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Effects of migration on Jaffna Tamil families

A case study assessing the effects of migration on a sample of Tamil families living in the Jaffna peninsula in Sri Lanka.

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Effects of migration on Jaffna Tamil families

by
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a case study assessing the effects of migration on a sample of Tamil families living in the Jaffna peninsula in Sri Lanka. The region suffered significant forced migration flows following almost three decades of ethnic conflict and civil war, particularly of a key economically active cohort. Jaffna has been relatively isolated and under occupation for most of the conflict, and therefore out of reach of academic study. The end of the civil war in 2009 has provided an opportunity to investigate social effects of migration on the home community for the first time. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participant families, to qualitatively assess responses and strategies used to sustain the family unit during and after conflict. This dissertation first assesses ways in which migration flows from Jaffna fit into existing literature on migration strategies during conflict, including the importance of the family unit, both domestic and transnational, in creating and funding migration opportunity. Ways in which non-migrant members participate in transnational social spaces are also assessed, including the role of communication, negotiating reunion, economic reliance and social expectations. Post-conflict, non-migrant members have new opportunities to share the transnational social spaces occupied by the diaspora, and lead transnational lives themselves. This has created potential changes in elderly care and marriage practices; new tensions are also created over property ownership in a rapidly depopulating region.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka has experienced twenty-six years of civil conflict and war (1983 – 2009) between Tamil and Sinhalese ethnic groups. The civil war ended in May 2009, after the defeat of the separatist Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) by the Sri Lankan Army (SLA). The conflict generated significant migration flows from all ethnic groups leaving the country to seek political asylum as well as economic opportunity elsewhere. The resultant diaspora have been the focus of enquiry in the literature, primarily in assessing transnational behaviour of the emigrants and emerging labour migration trends and effects on Sri Lanka. Migration of the Tamil ethnic group in particular has been of academic interest: the conflict-driven flows embody a victim diaspora, of an ethnic minority in exile, created by an exodus from the homeland (ICG 2010). Research on the Tamil diaspora has yielded a better understanding of social network dynamics, remittance behaviour and transnational influences on insurgencies, as these behaviours were seen to propagate and reinforce the conflict (Wayland 2004; Orjuela 2008).

While the diaspora's behaviour and experience has been well researched in the literature, less is known about the effects of this migration on the home society (Lindley 2008). Conflict migration has a great impact on home communities, as the twin effects of war and population loss continue to create instabilities for remaining civilian populations. Some studies have focused on internally displaced populations in Sri Lanka, assessing effects of conflict and tsunami-induced displacement on both Tamil and Sinhalese communities. However, one geographic region in the North, the Jaffna peninsula, has not been studied in the literature, primarily due to lack of access during the conflict. Jaffna first came under LTTE control early in the conflict, followed by military occupation, both of which served to isolate the civilian population from the rest of the country. Jaffna itself represents the heartland and embodiment of Sri Lankan Tamil identity and culture, historically rooted in the ancient Tamil Kingdom of Jaffna. The region

occupied a central role in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, as the LTTE's ideology was formulated in Jaffna (Swamy 2002). Gaining control of the region was therefore an important goal for both warring parties. The end of the war in 2009 has made the peninsula's population accessible again, creating an opportunity to gather emic narratives and study the effects of emigration on the Tamil community.

Conflict-migration can be theorised in a number of ways, from assessing migration propensities and strategies during wartime, to analysing consequences for an asylum diaspora. This dissertation will apply these established empirical lenses towards understanding effects on the home community in Jaffna. Taking a case study approach, the goals are to uncover the strategies and responses of non-migrant family members in Jaffna, and to assess any unique themes that emerge for the community. In particular, I will look at family strategies and involvement in enabling migration of key members, migration methods and impacts, and the extent to which non-migrants in the home community participate in transnational social spaces occupied by the diaspora. By analysing qualitative testimonies of families, this dissertation hopes to provide a lived experience of a community experiencing conflict-driven migration, and the effect this may have on future socio-political life in the Jaffna peninsula. Understanding the effects on the home society in Jaffna may help uncover both normative and new themes on the consequences of migration, and help provide insight into post-conflict rebuilding strategies in the region.

Methodological approaches for building this case study include collecting primary data through semi-structured interviews and surveys with participants in the Jaffna peninsula. I analysed a range of emic and etic observations on how conflict and migration has affected their family lives. Findings also extend to assessing community-wide effects of migration, such as changing

marriage practices in a transnational environment and implications for property ownership in a region depopulated by migration.

As this is a qualitative study of fifteen families, findings cannot be generalised to include all Jaffna families, however commonalities in experienced themes will constitute the majority of the analysis. This research attempts to uncover ways in which migration has both made and unmade this region, continuing to impact its social and community life. Jaffna's unique social, political and geographic position provides an interesting case study of a community under siege, by war, migration and attrition.

2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Jaffna peninsula is part of Sri Lanka's Northern Province, which also includes the Vanni or mainland, and a number of islands situated near the Indian coast (Figure 1).

Geographically, the peninsula is surrounded almost entirely by a lagoon and the Indian Ocean. Until recently the only access by road was through a single narrow isthmus, the Elephant Pass[1]. This geographical self-containment and proximity to the south of India fostered closer cultural and linguistic links with Tamil populations in India, than with the Sinhalese population in majority in the rest of the country. The ancient Tamil Kingdom of Jaffna ruled over the region until the Portuguese colonial era brought the Kingdom's independence to an end in 1619 (De Silva 1981). Despite successive Portuguese, Dutch and British Colonial eras changing Sri Lanka's fortunes over the past half century, Jaffna has maintained socio-political and linguistic differences that are distinct from other Sri Lankan Tamil and Indian Tamil populations.

Figure 1: Map of Sri Lanka highlighting the Northern Province. The Jaffna Peninsula comprises the Northern tip, excluding the islands.
Source: Ilankai Tamil Sangam

Migration has an established history in Jaffna. As key trade partners with South India, Tamil populations frequently moved and settled between both regions over millennia. Patterns of circular and economic migration at a low level appear to have continued during the Portuguese and Dutch colonial eras from the 1600s, although British

[1] The A9 highway over the Elephant Pass was, until January 2011, the only way in and out of Jaffna peninsula by road. A new bridge across the lagoon from Pooneryn now offers additional access to Jaffna.

colonial rule from the 1800s brought about new destinations for economic migrants. Jaffna Tamils began serving the empire in administrative and clerical roles on plantations in Malaysia and Burma, a trend that continued until Sri Lanka's independence in 1948 (De Silva 1981). A cultural emphasis on education, including in English, and a willingness to participate in a mobile labour market appear to have been the main reasons for Jaffna residents' growing affluence relative to the rest of Sri Lanka—affluence built on returned remittances from working in other colonised countries. British favour with administrative roles and land ownership--a direct outcome of increasing prosperity--helped position Jaffna Tamils as an elite population within Sri Lanka, arguably setting the stage for later ethnic conflict between the Tamil-speaking Hindu minority and the Sinhalese-speaking Buddhist majority in the rest of the country (Wilson 2000).

Ethnic conflict began brewing just before Independence from the British in 1948, when political power struggles over the new government and constitution saw growing discontent between Tamil and Sinhalese populations. Tamils, as a minority ethnic group, began experiencing a set of exclusionary policies set in place by the majority Sinhalese government in 1971, ranging from the selection of Sinhalese as the sole national language, to systematic exclusion from access to jobs and education (De Silva 1981; Ribeiro 1999). The Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka noted a population of about fifteen million in 1981. Of this, about 80% was Sinhalese. Ethnic Hindu Tamils, the focus of this dissertation, constituted only about 4.3% of the population, although the proportion of all Tamil speaking minorities was about 17.5%, including Muslims and Indian Tamil plantation workers. For the conflict, however, the indigenous Hindu Tamils were the primary group targeted by the Sinhalese. Growing violence between the two ethnic groups led to violent riots in 1983, when affluent Tamil businesses and residents in urban areas like Colombo, were attacked and looted. Of the many Tamil retaliatory groups that formed as a consequence, the LTTE became the most powerful. Initially, the LTTE were conceived by

Jaffna intellectuals, who sought a separatist agenda for Tamils: the aim was the creation of a Tamil state (Eelam) within the island, which comprised the Tamil majority areas of the North and East of the country (Boyden, Kaiser et al. 2002; Swamy 2002). By the mid-1980s, the disparate Tamil groups unified under the LTTE's leadership and began an official militant campaign to fight for a separate Tamil state, often resorting to terrorism to reach their goals. The civil conflict escalated into war against the SLA until the LTTE's defeat in May 2009.

The escalating tensions and war between the two parties over almost three decades had a significant effect on migration from Sri Lanka, generating refugee flows from both communities. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (2011) report estimates about 153,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees and asylum seekers currently outside Sri Lanka; in early 2011, about 1,500 had returned, although there were indications that spontaneous returns would increase over time. In reality, actual numbers of migrants may be much higher, as many would have left the country via irregular routes, not having entered the asylum system at all. A population of just over a million Tamils had seen an estimated reduction of about 20%. The refugee data does not identify region of origin in the home country, so it is difficult to know how many refugees are originally from Jaffna. Consulting regional census data provides an alternate method of estimating how the peninsula has been depopulated by the conflict.

Census data has been irregularly collected for the Jaffna peninsula. The last full national census was conducted in 1981 just before the riots and war began, with partial information collected for war-affected regions over the next two national censuses. The most recent findings from 2010 showed that a pre-war peninsular population of 831,000 in 1981 had reduced by a quarter to 622,589 in 2009, likely due to migration and conflict deaths (Jaffna District Statistical Handbook, 2010). The loss is even greater if projections for natural growth are accounted for.

Jaffna Town, the largest urban area and capital of the peninsula, currently has the highest population at just over 55,000; this is still 40% lower than what it was pre-war. The town has, as expected, the highest population density, and relatively equal sex ratios in the peninsula. In most other areas, however, women outnumber men; the sex ratio in Valikamam is as low as 85.5. Further, the population structure does reveal a reduction in cohort numbers between the ages of 40 and 54: the "migrant cohort". The depopulation effects of migration already point to key imbalances in Jaffna as a region: the underrepresentation of a working-age cohort, the larger numbers of women to men, and a reduction in the number of households in the region. These statistics point to questions focused on in this dissertation: what has been the effect on home, property, marriage and family life of the residents still remaining in Jaffna?

2.1 Creating the diaspora: migration strategies and transnationalism during wartime

Before reviewing migration effects in Jaffna, the migration flow itself should be assessed. Conflict-driven migration can be conceptualised by looking at causes, migration propensity and migration methods, which in turn can affect relationships with non-migrant family members at home. Defining the migrant community as diasporic or transnational also affords insight into how the community as a whole behaves, at home and abroad. Sri Lankan Tamils, in many ways, constitute a true diaspora, or a victim diaspora, using Cohen's categorisations (Cohen 1996). They consider themselves exiles, and have a strong association with the ideal of the Tamil Eelam homeland that they have been forced out of, through a combination of war and restrictive state policies. They are certainly scattered, following the traditional definition of diaspora (Vertovec and Cohen 1999), but have formed large cohesive social groups or clusters in destination countries. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), the majority of the diaspora reside in India and Canada with each hosting about 200,000 to 300,000 Sri Lankan Tamils (ICG 2010).

The UK is home to the next largest population, at 180,000 Tamils. In all, the ICG estimate nearly 800,000 Sri Lankan Tamils living outside the country as a diaspora. Reviewing Jaffna's population data decreases, it is possible that a quarter of these diaspora members (about 200,000) are native to Jaffna.

During times of conflict, there is a small but growing body of literature that examines who is likely to stay or leave. Similar to economic migration, poverty, class and education appear to be the main determinants during times of conflict: the cost of leaving a conflict zone is continually driven up so that usually only the economically elite can migrate, whether by regular or irregular routes. Class and affluence also afford greater access to various forms of capital (social, economic or cultural), which means the profiles of those leaving may be better off, better educated, and more entrepreneurial (Koser, Van Hear et al. 2003; Van Hear 2006). The displacement usually occurs internationally, rather than internally, as better educated individuals seek to restore their pre-war socio-economic well-being (Oruc 2009). This profile appears to follow similar themes found in assessing "brain-drain" literature, where the affluent are the most mobile, seeking economic opportunities elsewhere (Commander, Kangasniemi et al. 2004; Docquier, Lodigiani et al. 2009). However in countries experiencing conflict, these migrants may also be the least likely to return home or undergo circular migration, even after the end of conflict. They may therefore "represent both the greatest immediate loss and the greatest potential for countries of origin" (Koser, Van Hear et al. 2003). Engagement with the home country may also reduce over time if most family members settle abroad. For poorer households, internal displacement is more likely, although there is evidence that in Sri Lanka, these households are increasingly putting strategies in place to dispatch key members abroad, typically the Middle East, in order to survive economically (Amirthalingam and Lakshman 2009). This has been particularly noted in Muslim and Sinhalese households, who have not traditionally been

allowed to participate in the refugee flows constituted by the Tamils. The poorest households do not move at all, and comprise the largest number of non-migrants in conflict areas (Van Hear 2000).

Although the socio-political context of each conflict is unique, age and gender are also common determinants. Older inhabitants, despite increased vulnerability, may choose to remain in a conflict zone rather than leave, as found in Oruc's 2009 study of Bosnian households. Young men comprise the largest migrant cohort, as in most conflicts they are at risk of conscription into war, and therefore have the most to gain (both personally and economically) from leaving a conflict zone. This has been the case in Sri Lanka, where young Tamil men were the first to leave, in order to escape forced recruitment into the LTTE, and avoid detention and death from SLA (Justino 2009). In Northern Sri Lanka, these effects are immediately apparent in the disproportionate representation of female-headed households, shifting gender roles within conflict-affected society (Bouta and Frerks 2002) and challenging traditional Tamil patriarchal ideas about the role of the woman as domesticated and duty-bound (Schrijvers 1999). Age and gender of the non-migrants therefore appear to define the home community, which increasingly comprises the elderly, the very young, and with a higher proportion of women than men. Family structures redefine, in attempts to afford safety and security for members, so extended family networks become increasingly important in taking in vulnerable members, especially children (Korf 2004; Brück and Schindler 2008). As displacement may be long term, across many countries, family structures increasingly inhabit transnationality as the norm, especially in situations of protracted conflict as in Sri Lanka.

Settlement policies in destination countries also play a role in determining migration flows. For Sri Lankan Tamils in particular, Canada's border control policies at the beginning of the conflict

helped determine the shape and number of migrant flows. Canada allowed any arrivals on Canadian port of entry as having a right to claim refugee status; this subsequently became one of the most popular routes selected by Tamils. High approval rates (up to 80% in 1999) meant that large numbers settled, and the growing diaspora network encouraged further migration and settlement in Canada. High literacy, education rates and language also initially made Sri Lankan Tamils a more acceptable migrant source for Canada (Hyndman 2003). Other countries like Switzerland also accepted political asylum applications on arrival, and began attracting refugee flows. However only about 1% were afforded UN Convention Refugee Status; a few were either issued humanitarian permits and offered temporary refuge, however a vast majority simply 'disappeared' to other destinations, suggesting irregular flows and smuggling to various destinations was a key strategy for many Tamils seeking to leave Sri Lanka (McDowell 1996). Further, the low number of accepted applications suggests that genuine political asylum could not be proved, especially if a large proportion were economically active educated men and women from relatively affluent backgrounds.

These strategies therefore raise questions on defining these migration flows from Sri Lanka: are they forced, voluntary or economic? Categorisation is useful for policy, especially when assessing asylum applications and assigning refugee status for conflict-induced flows. While the choice to migrate may be voluntary, the structural pressures creating that choice mean all the resulting flows can be classified as forced: there is a clear case to be made that economic necessity is as much an outcome of conflict as fear of death (Van Hear, Brubaker et al. 2009). Van Hear and Brubaker suggest that conceptualising these flows as *mixed-migration* rather than as an asylum diaspora is probably more accurate, where intention and motivation suggest closer linkages with traditional economic or labour migration. I will assess the extent to which this may be true for the participants interviewed for this dissertation.

Understanding the dynamics behind the migration flows are useful primarily because decisions to leave are not made as lone individuals. Although strategies may vary, from employment to asylum seeking, or using agents for irregular routes, families play a crucial role in encouraging and funding these decisions (Boyd 1989; Massey, Arango et al. 1993). In researching Mexican irregular migrants, Dolfin and Genicot (2006) find that familial networks provide access to job and border crossing information, and help with the costs of migration (Dolfin and Genicot 2006). While the role of social networks for labour migration is typically the focus in the literature, in conflict areas creating refugee flows, similar effects are found, for example Koser's (1997) study of Iranian asylum seekers found social and family networks essential for decisions such as leaving the home country, choosing a destination for asylum, and integrating into the host society (Koser 1997).

The migrant's experience is therefore important to the non-migrant experience. For family units that are subsequently split between multiple countries, the transnational experience is a shared one, where non-migrants remaining in the home country are invested in a sense of collective welfare and unity which ties migrants and non-migrants together (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). The expression of transnationality can primarily be seen to be one of social capital, creating new cultural hybrid forms that emerge (Appadurai 1996), although living in a transnational social space also creates economic and political networks that deepen family ties. For residents in Jaffna, these expressions of transnationality may be limited: while the migrant members live transnational lives, the family at home may have limited abilities to engage with these new structures. Assessing how non-migrants participate in these family structures will provide an interesting comparison to the literature.

In transnational spaces, family and cultural signifiers can be challenged by changing expressions of identity. Language initially plays a cohesive role in maintaining links with the homeland. However, Canagarajah (2008) found that Tamil children born to families in cities with the largest diasporic population (London and Toronto) were becoming more proficient in English, rather than Tamil, therefore losing the ability to speak in their first language. This group was seen to be rejecting their heritage language in larger numbers than other groups, possibly due to language-based discrimination in Sri Lanka carrying more social and institutional capital in speaking English rather than Tamil (Canagarajah 2008). Cultural identity was seen as different from linguistic identity, which is an interesting tension developing in the diaspora, who are changing the definition of what being Tamil means, as the ethnic identity is no longer being linked primarily to language. Presumably, this affects on-going engagement with the community at home, and may have a generational impact on family structures and communication. It would be interesting to see how non-migrants in Jaffna are responding to the changing cultural and linguistic norms of their emigrant family members.

2.2 Remittance during conflict

One of the major ways in which families with migrant members express their transnational connections is through remittances, which contribute to the shared welfare of the family unit. Sri Lanka already has almost a tenth of its GDP accounted for by remittances (Ratha and Xu 2008). Remittance reliance has been important for all ethnic communities, as the conflict necessitated seeking economic opportunities in other countries to supplement family income, especially as other types of economic activity, FDI and developmental assistance was lacking. This was especially true of Sri Lanka, which saw declining official developmental aid from OECD countries, but sharply rising remittance rates during times of intense conflict over the three decades (Sriskandarajah 2002). They are an essential strategy when other economic options are

unavailable, and especially if households have lost a key male breadwinner through migration or death (Sarvananthan 2007; Justino 2009).While significant poverty alleviation has occurred, some adverse social effects have been noted for non-migrant households who experience relative deprivation in Sri Lanka: economic disparity has grown in home communities as remittances increase the gaps between the haves and the have-nots (Kageyama 2008).

The proportion of remittance attributed to the Tamil diaspora alone has been difficult to disaggregate (Koser, Van Hear et al. 2003), however it is estimated that up to $200 million a year was received through remittance channels by the LTTE during three decades of conflict (Wayland 2004). A migrant's class and geographic location play a role in generating this significant amount: as the initial migrants were likely to be better educated and of a relatively affluent class, they also had better economic prospects in their destination countries. Van Hear suggests that it has been Tamils in the wider diaspora from Europe or Canada who sent money, rather than those in India, again tied to affluence and migration propensities: the Tamils who settled in OECD destinations were able to afford those journeys and subsequent opportunities, whereas poorer or less educated Tamils displaced to India, with reduced ability to grow in socio-economic status.

Remittance by its very nature is usually an informal and personal transaction between family networks and beneficiaries. For Sri Lankan Tamils, this relatively informal transaction was formalised into a system called *undiyal* (ICG 2010), which has generated a great deal of interest in the literature, as it suggests transnational organisational strategies used by the diaspora and the LTTE (Van Hear 2006), as well creating consequences in supporting and perpetuating the conflict (Hyndman 2003; La 2004; Cheran and Aiken 2005). Findings show that a lot of the remittances were forced, using increasingly sophisticated channels for soliciting and extracting

donations from migrants abroad, and dispatching laundered money through agents working for the LTTE (Fair 2005; Orjuela 2008). There is some political debate on the scale and institutionalisation of the *undiyal* structure, as remittance senders and Tamil leaders insist that money was sent to support relief organisations and family members in Sri Lanka, rather than to directly fund LTTE activity (Wayland 2004). In reality, however, it has been very difficult to determine how migration and remittances are used at the household level, as researching remittance during conflict is plagued by lack of data, inaccessibility of households, and inability to track the informal networks used to transfer money (Lindley 2008).

Remittance behaviour is also linked to ideas of return to the home country, as a migrant is likely to send substantial amounts of money home for investment if they can reap the benefits upon return (Katseli, Lucas et al. 2006). Diasporic Tamils have indeed sent substantial amounts back to Sri Lanka; despite a major portion potentially diverted to the LTTE, some would have reached individual households and family members. In light of these remittance issues, it would be interesting to examine a Jaffna family's experience of *undiyal*, identifying where income had been diverted and invested, and to assess if there is any corresponding expectations of return that their distant family members might harbour. Remittance practices and usage can therefore provide a valuable insight into how Jaffna families express their transnationalism, and ways in which these might reinforce family unit expectations.

2.3 Impacts on Jaffna family life

In summary, the literature points to patterns of migration propensities during times of conflict, which may be reinforced by the experience of non-migrant members in Jaffna. Conflict and migration have also changed the demography of the peninsula, potentially creating social effects which are yet to be studied. This dissertation is an attempt to uncover what those effects might

be. In particular I will be looking at how families have enabled and participated in migration strategies during conflict, identifying any new routes emerge from those identified in the literature. Migrants foster a number of transnational connections with home, which can be realised as social, political, or economic behaviour (Schiller, Basch et al. 1995). The impact of these new social spaces on the home community will be reviewed through the key themes of communication, emic effects on social and cultural life, and the role that remittance and economic expectations may play in creating and sustaining transnational family life. The local effects of migration are no doubt also reactions to three decades of conflict; the ways in which that experience has created and mitigated these strategies and transnational spaces will also be reviewed.

3 METHODOLOGY

In building this case study, I conducted qualitative research with a total of twenty-two participants, comprising fifteen families living in the peninsula. Primary research was conducted over a three week period in June 2011, with analysis of results undertaken in London. I took a phenomenological approach, assessing prevalence of migration-related themes from the literature.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the peninsula, in a mixture of Tamil and English languages. The interviews occurred in both urban and rural settings in the peninsula: six were conducted in Jaffna Town, with the rest situated in villages across the peninsula in Valikamam and Nallur districts. This extended geographic region takes into account the emic concept of Jaffna membership being regional, rather than tied to the urban town. Thenmaradchi and Vadamaradchi districts were not considered due to access and security restrictions.

3.1 A note on positionality

My background and positionality play a large part in affecting the outcome of this project. I am a female British citizen, of ethnic Indian Tamil origin, married to a Sinhalese Sri Lankan. These intersecting identities no doubt had an effect on the quality of the responses I received during the interviews. As an ethnic Tamil, I was able to communicate easily with participants and bridge cultural barriers as I was seen to be from a similar background. In a civil war defined by ethnic identity, identity politics were crucial, and my being positioned as part of “us” rather than “them” was essential in gaining trust quickly with participants. I should note that Jaffna Tamil culture is quite distinct from other Tamil groups: the language is a dialect quite differently evolved from the Tamil I was familiar with. I was able to communicate and conduct interviews

in Tamil, but needed an interpreter to translate vocabulary and meanings during the interview. The caste system and cultural expectations are also distinct to Jaffna. As I was of Indian origin, I was still therefore a partial “outsider”, however commonalities existed over issues and expectations around traditional marriage, ideas of family life, gender roles and expectations for sons and daughters. Being a female interviewer did appear to inspire participants to revisit certain topics more than others, especially when discussing family life, marriage and children, which no doubt introduced a bias to the final themes discussed in the analysis.

Understanding the effects of my positionality was essential during the interviews: Kvale identifies the process as an intersubjective interaction, where both the interviewer and interviewee create an objective and subjective reality, and both influence the outcome (Kvale 1996). Building on this essentially feminist and post-structuralist methodological approach, I also considered the interview as an exchange of information, rather than a one-sided relationship with the participants, over which I dominated. As such, I presented myself as a British-Tamil student, and made my Sinhalese connection implicit through my name, and volunteered my positionality when asked, in order to encourage equally candid testimony from the participants. Identifying issues of “sameness” and “difference” as continuously negotiated realities debated in the literature were also useful considerations while interviewing (Rose 1997; Flowerdew and Martin 2005).

The fact that I was married to a Sinhalese man did cause some potential participants to decline being interviewed. It is likely that some interviews were guarded, as they were unsure of my political motivations and allegiance during the interview process, especially in relation to discussing family movements and relationships with the LTTE. Further, I had to ensure that strict conditions of anonymity had to be extended to all participants; getting introductions to

families was based on assuring intermediaries and community members that none of the interviews and narratives would be used for political purposes. These stipulations also reveal a bias in the results and themes discussed in this dissertation. Appendix 4 outlines the consent form reviewed and signed by all participants.

3.2 Creating the sample

As the research questions focussed on assessing effects of migration at the family level, I aimed to interview individuals in households with a large number of family members resident abroad. Geographic membership to the Jaffna region was also essential for cultural reasons, and to focus the study on indigenous residents rather than internally displaced residents. All participants therefore were Jaffna natives, who were born in the region, and were from families with a long residential history in the region.

The snowball sample was conducted by approaching well known community members in Jaffna, and through them, seeking introductions to people with strong social networks. Three bilingual people eventually were identified as intermediaries with personal connections to the final participants, and in most cases, they were present at the interviews. Using intermediaries for the interviews was not ideal, as the presence of third parties can sometimes introduce an additional bias and distortion of narratives (Arksey and Knight 1999; Flowerdew and Martin 2005). However, their presence was ultimately essential in not only creating an interview environment that felt secure for the participants, but in also providing help with language translation and clarification of meaning. These intermediaries helped to arrange interviews with the fifteen families in the final sample.

As this research focused on family-level experiences with migration during and after conflict, they were conducted with people deemed heads of household due to cultural beliefs about seniority (age) or ownership status of their home. The definition of household therefore closely reflected the social units that people lived in, as per the United Nations (1997) definition.

However, the majority of the research was on the effects of absent family members on family life at "home" in Jaffna. I therefore further refined what I meant by "household" and "family", what role the conflict played in causing migration, and if any particular demographic needed to be the focus of study. As the "family" comprised of both migrant and non-migrant members, this was accepted as an entirely emic construct, defined by each individual who was interviewed. Culturally, the definitions of family did not just refer to nuclear family members, i.e. parents and offspring. For all the participants, their siblings, parents' siblings and cousins, and other members of the extended family were considered part of the close family unit, whose welfare and wellbeing was an inherent part of family life. This extended idea of family is important for this research, as there are many implications for reliance that occurs across this network, from economic reliance (remittance or caretaking of property) to communication and an expectation of mutual support; each of these form emic ideas of what the transnational family means (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). Each interview, therefore, occurred within a "household" in the statistically defined sense, with a non-migrant "family" member who existed as a main node in their personally conceived family tree, and for whom "home" referred to the house they lived in, as well as Jaffna when speaking for their migrant family members. These members presented themselves as having "most family members living abroad" and were therefore considered for this project. Their testimony was considered acceptable if the extended household membership falls into definitions of members offering access to resources and capital, opportunities and obligations.

In most cases the interviews were with husband and wife pairs, who were the local economic decision makers in their particular families, even if they were not the primary economic earners (for example, a retired couple living in their own home with one of their working children). Defining this status in economic decision-making complicates the situation for households supported entirely by remittances, and is taken into consideration during analysis.

The final sample of fifteen families included the testimony of fifteen primary participants and seven secondary participants. Primary participants were those that answered most of the questions; secondary participants, if they were present, either contributed answers intermittently, or gave family histories as secondary to the primary participants. Eleven men and eleven women participated. A summary of the sample by age group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: *Participant Age Groups*

Age	**Primary participants**	**Secondary participants**
Over 80	3	0
70-79	5	0
60-69	1	3
50-59	3	3
40-49	0	0
30-39	3	1

There were no participants under the age of 30, likely due to the snowball sample affecting introductions within a restricted cohort (i.e. older generations). The under-30 cohort would also have been minors for the majority of the war and occupation so any impacts of migration would have affected them secondarily through the experiences of their parents or guardians.

As can be seen from the age groups, the majority are elderly, or of a mature cohort. Interviews with the four younger participants in the 30-39 age group do reveal generational differences in

migration strategy and familial effects, discussed in the analysis.

Besides the recorded interviews with the families, a number of interviews were conducted with community leaders, journalists, politicians and academics based in the Jaffna area. While they are not directly quoted in this dissertation, their views inform the analysis.

3.3 Interviews

The family interviews took place in most instances in the participants' own homes. This allowed further contextualisation of the family's experience, where observations on the nature of home, possessions, etc. would provide additional details on what the family was experiencing. In two cases where home-based interviews were not possible, I provided a quiet location in a private guest house. In three cases, interviews were conducted in the person's place of work, which was in and around the Jaffna Hospital.

The interviews were semi-structured, with questions based around experiences of migration, communication and remittance, settlement plans, and what their current family lives are like. Appendix 1 outlines the interview schedule. The varied and personal nature of the family size and composition meant I had to be open to new directions and themes. The families and individuals were making sense of their place in context of war, post-war and disparate family life, and had to be allowed to express degrees of importance as it applied to them, rather than what was only thematically relevant. This preparation of interview guides still left room for spontaneous responses and topics in what is essentially a phenomenological approach, allowing later reflective analysis (Kvale 1996; Flowerdew and Martin 2005).

Following the interview, a survey was filled out on site when possible. For participants who were suspicious of the formality of this approach, the intermediary helped provide missing details on ages and locations, as they were familiar with the family's history. This survey approach was partially derived from Massey and Zenteno's (2000) ethno-survey methodology which helped enumerate irregular migrant movements between Mexico and the US, as these were not present on any formal census data. As I also wanted to identify causality of out-migration along with motivations and outcomes for migrant family members, I adapted the Mexican Migration Project approach to suit my needs as an informational gathering tool to assess the extent of migration in the family (Massey and Zenteno 2000). An example of a completed survey is provided in the Appendix 2.

3.4 Analysis

The interviews with families were audio recorded. Bilingual interviews in English and Tamil were transcribed into English. Where possible, I translated the Tamil myself, or relied on the intermediary's rephrasing of Tamil into English during the interview. The interview transcripts therefore reflect the gist of what the participant said, rather than transcribed verbatim. All transcriptions, field notes and primary material were analysed using Atlas-Ti.

Open coding was used to extract a range of emic and etic codes from the data. Initial codes were thematic, based on general areas of research enquiry, such as migration methods and strategies, communication during and after war, economic or remittance support. Further codes were developed using grounded methods, enabling implied effects of migration to be extracted and analysed. While patterns for prevalence of codes were considered, the aim of the analysis was to continually assess how the individuals and families were making and remaking their narratives of scattered families, effects of war, and expressions of transnationality. Details on family

"scattering", i.e. residential status in various countries from the survey portion, were collated into spreadsheets and also entered into Atlas-Ti for analysis.

4 MIGRATION EFFECTS IN JAFFNA

As this is a qualitative case study on the effects of migration, there are associated difficulties in establishing validity of the findings, as events and movements of people cannot be independently verified, unless they relate to historically recorded war-related events. Some effects detailed below simply corroborate what has been identified in the literature, such as socio-economic status dictating migration propensity, and the role of social networks in building a critical mass of migration flows. Other effects are entirely emic, and relate to how the participants view the loss of members to migration. Further, as the sample size is very small, findings cannot be generalised to include all Jaffna Tamils. This study can therefore only reveal trends and some migration-related issues from a small sample of primary interviews and field notes. As such, this research has been approached as an exploratory case study, identifying themes and areas that would warrant further study or corroboration through focused empirical research.

The first section summarises the migration strategies the majority of the participants experienced during conflict, war and peacetime. The next sections discuss the extent to which themes uncovered in the literature are supported by the effects of migration in Jaffna, along with identifying new themes that emerged during the course of this project.

4.1 The Sample: Family strategies for migration

The families' experience of migration during and after the conflict appears to have fallen broadly along the following lines, which also have a temporal dimension: (a) an initial small scale migration of their young sons and brothers in danger seeking asylum abroad, gradually moved towards an established system of irregular migration, using agents, transnational family networks and local community funding to overcome prohibitive migration costs; (b) marriage emerged as

a popular migration route for women, as irregular routes were considered too dangerous for young women; (c) a combination of restrictive asylum policies, increasing danger of irregular routes and escalating costs bought a change in strategy to focusing on education and student visas as popular migration routes; (d) post-conflict, economic migration to the Middle East appears to now be a popular destination for the younger cohort. For this last group, permanent settlement outside Jaffna is not an ambition. Each of these strategies will be expanded in this section, along with the historic, social and political contexts that necessitated them. The findings will take a chronological approach, following common narrative structures of the interviews.

(a) Sending Sons and Brothers

All the interviewed families had experienced similar events during the past three decades of conflict and war, which seemed to form a collective narrative. Initially, the participant families were living and working either in Jaffna or Colombo when the 1983 riots occurred. If they lived in Colombo, where anti-Tamil sentiment was expressed violently, they were forcibly displaced to Jaffna by the Government, or returned of their own volition with their families to the relative safety and security of the peninsula. Jaffna was at the time considered a safe haven for Tamils, the historic homeland under protection of the LTTE, especially for those who had ancestral ties to the peninsula. Some contradictions arise in various family narratives: for some, living under LTTE governance had brought a sense of law, order and pride along with a better quality of life as a Tamil. For others, it was a dangerous time, especially if they were politically ambivalent towards the LTTE, but dared not express it. The ambivalence was especially expressed if they had young sons living in the household, as the protection afforded by the LTTE came at a price: young men were forcibly recruited into the LTTE to either fight, or serve in one of the administrative units. Simply being a young Tamil boy would also mean many would disappear

after altercations with the SLA. Family priorities therefore were first focused on getting their sons or brothers out of the country, as revealed by a participant whose parents decided very early in the conflict that the youngest son should be smuggled abroad in order to seek asylum on arrival:

> *"That was the problem age, others were older, and were 23, 22, there was less problem, but if you were young, they would take you. Up to 21 you were in danger, after 22 years no danger. He went by agent. Mother and father decided he should go. […]He went to Swiss as a refugee. He was at the [refugee] camp [in Switzerland] for 7, 8 years. But a cousin brother was there [in Switzerland], so he took him in. Cousin was also a refugee, went in 1984. So he took this brother. Both are now settled there."*

The above participant was in his late twenties during the dangerous and violent 1980s, and was therefore considered out of danger of forced recruitment. In his narrative, already a few key themes are revealed, reinforcing the literature: using an agent to facilitate smuggling out of the country in order to seek asylum and choosing a destination country for asylum based on a family or social network already present there.

The importance of social networks in defining and reinforcing migration echoes Massey's (1990) suggestion that critical levels of network connections formed in familial and social groups then self-perpetuate into migration structures that continually build momentum (Massey 1990). This does appears to be the case in Jaffna, echoed in other parts of Sri Lanka: the early refugees were successful at leaving the country and settling abroad when the conflict was at its worst. These tried and tested routes gained momentum, until many families shared this common experience of using agents and smuggling members abroad: anomalies became the norm, and the growing

social network outside the country helped perpetuate migration. At home, the statement "everybody was sending their sons", echoed by many participants, became an etic belief, and reinforced the perception that families must strategise to make migration a priority.

Methods for enabling this migration were very similar. Agents, usually found by word of mouth, were used to smuggle young boys out of the country to destinations where asylum applications were accepted. This appears to have been much easier in the 1980s, when Colombo became a transit destination before leaving the country. Costs for finding destinations and funding routes through agents increased over time for the families, as seen in patterns elsewhere in the literature: an increasing refugee flow to popular destination countries resulted in attempts at stricter border control, making it more expensive to find irregular routes to countries (Ghosh 1998). Families found it more necessary than ever to rely on social networks abroad to help with the journey and assimilation into the destination (Koser 2010). At home, funding the migration became a preoccupation of all the participant families. One young man was already working in Saudi Arabia during the height of the violence in the 1980s, and was able to fund his brother's escape through his remittances:

> *"My brother left before I got married, when I was [working] in Saudi [in 1987]. My brother left as a refugee through an agent. He had friends, two or three boys who also wanted to go. We gave [the agent] 30,000 or 50,000 rupees to go. This was early, and it was cheap, not many people were going. He went as he already had friends who were in Germany. They had also gone because they were afraid. From both sides problem, LTTE and Army. Here unemployment problem also, and we thought if [he left] he can earn some money. He talked to me about the decision. I sent money [from Saudi] to Colombo, it went through an agent and so I helped my brother to go. In those days if you don't have money you can't go. He did not finish his degree, he just went [to Germany]."*

The above participant returned to Jaffna in 1989, believing the conflict would be almost over. In 1990, after the LTTE took possession of the peninsula, he was "trapped" and was unable to migrate himself as the cost for seeking irregular routes had increased prohibitively. An average cost of 40,000 rupees went up to one or two lakhs (100,000-200,000 rupees)[2]. The participants offered reasons for the increase: by the late 1980s, the trickle of young men being smuggled out had increased to a flow, as "almost everyone was sending their children". By 1990, the LTTE responded to this reduction to their recruitment base by severely restricting movement out of Jaffna: only people who were issued with a special "pass" could leave LTTE controlled areas by road through the Elephant Pass. Smuggling routes therefore became more dangerous, as the first internal border formed by the LTTE needed to be breached first, avoiding clashes en route with the SLA, before seeking an exit from Sri Lanka to a destination country. Destinations were important: Colombo continued to be a rich source of smuggling agents; once a potential migrant had successfully arrived at the capital, relatives and friends would arrange meetings with agents, who would then take responsibility for the rest of the journey to international borders. Increasing agent costs were also directly related to more sophisticated border control of popular destination countries like the UK and Canada. Van Hear's examination of policy responses in Canada point to growing challenges of distinguishing between real asylum seekers escaping the war, and false ones who were seeking asylum but were actually economic migrants (Van Hear 2006). Many participant narratives do corroborate mixed motivations found in the literature: the young men left because they were in danger, but they also left as betterment migrants, seeking economic opportunity abroad. While the majority of the participant narratives revealed migration by irregular routes, there were some cases of brothers and sons having left on employment visas, usually to the Middle East. These family members appear to have settled in Colombo upon

[2] This figure is based on interviews and field notes only, and has not been corroborated independently as no official figures exist for what is essentially an informal process through irregular routes. In 1995, LKR 40,000 was about £450. A lakh was about £1,100.

return from their contact employment in the Gulf, as they could not return to Jaffna until the ceasefire in 2003.

The literature suggests that socio-economic status and class play a role in determining the nature of the flows. Having money to pay for migration was essential: the educated or the middle class are usually the first to migrate from an untenable situation as they have both the means, and can create opportunity to do so (Koser, Van Hear et al. 2003). For this study, the role of class and socio-economic status is less certain, as the sample is too small to generate a conclusion. Most of the participants were of a middle-class background, however not all were able to fund migration of their family members through the family's own resources alone. Three families described using a "chit system" as a way of generating funds. This was essentially community-led sponsorship of migration, where participating families would pay "one or two sovereigns[3]" into a shared fund and hold a lottery or "chit" to select a winner. The winning family would use the money for funding the cost of migration of their son or brother, especially for agent fees. This appears to be unique micro-level response to funding migration, not yet addressed in the literature. While the Tamil diaspora has been active in funding chain migration of members at home (McDowell 1996; Cheran 2004) the role of informally arranged lotteries as a strategy to raise migration funds remains underexplored.

Family strategies also included finding routes to smuggle members out of Jaffna, particularly after the LTTE restricted movement in 1990. There appear to be two main routes used by the participant families: the first was by using ICRC[4] ships, which at the time were delivering medical supplies to the region. The success of this seems to have depended on the social capital

[3] Gold sovereigns weighing about 8 grams each.
[4] International Committee of the Red Cross. During the conflict, many international organisations provided assistance and service to conflict-affected populations in Sri Lanka. The participants appeared to use "ICRC" as shorthand to refer to INGO presence.

and status enjoyed by the family: doctors and their relatives had access to these routes, and could sponsor places on the ships on medical grounds. The second was through acquiring a "pass" or permission from the LTTE to leave the peninsula, usually given on medical grounds, but also in rare exceptions, for promising students from Jaffna University who were given leave to complete their education in another institution in Sri Lanka. One man described how he lied about needing medical treatment for his young son in Colombo in order to procure a pass; once in hand, they stayed hidden in a relative's house in Colombo for six months, arranging for an agent through word of mouth to smuggle the boy out of the country.

(b) Sending Daughters and Sisters

The increased restriction of movement out of the peninsula was coupled with an increase in recruitment of young women into the LTTE, along with men. Irregular routes were considered too dangerous for women; only two of the participant families had sent daughters and sisters through smuggling routes, and they appear to have been accompanied by male relatives. Instead, the more common option was for seeking marriage to emigrant Jaffna men who had by then successfully received asylum in Canada, the UK or Australia. In the participant narratives, the majority of the marriages were arranged through proposals made by the groom's family to the bride's family. The bride's dowry was an important part of the negotiation, as was residence status: one participant noted that their daughter's dowry requirement was waived as she had successfully gained residency status in Canada—a lucrative settlement for the prospective groom, who would be able to emigrate and join her through legal routes. Like the previous strategy of using the "chit" system to help with escalating irregular migration costs of young men, families needed to find new ways of raising funds to pay for a woman's dowry, in order to make a match with a best available groom resident abroad. The effects of migration on a

changing marriage and dowry system are discussed in detail in Section 4.4 below.

(c) The student visa

In 1996, after a protracted battle with the LTTE, the SLA took control of the peninsula; Jaffna came under military occupation. Access in and out of the peninsula was still restricted for the majority of the inhabitants, however one route was still relatively open: that of education. As government-run institutions of schools and hospitals reopened, young Jaffna residents had access to national examinations and higher education opportunities elsewhere in the country. The uncertainty of conflict had not gone away, however the increasing cost of irregular migration, and the difficulty in obtaining sponsorship for regular migration (employment or family reunification visas from countries abroad) meant that other less dangerous migration routes needed to become the focus. This strategy features in the narratives of parents of all cohorts; the importance of education was deeply embedded as an expectation for their children. While some sons and daughters did study in Colombo and Peradeniya, the goal for many parents was to procure student visas for foreign countries where their child had a chance at eventually gaining settlement and citizenship.

For the younger parents who were interviewed, educating and enabling the student visa for their children was a significant investment, and one of the few routes through which they may see a return, as remittance was an expected outcome:

> *"When our son is abroad, he will send money if he earns, that is our culture. Now he's only a student. Everybody is trying to send their children to study abroad, but it depends on the money."*

As before, where investment was made on agents to help smuggle their children out of the peninsula, families once more cited reliance on agents to help procure student visas. Not all were successful, and being cheated out of funds was a very real possibility. One couple had paid an agent for procurement of a student visa for their son, along with admission into a UK college; however only a portion of the money had been paid, and on arrival, their son was forced to work illegally in order to support himself in the UK.

(d) Post-conflict employment destinations

In the family narratives, there have been two periods of relative freedom and mobility: the first was after the ceasefire agreement in 2003, which lasted until violence escalated again in 2006. The second is the current post-war period beginning in 2009, when living and working elsewhere in Sri Lanka has become a possibility. As I was interested in the effects of global migration, I did not focus on translocal migration and employment. However, an interesting trend began to emerge from the narratives of the younger working-age participants: for these participants, many of their siblings had migrated to the Middle East for employment, especially during the ceasefire. Here again, the pull of social networks appears to be strong; one man's brothers had been given jobs by relatives and friends who already worked there. The interesting finding is the desire for non-settlement: their siblings had no intent to seek citizenship and residency elsewhere, and had clearly left for only temporary employment with intent to return to Jaffna. The participants themselves expressed a conflict of feeling: they wanted to continue to live and work in Jaffna, but hearing about how much money could be made elsewhere, especially by siblings working in the Middle East, made living abroad a necessary evil for economic reasons. These aspirations for Middle East migration is only for a small group, however these choices now more closely mirror the labour migration patterns observed in the rest of the country since the 1980s (Korale 1987;

Eelens and Speckmann 1990), suggesting that post-war, the lives and migration aspirations of Jaffna Tamils now more closely resemble those of their fellow citizens in the rest of the country. There also potentially class and generational influences on these decisions, where a lower socio-economic background would enable Middle East employment more easily than in for example the UK. Age could also be an issue, as the participants in their thirties said they were considering working in the Gulf countries themselves. Older participants were still focussed on sending their children to study and settle abroad in OECD countries.

The rest of this dissertation will review emerging emic themes and findings from the interview material, using the above migration strategies and flows as reference.

4.2 Changing family life

Migration of family members during wartime undeniably changed life at home for the Jaffna residents, who had to deal with emotional issues of forced separation, difficulties in communication with migrant members, and a changing composition of the household that had lost its young, potentially economically active members. Living in isolation during war meant many participants had no access to transnational social spaces inhabited by their emigrant members. Economic uncertainty is a consequence of this, which will be addressed in the following section. Post-war, migration has brought new challenges, especially as members at home now encounter transnational life first hand and are required to participate in it. Strategies for sustaining the family unit during and after wartime included ensuring mobility (both internal and international), resolving issues of access by retaining multiple legal identities, and expectations of continuing migration, all of which are creating on going tensions.

Some participant parents who strategized sending their children abroad by irregular means in the late eighties and nineties suffered considerable emotional distress once the children left, as they had no easy way of communicating with them to ensure that they had reached their destination safely. Likewise, migrant members had no way of knowing if their non-migrant relatives were still safe and alive in the region. The peninsula suffered intermittent phone service beginning in the 1980s; eventually both the LTTE and the military prohibited service or destroyed phone lines in conflict areas, eliminating service completely by 1990. Most families could not talk to relatives elsewhere in Sri Lanka, let alone countries abroad. In communication terms, Jaffna was completely isolated with little or no media presence; foreign journalists had no access to the region, and local newspapers like *Uthayan* had difficulties in reporting about incidents in Jaffna without coming under severe attack by both the LTTE and the SLA. For families, news of the outside world filtered through on smuggled radios, whose usage was rationed as batteries were contraband and could be confiscated. Communication with sons, daughters and siblings took place by post, which often took up to six months to reach international destinations—if letters got past the censors of the LTTE and the SLA.

The communication and mobility restrictions meant that non-migrant members participated in transnational social spaces in extremely limited ways during most of the conflict. Major life events like marriage, births and deaths were missed entirely. It also appears that for the participants, transnational family life expanded to include entire communities that began functioning as large family units, supporting its members: participants spoke of relying on relations and friends living abroad (most of them emigrants themselves) to bring up their children and play a parental role.

There were two opportunities for communication and reunion, the first during the ceasefire era of 2003-2006, and the current post-war era from 2009. For most of the participants, this was the first time they experienced how their emigrant members were surviving in the by now vast social network abroad of kith and kin. A few families said they had access to mobiles or commercial phones in shops that had connections, and were able to hear relatives' voices after years. The ceasefire also meant residents could leave Jaffna, and family reunions began taking place. Many emigrant members could not return to Sri Lanka as they had gained refugee status, so India, particularly the Tamil city of Chennai, became the location for many such reunions. For one man's family, it was the first time they heard details about a brother's journey:

> *"He [brother] came to India in 2003, after 8 years, we had not seen him for 8 years. He was a boy when he left, and he was grown up…That time, he told me how he went to London, very difficult, by container at night time he passed that border, from Belgium or to UK…very military there also…I think he gave some money to the military, and he went. That's the first time I heard how he went."*

I was interested in discussing how these encounters changed their notions of identity and the maintenance of Jaffna culture abroad. After all, many of the participants' relatives were no longer Sri Lankan, but were naturalised citizens of other countries. One female participant had not left Jaffna during the conflict. During the ceasefire when she finally met her emigrant family, she was part of a network which included five children living in the UK, Canada, Germany and France. She had siblings who had settled abroad in Australia with their children, and cousins in Switzerland. For the first time, she was hearing detailed stories about what life abroad was like, and was being invited to come experience it for herself. Encounters with new cultures inhabited by emigrant members were sometimes reduced to what was brought back during reunions and visits: clothes, food, chocolate and electronics, all symbols of a life lived elsewhere. For

participants in turn, reinforcing Jaffna culture was reduced to the materiality of sending family heirlooms and tonics, special items required in birth ceremonies, and jewellery for weddings. Regional, cultural and familial identity seemed to be constant negotiations in these new transnational networks, along with discussions on settlement and where to live, which appeared to cause new tensions and expectations. These tensions seem to exist primarily because of government policy, which still restricts access to the Jaffna peninsula.

The Ministry of Defence require all foreigners to apply for special permission to enter Jaffna, for security reasons; this policy is still in existence at the time of writing. Some participants said this was like "needing another visa within your own country" – many relations with foreign passports had been denied permission to enter Jaffna, so meetings and reunions needed to take place either elsewhere in Sri Lanka, or, increasingly, residents in Jaffna were making plans to go abroad for visits. The situation was therefore reversed from that of wartime: now the transnational emigrant had limited participation in the "home" community, and those at "home" now needed to become transnational in order to sustain family life.

A few participants spoke of how their families were resolving access issues by simply retaining a controversial symbol of identity: the National Identity Card (NIC). The NIC was introduced in 1972, and was mandatory for all citizens over the age of 16. The card recorded generic bio data, and also noted the card holder's place of birth. This, along with the distinctiveness of Tamil and Sinhalese names, allowed holders to be immediately identifiable by ethnicity and natal or regional affiliation: Jaffna Tamils were therefore restricted by the document to their peninsula during the war. However after the war, visiting foreign citizens could simply show their NICs (if they had kept them) at the Jaffna checkpoint, and be allowed admission as they were simply seen to be returning home. One participant, who now increasingly inhabited transnational spaces

herself, cited the importance of this:

> *"I have Canadian residency …If you have the Sri Lankan identity card, NIC, you can come from Colombo, without applying for this MOD*[5] *and all those things, you can just…for that convenience people have it."*

There is an element of duplicity in this, as the emigrants who show the card are not meant to be in legal possession of it, however, the participants questioned the need for the MoD restriction in the first place, and saw this as a completely practical response to an impractical political restriction. Emigrants visiting Jaffna after years abroad had to be careful with dress and suspicious luggage, so as not to attract attention as an obvious foreign returnee and be asked to show passports at the checkpoint. This reliance on the NIC card for proving identity is a stark contrast to behaviour during the war: Hyndman and de Alwis (2004) review the performance of identity in relation to mobility and security in Sri Lanka where Tamils had intentionally not carried the NIC, and removed cultural markers like the *pottu*[6] in order to "pass" as Sinhalese and avoid harassment. Orjuela (2008) notes that as this is an identity based conflict where identity is mobilised and politicised, negotiating multiple identities, especially of citizenship and residential status at home and abroad is essential for the diaspora to foster continued engagement. Except for these few members who have found a way around the system, many faced significant challenges in holding legal identities (foreign citizenship) that prevented their return "home".

These challenges around returning to Jaffna mean that families are now finding it easier to sponsor Jaffna residents to go abroad, rather than for emigrants to return. For the participants, this meant they were now at the receiving end of strategies and pressures to migrate post-war in order to preserve the family unit and play their roles in it. A need to assume a transnational life

[5] Refers to the special entry permission to Jaffna, issued by the Ministry of Defence.
[6] Red vermillion dot on the forehead worn by Hindus.

was seen as a fulfilment of duty to family: one woman had not wanted to leave Jaffna, but was spending increasing amounts of time abroad in the UK and Canada to help care for her grandchildren. Her children had sponsored her, and were hoping she would settle abroad with them. These pressures were especially strong on the older cohort; these participants said their relations had no intentions of returning permanently to Jaffna, as they were embedded in their new lives elsewhere. Joining them, even temporarily, created new problems with needing to leave property lying vacant; Section 4.4 discusses this issue in detail. The need to care for property in Jaffna appeared to be a major reason for non-migration among the participants. Settlement abroad, especially for the older participants, was also untenable because of cold weather and the perception that their relatives lived a "machine life", full of economic hardship. For the older members, transnational life brought few benefits:

> *"For them it is like prison life. If the elders go abroad, it is like they can't go out, it is not nice. Here you can go anywhere, it is free. Our relations have told us about life abroad like that. It is not a nice life, they all want to come back, the elders. One neighbour has five sons abroad, and she only wants to go to visit them, not to stay. She has a pension, and can stay here, her husband had a government job."*

The irony here is that the participants' experience of transnational life had revealed it to be a hard one, harder than their relative imprisonment in the peninsula during times of war. Non-migration was preferable, however the care needs associated with ageing and dependency, and the expectation that emigrants would not return, mean migration may continue to occur outwards. Baldassar's (2007) study of transnational Italian migrants highlights the importance of giving and receiving care for the elderly as central to the migration discourse: constructing an ideal family life is usually situated around cultural obligations towards caring for older parents in personal, financial and emotional ways. This certainly appears to be deeply embedded in Tamil

families, where obligations for care are seen to be successful if children can provide personal care for parents; fulfilling these obligations are creating new tensions for residents at "home" who are ambivalent towards needing to live in a foreign country, and are yet equally ambivalent about what remaining at home means for dependency, not just for personal care, but also financially.

4.3 Economic reliance: remittances and expectations

Economic affluence, as stated in migration literature, is an important predictor of migration propensity, as migrants and families are better equipped to fund migration routes (Van Hear 2006). This is corroborated by the sample; the families could all be classified as middle class and were well educated, with many holding university degrees. Some had been affluent before the war, but were now in what one man called "reduced circumstances". Understandably, there was discomfort in candidly discussing incomes, money and remittances, however participants made reference to how they survived economically during the war, and made allusions to expectations in a post-war environment.

The economic relief brought by remittance appears to have been important during the war, as some participants faced significant economic pressure and erosion of wealth. Besides the cost of funding migration routes, there were other considerations: paying "tax" and bribes to the LTTE, bribing the Army to avoid persecution, bribing people to obtain passes to leave the peninsula and paying black market prices for contraband items like torches and batteries and sometimes even food. Families were also temporarily displaced from their households during the conflict, and would find possessions looted upon return. Fixing property also needed money. Getting extra help from abroad made the difference between whether large household expenses could be met or not.

One participant family did allude to using *undiyal*, as a way of not just paying off the LTTE, but also in using the system as a bank, as during the conflict, regular banks and money transfers simply closed down. The LTTE provided families with a monetary infrastructure where relatives abroad could deposit money with an agent, who could transfer it to the LTTE agents in Jaffna; after taking a cut, the family would use the money to pay for expenses, or, in the case of one family, an agent to help smuggle a brother out of the country. Using the system carried its own dangers: if too much money was seen to be coming in for one family, it would be taken away, or the family would be a target for people desperate to steal or loot money. Using this system was described as a last resort: a more reliable, but less frequent method was to rely on a relative who had a "pass" to go to Colombo, where money sent from abroad could be withdrawn from a bank and smuggled back into Jaffna. Other methods were used to raise funds: one participant sold almost all her gold wedding jewellery at a cheap price to the LTTE in order to finance the migration of a daughter and son. The participant families found access to capital, which in turn helped with cashflow to fund migration.

Employment was another source of capital, and one that was surprisingly reliable despite the situation in the peninsula. The type of job mattered: many participants had been employed by the government or civil service, as teachers, medical workers or administrators. Unfortunately I was not able to assess the nature of this employment, and whether they worked in the civil service during the LTTE occupation; however what was clear was that having a "government job" was considered a symbol of status and class, as well as a source of guaranteed income, especially as it brought a pension during retirement. The lucrative jobs they held appear to be an important predictor of non-migration, as having an income during uncertain times of civil war enabled them to survive economically, and instead prioritise the sending of those members who didn't

have government jobs. Pensions featured as income sources not just for the retired cohort, but also for younger participants. This man was the only remaining sibling in his family in Jaffna:

> *"I will never go. Jaffna is home, and we can manage here. My father worked in the government and my mother gets the pension, so we can manage with that for finance."*

Another participant was describing why his daughters left the country: one had remained behind, as she worked as a doctor in a public hospital. "The others didn't get government jobs, so they went." Reliance on the government as a source of employment and pension creates an interesting political tension. They were economically dependent on a system that the separatist movement was fighting against to begin with. The dynamics of this weren't adequately addressed by my research material, but is potentially a future area for research to determine how a contrary political ideology was allowed to co-exist alongside the need for secure employment from the same government.

Post-conflict, when the participants were able to build new economic relationships with transnational members, the new opportunity was met with surprising ambivalence. Remittance reliance appeared to be quite low: not many emigrant members were sending money home, and participants weren't expecting it or requiring it. Existing class and socio-economic status certainly play a role in this, but it does contradict the literature that suggests non-migrants during conflict are often the poorest (Van Hear 2000). As Jaffna also comprises an elderly cohort, the expectation of financial care should in theory generate an increase in economic flows to support potentially vulnerable members left behind (Baldassar 2007). The sample suggests the opposite: that first that economic reliance from abroad was not required, and second, that it was not sought. An overwhelming belief, even among the poorer participants, was that their relations abroad lived hard lives, and that members abroad had more use for money than they did. The

older participants particularly, voiced this belief, like this retired woman:

> *"I don't want to depend on anybody. I don't want to get money from my children. I know how hard they work…So why be a burden to them."*

The idea that life abroad was economically hard and difficult for emigrant members was also present in narratives of the younger participants, who had siblings settled abroad. A young man expressed ambivalence towards going abroad to work for money. While the potential earning power was better than what he had in Jaffna, the jobs his siblings had were of much lower status, and status was equally important to him.

There was only one instance of post-conflict remittance that a family was willing to discuss: a man and his wife were bringing up a sister's child, as she had gone abroad to work in the Middle East. The participant was one of the youngest I interviewed, and his narrative relates to the fourth major migration flow that could be occurring from the region: that of economic migration. For this group, remittances were sent back for a specific reason, to support the education and upbringing of a child. This could point to new trends identified in labour migration literature, where new family structures form in order to enable migration flows, most notably in the Philippines (Boyd 1989; Tyner 2002). Economic migration and its effects are already the subject of inquiry for Sri Lanka; assessing the extent to which Jaffna is now following these trends would require further study.

4.4 Changing practices: marriage, dowry and property

Family and community life in Jaffna must take *Thesawalamai* or personal law into consideration, as it dictates rules for property ownership and inheritance rights, including marriage or dowry. It

is an ancient system that applies only to Sri Lankan Tamils native to the Northern Province and is still in use today (Tambiah 2001). As it covers the dispensation of personally owned items like property, it exists simultaneously alongside national law which governs the rest of the country. Participants made references to *Thesawalamai* in statements like "this is our way, our laws" to express identity as a particularly Jaffna Tamil customary way of life. Migration appears to be changing the way in which families are negotiating these laws, as pressures on marriage and property ownership are creating new unresolved tensions.

Marriage in Jaffna used to be conducted in strict accordance with caste and class rules, with marriage typically proposed by the groom's family, and upon acceptance, a dowry paid by the bride's family. Traditionally, dowry came in the form of a marital home and property provided for the new couple by the bride's parents. Due to the conflict and consequent migration of the marriageable cohort, traditional proposals between families in adjoining villages could no longer be made. As finding routes to send their children abroad was a top priority for many parents, matchmaking in many cases occurred internationally to allow further migration, and also because increasingly, suitable brides and grooms were only found abroad, as seen from this man's observation:

> *"Still people are going, going, going you know. Boys from Europe…they come and get married to girls here, so one young girl goes, then still girls are also coming, from Europe and other things, they come and get married, and so they are taking away all our young crowd. And major portion of our young generation have been killed in the fights. So the young generation is missing."*

Ethnic pride and the decades of harbouring emotions of separatism meant that Tamils native to Jaffna only wish to marry other Jaffna Tamils of their own caste, regardless of their country of

residence. The following quote by a middle-aged man expresses some of these desires:

> *"My brother went to Swiss as a refugee…Married a Jaffna girl. We sent a girl from here. Our family made the proposal as he had wanted a Jaffna girl. He also sends money home to support for our sister's dowry. Here we have to give dowry for our sisters…If you work abroad… some parents ask. Mostly for foreign working boys."*

The quote above echoes two expectations: that marrying a "Jaffna girl" or a "Jaffna boy" are exceedingly important. The second expectation is that of dowry needing to be arranged, especially for "foreign working boys" – this refers to earning enough money to pay for a female relative's dowry, as well as expecting a dowry upon marriage if you were a man and had a lucrative residential status abroad. In both cases, living and working abroad appears to have changed dowry expectations as the perceived economic value of a foreign salary would translate into economic benefits gained by the bride upon marriage.

The expectation of marrying within the community is not unique to Jaffna, and is reinforced by migration literature assessing transnational marriage practices among ethnic groups, particularly among South Asians. Beck-Gernsheim (2007) notes that obligations to kin and a desire to perpetuate migration routes make marriage an important strategy for non-European migrants negotiating prosperity gaps between their home and host societies. Marriage is an important means of producing and transforming transnational networks (Charsley and Shaw 2006) and is especially important in fostering a sense of cultural difference in the host country where transnational living may weaken ties to religion, culture and expressed forms of social capital (Shaw 2006). Marriage in most South Asian cases reclaims cultural identity. In Jaffna's case, where there is a political identity to be maintained as well, these trends become an important way to express transnationality while still retaining ties to home.

As noted previously, marriage was an important route in arranging a daughter's security – in finding a partner as well as finding a legal migration route out of the country to live. Successful matches for daughters were becoming difficult to make: two participants, who had daughters of marriageable age, talked about the dearth of suitable grooms, and the increasing costs of dowry. According to the *Thesawalamai*, dowry land is apportioned on matrilineal or matrilocal lines, so that the new couple's marital home could be located near the bride's parents and village. However in a transnational context, where ideas of return and resettlement in Jaffna are no longer popular considerations, dowry in the form of land is no longer useful. The increasing dowry costs appear to be a direct result of market forces and a skewed sex ratio: there are more brides in supply than grooms, and finding a suitable groom means making a match with a "foreign working boy" who is able to pick and choose from a variety of lucrative dowry offers. In order to offer a competitive dowry, family finances needed to be heavily invested in making these matches, with remittances from other migrant relatives contributing to the cost. In the literature, issues of demand and supply along with the effect of remittances have had different effects in India and Bangladesh—other countries that still follow versions of the dowry system. In rural Bangladesh, overseas migration and remittances led to a reduction in the practice of dowry, seen as a socially progressive route towards promoting gender equality (Hadi 2001). In the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, however, dowry costs among educated IT professionals began increasing, for similar reasons found in Jaffna (Biao 2005).

Throughout the conflict, the twin pressures of war and migration meant that conducting the weddings also occurred within a transnational context. Three of the participant parents who had funded their children's migration, could not attend the weddings of their children overseas, due to mobility restrictions. They met their respective son- or daughter-in-laws only after the end of

the war, sometimes with grandchildren in tow. In one narrative, a wedding appears to have been a completely transnational affair: the bride and groom in the UK and Canada were matched by a relative living in the UK, who worked through the Jaffna Tamil social networks of family and kinship links in order to make the arrangements. Once the match was agreed, trips were planned by relatives and friends to India for purchasing the *sarees*[7] and bridal trousseau, and to Singapore for the gold jewellery. The wedding was then conducted in the UK. The parents, who could not attend due to Jaffna's travel restrictions, spoke of receiving the photos in the post months later, through a relative acting as a courier from Colombo. Another family received photos of their son's wedding through the regular post, which they gratefully stated had passed through the censors into Jaffna. There were obvious emotional issues expressed by not being able to participate in the actual wedding, but the parents were able to send small heirlooms, smuggled out of Jaffna with relatives who had passes, using the materiality of this contribution as a proxy for their attendance.

An intriguing consequence of the increasing dowry costs is that in turn, further economic migration is required as a strategy to help pay for it: one interviewed man was considering leaving his wife and child behind in Jaffna, to take a job in the Middle East for a couple of years to raise funds for his sister's dowry. It is interesting to note that this potentially economically crippling activity appears to be gaining a new found resurgence in Jaffna, even in a post-war environment. Analysing this potential effect would require further study; the sample size in this study is too small to offer conclusions.

Besides the cost of dowries, property ownership itself was articulated as another growing worry by some participants, as marriage as a route for distributing property was no longer popular.

[7] A saree is a traditional garment worn by women.

About 85% of the participants were from Jaffna's landowning caste. This was partly due to the nature of the snowball sample: the strict hierarchy of the social structure meant that introductions and recommendations for participants mainly occurred within this group. Observations on property therefore may not relate to other caste or socio-economic groups although some etic observations suggest that many families in Jaffna face similar issues; property ownership is common across all castes. Ownership of land appears closely linked to Jaffna pride and identity, as it is tied to a physical manifestation of ancestral roots in the "homeland". One woman was living in her marital home, which had been provided by her family as dowry. She had in turn gifted it as dowry for her daughter, who had left as a refugee in the 1980s and was now a married Canadian citizen, harbouring no intentions to return:

> *"I have given the house to the eldest daughter for her dowry. If I spend money, she says 'I don't want this house. If you want, you spend, but I won't give you [money]'. That's the problem. I don't know what she will do with this house, she doesn't want to come back. After we die she'll might give it to somebody or she might sell, I don't know. Till we are alive, we will live here. Now it is my house, but I don't know what will happen."*

This woman's experience was echoed by other participants, who were caught between investing in houses and properties in Jaffna (many of which had been damaged during the conflict), but were simultaneously aware of the futility of doing so, as their relatives would not be returning to live in it. Thiranagama's (2007) observation of homeland ideals for the Tamils captures this ambivalence: "The paradoxical effect of the fight for a Tamil homeland has been the constant stream of Tamils attempting to leave that 'homeland'." (Thiranagama 2007). A major consequence of migration for the participant families, is that they have been left land rich and cash poor. They also faced limited prospects for raising capital by selling the land as culturally and emotionally, it is considered a prohibited act.

Land carries connotations not just of wealth and status, but also the idea that Jaffna land must belong only to Tamils. This is a difficult and potentially untenable situation, as the exodus of migrants and potential inheritors of property mean many houses remain unoccupied and unsold: vacant houses are a very visible part of the Jaffna landscape. Many of the participants had taken on caretaker roles for relatives living abroad; some had been instructed to only rent to Tamils, and to not sell the property. There is a need and a desire to hold on to the land to prevent either the government or Sinhalese civilians from moving into Jaffna and further disenfranchising native Jaffna Tamils. Migration out of the peninsula is making this a difficult position to maintain, both politically and economically.

While changing marriage practices can have long term effects on the community, further longitudinal studies will need to be made to assess whether the dowry system continues to be reinforced post-war, or if the practice will be eliminated completely. The effects of migration on property ownership can also only be assessed in a longitudinal study, however it may evolve into a more immediate political issue, if the government begins to prohibit land ownership by non Sri Lankan domiciles. Emigrants may then lose rights to their properties in Jaffna; families may need to evolve new strategies to maintain ownership, which may continue to be a challenge in an ageing population. It would be interesting to study further effects on Jaffna, as it moves from being a culturally isolated region to one that deeply encounters first hand, the transnational identities of its growing diaspora.

5 CONCLUSION

This dissertation provides an initial case study of the effects of migration on family members in Jaffna, in context of conflict and war. The original aims of this investigation were to identify family strategies for migration and assess participants' roles in seeking and enabling migration routes. In doing so, I attempted to relate findings in existing migration literature to gain a comparative view of the families' experience in Jaffna. Further, significant migration flows from the region have created a strong transnational diaspora; this dissertation also reviewed the extent to which non-migrant members were able to participate in these new transnational social spaces during and after the conflict. In particular, I assess ways in which non-migrant residents faced limited participation due to the conflict and isolation of the Jaffna peninsula, and ways in which subsequent membership to transnational life created emerging tensions at home. I identify issues involving transnational family expectations, economic reliance, and strategies for enabling mobility as ways of expressing transnationality and sustaining ideas of a cohesive family unit.

The first finding was that initial migration strategies for the Jaffna families followed patterns already established in the empirical literature. The effects of migration in Jaffna have seen an exodus of a certain demographic, leaving an unevenly distributed population structure in the peninsula. Migration propensities were greatest for young men at the beginning of the conflict, who left through irregular routes to seek asylum in other countries. Over time, young women sought marriage as a popular route to emigration. As supported by the literature, the growing transnational social networks in the diaspora enabled these routes, however for the home community, investing in these routes had a significant financial impact. The findings have a temporal aspect, as new migration strategies and routes appear to be emerging in a post-conflict environment, such as the student visa and labour migration.

The second finding focused on ways that migration and subsequent depopulation of a key working cohort changed family life. Communication difficulties during the war meant non-migrant members had limited participation in transnational social spaces. Social networks abroad took on parenting roles, including educating children and conducting weddings. At home, new tensions emerged due to an ageing population with few remaining members able to provide support and care; emigration of an older cohort was seen as an option, however that created the new problem of caretaking of vacant property.

The third finding focused on the economic effects of migration on non-migrant family members. Migration appears to have left the studied families land rich but cash poor, where family finances were eroded by the need to fund and facilitate migration. Paying agents and funding irregular routes, financing study abroad and offering dowries have all contributed to the erosion, as has the reality of living in a conflict zone where bribes had to be made in order to secure mobility and create those opportunities for migration. These effects appear to be offset by remittance, especially in the case of funding dowries, however the extent of this will not be known without further study of a larger sample.

The fourth finding was on changing marriage practices: families that prioritised marriage as a migration route for their female members, faced increasing dowry costs due to the low supply of eligible men, and a simultaneous desire to marry only within the community. Migration was both the cause and consequence of these escalating costs: further economic migration is potentially needed in order to finance increasingly expensive dowries. Linked to this is the issue of property, which may no longer be considered an acceptable form of dowry, as ownership is not beneficial to emigrant couples intending to settle abroad.

Several limitations to this case study exist: the current study has only examined qualitative material from a few families living in the peninsula; the extent to which these issues are prevalent across a majority of the population is unknown, and would warrant further study. Particularly, the role of dowry and the changing marriage market would require a deeper examination of the role of class, caste and socio-economic background in reinforcing these practices, as the sample size was too small to construct strong class-based comparisons or conclusions regarding these effects.

A deeper enquiry into how the emic family unit participates in transnational spaces would involve studying migrants and non-migrants together, which did not occur in this study. This approach is particularly relevant in assessing transnational approaches to elderly care and marriages within the diaspora. In relation to marriage, a preference for Jaffna-born brides and grooms may change over time as the diaspora inhabit transnational spaces over decades; marriage to members outside the community may become more common in second and third generations, changing community practices and attitudes towards maintaining Jaffna identity through marriage. Further, Faist and Ozveren's (2004) examination of Turkish migrants found gender based responses to marriage within a patriarchal system; a study of practices in the diaspora could assess the extent to which marriage within the community is reinforced in successive generations of migrants. The sample size again limits knowledge of how different socio-economic groups create their marital expectations.

The findings carry some implications for policy in host countries. Enabling migration of young members is still high on the list of priorities for the interviewed families, with student visas being a favoured route, along with employment in the Middle East. The labour migration is a

temporary option, as for these migrants settlement is not an aspiration, nor an option allowed by Middle Eastern countries. However, the student visa is being pursued as a popular route towards eventual employment, settlement and citizenship abroad. If further study finds this to be prevalent among most Jaffna residents, this has implications on receiving countries and their corresponding policies. The UK remains a popular destination, however recent policy to reduce Tier 4 (student visa) numbers by 25% by 2012, as well as calls for closure of the Post-Study Work Route (PSWR) mean this may no longer be a viable destination for settlement aspirations, and migration strategies will need to change. For the Sri Lankan Government, already facing an issue with brain drain from other communities, further erosion of an educated cohort may prevent or slow down economic recovery in Jaffna.

New political tensions could emerge as a result of migration, especially with regards to property. Depopulation due to migration has left many properties standing empty, under the care of non-migrant relatives, many of them elderly. As migrants settled abroad have little desire for return, unoccupied land could become a political issue, especially if the government takes a proactive role in reassigning land, encouraging settlement of non-Tamils, or requiring landowners to be Sri Lankan domiciles, stripping emigrants of their ownership rights. This could politicise the diaspora to once more encourage separatism of the region, leading to a resurgence of conflict. Land takes a central role in defining the identity of the region and notions of the homeland could be challenged by changing property rights.

I have intentionally not discussed and analysed the role of current government policy on creating structural reasons for enabling migration, in order to avoid politicising this research. I am also limited by word count; these issues would require a more comprehensive analysis of cause and effect than what this dissertation is able to provide.

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INITIAL PROPOSAL

Working Title: Scattered families and uncertain households. Migration prospects in a post-conflict environment: a study of Sri Lankan Tamil households

Aims and Objectives of the Research:

The main aim of this research is to assess migration determinants among Tamil families in Jaffna in post-conflict Sri Lanka. To achieve this, this research will use qualitative methods to identify the impact of diasporic familial networks on household dynamics and survival strategies of the family members "left behind".

There are a number of research areas that can be addressed by this project:

- Household survival and remittances
- Micro-level consequences of conflict and post-conflict rebuilding
- Post-conflict return of family members, or emigration expectations
- Labour migration prospects (based on New Economics of Labour Migration)
- Impact of political diasporas and strong social networks abroad

Background and Relevant Literature:

Sri Lanka has experienced two major streams of global migration over the past three decades, roughly along a North/South divide: (a) economic migration of a predominantly Sinhalese population from the South, usually to the Middle East for employment as domestic workers (b) regular and irregular migration of Tamil Sri Lankans from the North, following three decades of civil conflict and war. The first migration flow is well documented in academic and policy-driven literature, as a significant proportion of the nation's GDP is supported by remittances from these flows. Labour and employment policy have specifically catered to engaging, encouraging, and harnessing the economic protection of this type of economic migration, along with the resultant social effects on any demographic imbalances.

The second flow, relating to the "exodus" of Sri Lankan Tamils from the North has been examined in migration literature mainly from a refugee/human rights perspective. Even here, remittances play a large role, as the LTTE's militancy was largely funded by this growing diaspora that comprised refugees, irregular migrants and economic migrants. The Tamil diaspora outside the country continues to be strongly political and influential in gaining Western

media attention on the situation of marginalised Tamils in Sri Lanka. Many members have resided abroad for almost three decades, and are firmly established in their host countries. However, the end of the civil conflict and dismantling of the separatist movement has left remaining Tamil populations in Sri Lanka in an interesting position: do they stay and take their chances with a tenuous peacetime, or do they seek to join their now large and prosperous family and social networks based abroad? Or do they instead push for family members to return home?

Anna Lindley's exploration of conflict-based migration provides an important conceptual tool in assessing how family that is "left behind" responds and reacts in relation to the members that left, especially in correcting income disparities over time, and negotiating trade-off between remittance versus reunification (Lindley: 2008). Some of those ideas will inform the analysis of this research. Massey's research into Mexican Americans suggests that the pull of social networks and family abroad is a strong one, especially if the home environment is still poverty stricken and underdeveloped, as is the case in Sri Lanka. This suggests that with increased freedom of movement, a propensity for emigration might occur for Sri Lankan Tamils to reunite with family abroad rather than seeking return migration of the diaspora.

Research Questions:

This research intends to gather primary qualitative data and secondary quantitative data to assess causes, motivations and behaviours governing migration propensity for Sri Lankan Tamil families located in a post-conflict zone. In households where the majority of family members are resident abroad, the household dynamics are expected to change in this new post-conflict environment. Specifically, the following answers are sought:

(a) How strong is the pull of family and social networks based abroad? Does having a majority of family members based abroad change migration prospects and intentions? Despite the end of the war, will family members still seek to leave (through regular or irregular routes)? Which members are likely to want to leave and why?
(b) How do households and family members identify their current economic prospects during peacetime? Does this corroborate or contradict government plans for post-conflict development?
(c) Do any of the households use migration as a strategy for economic survival? Are any reliant on remittances? What are the effects and dynamics of this? Has this behaviour changed during and after the end of the civil war?

Family members may be lost not just due to migration, but also due to conflict-related deaths. This in turn may affect propensities to leave the country (i.e. site of conflict) to join members abroad.

Methods and Methodologies:

Primary Research:

The primary research will be conducted in the city of Jaffna which serves as the capital of the Northern (Tamil) territory. The region is also a nexus of migration due to its proximity to India. The research will comprise of semi-structured interviews conducted with members of 10-15 households. Snowball sampling will be used to identify the households. These will be targeted and recruited by leveraging existing social networks in London and other parts of Sri Lanka.

Defining parameters:

Identifying what constitutes a "household". In this case, a household will refer to one property (either owned or rented) comprising at least two members. A mix of ages and genders will be sought per household.

Family members based abroad: the main commonality sought is that for these households, a majority of family members should reside abroad. Family members here refer to nuclear members as a first tier, and a second tier of partially extended family that constitute a familial network (aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces).

Household composition: all households should have at least one working-age member and at least one dependent (either young or elderly).

Socio-economic profile: ranging from low to middle-income families.

Secondary Research:

Analysis of Government issued census data to evaluate demographic gendered profiles of Jaffna residents, unemployment rates, resettlement rates of IDPs and age.

Data from International Organisations providing estimates of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora.

Timetable:

Meetings with assigned Supervisor: mid to end March

Literature Review: mid-March to mid-April

Planning and logistics, including budget, accommodation, paperwork and permissions: mid March - end April

Survey design and detailed methodology: April 15th - May 1st

Oral presentation: first week of May

Secondary data: gaining access, permissions and analysis: April 15 - May 15

Field work in Colombo/Jaffna: end May - June

Analysis and write up: July - mid-August

First draft to Supervisor: mid-August

Final dissertation submission: mid-September

Outcomes, rationale and value of the research:

The majority of research available focuses on migrants' experiences, with much less attention paid to impacts on households and members left behind. If successful, the questions answered through this research can contribute to literature on post-conflict behaviour of households with scattered members, diasporic social networks, and the impacts this has on continuing migration prospects. Sri Lanka is situated in a unique historical moment where post-conflict rebuilding could be successful, or deepen divides that lead yet again to civil conflict. Besides the role of the Government in peace-building, a lot depends on the actions and behaviour of Tamil households and families currently living in post-conflict areas. An increase in emigration, chain migration or return migration of diasporic family members could tip the balance in either direction, both demographically, as well as politically. An insight into motivations and experiences of some households can help assess these varying impacts of migration in post-conflict Sri Lanka.

Risks and Issues

The primary research method is to conduct semi-structured interviews with households and families based in Jaffna. To do this, a number of logistical challenges must be overcome: getting permission from the government for conducting research, finding a guide or research partner in Jaffna, finding accommodation and translating and obtaining transcripts of interviews. While Jaffna has been accessible to tourists since late 2009, it is not yet clear if visitors for research purposes need special permission or visas--I am in the process of confirming this. Gaining access to families to interview may be less of a challenge, as I've found contacts who are willing to put

me in touch with social networks and families in Jaffna that I can interview. Even so, constructing a good sample may be risky as I am relying on a snowball method, where some families may fit the profile better than others.

As this is the first time I am conducting interview-based research, I may under or over-estimate the amount of time required to obtain good quality source material for analysis. I can mitigate this by forging links with universities based in Sri Lanka, or NGOs that may be able to help with translating and transcribing interview material. Conducting standardised surveys would have been an easier method of obtaining data without the need for translation, however the richness of qualitative data obtained would be lost, which would be valuable especially as I am dealing with a small sample size.

I intend to begin this project early, so if any of these risks threaten to derail timings, I will still have time to conduct research for a "Plan B". This alternative project would focus on looking at remittance behaviour and return-migration propensities for Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora based in London (for both forced and economic migrants) and how they continue to interact with family members in Northern Sri Lanka during peacetime.

AUTO-CRITIQUE

At the start of the project, I knew that I wanted to locate the research geographically in Jaffna. Frequent visits to Sri Lanka would always bring up the "Tamil issue", and Jaffna loomed large in narratives about the island and its political future particularly because it was inaccessible. Although I am Tamil myself, I am of Indian origin, and have lived outside the subcontinent for most of my life. Sri Lankan Tamil issues, with their identity politics and separatist violence seemed worlds away, both politically and personally. However, it was obvious that migration of Tamils due to the conflict was a very real and continuing phenomenon. Migration effects on home communities, especially isolated ones like Jaffna, are still a relatively untold story, and I began this project simply because I was curious.

Finding a research focus adequately grounded in literature was difficult, as I was unsure of what kind of primary material I would be able to gather in the peninsula, and therefore how the literature could support findings. Ultimately, I chose to construct a case-study, as the findings, especially for migration strategies, marriage, and dowry, was very specific to how Jaffna residents were responding; a case study seemed the most appropriate format for presenting this. In retrospect, my original aims were very ambitious, touching upon multiple areas of inquiry. This may have been a stronger dissertation if I had focussed on just one issue (migration effects on marriage, for example) and delved deeply into how this related to existing literature on transnational marriage and gender/demographic issues in times of conflict. However, I needed to do this project to uncover such questions in the first place. The lesson for me therefore is on learning first-hand how derivative the literature is, and how primary exposure to a human situation may take you in completely new, unanticipated directions.

Part of my reasons for choosing to go to Jaffna was to simply experience the "doing" of research, especially fieldwork, in an area of a foreign country that was new to me and far out of my comfort zone. I found this the most enjoyable part of the project, as the skills I used were no different to how I function as a professional project manager. Finding good contacts was a key task, and I had started networking early enough that my arrival and stay in Jaffna was safe, comfortable, and brought me in contact with participants very quickly.

I gathered what felt like extremely rich material during my time in Jaffna. Writing the dissertation was subsequently very challenging: selecting just a few findings for inclusion was difficult, as so many issues had been uncovered, each with direct links to migration effects. Navigating through the various interconnecting issues of history, socio-political dynamics, family dynamics and transnationalism meant I could have taken this dissertation in a number of different directions. I'm only partially satisfied with the results, as I may have sacrificed coherence of argument or clear linkages in literature in order to include points that I thought were interesting, and still keep within the word count.

My idea of life in war-torn Jaffna was actually quite different from the reality, and my originally proposed research questions were therefore either too grandiose, or too reliant on sensitive issues already addressed in the literature (remittance, politics), or, in the case of analysing engagement based on pre-and post-war forced migration, too limiting. The final structure of the dissertation does review some original themes, but allows more room for identifying the unexpected effects of migration on family life, which I feel are the key strengths.

APPENDIX 1: Interview Schedule

Context and leaving Sri Lanka

Tell me about your family. Who is in your family circle? Which ones are living abroad?
When, why and how did they leave? How was the decision made for them to leave?
What were some difficulties you faced with sending your family abroad?
Where do they live now?
What type of status do they have in the countries they currently live in? (visa, citizenship, asylum etc.). What are their lives like abroad?
What about yourself? Did you want to leave or stay in Jaffna? Tell me about your decision.

Family returning to Sri Lanka:

When did you last see [family members]? What was the meeting like?
How often does your family come and visit Jaffna? (holiday, residence etc.)
Will they move back to Jaffna to live? Why or why not?
Do you and your family talk about them moving back to Jaffna, now that the war is over? Would it be easy or difficult for them?
Tell me about your thoughts on having your family "scattered" in different places.
How do you think family life has changed after family members have left to go abroad?
How do you think your family life is going to change now that the war is over?

Communication:

How often to you talk with your family abroad?
How have you kept in touch over the years (how often, and by what means)
Are there family members abroad who you haven't met? (Marriages, children born etc.)
How have you heard news about them?
How do family members keep up with traditions and events in Jaffna? Is that important for your family?
How have you communicated about life events during separation (births, deaths, marriage etc.)

Money and remittances:

Do you get money from family members living abroad? Would you say it is a main source of income?
Who provides the main economic support?
What has the money usually been sent for?
Tell me about what the money is usually used for.
Has migration affected your family's economic situation? In what ways?

APPENDIX 2: Survey

Following is an example of a completed survey for a participant.

ID number: 1009
Date: 12 June 2011
Location: Sandilipay, Jaffna peninsula

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Name
[REDACTED]</td></tr>
<tr><td>Head of household?
Yes</td><td>Age
73</td><td>Sex
Female</td></tr>
<tr><td>Marital Status:
Married</td><td colspan="2">Education level:
University graduate</td></tr>
<tr><td>Currently working?
Freelance work; receiving pension from government</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">No. of Dependents/Responsibility in household:
Lives with husband; Elderly husband needs health care

5 children: 4 living abroad, 1 deceased.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Occupation:
Freelance Translator

Languages spoken:
English and Tamil (fluent in both). Some Sinhalese.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Native to Jaffna?
Yes</td><td colspan="2">How long in current house?
Since 1970. Dowry house built after marriage in 1963.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Status: Sri Lankan Citizen with Canadian Residency status (status received in 2000)</td></tr>
</table>

Close family living in Jaffna

Age/Sex	**Relationship to head of household**	**Occupation**	**Location**
01 N/A Female	Sister	Retired	Neighbouring house; Spends portion of year in Canada with her children
02 Over 90; Female	Mother	Retired, receiving pension	Neighbouring house

Close family living in Sri Lanka (outside Jaffna)

Age/Sex	**Relationship**	**Occupation**	**Location**
N/A	Brother	N/A	Colombo

Close family living abroad

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">1</td><td colspan="2">Name/reference
03</td><td colspan="2">Relationship to household
Daughter</td><td>Occupation
[Tim Hortons employee]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Location
Yemen briefly in 1988 after marriage [work] left due to Gulf War. Switzerland in 1993 [agent smuggling; asylum]; Canada from 2002 [residency visa]</td><td colspan="2">Current status: Canadian citizen
Husband and 2 children

Returned: 2003 (tourist)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Age
45</td><td>Sex
Female</td><td colspan="2">Education level
University graduate</td><td>Link to Jaffna (born/lived?)
Born, lived until marriage</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">2</td><td colspan="2">Name/reference
04</td><td colspan="2">Relationship to household
Daughter (deceased)</td><td>Occupation</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Location
Switzerland; was killed in an accident.</td><td colspan="2">Current status: [none]
Husband and children are Swiss citizens now.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Age
Deceased at 28 (?)</td><td>Sex
Female</td><td colspan="2">Education level
University Graduate</td><td>Link to Jaffna (born/lived?)
Born, lived until marriage</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">3</td><td colspan="2">Name/reference
05</td><td colspan="2">Relationship to household
Son</td><td>Occupation
Mechanic</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Location
Went by agent to Germany in 1996, followed by United Kingdom</td><td colspan="2">Current status: UK Citizen, arranged marriage to Jaffna girl.

Returned: never</td></tr>
<tr><td>Age
38</td><td>Sex
Male</td><td colspan="2">Education level
High School</td><td>Link to Jaffna (born/lived?)
Born, lived until emigration in 1996</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">4</td><td colspan="2">Name/reference
06</td><td colspan="2">Relationship to household
Daughter</td><td>Occupation
[Office Admin]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Location
Germany 1990 [agent; smuggled; asylum]; Canada after 1995 [residency visa]</td><td colspan="2">Current status: Canadian resident, widow with one child

Returned: never (asylum status)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Age
39</td><td>Sex
Female</td><td colspan="2">Education level
College Graduate</td><td>Link to Jaffna (born/lived?)
Born, lived until emigration in 1990.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">5</td><td colspan="2">Name/reference
07</td><td colspan="2">Relationship to household
Son</td><td>Occupation
Engineer</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Location
Oman [work permit] from 1987</td><td colspan="2">Current status: Sri Lankan citizen, emigrating to Canada from Oman

Returned: often during ceasefire, to Colombo (work), once to Jaffna in 2003</td></tr>
<tr><td>Age
44</td><td>Sex
Male</td><td colspan="2">Education level
College Graduate</td><td>Link to Jaffna (born/lived?)
Born, lived until emigration in 1987</td></tr>
</table>

APPENDIX 3: Interview Transcript

Following is a partial transcript of an audio recorded interview. Sections have been edited out, to allow inclusion of material relating to marriage. Identifiable information has been redacted.

Interview ID: 1012
Location: Participant's home, Nallur
Date: 15 June, 2011
Time: 9am
Duration: 1:10:44, 1:30, 0:55 (3 recordings)
Interview participants: Male Widower
Intermediary and interpreter: I_1002
Languages: Mainly English, with some Tamil

[START OF RECORDING 1]

I: Thank you for agreeing to this interview. So as discussed, please tell me about yourself and your family. Where do they live and what do they do?

P: I have got 5 children, three are in the UK. They are all doing very well. Eldest is a =C203=, for TV, film. My son is an engineer, married to a computer engineer. They are living in the UK for 15 years. Second daughter is a doctorate in chemistry. She was a lecturer here in the university, and then went off to postgraduate there in London. Married to an accountant. They are also living there for over 15 years. They come and go very often. She is also giving private tuitions also. Third is my daughter, she's a doctor here at =C204=. She did, specialized in anaesthesia. She has been at =C204= for about 10 years. Now she has gone to the outpatients department. Her husband is also a doctor, who is also working there. Fourth child is son, engineer, with the =C205=, in the UK. He is also married to a doctor. So that is the fourth. Fifth one is a doctor in =C206=. He has given about 7, 8 years of service. He is also married to a doctor. She is of the majority community. The girl, he loved her, she is a Sinhalese girl coming from Kandy. So they married and are living in =C206=. I went and stayed with them for some time, they have got two children, they are doing very well. So now you know background.

I: What about yourself?

P: I was in the municipality as =C207=. I am counting 37 years or so of government service. Based in Jaffna town, not only in Jaffna town, various councils, Secretary of councils. I worked in Manipay for 10 years. And I worked in Neliadi, like that, I have been in 13 stations for 37 years. Now I'm 82 years of age. Yes! I am a vegetarian and I don't touch even eggs. Even now I'm a vegetarian. But I have some problem with the knee. This is the background.

My wife was also a teacher. Trained teacher, she served about 30 years of service, and she now passed away about 6 months ago. She died. Agriculture trained teacher. She was in the UK with the children, continuously for about 10 or 12 years. She was a citizen there. At the latter stages…

[Recording paused: daughter enters the room and leaves]

P: Wife passed away nearly one year. (shows a photo). I have got a file for her. She was a UK citizen for some time. And later she felt ill there…so she was in UK, but due to old age and all that, she came back. And at the later stages, she felt it's not fair for her to be a burden to the children. So she returned and..(opens file).

She went about 15 years ago, for the first childbirth of the eldest daughter. She went there to nurse and help. Similarly she returned here, similarly she returned to UK, on several occasions. At last she got a citizenship also. The children were citizens and they could sponsor. She was not able to have dual citizenship.

These are my children, who came for the funeral (shows photos). Three boys. And the daughter, elder and this one. (look at photos). Last son is in Colombo. Other two are in UK. They got together at her funeral. On June 17 of last year. We kept her for about 1 week, her body, to receive them…her anniversary comes in a week or so. And they were all here.

I: Did they come back often?

P: They had come often, and were in touch with us. (Shows photos). They live in different places in the UK. She would go visit here and there when she went. She was roaming about there. This is my daughter in law, the Sinhalese doctor. She's also an orphan, she lost her parents, but both are getting degree in Russia. With about 10 years service.

I: So who was the first to leave Jaffna?

P: Eldest son was the first one to go. In those days lot of trouble here so we couldn't have him here. We were compelled to send him out. Because in those days the LTTE would take these children, wrap them into their net, so we wanted to send him out. We sent him. My sister in law is in UK. She is still there. She sponsored and took him first. She is a well established person there. So they were in, they were [inaudible segment] took him there. He went and studied there. And became an engineer. Almost all the children have gone there and studied. Because the situation of my wife younger sister, she [inaudible segment].

He studied, continued, and passed exam, and got married there itself. Partner is also from Jaffna, arranged marriage. She studied and lived there. So we made the arrangement and the marriage took place in London. We knew the family. Her family was here. Parents were here. We met the parents here, and introduced. The father is a doctor. He went to UK, he stayed there and got everything done for them on her part. Our part, my sister in law and husband were there. That was there from ours for the wedding. We didn't go. We got all photos from there. And my relations are there, still there no? My wife younger sister, she is still alive in London, she is about 80 years of age. She is the person on our behalf she brought up the children there, looked after them well, very well.

I: You mean you and your wife didn't go for the wedding?

P: At that time, my wife did not have UK citizenship. Wedding took place, at that time she didn't have ?(citizenship)?. Then she went there for the first child birth. And stayed there for some time. We couldn't go due to Trouble. We were, other children were here no? The children were

here, we had to look after them. And a lot of money also for tickets. So we stayed here.

I: So the rest of the family was here?

P: At that time, in Vadamarachi, we were living from =C208=. This is my own place, at that time, I rented out and lived there. Operated from there. All our children were together. They were studying here. Second daughter, that is the second child, the doctorate in chemistry? She studied in Jaffna University, passed out in chemistry, she passed as chemistry special honour, and worked in the University for some time. Then only she went out. She was also sponsored by auntie.

We went to India, for the wedding of the third child, the son. The engineer? Telecom engineer? His wedding took place here, in India. Because he couldn't come here at that time. That is about 10 years ago. He can't come. He left as a refugee and studied there. In the UK. We sent him out by black market. By agent. Sister in law paid a lot and …she made an arrangement with an agent in UK. We hand over the child in Colombo, he took [inaudible segment] ?(the money)?. He was in Colombo for about 6 months, waiting for departure. So I was with him at that time. That is in 1990. At that time, I was retired. So I took him and I stayed with him in Colombo. So there also we can't allow him to move about, don't you know the LTTE, suspicion and all that. Difficult to move to Jaffna also. So I stayed there for six months, in the meantime, the agent made all arrangements and took him there. ?(He was)? able to go without much difficulty because agents they make sure to reach. To LTTE people, I'm saying that I am taking him for a treatment. Otherwise they won't let you. They were very keen, they will not allow boys of a certain age, boys and girls…Even 15, 20, all these school going children were compelled to be with them.

My son doctor, he used to be there in Colombo. He was in the AL, studies. LTTE used to go there, and pick them in a truck, or in a lorry, all the children. That is how they intimidated. 'Don't interfere with that, I am taking them for training'. Similarly, forcefully they took them. He also went, what to do? No, if he refused, he will be shot dead, like that. You can't …you'll have to pass with a… you'll have to part with a child. That's the state here. So that boy, he went with them.

[PORTION OF INTERVIEW EDITED OUT]

I: So your children had to pay money abroad?

P: Children in the UK, they had to pay money. They [LTTE]will intimidate, if you don't give, we will trace your people there, and we'll know how to handle with them. We will not to hesitate to even kill them…like that, intimidated…they collected.

I: So how did you know this? Before your wife left, how did you keep in touch with your children?

P: They can't come in those days, we never expected them to come. We cannot talk also, we used to write aerogrammes, letters. And then we posted, and they will reply. When the son got married, those days no phone. Letters would sometimes take 6 months. When eldest got married, I was in Jaffna, only later I went to Colombo with younger son. Even if someone wanted to contact a person abroad, he had to go to Colombo or to Vavuniya and contact them by phone. You have to take a pass and go, like a visa, from the LTTE. And if we are going, the house

left under somebody's care. They will say, you will have to return within a certain period, failing which we will take over this house. And you have to sign a bond, two people have to sign.

When I went to Colombo with my son, my, other children were here, and wife was there so it was an occupied house. When my wife went, she will have to get permission from Tigers to go to Colombo. At the Tigers controlled time, she left to go to the UK. We didn't say we are going to UK, we are going to Colombo for treatment, or something like that. You give a false excuse and go. So that's how she went, going to Colombo for medical treatment.

I: Tell me about the first time you saw your children after they left.

P: I don't..I 'm now old, and forgetful of exact year. We went to India, no? We went to India to perform a wedding. That is my ?(engineer)?, my fourth child, his wedding took place in India. We took the girl there. She was working in Colombo, a doctor. They preferred. Their relations, they are in UK, and she was with my wife at the time, wife was there. Wife took him to India. Myself and daughter, she was not married at that time, she was working in Jaffna. We went to India, we all joined there. Other children also came there. We joined. And we had a chat and all that in India.

I: What did you talk about at that first meeting? What was it like?

P: We said what to do? We are living under trying conditions. What to do we are compelled to meet there. Until we bring forth our two children, who are in the medical field, until such a time we have to tolerate all that. Even if we have to give the produce from our paddy lands, if we get about a lease of about 5 or 6 packs of paddy, they demand 2 packs of paddy from that. Similarly, from all ways they were squeezing money from the people by way of cash, or by way of kind.

[PORTION OF INTERVIEW EDITED OUT]

I: Tell me about the weddings. You said you couldn't attend. Was there anything you sent from Jaffna? Like the thali and sarees…?

P: All the things were taken from Singapore. There'll be relations and friends, no? They will make arrangements and send it there. They'll buy direct from Singapore. Mostly sarees are bought from India, gold from Singapore. They pay a visit to India to collect all these things. Sarees very cheap there. From the UK, they go to India, and buy sarees, otherwise if there are some friends, they will buy and send.

Things with sentimental value, for that we will not part with that. We will continue to and even our children will also like it. You have to hide these, otherwise robbery. You have to hide and keep somewhere, you have to keep in locker. We have soveriegns, some gold jewellery is there. Still about 15 to 20 soveriegns of jewellery. We didn't send it abroad to the UK. Very often they are able to earn there. So from the saving, they get from either Singapore or India. But certain worksmanship and all those things are here better. For grandchild, if you are giving, mother will take a chain, that is our culture. Mother in law…

I: You said your daughter went as a student, so how did her marriage get fixed?

P: All our marriages are proposals, not love. They will check the chart. Mostly the parents propose

in our culture.

[EDITED]

I: Who else was there at the wedding to represent the family?

P: My elder son is there, he was the *tholan*, he was representing, and then we got the photos and all. We were able to send for the wedding, *thali* they bought there, India. They went to India to collect. Sister in law is a very capable person, they took her to there for the bridal, groom, all those sarees jewellery and all they bought. We didn't go to India to help with the prep. We didn't go, it took place there. This was when LTTE was here, army was not here yet. Before 1996. We weren't uneasy, we were happy. The sons' marriage had happened well, and now the daughters. And on the particular day… we heard the story from my sister in law, she phoned me up and told me. In those days we could get a little phone. We had no problems, we were happy. We spoke to my daughter a little on the telephone.

APPENDIX 4: Consent form for participants

Information sheet and consent form

Department of Geography
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Title of Study: Effects of migration on Sri Lankan Tamil households
Name of researcher: Mrs Aishwarya Bowatte

The study is being done as part of my Masters degree in the Department of Geography, University College London. The study is supervised by Dr Pablo Mateos. I wish to study relationships Jaffna families have with members living abroad, and what this migration has meant for family life. The study has been approved by the Department, and will be conducted in according with UCL Ethical Guidelines.

If you agree to participate, I will interview you for about an hour at a time and place convenient to you. You can stop the interview and withdraw from this research at any time.

All interview material will be anonymised with codes. The report will not contain individually indentifiable information in the final report, which will only summarise trends. Your name and identity will be strictly protected. Our interview will be written and analysed in a report for my studies only, to be viewed by my professors at UCL. I will save the recorded interview until graduation from my Master's degree, after which it will be deleted.

If you have any further questions after this interview, I can be contacted by mobile at 0775750171 until 1 July 2011, or at the email address above at any time.

☐ I have been informed about the nature of this study and willingly consent to take part in it.

☐ I understand that my interview will be recorded and I consent to use of this material as part of the project.

☐ I understand that the content of the interview will be kept totally confidential and my identity will be protected.

☐ I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

☐ I am over 16 years of age.

Name / Initials ____

Signed / Initials ____

Date ____

There should be two signed copies, one for participant, one for researcher.