AN ANALYSIS OF THE EFFICACY OF POSITIVE INTERGROUP CONTACT AMONG THE SRI LANKAN DIASPORA

by

Maneesha Sampath Wanasinghe – Pasqual
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At the outset, I must recognize the help of prestigious academics at ICAR, whose intellectually invigorating ideas steered me in my current path. It is with reverence that I acknowledge the intellectual stimulation, guidance and advice of my Doctoral Committee, consisting of Prof. Terrence Lyons, Prof. Sara Cobb, and Prof. Peter Mandeville. This is especially pertinent as I had to leave USA after the field research and before its analysis to resume my duties as a full-time lecturer at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Thereafter, my Doctoral Committee had the difficult task of guiding me from a distance. Their assistance was invaluable, their suggestions at times challenging to comply from a thousand miles away but motivating nonetheless.

A great deal has happened since I began my doctoral program. I have faced a number of personal and family challenges, endured heartache and found happiness whilst living a full-life as a wife, daughter, sister, friend, lecturer, and student. I must acknowledge the support of my husband, Upendra, who has been my strongest ally throughout this period. His unwavering faith in my ability and skill, as well as the love he has shown me during the worst and the best of times helped me stay the course. My amma and thaththa’s own path to academic excellence provided me with the strength, determination, and inspiration to begin and continue my doctoral studies. They have been my staunchest supporters, believing in my ability and encouraging me with their experiences when the road became difficult. My own aiya, Viraja, first introduced me to the joys of gaining knowledge. His caring presence, which has been a constant throughout my life, continued to encourage me in my pursuit of higher learning.

I have two sets of parents as well as two sets of siblings. One I was born into and the other I gained through marriage. The latter amma and thaththa have continuously encouraged me. Their gentle understanding and the unconditional support comforted and helped me immensely. Aji, my other aiya’s journey towards his doctorate provided me with the determination to complete. Vishaka akka and Hemali akka have embolden me in my long quest. I must also acknowledge the laughter and joy I gained from my nieces, Sahani, Anuki, Dunali, and Siluni and friends Nirosha, Shyama, and Dilrukshi.

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Maneesha S. Wanasinghe – Pasqual
TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables v
List of Figures vi
List of Abbreviations vii
Abstract viii
Preface 1
Chapter One: The Divided Sri Lankan Diaspora 3
Chapter Two: The Literature Survey 34
Chapter Three: The Research Design 123
Chapter Four: Plotting First Order Positions 187
Chapter Five: Positive Contact 244
Chapter Six: Positive Contact Despite Prejudice 287
Chapter Seven: The Nature of Prejudice and Contact 374
Appendices 413
Bibliography 416
LIST OF TABLES

Tables
Table No. 1: Linking the Research Questions to the Objectives 16
Table No. 2: Participant First Order Positioning 192
Table No. 3: Existence of Intergroup Interaction Among Participants 257
Table No. 4: Divergence of Views 299
Table No. 5: Sub-Network One 304
Table No. 6: Sub-Network Two 307
Table No. 7: Sub-Network Three 311
Table No. 8: Sub-Network Four 313
Table No. 9: Sub-Network Five 315
Table No. 10: Sub-Network Six 317
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1: Five-stage Ladder of Analytical Abstraction</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2: Potential Interviewee Ethnic Composition</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3: Mutually Determining Triad</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4: Initial first order positioning</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5: First Order Positioning</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6: First Order Positioning Elaborated</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7: First Order Positioning Influences</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8: First Order Positioning Complexity of Identification</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9: First Order Positioning of Participants</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10: Components of Self-Identification</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11: First Order Positioning Ethno-Linguistic Division</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12: First Order Positioning National Division</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13: First Order Positioning Moral Order</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14: First Order Positioning ‘Obligations’</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15: The ‘Original Settlers’ Plot</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16: The JVP insurrection Plot</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17: Overall Network</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18: Analyzed Network</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19: Participant No. 1 Intergroup Interaction</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 20: Participant No. 1 History of Intergroup Interaction</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 21: Plots on Intergroup Interactions</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 22: Significance of Turning Points on Friendship Disintegration</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 23: Sub-networks One to Six</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 24: Timeline of Diaspora Narratives</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 25: Cross-case analysis of Turning Points</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCE : Before Current Era
BTF : British Tamil Forum
EROS : Eelam Revolutionary Organisers
GoSL : Government of Sri Lanka
JVP : Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (the People’s Liberation Movement)
LTTE : Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MOU : Memorandum of Understanding
PA : People’s Alliance
SLFP : Sri Lanka Freedom Party
TCC : Tamil Coordinating Committee
TGTE : Transitional Government of Tamil Eelam
TLO : Tamil Liberation Organization
TRO : Tamil Rehabilitation Organization
TYO : Tamil Youth Organization
UK : United Kingdom
UNP : United National Party
US : United States
USA : United States of America
ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF THE EFFICACY OF POSITIVE INTERGROUP CONTACT AMONG THE SRI LANKAN DIASPORA

Maneesha S. Wanasinghe – Pasqual, Ph.D.

George Mason University 2011

Dissertation Director: Dr. Terrance Lyons

This research challenged the assumption that intergroup interaction does not exist among Sri Lankan diaspora, who are often presented as archetypes of conflict-driven divided diaspora. If further questions the effectiveness of such positive contact in creating catalysts for peace. The research utilized the snowball sampling technique to uncover Sri Lankan diaspora participants residing in the United Kingdom who interacted with members of the ‘enemy’ (out-)group. The research used Network analysis to gain insights into whether these diaspora interact informally with diaspora who held similar and different ideas. Narrative analysis and Positioning theory assisted in understanding whether these diaspora interactions remained positive, resulting in a reduction in prejudice and a questioning of the enemy image. The concept of ‘Turning Points’ also aided in this endeavor. The research illuminated the fact that diaspora from divided groups perceived only those close acquaintances from the out-group as friends. Despite the tenants of Contact Hypothesis, the data illustrated that these same diaspora retained intergroup bias and prejudices regarding the out-group. These research findings provide
crucial insights into the understanding of the Sri Lankan conflict, diaspora studies, and the relevancy of Contact hypothesis in reducing prejudice among divided group. It further speculates on the efficacy of contact in ensuring catalysts for building peace. In exploring the nature of intergroup interaction among members of divided groups, the research concluded that rather than replacing one with the other prejudice and acceptance existed in tandem.
PREFACE

This doctoral dissertation is a culmination of eight years of course work and research; a search for knowledge undertaken at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR), George Mason University, USA. It is based on field research undertaken in 2005 in the United Kingdom as well as subsequent archival research.

This research came into being to unravel a conundrum. I was living in USA and found Sri Lankan diaspora from different ethnicities and religions interacting quite harmoniously, in spite of the intensely divisive conflict in their country-of-origin. The accepted perception was that the Sri Lanka diaspora constituted divided, conflict-driven groups who rarely interacted. I had personal experience to the contrary and wondered whether: a) this was an anomalous situation specific to those I interacted with in the USA; b) if not, whether this applied to diaspora residing in the UK; and c) if so, why this positive contact did not expand to reduce prejudice towards the out-group or create catalysts for peace.

The research became an exploration to understand rather than to prove a hypothesis.

For the majority of my doctoral candidacy, I was working full-time as a lecturer attached to the Department of International Relations, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Therefore, without the Doctoral Committee’s invaluable cooperation and insightful advice, this dissertation would not have come to fruition.
Learning from Scott Appleby, Kevin Avruch, Sara Cobb, Dan Druckman, Ho Won Jeong, John Paul Lederach, George Lopez, Terrence Lyons, Chirstopher Mitchell, Carolyn Nordstrom, Deniel Rothbart, Richard Rubenstein, Dennis Sandole, and Peter Wallensteen, to name a few, provided me a trajectory for my research.

While the different theories and approaches allowed me to gather the complex data in a coherent manner, the information-rich informants and all participants in my field research in the UK provided unexpected insights and insightful ideas. They constitute the core of the thesis.
CHAPTER ONE

The Divided Sri Lankan Diaspora

*The Sinhala nation is unable to stomach the support of our Diaspora for the Tamil freedom struggle; it is unable to accept the humanitarian help and the political lobbying by the Diaspora to end the misery heaped on our people. That is why the Sinhala nation is trying hard to shatter the bond between our people in our homeland and our Diaspora. Some countries are also assisting this amoral effort of Sinhala chauvinism. These countries are denouncing, as illegal activities, the humanitarian actions and political protests of our people abroad – actions that are carried out according to the laws of those countries.* (Prabhakaran 2007 www.tamilcanadian.com accessed December 1st 2007)

The Sri Lankan diaspora have become an archetypes of the conflict-driven, divided diaspora, blamed as peace wreckers by some and praised as advocates for justice by others. As stakeholders to the conflict/s raging in their country-of-origin the diaspora’s political, economic, socio-cultural, philanthropic, and advocacy roles often result in transplanting the divisions from their country-of-origin to their host-country. Accordingly, not only do the diaspora activism assist in making the conflict more protracted in their country-of-origin, but their relationship with members of the other group remain tainted through the divisive narratives emanating from their own respective group. This research *challenges the assumption that intergroup interaction among divided conflict-driven diaspora does not exist* by exploring intergroup contact that exists
among a selected number of so-called divided Sri Lankan diaspora and subsequently, questions the effectiveness of such positive contact in ensuring catalysts for peace.

**Introduction**

This research contends that, irrespective of the divisive nature of the conflict narratives emanating from home-country that emphasize in-group cohesion at the expense of the out-group relations, sustained informal interactions exist between members of the of Sri Lankan diaspora. This is true, despite the fact that the Sri Lankan conflict – characterized by brutal violence intermingled with sporadic attempts at peace talks – had engulfed the country and negatively affected the people, whether they live within the country or outside it as diaspora. The Sri Lankan diaspora, consisting of Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim (Moors), and Burghers, has remained active and vocal regarding events in their country-of-origin. This has been apparent during the periods of intense violence during the 1980s and 1990s, the ceasefire period between 2002 – 2008, and even after the cessation of military hostilities in 2009.

The diaspora activism – especially within the main parties to the conflict in the country-of-origin, i.e., the Sinhalese and the Tamil ethno-linguistic groups – assist their respective group. Indeed, Collier (2003), Collier and Hoeffler (2004) as well as Cochrane (2007), and Ballentine and Sherman (2003), have argued that such diaspora activism escalates and protracts the conflicts. Yet if, as this research argues, this intergroup interaction is of a
‘friendly’ nature, such contact might possibly provide a potential to foster peacebuilding and positive conflict transformation. According to some theories of Conflict Resolution, positive contact between parties to conflict result in reduction of the ‘us-them’ dichotomy and assist in the creation of peace-builders instead of peace-wreckers.

Current literature on Sri Lankan diaspora presumes a divided Sinhalese and Tamil diaspora (Orjuela 2008; Demmers 2007, 2002; Fair 2007; Zunzer 2004; Cheran 2003; McDowell 1996). The insights generated from these researches indicate that there is considerable positive contact among (a number of) Sri Lankan diaspora. The positive contact has not resulted processes that sustain peacebuilding and therefore challenge the central tenants of the Contact hypothesis. Contact hypothesis (Pettigrew 1998) is at the core of peacebuilding as defined by Lederach (1997), which infers that sustained positive contact between strategically placed individuals could result in the reduction of prejudice and increase understanding. The theory further argues that reduction of prejudice would lead to understanding of the ‘other’, which in turn will reduce conflict. Yet, this research illuminates the complexity of contact and questions whether positive contact alone is adequate to reduce prejudice and build peace.

**Background to the Problem**

There is a lacuna in research knowledge regarding intergroup interaction within the Sri Lankan diaspora. This research strived to highlight this gap, expand the knowledgebase
on how members from divided groups interact with one another, and question the nature of this contact in reducing prejudice towards the other.

This research began with the often-held contention that conflict-driven narratives from the country-of-origin continue to influence the diaspora, thereby strengthening the emotional link between the diaspora and their home country. At the same time, these intensify divisions that exist among the conflict groups (Hewstone and Brown 1986; Trew 1986). Expanding from this assertion, this research deduced that members of the diaspora cling to the prejudicial and at times hate-filled rhetoric of their ethno-religious group, despite the existence of intergroup interactions that challenge these same conflict-driven narratives. Shedding light on and then hoping to understand this contradiction between conflict-driven group narratives and contact-driven personal narratives is the crux of this research.

Coupled with the detection of the existence of a lacuna regarding the congruence between personal and conflict-driven group narratives among diaspora who interact is the recognition that this vacuum has restricted the understanding of the diaspora role to the traditional ‘group saviors’ (Feargal, Baser and Swain 2008; Turner 2008; Davies 2007; Smith and Stares 2007) or ‘conflict escalators’ (Baser and Swain 2009; Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2007; Smith 2007; Berdal 2005; Byman, et al 2001; Collier 2003, 2000). It is pertinent to understand that the Sri Lankan diaspora have been linked to the conflict/s in Sri Lanka from 1970s onwards. Indeed, the Sri Lankan conflict – characterized by brutal violence perpetrated by parties to the conflict, intermingled with sporadic attempts
at peace talks – had engulfed the country and has negatively affected the people, whether they live within the country or outside it as diaspora. Since 1975, when “a group of Sri Lankan Tamils residing in London formed the Eelam Revolutionary Organisers … EROS” (Swamy 2005, 30), the Sri Lankan diaspora consisting of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and Burgher have remained relatively active and vocal regarding events, decisions, and solutions to conflict/s within the country-of-origin.

Though physically removed from the conflicts in Sri Lanka, the diaspora remain ‘stakeholders’ (Abdallah 2001) to the numerous conflicts that have ravaged Sri Lanka (Radtke 2005). The political, economic, socio-cultural, and security deterioration within Sri Lanka remain the main reasons for the creation of an asylum diaspora (Farer 1995). The Sri Lankan diaspora are a party to the conflict since they appear to be involved vocally, financially, and as pressure groups in the conflict. Such diaspora have an emotional link with their ‘home country’ community (Anderson 1983), which different parties to the conflict strive to exploit. The leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Prabhakaran, for example, reiterated the importance of the Tamil diaspora for the ‘Tamil cause’, in the 2007 ‘Heroes’ Day’ speech.

The Sinhala nation is unable to stomach the support of our Diaspora for the Tamil freedom struggle; it is unable to accept the humanitarian help and the political lobbying by the Diaspora to end the misery heaped on our people. That is why the Sinhala nation is trying hard to shatter the bond between our people in our homeland and our Diaspora. (Prabhakaran www.tamilcanadian.com accessed December 1st 2007)

The above statement highlights the importance placed by the Tamil separatist group/s towards their diaspora’s contribution to the freedom struggle. In turn, those within and
outside of Sri Lanka woo other Sri Lankan (i.e., especially Sinhalese) diaspora, often via internet. Indeed, as commented by Sharma,

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has polarized the Sri Lankan diaspora community in the United Kingdom with politically active Tamil nationalists turning to the LTTE and the British authorities to represent their cause and the politically active Sinhalese nationalists expecting the Sri Lankan High Commission to represent them. (Sharma 2008: 17)

Herein lay the notion of a conflict-generating or conflict-escalating diaspora as each group not only views the causes differently, but they look to different sources to assist their cause. This in turn exacerbates the tension between the two groups. The role of diaspora in continuing divisions is evident from the activism of the Tamil diaspora even after cessation of military hostilities between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the LTTE in May 2009.

Literature on the Sri Lankan diaspora (Orjuela 2008; Demmers 2007, 2002; Fair 2007; Zunzer 2004; Cheran 2003; McDowell 1996) often present them as a prime example of a divided diaspora, influenced by their respective groups from within Sri Lanka. The romantic attachment to home country, the diaspora life experiences, and communication advances enhance their link to their home country. The chains of attachment, strengthened through narratives emanating from within the conflict, create prisoners and guardians of the narrative among the diaspora. Prisoners, to expand on a notion introduced in van Longenhove and Harré (1999), remain those positioned by others, unable to overcome the third order positioning of the hegemonic narrative. Guardians or gatekeepers, on the otherhand, have the power to position self and others; i.e., first order
and second order positioning. They, as illustrated in the findings of this research, “perpetuate the master narrative” (Adame 2006) of their in-group. The continuous tense and often violent situation in Sri Lanka escalated the divisions and the narratives of each group, which focuses on in-group cohesion, become polarizing towards members of the out-group.

Studies on Sri Lankan diaspora consistently emphasized the division by focusing on one group: the Tamil diaspora (Fair 2007; de Silva 2003; Hoole and Ratnajeevan 1997; McDowell 1996). Some focus on the discrimination that resulted in the creation of a Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora (Sivanayagam 2005; Balasingham 2004; Balasingham 2001; and Somasundaram 1998). Others examine the reasons why diaspora have helped finance the separatist war (Gunaratna 2001) and the relationship within the separate Sinhala and Tamil diaspora communities in the conflict scenario (Orjuela 2008). To reiterate, the focus of research conducted on Sri Lankan diaspora has remained either on intra-group interaction – i.e., how diaspora in each group interact with their respective groups in their country-of-origin – or on the diaspora relationship with host-country.

This research however grapples with the exploration of an uncharted area: the nature of the dynamic intergroup interaction among members of the diaspora from the conflict-ridden Sri Lanka. Therefore, the research findings not only attempt to fill a lacuna in current literature on Sri Lankan diaspora they further problematize the tenants of the Contact hypothesis.
**Problem Statement**

The *problem statement* of this research is:

*Contrary to the expectations of the Contact hypothesis, members of the divided Sri Lankan diaspora maintain friendly relationships while retaining their divisive conflict-driven group narratives.*

According to this statement, the main conundrum here is that not only do members of the Sri Lankan diaspora interact. The enigma lies in the fact that interactions have not diminished the conflict-driven in-group narratives as suggested by the Contact hypothesis (Pettigrew 1998).

**Research Questions**

To address the problem discussed above required asking three research questions.

1. *Do the polarized Sri Lankan diaspora have informal and friendly contact with each other?*
2. *Do individual diaspora retain their respective group’s conflict-driven narrative despite this contact?*
3. *What are the implications of these findings for the Contact hypothesis?*

As discussed in detail in the forthcoming chapters, observations provided insights that assisted in formulating the questions and in conducting interviews. The analysis of the
interview data utilized narrative analytical tools that focus predominantly on the content rather than the language of the telling (Chafe 1994). A narrative analysis provides insights into nuances presented through verbal and non-verbal communication from the perspective of the participants themselves. It focuses attention the "on what is said, as well as why, and with what effect it is said ... and ... allows for broad or thematic understanding of the conflict processes that capture not only what is said, but the meaning behind it" (Johnston 2005: 277).

In this research, the narrative analysis of each research question entailed separate analysis of the interview data. This included the examining the first and third order positioning of participants (van Langenhove and Harré 1999) to comprehend the divisions among the Sri Lankan diaspora. Secondly, this entailed conducting analysis of the conflict-driven plot (Johnston 2005; Brooks 1984). Thirdly, the research examined specific questions coded to provide data on intergroup interactions. This entailed utilizing a qualitative social network analysis technique (Marsden, 2005; Boje, 2002; Scott, 2000; Wasserman and Faust, 1994; Knoke and Kuklinski, 1982) to understand the intergroup interaction. Overall, the narrative analysis – i.e., Positioning, Plot and Narrative Network Analysis – of the data provided the necessary insights to illustrate the influence of polarized narratives despite positive contact among the Sri Lankan diaspora.

The study firstly strives to answer the research question “Do the polarized Sri Lankan diaspora have informal and friendly contact with each other?” by initially highlighting the existence of a divided diaspora. Since current literature on Sri Lankan diaspora
present them as divided into cohesive ethno-linguistic groups (Orjuela 2008; McDowell 1996). Indeed, there is a notion in current literature on the Sri Lankan diaspora that intra-group harmony occurs at the expense of intergroup divisions (Fair 2005). Without challenging the assumption of a divided diaspora, this research aimed at shedding light on the existence of intergroup interactions despite intergroup hostility.

In brief, this research asserts that positive contact exists but does not result in questioning the negative intra-group perception of the out-group. According to Lynch, Modgil, and Modgil (1992), ‘positive contact’ is voluntary non-competitive interaction. Schneider, Gruman, and Coutts, while reiterating the significance of non-competitive intergroup interaction, also emphasizes that “as people get to know each other on a more personal level, relations between them start to change and become more positive in nature” (2005: 352). In brief, this means contact without preconceived prejudices, which occur “when members of different groups (a) with equal status and (b) common goals are brought together (c) to interact intensively in noncompetitive, cooperative tasks (d) with the active endorsement of authority figures (Pettigrew, 1998, pp. 66 – 67).” (Healey 2005:116) or customs based on positive values. This research questions the merit of this ‘contact’ in enhancing potential builders of peace.

The second research question probes “Do individual diaspora retain their respective group’s conflict-driven narrative despite this contact?” by exclusively using field data to explore the plotlines to different turning points. The analysis entailed exploring not only the sequencing nature of the plot, but also the bounded or the closed nature of the
plots (Brooks 1984) in accordance with the notion that “a community exists where a narrative account of a we persists through its experiences and actions” (Carr 1997: 22). This research highlighted the existence of cohesive conflict-driven prejudicial narratives that influence the diaspora. The study asserts that conflict-driven prejudicial narratives inform participant perceptions despite positive interaction with members of the out-group. Herein lay the conundrum as the Contact hypothesis assumes that intergroup interaction – under specific conditions – results in reducing prejudices.

Indeed, a discovery based on participant-observations indicates a duality between accepting group narratives that emphasize group cohesion and personal narratives that accept a member of the enemy group as a friend. These contradictions pertain to how some individuals cling to prejudicial and emotionally relevant yet unanalyzed group narratives that determine their group cohesion whilst interacting with members of the out-group. According to the data gathered through the ethnographic-styled observations, the compartmentalization of these two aspects in day-to-day intergroup interactions remains an intriguing puzzle. The research asserts that this curious factor hinders positive outcomes of contact.

The third and final research question speculates on finding the answers to the question “What are the implications of these findings for the Contact hypothesis?” This is the crux of the research. The research examines the potency of positive contact. Therefore, whilst the first two research questions provided the groundwork; this third research
question investigated the implications of having apparent positive contact in the midst of group divisions.

The conclusions reached regarding this third and final research question profoundly queries the applicability of a hypothesis that is foundational to the field of Conflict Resolution. Furthermore, by linking the underlying assumptions of ‘Peacebuilding’ as introduced by Lederach (1997) with the tenants of Contact hypothesis (Pettigrew 1998), this research speculates on the implications of questioning Contact hypothesis on the Peacebuilding potential of diaspora.

Objectives

The primary objective of this research was to:

*Question the applicability of the tenants of Contact hypothesis*

To realize the above objective required five secondary objectives:

1. *To inform of the existence of subtle and informal yet continued intergroup interactions between (some) Sri Lankan diaspora*

2. *To illustrate that Sri Lankan diaspora remain as divided groups even during the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) period (2002 – 2008)*

3. *To emphasize the complexity and duality of this interaction with regard to the influences of prejudicial narratives emanating from the country-of-origin*

4. *To analyze the social networks that exist among interacting diaspora of this research*
5. To explore how diaspora who interact cope with the duality of tolerance and prejudice existing simultaneously in their daily interactions

As noted, the primary or overall objective of the research was to question the applicability of the tenants of Contact hypothesis. Each of the secondary objectives attempted to assist in answering the primary objective. Therefore, to inform of the existence of subtle and informal yet continued intergroup interactions between (some) Sri Lankan diaspora entailed long-term, unobtrusive observations and open-ended interviews of a select number of participants. In the process, to illustrate that Sri Lankan diaspora remain as divided groups even during the MOU period (2002 – 2008). The subsequent research objective – to analyze the social networks that exist among interacting diaspora of this research – aimed to analyze the social network/s of those who interact and those do not interact with members of the other group.

Fourthly, to emphasize the complexity and duality of this interaction with regard to the influences of prejudicial narratives emanating from the country-of-origin required an in-depth understanding of the intergroup interactions. Lastly, the research combined long-term informal observations and interview data to explore how diaspora who interact cope with the duality of tolerance and prejudice existing simultaneously in their daily interactions. This objective indicated the complexity of interaction and emphasized the assumption that interaction alone has not reduced prejudice towards the other group.
Table No. 1: Linking the Research Questions to Research Objectives

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Research Objectives</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do the polarized Sri Lankan diaspora have informal and friendly contact with each other?</td>
<td>Question the applicability of the tenants of Contact hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To inform of the existence of subtle and informal yet continued intergroup interactions between (some) Sri Lankan diaspora</td>
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<td>Do individual diaspora retain their respective group’s conflict-driven narrative despite this contact?</td>
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<td>What are the implications of these findings for the Contact hypothesis?</td>
<td>To explore how diaspora who interact cope with the duality of tolerance and prejudice existing simultaneously in their daily interactions.</td>
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As Table 1 (above) summarizes, the research questions and objectives retain a cohesiveness that provide a means of gaining insights into the conundrum of intergroup interaction among divided groups. To reiterate, the research strived to understand why, contrary to the expectations of the Contact hypothesis, members of the divided Sri Lankan diaspora maintain friendly relationships while retaining their divisive conflict-driven group narratives. In other words, this research examined the co-existence of
prejudicial conflict-generated narratives regarding an out-group along with sustained friendly contact with members of the out-group.

Method and Methodology

The research objectives drove the epistemological underpinning of this research. Being a member of the Sri Lankan diaspora, the researcher was a participant-observer of intergroup interactions that existed among Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and Burghers residing in the United States of America (USA) and, through the field research, in the United Kingdom (UK). The qualitative research therefore retained impressions generated through five years of intergroup interactions among Sri Lankan diaspora. This almost-ethnographic participant-observation understanding of positive intergroup contact among Sri Lankan diaspora in the USA informed the choice of methodology and the semi-structured nature of the field research. In designing the research, it also meant focusing on data that provided information on the influences of conflict-driven prejudicial narratives on personal narratives as well as on the social networks that exist among Sri Lankan diaspora who interact with members of the other group/s.

This is an explorative research designed to understand intergroup interactions within a natural setting. The research does not have a hypothesis but rather, a very specific problem statement. Therefore, the ethnographic paradigm required a cautious and conscientious consideration of validity. The research design, which incorporated ideas presented by Patton (2002) and Miles and Huberman (1994), endeavored to ensure that
the researcher remain unobtrusive as much as possible when gathering data. It was therefore a participant-driven research design that entwined documentary data with primary research data generated through observations and interviews.

The most significant data came through interviews of participants gathered using a snowball sampling technique. This non-probability purposeful sampling technique emerged as the best tool available to the researcher to gather the relevant data. This was required because the informal nature of the interaction itself made it essential to use this type of purposeful sampling. The diaspora who interacted remained invisible to researchers, as evident from the lacuna unmasked through the literature survey on Sri Lankan diaspora. To understand intergroup interactions remained an integral part of using the snowball sampling technique.

The study originated out of a need to understand whether informal intergroup interactions existed among ordinary members of conflicting groups. Subsequently, the necessity shifted to the analysis of the nature of those interactions in order to understand why positive interaction has remained unexamined and under-utilized within the Conflict Resolution discipline. Prior to expanding on the methodology of this research, there is an attempt to justify the choices made by focusing on the twofold rationale for conducting the research and highlighting the assumptions that underpinned the trajectory of the research.
Choice of Methodology

The driving force for conducting the research stemmed from personal experiences of the researcher and the lacuna of in-depth academic analysis of positive intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora. This became the two-fold core reason for the choice of the snowball-sampling tool. A caveat at the outset: although the conception of the research and the insights and questions that arose was ethnographic in nature, this research was never an ethnographic research per se. It exploited this knowledge to develop a qualitative research that gathered answers to open-ended questions (Appendix I), asked from participants found through a snowball sampling technique. It also provided an avenue for the researcher to enter the field since diaspora in the USA provided the researcher with names of the two initial information-rich informants.

The Sri Lankan diaspora became the focus of this research predominantly because of the personal experiences of the researcher that informed of informal interactions that appeared more subtle and unwavering than the often thought-of image of the rigidly divided and non-interacting Sri Lankan diaspora. As a Sri Lankan who had lived in Sri Lanka prior to living outside, the researcher had initially viewed the diaspora as consisting of two groups – the Sinhala group on one side and the Tamil group on the other side – with the (Sri Lankan) Muslim/Moors and Burgher groups remaining in limbo. The inference that interactions between the two main groups would be minimal or non-existent persisted, often assisted by published (McDowell 1996) and unpublished documents (Lyons 2004) regarding the Sri Lankan diaspora. Even information online
presented the notion of a divided diaspora or focused only one of the Sri Lankan diaspora groups.

This perspective changed when the researcher began interacting with the Sri Lankan diaspora whilst in the USA. Learning firsthand about the diaspora, their daily lives, beliefs, and interactions was an ethnographic study in-itself. The intricate and nuanced interactions amongst the Sri Lankan diaspora were intriguing to the researcher, who became a participant-observer. Furthermore, the previously held view that the Tamil diaspora were a cohesive group and that the Sinhala diaspora were inactive came into question as the researcher interacted with diaspora from all communities from Sri Lanka while in USA. This provided the impetus for conducting the research.

The insights gained through intermingling with Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher diaspora presented a different picture of interaction that existing literature on Sri Lankan diaspora appear to ignore. The lacuna in the existing literature regarding the Sri Lankan diaspora (Velamati 2008; McDowell, 1996) – even after the ending of military warfare in 2009 – presented a simple picture of cohesive in-group diaspora interacting with one another, interacting with their fellow ethnic/religious groups in home country, or opposing the actions and policies of the other group. These include the February 2010 Report by the International Crisis Group (http://www.crisisgroup.org), which examined only the Tamil diaspora and entirely from a conflict-driven angle. To reiterate, literature on Sri Lankan diaspora portray a divided diaspora with one group presented as the victim.
of the other (Edirippulige 2004; McDowell 1996; Vasantha-Rajah 1996); or with one (i.e., Tamil diaspora) helping to finance the separatist conflict (Rosenau 2006; Gunaratna 2001). The fact that researchers remain unaware or unconcerned of this significantly vital intergroup interaction was another rationale for conducting this research.

The ethnographic nature of the initial introduction to the subject group enabled the researcher to gain long-term and in-depth understanding of the interactions of diaspora. As emphasized by Patton, “The primary method of ethnographers is participant observation in the tradition of anthropology. This means intensive fieldwork in which the investigator is immersed in the culture under study” (2002: 81). The lived experiences of the researcher attest to the reality of informal intergroup interactions and the nature of the interactions with regard to some of the informal intergroup networks within the USA. The research interest stemmed from these experiences. As the knowledge expanded, so too did the realization of the strengths and weaknesses of such interactions.

Thus, the justification for the choice of the specific research methodology stemmed from a need to highlight an existing but unexamined intergroup interaction and in the process, understands the interaction itself. Snowball or chain sampling became the primary mechanism for gathering the data while narrative analytical tools, involving narrative (social) network analysis, positioning and plot, became the method for analyzing the gathered data.
The researcher speculated that some of the Sri Lankan diaspora residing in the UK do interact with one another despite the divisive nature of their group narratives. These perspectives of the researcher were thus the basis of the research. Empirical data formally gathered through the four-month field research in the UK, utilizing the chain or snowball sampling tool, provided interview data from one-hundred and ten (110) diaspora participants. This exploratory research used the interview data, coupled with archival research and observations to conduct a narrative analysis of the collected data. The sampling technique and interviews together presented insights into the social networks as well as to positioning and storyline or plot. The choice of methodology and method remained intricately linked to the origin of the study.

The analysis of the gathered data remained limited to narrative analysis of coded interview data with a focus on plot and positions as well as on social networks. Therefore a caveat: it is vital to inform of another assumption that colored this research: that every conflict has a history or a narrative of a specific group, which has emotional resonance with those affected by conflict. An internal conflict waged in the 21st century continues to be waged with the past. Strategically enhancing, excluding, and ignoring certain experiences and aspects of history, conflicts attempt to create, increase, and continue the us-them dichotomy. The narratives enhancing prejudice towards the other group appear at the forefront. While van Peer and Chatman describe narratives as "texts about events structured in time" (van Peer and Chatman, 2001: 2), a core assumption of
this research lay in accepting a narrative as “what constitutes the community, its activities, and its coherence in the first place” (Carr, 1997: 20). Ingrained in the assumption that narratives play an integral role in the generation, escalation, and de-escalation of conflicts, the research methodology integrated this understanding to explore intergroup interactions. Along with this assumption was the acceptance of MacIntyre’s notion of co-authoring (1984), which entailed the realization that personal narratives also play a major role in increasing or reducing intergroup hostility and prejudice.

The analysis of the research data used a combination of tools from the more extensive Narrative analysis field (Cortazz 2007; Johnston 2005; Bal 2004, 1985; Carroll, 2001; Lieblich et al, 1998; Gergen and Gergen, 1997). As noted above and as expanded in the forthcoming chapter, this entailed utilizing analysis of Positions (Moghaddam, Harré, and Lee, 2008; Moghaddam, 2008; Moghaddam, 2006; van Langenhove and Harré, 1999; Davies and Harré, 1991) and Plot analysis (Johnston, 2005; Dovidio, Kawakami, and Gaertner, 2002; Boje, 2001; Riessman, 1994; Brooks, 1984) with Narrative Network analysis (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004; Boje, 2001; Polkinghorn, 1988). Conducting narrative network analysis of the social interactions among the participants assisted in strengthening the argument that positive, friendly contact not only existed among members of the divided Sri Lankan diaspora living in the UK, but also that the very nature of that contact created problems regarding the applicability of the Contact hypothesis. This intricate weaving of narrative analytical tools allowed the researcher to explore the fascinating crux of the problem, the conundrum of the research.
**Significant Contribution of the Research**

This research strived to contribute firstly to the field of Conflict Resolution through the examination of the ‘Contact hypothesis’; secondly to the analysis of intergroup interactions through exploring narratives that inform of social networks; and thirdly to the understanding of diaspora participation in conflict. The *primary contribution* of this research stem from its findings, which reveal insights to the *field of Conflict Resolution* in general as well as to Peacebuilding that focus on sustainable long-term approach to conflict resolution (Lederach 1997; Botes 2003; Jeong 2003).

The *main contribution* of this research to the knowledge base of field of Conflict Resolution lie in examining an underlying logic of this field – that positive contact under specific circumstances would eventually reduce prejudice. Contact hypothesis examines the reduction of prejudice.

Therefore, the contribution of this research also involves *providing insights into the nature of intergroup interactions* through narrative analysis of the data collected. This research does not use Social Identity theory (Tajfel 1970, 1981; as well as Healey 2003; Saylor and Aries 1999; and Campbell 1967) as a key to understand this interaction, despite the fact that this theory explains intergroup interactions. Contact hypothesis provides insights into how participants found meaning in their friendly intergroup interaction, which is a far richer and more insightful lens into the complexities of intergroup interactions than with merely examining behavior. The research strived to
highlight the nuances, complexities and dynamism of interactions by getting the participants themselves to reveal their understanding of the interactions.

Lastly, there exists a potential for a three-fold contribution of this research to understanding diaspora. First is the exploration of intergroup interaction itself would assist in the analysis of the Sri Lankan conflict/s. External (Swamy 2005 and 2004; Pratap 2002; Varma 2002; Mathews 1990; Pfaffenberger 1989; Singer 1990) and internal (Seneviratne 2001; Gunaratna 1994; Warnapala 1994; Kodikara 1989) experts have conducted research on this conflict/s. Other writings included highly charged personal perspectives of one single individual (Balasingham 2005; Mahadeva 1994; Tambiah 1990) but these have remained perceptions of intra-group cohesion.

Research conducted on the Sri Lankan diaspora appeared biased towards one group (Bell 2005; Rovic 2005). The book *LTTE –The International Dimension of Terrorism* (2007), for example, present a divided diaspora where one side assists the LTTE. Even publications by the Sri Lankan diaspora have contained views representative of one group (Balasingham, 2005; de Silva, 2003; Edirippulige, 2004; Gunaratna, 2001). This research attempted to shed light onto the perspectives of the Sri Lankan diaspora, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, gender, or language. Moreover, the research findings provide a glimpse into the manner national and specific group histories, factual or otherwise but believed to be true nonetheless, influence the personal understanding of the conflict. This in turn has a bearing on the interaction between members from conflicting sides. In a country where people are obsessed with the past, in a conflict that utilizes the past as
justification for violations, and in a country where the past seems alive in mundane daily practices, such a study would be of significance.

While a majority of the research conducted on the Sri Lankan diaspora emphasizes the negative involvement of diaspora in the conflicts (Chalk, 2008; Fair, 2005; Sriskandarajah, 2004; Wayland, 2004; Chalk, 2000; Wilson, 2000; Cohen, 1997; Petras, 1996), this study targeted the potential for positive diasporic involvement in conflicts. Publications such as on “Engaging Diaspora Communities in Peace Processes” by the Public International Law & Policy Group (2009) examine diaspora in their positive role in country-of-origin. Furthermore, research conducted by Cochrane, Baser, and Swain (2008), Baser and Swain (2008), Baser and Pejic (2008), Orjuela (2008), Berchovitch (2007), Cochrane (2007), Koser (2007), Butler (2007), Kent (2006), Lyons (2006), Østergaard-Nielsen (2006), Thaknr and Maly (2006), Goodhand and Kelm (2005), Mohamoud (2005), van Hear (2003), and Reychler (2001) specifically explore the potential of diaspora as peace builders. Some of these writers have specifically examined the Sri Lankan conflict and the potential role of diaspora in resolving or transforming it (Fair 2007; Orjuela 2006; Zunzer 2004; Cheran 2003).

Intrinsic contributions from this research arise predominantly from the methodology used. The research provides important insights into accumulation of oral histories from a specific group to gain an understanding of a conflict. There are a number of studies on the Sri Lankan diaspora that highlight the divisions of the two main diaspora groups the Sinhalese and the Tamils (Balasingham, 2005; Bell, 2005; Rovic, 2005; de Silva, 2003;
Edirippulige, 2004; Gunaratna, 2001). These insights remain limited since they focus only on one diaspora group. Yet none, with the two exceptions below, presented the perspectives of ordinary middle class diaspora themselves. Two exceptions – Balasingham’s representation of his life with the LTTE in the book War and Peace (2005) and Mahadeva’s book (1994) – highlight the omission of such insights in the literature. This research used only direct interview data.

This oral history is of vital significance to the field of Conflict Resolution and to the understanding of the (Sri Lankan) diaspora. This research assumed that a study of the diaspora which was “actor-centered, thickly described, and context rich – emic” (Avruch 1998, 57) might provide a way of understanding the dynamic nature of the interactions, their understanding of the conflict, and their local moral order. In brief, oral histories of individual diaspora can provide a glimpse into diaspora members of conflicting sides making sense of intergroup interactions. This is especially vital for gaining insights into meaning making and the efficacy of positive contact.

Linked to this is the significance of the snowball sampling technique in conducting an unbiased research. While it is possible to imply that the very nature of snowball or chain sampling include a bias, this technique in fact reduced the inherent bias of the researcher; found information-rich informants; examined their biases through positioning theory; and indicated the dynamic positioning among the Sri Lankan diaspora. It further provided a window into the loosely based informal networks – i.e., clusters of sub-networks – in existence among certain Sri Lankan diaspora. Finally, the research highlighted the
importance of utilizing the ‘Turning Points’ not as a concept but as a technique for gathering information.

**Limitations**

Overcoming some of the limitations pre-dated the field research itself. As a qualitative research, the most important limitation to overcome remained the *internal validity issues* as well as *external validity concerns*. It is possible, for example, to position the *researcher* as a Sri Lankan from a particular ethnic, class and caste group, of a certain age, holding certain religious beliefs, of a specific gender, with a definite educational background, and, at the time of the interviews, a member of the Sri Lankan diaspora. To counter any accusation of intentional bias, the researcher added three components to the research at the very outset. One technique was to inform honestly of the researcher’s biases and at the same time add, to the participants during the interview itself that, “*I am here to understand your perspectives.*”

This revelation occurred at each interview. There was to ensure initial first order positioning of self and the participant. This statement allowed the participant to position him/herself as an expert whose opinion provided the ‘right’ to speak while the researcher positioned herself as an enthusiastic student seeking knowledge held by the participants and therefore having the ‘duty’ and ‘obligation’ to listen. By positioning of self – the interviewer – as the enthusiastic, polite, non-threatening researcher and a scholar, the
interviewer in turn positioned the participants as having knowledge that was crucial to the research. Unless the participants accepted the interviewer as a student/researcher, s/he could not provide the relevant insights regarding members of the out-group or about what s/he considered important turning points of the conflict.

The second technique used for transparency was to ensure that the personal perceptions and opinions (i.e., biases) of the researcher regarding the origin and the history of the conflict remain concealed from the participants. The objective lay in not divulging for fear of influencing the answer. The researcher mentioned this to the participants at the beginning. Thus, when gathering information from the participants, especially regarding ‘turning points’ or events of the conflict, no attempt was made to direct or steer their answers. Knowing and accepting the personal bias of the researcher and not allowing it to control the discourse removed the validity issue. It was, however, essential to distance the personal views of the researcher further since this study was about the personal perspectives of the participants. Thus, the third technique used to ensure that the researcher’s personal bias did not become a hindrance to the research was to employ the snowball sampling technique. The researcher chose only Participants No. 15 and Participant No. 106 and their interviews occurred at a latter stage. The other potential participants were strangers to the researcher. The respondents themselves selected the next person interviewed.

In this selection process, a key question asked from the person interviewed was whether s/he knew of anyone who held either similar or quite different perspectives from them.
(see Appendix I). This resulted in a sample of participants positioned by each other as having similar or opposing perspectives. Therefore, other than the initial two key information-rich informants (Participants 15 and 106), whom the researcher positioned as having both the knowledge and the connections to help in the research, one hundred and eight (108) participants were positioned by participants as having information relevant to the research. This technique allowed the researcher to explore the dynamic and diverse friendship (sub-)networks. While it is possible to argue that the use of this sampling tool would limit the variety of those interviewed – i.e., to limit to moderates who interacted with members of the out-group rather than extremists or uninterested participants – the complexities of participant perceptions made this a mute concern.

The perceived weakness and validity issue regarding the researcher’s inherent bias transformed into strength. This strength lay in knowing from lived experiences as a Sri Lankan and as a diaspora, how to approach potential participants, how to conduct interviews, how to ask questions regarding the history of the country, and to walk the minefield of delicate and dangerous issues. This did not result in gaining mundane results. Conducting the research from an emic perspective provided the necessary sensitivity needed to gather the information. It gave the researcher a better understanding of the people rather than an outsider to the culture and indeed, when conducting narrative analysis, cultural sensitivity is a crucial factor.

External validity, due to the sampling technique used, remained another concern. However, as noted by Patton,
The logic and power of probability sampling derive from its purpose: generalization. The logic and power of purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in-depth understanding. This leads to selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton 2002: 46 Italics in original)

At this juncture, it is pertinent to note that the forthcoming chapters examine this concern regarding the generalization of the research findings.

The *choice of participants* may also seem a limitation. Although the research did not target a specific group, the researcher’s two main informants positioned themselves as belonging to a specific group: i.e., the educated and/or professional middle class. Through the snowball sampling technique, these two participants contacted potential participants who in turn provided other names to the interviewer. The endresult was that despite the ethno-linguistic and religious differences, a majority of the participants had similar educational background and was from a specific social class. While this similarity may reduce variety in opinions, what it did provide was an opportunity to conduct interviews with participants positioned as information-rich *equals* by other participants. Though it is possible to allege that the choice of participants through the sampling process might limit it by gathering information only from those who interact, the reality was that participants did not only interact with members of their own in-group. The interviews reflected the dynamism and inherent contradiction of the interaction rather than providing flawed data. This assisted in the network analysis.
Chapter Overview

This preliminary chapter introduced the main conundrum and the questions that rose from it. It also discussed the overall and primary objectives and the significance of this research. Chapter Two examines current writings on intergroup interactions, the Contact hypothesis, and Diaspora. It addresses issues relating the definitions such as diaspora, prejudice, and intergroup interaction. The chapter also provides literature survey on the analytical lens of the research: narrative analysis. Chapter Three introduces the research design by focusing on data gathering tools utilized in the research.

Chapter Four begins the analysis by introducing the divided Sri Lankan diaspora. Analyzing primary data through the Positioning lens, this chapter illustrates that the Sri Lankan diaspora perceive themselves as divided. Building on the evidence of the existence of the divided Sri Lankan diaspora, Chapter Five provides empirical data to indicate how (some) Sri Lankan diaspora interact. Chapter Six, the penultimate chapter, goes to the crux of the research by examining whether the Sri Lankan diaspora participants who interact retain prejudicial perception of the out-group whilst maintaining positive interaction with members of the out-group. This entailed utilizing the interview data to carry out plot analysis of the data. Chapter Seven gathers the threads together. This final chapter initially examines the nature of interaction and, based on this, subsequently presents the key findings and contributions of the study.
In brief, the chapters together present the research conundrum (Chapter One), comments on existing studies (Chapter Two), presents the way forward (Chapter Three), how the question is answered (Chapters Four, Five, and Six), and why it matters (Chapter Seven).
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Survey

*Solemn Declaration of the Tamil Associations Established in France.*

*We declare in the name of the Tamil people which voted by plebiscite the resolution of Vaddukkoddaï, that we are infallibly interdependent of the fight of independence carried out by the Tamil Forces on the ground in order to release it from military occupation.*

*We declare that the will of independence of the Tamil people, democratically expressed in 1977, is still current and legitimate.*

*We call finally the international community, with being the guarantor of this legitimate will, and working in order to establish a political solution without transgressing the spirit of the resolution of Vaddukkoddaï.*

(30 April 19th 2009)

Sri Lankans, within and without, missed an opportunity to enhance existing ties during the six-year period (2002 – 2008) when the fragile MOU was in place. The ceasefire situation, the longest since the escalation of the conflict in the 1980s, provided numerous opportunities to reduce tension and build bridges of understanding through strengthening existing ties. Instead, January 2008 to May 2009 saw a more intense, a more violent, and a more zero-sum outcome-based war. Since 2008, the diaspora activism as gatekeepers
of their respective group aspirations continuously highlighted the divisions among the Sri Lankan diaspora.

This research argues that informal intergroup interactions exist in the midst of conflict despite the divisive nature of the conflicts within Sri Lanka. The need to understand how these interacting individuals made sense of the contradictions inherent in such interactions and through that, explore why contact apparently is not enough lies at the heart of the research. The literature survey below expands on the assertion made in the previous chapter, that there is a lacuna in research regarding Sri Lankan diaspora. Studies on Sri Lankan diaspora that highlight the interaction among members of opposing groups are non-existent. This literature survey also highlights research that question the applicability of the Contact hypothesis and studies that have utilized narrative analysis as its core tool.

Introduction

This chapter introduces the concepts and theories that influenced the research through the survey of literature. This is not only to inform of the status of current research in each area. This research intends to ensure that the choices made remain valid and to emphasize the significance of this research to diverse fields. This chapter in brief embeds this research within the current literature on diaspora, on intergroup contact, and on narratives.

The crux of the research lay in exploring the efficacy of positive intergroup contact in reducing prejudice with regard to the specific case study of the Sri Lankan diaspora.
residing in the UK. Therefore, at the outset, the literature survey discusses the difficulty in defining ‘diaspora’ and then presents the Sri Lankan diaspora. In the process, the chapter addresses the issue of divided groups by exploring the theories underpinning intergroup divisions and interaction. The focus here is on how different researchers have examined intergroup interactions. Subsequently, the literature survey targeted Contact hypothesis: from seminal authors to the current discourse on the tenants and applicability. The chapter then shifts to conducting a literature survey on narrative analysis: Positioning, Plot, and Narrative Network analysis. This study presents the strengths in conducting narrative analysis in order to justify the choice of using it to understand intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora. It also informs of how analysis of diaspora using narrative analytical tools remain relatively underutilized. Overall, the literature survey sheds light on the apparent lacuna regarding studies in intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora.

The Sri Lankan Diaspora

A significant contribution of this research lies in examining whether conflict-driven diaspora interact with members from the out-group, and subsequently, exploring the complexities of this interaction. As Smith informs, this is an increasingly relevant focus. The study of diasporas in conflict reflects an urgent international social problem. The capacity of some diasporas to secure tangible and intangible resources in support of armed conflicts, the often opaque institutional and network structures that can allow for transnational transfers of arms and money to state and non-state actors, including terrorist groups, as well as to more deserving causes (for
instance as humanitarian assistance), along with rapid transnational communication, mean that, in the era of globalization, diasporas have been reconstructed as new and potentially powerful actors in international politics. (Smith 2007: 3)

Therefore, fundamental to the literature survey was to put forward an argument regarding the significance of diaspora within conflict, with special emphasis on the Sri Lankan diaspora. Prior to exploring the nature of intergroup relationships between network/s of Sri Lankan diaspora, however, was the need to expand on who constitutes a ‘diaspora’ and current research on diaspora and their activism. This involved a persuasitively presenting the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ this research defined Sri Lankan diaspora in a certain manner instead of another.

**Defining Diaspora**

At the outset, it is vital to indicate that that best definition of the Sri Lankan diaspora for this research remains the retention of memories linked to the country-of-origin and a sense of community that arise from it.

This interpretation of the diaspora – as well as the focus on a distinct ‘Sri Lankan’ diaspora instead of a ‘Tamil’ or ‘Sinhalese’ diaspora – requires justification and clarification. It is pertinent to underline the fact that the choice to define a diaspora based on place of origin instead of culture presents a different interpretation of the data.
The literature survey presented below highlight the path taken. It is, however, imperative to clarify the nuances in definition of diaspora prior to conducting the literature review on the Sri Lankan diaspora.

It is possible to note that in the current discourse the term diaspora “is often used as a catch–all phrase to speak of and for all movements, however privileged, and for all dislocations, even symbolic ones.” (Braziel, Evans and Mannur 2003: 3). Furthermore, [a]s Vertovec (1998) observes: “Diaspora” is the term often used today to describe practically any population which is considered “deterritorialised” or “transnational” – that is, which has originated in a land other than which it currently resides, and whose social, economic and political networks cross the borders of nation – states or, indeed, span the globe. (Cohen 1997: vi).

Van Hear (1996) informs of this tension between those who wish to include all within a broad definition of diaspora and those who wish to significantly limit the meaning. Chaliand and Rageau (1995) suggest that the basis of diaspora definition remain limited to the catastrophic dislocation of a people from their original home. Furthermore, “For Marienstras (1989) durability is a necessary condition of a diaspora: ‘its reality is proved in time and tested by time’.” (1989: 125)” (Van Hear 1996: 5).

Infact, “Diasporas arise from some form of migration, but not all migration involves diasporic consciousness; all transnational communities comprise diasporas, but not all diasporas develop transnationalism” (Vertovec 2000: 12). It is indeed, noteworthy that authors such as Chaliand and Rageau in The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas (1997), through examining the Jewish, the Armenian, the Gypsies (Romani and Sinti), the Greek, the
Lebanese, the Palestinian, the African, the Chinese, the Vietnamese, and the Korean diaspora continue to comment on the difficulty of defining who is a ‘diaspora’.

Diaspora has arisen as part of the postmodern project of resisting the nation-state, which is perceived as hegemonic, discriminatory, and culturally homogenizing. The alternative agenda – now associated with the notion of diaspora – advocates the recognition of hybridity, multiple identities, and affiliations with people, causes, and traditions outside the nation-state of residence” (Vertovec 2000:5).

Thus, the current understanding of diaspora remains imprecise due to the diversity of diaspora groups.

Moreover, specialists such as Brubaker expanded on the multiple understandings of the word diaspora by emphasizing on several “extensions of the term” (2005: 2) by including long-distance nationalists who continue their political, social, cultural, economic, and religious ties to their country-of-origin. He noted that this entails “the application of the term diaspora to an ever-broadening set of cases: essentially to any and every nameable population category that is to some extent dispersed in space.” (Brubaker 2005: 3). This includes incorporation of diverse words such as trans-border actor, immigrant, guest worker, asylum seeker, and many others into the already complicated diaspora definition.

This tension between those who wish to include all and those who wish to limit the meaning of the term is presented quite clearly by Van Hear (1996), who notes that different studies favor different inclusions and exclusions in their definition of diaspora.

Thus Khachig Tölölyan (…) includes the terms immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest – worker, exile community, overseas community and ethnic community – “the vocabulary of transnationalism” (Tölölyan 1991: 4 – 5). For William Safran … the term diaspora should be limited to populations who satisfy more precise criteria (…) Others, like Chaliand and Rageau (1995), suggest that catastrophic
origins involving forced migration are a prime feature of diaspora ... For Marienstras (1989) durability is a necessary condition of a diaspora: “its reality is proved in time and tested by time” (1989: 125). (Van Hear 1996: 4 – 5).

Categorizing the Diaspora

As the discussion of different interpretations in a multitude of studies illustrate, the original term ‘Diaspora’ had clear and specific definition, which has become somewhat murky when defining modern diaspora. Due to this confusion in defining the term, it is impossible to label a ‘diaspora’ without commenting on the different meanings. For example, it is possible to present diaspora as three categories of ‘original’, the ‘classical’ and the ‘contemporary’ or into two categories of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’. The traditional meaning of diaspora “implied a forcible scattering … applied to … the three classical Diaspora … the Jewish, the Armenian and the Greek. Today the term is used for nearly thirty different groups (Vertovec and Cohen 1999)” (McCabe, 2005 29). Indeed, the word ‘diaspora’ was etymologically derived from the Greek term diasperien, from dia–, “across” and –sperien, “to saw or scatter seeds” [and] diaspora can perhaps be seen as a naming of the other which has historically referred to displaced communities of have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movement of migration, immigration, or exile (...) The term “diaspora” then, has religious significance and pervaded medieval rabbinical writing on the Jewish diaspora (…) Another early historical reference is the Black African diaspora, beginning in the sixteenth century with the slave trade (Braziel, Evans and Mannur 2003: 1 – 2)
Sri Lankan diaspora, as noted below, not only constitute Cohen’s categories (1994), they are also modern or new diaspora. Research on the so-called ‘modern’ or ‘contemporary’ diaspora includes those on the Irish and Africans, for example, illustrate the difficulty in this categorization. The Irish diaspora (Kenny, 2003; Griffin, 2001; Fanning ed., 2000; MacRaild, 1999), for example, dispersed centuries prior to the Mexican, Haitian, or the Tamil diaspora. Yet, while they are grouped as ‘new’ Armenian diaspora who dispersed in the 20th century, they are presented as illustrative of what constitutes a traditional diaspora. Current research on diaspora, therefore, does not allow for simple categorizations or definitions based on single meanings. Rather, tensions exist between those who wish to restrict the meaning to a specific set of identifiers and those who permit a broader understanding of the word.

Other than the traditional-modern or original-classical-contemporary categorizations, another twin understanding of diaspora is through its positive connotations with expansionist settlement formation and its negative connotations in forced expulsion. Cohen groups these together when he divided diaspora into four categories: imperial/colonial diaspora, labor/service diaspora, trade/commerce diaspora, and victim or refugee diaspora (Cohen 1997). While the first three in Cohen’s categorization infer positive undertones, the latter presents the negative connotation of diaspora. The Sri Lankan diaspora consists of the latter three and not the colonial diaspora. They also constitute the ‘modern’ or the ‘contemporary’ diaspora. Yet such categorizations do not clearly illustrate the complexity of Sri Lankan diaspora. Thus, the issue remains that the
term ‘diaspora’ has diverse meanings and the exploration of the Sri Lankan diaspora perceptions require clarification as to the meaning of ‘diaspora’.

In defining diaspora, the basis of dominant categorization is the place of origin. How they leave, where they go, their relationship with host-home country remained secondary in the definition. This research focused on this aspect of the Sri Lankan diaspora. There existed a number of reasons for this choice. Firstly, there exists confusion as to defining diaspora according to reasons for leaving, not just with regard to the Tamil diaspora within the overall Sri Lankan diaspora. Rather, a number of researchers highlight this confusion in defining a multitude of diaspora groups.

Initially, there was no confusion in defining diaspora based on forced expulsion. As noted by Braziel, Evans and Mannur (2003), word ‘diaspora’ itself originates from the Greek understanding of migration: ‘dia-spora’ from speiro and the dia denoting expansion. Subsequently, its application to the Jewish people (Goitein 1967) scattered across the globe infer forced migration rather than voluntary expansion. There is a vast array of scholarly writing, for example, on the Jewish diaspora, including those by Sheffer (2005; 2003), Safran (2005), Feldman (2003), and Biale (1998). These authors present the Jewish diaspora as the archetypal or the original diaspora, dispersed through persecution. In a broader sense, The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora Origins, Experiences, and Culture (2008) provides a holistic picture of ‘reason for leaving’ aspect of the original diaspora.
This understanding of diaspora as a group forced to leave further enhanced to include slaves dispersed in the Americas from the sixteenth century onwards (Phiri 2001; Jones 1989; Drachler 1975). Authors either examined a specific African diaspora group such as Bulcha (2002) on forced migration of Oromo diaspora from the nineteenth century onwards. Others, such as Harris (1996) focused on the African diaspora in general. The African Diaspora: interpretive essays (1972) as well as the Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora (1982) provide insights into the complexity of migration and Pan-Africanism. Indeed, Drake informs that the analogy of diaspora “needs constant critical analysis if it is to be a useful guide to research as well as a striking metaphor” (Drake 1975: 2).

The confusion arises when examining all diaspora groups categorized according to time of migration. While the Jewish, the Armenian, and even the African slave diaspora represent archetypes of victim or refugee diaspora, not all diaspora who dispersed prior to the 20th century constitute a ‘traditional diaspora’ nor categorized according to ‘forced migration’. The Greek diaspora (Prévélakis 2001), for example, represent the colonial diaspora who relocate to other countries in the process of expansion. The Chinese and the Indian diaspora (Jagat, Mahin, and Barot-Motwani eds., 1993) also remain examples of colonialism-induced labor diaspora. However, not only is there complexity in defining these groups as ‘forced migrants’ but there even exists a difficulty in categorizing such diaspora as only ‘colonial diaspora’. Not all diaspora were thus categorized according to reason for leaving.
The second reason for choosing country-of-origin as the core categorization in defining the Sri Lankan diaspora remained linked to issues regarding host country. It is difficult to determine who constitute a diaspora based on destination and their relationship with the host-home country. The complexity in finding a definition to ‘diaspora’ lies in the fact that diaspora appears all over the world. The Irish, the African, among others remains a case in point. While Kilbride and Farley examine the globalized nature of the Irish kin-relations with reference to Africa (2007), Coogan presented an interesting glimpse of Irish diaspora in Kenya (2000). Linking diaspora to forced migration, Akenson on the other hand examine whether Irish in USA were exiles or not (1993). Writers have examined different aspects of African diaspora. Kadende examined the Burundi diaspora and their internet communication (2000) while others examine the concept of slaves as African diaspora (Harris ed. 1993) especially in Anglophone West Africa (Adibe 2001; Khadiaglala and Lyons 2001). While Grimes presents migration as a rite-of-passage for Mexicans (Grimes 1998), Brodwin depicts marginalization of the Haitian diaspora in host country (2003). Others focus on a specific diaspora such as Turks and Kurds (Ostergaard-Nielsen 2000); and Latinos as a minority group in host country USA (Rodriguez et al. 2007). Yet, none has examined intergroup interaction among conflict-driven diaspora. Some studies however have targeted diaspora relations with their country-of-origin. These include investigations into transnational loyalties of diaspora in general (see Encyclopedia of Diasporas 2004; Bryceson and Vuorela 2002), from the perspective of anthropological understanding of transnational spaces (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003).
The difficulty in finding universally inclusive categorizations to understand who constitutes a diaspora stems from a) blurring of the categorizations traditional and modern, due to b) reasons for leaving home country, including war and persecution (Bell – Fialkoff, 1996; Mieth and Cahill, 1993) and c) economic (Kane and Peterson, ed. 1995) reasons, or in d) the vast array of diaspora groups in the contemporary world. As noted by Tsagarousianou (2007), Cunningham and Sinclair (2000), and Tölöyan (1996), it is difficult to delimit the reason for leaving. Whether the migration from home country to host-country remain formal or informal, and legal or illegal, the relations the diaspora continue with host and home country add another layer to an already multifaceted understanding of a word. There have been a number of studies, for example, on how diaspora travel from their country–of–origin to another, including Ghosh (1998) who looked into irregular migration. Furthermore, once in their new ‘home’, the interaction between the diaspora and the new, ‘host’ country have also been the focus of research. These include publications by Brochmann (1996), Teitelbaum and Weiner (1995); Richmond (1994), Collinson (1994), Edmonston (1994), and Kritz (1984), which have as its topic the relationship between the ‘host’ governmental policies and diaspora. Koopmans and Statham (2000) have focused on legal, cultural, and racial discrimination in host country while Frykman (2001) researched on challenges faced by a diaspora in the new host country are but a few of the examples.

The Chinese trek from mainland China, for example, has led them to other East Asian countries as well as to Europe and the Americas. Their journey, often due to all four
categories presented by Cohen (1997), went on for centuries. Other than *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas* (Penn, ed. 1999), the authors in *The Chinese Overseas*, edited by Liu (2006), Pieke et al. (2004), Bloom (2001), McKeowen (1999), Benton (1998), and Penn (1990) examine the traditional Chinese diaspora in the western countries. Thus, as noted by Burton and Gomez, the Chinese had lived in the UK from the 19th century. In *Chinese in the Post-Civil War South* by Cohen (1984) and *Coming man: 19th century American perception of the Chinese* (Dong, Choy, and Horn ed., 1996) provide insights into Chinese diaspora as both colonial and labor diaspora. Bolt (2000), Benton (1998), and Chan (1991) focused on Chinese migration to diverse areas of the globe during modern times. Merchetti (2006) and Lam (1996), on the other hand, illustrate the categorization of the Chinese diaspora as victim diaspora. The Chinese diaspora illustrate the complexity of meaning: they represent the traditional and the modern; the colonial, labor, trade, and victimization; as well as the cultural and post-modern understanding of diaspora.

**Country-of-Origin Definition of Diaspora**

As noted above, this research disregarded secondary categorizations of who constituted a ‘diaspora’ to examine the Sri Lankan diaspora through ‘country-of-origin’ categorization. Defining diaspora according to the country-of-origin also has its concerns, which this study highlights. It is possible to include all from one ethno-linguistic, tribal, religious, and other groups originating from one source. They constitute a ‘cultural diaspora’
whose ‘origin’ is not rooted to a specific nation-state. This research takes on the second understanding of diaspora: according to their nation-state origin.

Indeed, it is possible to define diaspora as ‘cultural’ diaspora, thereby dispensing with the confusion of ‘reasons for leaving’, ‘destination’, and ‘relationship with host-home country’.

Cultural diasporas, which incorporate religious experiences, are groups that reject the identity categories and social structures that nation states impose on them, opting instead to express identities based on a blurring of origin and destination and associated with loose, multiple connections to various groups, settings, and practices. (Levitt http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/Levitt.pdf accessed 10th January 2010).

Cultural diaspora provide further insights into the understanding of the word ‘diaspora’ and what it entails to the diasporic individual.

Mandaville, who examined how diaspora strive to connect with homeland in both Global Political Islam (2007) and in Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma (2003) provide insights into the significance of trans-border identification not linked to origin. It is possible that research conducted on the ‘Tamil diapora’ from Sri Lanka focus on the cultural/linguistic linkages between Tamils in Sri Lankan and Tamils in India (Bose 1994; McDowel 1997; Demmers 2002; Sriskandarajah 2004; Zunzer 2004; Fair 2005). However, there are a number of reasons for not focusing only on Tamil diaspora when defining ‘diaspora’ in this research.

Thus, another concern regarding this research stem from the multiple linkages held by Tamils. Tamils in India, in Sri Lanka, in Malaysia, and even in the UK, who migrated
from India or Sri Lanka, who have lived in Malaysia or UK for generations, still perceive self as Tamil. Indeed, Prabhakaran in his 2007 address illustrated this by pointing out that there were 80 millionTamils who accept him as the leader of the Tamils (www.tamilcanadian.com accessed December 1st 2007). This constitutes all Tamil diaspora, as a cultutal unit, irrespective of where they originated. Despite this, Tamils from Ceylon or Sri Lanka remain a distinct group. While Tamils continue to have unity through language, the Tamils in the north and east of Sri Lanka date their migration to pre-Mahabaratha era (circa 3000 BCE), 500 BCE, or 12th century A.D. Moreover, there remain distinct differences in language, traditions, and rituals between Tamils of India and Sri Lanka (Miller, Vandome, and McBrewster 2009).

Due to this aspect, this research defined Tamil diaspora as those whose original country-of-origin was Sri Lanka. They remain undefined as ‘conflict-generated’ diaspora, although Chalk (2008), Bulter (2007), Fair (2007), Rosenau (2006), Fair (2005), Chalk (2000), Chandrakanthan (2000), Wayland (2000), Fuglerud (1999), Fuglerud and Fuglerud (1999), McDowell (1997) have done so. While a number of researches targeted specific conflict-generated or conflict-escalating diaspora including those of Kahler (2006) and Wahlbeck (1999) who examined conflict-generated diaspora in general while Mahmood has analyzed the Sikh militancy and its diaspora (1997), this research strived not to define the Tamil or Sinhalese or even Muslim or Burgher diaspora as ‘conflict-generated’ diaspora. This is mainly due to two reasons: firstly, the Tamil diaspora does
not only constitute those who escaped trauma and secondly, Sinhalese and Muslim diaspora left the island nation due to persecution.

As noted previously, the current study examines ‘Sri Lankan diaspora’, which entail expanding the diaspora to include Burgher, Muslim/Moor, Sinhalese, and Tamil diaspora residing in the UK. This current study does not focus on the assimilation of diaspora to their new host country as depicted in research conducted by Vertovec (1999) on social cohesion and multiculturalism; and Haines and Mortland (2001) on the Americanization of immigrants. Studies on diaspora ties to their home country focused predominantly on the economic perspective and remittances (e.g., Skeldon 1997 and Nayyar 1994).

Research on diaspora role in conflicts in their country–of–origin is relatively new. However, a number of studies examining this include Shain (2002) who questions whether diaspora perpetuates the conflict or helps in its resolution, and Lyons who ponders how some diaspora perceive the conflict within their home country as a zero–sum struggle and therefore their role may become a hindrance to peace (http://www.beyondintractability.org). In a 2007 article on “Conflict-generated diasporas and transnational politics in Ethiopia,” Lyons examines the significance of a traumatic event in the creation of such a diaspora. While the Ethiopians and even Tamils (Rigby 2006) apparently do have a major role in exacerbating the conflict, this current research targets all the Sri Lankan diaspora.

The history of Sri Lankan or Ceylonese diasporic activities began only from the 1950s. The island nation gained independence in 1948 and the conflicts within the island
escalated from sporadic violence during the 1970s to excessive violence in the 1980s. Cheran, for example, notes that while “transnationalism is a condition of living, diaspora is about a condition of leaving. Diasporas are the result of forced migration” (2004; www.tamilnation.org/diaspora/articles/diaspora.pdf accessed March 12th 2009). However, it is impossible to categorize all Tamil diaspora as the result of forced migration just as it is not possible to disregard completely the fact that not all Sinhalese or Sri Lankan Muslim diaspora are the result of persecution.

The current research argues against such presuppositions. Diaspora do not always emerge from forced expulsion (Shuval, 2007). Instead, the study opts for a nuanced understanding of the word diaspora that takes into account the diversity of Sri Lankan diaspora, their reasons for leaving, and the period in which they left. This would provide a holistic picture of the Sri Lankan diaspora that takes into account all ethno-linguistic and religious groupings among those who left the island nation. The Sinhalese, Muslim, and Burgher diaspora are often categorized by the GoSL as ‘expatriates’ while the Tamil diaspora, especially after the 1990s decade, defined as ‘diaspora’. As noted by Weber, “an expatriate is anyone living or working in a country of which he or she is not a citizen and who can be classified as possessing skills” (2011: 1). It is possible to infer that the distinction depended upon those who left the island for educational and economic reasons and those who sought asylum; as well as between those who the governments presumed would return and those who might not. Taking this implication, it is possible to agree with the notion that “there was no Tamil Diaspora worth the name before the ethnic war
erupted decades ago. If anything, Diaspora is both a cause and product of the war.” (Daily Mirror, 2010: A9). This research, however, does not distinguish between expatriates and diaspora for a number of reasons.

Firstly, by focusing on those who left their country–of–origin in search of asylum a large number of Sri Lankan diaspora who left the country for other reasons, appear excluded. Moreover, as noted in the report “The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora after the LTTE”, International Crisis Group highlights this issue by noting that

There has been considerable debate over the years about whether Sri Lankan Tamils are indeed genuine refugees who have had no choice but to flee political violence, or economic migrants who are in no personal danger but choose to leave because of financial considerations.” (Crisis Group Asia Report №186 http://reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2010.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/MINE-82XPSQ-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf accessed March 3rd 2010).

Secondly, it is illustrative that out of the three Sri Lankan Tamil founders of EROS in 1975, London, Eliyathamby Ratnasabapathy even ran for office in Sri Lanka in 1980s, whilst Anton Balasingham left Sri Lanka in the 1970s for education reasons. They did not constitute an asylum diaspora. Moreover, the President of the Global Tamil Forum, Fr. S. J. Emmanuel, who was the Vicar General of the Jaffna Diocese, did not leave the island because of persecution. Despite this, he called himself a member of the diaspora (http://www.tamilnewsnetwork.com/tamilnewsnetwork.com/post/2009/07/06/Time-for-diaspora-to-stand-up-for-homeland-Tamils-Father-SJ-Emmanuel.aspx accessed on 10th March 2010) and moreover, wrote Let My People Go: the Tamil struggle for survival and self-determination (1997).
As the above discussion highlighted, this study remains critical of the notion of ‘ideal’ type, which, as noted by Clifford “no society can be expected to qualify on all counts, throughout its history.” (Clifford 1994: 306), especially as the South Asian diaspora in general remain excluded from the list provided by Safran (Ghosh 1989). As defined by Safran,

the term diaspora should be limited to populations who satisfy more precise criteria … these should include dispersal from an original centre to two or more peripheral regions; retention of collective memory of the homeland; partial alienation from the host society; aspiration to return to an ancestral homeland; commitment to the maintenance or restoration of that homeland; and derivation of collective consciousness and solidarity from a relationship with the homeland (Safran 1991: 83). (quoted in Van Hear 1996: 5).

Conversely, it is difficult to utilize Safran’s list of criteria in order to describe the Sri Lankan diaspora as it is difficult to place Sri Lankan diaspora, consisting of individuals from different ethnic groups, who left Sri Lanka from 1950s onwards, for diverse reasons, under all these criteria.

This study *chose* to focus more on an aspect discussed by Vertovec. Vertove’s perception of “diasporas as a type of consciousness that locates the individual in multiple cultural and social spaces; and diasporas as a mode of cultural production involving the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomenon” (http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/Levitt.pdf accessed 10th January 2010: 3 – 4) appear integral to the definition of Sri Lankan diaspora rather than Safran’s definition. Indeed, the
language of diaspora is increasingly invoked by displaced people who feel (maintain, revive, invent) a connection with a prior home. This sense of connection must be strong enough to resist erasure through the normalizing processes of forgetting, assimilating, and distancing.” (Clifford 1994: 310).

It is this emotional link to homeland, rather than merely the fact that these diaspora remain dispersed to diverse regions, or remain alienated from their host-country, that help explain and define the Sri Lankan diaspora. This research strived to highlight the “retention of collective memory of the homeland … aspiration to return … commitment to the maintenance or restoration of that homeland; and derivation of collective consciousness and solidarity from a relationship with the homeland.” (Van Hear 1996: 5). Due to this reasoning, the diaspora appear in this research divided into ethno-linguistic groups rather than the time or reason for leaving. The Sinhalese diaspora maintain one set of collective memories that appear counter to those of the Tamils. The Tamil diaspora hold on specific memories of homeland irrespective of whether they left the island due to persecution or not. Moreover, whether this persecution occurred at the hands of the GoSL, the LTTE, or the IPKF, Tamil diaspora collective consciousness remain strongly with other Tamils in their country-of-origin.

It is pertinent to clarify again who is a Sri Lankan diaspora. As noted above, Fr. S. J. Emmanuel, the former Vicar General of the Jaffna Diocese as the President of the Global Tamil Forum defines himself a ‘diaspora’ whilst Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the Defense Secretary who spearheaded the war against the LTTE from 2005, highlights his Sri Lankan citizenship despite being a naturalized US citizen. Moreover, Sarath Fonseka,
the General who spear-headed the victory against the LTTE is a US Green Card holder. Indeed, the confusion lies in how, whether migrant or diaspora, refugee, or exiles, those living outside of Sri Lanka identify themselves. Indeed, it is possible to present the Sinhalese diaspora as identifying self as ‘expatriate’, while the Tamil diaspora represent self as ‘diaspora’. This diversity in self-identification is not, in actuality different as the word expatriates, just as diaspora, include diverse meanings from migrant to refugee. There is further blurring of lines between a migrant and a diaspora among the Sri Lankan expatriates.

The above discussion highlighted the fact that definitions provided by Safran (1991), Cohen (1997), van Hear (1998), Sheffer (2007), Bruneau (1994), Chaliand and Rageau (1995), or Marienstras (1989) cannot fully encapsulate neither the complexity of the word ‘Sri Lankan diaspora’ (nor ‘expatriates’) nor does Clifford’s notion of ‘travelling cultures’ provide a clear understanding of the Sri Lankan diaspora in general and the Tamil diaspora in particular. In fact, Tamil diaspora from Sri Lanka include two groups – the Tamils of the north and east as well as the Tamils brought from India by the British during the 19th century. The latter group consists of Indian diaspora, dispersed due to economic reasons. Some researchers conflate all Tamil diaspora as one (Civaca kari, 2007) and Baumann, for one, commented on this aspect (2006). Moreover, due to the “blurring of the distinction between pro-Tamil and pro-LTTE positions makes the separating out of diaspora activities from those of the LTTE extremely difficult.”
(Sriskandarajah, 2004: 497) and thus, the GoSL identifies all Tamils as pro-LTTE activists. However, as noted by the International Crisis Group,

The interplay between diaspora Tamils and the LTTE has been complex and is often misunderstood. The diaspora is not a monolithic entity that acted solely as the fundraising and political wing for the Tigers as is commonly believed, particularly in Colombo ... Not every diaspora Tamil donated funds to the Tigers, not everyone supported them politically, and countless people were their victims. (…) LTTE is responsible for the murder of hundreds of Tamil-speaking Muslims and forcible displacement of tens of thousands more. Even in the West, Sri Lankan Muslims are still vulnerable to the LTTE’s authoritarianism; many continue to report harassment by Tiger sympathisers. (2010: 4 http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/186_the_sri_lankan_tamil_diaspora_after_the_ltte.pdf accessed March 10th 2010).

Thus, the Sri Lankan diaspora remain more complex and more nuanced. Moreover, since this research examines diaspora interaction with each other rather than with home or host country, the definition required a less politicized more identity-based understanding.

It is thus vital to inform of the definition used in this research as it provided the means of gathering the research participants and the lens of the research itself. The best definition of the Sri Lankan diaspora remains the retention of a sense of community and a link through memories with the country-of-origin. This entails an awareness of diaspora as a ‘social form’ as well as a ‘type of consciousness’ as described by Vertovec (1999). This understanding of diaspora involved focusing on social relationships, political orientations, and economic strategies, apparent among the Sri Lankan diaspora living in diverse countries and the focus on duality of consciousness, which among Sri Lankan diaspora involves multiple identities (Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1996) that...
sometimes appear almost fractured (Appadurai and Breckenridge, 1988). Conversely, it is Shuval’s perception of the diaspora that has been adapted in this research.

A diaspora is a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, history, meaningful narratives, group identity, longings, dreams, allegorical and virtual elements all of which play an important role in establishing a diaspora reality. At a given moment in time, the sense of connection to a homeland must be strong enough to resist forgetting, assimilating or distancing. (Shuval, 2000: 43)

To understand how diaspora themselves perceive their social networks as well as their sense of connection with the homeland required an in depth analysis of their discourse. The migrants aspire to neither integrate into host country nor hold a nostalgic perception of homeland. Rather, as Mandaville elucidate, “the condition of diaspora is one in which the multiplicity of identity and community is a key dynamic” (Mandaville 2001: 172). Thus, the participants chosen during the field research included only those dispersed from the original homeland; retaining a collective memory strongly intertwined with historical myths and events; with collective identification with ethno-religious groups within Sri Lanka, that result in political, cultural, socio-religious, and economic links to home country. Some of those interviewed appeared partially integrated with host-country while others enhanced their link to their country-of-origin. Some aspired to return to country-of-origin while others spoke of providing assistance and viewed their country-of-origin as a place to visit. The research included those who left Sri Lanka for diverse reasons, from different generations, and living for period of stay ranging between two to fifty-years in their host-country. They constitute a settled group of individuals, some low-skilled while
others highly skilled, studying, working, or retired but with strong emotional link to home country. The snowball sampling technique presented the researcher with individuals who held views regarding conflict/s raging in their home country, who continued their activism through physical protests, in cyber-space, and by keeping the memories of the past alive in order to socialize new arrivals or to inculcate to future generations.

From the above discussion on the difficulties of defining the Sri Lankan diaspora, it is possible to discern numerous divisions among the Sri Lankan diaspora. Those who arrived in host-country due to persecution and those who did not; those who were pro-LTTE and anti-LTTE; as well as long-term and newly arrived are but a few examples of the diverse representations of Sri Lankan diaspora. As pointed out above, different authors have chosen different categorizations. The simplest and most obvious division remained between ethnic/linguistic divisions. A number of writers and researchers have focused on this division. Orjuela on for example, wrote on “The Tamil and Sinhalese Diasporas and the war in Sri Lanka” (2007) while Fair focused on on “The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora: Sustaining conflict and pushing for peace” (2007). Even Wijesinha, who focused on the potential reconciliation, targeted the Sinhalese and Tamils (http://rjonline.org/search?b_start:int=136&SearchableText=reconciliation accessed 15th February 2010), highlighted the categorization of diaspora into ethno-linguistic groups.

Most wrote on the Tamil diaspora, thereby inferring a division of the diaspora based on ethnicity. These include, Sriskandarajah “Tamil Diaspora Politics” (2004); Wayland in “Ethnonationalist networks and transnational opportunities: the Sri Lankan Tamil
diaspora,” (2004); Cheran in The Sixth Genre: Memory, History and the Tamil Diaspora Imagination (2002); Fuglerut in Life on the Outside: The Tamil Diaspora and Long-Distance Nationalism (1999); Gunaratna on International and Regional Implications of the Sri Lankan Tamil Insurgency (1997), McDowell through research on A Tamil Asylum Diaspora: Sri Lankan Migration, Settlement and Politics in Switzerland (1997); and Bose on States, Nations, Sovereignty: Sri Lanka, India and the Tamil Eelam Movement (1994). Some others touched on the division of the Sri Lankan diaspora according to ethnic categorizations whilst focusing on other aspects of diaspora activism. Demmers, for example, focused on “New wars and diasporas: suggestions for research and policy” (2007) while Rigby examined the “Axes of Solidarity - Diasporas” (2006).

Broadly speaking, Sri Lankan diaspora in research present them as groups in conflict. Secondly, the literature survey highlights the fact that a majority of researchers focus on the reason for and the activism of one diaspora group over all other Sri Lankan diaspora. This research argues that by examining a more holistic ‘Sri Lankan diaspora’ provides a broader understanding of ‘contact’.

It is thus evident that there exists a lacuna in research on Sri Lankan diaspora in general and interacting diaspora in particular. Research, which focused on the actions and utterances of one group – the Sri Lankan Tamils – often present the picture of a cohesive Tamil diaspora, who rarely interact with the Sinhalese diaspora (Fuglerud and Fuglerud 1999; McDowell 1997). Though accepting that the Sri Lankan diaspora constitute at least two groups, this study asserts that the Sri Lankan diaspora are not two distinct
groups who rarely interact with one another. A closer examination of the some of the Sri Lankan diaspora revealed that divided though they may appear, their interactions with one another were more complex than has been previously assumed. This complexity remain hidden particularly in studies conducted by Rosenau (2006), Edirippulige (2004), Gunaratna (2001), Fuglerud and Fuglerud (1999), McDowell (1996), and Vasantha-Rajah (1996). It is therefore pertinent to assert that these studies have missed one dimension of Sri Lankan diaspora activities: the intergroup interaction among Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher Sri Lankan diaspora. Indeed, only Wayland (2004) examined the Sri Lankan diaspora as networks but even she examined this in terms of ‘transnational ethnic network’ consisting of Tamils rather than overall Sri Lankan diaspora. Moreover, while Orjuela (2008) and Cheran (2003) have examined how Sinhalese and Tamil diaspora interact with their respective groups from within Sri Lanka or act as transnational groups, they have not examined intergroup interaction but rather intra-group, trans-border interaction among diaspora. The current study, however, targeted the Sri Lankan diaspora as an interacting group.

Groups in Conflict

The significance of diaspora in present times is their potential to influence home/host country. This occurs often due to diaspora representing (their) groups in conflict: i.e., divided in host country due to conflict situations in home country. Just as in the previous
section, it is imperative to examine the concept of ‘divided’ groups, theories that expound on why they divided or how to reduce the divisions.

Taking Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse definition of conflict to be “the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups” (1999: 19 – 20) does not highlight the significance of diaspora groups in conflict escalation or de-escalation. The diaspora are often presented as extensions of the divided group from their country-of-origin (Gourgouris 2005). McEvoy-Levy has examined the significance of youth as ‘war-supporting diaspora’ (2001) while Gurr, who uses Kurds and Chechens as his example, confirm, “Diasporas … are a substantial and growing source of external support for ethnonationalists” (Gurr 2001: 179).

It is vital to recall that diaspora apparently transplant divisions that result in conflict in their country-of-origin. The first significant contribution of this research involves illustrating the complexity of intergroup interaction among members of divided groups. Diaspora from conflict-ridden home countries themselves often remain divided. Matosouka and Sorenson, for example, inform that “the divisions that shattered Ethiopia were reproduced in diaspora, with the result that a population collectively identified by outsiders as ‘Ethiopian’ was internally divided into opposing factions with contrasting images of the phantasmagorical homeland” (Matsouka and Sorenson 2001: 78). Ong’s examination of the Chinese diaspora also illustrate the aspect that “divisions [class, dialect, region] are only one example of how one cannot assume a unified diaspora community constituted by people who may be construed as belonging to the same ethnic grouping or hailing from the same homeland” (Ong 2004: 396). The Sindhi (Thapan
2002) and the Ghanian (Arthur 2008) diaspora remain divided according to their caste, class, or some other hierarchy while the Somali diaspora appear to hold sectarian divisions (McGown 1999; Taylor 1998) despite retaining a predominantly Muslim identity. The diaspora also divide according to when they became diaspora (Trotman 2003) or as based on their political views (Alexander 2007).

To reiterate, as illustrated by de Silva (2003) there is an assumption, strongly favored by studies on the Sri Lankan diaspora that this diaspora constitute a divided community who hardly interact. However, others like Ember, Ember, and Skoggard provide insights into a more complex Sri Lankan diaspora,

The Sri Lankan diaspora is by no means a homogenous social formation. Instead, it is divided not only by premigratory cleavages along lines of caste, class, gender, village or town of origin, education, and religion, but also by differences arising from the process of migration. (Ember, Ember, and Skoggard 2004)

The current research intends to question not the homogenous aspect of in-group diaspora but rather the apparent non-existence of interaction between members of opposing sides. However, prior to examining the relevant literature, it is vital to understand how divided diaspora emerge in order to examine whether contact is a crucial factor in bringing them together.

Thus, to understand whether the Sri Lanka remained divided required a holistic understanding of the Sri Lankan diaspora. Subsequently, the diaspora – definition based on country-of-origin rather than reasons for leaving, host-home country relations, or even the cultural linkages – require further examination of diaspora as divided groups.
Diaspora Groups and Conflict

The notion that Sri Lankan diaspora are archetypes of conflict-driven divided diaspora remains strong within media and academia. This section focus on understanding what constitutes diaspora in conflict by exploring literature on diaspora in conflict.

Numerous studies have been conducted merely on the importance of diaspora with regard their role as conflict inducing peace-wreckers or as advocates for justice or peacebuilders. Brinkerhoff, in examining “Diasporas and identity: A framework for understanding potential threats and contributions” (2005) illuminate the complexity of diaspora contribution to home country. Collier and Hoeffler examine this aspect in Greed and Grievance in Civil War (2004). So too have Bush (2007), Orjuela (2007), and Sriskandarajah (2004). Cohen informs that

Without pronouncing on the justness or otherwise of their causes, we can note the destabilizing role of the Sri Lankan diaspora in their support of the Tamil Tigers, the persistent efforts of the Kurdish diaspora to establish a Kurdish state and the success of the Croatian diaspora in helping to establish an independent Croatian state … The key finding of a recent collection of studies on diasporas in conflict is that they can be a force for stability (‘peace-makers’) as well as a force that amplifies and even creates conflict (‘peace-wreckers’). (Cohen 2008: 170)

As aptly noted by Lyons, the diaspora remain intricately tied to conflicts in their country-of-origin (2009). The diaspora retain their emotional and kinship ties with members of the country they left behind (Shain 2007, Ember, Ember and Skoggard 2007). Indeed, as noted by Shain
Many violent conflicts and their resolution in the world today pertain not only to security matters but also to the definition of ethnic and national communities. These identity conflicts not only involve issues of sovereign boundaries and territorial security, but also directly affect the lives and well-being of other diaspora communities in far-off lands that share ethnic ties with the people engaged in the conflict. Hence, the resolution of such violent conflicts often require addressing an audience beyond the immediate geographic boundaries of the conflict’s area. (Shain, 2002: 115).

Accordingly, linking of diaspora with homeland conflict issues resonate to such an extent that Rigby lists four methods in which diaspora interact with home country concerns. The Sinhalese and Tamil diaspora interactions with home country inform of examples of such links.

There are four main ways in which members of diaspora communities can support resistance movements with which they identify.

1. Financial remittances and community development aid
2. Providing political and strategic input to the resistance movement
3. Preserving and promoting forms of cultural resistance
4. Advocacy work in host countries
(Rigby 2006: 3)

This complex relationship with home country has been examined with regard to the Sri Lankan diaspora by Fair in “Diaspora involvement in insurgencies: insights from the Khalistan and Tamil Eelam Movements” (2005) and “The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora: Sustaining conflict and pushing for peace” (2007) as well as Wayland in “Ethnonationalist networks and transnational opportunities: the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora,” (2004); Cheran in The Sixth Genre: Memory, History and the Tamil Diaspora Imagination (2002); Rohan Gunaratna, “Bankrupting the Terror Business,” Jane’s Intelligence Review, Vol. 12, No. 8 (1 August 2000); and Fuglerut in Life on the Outside: The Tamil Diaspora and Long-Distance Nationalism (1999).
This study examines, albeit speculatively, of the possibility of diaspora acting as peacebuilders. In the process, it challenges the notion that the Sri Lankan diaspora are ‘peace wreckers’. As noted, there have been numerous studies on the role of diaspora as peace wreckers (Baser and Swain 2009; Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2007; Smith 2007; Berdal 2005; Byman, et al 2001; Collier 2003, 2000). Cohen, quoting Smith and Stares state that

‘Diasporic involvement in conflict still needs to be studied, but what can be said is that diasporas play “significant and varied roles” in the whole range of activities in the conflict cycle. One interesting case is that of the Eritrean diaspora, which played the role of peace-wrecker and peace-maker (Cohen 2008: 170)

Baser and Swain examine the Armenian diaspora (2009) and comment on the categorization of diaspora as good or bad depending on whether their activism involved spoiler or peacebuilder role (Baser and Swain 2009: 45). Their comments on the role of diaspora as revealed by Orjuela (2008), Demmers (2007), Fair (2007), Zunzer (2004), Cheran (2003), Demmers (2002), and McDowell (1996), are true for the Sri Lankan diaspora.

A perception exists of the Sri Lankan diaspora as mostly peace-wreckers.

Diasporas may also resist peace moves by their homeland political elites as they still tend to hold on to different narratives of victimhood and “chosen trauma”. If a homeland government decides to pursue reconciliation with a historical enemy,
diaspora communities may feel their identity as historical victims of the same enemy is under threat. (Baser and Swain 2009: 51).

Such assumptions persist due, perhaps to lacuna in knowledge regarding intergroup interaction. This study hopes to expand on the understanding of diaspora as peace wreckers by examining the intergroup interactions of a number of Sri Lankan diaspora.

**Diaspora as Peace Builders**

A member of the diaspora holds a unique position since they are both of the country they left behind, yet part of another country, and therefore become the third level discussed by Shain (2002). Other than providing financial aid, the diaspora can also become critics of the status quo of the country they left behind, ardent supporters of the ‘cause’, and/or the unofficial international ‘voice’ (du Tuit 1997), broadcasting their opinions, the conflict rhetoric, and information on the atrocities committed by the ‘other side’ to the international community. As analyzed by Cochrane (2007), Bahar and Pejèia (2007), Østergaard-Nielsen (2006), and Zunzer (2004), these diaspora can also become catalysts for building peace and transforming conflict. Indeed, according to Turner,

Diasporas have come to play two main peacebuilding roles in war-torn societies: as ‘external’ promoters of post-conflict peacebuilding through economic, political and social support (the ‘moral economy of the diaspora’); and as ‘internal’ promoters of post-conflict peacebuilding through their recruitment to help address the shortage of personnel and kick-start development and governance programmes (as ‘agents of the liberal peace’). (2008: 11)
There is an emerging school of thought on the potential role of diaspora in peacebuilding. As noted previously, a number of studies have investigated this potential. These include the works of Cochrane, Baser, and Swain (2008) and Cochrane (2007) who analyzed the coercive power of the Irish and Tamil diaspora, especially with regard to their impact on socio-cultural, economic, and political spheres within their country-of-origin. Berchovitch however targets social relations with home country for reconciliation and peacebuilding to succeed (2007). Lindley, on the other hand, provides insights into remittances from the perspective of the diaspora (http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/pdfs/WP0747-Lindley.pdf accessed 12th June 2009).

There is empirical evidence of the potential peacebuilding role of diaspora. An examination of the role played by Irish diaspora in resolving and later transforming the Northern Ireland conflict is the best example of the positive involvement of diaspora in resolving conflict and building peace. Others who have strived to foster peacebuilding, include the Eritrean (Kose 2007) and the Ethiopian (Lyons 2006) diaspora. These examples represent instances of diaspora interactions with their respective members in their country of origin.

Research on Sri Lankan diaspora presents neither ‘external’ nor ‘internal’ promoters of peacebuilding (Turner 2008). While Zunzer (2004) and Cheran (2003) have analyzed Sri Lankan diaspora as peace makers, only Orjuela has analyzed the potential of both Sinhalese and Tamil diaspora to become either “Distant warriors, distant peace workers?
Multiple diaspora roles in Sri Lanka’s violent conflict” (2008). This too examines intra-group interaction; i.e., between Tamil diaspora and the Tamil people within Sri Lanka. The current research, which utilized the snowball sampling technique to identify otherwise hidden or unexamined networks, hoped to inform of intergroup interaction rather than just intra-group. It further strived to explore how diaspora find meaning in their day-to-day interactions with members of the opposing side whilst accepting intra-group prejudicial perceptions of the opposing group. Prior to examining intergroup interactions or the influence of intra-group narratives, the study shifts to present a literature survey of Sri Lankan diaspora. In the process is a presentation of an inclusive definition of ‘diaspora’ representative of all ethno-linguistic and religious peoples who left Ceylon/Sri Lankan since independence.

_Ceylon/Sri Lankan Diaspora_

The Sri Lankan diaspora – and Tamils diaspora especially – remain one of the most active diasporic groups in the world. However, the vaccum in research on all Sri Lankan diaspora remain problematic. The focus has predominantly remained on one specific ethno-linguistic transnational, long-distant nationalistic, de-territorialized group (e.g., Fair 2007; Sriskandarajah 2004; Shukla 2001; Alonso 1994). As emphasized by Shain in a footnote,

Some stateless diapsoras may play a critical role in the struggle for the creation of a new ethnocentric state in the traditional homeland. This has been the case of
diasporic Sikhs who have led the struggle for an independent Khalistan in India, or the diasporic Tamils who are the core supporters of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. (Shain 2002: 141)

This research strived to conduct field research inclusive of all ethno-linguistic diaspora from Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan diaspora consist of people who had left their country-of-origin for various reasons. Some left Sri Lanka during the ‘closed economic’ era from 1948 to 1977/78, at a time when there were food-shortages, food stamps, unemployment, and other economic hardships, for educational and economic reasons. During the tumultuous years since 1971, when sporadic violence by the Sinhalese and Tamil militants was emerging, large numbers of people stayed back in their host-country due to (as several participants noted) the tense situation and uncertainty within the island nation. It was only after the ‘1983 riots’ that countries granted asylum to Sri Lankan asylum seekers. According to McDowell (1996), the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora left the country in three stages. The first stage, during colonial period saw the educated and non-educated Tamils leaving Sri Lanka for the British East Asian colonies such as Singapore for economic reasons. The second wave began post-independence and it was predominantly to the UK and was for educational and employment purposes. The third wave began in the post-1983 era, where initially the educated and later non-educated asylum seekers left Sri Lanka for distant shores (Daniel and Thangaraj 1995). Information on the leaving pattern of the Sinhalese, the Sri Lankan Muslims, and Burghers has remained unexplored by researchers.
Prior to 1983, Sri Lankans – Sinhalese, Tamils, Burghers, and Muslims – left the island for education and employment (Cong, Chang, and Evans 1996). A majority of those who left Sri Lanka after 1983 went as refugees and as political asylum seekers. A large percentage of those granted residency or citizenship within host-countries since 1983 were Tamils. A number of Sinhalese whose lives were threatened by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (the JVP or the People’s Liberation Movement) or the government during the ‘terror’ period (1987 – 1990) or by the LTTE from the mid-1980s onwards, as well as Muslims who faced threats, found asylum. However, the exact number of these diaspora remains speculative. Indeed, “[t]here are an estimated half a million Eelam Tamils, scattered across the five continents and spread over at least thirty countries of the world” (Sivanayagam 2001: 260). Edirippulige provides a more detailed list, but only still on the Tamil diaspora. “It is estimated that the membership of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora exceeds 650,000 that scattered in 60 countries around the world.” (Eidirippulige 2004: 273).

The majority of Sri Lankan Tamils are found in Western Europe, India, Australia, and North America. The largest numbers are found in Canada (approximately 200,000-250,000), India (approximately 150,000), U.K. (approximately 110,000), Germany (approximately 50,000), Switzerland, France, and Australia (each approximately 30,000). (Human Rights Watch 2006, 10 August 2007 www.hrw.org)

Other, more detailed statistical information, utilizing census data from fifteen countries with the largest numbers of Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora indicate that, as of 2003, India had the largest Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora population of 98,629. The Canadian census data
for 2001 indicates a Sri Lankan Tamil population of 92,010 while Germany in 2000 had 60,000. The 2001 census data of the United Kingdom indicated a Sri Lankan Tamil population of 60,000. Other than these countries, Sri Lankan Tamil population could be found, in descending order/decreasing population order, in Switzerland, USA, Australia, Italy, France, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, New Zealand, and Finland (05 December 2008 http://tamiltigers.net/features/migration/te_migration.html). However, there is some discrepancy in the above numbers. In an article published in January 2008, Bowcott stated that “As many as 300,000 Tamils from Sri Lanka live in the UK. There are an estimated 350,000 in Canada and around 100,000 each in the United States and South Africa” (http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jan/18/owenbowcott accessed 10th December 2008).

The Tamil diaspora numbers, just as with the Sinhala and Burgher diaspora, consist of estimates rather than irrefutably acceptable population statistics. Accordingly,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>24,436</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observer Research Foundation *Daily Mirror*, 2010: A9

These, though presented as facts, remain speculations. In reality, there are specific verifiable statistics only on Tamil diaspora who arrive as refugees since mid-1980s.
The Tamil diaspora is largely made up of refugees and former-refugees. According to UNHCR, between 1980 – 1999, 256,307 people of Sri Lankan origin applied for asylum in Europe, one of the top ten groups of asylum seekers during this period. (UNHCR, 2001) …Tamil diaspora consists of an estimated 700,000 people settled in Canada, Europe, India and Australia (Cheran, 2001, Fuglerut 1999). It is likely therefore that one in every four Sri Lankan Tamils now lives in the diaspora. (Cheran 2003: 9)

This however is not the full picture as there are diaspora legally and illegally living in host countries and statistical data on illegal aliens remain scarce. Moreover, some of the Tamil diaspora who had arrived in their host-country primarily for economic or educational purposes, especially prior to ’1983’ remain unaccounted.

Data on the Sinhalese diaspora as a separate entity outside of Sri Lanka does not exist. Until recently, they remained unexamined as a diaspora group. As noted previously, the exception remains (Orjuela 2008; 2006). One possible reason for the availability of the Tamil diaspora data is that Sri Lankan Tamils are often categorized with Indian Tamil as ‘Tamil’ diaspora (Sivasupramanian; 10 January 2009 http://murugan.org/research/sivasupramanian.htm) and statistical data is often gathered on Indian diaspora. In the UK census Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladesh are the three categories highlighted under ‘Asian’. Sri Lankans fall into the category of ‘Other Asians’ (http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=764&Pos=4&ColRank=1&Rank=176 accessed 14th November 2008). A second reason is that the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora has become synonymous with the Sri Lankan conflict since the 1980s and therefore form a separate diaspora category.
It is possible to assume that the Sinhalese diaspora, like their Tamil counterparts, arrived in UK soon after Sri Lanka gained independence. What is more relevant from the above data is that the international community has divided the Sri Lankan diaspora into two groups and focused on the Tamil diaspora, whether as refugees (Daniel and Thangaraj 1995; Demusz 2000), as nationalists (Fuglerud 1997, 1999), as political activists (Sriskandarajah 2004), and as distinct identity groups (Wayland 2003). The very exclusion of other diaspora in these studies portrays the Sri Lankan diaspora as a divided group. If intergroup interactions existed, these articles have not tapped into that information.

Sri Lankan Diaspora as Divided Groups

Clarity regarding the ‘groups’ remained a pre-requisite in conducting the intergroup analysis. The diaspora have been categorized according to ethnic divisions of Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher or in line with religious divisions of Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian (Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Methodist, Pentecostal, Jehovah Witness, Seventh Day Adventists, etc.) with their own group narratives. However, there are only two predominant groups from Sri Lanka – Sinhala and Tamil – often viewed as locked in a protracted conflict in their country-of-origin.

Yet it is difficult to demarcate the two groups clearly due to intergroup marriages, which have resulted in, for example, a Tamil-Burgher Christian marrying a Sinhalese Christian
or a Sinhalese-Buddhist married to a Tamil-Hindu. It is also hard to define a group because in Sri Lanka, there are people who belong to the same ethnic group but who may not belong to the same religion such as the Sinhalese Buddhists, Sinhalese Christians and Sinhalese Muslims or Tamil Hindu, Tamil Christians and Tamil Buddhists. They could also belong to the same religion but not the same ethnic group such as a Sinhalese, Tamil, and Burgher Christians or Sinhalese and Tamil Buddhists. Alternatively, they speak the same language but do not belong to the same ethnicity or the religion such as the Tamils and the Tamil speaking Muslims. Moreover, as the participants indicated, the ‘professionals’ could also be looked as a separate group. Yet, current literature on the Sri Lankan diaspora does not reflect such nuances or heterogeneity.

As noted above, it is also possible to categorize the Sri Lankan diaspora according to the reason they left the island nation. One group consists of diaspora who left Sri Lanka for economic betterment through education and employment. The second group left due to negative reasons – due to persecution, for safety. However, here again, there remain nuances. The Tamils as well as Sinhalese and Muslims found asylum from the mid-1980s. Some left because of threats from the government, while others from JVP, LTTE, IPKF (Indian Peacekeeping Force) persecution. Moreover, some who arrived in host-country for economic or educational reasons remained in host-country due to fear of persecution. In this research, the participants themselves assisted in presenting their self-identification or first order positioning.
The Diaspora of the Research

While possible to fuse Vertovec (1999) as well as Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1996) definitions, as discussed above, this research utilized Shuval’s (2000) definition of the diaspora. Using this as a description of the diaspora, the research also kept in mind that the Sri Lankan diaspora appear dispersed in many regions of the world. Indeed, Sri Lankan diaspora – Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and Burghers – reside in the Americas, Western and Eastern Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and East, South East, Central and South Asia (http://www.berghof-foundation.lk/diaspora.htm). There is retention of a memory of ‘home’ and an aspiration to return home, by some of them. The memory of home was evident in this research, as it looked into intergroup interactions that occur amongst Sri Lankan diaspora residing in the UK.

The information gathered from participants reflected on events (i.e., turning points or episodes) and perspectives of their ‘home’ and of their interactions with members of the ‘other’ group. Nostalgia, which “is memory with the pain removed” (Spitzer 1999: 87) – plays a major role in linking the diaspora to their (mythical) home (Anderson 1983). The food partaken, the wearing of the sari for special occasions, the games played, the songs sung, and the jokes retold when interacting with each other all indicate the importance of nostalgia for diaspora.

This nostalgia of the past creates a commitment to maintaining the homeland, especially among the Sinhalese; and a restoration or creation of a homeland among (a number of) the Tamils. The term ‘mythical’ home here indicates that the Sri Lankan culture
treasured and preserved by the diaspora might not exist in its treasured form within Sri Lanka. To the Sinhala and Tamil diaspora however, there is no ‘mythical’ homeland or the ‘creation’ of a homeland since each side positions their homeland as a ‘fact’, an absolute truth. The group narratives (i.e., history) emphasized by each side presents divergent perspectives of what constitutes the ‘homeland’. This idea was noticeable during the interview process when the participants indicated a strong collective consciousness and solidarity concerning the homeland, whether Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, or Burgher. This picture of the Sri Lankan diaspora may provide a clear example of the divided group introduced through the tenants of Social Identity theory. However, to reiterate, irrespective of this conflicting perceptions that members of each side appear to adhere to, Sri Lankan diaspora do interact with one another.

This literature survey is not exhaustive. These are but a few examples from a sea of research on diaspora. What this essentially points out is that while there have been a number of studies on various aspects of the life of the diaspora, the focus of this research topic and the research problem specified remains inadequately explored. While researchers have conducted investigations on the Sri Lankan diaspora, they have either not examined the intergroup interaction aspect nor were their research privy to firsthand accounts by diaspora on what they perceive as the conflict, the turning points, or their intergroup interactions.

Fuglerud (1999) investigated the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora and their long-distance nationalism while Cheran (2003) focused on trans-nationalism and plural identities of Sri
Lankan diaspora and others discussed previously. Furthermore, Borri’s thesis on “Tamil Refugees between exclusion and integration” (2007), which examined Tamil diaspora in the host country of Norway; Jain (1998) and McDowell (1996) on Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora residing in Switzerland; and Abrahams (2004) and Brunger (1994) on Tamils in Canada examine diaspora links with their host country. Haniffa (2000) and Sangarasivam (2006) have studied diaspora ties to home country while Gunaratna (2001) examined the importance of the diaspora for LTTE activities and Abraham (2004) investigated Tamil political activism in host country. What is intriguing is the absence of in-depth studies on intergroup interaction between Sinhalese and Tamil diaspora.

Two researchers have conducted research on a similar topic on the Sri Lankan diaspora. Cheran’s doctoral thesis on “Changing Formations: Nationalism and National Liberation in Sri Lanka and the Diaspora” (2001) and subsequent studies focus on the Sri Lankan diaspora (2002, 2004). In 2007, Cheran published an article on “Citizens of Many Worlds: Theorizing Tamil DiasporiCity” (Cheran 2007: 150 – 168). Cheran’s studies differ from this research on numerous points. Firstly, unlike Cheran’s examination of Tamil diaspora that includes all Tamils, whether they are from South India or Sri Lanka, this study strives to limit the focus to ‘Sri Lankan’ diaspora. In the current research diaspora includes Sri Lankan Tamils, whether Tamils of Indian origin who have lived in Sri Lanka since British colonial times or Tamils of the north and the north-east who have lived in the island prior to colonial rule of the maritime region of the island. The study also included the Sinhalese and, when the snowball sampling allowed, Burgher and Sri
Lankan Muslim diaspora. Furthermore, unlike Cheran, this research does not examine the interplay between trans-nationalism and diaspora. It does, however, focus on history and memory, an area examined by Cheran in *The Sixth Genre: Memory, History and the Tamil Diaspora Imagination* (2002) but once more, Cheran’s focus remain only on the Tamil diaspora.

A far more intricate link exists between Orjuela’s research on the Sri Lankan diaspora and the present research. Although Orjuela began her examination of the Sri Lankan conflict from the perspective of the Sri Lankan civil society (2003, 2004, 2005), in her later studies, Orjuela strived to include both Tamil and Sinhalese diaspora in her research. Moreover, the focus of “Distant Warriors, Distant Peace Workers? Multiple Diaspora Roles in Sri Lanka's Violent Conflict” (2006) and “Diasporas and homeland conflicts: What has identity got to do with it?: Lessons from the Sri Lanka/Tamil Eelam case” (2008) examine the significance of diaspora as peacemakers. Another similarity lies in the notion discussed in the latter article and in the abstract of an on-going research project on “Long-distance reconciliation? Nationalism and peace building in the diaspora” (http://www.globalstudies.gu.se/digitalAssets/904/904705_reconciliation.pdf).

The point of departure comes through a twofold focus. Orjuela examines diaspora discourse and targets the political organizations in the host country instead of their intergroup relationships in host country and transnational linkages. Her conclusion, that political stances cannot be traced to life experiences in home country, also runs counter to the notion of group narratives discussed in this current research. Thus, Orjuela’s research
does not examine ‘intergroup’ interactions from the perspective of individuals. Whereas the above survey of research on diaspora and Sri Lankan diaspora highlighted the significance placed on diaspora activism as divided groups. Therefore, it is opportune to theorize on the divided diaspora while providing examples.

_Theorizing the Divided Diaspora_

Horowitz in *Ethnic groups in conflict* (2000) begins the chapter on “Group Comparison and the Sources of Conflict” by examining the divisions among the Sinhalese and Tamils, as depicted in Leonard Woolf novel *The Village in the Jungle*. Horowitz notes how a tale of the Hindu god Kandeswami,

> demonstrates that groups are felt to have different mixes of attributes. Group attributes are evoked in behavior and subject to evaluation. The groups are in implicit competition for a favorable evaluation of their moral worth. The competition derives from the juxtaposition of ethnic groups in the same environment.” (Horowitz, 2000: 142)

The Sri Lankan diaspora appear to accept such intrinsic divisions based on mythology. When diaspora projection of a cohesive in-group and an out-group interlink with prejudice, tension, and even hatred, such diaspora emerge as conflict-driven diaspora. This becomes more of an issue when the diaspora activism leads to continuation of the divisions that were the root causes of the conflict in the host country. As noted by Collier, the activism of the divided diaspora groups hinders the potential for peace.

> There is little mystery about this effect. Diasporas sometimes harbor rather romanticized attachments to their group of origin and may nurse grievances as a
form of asserting continued belonging. They are much richer than the people in their country or origin and so can afford to finance vengeance. Above all, they do not have to suffer any of the awful consequences of renewed conflict because they are not living in the country. (Collier 2001: 155)

Taking into consideration the activism of three ‘new’ diaspora – the Afghan, Somali, and Sri Lankans – Van Hear illustrates how diaspora can have a positive and a negative effect on the continuation of the conflict (Van Hear 2005). The activities of the ‘Sri Lankan’ diaspora themselves, especially since the deterioration of the MOU, have become more overt, thereby highlighting this perception of a divided diaspora.

Keeping in mind the difficulties of generalizing diaspora (Orjuela 2008), it is pertinent to note that the divided Sri Lankan diaspora activism became highly explicit in the 21st century with protests such as against the proscription of the LTTE by the EU in 2006 where Tamil diaspora from three continents organized and conducted protest marches (http://peaceinsrilanka.com/peace2005/Insidepage/PressRelease/WebRel/September/WebRel250907_1.asp accessed 27th September 2007). As depicted in the statement, “London has been the venue for regular protest marches demonstrations and seminars to protest against military action of the Sri Lankan government, to mobilise Tamil public support and lobby international opinion in favour of the Eelam cause” (http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~sydney/ltte.htm accessed 20th April 2009), such activism continued to show the organizational powers and determination of the Tamil (of Sri Lankan origin) diaspora. Since 2008, and especially during March to April of 2009, when the war within Sri Lanka escalated, the Tamil diaspora protests escalated as well. These included protest rallies in UK, France, Netherlands, Norway, Canada, USA, and

While this research focused on the 2002 – 2008 MOU period, it is important to emphasize at the outset that even after the official ending of the ceasefire and even with the military victory by GoSL in 2009, diaspora activism remains strong. Soon after the end of the MOU in 2009, some Tamil diaspora in UK, Australia, and Canada have gone on a campaign of fasting (www.tamilnet.com; http://www.straightgoods.ca) and three Tamils in Tamil Nadu in India have committed suicide over this issue (http://www.rediff.com, http://news.webindia123.com). As expressed by Wijayapala in the Daily News of 12th April 2009, the anti-Sri Lankan government sentiment of some diaspora has escalated to the extent that,

Massive demonstrations were held in London, Toronto and Oslo where LTTE terror networks are active. It was on April 12, the LTTE terror network operating in Oslo attacked the Sri Lankan Mission there and caused extensive damages to the Embassy building and its property. (Wijayapala 2009: 1)

The use of the term “LTTE terror networks” further indicates how the author views some of the diaspora. Indeed, even on 19th May 2009, after the death of LTTE leader Prabhakaram, Mackey illustrated the diaspora determination by stating that “the idea that Tamils in Sri Lanka face annihilation if they do not secure an independent homeland drives many of the most passionate voices in the Tamil diaspora.” (http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/18/outside-sri-lanka-tamil-diaspora-not-ready-

Although the Tamil diaspora active intervention in the internal issues of Sri Lanka began in the 1970s (Swamy 2005), the Sinhalese, Muslim, and Burgher diaspora remained relatively inactive until the end of the 1990s. The Tamil diaspora activism, their role as advocates, and their determination to use their voice to influence the international community therefore began prior to even the Vaddukoddai Resolution of 1976. Indeed, the gatekeeper role of Tamil diaspora was illustrated on April 18th 2009 with the Paris Declaration or the Déclaration solennelle des associations tamoules établies en France (i.e., The Solemn Declaration of the Associations of Tamils Established in France).

We declare in the name of the Tamil people which voted by plebiscite the resolution of Vaddukkodai, that we are infallibly interdependent of the fight of independence carried out by the Tamil Forces on the ground in order to release it from military occupation,

We declare that the will of independence of the Tamil people, democratically expressed in 1977, is still current and legitimate,

We call finally the international community, with being the guarantor of this legitimate will, and working in order to establish a political solution without transgressing the spirit of the resolution of Vaddukkodai. (April 19th 2009 http://www.eelamnation.net/headlines_details.php?secid=69&newsid=5730)

This declaration reiterated the 1976 Vaddukkodai declaration of independence and, at the same time, informed the world that the Tamil diaspora represented the concerns and aspirations of all the Tamil people of Sri Lanka. They believe themselves to hold the key to ending the conflict in Sri Lanka.
Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan diaspora, and especially the Sinhalese diaspora also remained active with regard to protests rallies and declarations during and post-MOU period. The Sinhalese diaspora participated in the 1999 protest to ban LTTE. The Sri Lankan diaspora, consisting of Sinhalese, ‘anti-LTTE’ Sri Lankan Tamils, Muslims, and Burghers, organized a rally of over 100,000 people in London in 2009. This Sri Lankan (i.e., predominantly the Sinhalese) diaspora appeared to be less organized and more dependent on the Sri Lankan Embassies/High Commissions to defend Sri Lanka and Sri Lankans from allegations. Since 2008, however, the Sri Lankan diaspora have taken a more active approach, going on demonstrations in countries like UK, Australia, and USA. As noted by one witness in New York,

The crowd was emotionally charged and I could recognise the scope for violence if, as in Australia, a pro-government or anti-LTTE group decided to contest ground realities.

Not two blocks away however, I was handed flyers by a group calling itself the Sri Lankan Peace and Democracy Forum … pointing to atrocities committed by the LTTE. (Hattotuwa, 2009)


one another of so-called ‘nefarious activities’ of the out-group. It is possible to surmise that these diaspora activities especially in the 21st century, illustrates a division among the Sri Lankan diaspora. Indeed, during the pre-MOU, post-MOU, and post-war periods, all examples present the diaspora as two distinct groups. According to the perception of the diaspora, this assertion remained unchallenged.

Yet, the Sri Lankan diaspora, though divided, do interact and the forthcoming chapters reiterate this aspect. For the researcher, the five-year period living among the Sri Lankan diaspora in the USA, and the subsequent field research in the UK, illuminated the complex duality of intergroup interaction. Moreover, organizations, such as the International Network of Sri Lankan Diaspora (INSD) and http://srilankan-diaspora.org, focus on developing a dialogue for peace. Sites such as http://www.srilankandiaspora.ch in Switzerland are examples of diaspora working cohesively. The field research, conducted in 2005, targeted examining intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora. The first significant contribution of this research lies in examining these ‘intergroup interaction’ with special emphasis on questioning the applicability of the core tenants of Contact hypothesis.

**Intergroup Relationships**

A prerequisite in this quest to comprehend the nature of positive intergroup contact is the understanding of the significance of intergroup divisions. Indeed, there are numerous theories on, and studies of, intra and intergroup interaction. The study into intergroup
interaction remain indebted to Sumner who in 1906 introduced the theory of ‘ethnocentricism’ (1906), a sociological examination of in-group cohesion at the expense of out-group hostility and to Lewin’s ‘field theory’ (Lewin 1948, Smith 2006), which illustrated that a combination of individual and environmental factors affect behavior. This research primarily focused on the social psychological level (Jessim, Ashmore, and Wilder 2001; Spears et al. 1997; Abrams and Hogg 1999; Smith and Mackie 2000; Levin and van Laar 2006), which “customarily provide individual-level explanations for conflict” (Jussim, Ashmore, and Wilder 2001:7) by examining how individual interactions result in the reduction of prejudice towards the group.

Within the broad social psychological level numerous writers have provided insight into intergroup interactions and prejudice (Stangor 2000). Theories, for example, examine what occurs when members of groups interact (Agars and Kottke 2004). These include Ambivalence theory (Lynch, Modgil, and Modgil 1992), Anxiety theory (Devine, Plant and Buswell 2000; Wilder 1993; Stephan and Stephan 1985), and Social Dominance theory (Sidanius and Pratto 1993) which examine the negative aspect of intergroup interaction. This study strived to examine intergroup interaction among members from warring sides and therefore, it was vital to examine categorization of groups and the significance of prejudice. While individual attitudes can create prejudice without the existence of social divisions; this research focuses on linking prejudice to social structures (Best 2005; Carling 1991). This does not entail bigotry but perhaps, as
explained by Merton, some of the Sri Lankan diaspora might be described as ‘timid bigots’ (Best 2005: 755).

This study had the option of two theories to shed light on the complex interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora residing in the UK, which the field research illuminated. As informed by Brewer,

> For the past two decades, social psychological research on intergroup relations has been guided by the synthesis of two major theoretical perspectives. The first of these had its origin in the study of race relations in the U.S. and is best represented by the so-called “contact hypothesis,” … The second perspective had its origin in European research and the development of social identity theory. (Brewer 2000:165)

While Social Identity theory examines prejudice and its resulting stereotypes, from the other end of the spectrum, Contact hypothesis proposes a number of conditions that reduce prejudice. There are some similarities between Social Identity theory and Contact hypothesis. Both Contact hypothesis and Social Identity theory examine intergroup interaction but from different perspectives. Both Tajfel (1969) and Allport (1954), the originators of their respective theories, recognize social categorization as the basic cognitive process underlying all intergroup phenomena ... Categorization (a) partitions the multidimensional variability among human beings into discrete subsets, accompanied by (b) accentuation of perceived intracategory similarities and intercategory differences (Doise, Deschamps, & Meyer, 1978; Tajfel, 1969; Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963). The basic processes of categorization and category accentuation are presumed to be the same whether we are talking about individuals’ partitioning of the world of physical objects and events or of the social world. Individuals learn to classify objects as functionally interchangeable and develop concepts that distinguish members of one category from those of another as a fundamental tool for negotiating the physical and social environment. (Brewer 2001: 19 – 20)
However, prior to exploring these two theories, it is pertinent to discuss the concept of prejudice and complex and multiple identities as this current research argues that intergroup interaction thrives despite existence of prejudice towards the out-group.

_Grotjahn_ commented that “[i]t is easier—and probably cheaper—to smash an atom than a prejudice.” (1954: 537). Prejudice is “the holding of derogatory social attitudes or cognitive beliefs, the expression of negative affect, or the display of hostile or discriminatory behaviour towards members of a group on account of their membership of that group” (which is an ,This in turn involves social categorization .(8 :1995 Brown) Allport) essential part of human interaction 1954) and is not in itself negative. It is only

when a social categorization into groups is endowed with a strong value differential, encounters with negative or disconfirming instances would not just require a change in the interpretation. Much more importantly, the acceptance of such disconfirming instances threatens the value system on which the category differentiation is based. (Strangor 2000: 51)

Prejudice is a bias perception of the ‘other’ and includes stereotypical view of the other.

As quoted by Cullingford, according to Longman, prejudice is,

a) preconceived judgment or opinion; especially a biased and unfavourable one informed without sufficient reason or knowledge.
b) an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, group or race. (Longman, 1984)

(Cullingford centres.exeter.ac.uk/historyresource/journal5/Cullingford.pdf)
According to Allport (1954), prejudice does not occur spontaneously. When members of one group’s comments, jokes, and actions generate hurt and tensions to members of the other group, this ‘antilocution’ can often lead to intergroup ‘avoidance’. This in turn can result in overt ‘discrimination’ resulting in ‘physical harm’ and at times ‘extermination’ of members of the other group. To put in another manner,

vilification leads to derogatory stereotypes of out-group members which, then, leads to prejudice. Negative characteristics are attributed to out-group members to enhance the feelings of superiority of these members of the in-group (Hewston et al., 2002, pp. 579-580) (Faulker www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_41175_en.pdf).

The perception of a divided Sri Lankan diaspora includes the preconceived notion that each group has a biased, stereotype, prejudicial perception of the other.

The current research on prejudice divides into stereotyping, discrimination, and other forms of negative prejudice and involves the analysis of individual and social divisions. A number of scholars have examined intergroup bias, prejudice, group comparison, stereotypes, discrimination, its reduction, and intergroup interaction. The most significant is Allport (1954), who “supplied the principle of organization for the study of prejudice” (Grotjahn 1954: 537). Hewstone, Rubin, and Willis (2002) examined in-group cohesion and the potential for that to lead to intergroup conflict from the social psychological lens while Gaertner and Dovidio examined intergroup bias from a psychological approach (2000). While Mullen, Brown and Smith (1992) and Brewer (1979) focused on the importance of mild bias in enhancing in-group self-esteem, Struch and Schwartz (1989) examined intergroup bias and its negative repercussions. This research focuses on understanding the mild bias as well as all-out prejudice towards
friends from the out-group as well as the out-group itself in order to highlight to problems within the tenants of Contact hypothesis.

Indeed, numerous studies have been conducted on understanding prejudice (Banaji 2001; Gaertner and Dovidio 2000; Bobo 1999; Brewer 1999; Brown 1995; Pettigrew and Meertens 1995; Snyder and Miene 1994; Aronson 1978; and van der Post (1961 accessed 20th January 2009 http://www.ratical.org/many_worlds/LvdP/PsycheOrigsRP.html). Cullingford examined Prejudice: from individual identity to nationalism in young people (2000) and linked prejudice with nationalism through examining Nazi Germany (centres.exeter.ac.uk/historyresource/journal5/Cullingford.pdf). Moreover, Devine’s “Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components” (1989) is considered a seminal work on overt and covert prejudice. Furthermore, Bobo and Tuan (1996) have researched on the significance of prejudice in politics while Quillian examined Prejudice as a response to perceived group threat (1995), and Merton (1948) explored “The self-fulfilling prophecy” in The Antioch Review. Yet none investigated prejudice expressed by one diaspora towards another.

While Hinkle and Brown (1990) and Mummendey and Simon (1989) researched on group comparisons, others have conducted studies on stereotypes (Cameron and Rutland 2006; Lenton, Blair and Hastie 2001; Devine and Elliott 2000; and Hinton 2000; Judd and Park 1993), including Allen who examined “The Effects of Stereotypes on Memory” (http://clearinghouse.missouriwestern.edu/manuscripts/300.php), Shih, Pittinsky and Ambady (1999) who investigated the susceptibility of people to stereotype, and Steele in
1997 wrote on “A threat in the air: how stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance”. Pittinsky, Shih, and Ambady on the other hand conducted empirical research to understand the adaptive identities (1999). Shih, et al. illustrated the significance of ‘positive stereotypes’ (2002). While these researchers’ provided invaluable insights into stereotyping, a lacuna exists on the significance of stereotyping and prejudice in intergroup interaction among divided diaspora groups.

Quinn and Olson (2001) provided insights on discrimination – another aspect of prejudice – from a psychological perspective. Ruggiero and Taylor, on the other hand, examined the minimizing of the discrimination from the standpoint of those discriminated against (1997) and Dion and Kawakami focused on overt prejudice felt by specific racial groups such as the Chinese (1996). In Ruggiero and Taylor’s (1995) investigation into discrimination from the perspective of disadvantaged groups in the workplace and Taylor, Wright and Porter’s (1994) as well as Ruggiero’s 1999 article on “The Personal/Group Discrimination Discrepancy” utilize one specific theory on discrimination – Allport’s Contact Hypothesis. This theory examines the prevalence of discrimination (Ruggiero 1999; Brewer and Gaertner 2001). Furthermore, Dovidio and Gaertner (1999) have conducted research on the reduction of prejudice while Pettigrew and Tropp (2000), Devine and Vasquez (1998), Duckitt and Mphuthing (1998), and Jackman and Crane (1986) have explored intergroup interactions. Some use specific examples, such as Kinder and Sanders (1996), Bobo (1988), Jackman and Crane (1986), and Ray and Lovejoy (1986) on racial relations.
Prejudice, according to this current research, results in enhancing *us-them* dichotomy and creates closed storylines. This research contributes to the above literature by focusing on the perceptions of the diaspora. This entailed examining the plotlines offered by the participants to examine whether this prejudice remains subtle or explicit with regard to those whom they interacted with and towards the out-group (e.g., Dovidio, Kawakami, and Gaertner 2002). This required the exploration of theories that focus on prejudice. It is possible to note that both Social Identity theory and Contact hypothesis target prejudice – one on positive and negative outcomes of prejudice and the other on ways of understanding and then reducing prejudice respectively. Therefore, to examine prejudice fully required an understanding of these two lenses. Understanding prejudice and its positive and negative by-products is a pre-requisite to comprehending why intergroup interaction does not result in reduction of prejudice.

The more positive outcomes of prejudice discussed in Social Identity theory, result in in-group cohesion, but this group cohesion can lend itself to hostility towards the out-group. Sri Lankan diaspora retain prejudices towards members of the out-group. This is evident from comments made by Cheran (2003), who noted that, “[m]embers [of the Tamil diaspora] believe that they should collectively be committed to the maintenance, preservation and/or restoration of their homelands.” (http://www.unitarny.org/mm/file/Migration/Diasporas%202007/DiasporaCirc.pdf). This entailed enhancing group cohesion.
The diaspora members’ prejudices might appear as a closed narrative, static and uncomplicated, obvious and blatant, or more subtle. What is important to note is that the very existence of divided diaspora entails the prevalence of prejudice, at times stereotyping, or at least biased. The Sri Lankan diaspora activism in the 21st century illustrates the negative perception of the out-group. Contact hypothesis presents a solution to intergroup prejudice. Yet, as this research contends, a conundrum exists if intergroup interactions exist despite intergroup prejudice.

Prejudice and Social Identity Theory

Social Identity theory informs of both positive and negative effects of intragroup cohesion, as it occurs at the expense of intergroup cohesion. As noted by Anthony D. Smith, nationalism fuse symbolism, myths of origin and histories in order to enhance the ethnic past with the nationalist present (1986, 1999). In Sri Lanka, due to the separatist conflict, there is an impression of two nationalist movements, which, as noted by Asoka Bandarage in *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism, ethnicity, political economy* (2008), apparently began during colonial times and intragroup cohesion strengthened at the expense of intergroup cohesion. It is possible to infer that such intergroup cohesion amongst the Tamil diaspora might have a detrimental effect on intragroup interaction among Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher diaspora.
Social Identity theory, a notion introduced by Tajfel (1959), formulated into a theory by Tajfel (1963, 1969, 1970, 1981, 1982) and Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986) and later expanded by Jaspars (1986), Hogg and Abrams (1988), and Abrams and Hogg (1990), is a theory “intended to be a social psychological theory of intergroup relations, group processes, and the social self.” (Hogg, Terry and White 1995: 259). According to Jessim, Ashmore and Wilder (2000), though this theory was initially individualistic in outlook, later scholars emphasized the importance of the link between the individual and his/her group. It is, in brief, a theory that focuses on “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel 1978: 63).

The theory has four key tenants: Social categorization, Social Identity, Social Comparison, and Psychological group distinctiveness. According to this theory, stereotypes are the byproducts of the unchallenged acceptance of prejudice of the out-group. Studies into escalation of stereotypes (Spears, Ellemers, and Haslam 1997; Macrae, Stangor, and Hewstone 1996; McCartney 2001; Campbell 1967) and into prejudice (Brown and Zagefka 2005; Jackman 2005; Gaertner and Dovidio 2005; Esses et al. 2005; and Turner and Giles 2001) utilize Social Identity theory as the primary tool. Research using Social Identity theory includes those on conflicts. Other than research conducted by Tajfel (1970, 1981, 1982), Campbell (1967), Healey (2003) and Saylor and Aries (1999) have used this theory to analyze intergroup behavior and conflicts. As
noted by Brewer, “Social identity provides a link between the psychology of the individual – the representation of self – and the structure and process of social groups within which the self is embedded.” (Brewer 2001: 115). Since the 1970s, this theory has had a profound influence on presenting insights into intergroup dynamics.

Its influence on the field of Conflict Resolution has been profound. Numerous researchers have utilized this theory to explore intragroup relations (Brewer and Brown 1998; Stephan and Stephan 1996; Stephan and Brigham 1985), intergroup cohesion (Hogg 1993), prejudice (Nelson 2009; Brown 1995), increase of stereotypes (Marx 1999; Spears et al 1997), racial attitudes (Wittig 1998), and the duality of the self (Brewer 1991). The extension of the theory provided the means to explore perceptions of group discrimination (Ruggiero 1999), negative stereotypes (Brewer and Miller 1984), and case-based analysis (Bar-Tal 2005).

Yet, the current research into intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora residing in the UK found cause to question the applicability of this theory. Information gathered through participant-observations and later through field research, participant interviews provided insights that question the basic notion of the theory: i.e., individuals have hostile feelings towards members of the other side, especially in times of tension and conflict. The underlying question of the research, investigated through empirical data, was that intergroup interactions existed in the midst of intergroup hostility. Therefore, unlike Social Identity theory, which examines how group cohesion is strengthened through
stereotypes – a by-product of prejudice – this research intended to examine whether prejudice remained even whilst interacting with (selected) members of the out group.

Moreover, from a purely methodological perspective, Social Identity theory might not provide the necessary analytical tools to examine the ‘dynamic’ intergroup interactions. According to Tan and Moghaddam (1999), Social Identity theory provides a ‘static’ perspective of identity and intergroup interaction, which does not take into account the dynamic nature of intergroup interaction. Additionally as Moghaddam and Stringer’s research into “‘Trivial’ and ‘Important’ Criteria for Social Categorization in the Minimal Group Paradigm” (1986) indicated, it was difficult to use the methodology and tenants of Social Identity theory to examine intergroup interactions in a non-experimental (i.e., real environment) setting. Furthermore, investigation into ‘meaning making’ requires glimpses into the storyline, detrimental power relations, and dynamism in positioning. Social Identity theory cannot explain the nature of the complex interactions that occur whilst keeping a positive perspective of one’s own group.

This is not to say that Social Identity theory is redundant. This theory informs that, “individuals want to belong to a group that is distinctive from other groups. Moreover, they want the distinctive or unique characteristics of their group to be positively valued.” (Taylor, Bougie, and Caouette, 2003:211). To reiterate, if there is intergroup interaction among Sri Lankans, then Social Identity theory cannot be utilized to examine the nature of that interaction. It has played an important part in creating an underlying
assumption that divided diaspora have prejudicial perceptions of the ‘other’ and do not interact. This research questions this assumption.

Despite all the research highlighted above and the obvious significant contribution to understanding the outcome of prejudice, the current research into intergroup interaction among divided diaspora did not use Social Identity theory. The problem to unravel existed elsewhere. The study did not examine why the groups divided nor why they remain divided. Rather, while documented data informed of the existence of the divided Sri Lankan diaspora, the participant-observer data illustrated the factuality of intergroup interaction. The puzzle was to examine the interacting networks and the significance of positive contact in reducing prejudice. The theory that could assist in exploring the intergroup interactions among Sri Lankan diaspora is Contact hypothesis.

**Contact Hypothesis**

Contact hypothesis focuses on the how to prevent and transform prejudices through positive of intergroup interaction rather than why groups divided. Research conducted on diverse aspects of intergroup interaction has focused on inter-racial interactions (Adams et al. 1997; Chesler and Crowfoot 1990); reduction of prejudice (Chesler and Zuniga 1991); role of emotions in prejudice (Mackie and Smith 2004); and conflict resolution (Slavin and Cooper 1999; Guarasci and Grant 1997) within the school scenario. Others have examined this intergroup issue through racial (Hillinan and Teixeira 1987) and other
internal conflicts perspectives (Warfield 1997; 1992; 1990). Although the above research targeted ‘race’ relations, prejudice as discussed above include other aspects including bias. This research does not target race relations.

A number of researchers have explored reduction of bias and not just with regard to race relations. Studies have investigated whether instances of ‘inter-ethnic/race interactions had occurred (Kao and Joyner 2004; Shibazaki and Brennan 1998) and its impact on bias (Ensari and Miller 2002; Gaertner et al 1999); or whether this lack of intergroup interaction has led to racism (Dovidio, Kawakami, and Gaertner 2002; Dovidio and Gaertne 1998; Davidio and Validzic 1998). Studies have examined group divisions based on religion (Hunsberger and Jackson 2002; Jackson and Hunsberger 1999; Giffin, Gorsuch, and Davis 1987) and on sexual orientation (Schulte and Battle 2004; Herek and Capitanio 1996). All these utilize empirical data to explain intergroup interactions.

Although initial ideas of the significance of contact in reducing prejudice was presented in *The reduction of intergroup tensions* by Williams, Jr. (1947), it was not until 1954 that this concept was devised into a hypothesis. Numerous studies (Dixon, Durrheim, and Tredoux 2005; Taylor and Moghaddam 1994; DeCarvalho 1993; Katz 1991; Stephan 1987; Stephan and Brigham 1985; Brewer and Miller 1984; Jackson 1983) have analyzed the original interpretation of Contact hypothesis by Gordon W. Allport (1954). Allport’s seminal work on prejudice and the significance of contact in reducing it has continued to generate discussion amongst academicians, despite the fact that the hypothesis originated
in the 1950s. At the Allport Award Show, 2001, Huff’s speech on “Why should we care about Gordon Allport” included the comment,

Research on prejudice by current social psychologists rarely cites Allport except as a historical footnote. Current researchers are much more likely to cite foundational work by cognitive psychologists like Eleanor Rosch (1978). But social psychologists who study prejudice work in the same mine that Allport originally prospected. And they are asking remarkably similar questions. It was Allport, after all, who pointed out that prejudice was structured by categorization and that categorization was influenced by social context. This began the much discussed and researched area of the contact hypothesis.

(http://www.stolaf.edu/people/huff/misc/ 12 April 2007)

Since its origin, other than Allport, two names have become synonymous with Contact hypothesis: Pettigrew (1971, 1997, 1998, 1999) and Tropp (Pettigrew and Tropp 2000 and 2005). They have continued to expand the hypothesis, which broadly examined ‘prejudice’. As noted by Grim et al, there is “only one major theory of prejudice … [where] social contact between members of the groups” (Grim et al. n.d.: 1) reduce prejudice. It is Pettigrew and Tropp’s definition of ‘intergroup interaction’, or “contact as actual face-to-face interaction between members of clearly defined groups” (http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/meta-elements/html/troppsummary.htm 22 April 2008), that is used in this document.

Contact, under the specified conditions discussed below, removes prejudice among ‘friends’. Friendship with members of the opposing side in turn can reduce prejudice towards that opposing side, as the ‘friend’ is also a part of that group. To Allport, prejudice is irrational, based not on fact (1954). According to Ackerman and Jahoda, “Prejudice is a pattern of hostility in interpersonal relations which is directed against an
entire group, or against its individual members; it fulfills a specific irrational function for its bearer” (1950: 4). Thus, according to the Contact hypothesis, it is group categorization based on ‘prejudice’ and ‘stereotyping’ that enhances intergroup divisions.

Contact theory or hypothesis provides a clear set of conditions. As noted by Pettigrew, Allport initially introduced four conditions that required fulfillment for contact to succeed. These were “positive effects of intergroup contact occur only in situations marked by four key conditions: equal group status within the situation; common goals; intergroup cooperation; and the support of authorities, law, or custom.” (Pettigrew 1998: 66). Ponterotto, Utsey, and Pedersen comment that

[an example a context where all the conditions of the contact hypothesis are met might include an integrated athletic team in which the athletes have equal power; share a common goal (winning games); and share personal stories through mutual trust and respect, and which team member contact and cooperation is encouraged by the coaches and administration. (Ponterotto, Utsey, and Pedersen 2006: 156)

The participant – observations of the researcher in the USA provided insights to the existence of all four conditions. The researcher was privy to intergroup interactions where the members of conflicting groups – Sinhalese and Tamil, and even Burgher – interacted as equals with friendship. Their sustained, through not daily, interactions included common goals such as safeguarding and strengthening the friendship or in ensuring that a particular get-together, such as a Christmas/New Year party, became successful. They often cooperated in organizing social events such as sports/games, musical events, picnics, gatherings, and even a wedding; and had the support of
traditional customs such as getting together to celebrate Sinhala and Tamil New Year that prevailed despite living outside of the island. Most of these intergroup interactions observed by the researcher occurred among alumni from Sri Lankan Universities, members of extended families and their friends, work colleagues, and neighbors. The researcher was curious to explore the existence of intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora residing in the UK.

Current research has assisted in expanding the understanding of this hypothesis (Jackson 1993) by focusing on the need for ‘friendship’, which appears to be a clear aid to reducing intergroup prejudice (Pettigrew 1998). Empirical research with a meta-analysis conducted by Pettigrew and Tropp (2000) indicated the applicability of this hypothesis. These conditions that lead to increased intergroup interactions, which in turn would perhaps aid in the reduction of prejudice and in questioning stereotypes dealt with individuals who already had prejudice. The theory has been the basis of numerous researches, mainly into reduction of prejudice. Ponterotto, Utsey, and Pedersen (2006) provide both an overview of literature and infer that Contact hypothesis not only reduces prejudice but also prevents it. Dovidio, Glick, and Rudman (2005), Young-Bruehl (1996), Ford (1986), and Katz, Hass, and Wackenhut (1986) all present the positive aspects of the hypothesis. Its applicability tested in the often-cited Pettigrew and Tropp’s “A Meta-Analytic Test and Reformulation of Intergroup Contact Theory” in which they concluded that, “Greater intergroup contact is typically associated with less intergroup
prejudice” (http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/meta-elements/html/troppsummary.htm June 2008).

Gaertner and Dovidio on the other hand focus on the expanded version of this hypothesis – Common Intergroup Identity Model or the CIIM model – to inform that intergroup interactions reduces prejudice (2000). Dovidio, Gaertner, and Kawakami, in examining the “Past, Present, and Future” of Contact hypothesis inform that “The Contact Hypothesis has long been considered one of psychology’s most effective strategies for improving intergroup relations.” (2003: 5). Emerson, Kimbro and Yancey, however, examined intergroup bias to extend the Contact hypothesis (2002) while Rothbart and John not only conducted research to examine changing beliefs of the whole out-group after contact, they actually presented a multi-step process for reducing stereotypes (1985).

In Amir’s analysis, intergroup interaction leading to reduction of prejudice remains dependent on favorable-unfavorable conditions (1998). Bragal (1990) echoes Amir’s conclusion that ‘contact is inadequate’ while David (1971) has examined this hypothesis as it pertained to the migrants in their host country. Pettigrew (1998) infers that the application of this theory suffers from presenting only the outcome of contact rather than the process. Pettigrew contends this has resulted in researchers who predominantly select moderates rather than those with real prejudices towards to members of the out-group and moreover, of providing lists for contact to reduce prejudice rather than analyzing the hypothesis’ applicability. However,
Pettigrew (1986) has noted that the theoretical frailty of the contact hypothesis is common to other social psychological theories. It is logically loose, narrowly cognitive, statically focused on isolated rather than cumulative impacts, and mute about generality. (Messick and Mackie 1989: 67)

It is therefore evident that since its initial introduction, diverse individuals have expanded or challenged the hypothesis.

Applicability of this hypothesis was confirmed in research regarding the otherwise hidden communities within society. Such empirical studies involving the elderly (Schwartz and Simmons 2001), the homeless (Lee, Farrell and Link 2004) and the mentally challenged (Link and Cullen 1986), or otherwise-able (Makas 1993) indicate that contact reduces prejudice. Moreover, Chu (1985) examined the importance of informal contact in sporting events that assist reduction of prejudice and bias. Pettigrew and Tropp continue to champion the hypothesis in articles such as "Does Intergroup Contact Reduce Prejudice? Recent Meta-analytical Findings" in Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination (2000).

This hypothesis has become a tool for analyzing attitudinal and behavioral changes. Ruback and Singh, for example, focused on intergroup bias among Muslim and Hindu students in India (2007). Research conducted by Brown, Vivian, and Hewstone (1999) pointed towards the importance of maintaining the group boundaries at the point of intergroup interaction to enhance the positive outcomes of contact. Bayley, Levy, and Killen (2008), Wright, et al. (1997), Powers and Ellison (1995), and Sigelman and Welch (1993) on the other hand focused on contact leading to changes in attitudes towards the other group. While Park, Wolsko, and Judd expanded Allport’s hypothesis to specifically
analyze the sub-typing strategy of university students (2001), Biernal and Crandell examined the effects of long-term interaction towards reduction of prejudice (1994). Desforges, et al. (1991) specifically examined behavioral change with regard to prejudice and mental patients. Numerous studies have examined the negative aspects of contact, whereby, because of anxiety and hostility, contact leads to increase rather than any decrease, in prejudice (Paolini, et al. 2004; Greenland and Brown 1999; Stephan and Stephan 1985).

Contact hypothesis has become a tool for analyzing ethnic conflict (Hewstone et al. 2003; Amir 1998; Forbes 1997; Desforges et al. 1991; Bargal 1990; Hewstone and Brown 1986; Ben-Ari and Amir 1988; Striebe et al. 1988; and Brewer 1979). Only a few studies have used biographies or autobiographies of individuals to analyze. McKinney (2005) conducted empirical research on white student regarding his or her own perception of ‘being white.’

It is interesting to note that none of the above research has examined the conundrum expressed in this study: if intergroup interactions exist, why has this not resulted in positive reduction of prejudice and increase in trust towards the out-group. It could be that, as Pettigrew (1998), Amir (1998) Bragal (1990), and David (1971) perceive, the tenants remain either inadequate or the Contact hypothesis as a whole require re-analysis. This current research intends to problematize the applicability of the theory by utilizing participants’ personal narrative data to analyze whether contact with members of the out-group has reduced prejudice towards to the group as a whole.
Though no research conducted on the Sri Lankan diaspora has utilized Contact hypothesis, it is evident that current studies on Sri Lankan diaspora indicate that they are prejudiced towards one another (Orjuela 2008; Cheran 2003; de Silva 2003; Cohen 1997). Yet, as the underlying logic of this research inform, the intergroup interactions between members of opposing sides occur even while retaining the group prejudices. A caveat: intergroup interaction can be both negative outcomes leading to violence as well as positive leading to reduction of prejudice. This research targets the positive contact. While the conditions discussed within Contact hypothesis may provide an explanation of the intergroup interaction, this research strives to examine why ‘contact’ did not led to reduction of prejudice. As the forthcoming chapters intend to question, are the Sri Lankan diaspora prisoners and guardians of their home country narratives that justify suspicion and hatred towards the ‘other’? This study problematizes the hypothesis.

*Complex and Dual/Multiple Identities*

The participant-observation data from the researcher’s own lived experiences informed of the existence of positive friendly and even familial intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora residing in the USA. While Contact hypothesis might explain the friendships among these diaspora and those interviewed in the UK, it did not clarify why such friendly and sustained contact has not reduced prejudice about the opposing group. An assumption that dictated the research was the significance of group narratives on personal narratives. To comprehend the nature of interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora
participants required an understanding of ‘narratives’ and a perception of ‘dual’ or ‘multiple’ identities.

**Narratives**

The underlying notion in this research is that personal narratives of companionship and friendship coexist with group narratives of prejudice, suspicion, and perhaps hatred, towards the ‘other’. Such complex relationships, according to Contact hypothesis appear unlikely to coexist since interaction or contact might result in the reduction of prejudice. However, the field research into interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora residing in the UK highlight the complexity of intergroup interaction. To examine these complex and nuanced intergroup interactions required an understanding of ‘narratives’ as both as a lens and as an analytical tool (Mishler 1986; Atkinson et al 2007; Cortazzi 2007; Johnston 2005; Riessman 2002; Mattingly and Garro 2000; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber 1998).

At the outset, a caution: the underlying assumption regarding historical narrative takes its cue from Alasdair MacIntyre, whose “argument is that, because life, experience, and the past as lived are coherent and intelligible before we begin telling stories about them, the skeptical worries about imposing false coherence are ill-founded.” (Norman 1991:122). As Crites argued, “the formal quality of experiences through time is inherently narrative” (Crites, 1997: 26) and is an amalgamation of collective memory, public narrative and, in
large part, a history. Narratives include histories, myths, and archetypal stories of ‘origin’, heroes and heroic deeds, and happy and traumatic ‘turning points’ or critical events (Cebik 1986). History is therefore a “form of the narrative …[which] presuppose standards of achievement and failure, of order and disorder. It is what Hegal called philosophical history and what Collingwood took all successful historical writing to be” (MacIntyre, 1984: 3). It has, in brief, a story and a plot at its core.

Narratives tell the story that the people believe to be true. The national history – believed to be factual, real, and often undisputed by the people whose history it depicts – often tells the history of a specific people, an ethnic group, or a religious group. Even in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious nations, the historical background of all the people remain untold or ignored, is often of one group. This history of a nation is predominantly of one group, which is hegemonic and often considered the ‘national history’, the ‘official history’, or the ‘true history’ of nation or of the people. Such a hegemonic history conveys to the people information about their origin, of great deeds, of wars fought to protect the people and the land, and of heroes, traitors, and enemies (Taylor 2007; Brock, Strange, Green 2002; Zelizer 2001; Gergen, 1997; Lyotard 1979).

In a broad sense, the term narrative as used in this research describes the history of a people or a nation and is understood interchangeably with history. This history neither remains the personal history of an individual – since it is far larger in scope than that of a single person – nor is it limited to the lifetime of a single person. Such narratives, mostly expressed chronologically, sometimes as myth and as chronicles, epics, or annals and

105
preserved through written texts or oral traditions, are usually presented as stories of kings and great generals, of religious leaders, of gods, of wars, and defeats and victories. Nonetheless, the history or narrative is the history of a people, of a social group.

This does not however infer the notion of a macro-narrative, which deals with the temporal aspects of narrative (Gergen 1997). Nor does it focus only with public narrative that include “stories we hear everyday in the new media and the stories we consume in books, films, plays, soap operas, and so forth … important … major historical transition” (Brock, Strange, Green, 2002: 1). It does connote a meaning similar to collective narrative (Jacobs, 2002: 205 – 228; Brock, Strange, Green, 2002) or a history, which is a “form of the narrative” (MacIntyre, 1984: 3). Into this notion of history comes the importance of experiences, which is inherently a part of collective memory and therefore, an integral part of understanding group narrative. This history or group narrative can change over time, at times due to archeological findings that help re-interpret or emphasize the ‘truth’ in the traditional group narrative. At times, changes occur due to tensions that re-emphasize ancient hatreds to justify current tensions; or to highlight certain periods or kings over others as these narratives become popular.

As history is perceived as an archetypal (White 1973) story or a narrative (MacIntyre 1984), which the people believe to be true, the ‘truths’, which the narratives profess to speak of includes the rights of a specific group of people and the duties and obligations they are have as members of that group. Irrespective of the intellectual level or time spent as a diaspora, influence of home country narrative/s on diaspora is evident in all
participants. Indeed, according to McIntyre, it is possible to have multiple histories within a particular setting (McIntyre, 1997: 244). However, when a threat to the internal logic of the group narrative emerges, it endangers the narrative as a whole and this in turn can put into question an individual’s identification within the group. As said before, history and identity are intrinsically connected and a questioning of one can lead to a questioning of the other (Novitz, 1997). Therefore, a group or a community must protect its own story or narrative from external and internal conflict that can lead to fragmentation or destruction of that particular story. Indeed, according to Novitz, when personal identity is “threatened by a particular narrative identity (…) attempts are made to undermine and replace the projected identity.” (Novitz, 1997: 152 – 153). According to MacIntyre, “the rival premises are such that we possess no rational way of weighing the claims of one as against another.” (MacIntyre, 1984: 8).

The narratives of origin, of events, of heroes and villains exist in societies and are the histories of that people, that society, that group, or that profession. While the ‘story’ regarding the history may remain static, the plot or the telling of story varies. Indeed, each side to an intensely violent, protracted conflict such as the Sri Lankan conflict ‘corrupts’ or questions the existing official narrative of a people/society to suit their needs – i.e., to present their cause as just, to strengthen their rights by placing blame on the ‘other’/enemy – and thereby build counter narratives. In these narratives, the enemy image remains highlighted. Conversely, narratives that indicate a positive picture of the so-called enemy do not emerge at all, remain intentionally excluded, or presented as
falsehoods or misinterpretations of the ‘true’ history. This results in challenging old myths of origin or newer versions of the old myths emerge. One group’s narrative of origin, for example, competes with another group’s narrative of origin.

This notion of competing narratives is in itself not a new concept. According to McIntyre, it is possible to have multiple histories within a particular setting (McIntyre, 1997). When one narrative is jeopardize, this in turn can threaten individual identity. As Novitz explains,

> The fact that life-narratives [or personal narratives] … guide and regulate our behavior is of the greatest social significance … The notion of narrative-identity also helps explain why people are often immune to reason and rational argument … For whatever else our narrative identity does, it helps determine what we consider to be important … To accuse [group narrative] … is to attack their individual identity.” (Novitz 1997: 151 – 152. bold in original).

A group or a community must protect its own story or narrative from external and internal conflict that can lead to fragmentation or destruction of that particular story. Indeed, according to Novitz, when personal identity is “threatened by a particular narrative identity … attempts are made to undermine and replace the projected identity.” (Novitz, 1997: 152 – 153). According to MacIntyre,

> the rival premises are such that we possess no rational way of weighing the claims of one as against another. For each premise employs some quite different normative or evaluative concept from others, so that the claims made upon us are quite different (MacIntyre, 1984: 8).

This research focuses not only on the competing group narratives ingrained in people’s perception of the other. It also looks at the personal narratives of a number of relatively
ordinary people who apparently feel the effects of the competing narratives even though they live outside of Sri Lanka. While it is important to understand that “[w]e are still a long way from identifying all the forms of everyday discourse that connect the mind to the social world.” (Bennett, 1997: 75), it is perhaps prudent to assume that there is a far more complex a relationship than that between a sender and a receiver. It cannot be that the personal narrative is forever a receiver of the larger group or national narrative rhetoric nor mere vessels. As this research infer, group narratives strive to enhance intragroup cohesion at the expense of positive intergroup interaction.

Narratives also include an individual’s ‘personal narratives’ (interchangeably called ‘life stories’ or ‘autobiographies’) which is not independent of the group narrative. A superficial glance at the term ‘personal narrative’ may appear self-explanatory. Personal narratives could be called ‘life-narratives’, which are “[s]tories about ourselves, in which we figure as central subject … [which] invite the sort of empathy we most desire.” (Novitz, 1997: 148). Personal narratives could be termed ‘memory with experiences’. While experience is important, “[w]ithout memory, … experience would have no coherence at all” (Crites, 1997: 20). Memory usually helps create a sequence of events, with an antecedent and an end to the story. Memory could be viewed as episodes in a film and thus intertwine with the meaning given to ‘episode’ in Positioning theory. The focus of the ‘personal narratives’ in this research does not deal exclusively with those of importance or the elite. This research, though focusing on the diasporic personal narratives at a specific period in time, nonetheless targeted (relatively) ordinary
professionals who do not consider themselves to be elite. Personal narratives appear as “multiple-selfing in narrative” (Goffman 1975: 517), where diverse threads intertwine.

It is possible to imagine personal narratives linked with group narratives as it is important to remember that a personal “[n]arrative construction can never be entirely a private matter … [Its] an implicit social act.” (Gergen and Gergen 1997: 176). Therefore, the impact of narratives and group narratives on personal narrative is significant. Indeed, “as narratives are realized in the public arena, they become subject to social molding” (Gergen and Gergen 1997: 176). Narratives help us develop

a unified individual identity … [not that] we all enjoy such an identity … narrative is integrally involved in our search for a coherent self – image … The demand for such coherence seems … to be historically and culturally specific and is by no means a feature of all societies.” (Novitz 1997: 148).

Identity therefore appear linked to both group narratives and personal narratives. Personal narratives, enriched through interaction with the larger society, deal primarily with the personal experiences and historical and societal influences that surrounds an individual. Indeed, this research assumes that “[t]he incidents woven into a narrative are not only the actions of the single individual but interactions with others.” (Gergen and Gergen, 1997: 177). It is difficult for a personal narrative to exist in isolation, in a vacuum. It is possible to imagine that not all personal narratives accept the ‘us-them’ dichotomy especially in the midst of positive intergroup interaction.

Peoples’ interpretation and positioning of events in history or group narratives is in flux due to the very nature of narratives. Personal narratives involve ‘life-narratives’, which
are “[s]tories about ourselves, in which we figure as central subject (…) [which] invite the sort of empathy we most desire.” (Novitz, 1997: 148) or termed memory with experiences. However, while experience remains integral, “[w]ithout memory, (…) experience would have no coherence at all” (Crites, 1997: 20), memory usually helps create a sequence of events, with an antecedent and an end to the story, i.e., the plot.

As noted above, personal narratives link with group or national narratives. As discussed by Gergen and Gergen, a personal “[n]arrative construction can never be entirely a private matter. (…) [Its] an implicit social act.” (Gergen and Gergen, 1997: 176). Indeed, “as narratives are realized in the public arena, they become subject to social molding” (Gergen and Gergen, 1997: 176) and helps develop “a unified individual identity … [as] narrative is integrally involved in our search for a coherent self – image.” (Novitz, 1997: 148). This research assumes that “[t]he incidents woven into a narrative are not only the actions of the single individual but interactions with others.” (Gergen and Gergen, 1997: 177). Therefore, it is difficult for a personal narrative to emerge in a vacuum, in isolation.

As Fisher (1997) and Carr (1997) illustrate, the set of events, the audience, and the authority or legitimacy of the storyteller remain the three features of any narrative. A narrative has within it the component of the story itself, the viewpoint of the storytellers, and of the audience. Nevertheless, according to Carr, the relationship between the story, storyteller, and the audience is far more complex (Carr 1997). The position of the teller of the story gives *legitimacy* to the story. However, it is important to understand that
“[w]e are still a long way from identifying all the forms of everyday discourse that connect the mind to the social world.” (Bennett, 1997: 75).

It is pertinent to note that other researchers have utilized narrative analysis to examine diasporic or immigrant group. Contributions to the field by the doctoral thesis of Miskovic (2003) who analyzed the narratives of Balkans in the United States of America to explore how they develop their identities as immigrants or the Master thesis by Chindalo (1999) on immigrant stories have highlighted the use of narratives to explore immigrant perspectives. It was possible to combine narrative analytical techniques and turning points to explore both the participant’s personal narrative and the influences from the group narratives. As noted by Novitz, “It is left to narrative to [show the unified self] … narrative alone gives us the freedom to select and arrange events … [in] their proper significance.” (Novitz, 1997: 147). Insights into choice of plot, the significance of specific characters over the other, and the different themes enhanced provide insights into meaning making among the participants.

It was thus possible to use this tool to explore whether a participant’s own personal narrative explained why s/he chose a particular ‘turning point’ as important. As MacIntyre notes “[s]tories are lived before they are told” (MacIntyre, 1997: 1997) and “without memory … experience would have no coherence at all” (Crites, 1997: 33). It is evident then that a certain event is storied by the participant because of its relevance to him/her personally, and as noted by Crites, “the past remembered is fixed, a chronicle that I can radically reinterpret but cannot reverse or displace” (Crites, 1997: 38 – 39).
Then, if this is true, what is the plot and the antecedent, since “what is true is that in taking an event as a beginning … we bestow a significance upon it which may be debatable … [as there] are many events which are both endings and beginnings” (MacIntyre, 1997: 250). It is pertinent to remember that ‘plot’ remain integral to the research. However, the research required the examination of individual plots regarding specific events that informed of group influences to personal narratives. In other words, there exists a vast number of narratives and the researcher required the participants themselves to limit these.

The fulfillment of Contact hypothesis tenants presents contact as one-way path to reducing prejudice. This does not explain the lived experiences of the researcher who witnessed positive intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan Burgher, Muslim, Tamil, and Sinhalese but also understood the continued existence of intergroup divisions. This research pondered over the concurrent existence of group narratives of prejudice and personal narratives of acceptance. Research conducted on dual or multiple self-identification appear to complement the research and therefore requires fuller investigation.

Dual Identification

This research targeted intergroup interaction among members from divided groups to explore whether ‘contact’ alone reduced biases and prejudices towards the out-group.
This entailed not merely assuming that intergroup interactions exist among some Sri Lankan diaspora, but also involved perceiving such interactions involving dual or multiple identities rather than the rejection of one self-categorization over the other. However, one aspect not taken for granted was the significance of complex and dual identifications resulting from intergroup interactions. Whether such interactions lead to positive results or as Brewer and Hewstone inform, “If one category distinction is more socially meaningful and functionally important that others, intergroup discrimination based on that categorization may be unaffected by the existence of crosscutting memberships in other, less important groups” (2004: 311).

Dual identification, according to Brewer “is presumed to mitigate the negative effects of ingroup-outgroup comparisons” (Brewer 2000:167). As interestingly informed by van Langenhove and Harré, “One can be both the Keeper of the Queen’s Pictures and a KGB agent.” (van Langenhove and Harré 1999: 61). It is vital to remember identities as “multifaceted and complex” (Pittinsky, Shin, and Ambady 1999: 515). Personal identity interlinks with society and, at a given context and based on experiences and current membership in groups, an individual’s self-categorization varies. As Balmer and Greyser inform “there is no agreed upon list of identities or roles that an individual might assume in the world.” (2003: 92).

The seminal work of George Herbert Mead (1934) illustrated how an individual’s identity link with way a community perceives the individual. Brewer and Gardner present a more
complex three-level model, which focuses on personal, relational, and collective identity. What this research takes into consideration is their description of multiple identities.

Individuals are members of multiple social groups which imply different social identities and ingroup loyalties. Yet social identities have been treated as if they were mutually exclusive, with only one social categorization (in-group–outgroup differentiation) salient at any one time … [and] explore the implications of holding multiple group identities at different levels of inclusiveness, simultaneously. (Brewer and Hewstone :309)

Fiske (2000), Deschamps and Doise (1978), as well as Pettigrew and Tropp (2000) examined the significance of interaction in reducing prejudice. While some, such as Guibernau and Berdün (2007), Shen (2005), and Hermann et al. (2004) have examined duality with regard to national and regional identities, others have investigated identity linked to organizational identities (Sandberg 2003). Crawford et al (2002) examined the dual identity through a psychological lens while the Barbara Isanski in the Association for Psychological Science provides data suggesting that even with positive contact, the result might remain negative (http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/02/090202175047.htm accessed May 25th 2009).

Although the primary analysis of the data does not use Positioning theory, its employment occurred at the initial stages of the analysis to provide an insight into whether the Sri Lankan diaspora remained divided and whether their self-identification remained fluid. The examination the positions taken by each participant with regard to first-order categorization informed whether the diaspora retain divisions from their country-of-origin. In brief, positioning provide insights into the existence of divisions
among the Sri Lankan diaspora. It moreover provides a means of understanding how some participants, through elaborations, present diverse self-categorizations or dual identification. Indeed, Positioning theory helps explain how,

[o]ne and the same person is now this and now that. One can be both the Keeper of the Queen’s Pictures and a KGB agent. How is that psychologically possible? Our analysis will show that since both personal and social identities are attributes of discourse there is no ontological paradox in the evident existence of contradictions and multiplicities in the discourse. (van Langenhove and Harré 1999: 61).

As Harré informs, Positioning theory illustrates the complexity and fluidity of identity and informs how “Human beings are fully persons only as members of social groups. Each person is a social being, equipped with a dual identity, and recognized as such by others who are also persons.” (Harré 1993: 12). The duality of identity, as presented in answering the first question in the Questionnaire (see Appendix I) at times occur when a participant had to contend with third-order positioning, which is “open to dispute in the sense that one person can refuse to accept the other’s interpretation and attempt to impose his or her own” (Apter 2003: 23).

In brief, “[t]he aim of positioning theory is to provide a careful and sensitive method of analysis and to follow it wherever it might lead” (Apter 2003: 24). It not only allows the researcher to examine first, second, and third-order positioning but, the analysis also infer the rights, duties, and obligations that go hand-in-hand with that self-categorization (Harré and Slocum, 2003). Van Langenhove and Harré comment that “[t]he act of positioning thus refers to the assignment of fluid ‘parts’ or ‘roles’ to speakers in the
discursive construction of personal stories that make a person’s actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts.” (van Langenhove and Harré 1999: 17).

Brewer, on the other hand, examines the significance of dual identification in midst of tension (2000). She presents three reasons for the existence of unstable dual identities: firstly, the “existence of a common superordinate categorization creates conditions for individual intergroup comparison.” (Brewer 2000: 168). The second illustrate that identities based on social sub-groups remain stronger as one group loyalty vie with another that is less inclusive. The ‘superordinate’ or larger sub-groups have better demarcations through use of history, politics, and culture while sub-group categorization based on ‘nondominant’ categorization, although often lead to dual identification. Thirdly, “the problems with dual identification are exacerbated when there are asymmetries of size or status or power among the subgroups within the superordinate context.” (Brewer 2000: 168). Devine et al. (2000) and Gaertner (1993) adds to this by informing that shifting or blurring of group boundaries often help reduce prejudice and bias.

The seminal work of Hollway (1984) and the subsequent development of the theory by Davies and Harré (1990; 1991), Harré and van Langenhove (1991; 1999), Weatherell (1998), and Baxter (2000) provided an analytical lens that focuses on exploring how individual actors position themselves either within a conversation or within the constraints of a master (or meta) narrative. Through interpreting positioning in this
manner, it is possible to indicate the close link between the theory and the focus of the research.

This research is *about* the intergroup interactions. It targets personal narratives and influences of competing group narratives. Different authors have used this theory to examine different aspects of interaction. Harré and Moghaddam (2003) edited a volume on the importance of positioning groups and individuals in different contexts. Baxter (2003) and Walton, Coyle, and Lyons (2003) have looked into its usage as a tool for understanding gender while Parrott (2003) utilized this theory on positioning of emotions. Harré and Slocum (2003) have presented one of best applications of the theory into conflict analysis. Taking a specific case study, these two authors analyzed the conflict narrative that emerged. Since this research is about the ‘conflict’ group narrative and how individuals – often victims or witnesses of the conflict or influenced indirectly by the conflict – interprets it, the study took inspiration from Harré and Slocum (2003).

Other studies that have utilized positioning theory in conflict resolution/management arena include Winslade’s “Mediation with a focus on discursive positioning” in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution Quarterly* (2006).

To reiterate, there is a dearth of research using Positioning theory to analyze diasporic perspectives of intergroup conflicts. As noted previously, narrative analysis of migrants and immigrants perspectives remained sporadic. Moreover, a research that combines the theory and subject of diaspora, as in this current study, is non-existent.
Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

As noted at the outset of this research, the research hoped to contribute to the understanding of diaspora activism, to the questioning of the tenants of the Contact hypothesis, and linked to that, to the examination of Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, which assumes positive contact to reduce prejudice. Therefore, the third significant contribution of this research lies in the field of Conflict Resolution in general and Peacebuilding in particular. This is a speculative aspect of the research. Although the literature survey appears below, the research does not analyze this aspect in detail until the final chapter.

There are both personal and situational/structural sources of conflict and by “combining the two perspectives often yields a richer understanding of complex conflicts than relying on either one alone.” (Rubenstein 2003: 56). Just as the sources of the Sri Lankan conflict/s retain this mixture of personal and structural, to resolve it requires paying attention to both personal interactions and structural transformations. Indeed, as d’Estrée emphasizes, ‘points of entry’ required for ‘altering the dynamics of conflict’ include reducing preconceived prejudices and long-held stereotypes and “[o]ne approach for bringing people together to reduce stereotypes and build common ground comes from a body of work known as ‘the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1955) or sometimes just ‘contact theory’.” (d’Estrée 2003: 83).

This research presents this intergroup interaction as an enigma that challenges the logic behind peacebuilding as described by Lederach (1997). Peacebuilding stems from the
notion that positive interaction among members of hostile groups leads to reduction in hostilities and an increase in understanding. Writers who have contributed to emphasizing the importance of intergroup interaction in peacebuilding include Lederach (2005, 2003, 1997, and 1995), Burgess and Burgess (2003), Littlejohn and Domenici (2001), Dukes, Piscolish and Stephens (2000), Ury (2000), Schrock-Shenk (2000), Schrock-Shenk and Ressler (1999), Kriesberg (1998), Pearce and Littlejohn (1997), Rubin, Pruitt and Kim (1994), Boutros-Ghali (1992), Avruch and Black (1990), and Wehr (1979). For them, peacebuilding involves transformation of the violent, hostile society. It is an example of transforming the conflict-inducing, conflict-escalating structure using personal interactions. As noted by Lederach, such an approach requires the assistance of strategically placed participants willing to commit to a long-term investment of their time and effort (Lederach 1997). Indeed, peacebuilding stresses the importance of ‘contact’ in the form of relationships among members of opposing sides, perhaps based on “paradoxical curiosity” (Lederach 2005: 37). It was possible to link this idea with the tenants of Contact Hypothesis.

EQUAL STATUS Allport stressed equal group status within the situation … COMMON GOALS Prejudice reduction through contact requires an active, goal-oriented effort … INTERGROUP COOPERATION Attainment of common goals must be an interdependent effort without intergroup competition (Bettencourt et al 1992). Sherif (1966) demonstrated this principle vividly in his Robbers Cave field study … SUPPORT OF AUTHORITIES, LAW, OR CUSTOM The final condition concerns the contact’s auspices. With explicit social sanction, intergroup contact is more readily accepted and has more positive effects. Authority support establishes norms of acceptance. (Pettigrew 1998: 66 – 67)

Peacebuilding, as introduced by Lederach, utilizes all four conditions. By focusing on the ‘middle level’ of his triangle, Lederach emphasizes the equal status of builders of
peace. It is their position, within the middle level – and as diaspora in this context – that provides critical value rather than their numbers. The goal of the medium for change is to develop an understanding of the ‘other’ and thereby to reduce prejudices and stereotypical beliefs. To achieve this requires long-term intergroup cooperation, supported at times by custom rather than laws or authorities. Beginning from the individual level, the meso-interpersonal level and the macro-societal level can transform both the personal and the structural sources of conflict. This research intends to highlight that even long-term intergroup interaction might not promote the necessary results required if the very nature of that interaction is wrought with contradictions. The contradiction lies in how an individual can sustain a friendship with members of the out-group whilst strengthening the ‘us-them’ dichotomy. The significance of the study lay not merely in the topic or the theories examined, but it also stemmed from the tools used to analyze the data. It is vital to emphasize that this research explores why intergroup interactions has not resulted in reduction of prejudice. It does not conclude, except to speculate, the circumstances that would lead to reduction of prejudice. In this speculation endeavor, narratives provide a lens into how diaspora made sense of their dual identities.

The Literature Survey in Brief

This chapter compiled a literature survey on three broad areas of significance in this research: Diaspora, Contact hypothesis, and Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding. Though the latter is a speculative argument, this, along with the other two aspects,
highlights the contributions of this research to diverse fields. In the process of conducting the literature survey, this chapter also provided insights into the complexity of defining diaspora, the importance of narratives in understanding prejudice and dual identification. Moreover, by presenting the literature survey, this chapter also emphasized the uniqueness of this research. Research conducted thus far does not present a network analysis of Sri Lankan diaspora intergroup interaction nor a narrative plot and positioning analysis of interpersonal prejudices. While this chapter embedded the research in the literature, the forthcoming chapter links this method with the methodology and in the process, further highlight the path taken in the analysis of the gathered data. Moreover, the research design illustrates the significance of the analysis as that also made this research relevant and crucial for understanding diaspora activism.
CHAPTER THREE

Research Design

The fact that life-narratives ... guide and regulate our behavior is of the greatest social significance ... The notion of narrative-identity also helps explain why people are often immune to reason and rational argument ... For whatever else our narrative identity does, it helps determine what we consider to be important ... To accuse [group narrative] ... is to attack their individual identity.” (Novitz 1997: 151 – 152. bold in original. Italics not in original)

This chapter provides a glimpse into the journey taken by the researcher: from initial realization of the significance of intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora to seeking to understand the curious conundrum with regard to positive contact and its limitations in reducing prejudice. The research design, therefore, aimed at examining intergroup interaction among (a number of) divided Sri Lankan diaspora living in the UK in the hope of finding why positive contact has not reduced prejudice towards the out-group. As the Sri Lankan diaspora who interact constitute an almost hidden group, the research design presented below is detailed and specific. Thus, the research design, which highlight the decisions taken and choices made from the inception to conclusion of the research, is a blueprint that dictated the trajectory of subsequent chapters.
Introduction

Despite international focus consistently and continuously seeking out only the Tamil diaspora (see http://www.tamileelamnews.com/news/publish/tns_12519.shtml accessed June 3rd 2010; Vassubramaniam, 2010 http://www.groundreport.com/Politics/SRI-LANKA-SL-GENOCIDE-INTERNATIONAL-TARGETS-THE-DI_2/2922486 accessed June 3rd 2010); regardless of academics’ investigation of Sri Lankan diaspora as a divided group (see Sriskandarajah, 2005; Velamati 2008) and not considering Baumann’s assertion that Tamil diaspora “constitute a diasporic network or [a] web with joint-venture points and various gravitational centres” (2000: 331); this study examind the Sri Lankan diaspora as a unit to explore intergroup interaction among them.

Thus, the epistemology of this research is to examine the validity of an underlying belief among some in the field of Conflict Resolution: positive contact between members of the out/enemy-group reduces prejudice towards the out-group. This research asserts that the Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim/Moors, and Burgher diaspora informally interact with one another. They have familial ties, multi-generational friendships, and work together. Yet, media and politicians apparently remain either ignorant or uninterested in such interaction. In this sense, the diaspora who interact constitute a ‘hidden’ group. This notion of ‘hidden’ group does not denote hidden from the world but rather, due to the informality, subtlety, and, because of the unofficial nature of the interaction, remain unnoticed and unanalyzed. Moreover, those who interact apparently do not advertise this interaction. It is important to state at the outset that the research findings inform that the
diaspora who interact themselves do not intentionally keep this interaction hidden. The diaspora cases analyzed in this research appear hidden because they remain uninvestigated. Therefore, this aspect governed the choice of the methodology: snowball sampling. Moreover, the use of interview data as the core method for gathering the data assisted in the analysis of the data using Narrative Analytical tools of Positioning, Plot, and Social Networks.

The Research Design

An elaboration of the Research Design, presented in Figure 1 titled “Five-stage Ladder of Analytical Abstraction” below, highlight the steps taken in this research. The design, adapted from ‘The Ladder of Analytical Abstraction by Carney (1990) in Miles and Huberman (1994: 92), was transformed, albeit to suit this research, and is a hybrid of research designs discussed by Miles and Huberman (2994), Patton (2002), and Marshall and Rossman (2006). This visual ‘ladder of abstraction’ assisted in this chapter to expanding each stage of the ladder of the Analytical Abstraction. Dividing the chapter according to the steps of the ladder of Analytical Abstraction assisted in the justification of the choices made. It also clearly informs of the steps taken by the researcher herself in the progression of the research. Therefore, the chapter divides into four broad headings: Data Gathering; Summarizing and Packaging of Data; Repackaging; and lastly, Linking Data to Research Question and Problem Statement.
5. Examination of Problem Statement
   - Synthesis: Delineating the deep structure

4. Linking data to research questions
   - Reduction of data: Within-case analysis, Cross-case analysis, Social Networks
   - Identify Turning Points and Plots: Positions, Turning points, Narrative Network analysis

3. Repackaging
   - Categorizing of data for analysis: Social networks, Turning points, Positioning
   - Transcribing the interview data: Interview data, Order of the Chain Sampling
   - Visual representation of Networks: Within-case analysis, Cross-case analysis, Social Networks

2. Summarizing & packaging data
   - Finding data to analyze: Selection of data, Data gathering technique
   - Case Study Synopsis: Finding data to analyze

1. Data gathering
   - Data gathering technique: Finding data to analyze

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Figure 1: Five-stage Ladder of Analytical Abstraction
(Adapted from ‘The Ladder of Analytical Abstraction by Carney, 1990 in Miles and Huberman, 1994)
The first step in the research design, the gathering of the data, explains and justifies the choice of the Sri Lankan diaspora and the use of snowball sampling as the tool to find the individuals within the loosely based network. The second step in the Ladder of Analytical Abstraction, as adapted from Miles and Huberman (1992), illustrates the packaging of the data through analytical notes. These include use of a questionnaire to conduct open-ended interviews. This section discusses the problems overcome in order to ensure internal validity. After finding and packaging the data, step three informs of the repackaging of the data. This entailed taking the interview data and firstly, focusing on ‘turning points’ to analyze ‘narrative plots’; secondly targeting perceptions of participants regarding both out/enemy-group as well as friends from the out/enemy-group to examine ‘positioning’; and thirdly, to examine who introduced whom through a visual representation of social network/s. The final two steps of the research design link data to questions in order to delineate why positive intergroup contact, which exist despite negative conflict-narratives, does not result in reducing prejudice towards to out-group as a whole and are presented under one heading.

Data Gathering

As noted at the outset, the research originated from personal experiences of the researcher. Thus, it is possible to justify the choice of the Sri Lankan conflict/s, the Sri Lankan diaspora, and the Sri Lankan diaspora living in the UK from this personal
ethnographic point-of-view. However, while the interest stemmed from the researcher’s lived-experiences, the choice of the diaspora depended more on the academic interest in diaspora and the situation in Sri Lanka than merely the participant-observations of the researcher. This section also introduces the methodology used to gather the data: the sampling technique and the questionnaire used for conducting the interviews.

The existence of intergroup interaction among divided diaspora is a conundrum that requires answers. The data in this research were the diaspora: their interactions and their words. This meant the interviewing of diaspora from a specific country-of-origin or home country (i.e., Sri Lanka), in a specific host-country (i.e., the United Kingdom) using snowball sampling.

The Data

As noted at the outset, according to current literature, the Sri Lankan diaspora appear inextricably divided from the 1980s onwards (Tambiah, 1986; O’Balance, 1989; University Teachers for Human Rights Jaffna, Sri Lanka 1993; Hllmann-Rjanayagam, 1994; Chattopadhyaya, 1994). It is also apparent that the socio-cultural, political, and economic divisions, exacerbated through narratives, emerge predominantly from within Sri Lanka. The diaspora appear to transplant the group distrust that is at the heart of the conflicts that have ravaged the country-of-origin since the 1970s. In fact, the Sri Lankan conflicts are the result of diverse group differences, exacerbated in the process of nation building and development. Since the research examined intergroup interaction among divided people, and in the process, questioned the applicability of the tenants of the
Contact hypothesis, it is imperative to justify the choice of Sri Lankan diaspora: their divisions and their role in conflict/s raging in country-of-origin.

Despite the physical distance from their country-of-origin, the divisive narratives that feed into intergroup conflict appear to influence the diaspora. This is especially true with regard to the separatist conflict in Sri Lanka. Often accepted internationally to have begun in 1983, the origin of the separatist conflict can be traced to divisions created by the 19th century Hindu revivals in India and the subsequent Buddhist revival in the 20th century. An earlier influence of Portuguese, then Dutch and lastly British conquest in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries respectively, may have enhanced the divisions among the Sri Lankans. The British policies also resulted in stressing the differences than the similarities. The Cleghorn Minutes aided this division and the words in the minutes provided the map for the separated nation of ‘Eelam’ (de Silva 1987).

At the turn of the 21st century, the Sri Lankan people, and especially her diaspora, continued to cling to diverse nested identities. As noted by Gergen and Gergen, these group narratives exist as

‘nested’ or [as] ‘narratives within narratives’, whereby, these exist “as a part of a long cultural history but nested within this narrative they may possess an independent account of their development since childhood and within this account establish a separate portrayal of their life as a professional” (Gergen and Gergen, 1997: 171).

The nested identities of Sri Lankan diaspora, as presented in research conducted by Sriskandarajah (2005) include ethnic, religious, nationality-based citizenship, class, and caste, area of residence, profession, and reason for leaving.
Group affiliations based on ethnicity, for example, appear from the first census carried out in 1871 by the British colonial rulers. Regardless of the fact that “peoples of Ceylon are composed of an interesting assortment of several racial elements of a basic character … [and] is very much mixed” (Wijesekera 1959: 33), the emphasis on ethnic divisions based on myths of origin persist and appear at the heart of the separatist conflict. The majority ethnic group, the Sinhalese, consisted of eighty percent (80%) of the population according to the 2001 census (http://www.statistics.gov.lk accessed 10th June 2005). The Sinhalese as a group is not cohesive as there are Sinhalese Buddhists, Sinhalese Catholics, Sinhalese Protestants, and Muslims as well as different class, caste, political, and regional differences. However, linguistically and ethnically, the Sinhalese people remain cohesive. This is especially relevant as the Sinhalese and Sri Lanka are synonymous with each other and the Sinhalese people and their language remain confined to Sri Lanka.

Tamils constitute the second largest ethnic group within Sri Lanka despite comprising, approximately, ten percent (10%) of the population at the 2001 census. Just as the Sinhalese, in some sense the Tamils are far from a uniform group. The prime division based on ‘origin’ remains highlighted from the first census of 1871. The Tamil populations within Sri Lanka divide as ‘Sri Lankan Tamils’ and ‘Tamils of Indian Origin’. These ‘Sri Lankan Tamils’ split further into ‘Jaffna Tamils’ who have for centuries lived in the northern areas, especially around the Jaffna peninsula and the ‘Batticaloa Tamils’ whose original home is, along with the Muslims and Sinhalese, in the eastern areas of the country. The second broad division among the Tamil population in
Sri Lanka based on ‘origin’ is the ‘Tamils of Indian Origin’ who came to the island as indentured servants during the late 19th century to work in the British coffee and later tea plantation sector. The Tamils of Indian Origin or Plantation Tamils are either of Hindu or of Christian faith.

Despite the cleavages caused by origin, place, religion, and caste, the Tamil people are a coherent group due to their ethnicity and language. Furthermore, the closeness of India – only a twelve-mile stretch of water separates the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu from the Jaffna peninsula – result in strong kin ties to Tamils from India rather than to Sinhalese and Tamils from within Sri Lanka. Thus, the Tamil people, whether from Jaffna and Batticaloa, or of Indian origin, have historically kept close ties with South India due to strong language and religious, caste, and familial ties. The notion of a ‘Greater Eelam’ was born from this ethno-linguistic group coherence (Rupesinghe 2006a and 2006b). Indeed, as noted by Minahan in Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations: S-Z (2002), “Nationalist sentiment, particularly strong in Sri Lanka, around Madras on the Indian mainland, and among the Tamil diaspora, often focuses on the unity of all Tamil territories in South Asia in a Greater Eelam” (Minahan, 2002: 1849).

The third largest ethnic group is the Sri Lankan Muslims or Moors, constituting almost eight percent (7.9%) of the population (http://www.statistics.gov.lk). Though they define themselves by their religion, the language spoken by Sri Lankan Muslim is Tamil. The Muslims of Sri Lanka can belong to two groups based on either their religion (i.e., Islamic faith) or their language (i.e., Tamil). Indeed, at the outset of the ‘separatist’ conflict within Sri Lanka, the militants offered the Muslims a chance to be a part of the
conflict. Since 1987, however, with the exodus caused by the expulsion of the Muslims in the north by the LTTE, this prospect appears naught. The other minority groups within Sri Lanka include Burghers who are Euro-Asians whose origin dates back to the European colonial period of Sri Lanka, the Malays as well as the Veddhas who are the traditional indigenous tribal community living predominantly in the eastern areas of the country.

These socio-cultural divisions remain inextricably tied to myths of origin and hinder the growth of a nationalistic fervor that transcends narratives of origin (Smith 1999). These myths in turn have resulted in highlighting divisions, creating tensions, and enhancing conflict-situations. The Sinhalese myths of origin, for example, inform of originally arriving from either northeastern or northwestern India approximately in 500 B.C. and claim to be of Aryan descent.

On the history of the island up to the end of the first millennium, and indeed for three centuries of the second, there is a wealth of historical data. Of these the first category consists of Pali chronicles, the Dipawamsa and Mahāwamsa with its continuation the Cūlawamsa, which together provide scholars with a mass of reliable data, not available for other parts of South Asia … Next come the archeological remains of the civilizations of Sri Lanka’s dry zone, the magnificent array of religious and secular monuments written about in the chronicles mentioned earlier, and the irrigation works. The irrigation works consisted of reservoirs called ‘tanks’ … Third, there is the mass of inscriptional material mostly carved on rocks (de Silva 2005: 3).

However, it is pertinent to recall, “You can have multiple histories within a particular setting” (MacIntyre, 1997: 244). These multiple histories or narratives intertwined with group identity. When these multiple histories challenge each other, conflicts among group narratives occur with regard to acceptance or denouncement. Moreover, if, as in
the case of Sri Lankan conflict/s, these narratives become the vehicle for enhancing division among the people – through emphatically promoting blind acceptance of one’s own narrative, which includes prejudices towards the ‘other’ – these group narratives become conflict-driven narratives. Thus, within Sri Lankan, and as field research findings illustrated, a number of counter narratives have emerged due to ethno-linguistic and religious differences. This emphasis on ethnic-based history and mythology, often the basis for nationalism (Smith, 1987), appear to divide the Tamil and Sinhalese ethnic groups.

The Indian epic *Ramayana* (1894) inform of a far older civilization that that envisaged by those within Sri Lanka. The myth of Tamil people as the ‘original’ settlers, which contradict the Sinhalese claim, arose from this. This substantiates the notion of Eelam, “the ancient and cherished Tamil name for the Island of Sri Lanka.” (Mahadeva, 1994: 6) and, subsequent to the military defeat of the LTTE, this justified Tamil diaspora proposition of the formation of a Provisional Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (http://www.sangam.org/2010/01/TGTE_Report.pdf).

Stories of the origin and evolution of the Jaffna Tamils appear in the ‘*Yalpana-Vaipava-Malai*’ (the *History of the Kingdom of Jaffna*), written by Mailvagana Pulavar in 1736 under orders from the Dutch Governor residing in Jaffna. This author utilized “authorities [that] were certainly earlier writing such as the Kailāya Mālai, Vaiya Pādal. Pararājasēkaran Ulā and Rāja Murai (Royal Chronicles), the oldest of which was certainly not earlier than the 14th or the 15th century A.D. (Rasanayagam, 1926: xx).
While the English translation of the *Yalpana-Vaipava-Malai* by Britto (1879), still retain the distinction as *the* definitive history of the people of Jaffna, even Tamil authors use the same key sources such as the *Mahawamsa* (Geiger 1912, Wijesuriya 1988) to validate their claims.

The official history of Sri Lanka however, primarily utilizes Brahmin, Pali, Sanskrit, Sinhala, and Tamil sources from within the country and external sources provided by Indian, Roman, Chinese, and Arabian travelers to the island; Indian, Greek, Roman, and Arabian countries with whom the island nation had had trade ties; and the Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonial invaders. Indeed, Ptolemy’s map of Sri Lanka indicates the importance placed on the island by foreigners. This compilation of both ‘myth’ and verifiable ‘facts’ has, for better or for worse, become an integral part of the people’s identity.

To the Sri Lankans, the ethnic divisions appear the most obvious. Despite these divisions, the ethnically diverse people continue to interact. As noted by Somasundaram, “it is important to note that almost half of the Tamil population actually live [sic] outside the north and the east, which they claim as their homeland.” (Somasundaram 1998: 32). Within Sri Lanka and – as participant observations and field data attest – as diaspora, friendship and familial ties continue, despite intense violence and hatred spurred on by each group’s narratives of origin, of the causes of the conflicts, of events that escalated the conflict, and of heroes and villains.
Other than social cleavages, the Sri Lankans face political stratification based on minority-majority concerns. From independence in 1948 to 1978, D. S. Senanayake, Dudley Senanayake, and John Kothalawala of the United National Party (UNP); S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, W. Dahanayake, and Sirimavo Bandaranaike of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) guided the country as Prime Ministers. After the 1978 Constitution, which introduced the Presidential form of government, J. R. Jayewardene, R. Premadasa, and D. B. Wijethunga of the UNP; Chandrika Bandaranike Kumarathunga and Mahinda Rajapaksha of the People’s Alliance (PA) have ruled the country. All these leaders have been Sinhalese, the majority group within Sri Lanka. The youth who participated in JVP insurrections of 1971 and 1987 – 1990 identified these leaders, with the exception of R. Premadasa, as stemming from the elite (upper caste) group. The minority groups, meanwhile consistently perceive the ‘Sinhalese-led’ governing of Sri Lankan as a concern. The separatist conflict, for example, has as its basis this notion of political power sharing, a pre-independence demand from the Tamil minority within the Ceylon (Sri Lankan) Parliament. The Marxist insurrection of 1971 remained an attempt not to share power but to overthrow the government.

It is possible to infer that both Sinhalese and Tamil youth became militant due to urban-rural divisions, whereby the peripheral areas remained underdeveloped with little prospects for youth to enhance their skills (Chandaprema, 1991; Pålacinkam, 2004; Samaranayaka, 2008), exacerbated by language discrimination (Swamy, 2003; DeVotta, 2004). The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP; People’s Liberation Movement) insurrection, for example, emerged due to Sinhala youth dissatisfaction with the status
quo (Samaranayaka, 2008). According to information provided in court hearings, “[t]he decision … was to attack the States and as a result the JVP activists attacked 74 police stations within 24 hours.” (Gunaratne 2001: 92). They failed due to flaws in coordination rather than any issue regarding their determination. It was only with the external help of Indian, Chinese, and even British military and with the internal the volunteer Sri Lankan army and police that the government was able to control the situation. After coming into the mainstream of politics during the 1980s, the JVP once more became anti-democratic and militant in the period 1987 – 1990.

The Tamil militancy that emerged in the 1970s retained the dominance by youth from the periphery, from the less developed, lower caste areas of the island. Thus, both Sinhala and Tamil militancy, which at one point resulted in ‘twin civil wars’ (1987 – 1990) within Sri Lanka, illustrate the center-periphery or developed-underdeveloped divisions within Sri Lanka. Yet again, these divisions often linked to class and caste did not entail complete segregation. Positive intergroup interactions among youth, among urban-rural areas, among different castes and classes continue despite tensions.

The Sri Lankan case study and especially her diaspora, presents an interesting example where, despite intergroup tensions and at times hostilities, positive interactions occur. Herein lay the conundrum: how can positive intergroup interaction occur in the midst of divisions. Therefore, the initial step of gathering data entailed looking at Sri Lankan diaspora.
Choice of Sri Lankan Diaspora

The choice of Sri Lankan diaspora stems from a number of specific reasons. The first reason for choosing the Sri Lankan diaspora was that they appeared to be highly active with regard to the conflict and in interacting within their groups. The Tamil diaspora remained active from the 1970s onwards, since before the birth of the LTTE and now after its demise through military defeat in 2009 (Gunaratna, 2000). Though not highlighted in international media until the 21st century, the Sinhalese diaspora activism began in the 1990s. Secondly, despite the term ‘Sri Lankan diaspora’, these diaspora appear to transplant ethno-linguistic division from home country and therefore are not a cohesive group. Lastly, current research into the Sri Lanka diaspora provides no clue as to the complex and informal intergroup interactions that exist among members of conflicting groups. Indeed, despite the fact that studies inform the Sri Lankan diaspora as archetypes of conflict escalating diaspora, the empirical data from the lived-experiences of the researcher, which resulted in the field research, inform that they are also actively having continued, positive, yet informal interaction with members from the ‘other’ side.

Indeed, the Sri Lankan diaspora as a group appear to have moved from apparent cohesiveness in an era prior to 1970s, to emergence of divisions in the 1970s, to divided groups in the 1980s. From a superficial, non-participant–observer or non–ethnographic perspective, it is easy to visualize the Sri Lankan diaspora in the 21st century as consisting of two distinct groups with little positive intergroup interactions. However, living as a member of the diaspora, having participated in activities and having developed
friendships with members of the so-called ‘other’ group, it became obvious that an in-depth analysis of intergroup interaction among the Sri Lankan diaspora would provide hitherto unexamined insights into intergroup interaction among members of conflicting groups. The choices also included exploring group and personal narratives to tell the diaspora perspective and the use of the snowball sampling technique.

This research targeted the exploration of personal narratives of Sri Lankan diaspora for one more reason. As noted in previous chapters, the year 2005 was three years into the MOU. The MOU, signed in February 2002, made the unilateral ceasefire begun on 24th December 2001 into an official agreement between the GoSL and the LTTE. The period between 2002 and 2008 was a time of hope with increase people-to-people contact. It was also a time of tragedy. The interviews began in 2005 January, soon after the 2004 December tsunami that devastated Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan diaspora traveled from their host-country to their home country on visits soon after the MOU or as they sent assistance and even volunteered their services after the tsunami. The MOU – the longest ceasefire period since the inception of war in the 1980s – provided a moment away from the momentum of the conflict. It was a time of tension and hope.

Sri Lankan Diaspora in the United Kingdom

The focus of this research was the Sri Lankan diaspora residing in the UK. The choice of UK for the field research lay not only with the strong historical link between Sri Lanka and UK as the British ruled Sri Lanka for 150 years. In multicultural society that is the
UK, the Sri Lankan (especially the Tamil) diaspora have been highly active since the 1960s. Unlike the US, where immigrants strive to assimilate, multiculturalism of the UK promotes ethno-linguistic cohesion. Therefore, the UK has enclaves such as the East London ‘Little Jaffna’ where Tamil people speak in Tamil, dress in traditional clothes, eat and drink traditional foods, and sell items importanted from Sri Lanka, such as king-coconut. Enclaves exist in cities such as Birmingham where Hindi and Tamil films rather are regularly shown.

The primary reason for choosing the UK to spotlight intergroup interaction among the Sri Lankan diaspora stemmed from the fact that diaspora activities began and diaspora divisions exacerbated in the UK. Indeed, as noted by Gunaratna, until the 21st century, “UK has always been the heart of LTTE overseas political activity” (Gunaratne 1998 http://www.tamilnation.org/ltte/98rohan.htm).

The first Tamil diaspora-based organizations that argued for and organized themselves to achieve an independent state of ‘Eelam’ were the Eelam Revolutionary Organisers (EROS) and the Tamil Liberation Organization (TLO), both London-based organizations founded in the 1970s. Furthermore, Anton Balasingham, the theoretician of the LTTE was a British citizen and lived in UK until his death. He was one of the LTTE representatives in all peace talks, from the famed ‘Timpu’ talks in the 1980s to the signing of the MOU. It was in London that former LTTE Jaffna Commander ‘Kittu’ (Sathasivam Krishnaswamy) found refuge until his deportation. It was in UK that Shantha alias Krishanthakumar, the subsequent organizer of events, funding-raising, and
propaganda activities of the London operations continued working until his arrest by New Scotland Yard in 2006 for terrorist activities. The www.eelam.com website remains registered under Shantha and he represented the LTTE at the Geneva peace talks. Adele Balasingham, the Australian wife of Anton Balasingham continued to be a prominent supporter of the LTTE and a member of the LTTE women’s wing.

It was in the UK that organizations to ensure a cohesive Tamil diaspora emerged. Initially, this was the Tamil Coordinating Committee (TCC), developed under Sri Lankan Parliamentarian Amirthalingam’s patronage in 1978 in the UK. The President of TCC, Vaikunthavasan, interrupted a United Nations General Assembly speech given by the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister in 1978 to speak of the Tamil people’s plight. Since then, the British Tamil Forum (BTF), the Tamil Youth Organization (TYO), the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO) – an organization currently banned – have all played a major role in enhancing divisions among Sri Lankan diaspora. Subsequently, another organization called the ‘White Pigeon’ came into existence and is currently under investigation in the UK. The LTTE’s International Secretariat was located at No 211 Katherine Road, London from 1984 to 2001. The Tamil Information Centre in London provides information booklets and newspapers such as the *Tamil Times*, *Tamil Nation*, *Network*, and *Thamilan* for the diaspora. The propaganda machine of the LTTE and the Eelam cause operated from UK since 1970s. These included the Tamil House where the Tamil Information Centre took on the role of an Embassy.
The LTTE (…) maintains an information center in Albany Street, London, where the latest news from Sri Lanka is provided to any caller. The Tamil Eelam British Branch, providing this service could be accessed by calling 0171 387 4339. There are similar news services in a number of countries from Germany to the US. (Gunaratne 1998 http://www.tamilnation.org/ltte/98rohan.htm accessed on 20\textsuperscript{th} January 2004)

The United Kingdom was also the origin of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO) and the Intenational Federation of Tamils (IFT). It was home to a number of pro-LTTE publications, including

Network (…) Tamil journal Kalathil (…) Viduthalai Puligal and Tamil Land. Other Tamil newspapers are Tamil Nation published from Croydon, Surrey and Thamilan from Undine Street in London. More recently, an LTTE front in London, publishes Hot Spring, a journal hitherto published in the peninsula. (Gunaratne 1998 http://www.tamilnation.org/ltte/98rohan.htm accessed on 20\textsuperscript{th} January 2004)

More than any country, the UK continued to be the epicenter of celebrations, rallies and protest marches (Gunaratna, 2000). Moreover, after the ending of military action in Sri Lanka in 2010 the Transitional Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) conducted awareness events in London and provided a list of TGTE candidates for the UK elections (http://tgteuk.wordpress.com/2010/04/23/full-list-of-transnational-government-of-tamil-eelam-tgte-uk-election-candidate/ accessed 20\textsuperscript{th} April 2010).

The choice of the UK over Canada, where Sri Lankan diaspora activism reached its zenith in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, is mainly due to the established aspect of the activism. The tradition began in the 1970s and continues to the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. Moreover, London is also the venue for counter-protest marches by Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher Sri Lankans who oppose the LTTE and, after their defeat, the notion of Eelam. Irrespective
of the banning of the LTTE as a ‘terrorist’ group on February 28th 2001, the Tamils groups in the UK continue to support the ‘Tamil cause’ (Dass, 2005; Carpenter and Wiencek, 2005; Pruthi 2002). Even during the MOU period, a number of organizations continued to fund the LTTE, even after the ban of the LTTE as a terrorist organization and the closure of the LTTE International Secretariat at Katherine Road, London. This list appeared in numerous internet sites read by the Sinhala participants (e.g., www.spur.asn.au), thereby enhancing the divisions through emphasizing distrust of the ‘other’.

From the 1990s onwards, the LTTE Heroes’ Day celebrations and religious festivals ensured group cohesion among the Tamil diaspora. The British government attempted to curtail the Tamil support of LTTE (e.g., LTTE – The International Dimension of Terrorism 2007). However, even in the midst of the MOU and despite the ban, the LTTE Heroes Day celebrations took place in 2005 at Alexandra Palace and at Wembley Arena. In the same year, a ‘Black July’ rally included a large photograph cutout of Prabhakaran.

The event had the likes of Labour party Harrow Councillor Thaya Idaikaddar delivering a homily extolling the virtues of the LTTE leader. Incidentally permission to hold the rally was obtained from the Royal Parks' Police by 2 other Labour councillors one from Harrow Ms Sashikala and the other Ms Eliza Packiadevi Mann from Southwark. (Whiteman 30th November 2006 http://www.globalpolitician.com/print.asp?id=2235)

In 2007, the LTTE leader Prabhakaran spoke, via satellite, at a gathering in London despite an arrest warrant out on him for ‘crimes against life and health, organized crime/transnational crime, terrorism, terrorism conspiracy’ by both the Sri Lankan and

A ceasefire supposedly provides support of authorities (i.e., GoSL and LTTE) for enhancing intergroup contact (Chirot 2001; Fisher, 1993). Activism in the UK among Sri Lankan diaspora, however, remained intense even in the midst of the MOU period. According to a 2006 “Human Rights Watch” report of the LTTE controlling and siphoning off money from Hindu temples in the UK (12 Feb 2007 http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/ltte0306/4.htm). This not only created distrust between the Sri Lankan – especially Sinhalese and Tamil – diaspora, but it has also resulted in straining relationships among the Tamil diaspora. The Tamil diaspora include Tamils from South India as well as from Sri Lanka. Due to the LTTE control of Hindu temples, all religious activities are conducted only in Sri Lankan Tamil, a derivation of the South Indian Tamil.

Another major reason for choosing the Sri Lankan diaspora residing in the UK was due to escalating gang violence and murders linked to LTTE fundraising and extortion (Whiteman 12 Feb 2007 http://www.asiantribune.com/index.php?q=node/314) during the MOU period. This extortion and fundraising continued in the UK despite banning of the LTTE as a terrorist organization by the UK in 2001 and even with the MOU in place.
According to a Human Rights Watch report dated 2006, some Tamil diaspora remain highly active in raising funds for the LTTE and in fact diaspora acted as either fundraisers or providers of funds.

Fundraisers for the LTTE and LTTE-linked organizations went from house to house, and approached businesses and professionals, demanding significant sums of money for their cause. In Canada, families were typically pressed for between Cdn$2,500 and Cdn$5,000, while some businesses were asked for up to Cdn$100,000. Members of the Tamil community in the U.K., France, Norway, and other European countries were asked for similar amounts. (Aug 18th 2008 http://hrw.org/reports/2006/ltte0306/1.htm#_ftn2#_ftn2)

As noted by Becker, requests for money are often not limited to entrepreneurs.

The LTTE and groups linked to it such as the World Tamil Movement repeatedly call and visit Tamil families seeking funds. Some families have received as many as three visits in a single week. Fundraisers may refuse to leave the house without a pledge of money, and have told individuals who claim not to have funds available to borrow the money, to place contributions on their credit cards, or even to re-mortgage their homes. (18 Aug 2008 www.hrw.com)

The Tamil community who refuses to provide funds, especially in London, face intimidation from representatives of the LTTE. The BBC (www.bbc.ac.uk) reports that there is currently a division within the New Scotland Yard investigating violence perpetrated by the LTTE supporters in the UK. Indeed, in *Frontline*, an Indian Newspaper, Rohan Gunaratne noted that

[t]he LTTE raised up to £ 2 million to £ 3 million a year in the U.K. The bulk of it came from segments of the Sri Lankan Tamil community whose strength in the U.K. is estimated at 120,000; they were subjected to sustained LTTE propaganda primarily disseminated by its offices and cells in the U.K. The LTTE fund collectors visited the homes and workplaces of Sri Lankan Tamils, especially the new arrivals, and demanded a mandatory payment of £ 200-300 each. While part of the funds were laundered in the U.K., the other part was transferred out for
military and dual technology procurement. (Gunaratne 2001 in http://www.hinduonnet.com)

Such activism worsened tension and mistrust among the Sri Lankan diaspora, and apparently cemented the division of the diaspora into two broad groups. It is pertinent to recall that Sri Lankan diaspora as a group includes Sinhalese, Muslims, Burghers, Malay, as well as Tamils. It is important to remember that, while the Tamil population in Sri Lanka constitutes a minority, within the UK, they constitute the majority of Sri Lankan diaspora. “As of 2001, the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora was estimated at 600,000-800,000, accounting for approximately one-quarter of the global Sri Lankan Tamil population” (Becker, 2006: 10). At the same time, due to the tense situation in their country-of-origin, the majority of the Tamil diaspora define themselves as ‘Tamil’, ‘Ceylon Tamil’, or ‘Eelam Tamil’. Therefore, it should be noted that the ‘Sri Lankan’ diaspora often constitute Sinhalese as the majority and Tamils, Muslims, and Burghers as the minority while Tamil diaspora include Tamils from South India and Tamils from Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan and especially the Sinhala diaspora, though not as organized or as active as the Tamil diaspora, have also indicated a similarity in views regarding the conflict and the ‘trustworthiness’ of the out-group. The high point of their activism, as a cohesive group of Sri Lankans, began in the 21st century when rallies were organized and petitions signed demanding the banning of the LTTE as a terrorist organization. This assertiveness of the LTTE and their organizational ability to gather more than 5000 people to one place was often absent from the Sri Lankan diaspora. However, it must be noted that at a rally in London on 15th April 2009, over 100,000 Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and Burghers
participated. Since 2008, the Sri Lankan diaspora have also provided funding for the war in Sri Lanka according to www.tamilnet.com (April 16th 2009 http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=25577).

The Sinhalese diaspora have, however, continued to remain highly active via the internet, where they present either their perspectives on the actions of the out-group or challenge the Tamil narratives of their right to the land, the origin of the conflict, and significant events. Indeed, both the Tamil and the Sinhalese diaspora are highly active in their campaign to spread their version of the conflict through the internet. The sympathizers of the Tamil cause, for example, have established www.tamilnet.com, www.tamilnation.org and www.eelam.com while the LTTE has their own website, www.ltteps.org. The Sri Lankan have also established a number of websites to present their perspective. These include the www.helahanda.com; www.infolanka.com; www.sinhaya.com and www.spur.asn.au. The Sinhalese have also participated in rallies in 1999 for example, demanding that the UK Government ban the LTTE. Tamil diaspora have had protest marches and rallies denouncing the actions of the government of Sri Lanka since the 1970s.

The diaspora from each ethnic group appear to support ‘their’ own group due perhaps to intimidation or love of home country or life experiences. The evidence that the Sri Lankan diaspora support different causes feed the perception that intergroup interaction does not exist or are limited. The fact that members of these supposedly divided groups do not necessarily have to meet also strengthens to this notion. For example, even to gather information on Sri Lanka, these groups utilize different avenues. The Sri Lankan
diaspora have the option of reading newspapers from Sri Lanka either through the internet or by purchasing them from dealers or read about Sri Lanka from different newspapers published Sri Lankans living in the UK. These include the *Silvarrow* written in English and the *Tamil Guardian*, which circulates amongst the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora and available in cultural centers, Hindu temples, and Tamil-owned newsstands. The *News Lanka* and the *Voice of Lanka* are the newspapers that the Sinhala diaspora read. These are usually available at Buddhist temples. The newspapers target their prospective readers by including news both in English and in the vernacular of the reader. Only ‘Swadheena’ (i.e., ‘Independent’) has attempted to include all ethnic representations within Sri Lanka with articles in English, in Sinhala, and in Tamil.

*Data Gathering Technique*

To gather data on the Sri Lankan diaspora required a qualitative strategy involving snowball or chain sampling technique and open-ended interviews of Sri Lankan diaspora residing in the UK.

Examining intergroup interactions among individuals from conflicting groups in the midst of the MOU period provides insights into whether ‘contact’ appears sufficient to reduce prejudice. Positive people-to-people contact, assisted by the MOU signed between the GoSL and LTTE, provided an opportunity to increase intergroup contact, as “greater contact and familiarity with members of other groups should enhance liking for
those groups.” (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006: 753). In other words, Messick and Mackie paraphrase Allport’s ideas by informing that, “contact hypothesis is the proposal that under the right circumstances, direct interpersonal contact between members of two antagonistic groups will lead to a reduction in the negativity of intergroup attitudes” (Messick and Mackie 1989: 66). Moreover, Brewer (2000) and Devine et al (2000) reiterate this by indicating that when intergroup interaction result in complex and at times, dual allegiances, this might lead to reduction of prejudice.

The research design focused primarily on the field research and entailed interviews and observations. The field research was conducted with the express knowledge that,

(fieldwork is more than a single method or technique … Multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective … By using a combination of observations, interviewing, and document analysis, the fieldworker is able to use different data sources to validate and crosscheck findings. Each type of and source of data has strengths and weaknesses. (Patton, 2002: 306)

Moreover, while this research focused predominantly on interviews, archival data, and unobtrusive observations, the lived experiences of the researcher also enriched the interviews. The main observation lay behind the whole premise of this research: that the Sri Lankan diaspora do interact with one another even though they may be members of ‘opposing’ groups, accepting prejudicial narratives (stories) of the other group. This research, therefore, was a semi-ethnographic and a semi-pre-structured field research. From its inception, the research intended not to begin with a hypothesis. Rather, the
purpose of the study was to conduct an exploratory research, as conducted by Marshall and Rossman (2006) in the hope of understanding a complex conundrum.

Qualitative Strategy

The research topic – the intergroup interaction among diaspora – appears unexamined in the extensively researched intra-group or host-home country issues of diaspora. Moreover, since the Sri Lankan diaspora activities intertwine with the conflict within Sri Lankan, their perceptions remained a sensitive issue throughout the research. Due to these core reasons, the investigation of a somewhat hidden phenomenon required an exploratory study within a naturalized setting (Atkinson et al, 2007). It is vital to emphasize that this research topic cannot provide required insights within an experimental setting. The focus of the research was predominantly on the lived experiences of the participants. Nostalgic and sometimes traumatic, the telling of narratives of lived experiences, along with their perceptions regarding the conflict, required the participant to trust the researcher and to feel at ease with the setting. The qualitative research required untutored answers to open-ended questions. The response to the first question “What do you consider yourself to be?” (see Appendix One), for example, required a single word or single sentence answer that would inform of the positioning of the participants. For all other open-ended answers to interview questions, the researcher designed questions for detailed answers.
It was apparent from the onset that this research had to use qualitative data (Patton 2002: 4). The data collected included the observations of the researcher, personal narratives or personal perspectives of the participants (i.e., interviews), and archival sources. Yet, as noted at the outset, the starting point of the research lay in observed and lived experiences. The researcher observed intergroup interaction whilst being a member of the Sri Lankan diaspora living in USA. This observed intergroup interaction was not limited to Sri Lankan diaspora living in one city or to one state within the USA. Rather, the intergroup interactions, between Sinhalese (Buddhists, Catholics, and Christian), Tamil (Hindu, Catholics, and Christian), Muslims, and Burghers (Catholics and Christian) occurred consistently or sporadically at times.

Thus, the rationale for choosing the qualitative strategy was that it would provide insights into the conundrum seen by the researcher: that intergroup interaction exists but that apparently does not result in reduction of prejudice towards to out-group in general. The narrative analysis of data required such detailed stories of turning points and perceptions and understanding this entailed finding rich data. Therefore, for this current study only the qualitative genre or strategy appeared appropriate.

**Snowball Sampling Technique**

This research began with a need to understand the dynamic nature of Sri Lankan diaspora interaction in the midst of “support of authorities” (Pettigrew, 1998: 66). Decision from
the outset lay in interviewing participants using a *snowball* or *respondent-driven sampling technique* or chain referral method. This group remained relatively undetected and informal. The number of individual diaspora who interacted with members of the out-group in the UK remained undetermined at the outset of the research. As noted by Patton, a ‘snowball’ or ‘chain sampling’ technique, “is an approach for locating information–rich key informants or critical cases ... By asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases.” (Patton, 2002: 237). As noted by Bernard, 

**Snowball** and **respondent-driven sampling (RDS)** are two network sampling methods (also known, generally, as **chain referral** methods) for studying hard-to-find or hard-to-study populations. Populations can be hard to find and study for three reasons: (1) they contain very few members who are scattered over a large area ...; and/or (2) they are stigmatized and reclusive ... or even actively hiding ...; and/or (3) they are members of an elite group and don’t care about your need for data. (Bernard, 2006: 192 bold in original)

The medical field uses this sampling method to gather insights into hidden populations. These include examples such as by Watter and Biernackl on “Targeted Sampling: options for the study of hidden populations” (1989). This research aimed to use this tool to gather information on the existence of informal networks and to examine intergroup interaction among participating diaspora. It was hoped that this would shed light on whether Sinhalese and Tamil diaspora interacted, whether Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher diaspora had informal contact with one another, whether extremists interacted with moderates, were there victims of persecution in contact with ardent ‘patriots’ (of
either side). This technique also presented a means of overcoming concerns regarding internal validity in the research. The research required an understanding of the networks of friendships that might exist among diaspora. The snowball sampling or chain sampling technique allowed the researcher to gather this data through the questionnaire. However, a caveat: this research, although utilizing snowball sampling, in actuality, focused on one narrower component of snowball sampling called ‘case control sampling’ which limits the snowball sampling through introduction of criteria.

The ‘case control (snowball) sampling’ was useful in gathering a vast variety of people within a stipulated period. Indeed, the sample size was limited by time constraints, availability of the participants, age restrictions (only adults over 18 years of age); time lived in the UK (over four years); and the purposeful sampling technique used. In brief, the sample attempted to include those within the broad definition introduced by Safran (1991). During the interview process, the participants provided information on others who held similar or different perspectives but known to them (e.g., Question No. 18, see Appendix I). This presented the researcher with people the participant positioned as information-rich informants. The research did not begin with a pre-determined number of participants. By the end of the four months, the sample size was one hundred and ten (110) Sri Lankan diaspora. Within this were Sri Lankan Tamil and Sinhalese diaspora, as well as Muslim and Burgher. This snowball sampling technique provided the means for gathering dispersed data sources but was also instrumental in providing information on
networks, sub-networks, insights into whether the Sri Lankan diaspora interacted with one another, and whether extremists interacted with moderates.

The snowball sampling technique was essential for the internal validity of the research. When discussing internal validity of the research, it is important to view

validity as a process of checking, questioning, and theorizing, not as a strategy for establishing rule-based correspondence between our findings and the “real world.” “Validation becomes the issue of choosing among competing and falsifiable explanations.” (Miles and Huberman 1994: 278).

It was therefore possible to provide credibility to the research through thick descriptions of interview transcripts and through highlighting the areas of uncertainty; and through emphasizing the limitations of the study. The limitations include issues linked to snowball sampling technique itself. This ‘chain sampling’ technique usually provided only data on individuals with similar perspectives. However, due to Questionnaire query No. 18 “Whom else to talk to … with any similar and different views?” (see Appendix I), this snowball sampling gave the researcher some variation in the sampling.

Other than the two key information-rich participants contacted prior to the commencement of the field research in the UK, it was not possible to pre-structure the sample group. Nor was it possible to decide ahead whether the setting was informal or formal, whether the interviews would take thirty minutes or three hours. Due to the nature of the sample, it was also difficult to limit the interviews to a specific locality such as East London. The participants provided names of people living in Manchester,
Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and East, South, and West London. Therefore, the researcher had to travel to meet the participants where it was convenient for them.

The sampling technique used includes both weaknesses and strengths. While this tool might remove researcher’s own bias, one argument against the use of case control (snowball) sampling’ is that the sample itself, since it involved friends introducing friends, might include its own bias. The sample might include a disproportionate number of representatives of one group or another, from one generation rather than another, from one area more than any other. Indeed, as commented by Fink, there is “Little of no control over who is named” (Fink, 2002: 23). Another weakness lay in the fact that such techniques provided only a small sample and, as noted by Fink such “[r]ecommendations may produce biased sample” (Fink, 2002: 23). Thus, diaspora with diverse views might remain under-represented since people provide information of people who have similar ideas/views and therefore, difficult to generalize. A constant concern was that the snowball sampling might result in overally highlighting those who interacted with members of the out-group and exclude those who did not. Due to the Question No. 18 (see Appendix I) the over-representation concern, though remaining a concern, did not compromise the research data.

However, the strength of this sampling outweighs the weaknesses. The most crucial positive strength of the case control (snowball) sampling’ technique is that it prevents the researcher’s own biases from influencing the research data. It also afford the researcher with insights into a somewhat hidden (and/or undetected or forgotten) population or those
whose activities remain outside of the norm. This is “[u]seful when it is difficult or impractical to obtain a list of names for sampling” (Fink, 2002: 23), such as the Sri Lankan diaspora who interact informally. In fact, this tool illuminated the previously undefined social networks of friendships among members of the Sri Lankan diaspora and, since introduced by a friend, it became possible for the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews on strangers who otherwise would not have spoken truthfully.

The case control (snowball or chain) sampling method allowed the researcher insights into somewhat sensitive information. Though perhaps not considered so by outsiders to be intrusive questions, the questions asked (see Appendix I) examine sensitive topics and inquiring into such “sensitive topics requires nonprobability sampling.” (Bernard, 2006: 186).

This methodology of gathering data further allowed the researcher to conduct narrative research since the participants, in general, spoke for over 30 minutes. This occurred primarily due to the introduction of the research as an associate/friend of a friend. This snowball or chain sampling technique even allowed the researcher to become at times an observer of these intergroup interactions as the participants invited the researcher to gatherings, to places of worship, and to meals that highlighted them interacting with members of the out-group. According to Browne (2005), who utilized snowball sampling tool to conduct research on non-heterosexual women, this technique allows investigation into those groups often hidden or those who remain outside of the norm and highlights the interpersonal social networks among them. Furthermore, as commented by Wong.
(2008), the criticism leveled against this sampling technique neglects the fact that the representatives within the sampling provide rich insights into an often-overlooked area. Noy expands on the strengths of this sampling tool by emphasizing that this technique generates a distinctive kind of social knowledge on the organic and interactional networks (Noy, 2008). The snowball sampling allowed the researcher to trace those within and those outside of the social network.

Thus, the sample technique provided the researcher with not only insights into the often hidden and most certainly unexamined diaspora who interact. The sampling method also illuminated the networks of interacting and non-interacting diaspora. The very fact that this research targeted individuals who interact with members of the out-group and their opinions regarding the conflict, its origins, the role of diaspora, the potential for peace meant that that snowball sampling method remained the only probable tool for this research. Moreover, the snowball sampling technique also remained a mechanism that provided the researcher with personal perceptions.

Internal Validity

The pre-structured nature of the Questionnaire, along with the semi-structured nature of the data gathering endeavor, as well as the rationale or justification given for choices made, which include genre, focus conflict, population, and site, as well as the data
collection method (Marshall and Rossman 2007: 51), provided an opening into ensuring internal validity.

It must be stressed that, “the validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than the sample size”. (Patton 2002: 245 bold in original). As noted by Patton,

[i]n qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument. The credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork – as well as things going on in a person’s life that might prove a distraction. (Patton 2002: 14 bold in original).

A single individual who acted as the interviewer, transcriber, and the archival researcher conducted the study. The validity of the research hinged on overcoming biases of the researcher. Secondly, it rested on competence of the researcher in controlling or reducing interviewer-interviewee interaction that might hinder analysis. This entailed using the skill of the researcher to understand the emotional state of the interviewer, interviewee, and of the situation. It also entailed focusing on the rigor of the researcher in finding potential participants and conducting interviews, transcribing, and subsequently analyzing them. It is important to stress that,

[i]nterview data limitations include possibly distorted responses due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics, and simple lack of awareness since interviews can be greatly affected by the emotional state of the interviewee at the time of the interview. Interview data are also subject to recall error, reactivity of the interviewee to the interviewer, and self-serving responses. (Patton, 2002: 306)
Instead of overcoming the researcher’s bias issue by changing the researcher’s perspectives, the research strived to remain transparent, to gather and highlight information mainly from a participant perspective. This transformed this supposed weakness into strength by informing the participants of the researcher’s background, and the broad reasoning behind the study. This bias of the researcher transformed into strength within the research methodology since it provided a researcher with the knowledge of the historical, emotional, socio-cultural and educational backdrop to the interviews. The participants were from a specific country, have lived through or heard of certain key events familiar to the researcher. The insider or emic perspective enhanced the value of research, especially as the researcher herself was a Sri Lankan. From a methodological perspective, the researcher found the initial information-rich informants and, through them, approached other Sri Lankans. From a validity point of view, it is important to mention that although the researcher was a Sri Lankan, it is the perspectives, the memories, and the words of the participants that became the focus.

In the process of gathering data, this study faced a minefield of ethical issues. Ethical considerations in gathering the data include getting the participants’ informed consent, ensuring confidentiality of the participants, their personal details, and information they provided, and amount of information given to the participants prior to the interview regarding the research. Ethical issue faced included being conscious of the fact that some participants revealed information they would not otherwise have shared with a stranger;
since the researcher positioned self as a friend of a friend. The confidentiality of the contents of the interviews remained assured by three methods. The first was included in the ‘Informed Consent Letter’ (see Appendix I). The second was a verbal assurance of anonymity as a result of the interviews being transcribed only by the researcher, the keeping of all documents, including the recordings and/or interview transcripts in a secure place and, informing participants that if requested, to destroy (i.e., erase) the recordings and transcripts. The anonymity of the participants further assured through utilizing only specific sections of the interviews and excluding any references to identifiable personal information.

**Summarizing and Packaging of Data**

The search for data involved justifying the choice of conducting open-ended interviews from Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher diaspora residing in the UK, gathered through a snowball sampling technique. Once the mechanism became clear, the research focused on transcribing the data and analysis of the data using Narrative analysis tools.

**Case Study Synopsis**

In the four-month field research, there were one-hundred and fifty-one (151) potential *interviewees* (see Figure 2 below). There were eighty-eight (88) potential Sinhalese
participants; fifty-five (55) potential Tamil participants; nine (9) potential Muslim participants, and one (1) potential Burgher participant.

![Potential Interviewee Ethnic Composition](image)

*Figure 2: Potential Interviewee Ethnic Composition*  
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)

However, decisions made prior to and subsequent to entering the field as well as unforeseen issues, reduced this number to one-hundred and ten (110) participants. The sample size reduction occurred firstly because a number of potential participants introduced by those interviewed had not been residing in the UK for more than four years. This four-year limitation and the diaspora definition discussed and utilized from the previous chapter limited the number of potential participants. Although not an arbitrary decision, the specification of the number of years spent in the UK, involved perceptions developed as a participant-observer. Often, Sri Lankans arrive in a host-country for educational purposes but decide to stay after its completion (i.e., after a three
or four year degree). Some others arrive in the country for employment and by the third or fourth year, they have bought a home. Others arrive in the UK seeking asylum and these potential asylum seekers stay within the UK for years while their cases remained undecided.

Thus, the continued emotional links to country-of-origin despite extensive stay in host country remain the integral part in limiting the sample. For that, the diaspora in question must remain in host-country long enough to decide not to assimilate completely and to cling to home country ties. The second reason for reducing the sampling size: some names provided by the participants were of individuals below eighteen (18) years of age. Moreover, not all of these (151) people were willing to be interviewed, had scheduling issues, or were not in UK at that time. These three reasons prevented the researcher from interviewing forty-one (41) potential participants.

Transcribing Interview Data

The researcher transcribed the data. The decision to transcribe interviews verbatim occurred at the outset of the field research. To reiterate, this was a pre-structured field research to some extent. This included four-month field research time spent in the UK: the type of questions asked (see Appendix I); limiting diaspora to Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim/Moor, and Burgher Sri Lankan diaspora and depended on the amount of time the individual lived within the UK. The pre-structured aspect also included a decision at the
outset regarding the stance, tone, and attitude of the researcher as well as a consideration on crucial and not-essential information provided to the information-rich informants. The decision to plan beforehand resulted in the designing of a research that intertwined with the sampling technique, the data collected, and most importantly, the analytical tool used. There had to be an intricate connection, an amalgamation, between the analytical tool and the approach and the application. The research design implicitly entailed the acknowledgement that decisions of the researcher may impinge on the validity of the research.

The researcher acted as the interviewer. The individual participants provided the researcher with lists of names, telephone numbers, and the addresses of potential participants. The only people not subjected this process were the two (02) key information-rich informants who were presented with the ‘Letter of Consent’ (see Appendix II) and a brief outline of what the researcher expected to gain with a request of a list of potential participants. The interviewing of the two initial information-rich informants occurred at the latter part of the field research. The snowball sampling technique helped find all other participants. The initial introduction made over the telephone included an emphasis on the broad objective of the research to explore diaspora perspectives of Sri Lankan modern history and an introduction of the interviewer. Stressing that a friend of theirs provided the potential participant’s name gave the researcher the entry-point. Moreover, other criteria specified included the age of the participant and the length of time living within the UK. The initial telephone
introduction included assurances regarding the audio recording: voluntary recoding, to assist the researcher’s recollection as well as to conduct the research. Moreover, access to the audio-recordings limited only to the researcher.

The interviewer presented herself as a seeker of knowledge, an academic, and a friend-of-a-friend. This gave access to the participants and the informal surroundings, chosen by the participants, eased the interview process. A session entailed interviewing participants in office rooms, sitting rooms, and in cafes; using an audio-recorder or merely writing down the contents after the event; in London, Manchester, Birmingham, and Glasgow. Thus, while audio recording occurred in a majority of interviews, in a few the researcher listened and wrote down later contents of the interview. Keeping in mind the limitations of this technique, information transfer from audio recording to the laptop occurred sometimes within ten minutes of the conclusion of the interview or in others, within two hours of conducting the interview.

Allowing the participant to set the time, date, and the venue assisted the researcher in overcoming obstacles. The friendly tone, the helpfulness, and the courteousness of the interviewer as well as the introduction from a ‘friend-of-a-friend’ helped ease the tension. It further helped position the interviewer as a seeker of knowledge rather than an intrusive busybody. Another obstacle faced and conquered involved devising a list of questions prior to beginning of research in January 2005. The Questionnaire (Appendix I) helped the interviewer to conduct the interviews for two main reasons. The Questionnaire became a guide. The questions usually began according to the list (i.e.,
with Question No 1: “What do you consider yourself to be?”). This first question attempted to elicit ‘self positioning’ in order to gain insights into division of groups. The participants self-categorized and, at times, provided insights into the duality of their identity. The Questionnaire, written on both sides of a 4”x5” Index Card, by hand, provided a means of disarming the participant. The researcher would show the Index Card and tell the participants that “It is only this much … not a lot of questions”. The use of the Index Cart also positioned the interviewer as a student. Overcoming a further weakness of conducting interviews lay in stating that if the participant wishes it, the arrangement of the provision of a transcript of the interview for them to read and comment. Only one participant requested the transcript but did not request any changes afterwards. The other participants did not request to read the interview transcripts, either during the interview when mentioned specifically, or later.

To reiterate, most of the one-hundred and ten (110) participants were willing to talk, some quite verbosely on their experiences and on their beliefs. Out of 110 participants interviewed, there were only eight (08) second-generation participants. These second-generation participants, in their early 20s, expressed more interest in their education within their ‘home’ country of England than the ‘war’ in their parents’ home country. Of the participants, other than one individual who was a shop assistant, all the others were retired professionals, employed in a professional capacity, training to be professionals, or were studying. All the second-generation participants included those studying to be
professionals (i.e., as doctors, accountants, etc.). The youngest participant was nineteen while the oldest was in his/her late-70s.

The Questionnaire

The Questionnaire, which consisted of eighteen (18) questions (see Appendix I), strived to ensure open-ended answers for at least seventeen (17) of the questions. The designing of the Questionnaire (see Appendix I) entailed deciding to place specific questions at the start and building on each question. For example, Question No. 1 “What do you consider yourself to be? What about others?” flows into “Why and when did you come to UK?” Moreover, while the next question “What does Sri Lankan (modern) history mean to you?” might appear an abrupt departure, the reason for leaving Sri Lanka involved living through a specific period: i.e., the modern history of Sri Lanka.

There is a more intricate link from one question to the other from the fourth question onwards. Moreover, while the first question entailed a simpler answer, the subsequent questions not only build on each answer, thereby ensuring detailed answers. The placement of the questions also involved a shift in focus. While focusing on the overall history to the conflict to turning points might appear fluid, they ask different questions. Question No. 3 “What does Sri Lankan (modern) history mean to you?” provide insights into the participant’s acceptance of a specific group narrative while the answers to the next two questions provide detailed information on individual perceptions and at times,
narratives of lived experiences. The final question, “Whom to talk to? Anyone with similar or different views?” provided insights not only on whom to talk to but also provided information regarding the links and nodes in the network map (see Figure 17 and 18).

Data Categorization

The transcribed interview data, along with archival literature and observations provided the researcher with required information to analyze the conundrum that positive intergroup interaction occur despite acceptance of negative group narratives. A caveat, to assume Sri Lankan diaspora as static entities would never provide a realistic picture. Rather, “[t]he self is a location, not a substance or an attribute. The sense of self is the sense of being located at a point in space, of having a perspective in time and of having a variety of positions in local moral orders.” (Harré 1993: 12). Moreover, despite divisions and in spite of the group pressure to disassociate – even in London, where the Sri Lankan High Commission and the LTTE Secretariat were located, where Tamil Information Centre publishes books on the ‘Tamil’ cause, and where LTTE violence and fraud has become the object of New Scotland Yard investigations – the so-called divided diaspora do interact informally. As noted by Henriksen, “Positioning theory is of particular interest for conflict analysis, as it provides a view of how conflicts and solutions are negotiated among its partners” (2008: 43) and, as noted at the outset, the Sri Lankan diaspora are stakeholders to the conflict/s raging within Sri Lanka.
The categorization of data occurred at three stages. At the outset, network map emerged with insights into who introduced whom (see Figure 17 and Figure 18). It merely presented a visual representation of the order of the chain sampling. Secondly, the researcher transcribed the collected interview data and subsequently divided the data according to chronological order of the interviews (see Figure 18). Lastly, within each interview transcription, the researcher listed the hierarchy in turning points highlighted and the positions taken by each participant regarding their friends as well as the out-group.

The researcher kept a list of who introduced whom as well as the chronological order of the interviews. The researcher also provided each participant with a number based on the chronological order. This provided data to develop a visual representation of the interviews. Subsequent elaboration of the data provides the means for a social network analysis.

Interviews utilized examining ‘turning points’ to bring focus into the life-stories or personal narratives of participants regarding specific events. The search into the conflict narratives of Sri Lanka was an investigation of the modern history of the country. Moreover, by getting unstructured, unprepared answers, it was possible to control the amount of self-serving answers given to the researcher. The need to gather unrehearsed information on their perspectives was included and repeatedly stressed at the original introduction stage and was stressed again prior to conducting the interviews. If asked, the researcher would then elaborate on the research topic. What they present as crucial
turning points provided insights into turning points within the overall competing group narratives. Moreover, how or whether they incorporated their personal narratives to that event or incident allowed the examination of less-than subtle positioning which often occurred when interviewing a participant: i.e., how they presented their affiliation to the group (‘we’, ‘us’, etc.).

The research latched onto Shuval’s definition of diaspora as “a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, history, meaningful narratives, group identity” (Shuval, 2000: 43) by examining their interaction through narrative inquiry. This entailed using ‘Turning Points’ as a tool to assist the participants nudge their memories (see Appendix I). The tool used to help focus the participants’ memories and to gain insights into personal narratives ‘Turning Points’.

Narrative analysis of interview data further provided the researcher with the ability to analyze the individual telling of turning points to explore whether the diaspora remained influenced by myths and events in their country-of-origin despite the physical distance. The research questions included requesting that they provide information on what ‘turning points’ or critical moments, unforgettable or important dates they heard or experienced (Question No. 5). Participants provided their opinions regarding the history by talking about stories they heard or personally experienced regarding a specific event. Turning points assisted in categorizing the vast transcribed data into manageable sections that informed diaspora prejudices towards the out-group.
This study used narrative inquiry as a means of understanding the conflict-driven prejudicial narrative and explore whether such narratives influence intergroup interaction, even when positive contact occurs. In fact, this “refers to a subset of qualitative research … in which stories are used to describe human action … In the context … narrative refers to a discourse form in which events and happenings are configured into a temporal unity by means of a plot.” (Polkinghorne, 1995: 5). As defined by Bal,

a narrative text is a text in which an agent relates a narrative. A story is a ibula that is present in a certain manner. A ibula is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors. An event is the transition from one state to another state. Actors are agents that perform actions. They are not necessarily human. To act is defined here as to cause or to experience an event. (Bal 1985: 5)

Studies using narrative inquiry include Mischler (1995) who discusses the relationship between events and the storyline as it pertains to temporal sequencing. While narrative analysis conducted by Mishler (1999; 1986), Labov (1997; 1994; 1972) and Riessman (2002; 1993) have consistently informed this current study, this research it does not focus on the analysis of language construction below the sentence. This research does not involve a semiotic analysis. Rather, it takes as inspiration the work of Johnston (2005), who analyzed tobacco farmers and their complex identity concerns. The research focused on ‘narratives’, both personal and of the group.

[1] Because narratives contain more than one event and/or state of affairs. Narratives represent a series of events and/or state of affairs. … [2] to count as a narrative connection, a discourse representing a series of events must be about a unified subject … Of course, saying even this much allows that a narrative may be about more than one unified subject … Large – scale narratives such as a
history of France, will often be about more than one subject; and narratives of all sizes may develop parallel stories concerning different subjects; moreover, in addition, narratives may contain nonnarrative material. But to qualify as a narrative connection, the discourse must manifest at least one unified subject. …

Narratives have discernible temporal order … A narrative is simply a series of events arranged helter-skelter; a narrative is at least a sequence of events, where sequence implies temporal ordering. (Carroll 2001: 23)

To gain insights into such narratives, the researcher required the participants to have a discourse with the past, especially with their memories. Although competing ‘antecedents’ or ‘beginnings’ exists with regard to each group’s history, the events that participants perceive as crucial became to focus of the research. Dissection of the vast group narrative involved using the participant’s own definition of specific ‘turning points’ within the overall history. This is relevant as “[n]arrative events have not only a logic of connection, but a logic of hierarchy. Some [narratives] are more important than others.” (Chatman :53).

Turning points assisted in dividing kernels or major plot events from satellite or minor plots. Within the narrative analysis tradition, turning points as a concept utilized here to find a “unified subject” (Carroll 2001: 23). This is especially relevant as this research utilized the holistic-form to examine different plots regarding turning points (Sparkes 2005; Leiblich et at. 1998; Gergen and Gergen 1997).

The analysis of positioning required the use of the ‘Mutually Determining Triad’. This triad includes “speech-act … [which] expresses the illocutionary force of an utterance. The social or other effect of this act is the perlocutionary force.” (Harré and Slocum 2003: 107). It further includes ‘storyline’ which is traditionally analyzed through
discourse analysis and ‘positions’ which result in one individual or one group positioning or being positioned by another. These three components are interconnected and fluid. The ‘social force’ of utterances depends on the ‘storyline’, which provides the background history to positions taken.

Repackaging the Data

The categorized data included the visual representation of the network of intergroup interaction and plot and positioning of turning points. Repackaging of that data initially entailed elaborating the visual representation by examining each participant’s positioning. Whether, for example, first-order categorization entailed ethnicity, citizenship, religion, or profession. This assisted the creation of a network map, which provided the basis for social network analysis. Secondly, this research strived to understand whether Sri Lankan diaspora continued to link their identity with the country-of-origin. This meant repackaging the interview data of each participant to identity the positions taken by participants. Thirdly, the repackaging process assisted not only in identifying significant turning points as identified by the participants, but also the plot lines. This meant focusing on the plots within each turning point and regarding each intergroup interaction. Finally, the research considered the data through the narrative network lens.

Identification of Positions

171
According to Harré and van Langenhove,

a position is a complex cluster of generic personal attributes, structured in various ways, which impinges on the possibilities of interpersonal, intergroup and even intrapersonal action through some assignment of such rights, duties and obligations to an individual as are sustained by the cluster. … Generally speaking positions are relational, in that for one to be positioned as powerful others must be positioned as powerless. (Harré and van Langenhove 1999: 1 – 2).

This ensures positioning of self within a group, which, according to the heliotropic principle presumes that “systems evolve toward the most positive images that they hold of themselves” (Yeager and Sorensen, 1999, p.135), whereby “members move more rapidly and effectively in the direction of affirmative imagery, than in the opposite direction of negative imagery” (Yeager and Sorensen, 1999, p.135). The repackaging of data entailed examining the transcribed interview data for first order and second order positioning.

Figure 3: Mutually Determining Triad
(Developed from ideas presented in Tan and Moghaddam 1999; van Langenhove and Harré 1999; and Taylor and Moghaddam 1984)
Positioning theory allowed the researcher to analyze discourse through the ‘positioning triangle’ or triad, which provided “the three aspects of the cognitive conditions for the unfolding of meaningful episodes mutually determine one another.” (Moghaddam, Harré and Lee 2008: 12). The Mutually Determining Triad provided the necessary insights into positioning as well as the storyline that provided the illocutionary force for making sense of the utterances (see Figure 3 above).

Identification of Turning Points

The concept of ‘turning points’, often utilized within the field of conflict analysis and negotiation as a means of identifying the negotiation processes (Druckman 2001) and as a tool for examining critical moments that indicate a change. This research used this tool to gain insights into moment/event/episode when the personal narrative intersected or latched on to the group narrative; i.e., when the personal narrative of the individual faced a turning point. It provided a means of analyzing specific plots.

The research deals predominantly with the interpretation of interaction: as between the personal life stories (i.e., personal narratives) and the history (group narratives), the group/s accepts as theirs. The concept of ‘turning points’ was: a) used as a means of examining the group narrative influences on personal narratives; and b) used as a tool to help participants to interact with the past, rather than think of the researcher/interviewer.
This concept also provided a technique to incorporate ‘episodes’ in the traditional Positioning theory and narratives within the broader group narrative.

The research repackaged the turning points according importance: what each participant considered the most significant. Thus, each participant equivalent to a case study and within each case study was at least one turning point.

*Identification of Plot*

This research entailed the exploration of each individual participant’s plot, which is a chronologically ordered narrative with the specific notion that “If the action is plot-significant, the agent or patient is called a character. Thus the character is narrative – though not necessarily grammatical – subject of the narrative predicate” (Chatman 2000: 44). It is pertinent to recall that this research strived to understand ‘conflict-driven narratives.’ This required the mapping of the conflict/s within Sri Lanka as they appear to the participating diaspora. Mapping the conflict required an understanding that, in constructing the ‘us – them’ dichotomy, archetypal stories become reinforced and the ‘other’ is placed negatively within the narrative. When there is a conflict, the group narrative becomes simplified and closed. Prejudicial, conflict-driven group narratives do not have nuances or contradictions.

Furthermore, exploring the interview data using narrative analytical tools provide insights into whether positive contact present complex and dynamic narratives while prejudicial
group narratives remain static due to acceptance of stereotypes. As illustrated in the forthcoming chapters, an analysis of conflict-driven prejudicial story includes such static characterizations of the ‘other’. Furthermore, “[t]he events of a story are traditionally said to constitute an array called ‘plot.’ Aristotle defined plot (mythos) as the ‘arrangement of incidents’” (Chatman, 2000:43) and this research explores the plot. This research, however, does not use Fraytag’s Pyramid to analyze the plot.

Narrative analysis involved examining each plot to infer a specific narrative form (Cortazzi 2007; Lieblich et al. 1998; Gergen and Gergen 1997; Lobov 1972). This analysis is pertinent as “Narrative is, after all, a major means of making sense of past experience and sharing it with others” (Cortazzi 2007: 384).

“The dominant motif is the heroic myth in which the central character clashes with an enemy … The hero reigns supreme … or … made a tragic victim. Typically, forces of fate or whimsy drive the narrative … [at times] an innocent and powerless bystander to an avalanche of tragedy.” (Daiute and Lightfoot, 2003: 30)

The repackaging of the data entailed examining whether the predominant narrative plot form utilized by the participant contained a heroic/romantic plotline.

The heroic or romantic narrative form present a challenge faced, a journey taken, a goal-achieved whilst the tragic form of narrative inform of the powerlessness of the bystander. This analysis is essential as “narrative offers an avenue for linking personal experience to cultural knowledge, norms, and tenants” (Mattingly and Garro 2000: 28). This research took this notion and linked individual experiences to groups, and expanded it to include
nested identities (Novitz 1997; Gergen and Gergen 1997). The repackaging also assisted in finding whether more than one plot existed within each interview.

Other than narratives of turning points, each participant also told of their friendships with fellow Sri Lankans, some – as expressed by the participants themselves – from the out-group. The participants described how they met (the beginning), how the conflict influenced or did not influence their interaction (the middle), and the status of their friendships (the ending). The repackaging of the data assisted in beginning the exploration into whether Sri Lankan diaspora constitute divided groups and if intergroup interaction exist despite acceptance of in-group prejudice of the out-group.

**Identification of Narrative (Social) Networks**

Social network analysis entails presenting a visualized social architecture of interaction, revealing nodes and links that connect narratives. There exists a specific ‘narrative’ network analysis within the broader social network analysis. As clarified by Boje, “Most narrative study will involve some type of network analysis, the categorization of story fragments into narrative maps to read as nodes and relationships (links) for abstract model building.” (Boje 2001: 62). Indeed,

[a] network is a map of nodes and links that interconnect. Nodes … can be people, groups, organizations, stories, categories, etc. and the links can be analytical or virtual links. Links can depict intensity with various line shadings or symbols … A ‘node’ is a category-container for various ideas … The network displays are often simply the analyst’s perception of the salient structural features
of a storied network, such as its sub-group organization and recurrent narrative themes. (Boje, 2001: 65 – 66)

This research not only presents a visual map of networks (see Figure 17 and Figure 18 in Chapter 5) but it also analyzes this interaction by examining positions and plots of those who interact with one another and exploring the strength and weakness in the interaction/s.

Through analysis of nodes in a network, social network analysis provides an avenue for discovering ‘natural groups’, some hitherto unexplored. Moreover, narrative network analysis provides a means for understanding ‘relationships’, where the more dense the connections (relationships) among nodes and entities, the richer the insights into complex issues. This scale-free network mapping style analysis not only entails the exploration of the social network (i.e., the visual representation of who introduced whom) but also narrative network analysis. Indeed, “[n]arrative analysis takes as its object of investigation the story itself … Respondents narrativize particular experiences in their lives, often where there has been a breach between ideal and real, self and society.” (Riessman, 1993: 3 – 4).

**Connecting Data to Research Question and Problem Statement**

Linking data to research questions involved within and cross-case analysis of the interviews. In the process, this section strived to highlight the networks in existence. This analysis of case studies hoped to explore the turning points that influenced Sri
Lankan diaspora participants and, through the analysis of the plot, understand the specific group narrative that influenced them. This in turn provided insights into whether group narratives, believed as factual by the participants, include prejudicial and stereotypical perceptions of the other.

The analysis involved combining personal narratives of the participants with documented group narratives. This study highlighted only the Sinhalese and Tamil group narratives. This also resulted in, for example, the focus on specific areas or themes emphasized by individual participants. These include what each group informed were the ‘original settlers,’ the ‘naming of the conflict’ and the origin, the ‘antecedent.’

Along with focusing on divisions, this research also strived to illuminate the intergroup interactions that occur among Sri Lankan diaspora and whether prejudice existed within this interaction. In examining the individual cases in its entirety, the researcher hoped to examine the group narratives that influence the participants while an in depth analysis of each turning point present insights into significance of events to each participant and the meanings attached to them.

Reduction of Data

As the personal experiences of the researcher affirmed, if Sri Lankan diaspora do have positive contact with one another, a pre-requisite in the research design entailed finding a specific tool to analyze this intergroup interaction. Narrative analyses allowed the
researcher to explore the storyline while the linguistic and rhetoric devices helped explore the positioning within the personal narratives through words used by the participants. Subsequently, to understand the role of the social networks, the study also utilized narrative networks.

The within-case and cross-case analysis also presented an overview of the overall network derived through the snowball sampling technique used to gather data as well as the questionnaire data. The research highlighted individual exemplars and aberrations among the cases (i.e., within-case analysis). Within the Ladder of Analytical Abstraction (see Figure 1 above), this entailed the ‘Reduction of data to enable analysis’ and subsequently ‘Delineating the deep structure and synthesis.’

*Within Case Analysis*

The within-case analysis involved examining each case study. This initially entailed an in depth analysis of the first question in the Questionnaire “What do you consider yourself to be? What about others?” using Positioning theory. This is predominantly a visual presentation, but includes numerical data. Personal narrative data provided in the questionnaire – i.e., these include Question no. Nine to Fourteen (9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14) as well as Eighteen (18) – provided insights into whether intergroup interactions exist. While the answer to the first question in the Questionnaire provided information as to whether the Sri Lankan diaspora remain polarized, subsequent questions, each building
on the other, provided the means to examine the existence of intergroup interactions and its nature. The interview data involved a visual depiction of intergroup interactions and networking, as well as an analysis of how individuals position self. Each case contained numerous plots regarding friendships gained, retained, or lost.

The study shifted to a linguistic and rhetoric analysis of interview data regarding Questions no. 7 and 8. This experience-centered narrative research involves the analysis of individual cases of those who interact with members of the out-group. The examination of narratives of individuals who ‘interacted’ with members of the out-group provided insights required to answer the third Research Question “What are the implications of these findings for the Contact hypothesis and peacebuilding?” This entailed a ‘within-case’ exploration of the interview data and observations to examine the nature of the interaction. The data provided information on the frequency of these interactions and the nature of the said contact.

In brief, the study analyzed the progression of the chronologically structured and sequenced story of ‘meeting friends’; whether and how negative, prejudicial, and polarizing narratives of events influenced that friendship; and the current situation. This once more involved analysis of the narrative structure. Through comparison of the linguistic devices used in discourse of friends and out-group, this study examines whether having friends from the out-group reduced intergroup prejudices. The research strived to understand whether ‘contact’ resulted in questioning the prejudicial negative narratives within one’s own group, and that, if not, how these diaspora compartmentalize them.
Cross Case Analysis

Broadly, this is a cross-case analysis of one-hundred and ten (110) individual cases (i.e., 110 interview participants), with each case study initially providing information on first-order positioning within a group and the group affiliations and rights and duties that affiliation entails. These individual cases subsequently provided insights into the chronological or sequential plots of specific events considered by the individual as ‘turning points’ and of friendships formed or not formed with members of the out-group.

The analysis of the data extracted from transcripts provides an in-depth understanding of intergroup interactions and – through ‘within case’ exploration – a questioning of the tenants of the Contact hypothesis occur.

Furthermore, the questions in the field research questionnaire developed at the outset to answer specific areas of interest in the research, coupled with the snowball sampling technique, assist in defining the boundaries of each sub-network. The list of questions (see Appendix I) provided one set of relevant data. The data from the open-ended interviews, coupled with observations and documentary data gave the prerequisite information to analyze whether intergroup interaction among members of warring sides existed, its nature, and why positive contact has not resulted in reducing prejudice towards the ‘other’ group.

The analysis of the characteristics of different cases – i.e., personal narratives of participants – involved influences of negative conflict-driven narratives and the positive
intergroup interaction. The cross-case analysis examined the inherent contradiction/s presented within the interview data.

Social Network Analysis

The cross-case analysis also involved categorizing the cases according to sub-networks in an overall network map. According to Boje, “Most narrative study will involve some type of network analysis, the categorizing of story fragments into narrative maps read as notes and relationships (links) for abstract model building.” (2001: 63). This study focuses on strong and weak ties between those within the overall network and within the subsequent sub-networks. It thus targets the nodes and their relationship with members of the networks. In the process, the study defines weak ties as acquaintances while strong ties as friendships. As commented by Granovetter in his argument on “The Strength of Weak Ties: a network theory revisited.” (1983), strong ties involve densely knit ties to one another while weak ties entail absence of many such ties.

Examination of Problem Statement

The cross-case and within-case analysis provided answers to the first Research Question “Do polarized Sri Lankan diaspora have informal and friendly contact with members of the ‘other’ group?” through insights as to whether ‘positive’ contact occurs between
members of divided groups. According to Lynch, Modgil, and Modgil (1992), ‘positive contact’ means voluntary non-competitive interaction. Schneider, Gruman, and Coutts, while reiterating the significance of non-competitive intergroup interaction, also emphasizes that “as people get to know each other on a more personal level, relations between them start to change and become more positive in nature” (2005: 352). In brief, this meant contact without preconceived prejudices, which occur “when members of different groups (a) with equal status and (b) common goals are brought together (c) to interact intensively in noncompetitive, cooperative tasks (d) with the active endorsement of authority figures (Pettigrew, 1998, pp. 66 – 67).” (Healey 2005:116) or customs based on positive values. It is imperative to emphasize that this field data remain intertwined with observed intergroup interactions. The focus thus lies in exploring personal narratives illustrating the positive contacts based on above Contact hypothesis criteria.

Social network analysis assisted in answering the second Research Question “Do these diaspora retain their respective group’s conflict-driven narrative despite this contact?” Having established that positive contact exit, the study shifted to analysis of the conflict-driven narratives. Utilizing the field data, the research firstly defined what constitutes a ‘conflict-driven’ narrative. At the outset, it meant an exploration into the antecedent and then specific turning points highlighted by the participants. Narrative analyses of data provide insights into the closed, simplified, prejudicial nature of conflict-driven group narratives. Each ‘turning point’ represented either a firsthand experience presented through personal narratives or a secondhand account tainted through group narrative/s.
The study examined narratives of turning points in each case study to understand whether these contained prejudicial perspectives.

Thus, analysis of turning points described in each case study involved:

i. Hierarchical placement of turning points: i.e., which turning point was most important to participants from different groups

ii. Breakdown of these turning points into personal narratives or based on group narratives

iii. Analysis of turning points using narrative plot

iv. Informing whether the group narratives used retain complexity and flexibility or simplicity and rigidness through cross-case analysis of narratives of participants within sub-networks

v. A cross-case comparison of specific turning points include an examination as to whether there are similarities within each group and between groups and whether these are conflict-driven group narratives.

This in turn presented answers to the final Research Question: “What are the implications of these findings for the Contact hypothesis.” To reiterate, analysis of interview and archival data informed of the existence of both conflict-driven narratives that emphasize the distrustful, prejudicial, and negative attributes of the other and positive personal narratives of friendships maintained. The ‘within-case’ description compare whether individuals who interact with one another retained prejudice towards members of the ‘other’ group. This step remained highly descriptive and illustrative and emphasized the
exemplar cases that prove that contact with members of the out-group reduced prejudices towards the other group and other variations where intergroup interaction did not reduced intergroup prejudices. The analysis of the data provided the necessary means to advance perspectives regarding the applicability of ‘Contact hypothesis’ towards reducing intergroup prejudices.

Synthesis

The synthesis of the analysis above provided information to answer the problem statement: “Contrary to the expectations of the Contact hypothesis, members of the divided Sri Lankan diaspora maintain friendly relationships while retaining their divisive conflict-driven group narratives”.

Delineating the Deep Structure

The data analysis strategy chosen strived to ensure external validity. The external validity issue involves exploring “whether the conclusions of a study have any larger import. Are they transferable to other contexts? Do they ‘fit’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)? How far can they be ‘generalized’?” (Miles and Huberman 1994: 279). The most important aspect of external validity came from examining the problem statement. While the problem statement focused on the Sri Lankan diaspora, its broader applications
– the understanding of intergroup interactions – remain significance to fields of conflict resolution, theories on intergroup interaction, and diaspora studies. The research examined intergroup interaction – i.e., contact – and its potential outcomes. Thus, the importance of examining the role of diaspora coupled with the significance of scrutinizing the nature of ‘contact’. In the process of examining the inherently contradictory nature of the intergroup interactions among the Sri Lankan diaspora, the research findings strived to problematize tenants of Contact hypothesis. The snowball sampling technique and the analytical tool illustrate a means to replicate and thereby transfer the data gathering process and the steps taken in analyzing data.
CHAPTER FOUR

Plotting First Order Positions

“The people of Sri Lanka were all originally South Indian people ... Sri Lanka was a part of South India until the sea came between ... when about 9000 years ago ... That’s how the Veddas walked across and got isolated as so many other people walked across ... And there were the Raksha and Nagas and all that ... say ... the Dravindian people of high civilization ... But the Mahavamsa and all that tried to show them that they were ghosts and spirits ... Of course the Nagas worshipped the Cobra ... Some Buddhas have a cobra- hood protecting them ... amm? ... But this is false history ... and then pre-Buddha South India were all Tamil speaking ... Thousands of years ago Thelangu people, Andra Pradesh ... Karnataka, Kerala were all Tamil speaking people ... There all branches of Tamil ... You see ... same as Ceylon ... All you have is distorted history ... these are the facts!”

Participant No. 8 (Interview Data)

As archetype conflict-escalating diaspora, the Sri Lankan diaspora appear to embrace the divisions that exist within their country-of-origin. Thereby, the diaspora become the ‘gatekeepers’ of their respective group narrative by safeguarding their own group narrative from challenges from within and without. The conflict-driven nature of group narratives exacerbates the divisions, ensuring intra-group cohesion at the expense of intergroup interaction, despite the apparent existence of intergroup interaction among members of the ‘other’ group. To explore whether contact – as described in the Contact hypothesis – among Sri Lankan diaspora was adequate to reduce prejudice towards the
other require an in depth investigation of the prejudices towards the ‘other’ group. Prior to this, however, it is vital to present the divided diaspora.

**Introduction**

The significance of Sri Lankan diaspora intergroup interaction lie in understanding that the Sri Lankan diaspora remain divided on ethno-linguistic lines despite living outside of Sri Lanka. As presented in the previous chapter, literature on Sri Lankan diaspora highlighted this divisive nature. One dispute with the existing literature on Sri Lankan diaspora is that they present them as divided without an analysis of all diaspora groups. A second concern, which the current research strives to illuminate, is that they do not inform of the existence of intergroup interaction despite the divisions.

It is therefore vital to present the situation and, in the process, provide answers to the research objectives “To illustrate that Sri Lankan diaspora remain as divided groups even during the MOU period (2002 – 2008)” and “To inform of the existence of subtle and informal yet continued intergroup interaction between (some) Sri Lankan diaspora”. This entails using the data to understand whether the super-ordinate categorization of the participating Sri Lankan diaspora that “creates conditions for individual intergroup comparison.” (Brewer 2000: 168) appear linked to country-of-origin ethno-linguistic, political, cultural, religious, or any other categorization. As the analysis of research data
below illustrate, Sri Lankan diaspora identify themselves in terms of group affiliations stemming from the country they left behind.

**Divisions within the Sri Lankan Diaspora**

The very fact that an intense, vicious and protracted conflict exist within the country-of-origin infers the existence of divided groups. Social Identity theory “refers to the social use of markers to claim, achieve, or ascribe group membership” (Black 2003: 120). It is vital to keep this in mind when examining the interview data. The interview questions endeavored to examine whether the Sri Lankan diaspora appear segmented according to ethno-linguistic grouping that exist in their country-of-origin. It moreover aimed to establish whether the participants’ self-identification or ‘first order’ positioning included an emotional link with that group membership; i.e., did participants’ inherently position the in-group in a positive light whilst accepting the negative prejudicial stereotypes of the out-group.

The diaspora activism and the conclusions of academics presented in the previous chapter illustrate the existence of divisions. Such claims, secondary in nature rather than gathered from primary data, required firmer exploration. Moreover, research data that inform of group division as well as positive interactions from the perspective of the diaspora remain non-existent. This current research provided insights into the diaspora interactions from the perspective of the diaspora themselves. Thus, the analysis utilized
only primary – interview and observational – data to conclude whether the diaspora perceived themselves divided into groups. In the process of informing that the Sri Lankan diaspora remain divided, this chapter also provided insights into diaspora prejudices towards the ‘other’/‘out’ group.

Positioning, one of three narrative analytical tools used in this research, provided insights into whether the Sri Lankan diaspora constitute a divided group. As Figure 3 in the previous chapter illustrated, analysis of differential dynamic positions, the illocutionary or social force of utterances, and the storyline of the interview data provided the relevant background information to develop the argument that the Sri Lankan diaspora remained divided even in the midst of the MOU period.

First Order Positioning

The first order positioning of participants provide insights into super-ordinate categorizations. The open-ended question “What do you consider yourself to be? What about others?” (see Appendix I) resulted in the respondents self-identifying (i.e. self-categorizing) into groups. This initial “well I am a …” first order positioning by participant provided the insights given below in Figure 4.

Overall, it is possible to note that forty-two percent (42%) of the participants positioned self ethno-linguistically. The first order positioning of self as ‘Sinhalese’ entailed categorization; and if one is a Sinhalese, then, relationally, the participant positions
‘others’ into categories based on ethnicity or language. A caution: this is however not overall the largest categorization as fifty-three percent (53%) of the participants identified self according to their nationality.

Of the fifty-nine (59) participants whose first order positioning apparently involved nationality, thirty-six (36) participants informed the researcher that s/he was a “Sri Lankan” while another ten (10) participants informed that they were “Sri Lankan British” and another twelve insisted that they were “British.” All eight (08) of the second-generation diaspora positioned self as “British.” Only two (02) participants’ first order
positioning linked to their profession. These two participants, No. 44 and No. 66, had well-established professions. Finally, only four (04) positioned self through their religion. It was interesting to note that of these three, two spoke to the interviewer at a place of religious worship: a Buddhist temple. With the exception of one (01) participant, a retired professional interviewed at his/her home, the interview location may have had an impact on the self-categorization. While this research intends to analyze such statement in detail, Table No. 2 titled ‘Participant First Order Positioning’ below present an overview of first order positioning.

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192
A glance at the answers to the first question – none based on single word answers but rather included sentences and qualifications – illustrated that the diaspora appeared to position self within groups that predominantly appeared linked to their country-of-origin. Moreover, this segregation appeared based on ethno-linguistic, nationalist, religious, and profession categorizations. The sample in Figure 5 (below) illustrates this.

“Sri Lankan … I was born Sri Lankan”
[Participant No. 5, interviewed on Jan 27 2005]

“A Sri Lankan in a foreign country”
[Participant No. 64, interviewed on Feb 27 2005]
“I call myself Sri Lankan British … I feel better that way”  
[Participant No. 39, interviewed on Feb 15 2005]

“British Sri Lankan … I don’t want to lose my Sri Lankan nationality”  
[Participant No. 50, interviewed on Feb 19 2005]

“British … of Sri Lankan origin”  
[Participant No. 22, interviewed on Feb 12 2005]

“I call myself British”  
[Participant No. 62, interviewed on Feb 27 2005]

“Sinhalese naturally”  
[Participant No. 23, interviewed on Feb 12 2005]

“Sinhala … that is our identity … Sri Lankan is a mixture of different ethnicities … Sinhala is only there in Sri Lanka and we love to talk in Sinhala when there are others Indo Aryan … Indo-European language … Not Tamil … don’t take me for a raciest but I am Sinhalese.”  
[Participant No. 83, interviewed on March 19 2005]

“I’m a Sri Lankan Tamil … Normally I don’t just put Sri Lankan anywhere … I put Sri Lankan Tamil”  
[Participant No. 70, interviewed on March 16 2005]

“I call myself as a Ceylon Tamil”  
[Participant No. 92, interviewed on March 24 2005]

“British by passport but I’m a Buddhist … a Sinhala”  
[Participant No. 63, interviewed on Feb 27 2005]

“I’m a retired _______”  
[Participant No. 44, interviewed on Feb 16 2005]

“I say by profession … and then by Nationality”  
[Participant No. 66, interviewed on March 12 2005]

Figure 5: First Order Positioning  
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)
A caveat: this is merely a superficial examination of the first order positioning and further analysis of the data below provide a deeper understanding of this self-categorization or first order positioning. One reason is that without a background knowledge to specific terms, it is difficult understand the meaning given by the participants to each statement as well as the illocutionary power of such statements. As illustrated below, Participant No. 2 informed that while s/he was Sri Lankan, in reality, “I consider myself to be a Southern Sri Lankan.” (Participant No. 2, interviewed on Jan 25 2005 from Field research data gathered in UK from January to end of April 2005). On face value, the participant positions self within the nationality category. However, with an understanding the storyline and the illocutionary force of the utterances, it is possible to infer that the participant’s first order positioning places him/her within the ethnicity category, as traditionally, a ‘Southern’ Sri Lankan is a patriotic Sinhalese. Sinhalese group narratives regarding southern Sri Lankans position them positively as brave, tenacious, proud, patriotic, and as saviors of the nation or as well as negatively as stubborn, crafty, and hot-tempered.

The illocutionary force of such a statement, “I consider myself to be a Southern Sri Lankan.” (Participant No. 2) – which link self with King Dutugemunu, one of the most venerated kings in Sinhalese history, as well as with the JVP, and some national leaders – provide an insight into this individual’s group affiliation. Secondly, the researcher’s presence might have influenced this initial research question and thereby influences the validity of the findings. Furthermore, the location of the interviews – in Buddhist and
Hindu temples, cafes, offices, and homes – also possibly influenced the positioning of self. However, as participants qualified their answer, it became apparent that most first order positioning remained linked to an overall ethno-linguistic categorization from their country-of-origin.

A number of participants who immediately positioned self as “Sri Lankan,” “Sri Lankan British,” “British,” “Doctor,” “Christian,” “Hindu,” or “Buddhist” elaborated this first order positioning. The complexity in their identification appeared in the answer to the first interview questions. This is evident when examining the first order positioning of the two examples given below in Figure 6.

“British citizen now … Sri Lankan but … cultural heritage … born a Tamil”  
[Participant No. 42, interviewed on Feb 16 2005]

“Although I have a British passport … I would like to consider myself Sri Lankan … or Sinhalese”  
[Participant No. 63, interviewed on Feb 27 2005]

Both these participants qualified their first order positioning. Participant No. 42, one the one hand, positioned self according to his/her citizenship yet qualified this answer by positioning self within an ethno-linguistic group. It is possible to infer that this participant’s group affiliations linked to voluntary and involuntary choices group membership. The most significant group membership appears to be the citizenship,
his/her current nationality. Participant No. 63, on the other hand qualified his/her first order positioning by emphasizing the ethnicity, despite informing of the citizenship criteria.

Not all participants positioned self within an ethno-linguistic or political group. Participant No. 14 first order positioning involved his/her Christian faith but qualified this by informing that, “It depends on where I am … If I go on holiday I’m British … But if I’m in Sri Lanka I’m of cause Tamil … If I’m in India, I’m Sri Lankan” (Participant No. 14, interviewed on Feb 9 2005 from Field research data gathered in UK from January to end of April 2005). This individual highlighted the fluidity of identity.

It is noteworthy to inform that most participants clarified their first order positioning. Some, such as the examples presented above, qualified their first-order positioning by expanding or specifying the group allegiances. Some however provided the answer but assumed that the participant understood the significance of the statement. One example is Participant No. 2 who did not elaborate his/her answer to Question No. 1. The participant assumed that the researcher had an understanding of the meaning behind positioning self as a ‘Southern’ Sinhalese. The clarifications elaborated the storyline, enhanced the illocutionary force of the utterances, or inferred the rights or duties such positioning entailed. The first order positioning of Participant No. 2, for example, inferred the rights, duties, and obligations of positioning self as a ‘Southern Sri Lankan.’

Indeed, out of the fifty-nine (59) individuals who positioned self according to their nationality, thirty-four (34) elaborated their answer regarding their first order positioning.
by linking their personal identity to ethno-linguistic categorization. The two (02) individuals who positioned self according to their profession and the two (02) of the three (03) participants who identified self according to their religion clarified their first order positioning by linking their profession or religion to their ethno-linguistic identity. Of the two (03) whose first order positioning involved self-categorization according to their profession, Participant No. 44 informed that s/he was a Tamil while Participant No. 66 clarified that s/he was Sinhalese Participants No. 77 and 79 whose first order positioning linked to Buddhism qualified this further by positioning self as Sinhalese. Participant No. 14, however, never positioned self according to anything except his/her religion, but commented on how third order positioning forced him/her to highlight one aspect of his/her identity.

“If I am in holiday then I’m British ... If I’m in Sri Lanka of cause I am Sri Lankan ... If I’m in India, I am Sri Lankan (…) If I am with a group of Christians, then I am Christian.”

[Participant No. 14]

This participant’s first order positioning apparently remain tied to third order situational positioning. The forthcoming chapters examine his/her personal narrative further.

It is possible to surmise that such elaborations illustrated the need to clarify their meaning to the interviewer or merely a need to make self clear. Those who did not categorize self according to their nationality, religion, or profession also elaborated their initial first order positioning. Participants whose first order positioning involved ethno-linguistic categorization also elaborated their answer. Participant No. 86, for example, informed
that “Sinhala … a language is an identifier of a community” (Participant No. 86, interviewed on March 19 2005 from Field research data gathered in UK from January to end of April 2005). This individual not only presented his/her group affiliation but also provided an insight into the rights, duties, and obligations it entailed. If, as s/he noted, “language is an identifier of a community,” then to protect and preserve that language and the specific ethnic group remained his/her duty. This emphasized the complexity of self identification.

As noted, not everyone negotiated their first order positioning, thereby enhancing their link to their ethno-linguistic group. Participants No. 17 and 21 for example, whose first order positioning linked his/her self-categorization to nationality, explained why s/he did not position self according to ethnicity. Indeed, as Figure 7 below highlight, the upbringing apparently influences such assertions.

“I rarely identify myself as Sinhalese … It’s just that, from what I can remember from my childhood, we were never really told that we were Sinhalese … Our parents message was, you’re Sri Lankan, that’s were we were born and no question of ethnicity ever rose.”

[Participant No. 17, interviewed on Feb 10 2005]

Figure 7: First Order Positioning Influences
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)

It is interesting to examine the illocutionary force of this participant’s statement. Ethnic divisions remain ‘bad’ while nationality integral to self. Moreover, it proposed that
identity is not an involuntary membership within a group but rather a construct. While this participant emphasized the constructed nature of identity, Participant No. 21 (see Figure 8 below) introduced the complex nature of identity. What is intriguing is that despite this participant positioning self as ‘British’ s/he has apparently not restricted his/her identification.

“I have a sister-in-law who is a Buddhist (…) We are a thoroughly mixed. Brother one married to a Sinhalese, two to a Burgher. We have British, Irish and Welsh grandchildren”

[Participant No. 21, interviewed on Feb 12 2005]

Yet, of the one-hundred and ten participants, sixty-eight (68) participants or sixty-two percent (61.8%) positioned self according to their ethno-linguistic group. Of the eight (08) second-generation participants – which include Participants No. 7, 19, 26, 52, 53, 62, 64, and 76 – only one, Participant No. 26, indicated a third order positioning that focused on his/her ethnicity, “most of them interact with their own group … in Cambridge, it was mixed … the Tamil group was so small, we had to integrate here in London, it is segregated” (Participant No. 26, interviewed on Feb 12 2005 from Field research data gathered in UK from January to end of April 2005).

This indicated that while Participant No. 17 could remove him/herself from the Sri Lankan storyline and position self according to nationality, as s/he believed ethnic
identity is a construct; Participant No. 26 faced challenges to his/her first order positioning. This participant positioned self as British but, the linguistic devises inform of a more nuanced understanding of groups. This participant positioned the Tamil students as ‘them.’ Moreover, the term “we had to integrate” illustrated his/her perception that integration remained involuntary. Moreover, this participant informed of third-order positioning by Tamil students. However, since the first order positioning of Participant No. 26 involved nationality and as the Participant appear to reject the third order positioning, this categorization remains within the original category.

Figure 9: First Order Positioning of Participants
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)
Of the participants whose first order positioning included nationality, Participants No. 2, 17, 25, 27, 34, 37, 39, 40, 63, and 110 qualified their self-categorization by emphasizing their Sinhalese ethnicity. Moreover, Participants No. 21, 22, 42, 44, 48, 50, 51, 71, and 85 further positioned self as Tamil. Thus, forty-seven (47) participants positioned self as Sinhalese, twenty-one (21) as Tamil. Figure No. 9 (above), titled ‘First Order Positioning of Participants’ inform of the post-analysis first order positioning of the participants.

The first order positioning illuminated the super-ordinate categorization of the participants: their ethno-linguistic link to country-of-origin. A comparison of Figure 4 and Figure 9 illustrate (see Figure 10 below) how, as participants elaborated and their storyline became clearer, it is possible to conclude that a majority of the participants position self according to ethnicity. Those who emphasized profession provide a different self-identification while those who self-categorized in terms of religion and nationality/citizenship reduced in numbers as they elaborated what they meant.

Figure 10: Comparison of Self-Identification
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)
The social force of such first order positioning during tense situations inform of the strength of group affiliation. Moreover, positioning self as Sinhalese or Tamil entailed specific duties and obligations as well as rights. As emphasized by Harré and van Langenhove (1999) and illustrated through the heliotropic principle (Yeager and Sorensen, 1999), the ‘other’ has to be positioned in a negative light in order to position ‘self’ in a positive light. This is both a right and a duty. In this positioning of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ – especially during times of tension in protracted conflicts – the obligation to preserve group history and to use it for the justification of the division appear to go hand-in-hand with enhanced group divisions. Among the Sri Lankan diaspora, the divisions predominantly highlight the tension between the ethno-linguistic groups rather than among religions. Thus, it is possible to deduce that the diaspora continue and perhaps exacerbate divisions apparent in the country-of-origin. The differential dynamic positioning resulting from the combination of the fluid, tri-polar positions, storyline that anchor the episodes and the relatively determining social force of the speech acts illustrate further the significance of the third order positioning of Participant No. 26. As Berman noted, third order positioning, “can only be made salient through discourse if that position is taken up.” (Berman 1999: 151). The episode presented involves the third order challenge to the participant’s first order positioning. The third order positioning by Tamil students at his/her university apparently forced this participant to reconsider his/her first order positioning. This indicates the power embodied in ‘others’ in positioning and the significance of the ethno-linguistic divisions that apparently exist within the country-of-origin. Participant No, 17 who positioned self as ‘Sri Lankan
British’ also informed of this third order positioning, “when talking to English people … the majority of time, they say are you Tamil … That would come in a conversation, no I’m Sinhalese” (Participant No. 17, interviewed on Feb 10 2005 from Field research data gathered in UK from January to end of April 2005). While some participants appear to negotiate their identity, others challenge their nationalist first order positioning.

To reiterate, other second-generation participants’ first order positioning remained based on their British citizenship. They did not elaborate their self-categorization, which indicate the possibility that their first order positioning remained unchallenged. It is important to mention that this research focused on investigating first-generation diaspora rather than second-generation diaspora. Though these second generation diaspora remained included in the analysis as they also provided insights into first order positioning, albeit to negate the assertion that the Sri Lankan diaspora continue to divisions that exist in their home country whilst living in their host country, there were only eight participants, constituting only seven percent (7%) of the information-rich informants.

*The Us-Them Dichotomy*

As the interview progressed, a positioning analysis using rhetoric and linguistic devises further provided insights into the significance of this first order positioning. Participants used words such as “we,” “our,” “them,” “their” during the interview. The ‘us-them’
dichotomy emphasized by some of the participants illustrated the division of Sri Lankan diaspora predominantly into ethno-linguistic groups. Participant No. 8, for example, informed that “You people are Dravindians,” (Participant No. 8, interviewed on Jan 30 2005 from Field research data gathered in UK from January to end of April 2005).

This participant positioned the researcher/interviewer as well as him/herself within divided ethno-linguistic groups. In the process, s/he tried to inform “You people” were not Sinhalese, as the Sinhalese ethnicity remained a constructed ethnicity, a romantic illusion. Again, to comprehend the participant’s statement required an understanding of the storyline and the meaning or the social force of the utterances. Some, like the first participant quoted below, emphasized the divisions while other two highlighted in Figure 11 presented a far-less dichotomous perspective.

“if you ask any Tamil person are they better off leaving Sri Lanka and coming to this rich country, they all say better off. … second thing, … most may say they want half the island but that is just a verbal thing … Even in their own community, they have caste issues … they can’t go back even if they want to … none of them will return to their homeland”

[Participant No. 31, interviewed on Feb 13 2005]

Certain demands that have been made are not justified … And and also, they they tend to paint a different picture of how Tamil people are oppressed … Which I think is not the case. I was at university, in the halls of residence, I had my other roommate was from Jaffna … We got on well … That, there was no animosity.

[Participant No. 11, interviewed on Feb 6 2005]

“I still have Tamil friends who I’m very close … In my batch, I was in medical
school, there were 150 students … Of that, 75 were Tamil and 75 were Sinhalese … So when Tamils say that they were discriminated against, I couldn’t understand … You stop and wonder … Discrimination was felt in different ways … They had to learn Sinhalese … But if you live in a society where there is 80% Sinhalese, I would have expected them to learn Sinhalese … if they work in the South … We were supposed to learn Tamil but not to the extent as the Tamils … But I suppose, because I’m not a Tamil … I cannot criticize … I haven’t experienced the discrimination they’ve felt.

[Participant No. 106, interviewed on April 11 2005]

However, not everyone whose first order positioning involved their ethnicity elaborated this division. The linguistic and rhetoric devises used by Participant No. 2 (see Figure 12), for example, focused on ‘us’ being his/her family and ‘them’ being the government and the JVP who ‘harassed’ the family. This highlighted the importance of personal experiences.

**Figure 11: First Order Positioning Ethno-Linguistic Division**
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)

We were getting harassed by the government … the army and all this … As … because of my dad was the UNP ________ for the area, so we getting harassed by the JVP … So it was very difficult time for us because we were getting death treats from the JVP … And when the government forces round up a village they don’t care who you are, they just round you up and take them, you to the police. It only happened to me once but that was a very traumatic experience.

[Participant No. 2 interviewed on Jan 25 2005]

**Figure 12: First Order Positioning National Division**
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)
Understanding of participant positioning of self within groups, the illocutionary force of the utterances, and the group storyline that entailed, provided further information on rights, duties, and obligations of group membership. First order positioning of self within a specific ethno-linguistic group entail not only accepting the rights, duties, and obligations that go with it but also the storyline or plot that appear to inextricably link the rights, duties, and obligations to group membership. Participant No. 8, for example, informed the researcher that, “All you have is distorted history … these are the facts!” (Participant No. 8, interviewed on Jan 30 2005 from Field research data gathered in UK from January to end of April 2005). The right to define a specific narrative and, at the same time, to challenge the ‘other’ narrative occur hand-in-hand with the duty and the obligation – at least for this participant – to act as gatekeeper of the Tamil narrative. This moral order involved positioning the Tamil group narrative as the ‘true’ history and, relationally, positioning the Sinhalese narratives as ‘distortions.’ This is illustrative in the statement given by Participant No. 6 in Figure 13.

|“all the Sinhalese people, they they are brainwashed ... They are always, they have grudges against Tamil people .... They don’t know real history ... They ignore real history ... and then try and claim this country ... this country as a Sinhalese country ... But it’s not ... That’s why this Tamil riots came up ... They thought, from the beginning, that they were suppressed ... The Tamil people’s idea is like that ... Now the present generation, the Sinhalese, come to know about it ... They know when they read history ... They know the influence of the Tamil people have had and what was the history ... The ignorant people only ignore the history part.” |

[Participant No. 6, interviewed on Jan 28 2005]

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Figure 13: First Order Positioning Moral Order
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)
The Positioning theory analysis of the interview includes focusing on the highlighted areas as well as the underlined words. This in turn illustrates the rights, duties, and obligations of specific group membership. The ethnic group membership entailed highlighting and preserving the ‘correct’ history and juxtaposing this ‘true’ history with the ‘false’ history believed by the ‘other’ side. Indeed, only Participants No. 6 (above) and 8 and 40 (Figure 14 below) overtly indicated the rights, duties, and obligations of protecting group narrative from the ‘false’ narrative of the other group.

“Sri Lanka was a part of South India until the sea came in people of Sri Lanka were all originally South Indian people, when about 9000 years ago. That how the Vedda walked across and got isolated as so many other people walked across. And there were Raksha and Nagas and all that say … Dravidian people of high civilization.”

[Participant No. 8, interviewed on Jan 30 2005]

“They say Sinhalese came from India … and I way, no, only Vijaya came from India and he married Kuveni, … so we were here already. … I do deserve my nationality … they say ‘you’re a racist’ … lets go back to the principle … If they were discriminated, they deserve to be discriminated for occupying more than their right to the land.”

[Participant No. 40, interviewed on Feb 15 2005]

These participants make the obvious statements regarding his/her right as a member of a specific group: i.e., to claim the country and declare his/her ethnic group as the original settlers, as well as the duty and obligation to protect that belief. These three participants overtly inform what some other diaspora have merely subtly inferred. The right to claim
group membership apparently goes hand-in-hand with their duty and obligation to act as ‘gatekeepers’ or ‘guardians’ of their group narrative. Thus, the super-ordinate categorization (first order positioning) inextricably link with history, with religious beliefs, with ethnic rights, and with a territory.

In answering all the questions in the interview questionnaire, all the first generation participants, with the one exception of Participant No. 106, illustrated their answers by linking their personal narrative to a group narrative from the country-of-origin. Furthermore, all participants, with the exception of Participant No. 106 and the eight second-generation participants utilized historical sources to justify their group’s stance. Whether they belonged to nationalist, ethno-linguistic, or religious groups, the diaspora acted as ‘gatekeepers’ of their group narrative. The forthcoming chapter intends to analyze the case study of the one first generation exception, Participant No. 106. Of the other one-hundred and one participants, all used some storyline, some rhetoric, or linguistic devises to position self and others within a specific moral order.

A participant, whose first order positioning involved ethno-linguistic membership, appeared to accept specific events as turning points over others. Of the participants who consider the 1987 to 1990 period as the ‘terror’, the participants who positioned self according to their ethno-linguistic self-categorization of ‘Sinhalese’ saw the ‘terror’ inextricably linked to the JVP activities in the southern areas of the island.

Whether they lived in the north and north-eastern areas of Sri Lanka or outside of IPKF influence in other parts of the island or outside it as diaspora, all participants whose first
order positioning involved positioning self as Tamil perceived the ‘terror’ linked to the IPKF activities in the northern areas of the island. As indicated by van Longenhove and Harré (1999) Walton, Coyle and Lyons (2003), such first order positioning locates the participant and others within the Sri Lankan diaspora in a moral space in a specific storyline. Third order positioning can challenge this right to perceive one event as crucial over others or even to position self.

**Divisive Narratives**

It is apparent that a majority of the participants accepted ethno-linguistic and even religious divisions that exist in their country-of-origin. Their nested identities retain ethnic, nationalistic, and other categorizations from their country-of-origin. The above examination of Interview Question No. 1, however, focused only on one aspect of their identity: their first order positioning. An overall analysis of individual narratives provides illustrations into storylines that portray the other in a negative light.

*While it is possible to conclude from the interview and literature survey data that the Sri Lankan diaspora retain the divisions that exist in their country-of-origin, what has remained unexamined thus far is whether these divisions link to prejudice.* It is possible to categorize self within one group and not perceive the other group negatively. Yet, the tenants of Social Identity theory inform of the significance of negative comparisons and prejudicial views of the ‘other’. It was vital to explore whether there appeared distinct
narratives, with their own plot or storyline and characters. Linked to this investigation was the clarification as to whether each group’s narrative included positive comparison of one’s own group at the expense of a negative prejudicial perception of the ‘other’ group. In brief, this section strived to examine whether ‘conflict-driven’ narratives influence the participants. It used the words uttered by the diaspora to explore whether such narratives include biased, rigid, static, generalized, and most certainly negative perception of the ‘other’. Thus, this section begins with an analysis of major plots of a unified subject. By exploring the ‘plot’ regarding, for example, the original settlers of Sri Lanka, it is possible to infer whether a specific group narrative contains complexity and contradictions. A simplified narrative in turn can include unquestioned prejudicial perceptions of the other group. Linked to this, but examined separately, the ‘character’ of the agent include ‘hero,’ ‘victim,’ ‘helpless friend’ or ‘innocent bystander’. Together, the plot and the characters provide insights into the narratives that affect the participants.

The Plot

Kelley notes that the past has the power to shape the present (Kelley 1999: 229). In the Sri Lankan conflict/s, the fight for the “future is fought across its past” (Gemünden 1999: 120), especially as identity groups remain nested in narratives (Gergen and Gergen 1997) of origin that enhances divisions rather than conflating and creating a nationalistic identity (Smith 1986). The cross case analysis of interview data examined below exemplify the acceptability of this statement.
It was vital to gain an understanding as to whether the Sri Lankan diaspora believe in different narratives of origin, of defining the conflict, and even of the integral episodes or turning points. The study secondly strived to analyze whether these narratives included prejudicial or stereotypical perceptions of the ‘other’ by examining the ‘characters’. For example, other than one second-generation Sri Lankan diaspora – i.e., Participant No. 7, who did not link his/her storyline to that of his/her Sri Lankan parents – all other one-hundred and nine participants, including Participant No. 106, illustrated the significance of a group narrative that emerge from Sri Lanka as crucial to their self-categorization.

The interview data in its entirety provided information for this statement. The answer to Questions No. 3, 4, and 6, for example, provided insights into the chronologically ordered plot of the conflict. Through this, a plot emerges regarding the origin of the group and the origin of the conflict. Further plot or storylines emerge regarding specific episodes based on the answers to Questions No. 5, “What turning points impacted you the most?”. Combining these with the answers to Questions No 7 and 8 and even No. 14 provided relevant information on whether these retain prejudicial, biased, stereotypical, and generalized perceptions of the ‘other’.

The diaspora participants reiterated their perceptions by linking their personal narrative to their group narrative. This infers the notion that there exists at least two distinct, but perhaps interlinked, group narratives. The Sri Lankan official history focuses predominantly on the Sinhala people, primarily due to the Sinhalese Buddhists preservation of historically significant information. Even though the Sri Lankan history
does not provide adequate narratives of the ordinary people, it is viewed as an unbroken
record ‘of the people’, written ‘by monks/nuns/advisers/kings/poets’, and temporally
(relatively) ‘close to the events’.

While the early history remains a mixture of folklore and fact, the latter historical
information include highly detailed information, which incorporated chronological data
with archeological data from within and without the island. Thus, the earlier period of
Sri Lankan history (i.e., mainly the early period of Anuradhapura kingdom) has a more
mythical inclination with an inclusion on prophecies and miraculous events, whilst the
latter stages provides a more mundane but detailed information. This detail and the
immensity of the sources, which include archeological artifacts and foreign texts and
maps, and the amount of information, make this history highly hegemonic. This provided
a sense of factuality and authenticity. This history “covers nearly two thousand years”
(Perera, 1959: 46) and evidence of its existence appear in diverse foreign sources.

A caveat: presenting history as consisting of the ‘Sinhalese’ or of the ‘Tamil’ may create
an erroneous view of the history of the country. Through the analysis of key historical
sources, it is possible to emphasize the existence of both a Sinhalese history that did not
exclude a Tamil history. These same sources also indicate that there may not have been
an ‘ethnic’ distinction between the Sinhalese and Tamils. The historical sources provide
information on Sinhalese kings who fought against invaders from India with the help of
their Tamil generals while the Tamil kings, including Elara, had Sinhalese generals in
their respective armies to fight against Sinhalese rulers (de Silva 2005). These histories,
reinterpreted by modern audiences, enhance either the distancing or the linking of the people of the island from the Indian mainland. For example, history became the focus of enhancing us-them dichotomy since 1926, when Rasanayagam

attempted to prove that not only was Sri Lanka’s Tamil history the history of Jaffna … but that practically the whole history of the island was Tamil-Hindu or Dravindian history, or at least widely influenced by Tamil history. This was seen by the Sinhalese as an attempt to rob them of their own Sinhala-Buddhist history and tradition.” (Spencer, 1990: 111)

In brief, these narratives – defined through positive characterization of ‘us’ as opposed to negative characterization of ‘them’ by – highlight the divisions among the groups.

*Original Settlers*

There exist a number of myths of origin within Sri Lanka, among the different ethnic groups. Of these, the most resilient appear to be the arrival of Vijaya. It is an archetype storyline, the exiled hero helped in his quest by a native princess. This, at least for Sinhalese, is the antecedent, although this plot also involves the significance of Buddhism. This major plot or kernel, with its antecedent and set of events speak of the origin of the ‘Sinhala’ people. This very myth negates the Tamil people’s right to call themselves the ‘original people.’ Participant No. 13 reiterated this perception.
“It is the true land of ours … It doesn’t belong to anyone else … All that we were taught at school”

[Participant No. 13, interviewed on Feb 9 2005]

In actuality, the first inhabitants, according to both the Sinhala and Tamil or Hindu literature, are the Yaksha or Raksha. According to Hindu legend, the king was “a ten headed Rakshasa named Ravana” (Oman, 1894: 18). Participant No. 4, for example, informed of his/her knowledge of the *Ramayana* but not the *Mahavamsa*.

“never read the Mahavamsa … I’m not a great reader these days … But Mahabharatha and Ramayana five six times or so”

[Participant No. 4, interviewed on Jan 27 2005]

While Hindu narrative inform that Rama vanquished the Yaksha king Ravana, folklore within Sri Lanka (especially the *Mahavamsa*) informs that Vijaya also vanquished a Yaksha king around 500 B.C.

Yet, this belief in the factuality of the Vijaya story remains ingrained in the Sri Lankan (Sinhala) people. Indeed, a few participants, including Participants No. 23 and 41, emphasized the origin of the Sinhala group. Sinhalese narrative emphasizes an unbroken rule by Sinhalese kings from 500 B.C. to 1815, when the whole island came under the British rule. This narrative included the claim that the whole island remained under the purview of some of these kings and therefore, there never existed an independent Tamil kingdom. Participants No. 1, 2, 60, 109 and 110 alluded to this aspect.
Other participants, especially No. 8, 42, 43, and 92, used the Vijaya story to counter the Sinhalese claim of original people by informing that they, the Tamils, were the original settlers of Sri Lanka. These participants and others, including Participant No. 70, provided insights into a counter narrative, with a kernel emphasizing the origin of the Tamil people. Indeed, field and archival data inform of four counter narratives that amalgamated to form the Tamil narrative. The Tamil group narratives include countering the Sinhalese or official national narrative claims that Vijaya was the first of a new race by linking Tamil identity with the pre-Vijaya ‘Naga’ people. Participant No. 8 and 42 used both the *Mahavamsa* and the *Ramayana* to explain the antecedent of this plot. The antecedent in the first plot predates that arrival of Sinhalese.

The Nagas were supposedly sea faring people. According to the Tamil narrative of the origin and development of the group, all kings with a name of ‘Naga,’ including Mahanaga, the brother of King Devanampiyatissa – a contemporary of King Asoka of India, Buddhism was brought to Sri Lanka during this period – were of this bloodline. Moreover, since Mahanaga was a king of the Ruhuna region and his descendents included King Dutugemunu – the hero who fought against a powerful ‘Damila’ invader and protected Buddhism – they were all Tamils. Therefore, the kings who ruled the Rajarata civilization, especially from 1st century B.C. were Tamil and not Sinhalese.

“All you have is distorted history … these are the facts (...) Sri Lanka was a part of South India until the sea came in people of Sri Lanka were all originally South Indian people, when about 9000 years ago … That how the Vedda walked across and got isolated as so many other people walked across ... And there were Raksha and Nagas and all that say … Dravindian people of high civilization.”

[Participant No. 8, interviewed on Jan 30 2005]
It is possible to stretch this assertion further to infer that Kuveni, the Yaksha princess who helped Vijaya, as a Tamil.

“Kuveni in Mahavamsa is called a Devil … Why can’t they say a Tamil? … You make her a devil

[Participant No. 71, interviewed on March 16 2005]

The archetype storyline here is the heroin duped by unscrupulous villain as Vijaya discards her after his victory.

A second kernel involves emphasizing that Sinhalese as an ethnic entity emerged only after their conversion to Buddhism. This plot or storyline surmise that all Sinhalese history is the history of Tamil people. This also entailed the perception that the Sinhalese do not understand the ‘real’ history, that they are Tamils. The Sinhalese perception of the history of Sri Lanka is false or at least flawed. Participants No. 8, 22, 42, and 43 reiterate this perception (see Figure 15 below).

“...The people of Sri Lanka were all originally South Indian people. Sri Lanka was a part of South India until the sea came between. You people are Dravindians,”

[Participant No. 8, interviewed on Jan 30 2005]

“...my own sister-in-law … even though she’s married to my brother she believes what the Sinhalese majority is saying is correct.”

[Participant No. 22, interviewed on Feb 12 2005]
The third plot implying that Tamil people have lived in the island since the 3rd century B.C. while the fourth plot emphasizing the independence of the Jaffna kingdom from around 13th century onwards. Participants alluded to this but did not expand. To reiterate, the perceptions and narratives examined in this research remain those of the diaspora participants and not of the researcher.

The Tamil narrative of origin counters the Sinhalese narrative of origin and asserts their right to the land. For each Tamil claim, there apparently exists a counter claim. Participant No. 41 illustrated how Sri Lankan or Sinhala narrative appear to morph to challenge the Tamil narrative of origin.

“They say, Sinhalese came from India … and I way, no, only Vijaya came from India and he married Kuveni … so we were here already … I do deserve my nationality”

[Participant No. 41, interviewed on Feb 15 2005]

Participant No. 60 indicates another counter challenge to the Tamil narrative regarding Sinhalese as originally Tamil.

“What you don’t know is that … the Tamil groups of the Eastern Province are not Tamils they are Malabars … Came from Kerala … Evidence … property goes from Mother to daughter, mother to daughter, and they do it in the east but in the Thesavalame, it goes from father to son … Marriage between the two causes a lot of problems … They don’t like the Tamils. … there are three groups – Tamil, Thelangu, Malayalam … Malabars came from North India … When British came … the Jaffna said no, our law is the Thesavalame law … but when they tried to apply this to the east, it was rejected … There is a court-order, which I’ve seen in the British archives, that says, the Thesavalame law should not apply to the Eastern province.”

[Participant No. 60, interviewed on Feb 23 2005]
Moreover, as emphasized by Participant No. 23, 41, and 104, Tamils or Damila were never original settlers but rather invaders.

“I know that this is the thirteenth invasion … they have tried to take over the country … but they have never been able to control the country.”

[Participant No. 23, interviewed on Feb 12 2005]

The existence of the Jaffna kingdom however is not in dispute as most sources from around the 14th century provide information on it. What has become a contentious issue lie in the relatively independence of the Jaffna kingdom.

It is important to mention that only twenty-one percent or twenty-three participants spoke of the ancient history and of the narratives of origin. The interview questions did not allude to this. These participants, the majority positioned self within the Tamil group, include sixteen Tamil participants, four Sinhalese participants and one Burgher participant. These participants discussed the plot when explaining their perspectives or when emphasizing the origin of the conflict.

**Origin of the Conflict**

As noted earlier, since gaining independence in 1948, Sri Lanka has faced three major youth-related insurrections. One was the 1971 youth uprising led by the Sinhalese Marxist group the *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna* or the People’s Liberation Front (JVP). Within the space of a month or so, the government used brutal tactics to suppress this
attempt at wresting control of the government to transform Sri Lanka into a communist state.

The second conflict began with peaceful non-violence in the 1950s and 1960s but transformed into a violent struggle between the government of Sri Lanka and a number of militant Tamil groups in the north and the east by the mid-1970s. The most prominent of the Tamil groups has become the LTTE. Their aim has been to gain a separate state and, while the war has been localized in the north and the eastern areas of the island, over two dozen suicide bombs and attacks have a bearing on the rest of the country since the 1970s. Chronologically, the third conflict began in 1987, continued up to 1990, and was the warfare between the government and the rejuvenated JVP. This conflict, often called the ‘bheeshanaya’ (i.e., the ‘terror’), affected the southern, central, north-central, eastern and western areas of the country. During the terror in the southern regions of the island, there existed a corresponding ‘terror’ period in the northern parts of the island, where a war raged between the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) and the LTTE. For a period of three years, the country faced twin civil wars.

The JVP Insurrection

With the exception of Participants No. 13, 39, 41, and 61 all other first generation diaspora who categorized self as Sinhalese commented on the significance of the JVP insurrection to their lives. That is, this included the thirty-five participants who initially
categorized self within the Sinhala group and the eleven others whose answer to
Interview Question No. 1 included first order positioning of self within the Sinhalese
ethno-linguistic group. Of these, some, such as Participant No. 27, had been members of
the JVP while Participant No. 87 had been in politics at the time of the JVP insurrection.
Others, such as Participants No. 23, 24, and 110 had witness it. Participant No. 1 had
medically aided them. Indeed, during a two-hour interview, Participant No. 27, a
Sinhalese former member of the JVP provided another set of data on the numbers killed
(see Figure 16 below).

“And ah, the significant year in my career was in 1971 when there was another
upheaval in Sri Lanka … Ah, where a rebellion … or, I don’t know how to describe
them. There was a rebellion in the South … Put it that way (…)And one day, I was
working in the accident service and there were lots of young, like youth being
brought with lots of injuries … And they came in their numbers … And it was unusual
for the casualties to be that busy … And we were wondering what was going on … So
we just heard that there has been a rebellion somewhere and these had been the
casualties from the rebellion … And these were brought to the accident service for
treatment … And they were youth in there eighteens and twenties … And they were
beaten and all kinds of injuries so that was a very unfortunate experience for me, us ...
To see young youth, our own people, being treated like this.”
[Participant No. 1, interviewed on Jan 24 2005]

“In April 5th, 1971, 60,000 or so youth were killed and survivors sent to rehabilitation
camps in Elpitiya and Hambanthota”.
[Participant No. 27, interviewed on Feb 12 2005]

Figure 16: The JVP Insurrection Plot
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)
It is evident that, as with the deaths in the separatist conflict, the GoSL never specified the numbers of dead. What is known and accepted is that this insurrection – also called the ‘Che Guevara movement’, the ‘youth uprising’, the ‘1971 insurgency’, or the ‘JVP uprising’, the ‘revolution’ or the ‘rebellion’ – resulted not only in the capture of approximately 18,000 youth, but it also led to a government that violated human rights (Kearney 1977: 516). The plots presented in the interview data illuminate this as a key component. It moreover highlights the interesting aspect that these Sinhalese viewed the youth as belonging to ‘our’ group.

The brutality used to suppress this insurgency was also indicative of the steps the government would take in any future challenge to its rule. It also seemed to show other youth, especially Tamil, that it was possible, with good coordination, secrecy, money and arms, to challenge the government. Those imprisoned for crimes did not exceed 300 and the end of the 1970s saw almost all of these rehabilitated and released. Indeed, in 1982, Rohana Wijeweera became a Presidential candidate. Indeed, until 1983 when the proscription of the JVP occurred, it appeared to be part of mainstream politics. Only Participant No. 87, Sinhala a lawyer granted asylum, spoke of events prior to the re-emergence of the JVP in the late 1980s.

“they banned the JVP, the LSSP and Communist party, the three Marxist parties. I was not a member of either but three days later, I was arrested. Because I was supposed to be closed to the JVP … I was Wijeweera’s election agent … I was detailed for four months.”

[Participant No. 87, interviewed on March 21 2005]
What was interesting was how all Tamil participants ignored 1971 April ‘JVP insurrection’ as neither a major conflict nor a turning point. For them, it appeared that events proceeding and superseding this erased the importance of the JVP insurrection. The JVP youth uprising targeted the Sinhala people in the south, east, west, central, and north-central areas. Though a large percentage of Tamil people live outside of the northern and eastern areas of the island, they remained predominantly unaffected. As elaborated by Participant No. 42, the focus lay elsewhere.

A body called the International Association for Tamil Research … started by a Sri Lankan Tamil Catholic priest … [conference in] January ’72 … [at the conference] … suddenly … youth started coming … they had picked empty bottles … and then I heard a shot and there was pandemonium … there was tear gas … I hid behind a pillar or something … after smoke cleared … I got up … people had fled you see … the cartridge was used by vicious men … Inquiry took place.

[Participant No. 42, interviewed on Feb 16 2005]

To Tamil participants, the above episode or turning point was more relevant than the conflict that emerged with the JVP. The events of 1971 in Jaffna exemplified the discrimination faced by them. However, to the Sinhalese participants who spoke of the event, this appeared significant as it involved ‘our’ people.

“And they were beaten and all kinds of injuries so that was a very unfortunate experience for me, us … To see young youth, our own people, being treated like this.”

[Participant No. 1, interviewed on Jan 24 2005]

Of the participants who spoke of the JVP insurrection, only Participant No. 27 spoke of events prior to eruption of violence in 1971. For the others, the sudden uprising remained the antecedent. The events of significance included the brutal treatment of the youth, the end of the violence, and their rehabilitation. The plot however did not end with either
Wijeweera becoming a political candidate or with the re-emergence of the violence. In the diaspora discourse, there is a strong link between the events of 1971 and 1987. Participant No. 87, for example, had to flee the country.

“There were threats but no lawyer worthy of his soul would get scared of threats. But they carried out the threat … Two days after my nephew was killed, I claimed asylum. There is a fatwa against me by the state government.”

[Participant No. 87, interviewed on March 21 2005]

To the diaspora who positioned self as Sinhalese, the JVP insurrection ends with the death of Wijeweera in 1990. None of the diaspora spoke of the subsequent (re)entry of JVP into politics as a powerful rural youth based group. To the Sinhalese participant, the conflicts raging in the northern areas of the country involving the IPKF and the LTTE remain an obvious exclusion for all these participants. Of those who positioned self as Sri Lankan, seven discussed either the 1971 or the 1987 JVP activities. Those who left Sri Lanka during the 1970s spoke extensively of the 1971. The Tamil diaspora participants, on the other hand, completely excluded the 1987 – 1990 JVP ‘terror’ but some talked at length of the ‘terror’ of the IPKF intervention during that same period.

The Separatist Conflict

The intensely volatile and violent conflict between the GoSL and the separatists demanding their own country, which supposedly ended in 2009, is a difficult conflict to
define since in naming the conflict and parties to the conflict, or in designating a date of origin, one side gets positioned by the other. This conflict is broadly between groups of Tamils attempting to wrest control of the northern and eastern areas of the island and the Sinhalese-dominated government, presented as actively discriminating against the minority.

An approximate number between 60,000 and 70,000 have apparently died since the conflict became intensely violent in the 1980s. Even as recent as March 2008, Reuters informed that, “Since then [i.e., 1983], some 70,000 people have been killed in fighting between the government and Tamil Tiger rebels who want an independent state in the north and east of the island.” (http://www.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/LK_CON.htm Accessed March 30th 2008). Hennayake uses this same or similar number to explain the significance of terrorism by informing that “Terrorism in Sri Lanka and the resultant war has caused over 60,000 deaths and the majority of them are male youth” (Hennayake 2005: 108). He then elaborates in the appendix by informing that, “[w]hile accurate figures are difficult to ascertain, estimates put the total number of people killed between 50,000 – 60,000 up to 1998. Of these around half are civilians.” (Hennayake 2005: 123).

Indeed, according to Swamy, writing in 2004, 60,000 lives were lost since 1983 (Swamy 2004). To Edirippulige, writing in 2004 noted “[a]ccording to official statistics, the war has already claimed more than 70,000 lives” (Edirippulige 2004: 10). Yet the static nature of this number is a puzzle. How can this number remain the same, fluctuating year after year but remaining somewhat static when, even in the period 2006 to 2007,
according to Dilip Ganguly – quoting the ceasefire monitors in Sri Lanka – inform that almost 4,000 have died in the space of one year (http://www.foxnews.com/wires/2007Feb23/0,4670,SriLanka,00.html accessed February 25th 2007).

For the past five years the aggregate number of deaths in the war claimed by the media is a static 70,000. Whilst the 70,000 estimated deaths is stubbornly resisting any forward movement death spree is continuing without abating. The media says over 5,000 people have been killed in the violence since President Rajapakse came to power two years ago. It is claimed the death toll of LTTE stands at about 2,000 during this period.

During Indian Peace Keeping Force time, about twenty years ago the death toll stood at 35,000. With the declaration of full scale war by the former presidents Late Ranasinghe Premadasa and Chandrika Bandaranayake Kumaratunga against the LTTE the official figure leapt to 70,000. But since then the upward movement is at static hold. (http://lrrp.wordpress.com)

Irrespective of the exact number killed, the conflict has harshly changed the lives of millions of Sri Lankans. Of those who spoke, the numbers ranging from 60,000 or 65,000 to 70,000 deaths remain the one similarity.

Other than Participants No. 7, 9, 13, 19, and 27 and all others talked of the conflict briefly or at length. That is, ninety-five percent (95%) of those interviewed, irrespective of how they categorized self, commented on the conflict. Of the exception, Participants No. 7 and 19 were second-generation diaspora while Participant No. 27 spoke only of the JVP. Participant No. 13, on the other hand, was very vague in his/her remembrances and stopped the narratives without explaining. There appears some variety in defining the
Plotting the ‘Separatist’ Conflict

Defining a war in any one of the terms ‘ethnic war’, ‘communal war’, ‘separatist war’, ‘civil war’ or ‘rebellion’ can result in the creation of a narrative that include character modules that present one group positively as heroes to the detriment of the other group. The term ‘ethnic conflict’ for example, present a narrative that infer one group being unjust, racists, and discriminatory while at the same time, presenting the other side as having a noble cause with inalienable rights. The same idea presented in ‘communal war’. Civil war or a rebellion denotes other meanings. Civil war represents the notion of a unitary nation. Rebellion also invokes pictures of rebels fighting a government. Some, such as Participant No. 1 and 88, defined this as ‘the problem.’

Participants No. 37 and 58 who categorized self as Sri Lankan, Participant 61 a Sinhalese and 74, a Tamil, all defined the conflict as an ‘ethnic conflict.’ Indeed, with the exception of Participants No. 8, 35, 74, 81, 92, and 93, all others who categorized self as Tamil spoke of this conflict as ‘ethnic.’ The archetypal plot infer of a heroic struggle for inalienable rights.

The character module within this narrative indicates Tamil people as ‘victim.’ The same archetypal plot of heroic struggle remains when naming the conflict a ‘freedom struggle.’
Participants No. 8, 35, and 42 spoke of the loss of the traditional homeland and the fight to regain it. The apparent character module here inferred that the Tamil were heroes and the Sinhalese villains. Of the participants who named this conflict a ‘separatist conflict’ – this included all those who categorized self as Sinhalese with the exception of Participants No. 31 and 81 and those who classified self according to their nationality, with the exception of Participants No. 1, 2, 15, 16, 17, 18, 71 – only one, Participant No. 74, was Tamil.

With the one exception of Participant No. 74, all those who defined the conflict as ‘separatist’ or a ‘civil war’ were Sinhalese and one Muslim diaspora. On the other hand, both Sinhalese and Tamil diaspora defined the conflict as ‘ethnic’ or ‘communal.’ The interesting aspect of this is that ninety-five percent (95%) or twenty out of twenty-one of the participants who positioned self as Tamil defined the conflict as an ethnic war.

The Antecedent

Often accepted internationally to have begun in 1983, it is also possible to trace the origin of the separatist conflict to divisions created by the 19th century Hindu revivals in India and the subsequent Buddhist revival in the 20th century. An earlier conquest of the Portuguese and the Dutch and the British in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries respectively may have resulted in a belief of living separated from the rest of the island. The British policies also resulted in stressing the differences than the similarities. According to
Participant No. 87, the Cleghorn Minutes, who quoted de Silva (1987), aided this division and the words in the minutes provided the map for Eelam.

To participants such as Participant No. 110, the conflict may have begun in the 1930s because the Tamil elite were fearful of self-rule and the potential of independence under Sinhalese dominant policy. They feared, and apparently rightly so in hindsight, the impact of democracy to their status. Though a minority, during the colonial period, the Tamil elite held the best jobs and were the most educated in terms of numbers. This fear appears through a number of demands made by the Tamil politicians, such as a demand for fifty percent allocation of seats for all minorities (Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher) in the parliament. Despite such early yet peaceful rumblings, Sri Lanka, then called ‘Ceylon’, achieved a peaceful transition to power on February 4, 1948. Different diaspora provided different antecedents.

British Rule

All Sinhalese participants and ten participants whose first order positioning entailed nationality at some point in their narrative blamed the British rulers as originators of the conflict. Their narrative involved blaming the British as instigators of the ethnic division and creators of Tamil demand for the north and the east. Only Participant No. 87 spoke of the Cleghorn Minutes, as the regions described by Cleghorn have become the ‘traditional homeland’ of the Tamils.
few different nations, from a very ancient period, have divided between them the session of the island. First the Sinhalese inhabiting the interior of the country, its Southern and Western parts, from the river Walawe to that of Chilaw, and secondly the Tamils, who possess the Northern and Eastern districts (quoted in Warnapala 1994: 67).

Even though the above statement is the only ancient or relatively recent historical text that delineates the ‘boundary’ of the Tamil homeland, to Tamil Participants such as No. 4, 8, 35, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, and 92 however, this document represent proof of the existence of a divided people. These participants reiterated LTTE leader Prabhakaran’s statement.

We are an ancient people with special qualities. We have a unique national identity and national foundation … We are struggling only to regain our sovereignty in our own historical land where we have lived for centuries, the sovereignty we lost to colonial occupiers. We only struggling only to reestablish that sovereignty and rebuild our nation. (www.tamilcanadian.com).

Participant No. 87, an individual who categorized self as Sinhalese, reiterated the ‘falseness’ of the Cleghorn Minutes.

“You see … Cleghorn minutes questionable … there is nothing to prove this … he [Cleghorn] came only in 1797 … what did he know of the people … and show when it says … you know … that Sinhalese came from Siam … that’s wrong so rest also wrong … But Tamils … oh … you saw the map … its same”

[Participant No. 87, interviewed on March 21 2005]


Tamil politicians and ideologues of autonomy looking out for historical evidence and other data to support their claims to “national areas” chanced upon a
document prepared by Hugh Cleghorn, a British academic who had been in the island in the very early years of British rule as a political trouble-shooter, and was later on the island’s first colonial secretary. …. It read as follows:

“Two different nations, from a very ancient period, have divided between them the possession of the island. First the Cingalese[sic] inhabiting the interior of the country, in its southern and western parts, from the river Wallouve [Walawe] to that of Chilow [sic], and secondly the Malabars [Tamil], who possess the northern and eastern districts. These two nations differ entirely in their religion, language and manners. The former, who are allowed to be the earlier settlers, derive their origin from Siam, processing the ancient religion of that country”

The second part of the last sentence – the reference to the Thai origins of the Sinhalese – should have alerted reader to the limitations of this extract as historical source material but that whole sentence was omitted by ideologues of Tamil separatism in their resolutions and documents on the theme of traditional homelands (de Silva, 1999: 9 – 10)

This illustrates a comment made by Kodikara, which Participant No 87 requested the interviewer to examine.

For the Sinhalese, identification of the Northern and Eastern provinces as a “Tamil homeland” or even an area of historical habitation of Tamil-speaking peoples … implies that these provinces were not an area of historical habitation of the Sinhalese, or that they were not, and are not, a Sinhalese homeland. (Kodikara 1989: 722 – 723).

To a majority of the Participants who categorized self as Sinhalese, the antecedent to the conflict emerges with the British. Indeed, Participant No. 3 made the assertion of the notion that the British created this division.

“when the British left country in 1948 they have somehow created a kind of rivalry between two groups, right? … It was not something a thing that they have planned …. But the way they ruled so that was obvious, the way they ruled the country”

[Participant No. 3, interviewed on Jan 26 2005]
An analysis of this interview inform of a narrative that shift the blame to the British. The ‘British’ were responsible, although it was ‘not something … planned’. The natives of the island colony characterized as ‘helpless’ children, guided wrongly. Participant No. 74, who commented that he loved Prabhakaran and so do all Tamils and requested the researcher buy a specific book s/he was selling expressed a far different perspective.

One important fact … At no point of time in history, ancient, medieval or modern coming to the present day, has there been one unified identity of people called the Lankans, or Ceylonese or Sri Lankans – except in the passports and in the language of the government. Even during the near five hundred years of European colonialism, when Ceylon was under the occupation of the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British, the Sinhalese and Tamils were ruled separately. When the British introduced a unified system of administration … the Tamils continued to retain their own identity, their language … their traditional land in the North-East. (Sivanayagam 2001:132).

It becomes evident that, to the Tamils, the British helped solidify and clarify the divisions that apparently existed from time-in-memorial. On an opposite end, to Sinhalese, the British appear as instigators and the Tamils as accepting a lie as the basis of their argument.

Independence Movement Era

The Sri Lankan official narrative emphasize this era as significant. For some participants, such as Participant 57, 60, and 87, the Tamil leadership of this era led them astray. This is, in a sense, a reiteration of some of the Sri Lankan writers.
G. G. Ponnambalam raised the divisive cry of 50-50. Prof. de Silva, however, focused sharply on the twenties when Sir Ponambalam Arunachalam broke away from the Ceylon National Congress and retired into the womb of Jaffna on the demand for an additional seat for the Tamils in the Western province … Though Dr. Mendis points to the forties as the time when the communal issue took an acute turn he recognizes that there was a concerted move from the twenties by the Tamils to block any attempt of the Sinhalese to obtain their constitutional reforms. “In 1921 when the representative government was about to be granted,” wrote Dr. Mendis, “the Ceylon Tamils who comprised eleven percent of the population asked for half the number of seats which the Sinhalese who comprised sixty-nine percent, were to get, and succeeded.” (Mahindapala 2005: 54).

Participants No. 77, 82, 96, and 98 emphatically stated that Tamils did not have a right to the ‘Vanni’ areas, which lies in the northeastern area of Sri Lanka. These participants, and Participant 62 quoted the doctoral thesis of Dr. Indrapala on “Dravindian Settlements in Ceylon” (1965) as proof that even until the 1960s, the Tamils did not have any historical proof to the right to a homeland that included anything outside of Jaffna peninsula. An interesting and noteworthy aspect of the significance of this era is how none of the Tamil participants spoke of this period as integral.

The 1950 Decade

Ninety-eight of the one-hundred and ten Participants or eighty-nine percent (89%) remembered the 1950s as the period when “the problem started” as noted Participant No. 88. Indeed, this notion that that antecedent of the conflict lay in the 1950s is amplified by
statements by Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim Participants, who reminisced about their lives at school or at the university or in the workplace, prior to 1956 Language Bill.

“And as I mentioned earlier, we got a very happy childhood … An extremely happy childhood.”
[Participant No. 88, interviewed on March 21 2005]

This indicates a simplified storyline, with a sharp distinction between the pre-1956 era and post-1956 period. It does not reflect the forces at play in the 1956 decision to create Sinhala as the Official Language, nor the issues regarding power sharing. In specific instances, such as for the Sinhalese Participant No. 1 or for the Tamil Participant No. 4, the decade changed their lives as English had been the main language and all who wished to work in the government sector had to learn Sinhalese. Participant No. 14 illustrated the long-term repercussions of the 1956 language bill.

“I found it very difficult to sit for O’Levels (…) I did my internship there and in order to get increments I had to sit for O’Level Sinhalese … I could barely manage O’Level Tamil, let alone O’Level Sinhalese … So that would have been a problem. But I could speak Sinhalese and home language was English.”
[Participant No. 14, interviewed on Feb 10 2005]

However, this is a simplified version of the problems faced by all educated middle and elite class Sri Lankans in the 1950s. Learning Sinhalese became an issue not only for the Tamils but also to Sinhalese who spoke only English. By the 1970s, when Tamils also became the Official Language, Sinhalese doctors had to learn the Tamil language. Participant No. 106 noted that s/he not only had to learn Sinhalese but also Tamil to work as in the medical profession.
Yet, even for Sinhalese, a clear turning point was 1956 because of the Sinhala Only Language Bill devised by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, who chose a “more democratic and populist form of nationalism – linguistic nationalism – which was at the same time fundamentally divisive in its impact on the country.” (de Silva 2005: 626). For Participant No. 1, the events of 1956 appear retrospectively as negative. The era before the 1950s remain described as ‘very happy.’ Yet, within two years after this, violence erupted.

IT WAS VIRTUALLY impossible to set a date for the genesis of Tamil militancy.

Tamils began weaving dreams of an independent homeland much before militancy erupted, albeit in an embryonic form, in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Old timers recall the time when a group of Tamils organized themselves and opened fire at the Sri Lankan army in the eastern district of Batticaloa after the 1956 riots. … Tamil shot dead a Sinhalese shopkeeper and derailed a night train, killing at least two policemen, in separate attacks in Batticaloa following another outburst of racial riots in 1958. There was another attack on army soldiers in Jaffna after Colombo stifled the Federal Party *satyagraha* in 1961 … There was no real long-term perspective or planning in these strikes. (Swamy 2004: 23. Capitals in original)

While all the Tamil diaspora, and even the single Muslim diaspora, emphasized the significance of the event, only two Sinhalese diaspora spoke of the riot. For Participant No. 102, for example, the 1958 riots appear as the ‘start’ of the conflict.

“the ethnic conflict started … I went to see a film in Galle … that was the day it started … 1958. we saw shops being looted and everyone shouting that the Sinhalese were being killed. That is where it started”

[Participant No. 102, interviewed on April 1 2005]
Participant No. 99, a Sinhalese who worked in Jaffna during the 1950s was the only participant whose personal narrative involved a storyline fearing for his/her life while living in Jaffna during the 1958 riots. S/He noted that his/her Tamil friends helped protect him/her is an eerie forecast of statements made by Participants who survived the 1983 riots.

The 1970 Decade

All one-hundred and ten participants ignored the 1960s decade in their reminiscence of the origin or the turning points of the conflict. Moreover, other than the participants who spoke of the 1971 JVP insurrection in the south, west, and central areas of Sri Lanka, Participants No. 42 and 43 who expanded on the 1972 ‘incident’ in Jaffna and Participant No. 14 whose plot involved family escaping during riots, focused on the 1970s.

we our last two children had a terrible ordeal … I wrote a story about it … but I don’t remember the date … I took them to Jaffna … but [on our return] the train wouldn’t start … I feared there was trouble in Jaffna as well because of the burning of the Jaffna library … I think that is what it was … and then some Sinhala policemen creating trouble in …in civilian clothing, creating trouble … for trying to fool with Tamil girls and this the Tamil youth resented this. I sensed that was it and I asked them … train started … we stopped at Anu for a long time … each station for a long time … there were shouting outside, in Sinhala, … the doors [of our sleeper] were broken … Thugs … asked are you a Tamil or a Sinhalese and they started beating people. There was a chap in front of me, speaking to them in Sinhala … As for me and children were … six and seven … I asked them to sleep by my side … I had never got beaten … I had a letterhead with my name written in 3 languages. That was my concept that there were three languages … Children did not seem affected”

[Participant No. 43, interviewed on Feb 16 2005]
The plot here began with the trip to Jaffna and ended with getting out of the train safely. Here, the emphasis remained on the language and the police officers presented as ‘Sinhalese’ who harassed and ‘created trouble.’ The heroic tale presented villains, victims, a damsal in distress, and heroes. Only one participant talked of the negative effects of the riots of this decade.

“My father didn’t speak Tamil. He spoke Sinhalese. The 1977, the first riots … we were refugees and we went to a friend’s house and we were hiding under the bed and they knocked and asked and we say we are Tamil and police take us … We went to the [refugee] camp and we stayed there for two or three days. We didn’t know what was happening”

[Participant No. 14, interviewed on Feb 10 2005]

The Sinhalese diaspora plot remains silent of the above incidents. A number of Sinhalese diaspora talked of the assassination of Duraiappah while all the Tamil participants ignored that incident as well as the events leading to the birth of the Tamil militant movement.

Yet, according to Munasinghe, the conflict began in 1972.

Angered by the decision to introduce a new constitution, members of the TYF [Tamil Youth Front] tampered with the high-tension electric tower in Jaffna to cause a black out in the north on 22 March 1972. A bomb was thrown at the residence of lawyer Visvanathan (…) on 01 June 1972. A bomb was thrown at the residence of Mr. Alfred Duraiappah on 19 December 1972 … By 1974, the TYF had a larger membership. Uma Maheshwaran, a surveyor by profession, too had joined the group. In 1975, members who were desirous of violence broke away from the TYF (…) included Velupillai Prabhakaran (21 years of age at the time), Kandipan, Sellakili, Uma Maheshwaran, Ragawan (…) in 1976 the TYF was renamed the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front (TELO) (…) The breakaway group (…) was Tamil New Tigers (TNT) (…) The initial action of the TNT was to kill Mr. Alfred Duraiappah, the Mayor of Jaffna. (Munasinghe 2000:42 – 43).
This aspect is accepted by both Mendis (2004) and Wickramasinghe (2001) who noted that Sri Lanka “has been in state of war since the late 1970s when Tamil militancy took up arms against the state … The core values to be protected were territorial integrity and political independence” (Wickramasinghe 2001: 14). Gunaratna elaborates further, “Contrary to popular perception, Tamil insurgency originated in northern Sri Lanka in the early 1970s” (Gunaratne 2001: 7). Even Anton Balasingham indicates that in May 1976, the Tamil United Front convened a national convention at Vaddukodai in Jaffna, where a historic resolution was adopted calling for the political independence of the Tamil nation. SJV Chelvanayakam presided over this crucial assembly … The convention resolved to restore and reconstitute an independent state of Tamil Eelam (Balasingham 2004: 28).

Only Sinhalese Participant No. 60 spoke of the Vaddukodai declaration while two Tamil participants, four Sri Lankan, and two Sri Lankan British diaspora spoke of this.

“I heard the fighting between the Tigers and TELO [a Tamil militant group] I was sixteen … We normally go and see the bodies … and I saw people sleeping … the Tiger comes and kill the group … there was a pool of blood … that is a real pool of blood … The commander over there, we know him personally … commander of the people being killed TELO … He has been bringing anti-aircraft missiles to our house and kept it there … That’s when he was killed. A week before he was killed we had a box full of anti-aircraft missiles … That time everybody support … everybody support whoever …. He came and asked because the army was searching around there, we asked him to take it off … a week before. He was a very nice person. Nice to talk to him … very soft … that affect my father … so he said, no more support to anyone … we support the cause but not anybody.”

[Participant No. 70, interviewed on March 16 2005]
Moreover, only one Tamil participant included accounts of violence perpetrated by Tamils against Tamils, although a number of Sinhalese participants – Participant No. 1, 23, 60, 86, 87, and 109 – spoke of this.

The 1983 ‘Riots’

For most Tamils, a number of Sinhalese, and a vast number of international writers and specialists, the conflict began in 1983 with the looting and burning of Tamil homes and workplaces and with the killing of Tamils in an intense riot. Indeed, all participants spoke at length on the conflict and 1983, though some gave a different interpretation of the events leading up to the riots, and the perpetrators responsible for the carnage, and the role of each ethnic group. The interviews solidified the notion that the violence against the Tamil people on those terrifying days in July 1983 has had a lasting impression.

There are omissions on the investigating the antecedent to the riot and on punishing the perpetrators. A superficial glance presents these omissions as having created two groups at loggerheads with one another. The choice of year 1976, when Tamil leaders – both political and militant – demanded a separate state, positions the Tamil leadership as traitors. A turning point that only Participant No. 106 from those who positioned self as ‘Sinhalese’ mentioned was the 1977 riots. Here again, the blame appear to be with the ‘rumor’ rather than the people. This example seems to verify Social Identity theory that inform of the need of individuals to have a positive group affiliation.
“I was in Colombo when the rumor started that the Tamils were killing children … Sinhalese children and sending them in train … and the Sinhalese in the south were killing Tamils in the south … You see what happens with rumors … they act like animals.”

[Participant No. 44, interviewed on Feb 16 2005]

Whether the 1983 riots involved preplanning or unplanned mob action and what to call the incident remain hotly contested. Pratap, who had witnessed the violence noted that “[e]verywhere I could see proof of carnage: burnt-out hulks of buildings, burning bonfires of cars, motorcycles and furniture belonging to Tamils. It didn’t take an Einstein to figure out the attacks on the Tamils were systematic, pre-planned and well organized.” (Pratap 2001: 53). To Balasingham, what occurred in 1983 is a holocaust, genocide.

The extermination of the Tamils and the destruction of their property were set in motion. The holocaust continued for days, unabated in the capital city and the provincial towns deep in the south leaving a trail of death and devastation. Estimates put a total of 3000 defenseless Tamils savagely murdered.(Balasingham 2004: 40).

Pratap (2001) and Sivanayagam (2001) have used this term ‘holocaust’ to describe the events of the ‘83 riots.

The Sinhala State’s war of genocide destroyed the peaceful life of the Tamils. It turned the Tamils into refugees in their own homeland, ruined their nation’s social and economical infrastructure and plunged them into unprecedented hardships. While our motherland, caught within gruesome Sinhala military rule, is destroyed, Sinhalisation of our historic territory is going on under the pretext of High Security Zones and Free Trade Zones. This naked Sinhalisation proceeds by the hoisting of Loin flags, the erection of Sidharthan statues, the renaming of Tamil streets with Sinhala names, the building of Buddhist temples … The unjust war, the economic blockade, the restrictions on our people’s freedom of movement, the killing of thousands, the displacement of hundreds of thousands, have all deeply wounded the Tamil psyche. (www.tamilcanadian.com 11/28/2007)
These inform of either the unprovoked attack on defenseless Tamils or the result of militants justifiably retaliating against a rape and therefore killing thirteen soldiers that led to the riots. In both these, the character module emphasizes the Tamil people as helpless victims. This is evident when talking with participants who positioned self within the two ethno-linguistic categorizations. All Sinhalese participants who spoke of 1983 called it a ‘riot’ and the plot involved watching helplessly as the ‘mob’ destroyed and killed, helping to hide their neighbors, or even assisting in their flight from Sri Lanka. Only Participants No. 14, 50, and 51 spoke of the assistance given to them by the Sinhalese during the riots. Participant No. 39, a Sinhalese married to a Tamil, spoke of worrying for his/her safety.

_Uncomplicated Narrative_

The participants’ discourse illustrated the overlooking of all nuances, questionable complexities, and complications that exist within a group narrative. Each group apparently asserted the other group’s narrative of origin as false or presented the ‘other’ negatively. For Participant No. 71, this meant linking the Sinhalese with their mythology.

“The Tamils say the Sinhalese are Lion, they are animals … they have the animal quality”

[Participant No. 71, interviewed on March 16 2005]
In a country in conflict, the group narratives also inform of the origin of the conflict and of the historical issues that resulted in the creation of an ‘us-them’ dichotomy. It also focuses on the events that help increase this tension, of the ‘unjust’ actions of ‘them’ which led to the escalation of the conflict; of the propaganda that speak of hatreds and enemy images that explain the reasons why the conflict can ‘never’ be ‘abandoned’; and how ‘victory’ is defined. Even prior to the conflict escalating and becoming entrenched, one group’s ‘truths’ come into conflict with the other group’s ‘truths’ as each attempt to position the other negatively. Each side to a conflict views their own narrative as the absolute truth while at the same time viewing the narratives of the other side as fabrications. Moreover, each side intentionally strives to avoid learning and understanding the out-group logic regarding history for fear that, this might inform of questionable versions of a specific event. This might in turn introduce complexity and nuances to an otherwise simplified, archetypal storyline. This is in keeping with the tenants introduced in Social Identity theory.

Retaining Prejudices

It is apparent that the Sri Lankan diaspora retain the divisions in their country-of-origin and continue it whilst in their new host country. Thus, diaspora of this research continue to link their identity (at some level) with (groups within) Sri Lanka, resulting in “multiple tugs and pulls” (Frazier 1999: 116) as they interacted with out-group members. The forthcoming chapters expand on the examples of interviews provided in this chapter by
providing a clearer picture of intergroup interactions among divided groups. This chapter presented data that informed that the Sri Lankan diaspora constitute divided groups based on identifications from the home country.

In using first order and third order positioning and emphasizing the significance of narratives emanating from country-of-origin, this chapter provided data to show that Sri Lankan diaspora not only continue the self-identification from home country but that they also accept as fact narratives that exist in home country.
CHAPTER FIVE

Positive Contact

“I’ve not actually spoken to anyone Sinhalese or Muslim friends about this problem ... I try to avoid it because most of people I say friends and they are good friends ... Don’t want to destroy the friendship ... There is no right and wrong about it ... Just different views ... So, I avoid getting into arguments and destroying relationships”

Participant No. 4 (Interview Data)

While the previous chapter delved into the actuality of a divided diaspora, presented through the Sri Lankan diaspora perceptions, the assumption that intergroup interaction of an informal nature exist remain unexplored thus far. If intergroup friendships occur/occurred despite the influence of negative group narratives, this is a finding of immense value to the field of Conflict Resolution and to Contact hypothesis. However, more than merely asserting that intergroup interaction exists, this chapter combined the results of the snowball sampling technique and participant discourse to validate the assumption that intergroup interaction continued to exist among (a selected number of) Sri Lankan diaspora. The rich diversity of interview data, coupled with observations, provided the researcher with means to analyze whether ‘positive’ contact exist (Lynch, Modgil, and Modgil 1992). The two network maps and the six sub-network maps also provide a visual presentation of ‘interactions and help substantiate the assertion that informal contact exists among members of the divided Sri Lankan diaspora.
Introduction

To reiterate, this chapter continue the argument introduced in the previous chapter: that Sri Lankan diaspora remained divided. The divisions predominantly adhere to the schisms that apparently exist/existed within the country-of-origin. Utilizing empirical data, this chapter continue the analysis of the interview data to explore the first research question “*Do the polarized Sri Lankan diaspora have informal and friendly contact with each other?*” with the hope that it would “*inform of the existence of subtle and informal yet continued intergroup interactions between (some) Sri Lankan diaspora*” and provide insights into “*the social networks that exists among interacting diaspora*” This research proposed that intergroup interaction or ‘contact’ among members of divided group might exist and that it might result in creating catalysts for building peace. This is the underlying premise of peacebuilding (Lederach 2005). The concept of peacebuilding assumes the utilization of intergroup interactions of strategically positioned few – i.e., the ‘critical yeast’ of Lederach (1997) – to reduce tension, to enhance understanding of each other, and positively transform the conflict/s.

The Sri Lankan diaspora appear linked to their home country and the conflicts raging within. The fact that participants, irrespective of the time spent as a diaspora and their current life within the UK, positioned themselves according to their ethnicity (see Figure 4, 5 and 6 in previous chapter), illustrates this link. Utilizing the primary data, this chapter demonstrates that the diaspora of the research do interact despite such divisions. The analysis builds on previous chapter findings by examining the overall network map
(Figure 17 and Figure 18 below). Along with the analysis of the network map is an assertion of the usefulness of the choice of snowball sampling tool. The overall network map (Figure 17) – the visual depiction of who introduced whom rather than the chronological progression of the research – is merely the initial step in the analysis of ‘contact.’ The second network map (Figure 18) remains an integral part of the analysis as it allowed the research insights into the intricacies of the contact: who introduce whom; did they position themselves differently; and do they have similar/different perceptions regarding turning points. After the visual representation of the natural groups, the cross-case analysis of specific interview questionnaire answers provides insights into plots regarding such friendships. The study spotlights the different sub-networks visually evident in the network map to analyze each in turn. A further analysis involved finding an answer to whether intergroup interaction occurred within each sub-network or, if there is not, is there a ‘contact’ person who does interact with members of the other group.

**The Participants**

The Sri Lankan diaspora remain a prime example of a conflict inducing, conflict escalating, and conflict-protracting diaspora. The notion that intergroup interaction exist despite the divisive influences from home country coupled with the perception that these interactions by nature impede their very potential as builders of peace is at the heart of this study. The analysis begun in this chapter provides insights into the accuracy of the assertion of the research: intergroup interactions exist. Therefore, while intragroup
cohesion reduces chances for positive intergroup contact, the very existence of intergroup interaction despite the tense situation present a hope for their potential as peace-building diaspora.

To summarize the previous chapter findings, only ten percent (10%) of the participants categorized themselves outside of their diaspora identification of Sri Lankan and spoke as British citizens. Of the others, eighty-four percent (84%) of the participants linked their identity with an ethnicity in Sri Lanka. The corresponds with assertions in all the academic writings on Sri Lankan diaspora presented in Chapter Two. After establishing that the Sri Lankan diaspora divide into groups, this chapter investigates whether there is intergroup interaction.

A majority of the participants of the research consisted of individuals who had lived in the UK over 10 years. The second-generation participants had lived in UK for over 20 years. Only fourteen (14) or twelve percent (12%) of the participants have lived as diaspora for over 40 years. A majority of the participants had come to UK for educational or employment benefits and therefore remained in the UK for economic reasons while fourteen or eleven percent (11.8%) of the participants had left Sri Lanka in search of asylum. A superficial glance at the network map (Figure 18 below) would infer that these participants appeared closeted within their sub-network, each consisting of participants predominantly from one ethno-linguistic group. However, what was intriguing was that within these networks, strategically placed individuals interacted with
members of the out-group/other sub-networks. Moreover, more dense intergroup contact appears to exist when considering visual network map presented as Figure 17 below).

A caveat: while network analysis provided insights into intergroup contact, the focus lay in exploring interaction to understand the nature of the intergroup interaction. While the network maps (see Figure 17 and Figure 18 below) might not provide answers by itself on whether interaction with members of the out-group ostracizes or vilifies the diaspora who interact, it provides the doorway for plot and positioning analyzing of those who interact with those who do not. As the analysis conducted below illustrate, even the most ardent nationalist/extremist maintained friendships with fellow in-group members who interacted with members of the out-group.

**Links in the Chain**

The significance of a visual network map lay in the fact that this illustrated the existence of intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora who perceive themselves as members of divided groups. The network map began with one individual who introduced the researcher to others, who in turn informed of potential friends – with similar and/or different background – for the researcher to interview. This occurred with both initial information-rich participants. Through these two individuals, the researcher was able to interview one-hundred and eight (108) participants. Thus, a superficial exploration of the chain sample highlights who introduced whom. As the network maps illustrate (see
Figure 17 and Figure 18), there is an overall network of interacting Sri Lankan diaspora. There are also sub-networks, often, though not always separated by one node providing the linkage to the overall network. These boundary spanners provide linkages to a diverse overall network rather than a homogeneous one with likeminded members. While the primary focus lies with who introduced whom, other unexamined linkages might remain within the overall network (see Figure 17 below).

What is interesting in terms of the later analysis is how each individual who positioned self differently still interacted with one another. Moreover, the ‘Overall Network’ map presented below (Figure 17) highlighted the snowball or chain sampling. Participant No. 106 introduced Participant No. 4, who in turn provided contact information on Participant No. 8. This participant gave the phone number of both Participant No. 106 as well as Participant 14, who positioned self according to his/her religion and then provided contact information on Participant No. 35. This individual spoke of Participant No. 92, who in turn introduced the researcher to Participants No. 70, 87, and 93. Participant No. 87 provided information on Participant No. 27. Who in turn requested the researcher interview Participant No. 38. Some of these participants positioned self as Sinhalese, others as Tamil, while some others by their Nationality. The participants age ranged from ‘Adult’ to ‘Mature Adult’. The links cut-across three sub-networks and, according to a superficial analysis of the visual map, the nodes and linkages appear complex and dense.
Figure 17: Overall Network (Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005).

(***Note: Despite Sri Lanka defining 'youth' as those within the 15 – 29 age range, this study utilized the World Bank categories of youth as between 15 – 24 / UE: Unemployed Educated include Housewives, no longer studying or doing volunteer work).
It is vital to emphasize that the network map presented above (Figure 17) include insights into a denser network than Figure 18 (below). The above ‘Overall Network’ map includes all those who introduced the researcher to potential participants in the chain sampling. This dense links provides insights into who provided names of potential participants within the network. It highlights inter-sub-network interaction as well as intra-sub-network interaction.

Although this dense map (above) highlights the true nature of the snowball sampling as well as the social network mapping – since it illuminated natural communities – the problem remained that the researcher often used one name for the introduction and it is that relationship that remained integral. Another issue was that, while Participant No. 87 provided the name and contact information on Participant No. 27, since the researcher had already interviewed Participant No. 27, this introduction became redundant.

The research focused not only on the network. The network provided a lens to examine intergroup interaction. That entailed cross-case and within-case analysis. However, from a visual perspective, since the use of scale-free network mapping explored insights into strong-weak ties to members of the out-group, the above map provided information on the relationship (i.e., links) between the nodes as well as on the “one-to-many and many-to-many relationships between items (…)to track how many things are interconnected.” (Bender – deMoll 2008). Therefore, while data gathered from Figure 18 (below) remains the main focus of the analysis, the above map provides invaluable insights into the density of contact.
Figure 18: Analyzed Network (Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)

(*Note: Despite Sri Lanka defining 'Youth' as those within the 15 – 29 age range, this study utilized the World Bank categorizes of 'youth' as between 15 – 24 / UE: Unemployed Educated include Housewives, no longer studying or doing volunteer work).
Of those interviewed, twenty-seven (27) individuals or twenty-four percent (24.5%) of the participants were youth. The term ‘youth’ meant those in the age range fifteen and twenty-four (15 – 24). However, it is erroneous to assume that the subsequent seventy-five percent (75%) of the participants entailed ‘mature’ participants. Fifteen (15) participants or fourteen percent (13.6%) of those interviewed came within the range of twenty-five and fifty (25 – 50), described as ‘Adult’. ‘Mature Adults’ here included all those participants above fifty. This meant that sixty-eight or sixty-two percent (61.8%) of the participants fell into this category.

The interesting part in examining the Figure 18 (above) includes the fact that interaction appeared to occur predominantly among the same age range or due to similar interests. This appears consistent with the Contact hypothesis, which stresses interaction among equals leading to reduction of prejudice. To clarify, the most obvious example of an individual introducing those only within his/her age range remained Participant No. 15 and Participant No. 46 (see above Figure 18). Participant No. 49 introduced both youth and adults who apparently had similar interests. Participant No. 8 introduced the researcher to a predominantly ‘Mature Adult’ group of participants but also included a sporadic number of ‘Adults’. Participant No. 106, on the other hand, provided information predominantly on those involved in the medical field – i.e., medical doctors, nurses, students, or those retired – but from different ethnic backgrounds and different perceptions.
To reiterate, the Contact Hypothesis requires to fulfillment of “four key conditions: equal group status within the situation; common goals; intergroup cooperation; and the support of authorities, laws, or custom” (Pettigrew 1998: 66). The network map (Figure 18 above) and the interview data inform whether such ‘contact’ exists. To understand and to analyze the network map requires extensive plot analysis. Only through gaining insights into within-case analysis is it possible to determine the nature of cross-case contact.

Plot Analysis of Contact within the Network

The Overall Network map (Figure 17) and the Analyzed Network map (Figure 18) provided both a visualization of contact and insights into the structure and density of the contact. What remains unexamined is whether this ‘contact’ constitute positive interaction. Examples presented in Figure 19 inform that intergroup interaction existed and also where such interactions began.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Do you have a lot of Sri Lankans in your community?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Of cause, a lot, a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Did you meet them during the ’70s period?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Do you continue to keep ties with them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Yes. Mostly doctors. Mostly doctors. I think 99.9%. [laugh]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(…)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Because we didn’t have any … I mean of cause, there were sporadic political upheavals. But we were not … it did not affect any day to day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(…)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant 1  The few Tamils I know are … at least, on surface … who … people who like to get on … with Sinhalese and whom I presume, are not involved, right or wrong.  

Participant 1

The personal narrative – i.e., the plot – of Participant No. 1 regarding his/her friendship with members of the out-group inform of the contact. However, prior to analysis of the network/s, the research shifts to understanding the contact that existed among members of the out-group. Overall, the skeleton version of a larger plot presented above involve a heroic tale of meeting friends at University, facing political tension, and subsequently, keeping only friends willing to ‘get on with Sinhalese.’ However, unlike the above, some participants elaborated further (see Figure 20 below).

Interviewer  Do you talk to your friends
Participant 1  I have quite a lot of Tamil friends … to be honest with you … when I came here in ninety-one … before I met any of the Sinhalese Sri Lankan I met a Tamil couple …. They were like parents to us … Helped us to the maximum … that even today we visit them … that gentlemen … he hadn’t been there since seventy-eight … he was scared … 

Participant 1  I had ten to fifteen Tamils working with me [in Sri Lanka] … I get on with anyone … They were from Jaffna … and I have relatives as well because one of my uncles was married to a Tamil lady … She’s from Jaffna (…) They must have got married in the 50s or 60s … She was a doctor and she was working in a hospital in the South … Even during the communal riots she never had problems … She cannot speak good Sinhalese.
Interviewer: Was she upset?
Participant 1: Yes she was upset … Still I associate her relative … My cousins are still there … Even recently they went to Jaffna … They had no problem … Even Tamil relatives consider them as part of them and Sinhalese relatives consider as part of them … They are ok …

[Participant No. 1]

Figure 20: Participant 1 History of Intergroup Interaction
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)

The above plot sample not only provides insights into intergroup interaction but its nature. Three personal narratives link the overall plot of meeting and developing the friendship and the current situation. In two at least, the linkages appear strong and in all three, the contact remain between equals with common goals such as working together at office, focusing on cooperation with support from, in one example, authorities at work place and in the other two, through customs. The study will revisit the notion of ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ ties.

While the visualization of the overall networks provided interesting insights, the abstracted interview data provide a visualization of intergroup interaction/contact (Figure 21 and Table 3). It highlights the point that a comparison of Figure 5 with Figure 21 illuminates the fact that while only eleven percent (11%) of the participants apparently positioned self outside of ethno-linguistic divisions, ninety participants (82%) spoke of having friends or once having friendships with members of the out-group. This in-itself highlights the fact that despite divisions, contact exist/existed.
Other than three participants, all others answered Questionnaire questions No. 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13. These provided evident that intergroup interaction of the participants Table 3 below).

Table No. 3: Existence of intergroup interaction among participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long-term Friends</th>
<th>Never Close Friends</th>
<th>Never Friends from out-group</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 21: Plots on Intergroup Interactions
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)

It is pertinent to recall the dense interaction presented in Figure 17 that illuminate more intergroup contact that the analysis here depicted.

Category: ‘Never Friends from Out-Group’

As the above Figure 21 on ‘Plots regarding intergroup interactions’ and Table 2 on indicate, only fifteen percent (15%) or seventeen (17) of the interview participants informed that they never had any friends or associates from the out-group. Only one, Participant No. 55, informed that s/he had had office colleagues from the out-group but, firstly, that it is non-existent since the 1980s and secondly, that they were not friends. In
brief, these participants’ personal narratives provide three broad plots relating to age of participant to explain why they never had friends from the out-group. The analysis of plots of all of the older participants infer that their personal decision to not have close ties with members of the out-group, even in the home country, resulted in never having friends. They had colleagues but not ‘friends’ as defined by the participants themselves. The second explanation focused on the younger generation and on learning of negative narratives of the out-group or not having any understanding of the negative in-out group narratives. This apparently influenced their perception of the ‘other’ and therefore, made conscious decision not to engage in interaction with members of the ‘out’ group. The third justification plot informs that the participant did not have any opportunity for inter-group interaction. Thus, this lack of any relationship discounts the application of the tenants of Contact hypothesis.

It is interesting to note that the age group of a majority of the seventeen appeared between eighteen and thirty. The exceptions, Participants No. 35, 40, and 74, were individuals above the age of fifty. Participant No. 74 worked at a Hindu temple and informed that s/he knew Prabharakan and informed of the rights violated by the Sinhalese. Participant No. 40, the only relatively uneducated individual in the chain sample, informed that s/he never got an opportunity to be friends with members of the out-group. Participant No. 35 not only informed of the fact that s/he did not have any ties with either the Sinhalese or the Muslims, s/he also told that his/her spouse worked for a
pro-LTTE organization. Once this participant understood the researcher to be a Sinhalese, s/he requested the interview ended.

Moreover, Participant No. 10, whilst narrating how s/he witnessed the death of his/her neighbor at the hands of the mob, added that,

“I really don’t know what happened to that family … I was five then and we weren’t friends … not really … but it stuck in my mind”

[Participant No. 10]

Here again, the plot inform of never having an opportunity since childhood to develop ties with members of the out-group. Furthermore, the personal narrative of Participant No. 10 regarding inter-group interaction indicates that ‘contact’ can exist without the prerequisite four requirements. His/her family had not been friends with the neighbors as illustrated in this participant’s plot. To reiterate, living next to each other had not created ‘friends’ as defined in the Contact hypothesis. Furthermore, while the turning points, as in above, remain tragic, these plots regarding intergroup interaction never presented the lack of friends from the out-group as ‘tragic.’

An overall, an analysis of plots presented by some participants inform of a conscious decision not to interact. This is apparently due to the influence of negative, prejudicial, and at times, hate-filled perceptions of members of the other group since data on their personal narratives do not provide information on personally facing discrimination or hostilities from members of the out-group. The example presented below illustrates the
assertion that conflict-driven in-group narratives apparently influenced these participants to the extent of avoiding positive intergroup contact. While most of these individuals spoke mildly of the reasons they do not interact with members of the out-group — including that they never interacted or never got the chance — presented below is the one extreme example where the participant explained how s/he intentionally avoided members of the out-group and elaborated his/her stance.

I don’t have Tamils as friends … I feel … I mean … what they do, getting world sympathy is not fair … media would listen to them … political would listen to them … Sri Lankan people wouldn’t listen to them and the tsunami proved it since nobody wanted to go to the north

[Participant No. 41]

The influence of group narratives, albeit in the harshest, most prejudicial manner, apparently fuels the participant’s perception of the other. This individual apparently never had an opportunity nor wanted to meet members of the out-group. The prejudicial aspects of the group narrative colored the individual’s perception of the other. Thus, the analysis of plots regarding friendships gain and retained inform of a second reason for ‘never having friends from the out-group’: the negative perception of the ‘other’ based on prejudicial narratives. This category included three second-generation participants (i.e., Participants No. 26, 62, and 76).

“I was not told about the history … I’ve been to there and went to Sigiriya … but I don’t know the history”

[Participant No. 62]
The plot regarding this participant’s lack of intergroup interaction informed that s/he did not have ties with members of the out-group despite not knowing the history of Sri Lanka. As asserted at a later point, the analysis indicates transference of parental perceptions to the children.

Unlike the above example, other personal narratives explained the lack of interaction to not having opportunities to meet members of the out-group. Other than Participant No. 55, the rest told of never having ties with members of the out-group. With contact non-existent, the participants’ perception of the other clouded by his/her group prejudices. Thus, Participant No. 26 informed that,

“'I’m the only Sri Lankan in my school’”

[Participant No. 26]

Of the seventeen (17), the older generation informed of intentional avoidance of becoming ‘friends’ as they themselves termed it. Plotting their personal narratives, regarding interactions illustrate that these members were never more than superficially acquainted. Others – predominantly people born after the emergence of the separatist war itself – spoke either of influences of group narratives on their perceptions or of not having any ties to members of the out-group.
Out of the Participants whose narrative plot informed of interaction with members of the other group, twenty-seven individuals, or twenty-four percent (24%) of all interviewed, told of the superficial nature of interactions with members of the out-group. Here, they themselves categorized and defined who is a ‘friend’ and who is a ‘close friend.’ Participants No. 5, for example, told of colleagues from the out-group at his/her workplace in Sri Lanka but asserted that s/he knew them but were not real friends. Although twenty-seven individual informed on ‘superficial’ intergroup interactions, the single second generation participant in this category – Participant No. 53 – informed that while his/her parents had friends from the out-group, s/he did not. S/he added that,

“I’ve been to Sri Lanka once or twice … I got told about the cultural aspect … a lot about religion … I don’t know a great deal about the civil conflict … I wasn’t specifically told about that”

[Participant No. 53]

His/her parents’ traumatic personal narratives – of surviving the 1983 riots, having their home burnt, and living in camps for the internally displaced – apparently influence this participant. Yet, despite the fact that his/her parents remained close friends with selected members of the out-group, Participant No. 53, though interacting with them, apparently did not include them as ‘friends.’ S/he remained “not that close” even with the second-generation Sinhalese. This outcome remained despite interacting with members of the
out-group during dinners and at special events, although s/he provided the researcher
with the Participant No. 106 contact information (see Figure 17 above). Positive yet
informal contact apparently did not result in close friends. Rather, the lack of equal
status and cooperation result in having ‘friends’ who superficially interact.

Unlike the above example, narratives regarding friendships lost or curtailed of some of
the participants in this category remained mostly as a tragic form of plot. Outside forces
intervene in the plot presented by Participant No. 75.

“I used to speak very good Sinhalese … used to work at_____ … I can write
Sinhala … When I was to go to university, the standardization came … no matter
whatever marks we got we couldn’t get in … but at my workplace, my main
people were Sinhalese … Till ‘74, when I left Sri Lanka, I never find anything …
in Colombo, nothing to say … but, but … after coming here … and after ’83 well
it’s a different story … don’t have friends … not really.”

[Participant No. 74]

The participant indicates the significance of language within Sri Lanka, especially its link
to enhancing the ‘us-them’ dichotomy. The plot infers how outside forces beyond the
participant control has apparently sought to harm the friendship. His/her friendship
influenced by events and narratives of events. This individual had left Sri Lanka in 1974,
prior to the 1976 declaration and the 1983 riots. While personal narratives of living
through specific events remained non-existent, prejudicial narratives of his/her own
group apparently influenced the participant in defining ‘friends.’ Moreover, while his/her
personal experiences alluded to contact under specific situations – among equals at the
workplace with common goals, with the consent of authorities – once the relationship ended due to distance, the perceptions of the ‘other’ apparently transformed.

These plots of friendships lost provide intriguing insights into the influence of in-group narratives, not just emanating directly from country-of-origin but from the host-country as well. Most of the participants under this category informed that they personally had not witnessed or experienced the 1983 riots. Some, such as Participant No. 74 had already left the island in the 1970s. The influence of hearing, according to each in-group narrative (see Figure 24 and Table No. 4 in next chapter) what happened to their ethno-linguistic group or the vilification of the ethno-linguistic group by the others, changed the nature of intergroup contact.

Not all participants indicated a tragic tale of friendships lost. The plot presented by Participant No. 92 illustrates a romantic or heroic tale of facing adversity, overcoming hardships, and taking a journey.

My father had helped neighborhood people … especially Sinhala people … and when our house was attacked, it was by the same people who he helped … That had shaken him … and his workplace told him they will give him protection and he had questioned, protection against whom? … We went to Jaffna […] I didn’t know what the Tamil problem was until my brother was captured and how I was treated … and then I realized discrimination … some people told we don’t belong to that country … To go to India

[Participant No. 92]

Here, unlike the previous example, the participant’s personal narrative illustrates how his/her perception transformed. His/her personal narrative include tragic plot, of
betrayals and hardships faced. All of these participants informed of the significance of 1983 in transforming their friendships. While some spoke of its direct influence of 1983 in transforming his/her opinion of the ‘other,’ others spoke of the event’s long-term damage to the friendships (see Figure 22 below).

“Came in 1984 … I was in Nugegoda but didn’t see anybody being killed but saw things being burning … Up till ‘83 my best friends were Tamil … but … well … since then … well … they were suspicious of me and I was with them … otherwise until ‘80 they were my closest friends … More complicated than that … see 1960s, Sinhalese felt that … there were more Tamil lecturers than Sinhalese lecturers … they got more marks than the Sinhalese … One Minister introduced the quota system … But it was introduced for one reason … for that other reason, since Tamils were getting favored … that was part of it”

[Participant No. 56]

“I went with my son … we went … shops were burning … I was concerned because they were pulling Tamils … out of busses and he [the driver] couldn’t speak a word of Sinhalese … I got scared … I couldn’t go …cause curfew … and no petrol … felt … well … that kind of changed … friends … Tamil ones went abroad … I don’t meet them anymore”

[Participant No. 99]

Figure 22: Significance of Turning Points on Friendship Disintegration
(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)

It is interesting to note that other than the significance of 1983 in distancing their relationship, the participants’ personal narratives remained highly individualized. The plot form remained either tragic or comic; some spoke of never having close friends while others spoke of something akin to close friendships, curtailed due to the conflict.
The familiarity in all the diversity involved not having ‘close friends’ at the present due to group or personal narratives.

Category: ‘Long-term Friends’

The final category included sixty-three participants – i.e., fifty-seven percent of those interviewed – whose personal narratives inform of long-standing friendships. Out of this sixty-three, fifteen spoke of changes in their friendships due to numerous reasons. For some, one was the 1983 riots and its repercussions.

“In front of our house was a Tamil family … on top of the hill, two others … One family we kept them in under our beds … They who had the list … they couldn’t speak Sinhalese they could only speak Tamil … Pulled the people out and burnt … thugs joined in … they had killed people in the north … This was like a wild fire … We have no doubt about that … People who hid under our beds, he kept on saying, why did our people do this to us … After that it was not still safe … I brought them all the way to Heathrow … I came with them here … Now they live here”

[Participant No. 23]

Although 1983 did play a major role, the plot here inform of victims, heroes, and perpetrators. The plot beginning indicates a residential area where Sinhalese and Tamil live together. However, the participant’s assertion is that the Tamils themselves began the attacks on the Tamils. The heroic plot indicates the difficulties faced by the participant in assisting the neighbors.
The personal narrative of the above participant included heroes, victims, and perpetrator. The example given below of the personal narrative, the plot did not indicate agency as “Something was put on fire” rather than ‘someone put something on fire.’

“Something was put on fire near our home … We hid some friends in our home … But after killing pilgrimages, these incidences, our relationships with Tamils became distant … but in University it was different Still visit Prof. _____ when I go back … Our best professor and he was Tamil … But I saw a gradual change … All the Tamil friends became distant … really … they are like that now.”

[Participant No. 46]

Here, this participant’s storyline indicate a close relationship at one time, to the extent that s/he was willing to assist ‘friends’ in her home. However, the reason for a change of heart in his/her case appears to be the 1985 attack on the Buddhist holy site. As the Participant inform,

“But after killing pilgrimages, these incidences, our relationships with Tamils became distant.”

[Participant No. 46]

Here, 1983 apparently did not lead to a breakdown of friendships. At the same time, this individual spoke of friendships gained in the past, at the University. Longstanding friendships remained despite the 1983 riots and, had it not been for the narratives of events – as this participant lived as a diaspora since 1969 – influencing his/her perception of the other. Some friendships begun in the past – at a pre-manifest conflict era – continue. This is similar to the participant below who informed that,
“We grew up together … Only time this issue came up was marriage … Never came up in anything else (…) A group of us formed the Sri Lankan Fellowship in the ‘80s … There were Sinhalese, not a Muslim, but a Burgher chap, and us [Tamils] … But one fellow wanted to take a picture of us with the High Commissioner [of Sri Lanka] and we said no … That was aligning ourselves with one party … He couldn’t see it … so that was that … the group”

[Participant No. 14]

The intriguing aspect remains that none of these fifteen participants alluded to tension or anger towards their ‘friend’ from the out-group. What was intriguing, and discussed in detail at a later point, was the transference of the blame. Events just happened without specific perpetrators, the harm created by mob of ‘pretend’ Sinhalese, or one individual rather than the group of friends, remained at fault for specific events. Moreover, they introduced only friends from their ethno-linguistic background and therefore, all three participants belonged to relatively homogenous sub-networks (see. Figure 18 above as well as Figure 23 below).

To reiterate, the overall network contains individuals with diversity in outlook. The fear that the snowball sampling technique would result in interviewing like-minded participants appear resolved. There were participants, such as Participant No. 106 who interacted with members of the out-group and Participant No. 35 or 41, whose prejudice of the ‘other’ cloud their perception. While Participant No. 106 may not interact directly with the latter two, s/he does have friends who interact. However, Participant No. 106 interact with Participant No. 8, a fervent opponent of Sinhalese right to land as well as with Participant No. 2, an individual who emphasizes the contrary; with Participant No.
95, whose long-term friendships with members of the out-group had deteriorated due to conflicts; and with Participant No. 109, who informed that

“I don’t have much connection with Tamil friends in Sri Lanka but in UK yes”.

[Participant No. 109]

Due to the complexity of interaction among members of the overall network, the study shifts to examining sub-networks, where participants apparently had closer ties than friend-of-a-friend.

Just as interview data provided insights into diaspora perceptions of the divided diaspora, the above categorizations highlighted the intergroup contact. These contacts – frequent to infrequent, consistent to sporadic, long-term to short-term, and strengthened over time or weakened due to events – provide the relevant data to understand the nature of the contact. Along with this is an analysis of contact within the network.

**Social (Narrative) Network Analysis**

The network analysis began with a visualization of the intergroup interactions. It subsequently conducted an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the interactions. This entailed an understanding of the degree of friendship among members of the divided diaspora. The overall network took shape with Participants No. 106 and 15, who themselves were introduced by individual diaspora in the USA. Although the researcher
did not interview these individual participants until later – the numbers indicate the sequence of interviews – these two remained the initial, key information-rich participants. These two individuals represent two generations – the young, just completed his/her university education Participant No. 15 juxtaposed with Participant No. 106, a professional near retirement, having lived in the UK for over thirty years.

The overall network map indicates – through arrows – who introduced whom. The sequence of the interviews however remains according to numbers. Therefore, while Participant No. 106 introduced Participant No. 1, the former remained one-hundred and sixth (106) participant interviewed. The overall network map also illustrates the individual’s self-categorization, information on his/her profession, found through interview data (see Figure 18).

**Social Narrative (Sub) Networks**

An analysis of the narratives inform of six sub-networks within the overall network (see Figure 18 and Figure 23 below). Here, each sub-network was introduced to the researcher by one individual providing contact information of others who in turn introduced others known to him/her or both. Individuals within sub-networks interviewed by the researcher interact closely with one another. This meant ‘friends’ meeting for an informal social gathering or establishing formal groups to assist Sri Lankans and meeting at one member’s home once a month. Some members
predominantly communicate over the telephone while others meet one another at the
temple or church almost once a week. Some others work together or get advice from
each other from time to time. Thus, interview data provided insights into how some the
members of sub-networks apparently have close ties to one another. A caveat: not all
sub-groups were close-nit. One sub-network, introduced by Participants No. 4 and 8,
include those who interact with one another frequently as well as others who avoid all but
a few. There exists complexity in the intra-group interactions as well as inter-group
interactions.

Indeed, the first sub-network consisted of educated individuals, most of who were in the
medical profession. Participant No. 106, a Sinhalese-Buddhist, provided the initial
introductions. This participant was one of the two information-rich informants initially
contacted by the researcher. Though interacting with Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims,
this participant still positioned self as a Sinhalese – Buddhist. Moreover, even though
s/he expressed uniqueness in perception, this participant remained influenced by his/her
group narrative. In providing answers to interview Questions No. 10, 11, and 12, the
participant provided invaluable insights.

“My view of history is a personal interpretation of what happened in the past ... But to me, history is not important at all as it’s the present that matters ... past is interesting to see how people did things or how things evolved but past as a source of pride or ... describing oneself as a ... in the past ... we did this and we did that ... It is important as a learning process ... You learn through experience but people talk about the past to show that they are better than other people.”

[Participant No. 106]
This participant, having lived as a diaspora since 1981, continues to link his/her identity with Sri Lanka and the Sinhala-Buddhist ethno-religious group.

“I joined the people … to ban the LTTE … I did feel that raising money to kill the Sinhalese is wrong (…) It does exasperate me when they say they want to divide the country … It may not help … if it did, I don’t mind dividing the country …. I don’t think it will be fair …. we are interdependent

[Participant No. 106]

Yet, at the same time, s/he introduced the researcher to Muslims, Tamils, and Burgher friends. These friends, even Participant No. 8 – an individual with strong views regarding Tamil rights and Tamil nationalist endeavors – visited him/her for dinners, met at events organized by Sri Lankan students at nearby university, or at New Year celebrations. The first information-rich informant – Participant No. 106 – introduced the researcher to one individual who in turn introduced the researcher to nineteen participants, one of whom introduced the researcher other participants (see Figure No. 23 below).

It is possible to declare that merely by examining the density of the links (see Figure 17) as well as the complexity of the links of Participant No. 106, provide intriguing insights into the effectiveness of the Contact hypothesis. A more in-depth analysis of even this participant’s interview data – in the forthcoming chapter – highlight the power of in-group narratives in influencing the nature of inter-group contact.
Figure 23 Sub-networks One to Six

Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005

Sub-Networks One to Six

106 Participants in the subsequent box introduced by this participant

71 = Participant No.

2 = Sub-network number

1, 2, 3 = individuals introduced by a specific participant and belonging to an informal sub-network
S/he introduced the researcher to Participants No. 4, 13, 46, and 49 who in turn introduced the researcher to four separate sub-networks (see Figure 12 below). S/he also knew some members within each of the sub-groups. Moreover, although Participant No. 106 did not introduce the sixth sub-network – introduced to the researcher by Participant No. 15 – s/he remained indirectly linked to it through knowing Participant No. 19. Although a number of participants knew each other, one sub-network had at its center Participant No. 106. This sub-network contained Sinhalese, Tamil, Burghers, and Muslims. The second information-rich informant – Participant No. 15 – provided introduction into a more loosely based, less ethno-linguistically diverse sub-network.

The second sub-network includes Participant No. 4, a Tamil university batch-mate of Participant No. 106 since the 1970s. S/he in turn began the process of introducing the researcher to a sub-network by requesting the researcher interview Participant no. 8. Participant No 8 in turn not only found a number of potential participants – such as Participants no. 14 21, 22, 42, and 43 among others – but s/he also provided an opportunity for the researcher to observe inter-group interaction.

Participants No. 42 introduced the researcher to individuals who had left Sri Lanka prior to the conflict (i.e., Participants No. 70, 71, and 92) or during the conflict (72, 73, and 74); politically active (i.e., Participant No. 70, 73, 74, and 87) and inactive (Participant No. 72 and 73). Participants included anti-LTTE human rights activist (i.e., Participant 70) or anti-Sri Lankan government and anti-Sri Lankan opposition human rights activist (i.e., Sinhalese Participant No. 87). There was overlapping of contacts provided by
Participant No. 8 and Participant No. 42 and even those introduced by Participant No. 42 and 92 (i.e., Participant No. 87).

Overall, the sub-network initially introduced by Participant No. 4 contained twenty individuals who permitted the researcher to interview them. It is important to recall that potential interview number exceeded one-hundred and fifty (see Figure 4 above). What was interesting was how this loosely-based sub-network included pro-LTTE activists such as Participant No. 35 who had ties to the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO), an organization banned by the UK government; Participant No. 92, an individual who headed another Tamil organization; as well as Participant No. 73, an individual who worked in a Hindu temple and informed that s/he venerated Prabhakaran. These predominantly Tamil sub-group contained members with diverse perspectives. However, this sub-group contained one Sinhalese individual, Participant No. 87. At the same time, the researcher observed Participant No. 4 interacted with a number of Sinhalese and Muslims and Participant No. 8 interacting – at dinner – at a Sinhalese individual’s home. Moreover, Participant No. 70 assert the division of the Tamil diaspora,

“The Tamil community live in London, they came out of the war in Sri Lanka … they never live in a peaceful life … They committing crime … involving in Gang crime … Last four year, 14 killing 250 people in prison … The Tamil population of London is around 80,000, for that population the violence committed is too high compared to other communities.”

[Participant No. 70]

This sub-group included ultra-nationalist, pro-separatist Participant No. 8, 42, and 42; as well as Participant No. 92, who informed that,
We support the cause, we don’t want separation ... The reason we ask is, the Sri Lankan Government has forced them ... People want to live together but the government has already split ... we are very happy to take the Federal State.

[Participant No. 92]

The sub-network also consisted of Pro-LTTE individuals who did not interact with members of the out-group at all (i.e., Participant No. 35) as well as others who were anti-LTTE (Participant No. 70).

“Even after the riots … we have a lot of friends in Anuradhapura ... When I came here I lived with a Sinhala family … After we moved out no … In London, the community is split”

[Participant No. 70]

This individual continues to interact closely with a Sinhalese human rights activist (Participant No. 87) but not with Tamil Participants No. 8 or 42.

The introduction to the third sub-network began through Participant no. 13. Just as the above sub-network 2, one ethno-linguistic category dominated it. While sub-network 2 remained predominantly Tamil, Sinhalese dominated this sub-network. Yet, there remained variety in intergroup interaction. Participant No. 13, for example – a Sinhalese individual had arrived in the UK in the 1970s, had been in Sri Lanka during the 1983 riots – while informing of his/her friendship with members of the out-group, also informed that his/her friendship never became ‘close’ due to his/her views. As Participant no. 13 him/herself noted,

“I have Tamil friends. They are very nice. They don’t talk about these things

[Participant No. 13]
Along with Participants No. 46, 106, and 109, this participant had also participated in protesting LTTE activities in the UK. S/he notes that

“It is the true land of ours. It doesn’t belong to anyone else. All that we were taught at school”

[Participant No. 13]

This sub-network included individuals with diverse views: including a former JVP activist (Participant No. 27), an individual with racist perspectives (Participant No. 41), participants who actively engaged in politics within Sri Lanka (Participants No. 36 and 37), and a Sinhalese Buddhist participant married to a Tamil (i.e., Participant 39). The sub-network included individuals who had left Sri Lanka prior to 1980s such as Participant No. 27, an individual who had to seek asylum due to political issues as well as relatively recent diaspora such as Participant No. 33 and 34. Thus, although a superficial examination of the participants might indicate an all-Sinhalese sub-network, it is more complex that it appears.

Participant no. 46, a friend of Participant no. 106 (see Figure 18 and Figure 23) provided insights into a fourth sub-network. Participant No. 46 informed that s/he was part of a voluntary organization providing assistance for the rural poor in Sri Lanka. At the time of the interview, this group, consisting of a number of the participants interviewed, focused on providing assistance to the tsunami affected southern regions of the island. Their explanation as to why they focused on this area rather than the eastern areas affected by the tsunami indicated an acceptance of anti-LTTE rhetoric. Yet, even though
this group was homogeneous in terms of their ethnic background, each individual informed of intergroup relationships. Participants No. 46 and 47 informed that despite threats and intimidation, they had helped save a Tamil family during the 1983 riots by hiding them in their home. Participant No. 57 also spoke of the tension and fear experienced by him/her when s/he tried to help a Tamil neighbor. Although it was apparent to the researcher that these individuals shared similar perspectives, their personal experiences indicated complex personal narratives. Thus, irrespective of the unchallenged acceptance of anti-LTTE rhetoric emanating through their group narrative, this participant interacted with in-group members who in turn had sustained friendships with members of the out-group.

The fifth sub-network, introduced by Participant No. 49 provided insights into multi-ethnic, multi-generational friendships. Of the seven participants introduced by this individual, four were second-generation diaspora (Participants no. 52, 53, 62, 76) and three were from the out-group (Participants no. 50, 51, and 52). This individual also provided the researcher access to observe the inter-group interactions between him/her and his/her close friends.

The second information-rich individual contacted by the researcher at the outset of the field research – Participant No. 15 – provided a lens into the sixth sub-network. This complex network included individuals of different generations. However, the initial five interviews – from friends of Participant No. 15 – were all in their twenties. Participants 19 and 26 were second-generation diaspora while the others had lived in the UK for ten
(Participants No. 15 and 16) to seventeen years (Participant No. 18). These individuals, from different religions, allowed the researcher access to observe their interactions. Subsequently, Participant No. 26 introduced the researcher to Participant No. 23, an individual known to him/her at the Buddhist temple, who in turn presented twenty-six names of friends. Participant No. 23 informed that,

“The number of people killed is such an exaggeration … I was going to hospital … and coming back … and I saw things (…) hundreds and hundreds of Tamils … their houses were burnt … but I saw only a few bodies.”

[Participant No. 23]

The existence of an overall informal network and sub-networks provide an insight into the existence of strong and weak ties among the Sri Lankan diaspora.

*Strong and Weak Contact*

The analysis thus far provided relevant data to inform that positive intergroup interaction existed among (a number of) Sri Lankan diaspora. This included not only the diaspora interviewed but, from their narratives of friendships made and retained, about other diaspora who interact as well. The analysis also shed light into the type of contact and the length of time of the contact. The strength and/or weakness of such ties remained unexplored thus far. This entailed narrative network analysis, which allowed for a visual
understanding of strong ties that involved densely knit ties to one another. Weak ties, on the other hand meant absence of (many) such ties.

Visually, it is possible to assert that Participant No. 8 and Participant No. 13 (see Figures 17, 18, and 23 above) as nodes in their respective sub-group, had the strongest ties. Together they introduced the researcher to thirty-two participants. However, in the context of this network analysis, it is pertinent to examine their contacts’ self-identification. Since this research examined intergroup contact and these two individual’s interactions remained predominantly with his/her ethno-linguistic group, it is vital to utilize the plot analysis provided above to expand the understanding. Participant No. 8 and Participant No. 13 contact with members of the out-group remained weak while his/her ties with his/her own in-group remained strong. However, Participant No. 8 had ties with individuals who themselves had ties with members of the out-group. Participant No. 8 introduced the researcher to Participant No. 42, who had direct ties with Sinhalese (Participant No. 87) as well as with pro-LTTE and anti-LTTE participants. This highlighted the complexity of intergroup interaction.

The individuals with the strongest out-group contact were Participant No. 106 and Participant No. 49. Participant No. 106, for example, has strong ties with members of different ethno-linguistic and religious groups. It is the same with Participant No. 49. Both these individuals present less prejudicial perceptions of the out-group. Moreover, as with both scenarios, and with Participant No. 8 and 13, their contacts interacted with individuals who tenaciously avoided interaction with members of the out-group.
The traditional notion of Sri Lankan diaspora entailed intra-group contact and Participant No. 23 and Participant No. 46 highlight this notion of a divided diaspora who rarely interact with members of the ethno-linguistic group. Thus, their ties with members of the out-group appear weak. They appear to interact with members of their own ethno-linguistic in-group. Despite this, it is pertinent to note that Participant 23 (sub-network 6) had ties with Participant No. 26, introduced to the researcher by Participant No.15. Thus, Participant 15, who had complex ties with individuals from different ethno-religious groups but of a similar age and equal status, separated from Participant No. 23 by one node. It is interesting to note how boundary spanners result in complex intergroup interaction.

The analysis thus far provided insights into the complexity of interaction. While it is possible to state that only a few individuals serve as nodes, a more closer examination of the Overall Network map (Figure 17) and the interview data illuminate intricate intergroup interactions among those not identified as nodes. Even those who appear to interact with only their in-group, such as Participant No. 23 and Participant No. 46, still included plots of friendships retained despite divisions.

**Narratives of Interactions**

Having established that positive, long-term and consistent intergroup interaction occurs, the research expanded to understand the nature of that interaction. A closer examination
of intergroup interaction inform of how these boundary spanners in actuality link different in-groups. An analysis of Sri Lankan diaspora plots regarding intergroup interactions informed that these diaspora retain memberships of diverse in-groups. These in-groups include ethno-linguistic as well as university, school, and neighborhood as well as place of birth, childhood home, workplace, and current residence. As noted in the previous chapter, the diaspora appear divided mainly along ethno-linguistic groups, with the intra-group cohesiveness dependent on group narratives that portray the other negatively.

The above analysis on the sub-networks as well as individual plots regarding turning points informs that intra-group variations exist, up to a point. The significant aspect in intra-group narratives appears to be the variations regarding friendships made and retained. Group narratives inform of prejudicial perceptions of the ‘other.’ Individuals who fully believed their group assertions talked of how their friendship ended or why they remained acquaintances rather than ‘friends.’ The variations in the personal narratives also involve justifications for retaining the friendships.

Participant No. 3

The nature of intergroup interaction examined the plot of meeting the member of the other group, the subsequent events that tell of the expansion or deterioration of the friendship, and finally, the current situation. The example presented here represent an
example of an individual with strong friendship ties with members of the out-group. The choice of this example over others is that this individual provided the most in depth insight into his/her interaction with members of the out-group.

“I have a lot of Tamil friends … To be honest when I came in ’91 before I met any Sinhala Sri Lankans I met a Tamil couple … They were like parents to me … helped us to the maximum … that even today we visit them … That gentleman, he had not been to Sri Lanka for … since 1978 because he was scared … He first came to Sri Lanka to pick his mother from Jaffna in ’99 … He stayed with us … He had been told by his other Tamil colleagues and friends not to be like your vehicle’s been stopped by army and you’ll be harassed and everything … At the end of the trip he said its all rubbish … He was told by his friends … Of cause there will be … there were check-points and things … It was a random thing … You could happen to be a Tamil or it could happen to be a Sinhalese … By looking at you’re face you can’t tell whether you’re a Tamil or a Sinhalese because we all the same.”

[Participant No. 3]

The above plot narrated by Participant No. 3 inform of meeting friends, the events that define, and the status. Here, meeting the friends occurred in 1991, when a Tamil couple helped a young medical officer from a different ethnic group. The significant events include the Tamil friend coming to Sri Lanka and staying with the Sinhalese couple’s family home. The current situation included visiting the Tamil family. Moreover, the nature of the friendship involves viewing the Tamil family as “parents” and having an advisory relationship with them on events in Sri Lanka. The fact that the Sinhalese friends advised the Tamil friends and subsequently, the Tamil friend stayed with this participant also infer the nature of the friendship. The friendship remained long-term, sustained through mutual goal oriented assistance.
This individual also spoke of other friendships with members of the out-group.

“I had ten to fifteen Tamils working with me [in Sri Lanka] … I get on with everyone … They were from Jaffna but these days they couldn’t go to Jaffna and I have relatives as well because one of my uncles was married to a Tamil lady … She was from Jaffna (…) They must have got married in 1950s or 1960s … She was a doctor and she was working in hospital in the South … Even during the communal riots she never had problems … She cannot speak good Sinhala (…) Still I associate her relatives …. My cousins are still there.”

[Participant No. 3]

According to the tenants of Contact hypothesis, such equal, goal oriented custom supported cooperative interaction should reduce prejudicial perceptions of the ‘other.’ It is possible to discern from this plot that interaction with the Tamil couple resulted in a close friendship.

Significance of Intergroup Contact

This chapter’s analysis that intergroup interactions existed built upon the previous chapter’s assertion that Sri Lankan diaspora appeared divided. Utilizing interview data, this chapter provided proof, from the perspective of the Sri Lankan diaspora residing in the UK that, regardless of self-identification based on ethno-linguistic terms and despite intra-group cohesion, positive intergroup interaction existed. The forthcoming chapter expands on the findings by examining whether diaspora retain their intra-group prejudices despite the intergroup interaction. That is, whether and how super-ordinate categorization coexists with other (non-dominant) categorizations.
CHAPTER SIX

Positive Contact Despite Prejudice

“If you ask any Tamil person are they better off leaving Sri Lanka and coming to this rich country, they all say better off … Second thing … Most may say they want half the island but that is just a verbal thing … Even in their own community, they have caste issues … They can’t go back even if they want to … none of them will return to their homeland … Thirdly the ‘83 … The Sinhalese people left it to the army to do the work and they just went with the day-to-day issues … But meanwhile, what Sinhalese didn’t realize was that they [Tamil Diaspora] had already got an infrastructure in other countries.”

[Participant No. 31]

As the analysis conducted thus far inform, some Sri Lankan diaspora, despite self-identifying according to divisions emanating from their country-of-origin group narratives, apparently interact with members of the out-group. The research finds that prejudice towards out-group remains despite this positive intergroup interaction. Herein lay the conundrum examined in this research: the diaspora acceptance of prejudicial plots that inform of the untrustworthiness, the viciousness, and unacceptability of the ‘other,’ [should not] exist at the same time with personal narratives to that bring these into question. The puzzle appears more apparent when exploring in depth the nature of the contact and the relationship between members of opposing groups. The analysis blow strives to illustrate the deep structure of contact. In the process, the study informs how
these diaspora appear to accept in tandem his/her own group prejudices whist accepting a member from the ‘other’ is a friend.

Introduction

This chapter presents an understanding of the complexity and duality of this intergroup interaction with regard to the influences of prejudicial narratives emanating from the country-of-origin and, building on that, to explore how diaspora who interact cope with the duality of tolerance and prejudice existing simultaneously in their daily interactions by exploring in depth a number of participant interviews. Added to this, with the within-case and cross-case analysis of a selected number of participant interviews, the spotlight focused more firmly on the tenants of the Contact hypothesis, as the core argument of this research was to challenge “the implications of these findings for the Contact hypothesis”.

While the previous chapters illustrated the existence of positive intergroup contact and how the diaspora themselves perceived equality between themselves, it also highlighted, albeit briefly, their cooperation at interpersonal level to achieve specific goals. These included maintaining friendships to helping out during weddings, New Year celebrations, picnics, and get-togethers. Such interaction, especially during the MOU period, highlighted the significance of customs that assist in the “actual face-to-face interaction
between members of clearly defined groups” (http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/meta-elements/html/troppsummary.htm accessed 22 April 2008).

The contribution of personal and group narratives within this interaction/contact, however, remained unexamined thus far. As noted at the outset, it is pertinent to recall that this research took into account MacIntyre’s notion of co-authoring (1984) that group and personal narratives intermingle with that of Contact hypothesis, which inform of the process of increasing or reducing intergroup hostility and prejudice. As noted by Pettigrew, intergroup interactions – resulting from co-authoring narratives – based on the parameters of the Contact hypothesis result in ‘friendship’ (1998) and a majority of the participants had stressed the friendship angle. Building on the previous chapter’s examination of the nature of the friendship, this chapter considers on the implications of this contact on diaspora potential for building peace. Contact hypothesis assumes that intergroup friendship among members of divided groups would reduce intergroup prejudice. However, this chapter illustrated the complexity of the influence of narratives.

Translating Positive Contact to Positive Action

Despite the existence of intergroup contact, the Sri Lankan diaspora remain infamous as archetypes of conflict-driven divided diaspora. To comprehend why intergroup contact has not translated diaspora into catalysts for building peace requires an understanding of the significance of divisive narratives emanating from country-of-origin. Stressing the
significance of home-country narratives within the lives of the participating diaspora is not a leap-of-faith but rather a progression of the discourse with the primary data. The Sri Lankan diaspora self-identification remained strongly with home country and, in their interviews, they (with the exception of the majority of second-generation participants) continued to link with home country narratives.

This research studied the influence of narratives by analyzing the plots of selected key participants whose interactions went beyond the boundaries of each sub-network and whose interaction with member of the out-group remained strong. To understand these diaspora required an equal understanding of diaspora with strongly negative views and not-so-passionate views regarding the ‘other’ (i.e., those with weak ties). Therefore, this chapter highlighted those participants revealed in the previous chapter as having strong and weak ties to out-group. The plots regarding turning points and of friendships made, retained, destroyed, or never made adds to the understanding of the nature of the friendships.

To understand whether contact existed despite prejudice required a more detailed comprehension of prejudicial narrative plots, whether influenced by group narratives or by personal experiences. To reiterate, plot as defined by Brooks “is the logic and dynamic of narrative, and narrative itself a form of understanding and explaining” (1984:10). The plots examined here have a beginning, a middle, and an end … [and] a plot must be ‘of a length to be taken in by the memory.’ This is important, since memory … is the key faculty in
the capacity to perceive relations of beginnings, middles, and ends through time, the shaping power of narrative.” (Brooks, 1984: 11).

This initially meant an examination of turning points to see if group narratives continued to remain significant for the participant. Subsequently, the exploration of interview data provided insights into whether these diaspora retained prejudicial perceptions of the out-group. This meant a closer study of participant interview data. This included interviews of diaspora who introduced the researcher to their informal sub-networks, those with such a prejudicial perception of the other that it apparently tainted their observations. This entailed re-examining the participants with extreme prejudices – i.e., Participants No. 35 and 41 – who apparently never had any friends from the out-group. This also meant exploring interview data of participant plots regarding friendships retained despite the influence of prejudicial group narratives such as Participant No. 4, 14, 19, 22, 60, 68, and 110 whose personal narratives present insights into how others may have retained friendships over time. Surprisingly, none of the first generation diaspora disregarded group narratives emanating from country-of-origin.

As analysis below inform, only one diaspora re-interpreted the group narratives in an inclusive manner. All other (with the exception of second generation) diaspora embedded their ethno-linguistic and/or religious narratives in their understanding of the other.
Conflict Narratives

The analysis conducted below targets ‘plots’ and its form, since whether the interacting diaspora retain ‘conflict-driven’ narratives remained unexamined thus far. The analysis began by taking each case and tracing the hierarchical placement of turning points (i.e., which turning point was most important to participants from different groups) and consequently whether the turning points included personal narratives or remained based entirely on group narratives. Subsequent to the analysis of a plot regarding a turning point was an understanding that plots can either remain static and uncomplicated or dynamic and complex. To reiterate, the term ‘plot’ in this research takes on the meaning of a grave plot (Brooks 1984) and focuses on its static rather than the dynamic nature.

Finally, the analysis entailed a cross-case analysis of participants who ‘belonged’ to the loosely based sub-groups to examine whether they identified the same turning point and, if so, whether they each perceived the turning points in a similar manner. This would then illuminate the influence of conflict-driven narratives from the country-of-origin on the diaspora. The synthesis of all plots regarding turning points allowed the researcher to conduct a timeline understanding of the conflicts as perceived by the participants and thus provided insights into the static, bounded, and uncomplicated nature of group narratives.

A timeline developed from participant perceptions, utilizing ‘turning points,’ illustrate certain significant events accepted by a majority of the participants (see Figure 24 below). A large percentage of the Participants – 98 out of 110 – recalled the 1950s as
the period when “the ‘problem’ started” as noted Participant No. 88. Their plots inform of a transformation of the intergroup relationships. It is important to note that all the second-generation participants did not focus on this decade. Indeed, this notion that that antecedent of the conflict lay in the 1950s is amplified by statements by Participants, whether Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher, who reminisced about their lives at school or at the university or in the workplace, prior to 1956 Language Bill.

“And as I mentioned earlier, we got a very happy childhood … An extremely happy childhood.”

[Participant No. 88]

The differences in turning points, however, became evident through plot analysis of each diaspora interviews, especially concerning the events leading up to 1983, a date all participants – with the exception of Participant No. 41 – perceived as the significant event of the separatist conflict. Notably, specific turning points, which appeared significant to Sinhalese diaspora, remained disregarded by the Tamil participants. For the Sinhalese, for example, a significant event was the JVP insurrection of 1971. All Tamil participants ignored this event. None spoke of it even in passing.

Conversely, the Sinhalese ignored the 1963 riots described by Tamils as being as important as the 1958 and 1978 anti-Tamil riots. Each individual’s plot regarding specific turning points remain a synthesis of Interview Questions No. 3 (What does Sri Lankan (modern) history mean to you?); 4 (And what are the conflicts you see in Sri Lanka?), and 5 (What turning points impacted you the most?).
### Turning Points in the Conflict as Perceived by Tamil Participants

1. **The Cleghorn Minutes** highlighted divisions between ethnic groups & areas ruled by each
2. Denied request for 50:50 Representation in Parliament
3. Disenfranchised Tamils of Indian Origin
4. **Sinhala Only Bill**
5. Failure of ‘satyagraha’ movement; Anti-Tamil Riots; due to Tamils opposing Sinhala Only Bill, etc.
6. **Ant-Tamil Riots**
7. Killing of 9 by Govt. forces at Tamil Language Conference in Jaffna
8. Language issue in 1972 Constitution & Buddhism becomes the State Religion; University Standardization Policy
9. **Vaddukoddai Declaration of Independence; Demand for Separation**
10. Army Operations in Jaffna; Anti-Tamil Riots
11. Jaffna Library burnt by pro-Govt.
12. Ant-Tamil Riots due to LTTE killing 13 soldiers in retaliation for rape of Jaffna University students. Perpetrators Sinhalese &/or pro-Govt. forces

### Turning Points in the Conflict as Perceived by Sinhalese Participants

13. **British rule over whole island begins**
14. The British use divide-and-rule policy discriminates majority Sinhalese; Influx of Tamils of Indian Origin;
15. The minority’s ‘unreasonable’ demand for 50:50 representations in Parliament
16. **Sinhala Only Bill**
17. Riots: due to Sinhalese being attacked by Tamils
18. The JVP insurrection
19. Despite 1972 Constitution recognizing Tamil language, Tamil Youth Militancy begins
20. Assassination of Mayor of Jaffna, Alfred Duraiappah; committed by Prabhakaran
21. Militancy continue; Tamil recognized as a ‘National Languages’ in 1978 Constitution
22. Jaffna Library burned by Thugs
23. After unprovoked attack on 13 soldiers by LTTE. anti-Tamil riots. Perpetrators the ‘mob’ &/or pro-Govt. forces.

Figure 24: Timeline of Diaspora Narratives

(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)
The intriguing aspect – depicted in Figure 24 titled, ‘Timelne of Diaspora Narratives –
is that even common events accepted by both parties to the conflict as significant still
retain different interpretations that justify one group’s perception of the ‘other’.

The events leading up to 1983 July riots remained contentious for both sides. Each participant’s perception of the past, it appears, retained the influences of his/her own group narratives. The interpretation of these narratives remain unexamined and, at times, unknown by the out-group. An analysis of 1983 plot, for example, inform of twin explanations regarding the beginning, the events leading to, and even the perpetrators of the riots. This occurred despite a number of participants’ personal narratives informing of the variations regarding experiences.

Each side’s plot regarding each event highlighted (see Figure 23 above) appears uncomplicated. Even the rendering of the events contain similarities. For Participant No. 102, for example, the 1958 riots appear as the ‘start’ of the conflict.

“the ethnic conflict started … I went to see a film in Galle … that was the day it started … 1958 … We saw shops being looted and everyone shouting that the Sinhalese were being killed … That is where it started”

[Participant No. 102]

The above explanation seems similar to plot of the same event as experienced by Participant No. 106.

“I was in Colombo when the rumor started that the Tamils were killing children … Sinhalese children and sending them in train … and the Sinhalese in the south were killing Tamils in the south … You see what happens with rumors … they act like animals.”

[Participant No. 106]
The personal experience of witnessing violence couple with the overall Sri Lankan/Sinhalese group narrative presentation of the events as resulting from rumors. The Tamil participants perceived the same events differently.

“I was brought up with Sinhalese … I was more Sinhalese … but a person came and warned us … we ran to the neighbor’s house … that in ’53 … in 1977 there was another thing … we had to run to neighbor … My father was affected by racial riots”

[Participant No. 50]

The plot here was of unexpected attack on civilians without warning or due to any prior instigating events. Each group plots the event as an uncomplicated chain of events, whereby the group members became either victims or helpless bystanders. The Tamil group narrative informs of the 1958 as well as the 1983 attacks on Tamils as unprovoked while the Sinhalese group narrative inform of provocations. Thus, despite personal narratives, the experiences themselves remained clouded in group narratives. The analyzed plots contain within it the influences of the group narratives.

Static Nature of Plot

The overall analysis of plots of turning points inform that, despite the personal nature of some of the examples – and these entail events from 1950s onwards – the plots themselves resemble a static, uncomplicated, and bounded grave plot (Brooks 1984). The analysis of the plots regarding 1983 highlights this aspect. To a majority of people within Sri Lanka and outside it, 1983 marked the beginning of the conflict. Pratap, who
had witnessed the violence, noted that “[e]verywhere I could see proof of carnage: burnt-out hulks of buildings, burning bonfires of cars, motorcycles and furniture belonging to Tamils. It didn’t take an Einstein to figure out the attacks on the Tamils were systematic, pre-planned and well organized.” (Pratap 2001: 53). This Indian author takes up the view that the riots were pre-planned, systemic, and organized. In the process is a positioning of the GoSL and the rioters.

To Balasingham, what occurred in 1983 is a holocaust; a genocide.

The extermination of the Tamils and the destruction of their property were set in motion. The holocaust continued for days, unabated in the capital city and the provincial towns deep in the south leaving a trail of death and devastation. Estimates put a total of 3000 defenseless Tamils savagely murdered. (Balasingham 2004: 40).

Pratap (2001) and Sivanayagam (2001) have used this term ‘holocaust’ to describe the events of the 1983 riots. Not only do the Sinhalese and Tamils name the events of 1983 differently, but as (the Tamil) Participant No. 88 told of the tragedy of losing everything, it entailed a tragic form of plot of losing everything, including a hope for the future and his/her trust in people.

“I was a consultant eye surgeon … I was doing voluntary service for the government … I was fully involved with that instead of doing private practice … this was the reward we got (…) We were at home and there was house being attacked … a Tamil MP [Member of Parliament] … Saw early morning that house was being burnt … I thought I’ll just dial the fire brigade and inform … then suddenly to see … stones fall on our house … All small fellows … they looked very young … Sinhalese … Then one of the consultants came … and we had to escape … we lost everything … everything (…) I wanted see the house … as I got into the car … when I went there … even the window frame was removed …
everything was removed except the grinding stone ... That was all that was left … We are about to retire … so that was the end of it (…) I didn’t have ID card or passport … all the certificates were lost.”

[Participant No. 88]

While Participant No. 88 presented self in narratives as victim, thereby linking his/her personal narrative to in-group narrative, Participant No. 102, a Sinhalese, indicated the repercussion of branding all Sinhalese as ‘perpetrators.’ S/he perceived the Sinhalese as victims and therein lay the tragedy.

“Had friends when in Sri Lanka you know … in ’83, saw them griping about their treatment … that they were always discriminated … well you should have been here in then … It was terrible being judged not good being Sinhala … I don’t talk to any anymore”

[Participant No. 102]

This narrative plots the events in one manner while the Sinhalese narrative presents the events in a somewhat different manner (see Table 4 below). Indeed, the synthesis of all interview data coupled with archival data not only presents two distinct plots regarding the same event, but also each groups’ plotting of the event perpetuate the tension, suspicion and distrust, and enhances prejudice towards the out-group. These narratives, which, although of particularly personal experiences, echo the group narratives, enhance the ‘us-them’ dichotomy. Moreover, these personal narratives inform of the influences of ‘conflict narratives’ within each group. Whilst affirming that plot of the 1983 as experienced by Participant No. 88 include the fact that Sinhalese friends helped, the plot also contained within it certain assumptions that provide insights into the influence of his/her in-group narrative. These included, for example, an acceptance that this was an
unprovoked attack, a belief that the Sinhalese targeted Tamil homes or that perhaps the ‘government’ was responsible in some manner, and an acknowledgement the helplessness, desperation, and fear of the Tamils affected by the riots. These aspects remain at the core of Tamil definition of 1983 as ‘genocide.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Sinhalese Group Narrative</th>
<th>Tamil Group Narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983 riots</td>
<td>Started with the ambush killing of 13 soldiers.</td>
<td>Started either without any provocation or because a rape of a/some Jaffna girls. The LTTE killed soldiers in retaliation for this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not planned, No one had lists. Only a few were involved, but without any backing from anyone. It was a riot and no one had control.</td>
<td>Pre-planned, with the backing of politicians. Perpetrators came with lists and with the specific intention of targeting innocent Tamils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The perpetrators were not Sinhalese Buddhists. They were thugs or Muslims intent on getting Tamil businesses; were Tamils themselves, intent of creating hatred between Sinhalese and Tamils</td>
<td>The perpetrators were Sinhalese Buddhists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The ordinary Sinhalese people saved Tamils people’s lives</td>
<td>Predominantly, though not all, remained silent on this aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It was a riot, uncontrollable, with mob-mentality</td>
<td>It was a pre-planned genocide, perhaps even a holocaust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thousands died</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005 and Sivanayagam 2005; Balasingham 2004; Somasundaram 1998; Tambiah 1990)
The Sinhalese group narratives inform that the 1983 riots perpetrated by ‘thugs’ and that the ‘Sinhalese’ remained either heroes who tried to save their neighbors or at the least, innocent by-standers. To these participants, the charge of being a ‘racist’ or a ‘perpetrator’ entailed the acceptance of unjust propaganda of the ‘out-group.’ Participant No. 41, for example, informed that,

“I’m Sri Lankan … don’t take me for a racist but I’m Sinhalese.”

[Participant No. 41]

Participant No. 29, despite positioning self as ‘Sri Lankan’ (see Table 2 above), echoed this perception.

“English person was working for us … met a Tamil and he had given a tape … to go home and watch … that it was about what the Sinhalese done to them”

[Participant No. 29]

It is possible to infer that the plotting of events and, especially in interpreting the meaning of the events, inform of group narratives being embedded in personal narratives. These group narratives themselves appear conducive to escalation of the conflict, or at least in perpetuating the tension and the ‘us-them’ dichotomy.

**Influence of Narratives**

To explore this further required conducting cross-case analysis of sub-group member’s hierarchical placement of turning points and the influences of personal narratives to group narratives. As noted above, there are apparently six broad sub-networks.
However, not everyone interacts with each other within these sub-groups nor have similar views of the out-group. The intriguing aspect remain that, while almost all participants retain some prejudicial perception of the ‘out-group,’ most still talked positively of their friendships with members of the out-group. To reiterate, fifty-seven percent (57%) of participants interviewed informed of intergroup interactions. A cross-case analysis of members of each sub-group provided insights into the nature of intragroup interaction as well as intergroup interaction. For Participant No. 4 (see Figure 25), the most significant turning points was 1987 when the IPKF began their battle with the LTTE. Both this individual and Participant No. 39 spoke of 1987 as the most significant, but, to the latter, 1983 superseded 1987 in significance. Moreover, Participant No. 2 spoke of the same time to denote another battle, this between the JVP and the Government.

![Figure 25: Cross-case Analysis of Turning Points](Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)
Although variety exists with regard to turning points examined and the plots that describe them, similarities also exist to infer influences from in-group narratives. The cross-case analysis below targeted participants within sub-networks and what they considered as important events.

Sub-Network One

As noted above, this particular sub-network consisted of a variety of individuals – from different age groups, living in different parts of the UK, including London, Manchester, and Birmingham – known to each other. Most of them positioned themselves according to nationality (Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 116, 109, and 110). Others positioned according to their ethno-linguistic identifiers: some Tamil ethnicity while others Sinhalese. Members of this network also introduced the researcher to a number of other sub-network (see Figure 17 and Figure 18).

Some interacted quite closely for over two decades (i.e., Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 46, 49, 66, 104, 107, 108, 109, 110) while others becoming ‘friends’ at a later stage (e.g., Participant No. 2, 6, 8, and 105). Participant No. 106 informed how s/he knew a number of friends from the time they were studying together at university in the mid-1970s (i.e., 1, 4, 12, 104, 105, 107, 108, and 110, as well as spouse of 8). Thus, in terms of the tenants of Contact hypothesis, there exist equal group status among interacting members; have common goals, which include keeping the friendships with members of
the out-group. This friendship also include intergroup cooperation as a number of the participants meet once a month or so for informal gatherings, including birthday parties, dinners, films, health issues, meditation classes, work, and at fitness centers.

While cooperation among members of the out-group – e.g. between Participant No. 4 who is a Tamil and Participand No. 104, who is Sinhalese – entail infrequent get-togethers, customs influencing this interaction remain constant. The participants interact as University batch-mates or as another member of the medical profession as was a custom to do so. The observed routine among Sri Lankans living within or without, involve meeting individuals, asking; “what do you do here?” and subsequently, “what school/university did you go to and which year?” establishes not only a commonality between strangers but also a bond. This inter-generational, inter-faith, and inter-ethnic sub-network included, for example, individuals either directly or indirectly involved in the medical profession.

The intriguing aspect regarding this sub-network as with almost all others remained variety in turning points. As Table No. 5 on ‘Sub-Network One’ (below) illustrate, a number of participants placed the JVP insurrection – whether the 1971 or the 1987 – as more significant to them than the separatist war while some others focused on 1956 as more significant than 1983 or 1987. Another more intriguing finding was that the neither the MOU period nor the more tension-filled decades before this, lessened the tension between participants. Thus, it appears that, at least within this group, the Contact hypothesis variable of favoral conditions for contact to reduce prejudice (Amir 1998) has
not had a great impact. Nor has the existence of the MOU positively or negatively impacted the mundane positive intergroup contact among members of divided groups.

Table No. 5: Sub-Network One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>1st Turning Point</th>
<th>2nd Turning Point</th>
<th>3rd Turning Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 1</td>
<td>1956 Language Bill</td>
<td>1971 JVP insurrection</td>
<td>1998 Attack on sacred Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 2</td>
<td>1987 JVP insurrection</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1956 Language Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 3</td>
<td>1956 Language Bill</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 4</td>
<td>1987 IPKF intervention</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1958 Riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 5</td>
<td>1956 JVP insurrection</td>
<td>1987 – 1990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 6</td>
<td>1956 Employment Issue</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1993 PA Govt. in power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 7</td>
<td>1989 Language Bill</td>
<td>1980s Tension/Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 9</td>
<td>1987 JVP insurrection</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1950s Colonization of Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 10</td>
<td>2004 JVP insurrection</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1987 JVP insurrection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 11</td>
<td>1971 Tsunami</td>
<td>1999 JVP Ant-LTTE protest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 12</td>
<td>1971 JVP</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 13</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>2001 Attack on Air Port</td>
<td>2002 MOU &amp; visit to Jaffna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 46</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1958 Looting</td>
<td>1959 Killing of SWRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 49</td>
<td>1987 SL Soldier hits Gandhi</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 66</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1971 JVP insurrection</td>
<td>1958 Riots</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although similarities exist among members who interact – and indeed these participants do interact at sports days, New Year celebrations, and most in religious functions – how they perceive turning points remained grounded in personal and group perceptions.

Sub-Network Two

The members of this Sub-Network – introduced to the research through Participant No. 106 – present a predominantly Tamil interaction. Here, while potential for strong ‘contact’ remain and a supposition that there exists a closely bond group, there appear variety and tension between some individuals due to politicization and the long history of the Tamil struggle. Participant No. 4, for example, informed how s/he did not want to
live in London because of LTTE influence; while Participant No. 70 narrated how the LTTE killed his/her brother. This not so close but known to one or two individuals subgroup include openly anti-LTTE activists (Participant No. 70, 87) and pro-LTTE activists (Participants No. 35, 42, 43, 74, and 92), interacting with some individuals (Participants No. 42, 43, and 92) though not with each other.

This sub-group included individuals with a strong Tamil nationalist perception (No. 8, 35, 42, and 74). Some, such as Participant No. 70, the human rights activist, informed how the LTTE had a ‘fatwa’ against him/her while Participant No. 74 informed that s/he, “Know Prabhakaran well … met him in India and he can solve this” [Participant No. 74]

These two individuals never inferred they knew of each other, Participant No. 92 introduced them both to the researcher.

As presented in Table 6 below, variety exists somewhat with regard to specific events experienced by the participants. However, a commonality here is the assumption made by a number of participants that they need not signify 1983 specially as a turning point, that it was self-evident and therefore, unnecessary to specify. Of the twenty-one individuals within this sub-network, Participants No. 8, 21, 42, 72, 73, 74, 92, and 93 did not highlight the significance of 1983 as a turning point. They spoke of other events that either influenced them directly or considered as important. This was not due to the presumption that 1983 riots remained unimportant but rather because, as it became
evident as the interview progressed, they assumed that its significance remained self-evident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>1st Turning Point</th>
<th>2nd Turning Point</th>
<th>3rd Turning Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 4</td>
<td>1987 IPKF intervention</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1958 Riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 8</td>
<td>1950s Land colonization in the northern areas</td>
<td>2nd cen BC: Intro of Buddhism in SL The converted Tamils called themselves Sinhalese</td>
<td>1956 Language Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 14</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1972 Standardization of entrance to University</td>
<td>1956 Language Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 21</td>
<td>1987 IPKF</td>
<td>2004 Tsunami</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 22</td>
<td>1958 Riots</td>
<td></td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 35</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1976 Vaddukoddai declaration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 43</td>
<td>1958 Riots</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1993 Assassination of President Premadasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 44</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 70</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1978 LTTE murder of TELO members</td>
<td>1987 LTTE murder members of other Tamil groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant No. 71</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1985 tension between Tamils &amp; Muslims</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 72</td>
<td>1987 IPKF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 73</td>
<td>1987 IPKF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No.</td>
<td>Event 1</td>
<td>Event 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>1958 Riots</td>
<td>1976 Vaddukoddai declaration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>1987 JVP</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1988 LTTE kills friends in politics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1958 Language Bill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>1958 Riots</td>
<td>1948 Independence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>1979 Govt. military operation against Tamil militants</td>
<td>1958 Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)

Another intriguing aspect of this sub-network, especially when compared to sub-network one and three, is how some individuals remained in isolation, interacting only with a few individuals. These included Participant No. 4 who interacted only with Participants No. 8, 14, and 92; Participant No. 70 interacting only with Participants No. 87 and 92; or Participants No. 88 informed that,

“We don’t talk to people … too much politics”

[Participant No. 88]

Participant No. 89 elaborated this,

“LTTE fellows everywhere … I just give money to TRO but not to everyone who calls … these boys call … but I don’t give and I tell them that I give to TRO.”

[Participant No. 89]
Some individuals within the sub-network – such as Participants No. 44, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 87, 88, 89, 92, 93, and 95 - had sought asylum. Others, such as Participants No. 4, 8, 14, 21, 22, 42, 43, and 74 had arrived prior to 1983 and for educational or employment reasons; while Participant No. 35 did not provide a reason for leaving Sri Lanka. Although only three individuals – Participants No. 4, 8, and 92 – provided the researcher with introductions to members of the out-group, some of the other members did speak of friendships with members of the out-group. Some spoke with sadness at the loss of friendships while others informed of continued friendships. Only two individuals, Participants No. 35 and 74, did not mention ever having ties to members of the out-group. The participants who narrated their friendships with members of the out-group, used similar plots about friendships developed prior to 1983; often at school or at university. Their plot, often in a heroic/romantic form, of troubles faced and overcome, focused on friendships formed and retained despite tensions because,

I have not spoken to anyone, Sinhalese or Muslim friends about this problem ... I try to avoid it because, ah, most of people I say friends, and they are good friends ... Don’t want to destroy the friendship ... So things like politics and religious should not be discussed ... There is no right or wrong way about it ... Just different views ... So I avoid getting into arguments and destroying a good friendships relationships

[Participant No. 4]

This indicates a conscious decision not to discuss certain aspects with members of the out-group. Others who no longer interacted with members of the out-group storied their relationship in a more tragic form.
A majority of the participants informed of a distancing from friends or acquaintances from out-group due to events. Here, the influence of the respective group narrative appears significant. Only one individual, Participant No. 87, indicated that s/he rarely interacted with members of his/her own original ethno-linguistic in-group but rather with like-minded individuals (e.g., Participant No. 70 and 93), of which ever ethno-linguistic group. Participant No. 87 only provided one contact from his/her own ethno-linguistic group for the researcher to interview and that participant (No. 27) had also found asylum.

Sub-Network Three

This sub-network, introduced by Participant No. 13, appears homogenous as the above sub-network with the exception that this one was Sinhalese. Only one individual, married to a Tamil (Participant No. 39), present a divergence from the Sinhala only character of this sub-network. Despite ethno-linguistic homogeneity within this sub-network there exist differences within. While Participants provided different examples of turning points, the plots regarding these turning points resembled each other in that they informed of influences of group narratives (see Table 7 below). How in-group narratives influence an individual to decide on a specific turning point is a common theme in the analysis of the data.

Unlike the previous example, the narratives of these individuals contained plots regarding both 1983 and specific LTTE-led attacks. The JVP insurrections, both 1971 and 1987 to
1990, also appear to have influenced these individuals. Even Participant No. 39, the only individual married to a Tamil, focused on 1987 – 1990 JVP insurrection first and subsequently told of how s/he was not harassed by the ‘mob’ during the 1983 riots. S/he is the only individual from all one-hundred and ten participants to speak of both the JVP insurrection and the IPKF intervention during the 1987 to 1990 period.

Table No. 7: Sub-Network Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>1st Turning Point</th>
<th>2nd Turning Point</th>
<th>3rd Turning Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 13</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>2001 Attack on Air Port</td>
<td>2002 MOU &amp; visit to Jaffna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 20</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 27</td>
<td>1971 JVP insurrection</td>
<td>1972 Standardization of University intake</td>
<td>1950s Land Colonization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 36</td>
<td>2004 Tsunami</td>
<td>2001 Attack on SL Air Port</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 38</td>
<td>1998 Attack on sacred site</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 40</td>
<td>1971 JVP insurrection</td>
<td>2004 Tsunami</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 41</td>
<td>2004 Tsunami</td>
<td>6th century B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 61</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1985 Attack on sacred site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

311
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant No.</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Attack on sacred site</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1987 JVP issues in Universities</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Bomb blasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>1956 Language Bill</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Attack on sacred site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>1971 JVP insurrection</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)

Despite the hegemonic nature of this sub-network, a number of participants informed of continued friendships with members of the out-group. Participant No. 39 spoke of his/her close relations with his/her in-laws, some of whom fled to India and others living in Jaffna. Others, such as Participants 64, 67, 68, 69, 90, and 91 narrated how they continued to have close ties with members of the out-group. Yet, Participant No. 13 spoke of how s/he never really had close friends from the out-group, despite knowing and having introduced Participant No. 39.
This illustrates a compartmentalization of what an understanding of who is a ‘friend.’ Furthermore, Participants No. 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, and 41 informed that they never had friends from the out-group.

**Sub-Network Four**

The fourth sub-network – introduced by Participant No. 106 – provided insights into a formal grouping of individuals who interacted closely. As presented in Table No. 2 (above), all these participants positioned self as Sri Lankan (e.g., Participants No. 46, 47, 55, 56, 57, 58, and 59) or Sri Lankan – British (Participant No. 48) or Sinhalese (Participants No. 54 and 60). These individuals presented the ‘conflict-driven’ diaspora as, other than Participant No. 60; these individuals belonged to a formal group that assisted ‘their’ people within Sri Lanka, i.e. the Sinhalese.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>1st Turning Point</th>
<th>2nd Turning Point</th>
<th>3rd Turning Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 46</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1958 Looting</td>
<td>1959 Assassination of SWRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 47</td>
<td>1958 Riots</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 48</td>
<td>1958 Riots</td>
<td>1958 Riots</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 54</td>
<td>1971 JVP insurrection</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 55</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Despite the fact that a majority of members of this group informed that they had good friends from the out-group (e.g., Participants No. 46, 47, 56, 58, and 60), when interacting within the group, they spoke of the negative aspects of the out-group. These included, for example, the idea that,

“The Tamils are making things bad … saying that we’re discriminating them”

[Participant No. 57]

The ‘us-them’ dichotomy appeared paramount in their self-identification. Participant No. 46 and 47, for example, justified their stance regarding 1983 Tamil narrative that all Sinhalese acted as perpetrators by citing personal narratives to the contrary. This, despite Participant No. 46 clearly informing that s/he had close ties to members of the out-group. However, the turning points plot analysis and observed data informed of the strong influence of in-group narratives. These individuals apparently reduced or completely ended friendships with Tamils.
Sub-Network Five

The fifth sub-group introduced by Participant No. 49, remained unique in that included three Tamils (Participants No. 50, 51, and 52), five Sinhalese (Participants No. 49, 61, 62, 63, and 76), and two generations. The first generation represented by Participants No. 49, 50, 51, and 63 and second-generation represented by Participants No. 52, 53, 62, and 76. The interviews indicated a reduction of prejudice towards members of the out-group, especially the friends from the out-group. Unlike members of the other five groups, these individuals apparently spoke with candor to friends from the out-group. The individuals, especially Participants No. 49 who introduced the sub-network, as well as Participants No. 50, 51, and 63, illustrated true equality and acceptance of the other’s perception as having merit. These individuals were of the same age group, had met as children in Sri Lanka, and continued their friendship for twenty years, despite the tensions created by the conflict.

Table No. 9: Sub-Network Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>1st Turning Point</th>
<th>2nd Turning Point</th>
<th>3rd Turning Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 49</td>
<td>1987 SL Soldierhits Gandhi</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 50</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1858 Riots</td>
<td>1963 Riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 51</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 52</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These individuals – though not Participants No. 53, 62, and 76 – illustrate that some diaspora do not retain the prejudicial, hate-filled rhetoric of their country-of-origin groups.

Sub-Network Six

The final sub-network, introduced by Participant No. 15, the second information-rich informant initially sought by the researcher, itself include two separate sub-networks. Participant No. 15 introduced the researcher to five young, educated professionals (i.e., Participants No. 16, 17, 18, 19, and 26). Participant No. 26 in turn introduced the researcher to Participant No. 23, his/her parent. This individual in turn introduced the researcher to twenty-five (25) of his/her age group friends. As depicted in the Overall Network (Figure 17), only one Participant provided a name from another sub-network (Participant No. 19 provided Participant No. 106 as a potential contact).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>1st Turning Point</th>
<th>2nd Turning Point</th>
<th>3rd Turning Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 15</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>2004 Tsunami</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 16</td>
<td>1996 Cricket World Cup</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant No. 17</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 18</td>
<td>2004 Tsunami</td>
<td>1999 Thericulvam murder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 19</td>
<td>1996 Cricket World Cup</td>
<td>1998 Attack on sacred site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 23</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1987 JVP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 24</td>
<td>JVP insurrection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant No. 25</td>
<td>2004 Tsunami</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant No. 26</td>
<td>1987 JVP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Participant No. 28</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1958 Language Bill</td>
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<td>Participant No. 29</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 30</td>
<td>JVP insurrection</td>
<td>1960s Disintegration of Federal Party</td>
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<td>Participant No. 31</td>
<td>1956 Language Bill</td>
<td>1971 JVP insurrection</td>
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<td>Participant No. 32</td>
<td>1971</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant No. 77</td>
<td>1948 Independence</td>
<td>1972 Introduction of Constitution</td>
<td>1971 JVP insurrection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant No. 78</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1970s Economic crisis</td>
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<td>Participant No. 79</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1983 Riots</td>
<td>1970s Economic crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant No. 80</td>
<td>1996 Attack on Central Bank</td>
<td>1995 Soldiers killed</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Year(s)</td>
<td>Event/Description</td>
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<td>81</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Attack on sacred site</td>
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<td>1987 – 1990</td>
<td>JVP</td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Attack on Central Bank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>1987 – 1990</td>
<td>JVP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Declaration</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>Standardization University Entrance</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1975 Diraiappah killing</td>
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<td>86</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Riots</td>
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<td>96</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Independence</td>
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<td>97</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Riots</td>
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<td>98</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>JVP insurrection</td>
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<td>1956</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Jaffna Library</td>
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<td>101</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Cricket World Cup</td>
<td></td>
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<td>103</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Jaffna Literary Festival</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Riots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Field research data gathered in UK January to end of April 2005)

The above analysis of interview data provided insights not only into the reality of intergroup interaction but also on the inescapability of narratives, which apparently often appeared divisive. The diaspora acceptance of events, as crucial or not and their interpretation apparently depends on the in-group perceptions. It is, however, pertinent to continue the analysis begun in the previous chapter.
It is possible to assume that acceptance of prejudicial group narratives depended on personal experiences. Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, for example, might have left Sri Lanka due to fear resulting from discrimination or violence. Overall, a majority of participants (79%) informed that economic and educational reasons lay behind their decision to leave Sri Lanka. Participant No. 1 explained this aspect.

“First of all, as a professional, you would have to advance your professional life ... And as I am a doctor and as doctors, we have to advance our careers ... Although the basic degree, called the comprehensive in Sri Lanka, we get a fantastic training ... But, beyond that, we have to come to England for furthering the studies ... That is from the career point of view ... Then, from the family point of view, you would like the family to be educated here ... That’s the wish of any parent in Sri Lanka at this moment ... So, that’s another reason why, for further education for your children ... And thirdly of cause, financially ... You come to advance your financial status.”

[Participant No. 1]

Within this, thirty-nine (39) participants informed that that whilst economic gain played a major role, the turmoil within Sri Lanka remained the most significant reason for not returning to Sri Lanka. Furthermore, twenty-one participants informed that the primary reason for leaving Sri Lanka lay in the conflict situation within country-of-origin. Of these, fourteen (or 13.7%) had found asylum in the UK.

Of the economic diaspora, the majority remained Sinhalese and they used the conflict as a means of justifying the choice. All these Sinhalese participants, with the exception of Participant No. 2 and 105, informed of a sense of guilt in abandoning their country and
some, such as Participant No. 1, 29, 40, and 110, even spoke at length of returning once peace returns. The exceptions – Participant No. 2 and 105 – informed of the choice in a matter-of-fact manner; as a rational choice. Moreover, these two diaspora informed of the significance of the conflict in the choices made. None of the Tamil diaspora who left Sri Lanka for economic or educational reasons spoke of guilt but rather portrayed the decision as a rational choice, influenced perhaps by discriminations faced or concerns for future.

From the economic diaspora, fifteen (15) of those who self-identified as Tamil participants and twenty-four (24) as Sinhalese participants informed that the turmoil situation within Sri Lanka – including the youth militancy of the 1970s, civil war, corruption, and political instability – influenced their decision to remain in the UK. All these individuals had left Sri Lanka for education but the decision to remain involved both economic payoffs in their new host country and economic hardships in their home country.

Twelve (12) Tamils and nine (9) Sinhalese informed they left Sri Lanka entirely due to conflicts within Sri Lanka. All twenty-one (21) spoke of political discriminations and even violence forcing them to leave the country-of-origin. Their plots informed of facing adversity. They all involved perpetrators, some Sinhalese (the mob, the JVP, the GoSL), some Tamil (i.e., LTTE), and some, the Indians (i.e., the IPKF). Some, such as Participants No. 2, 23, 27, and 87, spoke of the JVP and the GovSL as violators of their fundamental rights. Others, including Participants No. 31, 35, 78, and 93, named the
LTTE and the GovSL as responsible for violence. Participant No. 72 spoke of the LTTE-PLOTE-IPKF conflicts during the 1987 – 1990 period as the primary reason for leaving Sri Lanka.

Of these twenty-one, nine, consisting of two Sinhalese and seven Tamils, had sought asylum. Here again, the Sinhalese spoke of retaliatory activities of the JVP or the GovSL leading them to seek asylum. The Tamil participants did not specify the fear or the discriminatory reasons for leaving Sri Lanka. Their personal narratives, including choice of turning points (see Tables 5 to 10) however, illuminate the discrimination faced, the fears overcome, the violence witnessed and experienced.

Despite this, the reasons for leaving Sri Lanka apparently did not; in itself, play a role in the acceptance of conflict-driven uncomplicated and prejudicial group narrative. Participants No. 50 and 51, for example, sought asylum in the UK due to violence faced in the 1983 riots. The personal narratives include experiencing firsthand the mob violence, loss of home and of a future, and living in refugee camps as internally displaced. With their personal narratives compatible with their in-group narratives – including facing discriminations, surviving a vicious mob destroying property and threatening Tamils – they continued to interact with a number of Sinhalese friends. However, Participants No. 8, 14, 42, 43, 56, 60, 74, and 76, for example, left Sri Lanka for educational or economic reasons retain highly prejudicial perceptions of the out-group and of its members. These individuals not only did not challenge their prejudicial, often simplified in-group narrative but also assisted in spreading their perceptions to others.
within their in-group. Some of the above wrote their views to newspapers in the UK or in Sri Lanka while others sent protest letters to their Ministers of Parliament in the UK. Participant No. 42 and 60 published books on their group’s right to the land. Evidently, while their personal narratives appear complex, do also do not challenge their own in-group prejudices of the other. Thus, what is intriguing is how personal experiences alone did not challenge or bring into question their understanding of in-group narratives. Group narratives of hate co-exist with personal narratives of tolerance friendship.

Existence of Prejudice

The study into the existence of prejudice towards the out-group among those who have strong as well as those who have weak ties within the overall network required within case analysis. This within-case analysis focused on strong and weak ties rather than who introduced whom.

Weak Ties

The examples provided below remained archetypes of the divided diaspora. These participants, often nodes within a network, maintained intra-group rather than intergroup contact. Some, such as Participant No. 35, intentionally avoided intergroup interaction while Participant No. 41 viewed the out group through an intensely prejudicial lens.
Others with ‘weak ties’ in the network analysis include individuals who previously might have held relations but now distanced themselves. These individuals show a consistency with the Contact hypothesis in that they do not have contact with members of the out-group and therefore accept the prejudices from the in-group. However, it is pertinent to recall that this research strives to prove that positive contact alone is inadequate to reduce prejudice towards the out-group (see Table No. 1) rather than on prejudice and on-contact.

Participant No. 35

Participant No. 8 provided the contact information. This individual positioned self as Tamil and focused on the 1983 riots and the Vaddukoddai declaration of 1976 demanding separation from Sri Lanka as the most significant turning points. A staunch Tamil nationalist, this participant informed s/he never had friends from the out-group. S/he told of how s/he and spouse support Tamils in need and added that the spouse worked for a pro-LTTE organization in London. His/her acceptance of conflict-driven narratives regarding the plight of the in-group and of the horrors committed by the out-group was apparent throughout the interview.

“‘83 holocaust was the worst.”

[Participant No. 35]

The term ‘holocaust’ infers the acceptance of the Tamil in-group interpretation of the events of 1983.
Furthermore, while s/he assumed the researcher was a Buddhist Tamil, his /her conversation remained open, but when s/he found the researcher was a Sinhalese, the interview ended abruptly. This distrust of the ‘other’ and the determination not to interact with members of the out-group present this participant as an archetypal conflict-driven diaspora. This participant closely associated with Participant No. 42 who informed of witnessing horrors committed by the Sri Lankan/Sinhalese police. Moreover, s/he apparently maintained links with Participant No. 74, an individual who worked at a Hindu temple in London and who informed of his/her love for Prabhakaran. Lastly, his/her network of friends consisted of Participant No. 92, a Tamil local government official who spoke candidly of the crimes committed by pro-LTTEers in the UK. None of those who interacted with Participant No. 35 – with the single exception of Participant No. 92 – spoke harshly of the LTTE but appeared critical of the ‘Sinhala’ governments. His/her contact with the out-group appears non-existent and intra-group interaction reinforced his/her negative perception of the ‘other.’

This participant and his/her (sub)network illustrated the strength of intra-group ties, influenced by divisive and even prejudicial group narratives. Moreover, as noted above, his/her relationships appear based on acceptance of these divisive narratives. There is little evidence of interaction with so-called moderates who question group narratives without rejecting them. However, s/he does not appear to ostracize those who do. S/he illustrate the archetype divided diaspora who not only rarely interact but perceive members of the out-group from a prejudicial lens.
Thus, the super-ordinate categorization of this participant prevented the existence of non-dominant categorizations that countered his/her first order positioning. There does not exist a dual identification in this participant with regard to intergroup interaction.

Participant No. 41

Participant No. 40 introduced the researcher to this staunch Sinhalese nationalist. Just as Participant No. 35 accepted without questioning the conflict-driven Tamil group narratives, this participant believed the in-group narratives of the Sinhalese. The in-group narrative accepted as facts by this individual however appear highly prejudicial and simplified versions of traditional history. This individual emphatically stated that,

“I think they should go back to the 1970s and send everyone to India … I mean before the English there weren’t any Tamils persons … Just labor forces.”

[Participant No. 41]

Here, the participant’s acceptance of the distorted ‘history’ does not include the fact that Tamil people have lived in Sri Lanka for centuries prior to the arrival of the British. The apparent contradiction of the above statement – a Jaffna kingdom existed from the 13th to the 17th century – remains hidden to or unrecognized by this individual. Despite this strong assertion regarding the Tamil people’s right to the island, this participant informed that s/he not only had friends from the out-group but that s/he spoke candidly about contentious the issues.

I talk to my Tamil friends about the conflict … They say, Sinhalese came from India … And I say, no, only Vijaya came from India and he married Kuveni … So
we were here already … I do deserve my nationality … They say ‘you’re a racist’ … But lets go back to the principle … If they were discriminated, they deserve to be discriminated for occupying more than their right to the land.

[Participant No. 41]

A careful analysis of this individual’s personal narrative indicate that in actuality the Tamil ‘friends’ apparently are not ‘friends’ but just associates. This individual’s views apparently alienate not merely his/her Tamil acquaintances but also others around him/her.

I try to talk to my friends … What they do, getting world sympathy is not fair … Media would listen to them … Political would listen to them … Sri Lankan people wouldn’t listen to them and the tsunami proved it since nobody wanted to go to the north … Everybody gave their aid to the south because there is a conflict in the north and you couldn’t go to the north … I have a right to my opinion … Sinhalese people have not been bothered about Tamil … there are less Sinhalese people abroad compared with Tamils.

[Participant No. 41]

Being a member of a diasporic minority, this participant perceives his/her role as the ‘voice’ of the Sinhalese. This individual re-enforces the belief that Sinhalese and Tamils do not interact as diaspora and are conflict-escalators. S/he does not have any ‘friendly’ contact with any member of the out-group. Any contact s/he has appears confrontational and consumed by prejudice.

Participant No. 13

An individual known to Participant No. 106, this participant introduced the researcher to an ethno-linguistically homogeneous sub-network. S/he perceived the 1983 riots and
secondly, the 2001 LTTE attack on the Sri Lankan airport as significant turning points. The first personal experiences influenced this participant’s perception of the ‘other.’ These very personal experiences presented a plot that focused not so much on the ethno-linguistic divisions but rather on the experienced and witnessed.

“I was going to my work at University of Kelaniya … I saw certain things happen … I saw flames and there were so many people gathering to get food thinking that this will go on for a while … Due to shortage of food …. There were queues for food … What else did I see … The bus stops … You can see huge number of people going home … Everyone wanted to go home … We could hear gun shots … Burning of houses and killing of people.”

[Participant No. 13]

An individual who travels back and forth to Sri Lankan almost annually, the assertion that s/he never had any close friends from the out-group infer the influence of both the personal experiences as well as group narratives.

“Our country … Its our country … Sinhalese people … we can’t give a part of it … than land to them … It belongs to the Sinhalese community … What I think … they can’t ask for it … They want the north but that’s not right”

[Participant No. 13]

The above statement assumes the acceptance of the in-group narrative, especially regarding the plot that Sri Lankan remained a unitary state ruled by Sinhalese kings. This group narrative regarding one ethno-linguistic group’s right to the land over another also entail a simplification of a more complex understanding of Sri Lankan history. Thus, this participant’s understanding of the conflict and its origins appear linked to a conflict-
driven narrative, but also his/her perceptions appear clouded by these beliefs. This participant shuns intergroup interaction, notwithstanding his/her claim that,

“They are all human beings … We don’t have to separate the land … We have to live together”

[Participant No. 13]

Whilst informing that s/he had had colleague at his/her workplace in Sri Lanka, his/her personal narratives entailed viewing the ‘other’ – i.e., the LTTE – as the enemy. Moreover, s/he spoke of ‘never having close friends’ with members of the out-group and illustrated his/her distrust of the ‘other’ when explaining how s/he avoided going to Sri Lankan Tamil owned shops in London as that would result in money going to the LTTE. Whilst defining self as a ‘Sinhalese’ and despite having friends predominantly from the in-group, his/her friendship with Participant No. 39, a Sinhalese-Buddhist married to a Tamil-Hindu, present the complex nature of intergroup interactions. S/he went with Participant No. 39 to Buddhist temples and spoke candidly with him/her regarding specific events, concerns, or people within Sri Lanka relating to the conflicts.

The overall picture presented here is of an individual who informed of how s/he intentionally shunned opportunities to enhance interaction among members of the out-group. Suspicions have apparently distanced friendships s/he had from the past. Thus, although not an activist, this participant’s narratives illustrate the nature of intergroup interaction among conflict-driven diaspora. However, even though friendships in accordance to the tenants of Contact hypothesis do not apparently exist, it is not to say that intergroup interaction did not exist. This individual did once have friends, though
not ‘close friends’ from the out-group and has friends married to a member of the out-group. S/he has not ostracized the friend for this marriage nor does s/he avoid talking to the spouse.

Participant No. 23

An individual introduced by Participant No. 26 (see Figure 8), this participant provided further insights into the sixth sub-network. S/he provided the researcher with twenty-two individuals to interview. Though calling oneself a ‘Sinhalese’ Participant No. 23 informed of long-term ties with members of the out-group. As s/he narrated,

“The youth conflict 70 – 71 and in the north, Tamil conflict came up in ’83 ... By that time, they were trying to persuade Tamils living in comfort in Colombo to join in … They had a list of these people … my view is that the Tamils set fire to their own people … to get them in to the conflict … I know because I talked to them … In front of our house was a Tamil family … On top of the hill, two others … One family, we kept them in under our beds … They [mob] who had the list … they couldn’t speak Sinhalese they could only speak Tamil … Pulled the people out and burnt … Thugs joined in. … they had killed people in the north ... This was like a wild fire ... We have no doubt about that ... People who hid under our beds, he kept on saying, why did our people do this to us … Now they live here.”

[Participant No. 23]

This plot here inform of a tragic event but included prejudice towards the other group. While not including the neighbors within the negative perception, it was evident that prejudices stemming from group narratives clouded this plot. This participant viewed the killing of soldiers in north as the antecedent while hiding neighbors in the house, talking
with some of the mob, and witnessing murders appear as significance events within the plot.

“I brought them all the way to Heathrow … I came with them here … the Faculty was closed and I could … we had known them since childhood … and Sinhalese come to our gate and told us the dangers of keeping them … But the people in the vans started it … Not Sinhalese.”

[Participant No. 23]

This plot ends with the neighbors leaving Sri Lanka with the assistance of this individual. It is thus a heroic tale of bravery with villains and heroes. To this participant, however, the villains were members of the out-group who attacked their own; who attacked people who did not support the separatist cause in order to create future supporters. This individual hid their neighbors despite opposition from other Sinhalese and regardless of the dangers his/her family faced in hiding Tamils. Furthermore, s/he assisted in their escape. This participant’s views regarding the Tamils group remained constant despite this close tie and regardless that s/he viewed his/her to the neighbors as victims. The out-group lied and contrived to create a riot.

“The number of people killed is such an exaggeration … I was going to hospital and coming back and I saw things … Rossmid place, Wellawatte, hundreds and hundreds of Tamils … Their houses were burnt … But I saw only a few bodies.”

[Participant No. 23]

The assertion that the numbers of dead during the 1983 riots was an exaggeration is part of the in-group conflict-driven narrative. This individual’s personal narrative reinforces the influence of the group narrative, thereby enhancing the perception of the ‘other’ as distrustful, opportunistic, and conniving. Even though this individual maintained close
ties with members of the out-group, in spite of viewing these friends as victims, and notwithstanding the fact that prejudicial perception of these friends appear non-existent, this participant views the out-group through a prejudicial lens.

“My colleagues from the North don’t like the LTTE … they are from good castes and their families were destroyed … But some distort the Sri Lankan history … I heard from someone else that she said that Sri Lanka was really Tamil … before it became Sinhalese … You can’t dispute the facts given by history … I know this is the 13th invasion … They have tried to take over the country … but they have never been able to control the country … When the Dutch came to SL, they landed in Trincomale and they were taken to the King of Kandy … How can they then say it was not controlled by Kandy? … Robert Knox landed in Trinco and was taken to country”

[Participant No. 23]

All individuals introduced by this participant positioned self as Sinhalese or Sri Lankan but it was apparent that this participant has continued contact with Tamils.

While Participant No. 23 did not provide the researcher with names of any potential Tamil contacts, s/he did speak of the type of contact s/he had with members of the out-group. This contact involves collaborative, goal-oriented ties between equals; dictated either by traditional customs such as helping friends in need or working together to organize a celebrations or by support of authorities such as the hospital bureaucracy. As noted above, despite this interaction, this individual’s acceptance of conflict-driven in-group narratives appear static rather than dynamic or questioning. Positive contact (at one time) here apparently has not decreased prejudice towards the out-group. Rather
personal experienced coupled with in-group narratives has rendered him/her unwilling to have friendships with members of the out-group.

Participant No. 46

This individual introduced the researcher to the only formal sub-network. With the exception of Participant No. 60, all others in the sub-network four – Participants No. 47, 48, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, and 59 – belonged to a formal organization assisting Sri Lankans. The assistance they provide, which at the time of interviews was for the tsunami affected south, usually include technological hardware such as computers and monitory assistance for needy students. While Participant No. 46 informed that s/he had long-term friendships with members of the out-group (see Table No. 4), at the same time, s/he informed that,

“1983 ... something was put on fire ... after these incidences, our relationships with Tamils became distant ... but in University it was different ... A gradual change I feel ... All the Tamil friends became distant (...) They are like that ... I remember going to Jaffna nobody wanted to speak to us ... That was in 1955 or '54 ... This is before that ... In Kandy, Peradeniya University it was alright ... But when you go to Jaffna it was bad ... We were in Sri Lanka not here in '83 ... But we still had to face people calling us killers ... Calling all Sinhalese murderers ... It was hard ... Tried telling them that we had Tamil friends ... Also that we helped save a Tamil family ... Hid them for days on end ... And food was an issue ... But we still did that.”

[Participant No. 46]
This individual provide insights into a plot that informs of friendships begun at University, when all students were equal, had specific goals which collaboration assisted in achieving, and an overall university structure that encouraged intergroup interaction. The friendships apparently continue but appear ‘distant’ due to intervening events such as the 1983 riots. Intergroup interaction occur between friends and former professors from University rather than any newly acquired individuals. This infers that contact begun under specific conditions and prior to the start of hostilities continues despite tensions. The participant spoke of hesitating about making new friends and informed that only some of the existing Tamil friends continue to interact. This contact, however, appear sporadic and, when such interactions occur, this individual indicated that they spoke of university friends and life instead of the conflict. This aspect of intergroup interactions is illustrative of how most do not talk of the very issue that causes tension.

Strong Ties

The choice of the cases examined below dependent on their identification as having strong ties to members of the out-group through the network map (see Figure 7) and network analysis conducted in the previous chapter. Unlike the above participants, these individuals continue to interact with members of the out-group but, whether their perceptions retained intra-group divisive and often prejudicial narratives required further analysis.
Participant No. 4

Participant No. 106 introduced the researcher to him/her. The first Tamil participant interviewed, this individual positioned self as Tamil (see Table 2 on ‘Participant First Order Positioning’ above). Moreover, this individual’s personal narrative informed of what s/he perceived as critical turning points. Furthermore, s/he began the introduction of the researcher to the second sub-network. What has remained unexplored thus far is the nature of this participant’s long-term, informal interaction with members of the out-group.

This individual’s personal narrative includes a plot regarding a tragedy involving the Indian peacekeeping army or the IPKF.

One day, there were some skirmishes between the LTTE and the Army and they blasted off a few army soldiers and all that … not far from our house … So, immediately all the people in the neighborhood ran off to the refugee camps and temples to hide … My father-in-law, a bit more adamant, he didn’t want to go … He had met this situation before … He had gone through it … He talked to the army when they came for searches and he manages to get away … But this time there were no questions asked … They came (…) from the back garden and from everywhere and they took him back to the back garden and they shot him … We don’t know the exact date … At that time the troubles were so bad.

[Participant No. 4]

The plot of this – the most significant of turning points as described by this participant – along with the events of 1983, which s/he heard of second-hand provide insights into how personal and group narratives influence the perception of the ‘other.’ The ‘other’ here
remain the military – whether Sinhalese or Indian – as well as the politicians. This individual informed at the outset that

“I did not actually feel, when I was a young _______ or even in medical school, or even when I was working ... I never felt the differences between the Sinhalese and Tamils (...) I think the politicians created this split.”

[Participant No. 4]

This participant’s personal narrative of friends from the out-group inform of a duality. S/he perceived the friend as someone s/he went to University rather than as a Sinhalese. His/her plot of friendships gained and retained illustrates that aspect. Yet, it is not to say that this individual remained ignorant of the ethno-linguistic divisions among Sri Lankans. The statement below, a component of a larger plot informing of friendships gained and retained, illustrates this point.

I have not spoken to anyone Sinhalese or Muslim friends about this problem ... I try to avoid it because, ah, most of people I say friends ... and they are good friends ... Don’t want to destroy the friendship ... So ... things like politics and religious should not be discussed ... There is no right or wrong way about it ... Just different views ... So I avoid getting into arguments and destroying a good friendships relationships

[Participant No. 4]

Herein lay the crux of how this individual retained his/her friendships despite the intrusion of negative group narratives. It is noteworthy to specify that this participant perceived the divisions among Sri Lankans and intentionally strived to circumvent the difficulties by focusing on the existing category of University friend.
Thus, it is possible to breakdown this data to present an overall picture of this participant’s interview. Despite defining ‘self’ as Tamil, this participant informed how s/he met members of the out-group during University. As equals, and through goal oriented cooperation, this individual developed long-term friendships with some of these individuals. Disregarding the fact that this individual’s friendships with members of the out-group began in the 1970s, s/he does not discuss certain matters pertaining to the conflict as it might “destroy the friendship.” Herein lays the crux of the research: positive intergroup interaction as exemplified by the tenants of Contact hypothesis might not result in reduction of prejudice.

Thus, this participant remains silent regarding his/her views regarding the military when interacting with friends from the out-group whilst talking of this issue candidly with members of his own group. This not only signifies his/her understanding of the groups but also illustrates the nature of intergroup interaction; at least concerning his/her interactions with participants within sub-group one and two. The compartmentalization prevents true understanding, which in turn hints of ‘trust’ being a major concern between ‘friends’ from out-groups.

Participant No. 15

A young diaspora activist and an economist by training, this individual informed that s/he self-identified as Sri Lankan British. Although arriving in the UK during his/her
formative years, s/he still indicated that s/he had long-term friendships with members of the out-group, which in this case included those from different religion. S/he moreover spoke positively of intergroup interaction. His/her friends included educated youth of the same age (i.e., Participants No. 16, 17, 18, 19, and 26) but from different religions. The participant’s personal narratives plot interactions at workplace, at university, during meals near workplace, and informal meetings at friends’ homes. These interactions focus on specific issues or on the mundane; including sports events.

“Sure we talk of the war ... we’re all here so … that’s ok … I think that … But we don’t blame … we try and see the good in everything … you know … like the World Cup in ’96 … you know … when we won … as a team with Sinhalese and Tamils … Think of Murali … he’s the best in the world and we think of him as one of us … So we talk of the positive … or we just talk of books ... or films … We just get together and talk … It doesn’t offend you know … We … we do this always … order in and talk for hours … Oh until about 12 or so.”

[Participant No. 15]

Here, the plot does not focus on how the friendships emerge but rather on the process of keeping it. The mundane further includes boy/girl friend problems, family issues, and work or study related discussions whilst the more conflict-related discussions involve issues on religion, ethnicity, gender, and propaganda.

None of the friends introduced by this individual – i.e., Participants 16, 17, 18, 19, and 26 – self categorized according to ethnicity. They focused on Sri Lankan or their British nationality (see Table No. 2). With the one exception – Participant No. 26 – all others in this close-knit group informed that s/he had long-term friends from the out-group (see
Moreover, Participant No. 15 illustrated how friendships from university, from internet, and from Sri Lanka continue to evolve.

“Still have most of my friends … I’m like that … We’ll keep in-touch too.”
[Participant No. 15]

The intriguing aspect is that when talking of the Sri Lankan win at the Cricket World Cup of 1996, the participant alluded to the ethnic tension and how it united the groups. Thus, despite the first-order positioning, the participant still could not remove his/herself from the narratives emanating from the country-of-origin. This individual’s plot regarding ties with members of the out-group illustrate the goal-oriented cooperation among equals under certain informal customary instances such as get-togethers and sports events. The fact that this individual talks of the ‘positive’ however, might hinder challenging the existing conflict-driven narratives. However, this individual volunteers his/her services as the Secretary to an academically inclined internet site. This allows him/her to interact with contributors from different areas of the world. Whilst the focus here remained academic, contributors also examine different interpretations of history, of the meaning of each event, and question the human rights record of the parties to the conflict. His/her understanding of the group narrative entails recognition of its dynamic nature.

Participant No. 42

An individual introduced to the researcher by Participant No. 8. Participant No. 42 not only provided insightful information but also gave contact information on eight
individuals. Belonging to the informal and loosely-based sub-network two, this individual positioned self as British, but informed that s/he still had long-term friendships with members of the out-group. This in-itself positioned him/her according to his/her ethnicity as a Tamil. While s/he spoke for a long period regarding turning points such as the 1958 riots and the 1974 attack on the literary festival in Jaffna, s/he did not specify the nature of intergroup interaction. What because evident however was his/her stance regarding events intertwine both the personal and in-group narrative.

“we our last two children had a terrible ordeal … I wrote a story about it … but I don’t remember the date … I took them to Jaffna … but [on our return] the train wouldn’t start … I feared there was trouble in Jaffna as well because of the burning of the Jaffna library … I think that is what it was … and then some Sinhalese policemen creating trouble … In civilian clothing, creating trouble … For trying to fool with Tamil girls and this the Tamil youth resented this … I sensed that was it and I asked them … Train started and we stopped at Anuradhapura for a long time … At each station for a long time … There were shouting outside, in Sinhalese … The doors [of our sleeper] were broken … Thugs … asked are you a Tamil or a Sinhalese and they started beating people … There was a chap in front of me, speaking to them in Sinhala … The thugs found he was Tamil and beat him up … As for me, and children were six and seven … I asked them to sleep by my side … I had never got beaten … I was in the army once … They searched … I had a letterhead with my name written in three languages … That was my concept that there were three languages … It had my army title as well so nothing happened … They let us be … But we were supposed to come at 10 but we came to Maradana at 2 o’clock … Children did not seem affected … Up to today, we have never asked them about it”

[Participant No. 42]

This individual’s perception of the ‘other’ contains notions such as Sinhalese police officers create trouble and bother Tamil girls and of Sinhalese thugs targeting and beating
innocent Tamils. The plot of this incident presents a heroic journey, of a hero overcoming adversity and safeguarding the innocent children.

His/her perception of Prabhakaran, an individual wanted by Interpol is insightful.

“I have identified people who have defended Eelam … Mr. Prabhakaran is primary and is respected by almost all Tamils except for a number of quislings.”

[Participant No. 42]

The word ‘quislings’ reinforce his/her perception of all those who do not accept the LTTE leader’s significance. However, even while having such strong feelings regarding Tamils who do not accept LTTE as the rightful party of the Tamils, s/he interacts with Participant No. 92, an individual critical of LTTE activism in the UK. Participant No. 42 apparently does not ostracize Participant No. 92 for having close ties with Participant No. 70, a human rights activist critical of LTTE activities within Sri Lanka.

As noted above, this individual did not specify the nature of his/her ‘friendship’ with members of the out-group. It is possible that like Participant No. 8, this individual interacts sporadically with members of the out-group. However, what is evident is the influence of conflict-driven in-group narratives that stipulate the importance of specific incidents and individuals at the expense of out-group interaction.

“I have no great respect for history … I believe the Sinhalese people have a paranoid about the Indian Tamils … getting together with the Sri Lankan Tamils and pushing them into the sea, metaphorically … I must say they have … Now they know that Sri Lankan Tamils are different from Indian Tamils … Yes there is a similarity in language and culture but the way the Indian Tamil is its different … And many of them look to our Tamil leader as the world Tamil leader.”

340
As noted in Social Identity theory, within-group cohesion occur at the expense of inter-group interaction.

Participant No. 49

Unlike most of the individuals who interact with members of the out-group, Participant No. 49 not only discusses openly of difficult issues regarding the conflict but also invites friends from the out-group to air their views. This participant, known to Participants 13 and 46, and introduced to the researcher by Participant No. 106, defined self as a Sri Lankan British. Here again, whilst analysis of Question No. 1 (see Appendix I) provided insights into the first order positioning, the answers to other research questions highlighted the fact that the participant viewed the out-group as consisting of the LTTE as well as the extremist nationalistic Sinhalese.

Having arrived in the UK from 1966 at 13 years of age, his/her understanding of the conflict involves personal experiences, perceptions from friends, and in-group narratives. While the turning points described by him reinforce the fact that s/he remained in the UK rather than in Sri Lanka during the specific events (see Table No. 9), it also illustrate the distancing of self from the in-group narratives.

“This tension’s been there for so many years ... History tells us it’s been there for centuries ... from South India to Sri Lanka ... People have their own opinion ... They have some information to back up their opinion and if you are in the
opposition, they have an argument … But I believe politics hasn’t benefited the country.”

[Participant No. 49]

Despite living outside of Sri Lankan on-and-off for over four decades, this individual informed that s/he had witnessed violence during periodic travels to Sri Lanka.

“I’ve seen violence from my own eyes … I saw civil disturbances … cars being toppled.”

[Participant No. 49]

Yet, to this individual, ethno-linguistic divisions remained secondary to friendships made during school in Sri Lanka. His/her friendship with Participant No. 50, an individual from the out-group, apparently began in the early 1950s and has continued since. This friendship defined by both as integral, retain all characteristics discussed within the Contact hypothesis (Pettigrew 1998). At least to this participant, this intergroup interaction or friendship assisted in his/her understanding of the ‘other.’ Only two individuals truly indicated that their intergroup interactions apparently resulted in reducing prejudice towards another out-group: i.e., Participants No. 49 and 106. This two remain the only individuals, from a group of one-hundred and ten, who specifically informed that their perception of the ‘other’ has transformed.

This individual further informed of his/her disgust regarding certain activities of his/her in-group. S/he informed that,

“I contribute but don’t initiate contact or really assist”

[Participant No. 49]
The plot regarding his/her friendship with Participants No. 50 and 51 involve assisting them when they arrived in the UK after 1983 riots, after the destruction of their home. The friendship continues but this has not apparently transferred to the second-generation. Participants No. 52 and 53, children of Participants No. 50 and 49 respectively, indicated that they did not have ‘close’ friends from the out-group. These two second-generation participants positioned self as British and though they discussed trips to Sri Lanka, their lives and interactions occurred within the UK.

Participant No. 50

This participant, introduced by Participant No. 49, and speaking whilst in that out-group friend’s home, informed that,

“I’m a British Sri Lankan … I don’t want to lose my Sri Lankan nationality”

[Participant No. 50]


“We were affected in 1983 riots … the house was burnt … she [the daughter] was only six weeks when it happened … A boy from a neighboring house came up and told us there was a mob coming around and clear out … We all ran across to the neighbors house … It was another Sinhalese family who came and asked us to come and stay with them … So Dr. A______ [Sinhalese] took us in and he was threatened … Then another Sinhalese Doctor came but then threatening letters … We really wanted to get away from Sri Lanka … We were in refugee camp wearing another’s clothes … I was brought up with Sinhalese … I was more Sinhalese that most because I could speak Sinhalese well … But in ‘58, a person came and warned us … So we ran to the neighbor’s house … In 1977 there was another thing and we had to run to neighbor … My father was affected by racial riots in his 50s, I was affected
when I was in my 20s, and my daughter was affected when she was six weeks old ... I left”

[Participant No. 50]

This plot illustrates the helplessness of the individual in the midst of mob-violence.

All Tamil participants informed of this historical event as important. This individual had apparently lived through the horrors and still continued to interact with ‘close friends’ from ‘before.’

But we meet friends here … old friends from before ... They weren’t there then … In Sri Lanka I mean … They helped when we came with nothing … We came without even a visa but have been there … almost every year … But for the first ten years we couldn’t come because of visa”

[Participant No. 50]

This individual provided an unusual reason for leaving Sri Lanka.

“We just wanted to get away from Sri Lanka because we wanted to get a sense of normalcy … When you see everything go up in flam and having lived in a refugee camp, queuing up for food, not knowing when your next meal will come, where to find clothes … It was an all a big change … The only way to come to this country is to come as a student … we were staying in this country in a visa every six months to six months.

[Participant No. 50]

To this participant, the blame for all the horrors faced rests firmly with the ‘mob’ rather than the Sinhalese ethnic group.

“We do have friends … … We rarely talk about it [the horrors faced] … We’ve just moved on … If I was to say, this is what the Sinhalese did to us I just don’t want them to think I was one of them who accuses … See what I mean … It was not the educated people who did this to us … It was the mob … So its not fair on the Sinhalese people to say that … It was the Sinhalese who took us in and looked after us.”

[Participant No. 50]
The analysis of the overall plot regarding friends from out-group (i.e., the Sinhalese) indicate an antecedent of meeting friends at school in the late 1950s, strengthening the friendships, especially with regard to Participant No. 49, even when school life ended. Despite subsequent experiences that could cloud an individual’s perception of the ‘other,’ this participant stresses the goodness of members of out-group. Nor, as mentioned before, does s/he blame the out-group but rather the uneducated mob for the riots. Just as Participant No. 49, this individual’s understanding of in-group narratives appear nuanced, with an understanding of the complexities and contradictions inherent in the narratives. Yet, despite this understanding and regardless of the long-term intergroup interaction born out of “active endorsement of authority figures” (Healey, 2005: 116) at school, these individuals apparently rarely talk of specific events and their meaning.

“When you go to dinner, you don’t really talk about it”

[Participant No. 50]

This illustrates the nature of intergroup interaction, even among two individuals such as Participant No. 49 and 50, who does not accept the prejudicial, conflict-driven narratives emanating from groups within their country-of-origin.

Participant No. 60

The only individual not in the formal group described by Participant No. 46, this individual non-the-less interacted with almost all members of the sub-group four. This
individual focused on the caste issues among Sinhalese and Tamils groups as the primary cause for the two conflicts that ravaged Sri Lanka.

“I’ve been here since 1970 … I’m reading all the time … One very valuable book on Tamil settlements in Sri Lanka … He came to SOAS and did his thesis … Then someone stole the copy … And that copy traces the Tamil settlements from the earliest times to the 10th century … There was no Tamil kingdom just settlements here and there … It was only after the invasions that Tamils went to the North and they had this identity that they were a different people … Then Aryachakrawarthi came and built the Tamil Kingdom.”

[Participant No. 60]

Calling self a ‘Sinhalese’ this participant informed that s/he continued to have long-term sustained friends from the out-group. This friendships stem from the time s/he was a lecturer at a University in Sri Lanka. Despite having friends from the out-group during the 1940s and 1950s, the participant perceived the 1956 Language Bill as a purely personal experience.

“You know, it was hard for us too … the Sinhala only bill … Our lecturers had to be given in Sinhalese … And we spoke in English, learnt everything in English … It was hard for us too”

[Participant No. 60]

His/her intergroup interactions apparently limit to former university colleagues and students whom s/he met prior to 1970. This inform of the nature of this interaction, which include equals as well as students considered by this individual as less than equal. Interaction within the University system infers goal oriented cooperation among colleagues and students, resulting in long-term friendships. However, this individual focused his/her interview time to caste concerns and analysis of historical data, thereby not providing insights into this interaction.
Participant No. 68

A Sinhalese individual and friend of Participant No. 13 as well as Participant No. 106,
this participant informed of facing difficulties during the JVP insurrection.

“We had to go through several army check points … You know ‘Billas’ [an individual whose face remained covered, someone who spied for the government against the JVP] … Curfews and people being killed either by the army or the JVP … You didn’t know whether one or the other side was going to accuse you of anythings … Lots of journalists killed … Lots of people who had young boys wanted to get out … I was actually held at gunpoint by the army and was ordered by the army to not leave the hospital … Apparently they needed a doctor … Then I thought, that’s it.”

[Participant No. 68]

His/her personal experiences resulted in focusing attention on the JVP. However, this participant also noted the significance of 1986 bomb blast in Colombo, planned by the LTTE. Despite the emotions linked to this and other events, s/he informed that s/he had friends.

“Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslim friends from Sri Lanka and other who I met since … Sri Lankans are political animals … When we get together, we talk about it … Main thing, other than saying that our politicians are to blame, they talk of autonomy … But if you talk to Tamils and I know some LTTE fellows also … We have heated discussions but we agree to disagree … They want peace anyway … They feel that they have been at the receiving end of the Sinhalese and they want an end to it … Their own freedom, to govern themselves … There would have been some reason for them to have got that impression, whether it is from their political leaders who teach them that … Its not, I don’t think its their personal experiences…. My Tamil friends, they came before that [83 riots].

[Participant No. 68]
The nature of this individual’s intergroup interaction appears to involve discussion of sensitive concerns.

“I say, this is a small county, you can’t have an Eelam … And they say you will never treat us right”

[Participant No. 68]

The nature of intergroup interaction among individuals relate to the tenants of Contact hypothesis. Yet, even whilst having discussions, despite close ties, this individual’s prejudices remain.

“You can’t help feel mad about … I’ve been shown pictures of massacres by the Tigers and your blood boils … Natural … But I think they must have been under drugs or something to do this … They couldn’t have done such horrible things if they were a little bit human … Your nationality comes up then … Then you try to think.”

[Participant No. 68]

Regardless of these assertions, the insights regarding intergroup interactions illustrate close friendships.

“Personally I differ to my friends … I personally hold a view that giving them a personal autonomy … things have gone too far now … Our youngsters are getting killed … That’s what’s important.”

[Participant No. 68]

Re-examining the situation from that standpoint that all youth, irrespective of whether they belong to the LTTE or the Government military, provides an avenue for intense discussion of difficult and sensitive concerns that might otherwise harm friendships.
Participant No. 70

A friend of Participants No. 92 as well as 87, this individual informed why s/he writes critically of the LTTE activities. A caution, his/her activism challenges the LTTE narrative but not, it appears, his Tamil ethno-linguistic group narrative.

“When we go to Jaffna, for tuition, won’t go without passing a body, on a lamppost … My brother, own brother was a member the militant group called PLOT … He has been killed between the fighting between LTTE and PLOT, during the IPKF times … That is the only time Sri Lankan Govt. helped the Tigers to attack other Tamil groups … That time he was 25 … He went to the military group when he was 18.”

[Participant No. 70]

Yet, initially this individual and his/her family apparently supported the militants.

I heard the fight between the Tigers and TELO … I was 16 or something … We normally go and see the bodies … And I saw people sleeping … The Tiger comes and kill the group … They are showing that group … There was a pool of blood … That is a real pool of blood … The Commander over there, we know him personally … Commander of the people being killed … TELO … He has been bring anti-aircraft missiles to our house and kept it there … That’s when he was killed … A week before he was killed, we had a box full of anti-aircraft missiles there … That time everybody support, everybody support whoever … He came in and asked … Because the army was searching around there, we asked him to take it off … A week before … He was a very nice person … Nice to talk to him … Very soft spoken … That affect my father … So he said, no more support to anyone … We support the cause but not anybody.

[Participant No. 70]

Not only has this participant faced terror and sadness in the hands of the LTTE but also the Sri Lankan government.
“1985, there was some incident … the Tigers went to Anuradhapura and killed the civilians … My father was taking refuge in a school or something … And after two days, one of the corporals takes a gun and starts shooting … When he comes to my father, the bloody gun runs out of bullets … The commander came and shot him … For ten days, we know Anuradhapura is burning … We couldn’t get out of the camp and communication was bad.”

[Participant No. 70]

Each plot illustrate the plight of those caught between multiple forces during a conflict.

“I won’t be able to go … since I write in the papers … … normally … on Human Rights … The Tamil nationalism … If you do anything, then you are against Tamil nationalism and you are a traitor … Me all my names comes into that list … I don’t have an anti-Tigers view … I say, you are the government of the Tamil people … Behave like the government of the T people … You don’t need to write anything against them … If you don’t support them, you are a traitor … My friend covers a newspaper that writes about things happening in London, and not political … His name is also in the list because he is not writing anything about them… If you keep your views quiet, ok.”

[Participant No. 70]

Being an individual apparently hounded by the pro-LTTE groups living in the UK, this participant strives to keep ties with fellow human rights activists and journalists. Moreover, this individual appears critical of the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE as well as the Tamil diaspora residing in the UK.

“The Tamil community live in London, they came out of the war in Sri Lanka … They never live in a peaceful life … They are committing crime, involving in Gang crime … Last four year, 14 killing, 250 people in prison … The Tamil population of London is around 80,000 … For that population the violence committed is too high compared to other communities … For that reason, the Scotland Yard set up a special operational team that is running last two years … Some in the Tamil media start to publish name and shame campaigns … This year it’s come down to one boy killed in Kingsbury … They want to manipulate the news [pro-LTTE Tamil Journalists] … Anything that is harmful to the LTTE or the Tamil myth, they don’t want to publish … There was a rape case and none of
the Tamil media covered that news … Rather than stopping the crimes, they want to stop the news coverage … They want to keep our mouths shut.”

[Participant No. 70]

Despite blaming the Sri Lankan military acts committed, this participant informed that s/he had close friends from the out-group.

“When I came here, I lived with a Sinhala family … After we moved out, no … In London, the community is split … We don’t believe in each other … Even between Muslims and Tamils I go because of my paper I see this split.”

[Participant No. 70]

The individual’s awareness of the divisions among the diaspora does not apparently relate to his/her ties with members of the out-group. S/he informed of his/her continued ties with members of the out-group but did not specify the nature of the interaction.

Participant No. 87

The second human rights activist interviews from the second sub-network, Participant No. 92 introduced this individual. A Sinhalese lawyer, this individual sought asylum in 1989 due to, as noted by him/her, persecution by the then government.

“I came with my eldest daughter in 1989 … There were threats … But no lawyer worthy of his soul would get scared … But they carried out the threat … So two days after my nephew was shot on a Friday, and despite the shooting, I was prepared to go on Monday … I was coming out of the house … A Quaker friend worried about me took me to her hotel and left me in the hotel room … And in the evening, the staff called to say that someone was wanting to see me … I was curious … Having left home with the fear of being killed … Then he came up this person … He seemed to be very very informed about the situation … For about
half an hour, we were chatting ... I asked him, who are you ... Then only I knew he was ______ His Excellency, the High Commissioner [of UK] ... He advised me to get out ... I said I did not have a passport but he said don’t worry ... I was taken from my hotel room in one of the embassy cars and my wife and children also came ... Both American and British embassy were both helpful ... Within two days, they were here”

[Participant No. 87]

This participant informed that s/he had close friends with members of the out-group, despite accusations to the contrary.

“In ’83 ... They banned the JVP, the LSSP and Communist party, the 3 Marxist parties ... I was not a member of neither but 3 days later, I was arrested ... Because I was supposed to be closed to the JVP ... I was Wijeweera’s ______ ... I was detained for 4 months ... I was saving Tamils at that time ... I had picked up two Tamil lawyers and dropped them home ... I took food and gave them and I was accused as Tamil killers ... I fought and was taken to the police headquarters ... And to have been detained at Negambo prison ... I said I’m not coming with you to prison, I’m not a convict ... They gave me a room... We were at that time campaigning against JR, against the Referendum ... That’s why I was detained ... Not because I was anti-Tamil”

[Participant No. 87]

The nature of intergroup interaction since arriving in the UK appears as between like-minded individuals. This participant interacts closely with Participants No. 70 and 92, both critical of the human rights record of the parties to the conflict. The goal here appear to include informing the public of the human rights violations, the collaboration appear to involve finding the relevant data, and specific papers appear as relevant authorizes assisting in this intergroup interaction.

Whilst intergroup contact – though perhaps not a close friendship – exist between Participants No. 70 and 92, it does provide potential, as they appear to view their own in-
group narratives critically. The questioning of prejudicial perceptions within their fellow in-group members, the determined efforts to highlight the negative aspects of in and out-group activities inform of a potential role as peacebuilders. Yet, their exclusion from their relevant in-groups infer that intergroup interaction alone cannot result in creating catalysts for peace.

Participant No. 92

Introduced by Participant No. 42, this individual spoke with the researcher for three hours in a café in ‘Little Jaffna.’ Calling oneself a Ceylon Tamil, this individual appeared critical of his/her in-group’s exploitation of history.

“History was very well recognized ... But here, Tamil’s side are trying to re-write the history ... Using all the other books ... Are we going to tell the truth? ... We lived in one land with Sinhalese, Muslims ... Now we say we can never do that? ... How come? ... What are we going to tell the future generations? ... Are we going to hide? ... We are not telling the truth of the story to divide a nation but to tell why that situation arise ... The conflict is not black and white.”

[Participant No. 92]

This individual narrated a plot informing how his/her interest in politics began with his/her father.

“My father helped all communities”

[Participant No. 92]
S/he introduced the researcher to Participant No. 70, the human rights activist; Participant No. 87, a Sinhalese human rights lawyer critical of Sri Lankan government politics; and Participant No. 93, the Head of a Tamil religious organization who told of home attacked in 1956 and fifteen-year-old brother jailed and tortured in 1979. Yet Participant No. 42, a staunch Tamil nationalist and a LTTE sympathize introduced the researcher to this individual. Participant No. 92 however remained critical of LTTE activities. S/he informed of how s/he helped the New Scotland Yard police in their investigations of LTTE-related crimes in the UK. Moreover, this individual illustrated his/her disdain for certain Tamil asylum seekers.

“They come not because of discrimination … Until the war ends they can claim asylum … But then here, they intimidate … They intimidate Tamils … I don’t stand for that … They are false claimers … I help real victims of politics and victims of social conflicts.”

[Participant No. 92]

Whilst remaining critical of his/her own group actions, this individual informed that s/he did not have close friends with members of the out-group. Even though acquainted with Participant No. 87, the Sinhalese politician turned human rights activist granted asylum in the UK, this relationship apparently does not constitute ‘close friends.’

Thus, the activism of Participant No. 92 towards fellow Tamils appears to distance him/her from the Sinhalese population at large.
Participant No. 106

The first of two information-rich informants sought out by the researcher, this individual not only provided direct contact to twenty-one participants, but s/he also introduced the researcher to five of the six sub-networks examined in this research. In a more indirect sense, this individual knew of a number of individuals within sub-networks two to six. These included Participant No. 8 of the second sub-network; Participant No. 68 from the third sub-network; Participants No. 47 and 48 from the fourth sub-network; Participants No. 53, 62, 63, and 76 from the fifth sub-network; and Participant No. 19 from the sixth sub-network.

An individual who arrived in the UK in 1981, s/he introduced the researcher to long-standing friends from the out-group (i.e., Tamil). Indeed, this Participant informed that,

“I still have Tamil friends I am very close to … In my batch, I was in medical school, there were 150 students … Of that 75 were Tamil and 75 were Sinhalese … Tamil people since ’83 I haven’t made any new friends … All friends I have are before ’83 … I had to learn Tamil as a Doctor but we speak in English when we meet.”

[Participant No. 106]

His/her perceptions of history and of the ‘other’ appear unique when compared with the other Participants.

“My view of history is a personal interpretation of what happened in the past ... But to me, history is not important at all ... It’s the present that matters … Past is interesting to see how people did things or how things evolved ... But past as a source of pride or to describing oneself as a … In the past ,we did this and we did
that ... It is important as a learning process ... You learn through experience but people talk about the past, to show that they are better than other people ... I think I changed my opinion over the years ... I think when I was very young, I thought I as Sinhalese ... I was better than other people ... I think my religion and my work, I've seen so many people die ... And everybody forget in old age ... Its an ever changing world ... I think we talked about the history, about what was achieved and we showed them Anuradhapura ... And our talk was more scientific, like the Sigiriya rather than compare Sri Lankans are better than other ... Everybody has got a past ... Why be proud of our past only.”

[Participant No. 106]

More interesting that the above statement is how his/her religion reinterpret the ethnic divisions among individuals.

“As a Buddhist we are all humans ... It's wrong to say Sinhalese and Tamils ... I believe in reincarnation ... And I say to my friends, in your next life, you may be born Tamil ... We fight for a piece of land ... And then we die and then what ... You are not here forever.”

[Participant No. 106]

This perception of the ‘other,’ this understanding that ethno-linguistic divisions as being transitory, and viewing history as something not to gloat over, illustrate why s/he continues to have close ties with friends from the out-group.

“Because I’m not a Tamil I cannot criticize ... I haven’t experienced the discrimination they’ve felt”

[Participant No. 106]

Yet, despite this acceptance of the ‘other’ and a rejection of prejudices within in-group conflict-driven narratives, this individual participated in a rally to ban the LTTE.
“I just joined the people to ban the LTTE … I did feel that raising money to kill
the Sinhalese was wrong … It does exasperate me when they say they want to
divide the country … It may not help … If it did, I don’t mind dividing the
country … I don’t think it will be fair for all”

[Participant No. 106]

The intergroup contact observed and told by this participant illustrates the fact that Sri
Lankan diaspora do interact. S/he meets friends from Tamil and Muslim groups during
potluck events such as a cricket match or during New Year celebrations. Other than such
events that require everyone’s participation, s/he also interacts with members of all
groups during birthday or anniversary parties. His/her goal of traveling to nearby
Birmingham to watch a Hindi film with friends also entails intergroup interaction and
collaborative work. Customs dictate these relationships.

Yet, whilst the intergroup interaction of such an individual would provide a means for
building peace, the nature of the interactions entail not discussing the sensitive issues.

“I have really strong views … I don’t think we really talk about politics … I don’t
talk about bombs … I don’t know whether I’m avoiding it … But I don’t think so
… We just meet at a party, we have other things to talk about.”

[Participant No. 106]

Intergroup interactions as described by this individual occur during both the formal and
the informal settings. The different plots that inform of his/her intergroup interaction
contain a theme, that as a member of the medical profession, this participant apparently
perceives another in-group consisting of those within the medical profession.
Outliers

The above within case analysis of intergroup interaction illustrate the complexity of the interaction but also the similarities. Almost all participants indicated through their narratives the influence of in-group prejudicial narratives. Such prejudices continue despite the clear existence of intergroup interaction as defined by the tenants of Contact hypothesis. Reduction of prejudice towards friend apparently does not automatically reduce prejudice towards members of the entire out-group. While division of participants into ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ ties appear significantly easy when taking both their narrative plot analysis and network analysis, an in depth examination of each individual participant inform of outliers as well as those who fall into the above two categories.

Participant No. 8

Introduced by Participant No. 4 but unlike Participant No. 4, group narratives dominate this participant’s perception of the ‘other.’ Indeed, unlike any other participant in this research, this individual substantiated his/her stance through highlighting ‘facts’. Having lived in the UK for almost five decades, this participant’s understanding of the conflict apparently did not entail personal narratives. S/he defined his/her significant turning points as ‘1950s’ colonization process of the government in land perceived by Tamils as their homeland as well as historical events such as the arrival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Indeed, this individual began with a declaration.
“The people of Sri Lanka were all originally South Indian people ... Sri Lanka was a part of South India until the sea came between ... when about 9000 years ago ... That’s how the Veddas walked across and got isolated as so many other people walked across ... And there were the Raksha and Nagas and all that ... say ... the Dravindian people of high civilization ... But the Mahavamsa and all that tried to show them that they were ghosts and spirits ... Of cause the Nagas worshipped the Cobra ... Some Buddhas have a cobra-hood protecting them ... amm? ... But this is false history ... and then pre-Buddha South India were all Tamil speaking ... Thousands of years ago Thelangu people, Andra Pradesh .... Karnataka, Kerala were all Tamil speaking people ... There all branches of Tamil ... You see ... same as Ceylon”

[Participant No. 8]

It is possible to infer from both the above statement as well as comments made subsequently, that this participant represented the epitome of divided diaspora. This participant accepted the simplified conflict-driven narratives that portray the ‘other’ negatively and exclude all nuances or contradictions from the in-group narratives. In this narrative, the original settlers of Sri Lanka were the Tamil people. The conversion into Buddhism resulted in Tamil people calling themselves ‘Sinhalese.’ All so-called Sinhalese kings and all so-called history of the Sinhalese people is in actuality the history of the Tamil people.

“You people are Dravindians ... So all those wars ... It’s between Tamil people”

[Participant No. 8]

This assertion, reiterated by a number of Tamil participants (i.e., Participants No. 14, 21, 42, 43, 71, 74, 75, and 93), challenges the veracity of the Sinhalese group narrative. It simplifies a complex history and reinforces the static nature of the plot. The unquestioned acceptance of group narratives inform of the influence of in-group
narratives regarding the ‘other.’ As noted in Social Identity theory, enhancing group cohesion occurs at the expense of intergroup interaction.

However, while the examples presented above illustrate the intriguing aspects of a dual sense of identity – having personal narratives that challenge their prejudicial perceptions – Participant No. 8 appeared to strongly accept the simplified understanding of his/her group narratives. Despite the significance of negative group narrative in this individual’s perception of the ‘other’, s/he continued a close relationship with Participant No. 4, who – although Tamil – is an individual with a more complex understanding of the conflict and its origins. Moreover and more significantly, the researcher observed intergroup interactions. This individual retained a somewhat close – though apparently ‘never that close’ – friendship with members of the out-group. This interaction occurred as dinner parties at homes of university friends known to his/her spouse. S/he informed that,

“My wife doesn’t share my views … She thinks I make enemies with my views but you understand … I am telling the truth.”

[Participant No. 8]

The intergroup interaction included Participants 106. The observed interaction involved a dinner party where the participant remained silent with regard to his/her views of the ‘other.’ Again, the interview data as well as observed insights present the compartmentalization that prevents true understanding of the other’s perspectives. While this individual spoke as a member of the Tamil group, s/he did not air his/her views whilst interacting with members of the out-group.
The nature of positive intergroup interaction remained sporadic and the result of his/her spouse’s ties with members of the out-group. Yet, it is possible to speculate that even in the most ardent of nationalists, intergroup interaction of a sporadic nature occurs but, notwithstanding that, the individual perceptions retained the prejudicial group narratives regarding the out-group.

This participant’s personal narrative informed of how s/he did not know of the out-group’s narratives that justify specific historical events. S/he did not know why Buddha statues have a cobra hovering over them. S/he accepted his/her group’s simplified narratives without questioning as s/he had no access to narratives that provide complex, divergent, and questioning aspects to his/her understanding of events, individuals, and the conflict.

Participant No. 39

This participant’s personal narrative included narratives of close familial ties with his/her in-laws and fearing for his/her life during the 1983 riots. S/he spoke of requiring courage to talk to his/her parents regarding his/her love affair with future spouse.

“We were so worried (…) we wanted to get married and then tell … and he was such a gentleman”

[Participant No. 39]
Fear of disappointing his/her parents led to fear of informing his/her parents. Opposition from both families resulted in the couple distancing themselves for a while and subsequently, re-establishing relations. The intriguing aspect of this participant’s personal narratives, despite fearing for his/her safety in 1983 because s/he was married to a Tamil, s/he continued ties with his/her Sinhalese friends. This highlighted the significance of group narratives.

**Analysis of Positive Intergroup Contact**

The analysis conducted thus far present the Sri Lankan diaspora has having personal narratives that include those regarding friendly intergroup interaction as well as group narratives of prejudice. It is possible to discern that the nature of intergroup interaction therefore results in dual identifications (Brewer 2000). Identity remains complex and this very intricacy result in perceiving the friend differently from the friend’s group. Syntheses of all data on those who interact with members of the out-group illustrate the key feature of ‘duality’ or compartmentalization. The individuals do not speak of their larger group affiliations of ethnicities when interacting with a member from a sub-group, such as university batch-mates. This, as directly stated or inferred, occur due to fear that such a statement might harm the friendship. In brief, the acknowledgement that ethno-linguistic group affiliation might remain stronger a link than sub-group friendships should these two challenge each other. As noted by Brewer, non-dominant categorizations based on university, profession, school, and area often continue to
influence despite super-ordinate influences. Yet, if faced with a choice, identities based on super-ordinate categorizations prevail over sub-ordinate demarcations.

This chapter illustrated how diaspora who interact cope with the duality of tolerance and prejudice existing simultaneously in their daily interactions. As the cross-case analysis inform, the diaspora who do interact cope with the duality of tolerance towards the ‘friend’ whilst continued ‘prejudice’ towards the friends’ in-group through not talking of contentious, sensitive issues.

_Dual Identification_

The analysis conducted thus far regarding the acceptance of prejudice among members of (sub)networks illustrate the significance of group narratives within intergroup interactions. Personal narratives of friendships maintained with members of the out-group exist along with divisive group narratives that highlight prejudicial perceptions of the out-group. In brief, this meant an acceptance of the ‘friend’ as someone to trust but at the same time, accepting that all members of this same friend’s ethnic group were untrustworthy. The participants who had strong ties to members of the out-group appeared to compartmentalize these two contradictions.

The findings question the tenants of Contact hypothesis. As argued in this research, positive contacts (i.e., friendships) with members of the out-group apparently do not result in the reduction of prejudice towards the rest of the out-group. In the process of
making sense of the duality of friendship and prejudice, an interacting diaspora apparently shifts the blame in order to justify the friendships. The case examined – Participant No. 3 – illustrates how intergroup interaction could transform the individual’s perception of the ‘other.’ This individual informed of how his/her perceptions in actuality changed.

“’83, ’84 period I came into the stance I am now … Before that you think, you could interpret me as a racist … [Now] I think my Tamil friends think I’m kind of in the middle.”

[Participant No. 3]

This individual clarified this view by indicating how s/he talked openly, listened intently, and argued his/her point with friends from within his/her ethnic group.

“I had a big debate with ________ A heated argument with him … He believes its Sinhalese against Tamils … But I never believe its Sinhalese against Tamils … I believe it’s a political problem …. I see this as a political problem.”

[Participant No. 3]

This individual explained how s/he compartmentalized the strong feelings s/he has about the LTTE and the separatists and friends who help them.

“Yeah I know some of my friends even even in the ’80 … the friends I worked with, they had strong feelings about … some feelings for LTTE … But it never came to effect our personal friendship … Because, like … een during the JVP … I had a very close friend … He, he actually died trying to attack the Air Force Headquarters … Right … We always argue but after we share a one pack of rice and then we tend to go out … And we used to play tennis together … But he is a very very hard-core JVP and he was a very strong member of their armed unit (…) But I never had any problem with that … Maybe they can keep their political views up to them … I can keep my political views up to me … But when we arguing, its only for the matter of argument … I never take a grudge or anger with and I never try to personalize.”
This illustrates how s/he could retain friendships with members of the out-group but still have negative perceptions regarding Prabhakaran.

“Take the average Tamil person … They used to be able to speak a good English, very good Sinhalese and very good Tamil … Now they can’t speak Sinhalese at all and they can hardly speak English because of the war … They never mix-up with other people … They are being brain-washed … You don’t have any other future therefore join us … Join us and lets kill them … Imagine that if they get a separate country, they don’t have any resources … And Prabha … he’s a murderer … What I believe is … Assume that tomorrow there’s no war … Can he come out? … No because he killed his own people … How many his own people has he killed? … Thousands … Therefore, he cannot come out even if the President says ok come and take over”

The above demonstrates how this participant strives to shift the blame for the conflict on politicians who ‘brain-wash’ people. However, the intriguing aspect in all of the above is the notion that s/he does not express certain views as these might harm the friendship. A caveat: only this participant spoke of having arguments/discussions with members of the out-group regarding specific sensitive issues.

Despite the resultant friendship, certain matters remained unexamined in order to safeguard the friendship. Due to this, the individual understanding of the conflict, its reasons, its turning points, and even its heroes and villains remain unexplored. The assumptions, influenced by in-group prejudicial narratives, result in compartmentalization of interaction. Intergroup interaction as indicated by Sri Lankan diaspora result at times in reduction of prejudice towards certain members of the out-
group but as illustrated below, sometimes this does not spread out to include the whole out-group. The synthesis of the above interview example provides insights into within case expressions of friendships with members of the out-group. It moreover illustrates how an individual compartmentalizes his/her views when interacting with members of the ‘other’ group. Thus, notwithstanding the fact that this individual professes to have friends and family from the out-group and despite having discussions with close friends, s/he still compartmentalizes in order to safeguard the friendship. The within-case analysis of all participants followed the same trajectory.

The Nature of Informal Contact

As presented above, this chapter categorized interactions as ‘strong’ and ‘weak ties.’ The first categorization inform of long-term, informal, and trust-based friendships, even those who informed of the existence of intergroup interaction only during formal occasions. Thie triangulation of data – observations, interviews, and archival material – provide substance to this assertaion.

It is vital to recall that another category exists: those who informed of the non-existence of intergroup interaction. These individuals had weak ties with members of the out-group. They constitute the accepted perception of the divided diaspora who do not interact. This number also illuminate the fact that the snowball sampling technique
provided insights into individuals within a network who do not interact as well as with those who do.

Eighty-two percent (82%) of the participants analyzed fell into the typical case example. These include some of the ninety participants who informed they had ‘long-term’ friendships or ‘never close’ friends (see Table No. 4). Each participant’s narrative – though unique in their personal experiences, in plots informing of friendships gained, and retained – presented commonalities regarding the friendships. Those who retained friendships did so by not talking about contentious issues such as questioning the veracity of each other’s group narratives.

While some participants informed of friendships retained, others, including Participant No. 90, narrated how conflict-related events and discussions regarding narratives of these events harmed the long-term friendships.

“I knew a lot of Tamils here … Rented the little apartment we owned … We don’t anymore ... Especially not to them … It was difficult after ’83 … But even before that in London … I don’t know … It was alright back home … Worked with Tamils but didn’t feel this divide … Now … we don’t go to any Tamil shop … I don’t associate with Tamils friends anymore … I hardly see them … To tell you the truth I don’t trust them anymore … All give money … I told one or two friends about it … Tamil friends … I don’t mince words … I tell what I feel.”

[Participant No. 90]

This participant him/herself had never personally experienced moments of tension between the ethnic groups. The analysis of his/her narratives inform of the internalization of in-group narratives that portray the ‘other’ negatively. This intrusion of
narratives external to the individual’s personal experiences apparently harmed the friendship.

The commonality here lay in the belief that discussion of contentious issues, especially regarding the conflict, would harm the friendship. Only Participant No. 2, 49, and 50 spoke of contentious issues to the out-group friends. All others who interacted with members of the out-group, including the second-generation participants, either did not speak of contentious issues or, as illustrated below, did not allow the unwritten unspoken rule broken.

He started talking ... at that party ... spoke of the LTTE and the discriminations and all that ... you know... and I replied back ... a bit harshly I guess ... don't know whether he will forgive me and hasn't been around lately ... but his wife and children came to see my wife when ... you know ... I wasn’t around and ... well, it’ll be alright ... Always knew he was a LTTE supporter but his wife’s and ... they are ok ... well everyone is ok”

[Participant No. 63]

The nature of intergroup interaction is thus between ‘guardians’ or ‘prisoners’ of the group narratives. The ethno-linguistic group affiliations, based on group narratives influence the diaspora despite the distance and these continue as super-ordinate category when Sri Lankans interact.

Participant No. 106, an individual with strong friendship ties to Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim communities, further illustrated this aspect. This participant perceived intergroup divisions differently.

368
to me, history is not important at all as it’s the present that matters (…) past as a source of pride or … describing oneself (…) It is important as a learning process … You learn through experience but people talk about the past to show that they are better than other people.”

[Participant No. 106]

This participant did not accept ethno-linguistic divisions since, as s/he noted.

It’s wrong to say Sinhalese and Tamils … I believe in reincarnation (…) you may be born Tamil … We fight for a piece of land … And then we die and then what.”

[Participant No. 106]

Even this participant, with his/her open-mindedness and willingness to engage in questioning his/her own group narratives, did not apparently question the out-group’s narrative with friends from the out-group.

I don’t talk about bombs … I don’t know whether I’m avoiding it … But I don’t think so … We just meet at a party, we have other things to talk about.”

[Participant No. 106]

Once again, the similarity between all those who continue to interact with members of the out-group remains the understanding of the precariousness and sensitivity of challenging the other’s group narrative.

**Diaspora as Builders of Peace**

This chapter illustrated how diaspora who interact *cope with the duality of tolerance and prejudice existing simultaneously in their daily interactions*. As the cross-case analysis
informed, the diaspora who do interact cope with the duality of tolerance towards the ‘friend’ whilst continued ‘prejudice’ towards the friends’ in-group through not talking of contentious, sensitive issues. It further indicated – at least in the cases examined in this research – that as long as ‘contact’ remains ‘friendly,’ it jeopardized true understanding. Even those nodes with the long-term intergroup interactions, such as Participant No. 4, spoke of not wanting to jeapordize his/her friendship with members of the out-group by talking of contentious issues.

*Diaspora Activism*

While inferring that as diaspora, they perceive the conflict differently, the answer to Research Question No. 15: “What do your own group members in Sri Lanka not know that you, as living outside of Sri Lanka, have learnt? (re: the conflict, the others),” an analysis of the interview data inform that in-group narratives continue to influence all participants. For sixty-two percent (61.8%) or sixty-eight (68) diaspora participants, the distance from the home-country provide them with opportunities to distance themselves from both the narratives as well as the issues emanating from Sri Lanka. Yet, an analysis of personal narratives and of turning points illustrated the continuation of in-group/out-group prejudices even in their host-country. Herein lay the significance of ‘activism’ as the inability to distance themselves from home-country issues ensures activism.
A cross-case analysis of Research Question 16: “How/Can you help reduce tension and/or achieve victory?” provided a clear-cut division between Sinhalese and Tamil participants. All Tamil participants informed of a sense of purpose and power as diaspora. They viewed the TRO and the White Pigeon as representing the Tamil people’s needs while the GovSL as the ally of the Sinhalese. Contrary to this, only a few Sinhalese diaspora spoke of a potential role where their activism alone could achieve specific goals. The Sinhalese participants all referred to the Sri Lankan High Commission and the GovSL as having the primary role to play. As activists, while working in small numbers to provide financial and other assistance to small groups within Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese diaspora in general informed that their numbers remained small and their disunity prevented large demonstrations.

This disunity and inactivity of the Sinhalese – or Sri Lankan – diaspora appear self-evident to Tamil participants including Participant No. 70.

“They [Sinhala] are not as active as us (…) If the Tigers do a march [in UK], they get 15,000 people … The Sri Lankan are so weak.”

[Participant No. 70]

Sinhalese participants reiterate this notion.

“The Tamils who have come after ’83 came with a pro–LTTE stance … And the Sinhalese are weak … None of the politicians are worth anything.”

[Participant No.83]

The Sri Lankan diaspora – including a number of participants – did however gather in the 1990s to protest against LTTE activities and subsequently to demand the UK
Government declare LTTE a terrorist organization. Thus, the diaspora of the research at times actively work for the benefit of their in-group and through this activism appears blatantly to the world, their intergroup interactions remain discreet, veiled, and humble as they limit to the mundane, everyday contact.

Despite this, a number of Sinhalese participants reiterated this sense of helplessness in answering Research Question No. 17: “Do you think the Tsunami can help [bring an end to the conflict/increase inter-group interaction]? What views being said in your group in Sri Lanka and in UK?” While a few spoke of linking with the Sri Lankan Embassy, a majority of Sinhalese participants informed of providing assistance to tsunami victims through their temple or church. Tamil participants, on the other hand, informed of organizations such as the White Pigeon that took the responsibility. A few of these participants, such as Participant No. 22, informed of writing to his/her British Minister of Parliament regarding tsunami Tamil issues.

“We once wrote to the local MPs explaining our concerns that all aid go to the people fairly ... Send emails to the BBC ... We have people on the ground monitoring it ... Only thing is people don’t always see eye to eye (…) Tamil Orphans’ Trust, Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (…) good ... A friend of ours went to Sri Lanka with the help of the TRO with a dialysis machine ... We don’t have contact with Sinhalese organization.”

[Participant No. 22]

All first generation diaspora discussed the disunity of the Sri Lankan diaspora and the supposed unity of the Tamil diaspora, which at times included both Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils. They moreover saw the post-tsunami period as a missed opportunity but only a few saw the diaspora as having a role to play.
The intriguing aspect highlighted above is that despite intergroup interactions, the participants remain either inactive regarding reduction of prejudice in order to ensure interaction or they focus their energy on spreading their in-group prejudicial perceptions. Indeed, despite intergroup interaction among the participants interviewed, the diaspora did not utilize these ties and thus remained relatively inactive as interacting groups. This problematizes the assertion of Contact hypothesis: that intergroup interaction result in reduction of prejudice, which in turn assists in developing intergroup understanding and enhancing intergroup cooperation. The nature of the contact requires further analysis.

**Unconstructive Intergroup Contact**

This chapter, along with the two previous chapters, presented an intriguing picture of intergroup contact between members of divided groups. Utilizing field research data, the qualitative analysis entailed focusing on presenting the Sri Lankan diaspora as divided according to ethno-linguistic and/or religious lines, but at the same time, still interacting. This intergroup interaction, however, apparently has not resulted in strengthening friendships to the extent of weakening the acceptance of prejudicial in-group narratives. The super-ordinate categorization co-exists with non-dominant categorizations of self but, as the final chapter illuminate, this has resulted in intergroup contact that is unconstructive to building peace.
CHAPTER SEVEN

The Nature of Prejudice and Contact

“When the IPKF came, my brother-in-law and sister-in-law were in Jaffna and the IPKF and the LTTE were firing near their home ... They feared that they would come in and so they ran out ... And my brother-in-law was shot and she ... She was a little further and she ran back and they shot her dead ... This is the Indian army ... A big mistake ... They shot him in the leg ... They couldn’t get the body to bury ... She was so kind to me ... We were not threatened ... Never ... We were not threatened by anybody.”

[Participant No. 33]

In 2009, diaspora activities in achieving the aspirations of their own in-group peaked intensely through marches, speeches, declarations, demands, and accusations. Indeed, subsequent to the military defeat of the LTTE, both Tamil and Sinhalese diaspora activism increased dramatically. During protest marches the Sri Lankan diaspora appeared intensely divided, filled with distrust and even hate towards the other. Through their actions and words, the diaspora presented all the traits of conflict-driven divided diaspora.

This chapter reflects on the problem statement “Contrary to the expectations of the Contact hypothesis, members of the divided Sri Lankan diaspora maintain friendly relationships while retaining their divisive conflict-driven group narratives” following the analysis conducted in the previous chapters. The analysis conducted in this study
illustrated that (a number of) the diaspora, despite years of intense conflict, interacted informally notwithstanding their respective in-group’s divisive conflict-driven prejudicial narratives. This remained a curious aspect to the tenants of Contact hypothesis as this intergroup interaction has apparently not resulted in reducing each participant’s negative perception of the out-group in general. Thus, the analysis of the research data highlighted that whilst informal interactions existed within Sri Lankan diaspora, these apparently do not challenge the divisive nature of conflict narrative. This in turn problematizes the tenants of Contact hypothesis.

Introduction

This final chapter not only gathers the diverse threads of arguments and findings together but also weaves through a strand of speculation on the potential for interacting diaspora to become catalysts for peace. The varied strands of arguments and conjectures not only highlight the complexities in the duality of harmonizing conflict-driven in-group narratives with personal narratives. At its core is an emphasis on what this signifies for the applicability of the tenants of Contact hypothesis; at least with regard to the Sri Lankan diaspora case. These further spotlights the difficulties faced in enhancing the peacebuilding potential among the Sri Lankan diaspora who do interact with members of the out-group. Through re-emphasis of each strand of argument, this chapter also strives to emphasize the significance of this research to the fields of Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding.
The diverse threads of argument linked to each research question provided avenues to explore each research objective. The first three chapters presented the case, from introduction to literature survey to methodology. The subsequent three chapters analyzed the field research data. In the process, the study utilized numerous ideas, including Brook’s definition of the plot (1984) to MacIntyre’s presentation of ‘co-authoring’ (1984, 1997) to Brewer’s notion of common ‘super-ordinate’ categorizations (2000). In this, the concluding chapter, the core argument of the research – that intergroup interaction might not reduce prejudice towards all members of the out-group; i.e., the tenants of Contact hypothesis – is weaved in.

**Contact in Midst of Favorable Conditions**

Amir informed that intergroup interaction leading to the reduction of prejudice depended on favorable or unfavorable conditions (1998). Although most participants informed of long-term friendships, which began decades prior to the period examined in this research, it is pertinent to emphasize that this research examined intergroup interaction in the midst of conditions favorable for positive contact. During the midst of a MOU and a ceasefire; in the aftermath of the tsunami where forty-thousand Sri Lankans died; and in the post-9/11 era, a powerful enticement existed for Sri Lankan diaspora to interact to reduce prejudice, and thereby, to assist in diminishing the tension that apparently exist between the Sri Lankan diasporic groups. The field research occurred in 2005 and thus focused on the favorable conditions that could have resulted in reduction of suspicion.
based on prejudice. Retrospectively, neither the Sri Lankan diaspora nor Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka seized this potential opportunity because one year after the tsunami; the ceasefire existed only in paper due to the shadow war in Sri Lanka. The four-year period from 2002 to 2006 when the fragile ceasefire actually existed on the ground or the six years from 2002 to 2008 until the official ending of ceasefire, the potential for peacebuilding remained unutilized. Yet, the research findings illustrated how contact existed even in unfavorable conditions, and despite that, even in favorable conditions, intergroup prejudices remained.

Having lived among the diaspora, witnessing and participating in intergroup interactions, the researcher endeavored to understand this interaction. These include traveling together on holidays; being invited to housewarming and children’s parties; organizing get-togethers and picnics; playing cricket, tennis or badminton; singing karaoke or playing music at an individual’s home, inviting friends for religiously significant events, and decorating and wrapping presents, making food and organizing New Year and Christmas celebrations. Such relationships in the midst of tension became the conundrum addressed.

Indeed, the foundation of the research lay in challenging the assumption that intergroup interaction among divided (Sri Lankan) diaspora originating from protracted conflicts does not exist. Whist Cheran (2003) and Zunzer (2004) have examined the potential of Sri Lankan diaspora from one specific group to become catalysts for building peace, the most frequently stated assumption in current literature is that Sri Lankan diaspora are conflict-driven divided diaspora who do not interact. This research strived to explore the
nature of intergroup interaction through analysis of first order positioning as well as narrative plots and network mapping in the hope of understanding why intergroup interaction has not resulted in challenging the each individual’s prejudices of out-group. The study also examined the complexities and contradictions of intergroup interactions, thereby questioning the Contact hypothesis.

The positive contact between participants of the study illustrated how their (in)group narratives influence personal narratives. This was in keeping with Brewer’s notion of unstable dual identities: where at one level, each participant exist as a member of the divided ethno-linguistic group while at the same time, a member of university and/or profession sub-categorization. As cautioned by Brewer, the “existence of a common superordinate categorization creates conditions for individual intergroup comparison” (2000: 168) and, while non-dominant categorizations of friendship exist, the power asymmetry between super-ordinate (ethno-linguistic, religious) categorization and non-dominant (university friends, neighbors, school-mates, profession) categorization often result in the super-ordinate categorization triumphing. This in turn makes personal friendships fragile and unstable.

Super-Ordinate Categorization

The research findings inform that a majority of diaspora cases in the research not only identified self according to home country groups but also that they apparently continued
to position themselves based on home country divisions while in their host country. As noted previously, these group comparisons occur due to the existence of “superordinate categorization” (Brewer 2000: 168). The ethno-linguistic group divisions transplanted in host country dominated diaspora participants’ super-ordinate categorizations. This in itself illuminated the influence of home country conflict-driven narratives and informed of a divided diaspora.

It is possible to perceive the diaspora as believing themselves guardians of their respective in-group narratives. As noted before, the word here does not recall the legal meanings but rather a traditional understanding someone who protects. This represents the diaspora as they see themselves: as custodians, watchdogs, and heroic paladin. Indeed, it is possible to perceive (especially the Tamil) diaspora philanthropic, financial, vocal, or advocacy activism as fulfilling a guardian’s role.

However, it is pertinent to indicate that the Sri Lankan diaspora appear oblivious to the simplification of the conflict-driven in-group narratives. Often times, the diaspora remain unwilling or unable to question and challenge the simplified, uncomplicated group narratives related to the conflict/s in Sri Lanka, making them in actuality, prisoners of the narratives rather than guardian. Indeed, while a number of diaspora actions link with the understanding of guardian, in reality, a majority of the diaspora appear caged within the prejudicial in-group narratives. Thus, the research findings illustrate how the diaspora from conflict-ridden home countries cling to their in-group conflict-driven narratives despite interacting with members of the out-group.
Non-Dominant Categorizations

While the super-ordinate group narratives influence diaspora, the non-dominant categorizations assist in enhancing friendships among members of divided groups. Indeed, the intriguing aspect of intergroup interaction – observed prior to and during the field research and highlighted through the interview data – emphasized the significance of nested narratives (Gergen and Gergen 1997), where within the overarching group narrative exist numerous personal narratives that result in complex self-identifications. The nature of intergroup interactions also informed of a sense of community based on University, workplace, or neighborhood “where a narrative account of a we persists” (Carr 1997: 22). The storied accounts of the past and the narratives of the present in personal narratives combine and result in friendships that apparently continued despite the divisive conflict-driven group narratives emanating from home country and despite the intensity of the conflict/s.

Although intergroup interaction examined in the study focused on a period of potential (2002 – 2008), the conflict still existed. It therefore remained a tenuous period with regard to the ceasefire. Moreover, the conflict/s within Sri Lanka, which began in the early 1970s, apparently continued to influence the participating Sri Lankan diaspora. Therefore, despite the strong ties it is pertinent to note the fragility of the dual identification. Brewer noted how super-ordinate categorizations assisted in enhancing intergroup interaction despite the negative influences from overarching group categorization. Thus, although still positioning self according to ethnicity, the diaspora
interactions observed by the researcher highlighted the existence of ‘friendship’ between those who interacted.

Old and New Friendships

One puzzling aspect not addressed thus far involved concentration of in-group and its impact on intergroup interaction. In areas of high concentration of one ethno-linguistic group, such as London, the intergroup interaction remained sporadic. In Manchester, Birmingham, and Edinburgh, the interaction occurred consistently. A caveat: time limitations and inadequate data prevented a more detailed analysis into the significance of place of residence in intergroup interactions. From both observed and interview data, it became evident however, that individuals from different ethno-linguistic groups living around Manchester for example, would get together to see a Hindi movie, go to dinner, have potluck picnics, organize surprise parties, and play cricket, badminton or tennis together. Here again, the superficial or the observable interaction appeared friendly and sustaining.

Whether living in London, Manchester, Birmingham, or Edinburgh, the participants still interacted and the interview data presented an illuminating picture of intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora. The cross-case analysis revealed a diaspora who did interact but did so with individuals known to them either prior to the escalation of conflict or after their arrival in the UK. For the latter examples, these new contacts
entailed individuals within the same profession, co-workers, and/or studying or living nearby. These old friends and new contacts fell into categories different from home country ‘ethno-linguistic’ groupings. Some friendships originated in the past in Sri Lanka, through interacting at school, in the neighborhood, as a university undergraduate, or working together at the workplace. Some participants, including Participant No. 109 continued the friendships as diaspora but their ties to friends in Sri Lanka appear tense.

“I don’t have much connection with Tamil friends in Sri Lanka but in UK yes.”

[Participant No. 109]

These old and even the newly formed friendships apparently evolved by focusing on the common element (i.e., non-dominant categorizations) and not the discord inducing, emotionally charged, and negative narrative enhanced elements in the in-group narratives (super-ordinate categorization). Thus, all those who interacted talked of finding a common factor that did not lead to discord and thereby resurrect the ghosts of opposing group narratives. At the same time, as the analysis below illuminate, while intergroup interactions apparently reduce/remove prejudice with regard to the friend, it does not apparently challenge the negative stereotypes of the other by questioning the veracity of intra-group prejudicial group narratives.

**Unspoken Rules of Interaction**

The empirical data on intergroup interactions gathered through the interviews point to unspoken (at least among themselves) and unwritten rules. Overall, these unwritten rules
confine to not discussing contentious issues when interacting with friends who do not or might not share the same views regarding conflicts or even politics in home country. There is an issue of trust that is apparently at stake since this also illustrates the significance of in-group narratives that apparently continue to influence intergroup interactions. Individuals such as Participants No. 1, 6, 11, 14, 22, 63, and 103 indicated the entrenched nature of in-group prejudices. It is possible to define these participants as prisoners of their in-group conflict-driven and prejudicial narratives. Analysis of plots regarding friendships formed, never developed, or destroyed, provided further insightful discoveries regarding significance of personal experiences in questioning the in-group prejudicial conflict-driven narratives.

Not only did in-group conflict-driven narratives influence the individual. These also apparently continued to influence even long-term friendly intergroup interactions. Indeed, the cross-case analysis of those who interacted illustrated how each presumes, consciously or unconsciously, that intergroup friendship s/he formed as fragile. Sometimes, this concern for the fragility of friendships presents itself through inferring a suspicion, discussed with honesty by Participant No. 1, of the friends’ perception of the out-group.

“The few Tamils I know are … At least on surface who people who like to get on with Sinhalese and whom I presume are not involved right or wrong.”

[Participant No. 1]
Here, despite intergroup contact of decades, prejudice towards the out-group continued to resonate. Though others spoke less blatantly, the majority of personal narratives of those who interacted illustrate the influence of in-group narratives in intergroup interactions.

For some of the participants, not only did the prejudices regarding the out-group remain unchallenged but even their perception of their out-group contacts appeared clouded by these negative narratives. This suspicion apparently harmed the friendship and, as Participant No. 102 aptly pointed out,

“It was terrible being judged not good being Sinhala … I don’t talk to any anymore”

[Participant No. 102]

Here, intergroup interactions disintegrated due to the influence of conflict-driven narratives. Thus, while sustained contact appears to reduce prejudice towards the friend, each individual case analyzed infers the realization that university sub-ordinate categorization is secondary to ethno-linguistic super-ordinate categorization in identification.

Diaspora narratives present this realization of the fragility of friendships through concern that if one questions the friend’s understanding of narratives relating to the origin, whom to blame, or the justification of the war, it would destroy the friendship through enhancing prejudicial beliefs. Examples of evading or circumventing difficult issues include remaining reticent regarding emotionally charged in-group narratives of events when interacting with friends from the out-group.
The events I witnessed were not major … But Central Bank bomb … Well didn’t witness and a friend of mine died (…) I don’t talk of that with a lot of Tamils because I believe they contribute money to the Tigers … They may be forced to do so.”

[Participant No. 48]

Whilst indicating a conscious effort not to discuss contentious issues for fear of outcome, this individual’s words inform of twin contradictory concerns which present insights into the influence of in-group prejudicial narratives in personal narratives. In the one hand there is an acceptance of the stereotype that every Tamil deep down assists the LTTE to get a separate land. Simultaneously, this individual absolves his/her Tamil friends of such intentions by inferring that they “may be forced to do so.” Such duality was apparent from the interview data of Participant No. 49 who confirms this perception that the only result of discussing contentious issues is the argument and subsequent harm to the friendship.

“People have their own opinion … They have some information to back up their opinion and if you are in the opposition, they have an argument.”

[Participant No. 49]

Even if those who interact with members of the out-group do speak of contentious issues, they do so with tolerance or rejection. For example, Participant No. 68 exemplified the former when s/he informed,

“We have heated discussions but we agree to disagree”

[Participant No. 68]
The term ‘agreeing to disagree’ in itself illustrates the nature of intergroup interaction. Despite interactions, the individual’s in-group narratives remain unchallenged. The rejection of that individual as a friend occur quickly as noted by Participant No. 63 who sharply corrected another’s views and informed the researcher of how s/he did not seek contact.

“He started talking … at that party (…) and I replied back … a bit harshly I guess (…) He said things he should not have … I mean I guess they harp on this all the time … But he can’t come telling that to us.”

[Participant No. 63]

The sharp retort resulted from the friend breaking the unwritten rule on intergroup interaction. The words of Participant No. 50 illuminate this concern differently. In that retelling of his/her personal narratives of victimhood, s/he indicated a concern on how others might perceive his/her.

“We rarely talk about it [the horrors faced] … We’ve just moved on … If I was to say, this is what the Sinhalese did to us I just don’t want them to think I was one of them who accuses.”

[Participant No. 50]

Participant No. 50 did not “want them to think I was one of them who accuses” entail striving not to live up to the other’s prejudicial stereotyped perception of the out-group. This individual did not want to include him/herself within the simplified stereotype of all Tamils as false accusers nor accusingly stereotype Sinhalese as perpetrators. It is apparent that that concern lay not in that arguments resulting from challenge of the
other’s in-group narratives. Rather, the real concern appears that such challenges might not result in questioning the friendships rather than the in-group narratives.

However, the more perilous fear exists when such open discussions result in questioning one’s own in-group ideals. Each participant, it appeared, had a firm view on his/her understanding of history and remained unwilling to allow anyone to question this perception. Participant No. 6, a Burgher-Christian, for example spoke at length of his/her views.

“They ignore real history and then try and claim this country … This country as a Sinhalese country … But it’s not … That’s why this Tamil riots came up … They thought, from the beginning that they were suppressed … The Tamil people’s idea is like that … Now the present generation the Sinhalese come to know about it … They know when they read history … They know the influence of the Tamil people have had and what was the history … The ignorant people only ignore the history part.”

[Participant No. 6]

Thus, whilst intergroup interaction does exist, these apparently have not resulted in challenging the divisive and prejudicial group narratives. In-group narratives influence all participants, whether interacting or not. Indeed, even those, including Participant No. 106, whose personal narratives illustrated a questioning of the in-group narratives, the influence remained, dormant yet powerful. Whilst challenging some in-group narratives, Participant No. 106 apparently still continue to perceive the conflict as between Sinhalese and Tamils to ‘unfairly divide the country.’
“It does exasperate me when they say they want to divide the country … It may not help … If it did, I don’t mind dividing the country … I don’t think it will be fair … we are interdependent.”

[Participant No. 106]

Moreover, this prejudicial perception of Tamils people as unfairly treating Sinhalese remained and therefore, this individual informed that,

“It might have been underneath … On surface everybody speaks to each other.”

[Participant No. 106]

Here again, the acceptance of a stereotype that all members of the out-group present a false face to the in-group exist, albeit moderately. The research findings illuminate the complexity of intergroup interaction.

**Compartmentalization of Interaction**

Despite all this concern, intergroup interactions continue to exist. These interactions – often based on long-term, sustained friendship founded on mutual regard within a specific categorization – remain notwithstanding the negative narratives emanating from the home country. They seem sustained by diaspora perceptions as guardian of these narratives. *The existence of duality or compartmentalization of interaction, which inform of what to talk to with which in-group, illustrate the coping mechanisms of individuals who reject certain prejudices with regard to friends from the out-group whilst accepting all prejudices regarding the out-group.* The duality of tolerance and even acceptance of
some of the out-group concurrent to intolerance of the out-group further highlights the difficulties faced when interacting with a member of an out-group in contentious relationship with one’s own in-group.

This perception of the other, even friends, as having dual identities – whereby their true feelings may remain hidden, a belief equally articulated in both Sinhalese and Tamil in-group narratives apparently undermine friendly contact. Even Tamil Participant No. 14 informed of his/her concerns regarding the ulterior motives of some Sinhalese friends. Therefore, both these individual illustrated acceptance of prejudice despite long-term friendships. Moreover, Participant No. 106 illustrated this influence of conflict-driven narratives when s/he commented,

“Tamil people since ’83 I haven’t made any new friends ... All the friends I have are before ’83”

[Participant No. 106]

The friends s/he and the other sixty-two who informed of having long-term friendships inferred – even those who informed that they no longer interacted – that friendships made prior to the conflict did not involve suspicious but that divisions caused by the conflict influenced subsequent contacts with members of the out-group.

Thus, individuals who interact with members of the out-group handle the complexity by not voicing their personal prejudices for fear of challenge to one’s own understanding or concern that it might bring harm to friendships. The nature of intergroup interaction among Sri Lanka diaspora challenges the applicability of ‘Contact’ as a means of
reducing prejudices towards the out-group. At the same time, the empirical data and the research findings resoundingly validate significance of contact in reducing prejudice regarding the friend from the out-group.

Futility of Contact

To reiterate, intergroup contact as explained by the participants involved all tenants of the Contact hypothesis. The individuals who interacted looked at each other as equal, even if one is senior in age while the other a youth, an experienced professional while the other an inexperienced junior, whether rich and well-established or poor but developing one’s potential. Within the situations under examination, as a member of the friendship group, the individuals remained equal. The acceptance of equality in itself presents a rejection of prejudicial in-group narratives. Interactions between Participants No. 1 and 4, for example, involve talking of medical issues, sports, or tsunami assistance rather than the conflict. As aptly noted by Participant No. 106 and deduced from empirical data from all other participants who interacted with members of the out-group,

“We just meet at a party, we have other things to talk about.”

[Participant No. 106]

This statement, as well as the analysis conducted in previous section, underscores the nature of intergroup interaction. Individuals who do interact with members of the out-group talk of everything but the crucial issue.
The observed empirical data illuminate the second and third tenant of Contact hypothesis: common goals and intergroup cooperation. As noted, the diaspora who interact do so informally but, due to the lengthy friendships, have a history of cooperating for common goals. These common goals remain not for the larger group (ethno-linguistic) but for smaller friendship groups. However, informal get-togethers, assisting each other in times of need, and remaining friends were at the heart of interactions observed and discussed.

The last tenant, “support of authorities, laws, or custom” (Pettigrew 1998: 66) also existed. The collection of empirical data occurred in the midst of a ceasefire, where authority figures (i.e., the GoSL and LTTE) provided impetus for a period of discussion. Other than this, as expanded in the tenants of Contact hypothesis, this also entailed traditions and customs that ensured that cooperation for achieving common goals existed. The intergroup interactions described by participants inform of unspoken rules, acceptance of traditions, and a continuation of customs.

**Compartmentalization and Contact Hypothesis**

Despite the nature of intergroup interactions, it remains self-evident that for peacebuilding to occur, positive contact of any nature remained vastly superior to no contact. Moreover, the contact among the divided Sri Lankan diaspora present a prime example of friendships – as defined by the participants themselves – existing for years despite a divisive conflicts. Yet, a problem arises as the efficacy of contact in reducing
prejudice towards the out-group. Even as intergroup interactions apparently reduced and removed prejudice towards the friend from the out-group, the empirical data inform of a continued acceptance of prejudice regarding the out-group.

In one sense, contact as stipulated in Contact hypothesis has reduced or eliminated prejudice towards the immediate friend. This implies the effectiveness of long-term, sustained, friendly, and direct contact to reduce prejudice between divided groups. However, it is apparent from the analysis of field data that intergroup interaction among divided Sri Lankan diaspora has not expanded this to include the whole out-group. The Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, or Burgher Sri Lankan diaspora continued to accept their respective in-group prejudices towards members of the out-group. Herein lay the conundrum, as this intergroup interaction not only problematizes the applicability of Contact hypothesis but also implies concerns for diaspora activism in Peacebuilding.

**Foiling the Peacebuilding Potential**

Peacebuilding, as described by Lederach (2005, 2001, 1997), tell of the inherent power of strategically positioned few in building long-term sustained peace and thereby positively transforming protracted conflict. Lederach calls these individuals the ‘critical yeast’ as small numbers can make a major difference through developing ties with members of the other side and through sustained efforts. Positioned as the middle level due to their placement within the Peacebuilding Pyramid (1997), they emerge from within the
conflict situation. As Peacebuilding stresses the significance of relationships, it is possible to infer that one of the underlying components of Peacebuilding remain Contact hypothesis. Indeed, Peacebuilding exploits relational interactions based on equal status, which focus on long-term, goal oriented, non-competitive interaction supported by customs, traditions and by authorities. This in turn results in long-term, sustained ties that transcend the divisive narratives and upheavals in the conflict. Thus, in brief, Contact hypothesis remains an underlying assumption of Peacebuilding.

Just as individuals within the conflict have the capability of influencing in building peace, as stakeholders to the conflict, so too can the diaspora. The peacebuilding power of diaspora remained unexamined, however, until the 21st century. Since then, a number of research studies have focused on the potential of diaspora as peacebuilders. These included Berchovitch (2007), Cochrane (2007), Koser (2007), Kent (2006), Lyons (2006), Østergaard-Nielsen (2006), Thaknr and Maly (2006), Mohamoud (2005), van Hear (2003), and Reychler (2001). Moreover, certain studies have examined the possibility of Sri Lankan diaspora fulfilling that potential (Fair 2007; Swain 2007; Zunzer 2004; and Cheran 2003; and Shain 2002). Yet, even these individuals focused on the potential of one diaspora group becoming agents of change.

The current research targeted Sri Lankan diaspora irrespective of ethnicity, residing in one country. The assumption that sustained intergroup interaction among diaspora themselves could promote peacebuilders guided the directionality of the research. Moreover, the conviction that the Sri Lankan diaspora, as supposed prisoners or
guardians of the conflict-driven group narratives and with their kith-kin ties to home country, remain stakeholder to the conflict despite distance separating them from the conflict. A majority of the diaspora analyzed in this research apparently had sustained interactions. Moreover, they remain in a strategic position, not merely due to their financial, vocal, and other assistance to home country groups, but also due to their place in-between home and international community. They are trans-global actors with access to diverse tools for building peace. As the research findings inform, they have the potential to become the ‘critical yeast’. Thus, this research did not focus on diaspora interactions with home country groups, which might thereby assist in enhancing their peacebuilding potential. Rather, by exploring *intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora*, the study examined the relationships-building potential of diaspora in general.

The existence of intergroup interaction among divided diaspora, a crucial finding of this research, inform of the strong possibility of using this for enhancing diaspora peacebuilding potential. Though divided according to their ethno-linguistic ties to home country, the diaspora interactions continue. Indeed, the empirical data illustrate how some ties originated in the 1950s while others in the 1990s. The interesting aspect remained that most of these relationships continued for decades. A majority of the relationships inform of friendships rather than superficial interactions. The existence of friendship ties reduces or removes all prejudice towards these friends and, at least in theory, assists in the reduction of prejudice towards the out-group. The intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora presents an untapped resource for conflict de-
escalation. Indeed, these interacting diaspora have the capability of becoming external promoters of peacebuilding and therefore, this study speculated on why intergroup interactions remained a dormant possibility even in the midst of a ceasefire.

As noted by Jeong (2003) and Lederach (1997), intergroup interactions strive to build relationships between members of out-groups in the hope of enhancing communication. The findings inform that intergroup interactions occur and that the sustained interactions remain informal, often within small sub-networks or small in-groups. As the answers to Research Question No. 16 on “How/Can you help reduce tension and/or achieve victory?” (see Box 1) illustrated, all Sinhalese stressed the ineffectiveness of their in-group activism; the Tamil participants emphasized ethno-linguistic in-group activities tied to the demand for a separate land; and the Muslim and Tamil-Burgher participants emphasized inactivity and helplessness. Despite the potential for building peace, none of the diaspora interviewed spoke of the possibility of utilizing their intergroup interaction to support peace in Sri Lanka. Even Participants 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19, open to diverse perspectives and willing to discuss contentious religious issues even though some were Buddhists and some were Christians, spoke only slightly of the potential of intergroup interaction for enhancing intergroup cohesion. They spoke of the tsunami and the 1996 Cricket World Cup as indicators or missed chances for in-group action. These individuals even spoke of the potential of internet, including websites such as the Lanka Academic Network or LAcNet (www.lacnet.com) for getting together likeminded Sri Lankans. Only this group, consisting of youth, spoke of this potential for acting as
catalysts for peacebuilding while all others remained mute with regard to their potential as interacting diaspora. With diaspora not exploiting their capabilities for peace as interacting individuals, the analysis of the field research present the argument for peacebuilders among the diaspora as moot. The study therefore deduces that the very nature of intergroup interaction hinders the potential activist role for building peace.

The study data illustrated that the very nature of these intergroup interactions reduces the potential for becoming catalysts for building peace. The nature of intergroup interaction, where discourse on contentious issues remained almost non-existent, reduces the promise in utilizing the existing informal intergroup interactions for building peace. The Sri Lankan diaspora intergroup interaction continued in the midst of intense violence, horrendous human rights violations, bitter accusations, and use and abuse of history to justify actions. Friends maintained these ties despite the over seventy-thousand deaths, uncountable horrors, and destruction to property. Their contacts remained despite the ever increasing, highly prejudicial, divisive conflict-driven narratives. This is not to infer that the interacting diaspora disregarded prejudicial narratives emanating from country-of-origin. Rather, the intriguing aspect remains that these interactions still existed, although all diaspora narratives analyzed illustrate their inability to disregard the flood of negative, prejudicial, stereotyped, and even hate-filled narratives emanating from home country from the 1960s onwards, these interactions still existed. It is possible to recognize that to diaspora, distance remains secondary to the emotional resonance of kith-kin ties.
The ties to home country present the diaspora as stakeholders and therefore, potential peacebuilders. Yet, the Sri Lankan diaspora remain as divided diaspora who interact. Therefore, the balancing of super-ordinate categorization of ethno-linguistic identification that trumps all other subordinate categorizations and the safeguard of these subordinate categorizations appear tenuous. Intergroup interaction as depicted in interview and observations of this research inform of the steps taken to ensure that the intergroup interaction exist despite in-group cohesion. Even Participants No. 70 and 87, who question their in-group narratives and thus appear outsiders to the cohesive in-groups, interact with members of the in-group and continued to hold in-group prejudices towards the out-group. Despite this, neither Participant No. 70 nor Participant No. 87 rejected the overarching in-group narratives, especially regarding the origin and interpretations of turning points of the conflict. In-group cohesion, blatantly visible among the Tamils and more subtle among the Sinhalese, Muslims, and Burghers, exist.

In-group cohesion presents itself vividly when examining topics discussed when interacting with the in-group. The Sri Lankan diaspora discussed contentious issues when interacting within the in-group, including the conflict. The reality of intragroup openness in topics remains unrealized when exploring intergroup topics. The participants who interacted with members of the out-group in the midst of an intensely violent protracted conflict maintained in-group cohesion. While establishment of new friendships remain sporadic, friendships established in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s continue despite acceptance of in-group narratives that strive the ensure
in-group cohesive. As noted previously, herein lie to conundrum. Acceptance of in-
group prejudicial narratives occurring concurrent to rejection of these same prejudices in
friends from out-group poses a concern for peacebuilding. Not only has prejudice
towards out-group not diminished but it apparently can influence intergroup interactions
if precautions not taken.

Diaspora as Catalysts for Building Peace

The diaspora interactions examined in this research remain localized, limited to a few
individuals, with goals focusing on the mundane. More significantly, by not
communicating about contentious issues, the diaspora who do interact remain prisoners
of their respective in-group narratives. While it remains a possibility to exploit the
bridge-building potential of individuals who interact with members of the out-group, the
very nature of the interactions that hinder open discussions, make this a tenuous
possibility.

To reiterate, the focus on the peacebuilding potential of participants interviewed remain
speculative rather than emphatic due to the gaps in the empirical data. Therefore, while
using analyzed data, the assumptions discussed remain conjectures rather than certainties.
However, due to the link between Contact hypothesis and Peacebuilding, the questioning
of the applicability of former in turn questions the possibility of the latter. Peacebuilding
presumes contact between equals who cooperate to achieve common goals under the
auspices of custom, laws, or authorities. These constitute the ‘bridge-building’ elite, middle, and grassroots levels. Though crucial placement and dedication imply more than the use of ideas of Contact hypothesis, Peacebuilding at its core appear as an mechanism that applies the tenants of Contact hypothesis to the conflict scenario.

Thus, it is possible to speculate that although intergroup interaction exists, the very nature of intergroup interaction harms the possibility of ensuring catalysts for building peace as these relationships do not result in enhanced communications. It further sheds light on why diaspora who interact have not used their position and power to become peacebuilders.

**Significant Research Findings**

The first research finding was that *polarized Sri Lankan diaspora have informal contact with each other*. The analysis, using Positioning technique, provided empirical information on the fact that (a) Sri Lankan diaspora were divided; (b) diaspora themselves perceived themselves as a divided group; (c) the divisions remained based on country-of-origin ethno-linguistic identifiers; (d) these identifiers remained super-ordinate categorizations; and (e) in their interactions with one another, prejudice towards the ‘friend’ from the out-group appeared reduced.

As noted repeatedly in this research, academic and non-academic writing on the Sri Lankan diaspora present the diaspora as archetypes of a divided and conflict-driven
diaspora. This study provided proof of this division/s. This is not the core finding of the research. This merely confirmed the findings of other researchers. However, the fact that this information on the division/s came from Sri Lankan diaspora themselves remained intriguing since that proves that divisions have become internalized for those living outside of their country-of-origin. Not only do the Sri Lankan diaspora cling to country-of-origin ethno-linguistic divisions, but they also perceive others do so as well. The Sri Lankan diaspora therefore know the divisions and when they do interact, they remain conscious of and sensitive to these divisions.

A core aspect of understanding that the diaspora remained divided was the realization that despite living outside of their country-of-origin the Sri Lankan diaspora remained divided according to divisions emanating from their country-of-origin. These divisions, predominantly based on ethno-linguistic identifications, infer the significance of emotional narratives that surpass physical separation. It also informs that such group narratives remain ‘super-ordinate’ self-identifiers for the diaspora and therefore, despite the distance separating the diaspora from their country-of-origin, empirical data inform that the diaspora remain stakeholders. The analysis also provided information that personal experiences alone did not render the individuals prejudicial towards all members of the out-group. Rather, some Tamil diaspora whose home the rioters destroyed had positive contact with members of the out-group whilst those who had no personal experience of trauma did not interact with members of the out-group.
A crucial finding of the research was that *Sri Lankan diaspora interact*. Due to the researcher having personal knowledge of the existence of such intergroup interactions among Sinhala, Tamil, and Burgher Sri Lankan diaspora aided in the directing of the search. Through Narrative Plot and Network analysis, the study revealed how the diaspora who interact do so under the tenants of Contact hypothesis. As noted, the four tenants of Contact hypothesis – perceiving the other as equal, having common goals that involve intergroup cooperation, often supported by customs and/or authorities – lead to friendships and rejection of prejudicial narratives of the other. The analysis of the interview data provided information on diaspora themselves perceiving each other as equal and cooperating at an informal level to achieve shared goals. These goals, though not sanctioned by law or authorities, appeared dictated by custom. At the same time, the research examined intergroup interaction in the midst of the longest ceasefire between the GoSL and the LTTE (2002 – 2008). The existence of the MOU between the GoSL and the LTTE, along with the brokered peace talks illustrated the support of authorities for intergroup interaction.

Thus, some Sri Lankan diaspora interacted with members of the out-group. This interaction, often based on friendships developed prior to the escalation of the conflict, remains discreet, informal, and limited to the mundane. That is, these long-standing, informal friendships appear to be based *non-dominant categorizations* and therefore do not appear to challenge the super-ordinate categorizations. As noted by Pettigrew (1998), positive contact among equals who cooperate for common goals under the auspices of
authorities or customs lead to friendship. This remains the clearest aid to reducing intergroup prejudice. Indeed, the research highlighted how the diaspora who interacted perceived the other as a friend. Such diaspora apparently reject in-group’s prejudice regarding the out-group with regard to the friend. Whilst the existence of intergroup positive contact is an integral discovery, the study used this finding to launch further analysis of the interactions.

All above findings provided answers to the first research question “Do the polarized Sri Lankan diaspora have informal and friendly contact with each other?”. It informed of the existence of subtle and informal yet continued intergroup interactions between (some) Sri Lankan diaspora and illustrated that Sri Lankan diaspora remain as divided groups even during the MOU period (2002 – 2008).

Another crucial breakthrough of this research was the finding that the diaspora who interact retain their respective group’s conflict-driven narratives despite the friendships. The exploration of the nature of intergroup interaction provided insights into the reality of this discovery: that whilst intergroup interaction reduced/removed intolerance towards the friend, it apparently did not reduce the prejudicial perception of the out-group. The analysis illustrated that while personal narratives of friendships existed, the diaspora perceptions of the out-group remained linked to each participant’s group narratives. These remained tainted by divisive narratives that apparently highlight the negative and stereotypical perception of the out-group.
The social network analysis initially provided a visual understanding of interaction while the Plot analysis aided in understanding interactions presented in this map. Utilizing Social Network analysis to the extensive analysis of open-ended interview data added a further layer to the understanding of the interactions. The analysis illustrated that positive contact, as specified under the tenants of Contact hypothesis, existed among the participants of the research. These goal oriented, non-competitive cooperation between equals, supported by customs inform of reduction in prejudice towards to friends from out-group. Yet, narrative Plot analysis provided the relevant data to inform that the same individuals who maintain friendships with members of the out-group also retain their prejudices towards the out-group. They justify their relationship with members of the out-group by rejecting stereotypes concerning only the friend but concurrently continue to accept without question the prejudices and stereotypes regarding the friend’s group.

The analysis of empirical data using positioning, plot and network analytical tools emphasized the complexity and duality of this interaction with regard to the influences of prejudicial narratives emanating from the country-of-origin. This also remains a key finding of the study.

The decisive finding of this research lay in the implications of these findings for the Contact hypothesis. The explorative plot and network analysis of intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora resulted not in directly rejecting the assertions of Contact hypothesis but in questioning its universal applicability and subsequently, in contemplating about adding one more tenant.
There is an obvious duality in the diaspora identification with one another. Indeed, while
friendships appear as the basis for non-dominant categorizations of self (i.e., first order
positioning of self as childhood/school/university friend, neighbor, colleague), such
categorizations exists side-by-side with the ethno-linguistic influenced super-ordinate
categorization. Thus, the empirical data illuminated that as long as the super-ordinate
categorization remains unchallenged, the friendships continue. The research data
illustrated how challenging the understanding of in-group narratives did not result in the
questioning of or rejection of that group narrative. Rather, the challenge to super-
ordinate categorization of the individual, which is based on narratives that highlight
ethno-linguistic self-identification, at times resulted in ending the friendships.
Furthermore, even those friendships that apparently lasted for thirty or forty years,
continue because of the very nature of the interactions.

In the process, the study informed of how diaspora who interact cope with the duality of
tolerance and prejudice existing simultaneously in their daily interactions. The observed
and interview data, for example, illuminate how tenuous intergroup interaction appear to
be. The interviews from first generation diaspora, informed of apparent ‘unwritten rules’
regarding how friends from out-groups should interact. As long as those who interact do
not talk of contentious issues, the friendships among members of the out-group continue.
Thus, the participants appeared conscious of the fact that their friend/s belonged to the
out-group. Therefore, while participants argued and challenged each other’s
interpretations of the socio-political and economic happenings in Sri Lanka, they did so
only with members from their own group. In occasions when talking with friends who were members of another group, they had non-contentious discussions.

If the very nature of intergroup contact among the Sri Lankan diaspora participants inform of avoiding discussions of contentious issues, this rejects the potential of contact to reduce prejudice. Indeed, another significant discovery of the study was that the very nature of this intergroup interaction reduces the possibility of challenging prejudicial narratives. Thus, the diaspora maintain a duality in their complex self-identification to prevent discord between the super-ordinate categorization of ethnicity and subordinate categorizations of university friends, neighbors, and fellow professionals. Intergroup interactions continue because the diaspora sustain the friendship by not challenging their own and their friends’ in-group prejudicial narratives of the out-group.

A key breakthrough in this research lay in unearthing the fact that while intergroup interaction as stipulated in the Contact hypothesis allows for reduction of prejudice regarding the person/s immediate in contact, it does not automatically reduce prejudice towards to out-group in general. This study’s findings thus question the acceptance a Contact hypothesis that does not provide a tenant regarding the nature of the contact. The four tenants of the hypothesis tenuously provide insights into the nature of contact: i.e., equal, goal oriented, cooperative, and based on customs, etc. However, this does not take into account the core finding of the research. That is that the basis of intergroup interaction among Sri Lankan diaspora of this research continued to exist because they do not challenge each other’s super-ordinate categorizations: i.e. in-group narratives. Thus,
the nature of interaction here is that if it does not challenge the fabric of self-identity (i.e., first order positioning of self), contact would reduce prejudice towards the out-group. If the self-identification remained linked to prejudicial in-group narratives, it is difficult to challenge the group narratives without challenging the personal self-categorization. Thus, the analyzed empirical data inform of adding one more tenant to Contact hypothesis: to reduce prejudice towards an out-group requires communication that cultivate enough trust to question each other’s understanding of respective group narratives. Without communicating one’s concerns regarding another’s understanding of histories, individuals, and/or events, it is impossible to reduce prejudice towards the out-group.

**Significant Contributions**

The key findings of the research inform of this study’s potential contributions to the knowledge base of five areas: Contact hypothesis; Diaspora Studies; Analysis of Sri Lankan Conflict; Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding; and the Sampling technique. As the Problem Statement informed, “Contrary to the expectations of the Contact hypothesis, members of the divided Sri Lankan diaspora maintain friendly relationships while retaining their divisive conflict-driven group narratives,” the research questioned the implications of the finding that despite the existence of intergroup interaction, prejudice existed and thereby questioned the tenants of the Contact hypothesis. In brief, this research strived to explore the contact that existed among divided diaspora. To
reiterate, the tenants of Contact hypothesis inform of specific requirements, if in existence, that could result in reduction of prejudices regarding the out-group. The research findings inform of sustained interactions among divided diaspora that not only include the four original tenants introduced by Applort but also the added designation of ‘friendship’ discussed by Pettigrew (1998).

The field research consisting of observations and interviews provided insights into the fact that despite the reality of positive intergroup interaction, these same diaspora accept the prejudicial perceptions of the out-group in tandem to rejecting such prejudices regarding the ‘friend’. Herein lay the conundrum. If sustained and friendly intergroup interaction based on the tenants of Contact hypothesis occurs, this should lead to a reduction of prejudice towards to overall out-group. However, the most significant contribution of this research lay in problematizing the applicability of the tenants of Contact hypothesis.

The significant contribution of this research also rests on the very nature of the topic examined. This research questioned the assumption that the Sri Lankan diaspora were an epitome of a divided diaspora. The contribution to knowledge entailed highlighting both the influence of super-ordinate (group narrative) categorizations for self-identification that prevent emotional distancing of the diaspora with home country as well as the existence of intergroup interaction despite this (see Figure 25 above).

Thus, the contributions to diaspora studies involve three aspects: the first deals with how in-group narratives from home country influence diaspora whilst in host countries; the
second is on whether divided diaspora interact; and lastly, why the diaspora remained ineffective in utilizing their intergroup interactions to reduce prejudices. These conclusions remain limited to the focus of the research. It is pertinent to recall that this research targeted middle-level diaspora, who lived in the UK.

Utilizing diaspora interview data, this research concluded that the Sri Lankan diaspora remained divided. These divisions inform of influences from conflict-driven, uncomplicated in-group narratives that strive to enhance in-group cohesion by explicitly highlighting prejudicial perceptions of the out-group. The analysis used the diaspora interview data to examine these divisions, based predominantly on ethno-linguistic identifications, while keeping in mind that “positions are relational, in that for one to be positioned as powerful others must be positioned as powerless.” (Harré and van Langenhove 1999: 2). Thus, the ethno-linguistic positioning of one as Sinhalese entailed a relational positioning of the other as Tamil or Burgher. This division enhances in-group positive image and at the same time ensures the negative image of the out-group.

The study’s contribution to the knowledge base on diaspora, therefore, remained three-fold. Firstly, the study provided empirical data, supplied by the diaspora, of the factuality of the divided Sri Lankan diaspora.

The Sri Lankan conflict, often presented negatively as a conflict that originated from a divided a people, also inferred a divided diaspora who rarely interacted. By examining the history through the eyes of a specific group, and through exploring the vast and convoluted history through turning points that the participants themselves helped define,
this research provided different perspective of the conflict and its impact on ordinary lives. The participant discourse further informed of the two group narratives that compete for hegemony at least among its own members.

The most significant contribution for the analysis of the Sri Lankan conflict involved the inclusion of diaspora as stakeholders who have the potential to assist in the reduction of tension. The influence of in-group narratives to the diaspora understanding of the conflict also adds to the understanding of diaspora involvement of the conflicts/s within the island. This research remains the only one that used the diaspora oral histories to analyze what they perceived as significant turning points. These personal narratives of Sri Lankan diaspora illuminate the complexity of living outside home country whilst influenced by in-group narratives. While informing of the negative influences of in-group narratives that perpetuate divisions in host country, the research contributed to the understanding of the reality of informal intergroup interactions among the selected diaspora (see Box 12 above).

This research examined why so-called divided diaspora who interact have remained ineffective peacebuilders. By linking the intergroup interaction with the Contact hypothesis, the study not only focused on one of the underlying assumptions of Conflict Resolution: i.e., that intergroup interaction result in reduction of prejudice. By presenting the Sri Lankan diaspora as stakeholders of the conflict, the study also stringently targeted the exploration of their understanding of the conflict from their own words. The study presented empirical evidence on how diaspora positioned self to inform that the Sri
Lankan diaspora remained divided even during the MOU period. The divisions existed in both personal and in-group narratives and thus, one contribution to the field of Conflict Resolution lay in presenting empirical evidence, extracted from the interviewed diaspora themselves, of the existence of a conflict-driven divided diaspora in the UK.

The study moreover strived to present insights into the stakeholder role of diaspora, especially on the significance of continued influence of in-group narratives from home country on diaspora. This in turn spotlighted the influence of the simplified, uncomplicated, prejudicial, conflict-driven group narratives emanating from country-of-origin on diaspora. Informing how these conflict-driven narratives impact diaspora using their words remains another significant find. The contribution of in-group narratives on enhancing divisions among diaspora remains a significant contribution to the field of Conflict Analysis.

More significantly, the speculative answer of why interacting diaspora remain inactive concerning peacebuilding remains another contribution to the field. Using documents, observations, and interviews, this research investigated how contact alone might not result in creating catalysts for positive change (see Box 12 above). Linking the Contact hypothesis with Peacebuilding, the research reflected on the impotence of contact in reducing prejudices regarding the ‘other.’ Although tentative, the argument follows that as long as individuals who interact accept in-group prejudices regarding out-group, intergroup interaction cannot result in peacebuilders. While diaspora apparently reject in-group prejudices regarding their friends from out-group, empirical data illuminate the
retention of in-group prejudices towards the out-group in general. This duality – a key aspect of the nature of intergroup interaction among the participants of the research – results in ineffective pro-peace activists.

This research highlighted the usefulness of snowball sampling technique on finding diversity among the sample. This sample technique provided the means – perhaps the only means – of finding a number of individuals unobserved by the majority, often hidden from public view. A major concern in utilizing the sampling technique lay in the fear of finding like-minded participants. Using Interview Question No. 18: “Whom to talk to? Anyone with similar or different views?”, the research uncovered diversity regarding positions and plots among those who interacted. Thus, the contribution to research method was to reaffirm the chain sampling’s invaluable potential for gathering information.

External Validity

To reiterate, this research strived to explore and through that, understand the limited contribution of intergroup interaction to reduce prejudice towards the out-group. Therefore, while possibility exist in generalizing certain key findings of this research, it is vital to stress that this research never strived for external validity.

Whilst the research findings and conclusions remain limited to the Sri Lankan diaspora interviewed in this research, it is pertinent to inform of the possibility of generalizing
some of the research findings. A core finding of this research lay in questioning the tenants of the Contact hypothesis by stressing the inclusion of a tenant that informs of the nature of intergroup interaction. While the possibility to replicate the technique used to gather and subsequently analyze intergroup interactions exist, the other important components present difficulties in generalizing. It is possible to explore whether the Sri Lankan diaspora interact in countries other than the US and the UK using the same plot analysis.

In Conclusion

This research strived to understand the conundrum

Contrary to the expectations of the Contact hypothesis, members of the divided Sri Lankan diaspora maintain friendly relationships while retaining their divisive conflict-driven group narratives.

While personal experiences dictated the origin of the research into diaspora interactions, the resultant study combined observed and interview data with archival sources. The road to discovering as to whether intergroup interactions among Sri Lankan diaspora existed in the UK, coupled with questioning of whether contact could ensure catalysts for building peace, resulted in problematizing the tenants of Contact hypothesis. In conclusion, the core findings of the research contribute to the knowledge base in the fields of Contact hypothesis, Diaspora studies, and Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding.
APPENDIX I

The Questionnaire

1. What do you consider yourself to be? What about others?
2. Why and when did you come to UK?
3. What does Sri Lankan (modern) history mean to you?
4. And what are the conflicts you see in Sri Lanka?
5. What turning points impacted you the most?
6. Opinions and history you would tell your children/friends?
7. Heard of different perspectives from others?
8. Have these confused?/angered?/surprised? You? Why these reactions?
9. Do you have many Sri Lankan friends? Recent or since Sri Lanka?
10. Do you express your views to them? What don’t they understand at all? What do you want to explain to them?
11. Do you see the conflict similarly or differently from them?
12. Have these views changed over time? When and Why?
13. Would people from the other ethnic groups say you have a softer or harder position on the conflict? Any changes on position?
14. How do you reconcile being passionate about the conflict yet having friends from the other ethnic group?
15. What do your own group members in Sri Lanka not know that you, as living outside of Sri Lanka, have learnt? (re: the conflict, the others)
16. How/Can you help reduce tension and/or achieve victory?
17. Do you think the Tsunami can help? What views being said in your group in Sri Lanka and in UK?
18. Whom to talk to? Any similar/different views?

413
APPENDIX II

Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, Maneesha S. Wanasinghe – Pasqual, am a doctoral student at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) at the George Mason University, USA. This research is intended to provide insights and information for my Ph.D. thesis regarding the modern history of Sri Lanka through the eyes of a selected number of Diaspora.

I am undertaking these interviews to gain an understanding of whether and how the larger history of the conflict and personal stories change in times of specific critical turning points from the point-of-view of the Sri Lankan Diaspora – Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim –residing in the United Kingdom.

The participants are expected to talk to the interviewer – Ms. Maneesha S. Wanasinghe – Pasqual – about their memories/views of events that they think are of importance in the Sri Lankan conflict. There will be no benefits to the participants other than the knowledge that they have helped further the research by providing a lens into the narratives of the Diaspora.

To ensure anonymity of the participants, only parts of the transcripts will be used. I, Ms. Wanasinghe – Pasqual, will personally guarantee confidentiality by conducting the interviews and transcribing them myself; providing the participants copies of the transcripts to correct if they request; keeping all documents, including the transcripts and audio-tapes, in a secure place; and if the participant requests, destroy them after the information is incorporated into the larger research. Also, to preserve the
anonymity of the participants, any references to identifiable personal information will be excluded.

Participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalties. The subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. The interviews are expected to be friendly and unobtrusive and therefore there may be no physical risk. However, psychological discomfort may occur because some questions may trigger memories from the past. The interviews may take from one hour to a number of hours and the location will depend on the participants.

If you have any question regarding the interview, please contact me at mPasqua1@gmu.edu or (317) 513-2352 or Prof. Terrance Lyons at tlyons1@gmu.edu, my advisor at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR), George Mason University, USA.

The project has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Sponsored Programs at (703) 993-2295 if you have any questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in this research.

This is to inform that I have read the above and I am willing to be interviewed by Ms. Maneesha S. Wanasinghe Pasqual and,

a. I have agreed to be audio-taped (___)

OR

b. I have refused to be audio-taped but am still willing to be interviewed (___)

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Signature of Participant/Date


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Maneesha S. Wanasinghe – Pasqual (W. A. M. S. Pasqual, nee W. A. M. S. Wanasinghe) was born on January 23, 1973 in London, UK. She is a Sri Lankan citizen. She went to school at Vishaka Vidyalaya, Sri Lanka and Coldeen Middle School in Sussex, UK. She received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Colombo with a First Class in Modern History in 1998. She subsequently obtained a Masters in International Peace Studies from the University of Notre Dame, USA (2002). She was a Fulbright Junior Scholar (2000) and the recipient of the Arthur Anderson Award (2004).

Maneesha S. Wanasinghe – Pasqual is a lecturer in International Relations attached to the Department of International Relations, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is a SEDA (UK) and CTHE (Sri Lanka) qualified lecturer with areas of specialization that include Conflict Analysis, Human Rights, Human Security, and Diplomacy. Her original research contributions in areas of food ‘self-sufficiency’; peace education; foreign policy; human security, and diaspora studies have utilized qualitative researcher methods. She has conducted analysis using narrative and positioning theory.