

**A force in foreign affairs?
Tamil diaspora interest group lobbying in Canada and
the United Kingdom**

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**Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Political Science**

Declaration

I, Matthew Godwin, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

Foreign policy observers have deliberated for decades on the influence of diasporas on host country foreign policy, and by extension on civil wars abroad. The 26-year civil war in Sri Lanka led to an exodus of hundreds of thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils, which have since formed large diasporas in Canada and the United Kingdom. Through the formation of sophisticated interest groups, the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in both countries have undertaken to influence foreign policy toward the civil war and its aftermath. While the scholarship has discussed diaspora influence on foreign policy in great detail in the United States and elsewhere, identifying a number of factors believed to impact diaspora influence, the literature has spent less time considering this question in parliamentary democracies. Through a most-similar, cross case comparative approach I delve into two foreign policy decision-making processes in Canada and the United Kingdom to determine if and when Tamil diaspora interest groups influenced Canadian and British foreign policy. I argue that in all four temporal and spatial cases explored, Tamil diaspora interest groups had influence over decision-making, but that they had more influence in the UK despite facing greater domestic and international constraints.

Impact Statement

In respect of contributions to practices in public policy, this project contributes to the discourse on advocacy efforts, in particular for diaspora communities advocating on behalf of their co-nationals in the homeland and to practitioners in foreign policy seeking input from newly arrived communities. Firstly, as described in Chapter V, diaspora activists face hurdles to the formation of professional lobby groups through migration, settlement and integration policies. With a view to establishing diaspora interest groups earlier upon arrival, diasporas should advocate for state resources to be allocated to diaspora-run settlement organisations with a view to building advocacy capacity. Secondly, as articulated in Chapters VI and VII, diasporas should seek to emulate existing diaspora interest groups with more knowledge of host country institutions and structural constraints. Finally, and with respect to non-governmental domestic advocacy more generally, advocacy organisations should seek to develop partisan channels of access to government through which to engage in direct lobbying with a view to bolstering contentious, outside lobbying.

As the targets of diaspora interest group activism, foreign policy practitioners can draw several relevant conclusions from this project. Firstly, foreign policy elites can acquire in-depth, if partisan knowledge of conflicts abroad through consulting diaspora interest group representatives who have both first-hand knowledge of conflicts as well as domestic and international mechanisms governments can use to influence conflict outcomes. Through consulting diaspora interest groups on opposing sides of conflicts in their homelands, bureaucrats can work to craft more comprehensive and balanced policies toward conflict. Secondly, political party elites can seek to engage diaspora communities via diaspora interest groups, who have the capacity to mobilise interested members of their communities in the political process. As host countries become more diverse through migration, the involvement of migrant communities in politics can make political parties more representative of host country demographics and diaspora interest groups offer a potential mechanism by which to enhance diverse community representation.

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List of Abbreviations

AIPAC	American Israel Political Affairs Committee
BTC	British Tamil Conservatives
BTF	British Tamil Forum
CFI	Conservative Friends of Israel
CJC	Canadian Jewish Congress
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CTC	Canadian Tamil Congress
FACT	Federation of Associations of Canadian Tamils
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GTF	Global Tamil Forum
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
LFI	Labour Friends of Israel
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NDP	New Democratic Party of Canada
NGO	Non-government organisation
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SACEM	Society for the Aid of Ceylon Minorities
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
TAG	Together Against Genocide
TESOC	Tamil Eelam Society of Canada (TESOC)
TGTE	Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam
TOSIS	Tiger Organisation of Service Intelligence Services

TYO Tamil Youth Organisation
UNHCR United Nations Human Rights Council
WTM World Tamil Movement

Acknowledgements

I owe an immense amount of gratitude to my supervisors, whose ongoing support, guidance and above all, patience has been vital to seeing this project over the finish line. I am especially grateful for their attention to detail, stimulating and open discourse as well as their encouragement when the project meandered. It's thanks to them that this has been a fascinating and positive journey.

In this vein, I would also like to offer my thanks to the faculty and staff of the School of Public Policy, UCL and the Department of Politics and International Studies, SOAS who were instrumental in keeping the project on track. My fellow PhD students were a constant source of support and often much needed amusement inside and outside of the department; their humour and genuine support form my best memories of this experience.

The love and support of my family, in particular my parents Julie and Ken was a source of encouragement throughout the sometimes lonely road of a PhD candidate. Despite numerous health challenges during this period, they have remained committed to this project and the submission of this dissertation with both in good health is a blessing.

I am deeply indebted to my interviewees who gave generously of their time, were candid and at times shared illuminating and tragic stories which motivated their activism and dedication to public service. The passion and commitment to human rights exemplified by activists, politicians of all stripes, civil servants and fellow researchers was inspiring and often a source of inspiration.

Throughout this process, a number of individuals have been exceptionally supportive in a variety of ways and I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the Lord Mendelsohn, Shimon K. Fogel, Lisa Trischler, Dr. Anita Singh, Dr. Maria Koinova, John Levy, Boaz Cohen, Goodenough College, and the publicans of the Lamb Pub on Lamb's Conduit St.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to the memory Dr. Stefania Barichello whose good work will serve as a motivation for many years to come.

Chapter I – Introduction

Diasporas: A force in foreign affairs?

During the Sri Lankan civil war and its aftermath, numerous observers claimed that the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Canada and the United Kingdom were influencing these countries' foreign policy toward the country and the conflict: Claiming malicious infiltration, the Sri Lankan government accused Western foreign governments of being beholden to the Tamil diaspora for electoral interests (Sri Lanka Campaign for Justice, 2014); domestic foreign policy experts accused governments of pandering to the Tamil diaspora for votes (Carment and Samy, 2013); and, foreign governments believed the diaspora was a key motivation for these governments' reaction to events in Sri Lanka (Rayner, 2010). Some of these claims assume the Tamil diaspora was a passive actor in foreign policy decision-making. However, my dissertation research argues the opposite, that the Tamil diaspora in Canada and the UK formed sophisticated interest groups which employed adept direct lobbying and contentious action strategies to influence government decision-making, exerting significant pressure during two, key foreign policy decision-making processes pertaining to the Sri Lankan civil war and its aftermath.

Through a most-similar, cross-case comparison of bounded foreign policy decision-making processes, I investigate at the microfoundational level the causal processes leading to foreign policy outcomes and how Tamil diaspora interest groups intervened to influence these processes. Interviews with diaspora and political elites reveal their experience during the final months of Sri Lanka's bloody civil war in 2009 and the 2013 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka. Through this investigation I add to the literature on diasporas, interest groups and foreign policy

analysis with a view to answering fundamental questions about the role of diasporas in foreign policy making: Do diaspora interest groups influence Canadian and British foreign policy? What causes interest groups to achieve more influence in some cases rather than in others? How does Canada's and the UK's role in the world impact their ability to respond to diaspora interest group preferences? This introductory chapter begins by providing background on the Sri Lankan civil war and the Tamil diaspora, it then introduces the research puzzle, describes the project's contributions and finally breaks down how the project is organised.

Fleeing Sri Lanka: The tragic journey toward Tamil diaspora interest groups

Between 1983 and 2009 the Southeast Asian island of Sri Lanka was consumed by a brutal, secessionist civil war that concluded leaving as many as 50,000 dead, tens of thousands displaced internally and hundreds of thousands dispersed throughout the globe (Zulfika, 2014: 110). The Sinhalese-dominated government of Sri Lanka based in Colombo, the country's capital, maintained that the conflict was a secessionist struggle led by a terrorist organisation; disputing this view are many members of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority who argue the conflict was a struggle for liberation and the redressing of grievances dating back to the country's independence from Great Britain in 1948 (Lunn et al., 2009).

The injustices cited by the Tamil community, which served as the principal justification for the secessionist civil war included constitutional provisions which elevated Sinhalese rather than Tamil as the dominant national language, and Buddhism as the prevailing national religion to the exclusion of all others (Gopal, 2000: 153). In addition to these origins of discontent, the Tamil minority was actively excluded from

the country's institutions of higher education and professional occupations. In response to these grievances, a range of Tamil organisations throughout the 1960s and 1970s undertook largely peaceful resistance in an effort to restore Tamil rights and redress these perceived injustices.

By 1983, a number of more radical and militant groups had emerged, including the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The LTTE ambushed an army convoy and killed 13 Sinhalese soldiers. In response, pogroms against Tamils ensued killing at least 2500 and displacing one hundred thousand more, igniting in earnest the civil war between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. Despite its smaller size, the LTTE eventually achieved relative autonomy over the north of the island in the ensuing decades, along with substantial conventional military capacity. However, by the mid-2000s the LTTE had weakened following an internationally facilitated ceasefire. The election of nationalist Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse in 2008 instigated a final close to the conflict, with renewed hostilities leading to the ultimate demise of the LTTE in 2009 (BBC, 2017). The dramatic conclusion of the conflict and its aftermath did not end the Tamil struggle for self-determination. Now almost entirely a transnational rather than domestic movement, Tamil activists and their allies sought to force the Sri Lankan government to implement a legitimate transitional justice process, including the release of prisoners, the return of land, prosecution for perceived war crimes and the redressing of longstanding grievances (Amarasingham, 2015: 143).

These transnational efforts were only the latest in a succession of international influences on the civil war and its aftermath, dating back to the onset of the conflict. In the late 1980s, the Indian government's peacekeeping force sought to bring an end to the conflict, but instead departed in failure leaving a power vacuum filled by the LTTE.

In the early 2000s, the Norwegian government championed an internationally-backed peace process leading to the 2002 ceasefire agreement, which ultimately collapsed in a return to hostilities (Lunn et al., 2009). During the Rajapakse regime, greater intervention from abroad, particularly from China, strengthened the government in Colombo (Large, 2016: 23).

These sources of international intervention on the Sri Lankan civil war have been of great scholarly interest, but of particular relevance to scholars of civil wars and diasporas in recent years has been the impact of the transnational Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora during the civil war and its aftermath. The diaspora in Western countries numbered only in the tens of thousands at the beginning of the 1980s. However, as a result of the civil war, the diaspora has swelled to at least 2.7 million Sri Lankan Tamils, with the largest diaspora community located in Canada and a comparably large diaspora population in the United Kingdom (Mendis, 2014: 105; Cochrane, 2009; Fair, 2006). Along with establishing organisations to support efforts to settle and integrate into British and Canadian society, the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora formed interest groups to actively lobby governments in both countries. Groups such as the Canadian Tamil Congress and the British Tamil Forum have been active since the 2000s petitioning elected officials and bureaucrats with increasingly sophisticated lobbying techniques, a coherent policy agenda and well-resourced campaign strategies (Amarasingam, 2015: 105; ICG, 2010). In large part, these Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora interest groups have been motivated by events in Sri Lanka and their demands have sought to influence the foreign policies of Britain and Canada toward Sri Lanka.

Focusing on two foreign policy decision processes which comprise this project's case studies, I investigate the extent of influence Tamil diaspora interest groups such as

the above have had on foreign policy decision-making in Canada and the UK toward Sri Lanka. The following section discusses the research puzzle presented by Tamil diaspora group operation in Canada and the United Kingdom and summarises the contributions this project makes.

Research puzzle and project contributions: The Tamil diaspora as influential interest groups in foreign policymaking?

Several fields of scholarship have looked at transnational actors and their perceived influence on civil wars, including questions regarding the duration of conflict, its intensity and its resolution (Buhaug et al, 2009; Lacina, 2006; Hartzell, 2001). Such external influences on civil wars analysed by scholars include resources injected into conflicts from abroad, such as financial and manpower contributions (Cochrane, 2009; Orjuela, 2008), while other debates have centred on the effect of sanctions and other forms of coercion and intervention from states and non-state actors (Whang, 2011; Gent, 2008). I situate this project within this discussion of external influence on civil wars, but look with specific interest at how diasporas have acted as an external actor on conflict in the homeland from which they originated. Since the 1980s, scholars such as Mathis (1981) have looked with scepticism on the influence diasporas have had on their host countries towards their countries of origin, while Shain (1995) has argued in favour of their role as external actors, either via their host country or directly on conflict. In reference specifically to civil wars, a polarizing debate on whether or not diasporas are more likely to extend the duration of conflict or curtail it vigorously continues (Orjuela, 2008; Fair, 2005, 2008; Smith and Stares, 2007). With a view to understanding how diasporas impact their host countries' foreign policy toward civil wars in their homeland, this project's principal empirical contribution to the literature

is in answering the question: To what extent have Tamil diaspora interest groups in the United Kingdom and Canada impacted foreign policymaking toward the conflict in Sri Lanka and its aftermath?

This project's primary research question explores whether or not the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora's interest groups in Canada and the UK influenced decision-makers during two, specific decision points related to the Sri Lankan civil war. The first decision faced by both governments I analyse was how to respond to the dramatic conclusion of the civil war in Sri Lanka in 2009. Diaspora interest groups and Tamil activists petitioned fervently for Canada and the UK to act against the government of Sri Lanka and force it to end its offensive against the Tamil Tigers in the north. Observers in Canada lamented the lack of influence achieved by the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora over the Conservative government in Canada in 2009 (Canadian Tamil Congress, 2009). While some in the UK argued the diaspora in the United Kingdom came to hold significant sway over the British government when faced with the same decisions (Rayner, 2010). The second decision facing Canadian and British governments I consider was whether or not Prime Ministers Stephen Harper and David Cameron should boycott the 2013 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Tamil diaspora interest groups lobbied intensively to prevent leaders from attending the summit to protest the Sri Lankan government's human rights record. Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper ultimately boycotted the summit, while UK Prime Minister David Cameron attended.

Despite having similarly sized Tamil diaspora communities concentrated in one region, migratory histories which largely parallel one another and comparable parliamentary institutional constraints, why was the diaspora in one case at one time

perceived to have been more effective compared to the same diaspora in the other?

Adding greater complexity to this research puzzle is how British Tamil diaspora interest groups attained greater influence over foreign policy decision-making despite emerging in conditions less favourable than their Canadian counterparts and having had to confront more potent institutional barriers.

Through exploring this overarching research puzzle, I demonstrate that Tamil diaspora interest groups in the United Kingdom and Canada have had discernible influence on these countries' foreign policies towards Sri Lanka, its civil war and its aftermath. However, when looked at through a more fine-grained lens, I argue that Tamil diaspora interest groups in the United Kingdom have had more influence than their co-nationals in Canada. In the UK during both decision-making periods discussed, Labour and Conservative governments acted often in line with the preferences of Tamil diaspora interest groups, in some instances putting at risk perceived national interests. Whereas in Canada, Conservative governments were less responsive to Tamil diaspora interest group demands in the 2009 decision-making period and would come to only act entirely in line with preferences when those interests were aligned with existing foreign policy. Unlike in Canada, in both cases the British government risked more to respond favourably to the Tamil diaspora.

The literature advances that a range of factors associated with diasporas, the institutional structures which constrain them and the strategies they employ to exert pressure explain why they are able to attain influence over decision-makers. Through a fine-grained comparison of these determinants between cases, I am able to draw a number of conclusions explaining why more influence was attained in the UK rather than in Canada. Firstly, in respect of *actor characteristics* which are determinants

inherent to diaspora interest groups, I argue that it is not adequate for diasporas to be simply concentrated in electoral districts, but they must also be viewed as politically salient; political and bureaucratic elites are not likely to respond to overtures from diaspora elites unless they are perceived as credible, legitimate representatives of their diaspora community; and, that diaspora interest groups which mobilise their members to get involved in partisan politics, and establish trusted channels of access through the creation of 'inside advocates', are able to leverage other resources and influence decision-making.

Regarding *institutional factors*, I demonstrate that despite Canada's integration and settlement policies favouring the creation of Tamil diaspora groups earlier than in the UK, these policies are not advantageous if diasporas are not viewed as credible; while parliament was permeable for interest groups in both host countries, the failure of the Canadian diaspora to build inroads with the Conservative Government greatly hindered its efforts in 2009; as for rival constituencies, the most potent barrier for diaspora interest groups are non-partisan, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) bureaucrats who are not sensitive to political considerations and thusly less sympathetic to diaspora preferences; and, it is not essential for diaspora demands to align with existing government preferences in all instances. Finally, I argue that international role constraints at the international, sub-system and bilateral levels are a greater obstacle for Britain than Canada in responding to diaspora preferences.

I further demonstrate that *diaspora interest group strategies* also explain influence attainment, concluding that direct lobbying strategies are adequate to have influence with decision-makers when trusted channels of access are available, but that contentious outside lobbying can add leverage when these trusted channels of access

already exist. Additionally, I also find that internal pressure on parties by diasporas proffering political resources enhances leverage with political decision-makers.

The above is a summary of outcomes from this project's exploration of the research puzzle, and before I present how the dissertation project is organised I make reference in the following section to its contributions to the existing literature, as well as to public policy practitioners.

Contributions to existing literatures and to public policy practice

Broadly speaking, this project contributes to three relatively distinct bodies of literature: The literature on diasporas, on interest groups and lobbying, and on foreign policy analysis. Firstly, I contribute to the extensive literature on diasporas by undertaking a conceptual discussion in Chapter II which ultimately defines 'transnational Tamil diaspora interest group'. In the extant literature, it is often concluded that a 'diaspora', be it the Irish, Tamil, Cuban or another diaspora, has influence over foreign policymaking (Cochrane, 2009; Uslander, 2012; Geislerova, 2007). I add greater conceptual rigour by integrating the diasporas and interest group literatures through borrowing from the latter conceptual components to define the actor of interest with greater precision. As will be demonstrated through this project's empirical analysis, it is through forming sophisticated interest groups that diasporas are able to attain influence. Additionally, through this conceptual discussion, I also add additional precision by explicating on the transnational nature of diaspora interest groups and the divergences between different transnational diaspora interest groups.

Secondly, as noted in the above section, the existing literature on diasporas and foreign policy have referenced a number of factors which are believed to impact

diaspora influence on policy outcomes. I engage these assumptions and add to them through this comparative analysis, for instance finding diasporas must be viewed as credible by host country governments in order to have their preferences considered, that bureaucracies are more potent rival constituencies than are rival diasporas, not being in alignment with existing host country policy objectives is not an insurmountable barrier to influence and, that the use of inside advocates builds the channels of access necessary to petition government elites. What is also of consequence is how some of these factors interrelate, such as how diaspora interest group homogeneity impacts credibility and how diaspora outside mobilisation can augment direct lobbying strategies. Finally, I disaggregate diaspora lobbying strategies, in particular between direct lobbying and outside, contentious action demonstrating the latter can increase leverage for diaspora interest groups, but only if inside advocates are present.

Finally, I adopt a role theoretical lens from the foreign policy analysis literature to add to the institutional factors which constrain diasporas, with a view to understanding how the roles states play internationally limits the extent to which they can respond to diaspora interest group preferences. Through this lens, I provide behavioural constraints for the host countries within three distinct international fields: The international system, the Commonwealth at the sub-system level and bilaterally to determine their possible foreign policy outcome options. Having done so, this project further evidences the need to consider domestic influences on foreign policy.

In respect of contributions to practices in public policy, this project contributes to the discourse on advocacy efforts, in particular for diaspora communities advocating on behalf of their co-nationals in the homeland and to practitioners in foreign policy seeking input from newly arrived communities. Firstly, as described in Chapter V,

diaspora activists face hurdles to the formation of professional lobby groups through migration, settlement and integration policies. With a view to establishing diaspora interest groups earlier upon arrival, diasporas should advocate for state resources to be allocated to diaspora-run settlement organisations with a view to building advocacy capacity. Secondly, as articulated in Chapters VI and VII, diasporas should seek to emulate existing diaspora interest groups with more knowledge of host country institutions and structural constraints. Finally, and with respect to non-governmental domestic advocacy more generally, advocacy organisations should seek to develop partisan channels of access to government through which to engage in direct lobbying with a view to bolstering contentious, outside lobbying.

As the targets of diaspora interest group activism, foreign policy practitioners can draw several relevant conclusions from this project. Firstly, foreign policy elites can acquire in-depth, if partisan knowledge of conflicts abroad through consulting diaspora interest group representatives who have both first-hand knowledge of conflicts as well as domestic and international mechanisms governments can use to influence conflict outcomes. Through consulting diaspora interest groups on opposing sides of conflicts in their homelands, bureaucrats can work to craft more comprehensive and balanced policies toward conflict. Secondly, political party elites can seek to engage diaspora communities via diaspora interest groups, who have the capacity to mobilise interested members of their communities in the political process. As host countries become more diverse through migration, the involvement of migrant communities in politics can make political parties more representative of host country demographics and diaspora interest groups offer a potential mechanism by which to enhance diverse community representation.

Organisation of dissertation chapters

Chapter II - Literature review: Tamil diaspora interest groups, transnationalism and foreign policy influence

Given the range of scholarly fields incorporating the study of diasporas, I situate this project into a number of existing bodies of research including conceptual discourses on diasporas and the literature on diasporas and foreign policy; the literature on interest groups, and I draw on transnationalism discourses as well as foreign policy analysis. Firstly, through canvassing the extensive and still contentious literature on diasporas, I define the Tamil diaspora as a mostly conflict-generated, victim diaspora whose members originated largely as refugees, are dispersed far from the homeland and who can be said to have an antagonistic relationship with their home-state. I then borrow from the interest group literature to conceptualise 'Tamil diaspora interest group' as well as the literature on transnationalism to define Tamil diaspora interest groups as transnational entities. Secondly, this chapter looks in greater depth at the efforts made thus far to analyse diaspora influence on foreign policy, with a view to discussing actor characteristics, institutional factors and strategies scholars have identified as impacting diaspora group success. I also draw on the foreign policy analysis literature to add international role constraints to the determinants discussed, as well as borrowing from the contentious politics literature to disaggregate between non-contentious and contentious action.

Chapter III - Theoretical framework: Causation, causal processes and influence

Having established the foundational fields of relevant research for this inquiry and conceptualised the terms it will employ, the theoretical chapter discusses causation. The principal contribution of this project is to ascertain whether or not Tamil diaspora

interest groups in Canada and the UK *caused* a change in these states' foreign policy towards the Sri Lankan conflict and its aftermath. To accomplish this, I build causal sequences composed of events in the homeland and host country. I then apply a microfoundational analysis to these sequences focused on Tamil diaspora interest group interventions and their influence decision-makers, taking into consideration structural constraints. The first section of this chapter discusses the literature to date which also argues diasporas are causing foreign policy change and advances that my contribution is distinct because it focuses on specific decision-making processes wherein diaspora interventions can be isolated and their impact analysed. Each of these earlier inquiries are interested in isolating causation and the second section of this chapter draws on comparative historical institutionalism's view of causation and how to locate it, specifically searching for causal mechanisms.

In addition to searching for causal factors to help explain foreign policy outcomes with a view to understanding which factors were particularly consequential, the second section of this chapter lays out how I will build causal sequences describing the decision-making process composing each case. It depicts how causal sequences are built and argues that understanding when inputs occur is important to determining causation. Each of these causal sequences is bounded by a decision point I will uncover what influence Tamil diaspora interest groups had over these decisions. For this reason, the third section discusses influence, differentiates it from 'power' and defines it as 'control over outcomes'. The theoretical framework constructed in this chapter is used to isolate causal factors, assess their impact on foreign policy outcomes and allow the inquiry to uncover the distinctions between cases in Canada and the UK which explains why outcomes are different. In addition to discussing causation and causal

factors; it operationalises 'influence', which is the central outcome this inquiry is trying to isolate.

Chapter IV - Methodology and research design: Getting to the heart of the matter

The methodology chapter opens by canvassing some of the other methods employed by scholars to answer questions on diasporas and foreign policy, settling on Mill's most-similar cross-case comparative design given the small number of cases, the large number of comparable factors and the desire to isolate subtle differences between two similar cases: Canada and the United Kingdom. This section also highlights advantages of the comparative method for this project including its utility for analysing policy decision making, its creation of internal validity and its systemic approach.

Secondly, the methodology chapter defends the case selection, arguing that the Tamil diaspora is an appropriate diaspora for analysis given its extensive dispersal abroad, its firm suitability within the conceptual constraints of the diaspora definition, its rapid organisational crystallization, and its similar size and settlement patterns in the two host countries chosen for analysis. Secondly, I set out to compare cases temporally as well as spatially. By choosing two time periods in each country case, the chosen cases can be compared cross-sectionally to add rigor and explanatory power. This section argues that the two temporal cases chosen are suitable as governments in both countries were faced with the same decision at the same time: How much action to take to halt the violence in Sri Lanka in 2009; and, if the Prime Minister should attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka in 2013. The third section argues that Canada and the United Kingdom are appropriate country cases to consider, principally because they have the largest Tamil diasporas in the Western

world and are both permeable, pluralist, parliamentary democracies.

In the final section of this chapter, I present the research design employed to gather the requisite information and the processes for data analysis. It begins by describing the existing data gaps in the Canadian and UK contexts, arguing that there are gaps in respect of gathering the views of policymaking advocacy targets such as politicians and information regarding some Tamil diaspora organisations such as Tamils for Labour and British Tamil Conservatives. To address these gaps, the research design triangulates sources through collecting data from parliamentary records, diaspora and non-diaspora media as well as interviews. This section emphasises the importance of this final source as foreign policymaking is often undertaken 'behind-closed-doors'.

Chapter V - Empirical Background: Challenges and opportunities for Tamil diaspora interest groups

This chapter provides essential empirical background for Chapters VI and VII, where the analysis of causal factors is undertaken. I advance three arguments in this chapter: Firstly, I provide greater detail on the genesis Sri Lankan civil war, the evolution of the LTTE as the sole resistance organisation in the conflict and by touching on instances of international intervention. It focuses on the activities of the LTTE abroad, its mobilisation of the Tamil diaspora and its connection to non-LTTE diaspora organisations. It argues that the proscription of the LTTE greatly disrupted the organisational landscape of the diaspora in both countries, providing the impetus for the founding of more conventional interest groups. However, while the collapse of the LTTE may have led to the generation and empowering of other diaspora interest groups, its legacy in both countries tainted the diaspora and their ability to penetrate

decision-making processes, which would by extension impact their capacity to influence decisions in the cases discussed later.

The second section of this chapter focuses on the immigration, settlement and integration processes of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in both host countries. The Tamil diaspora had similar migratory trajectories and settlement patterns in both countries, but this chapter will look in detail at the divergent settlement and integration processes adopted by Canada and the United Kingdom, demonstrating that there are critical differences. Canada's approach to settlement, whereby it permitted Tamil organisations to deliver services, provided more fertile ground for the development of diaspora interest groups than did the UK's approach. Additionally, Canada's far more robust integration system further enhanced the environment for the creation of Tamil diaspora interest groups and their ability to become involved in domestic politics.

Finally, this chapter turns to the foreign policy processes of Canada and the United Kingdom, which share inherent systemic similarities, but differ in the extent of bureaucratic influence as well as openness to external, non-governmental influences. I argue that Canada's foreign policymaking processes are comparatively more permeable to external influence than in the United Kingdom due to the latter case having a more influential bureaucratic apparatus, indicating that Tamil diaspora interest groups should have more influence over Canadian foreign-policymaking than in the British context.

This section also discusses where Canada and the United Kingdom are situated in the international system, in the Commonwealth and in their bilateral relationship with Sri Lanka. Role Theory assumes that states are constrained in their behaviour by role-defined boundaries, which means that Tamil interest group preferences are only able to

be met within the constraints placed on the UK and Canada at various levels of the international system. I argue that the UK is a more powerful actor than Canada in all three of the above fields and is therefore better placed to influence the behaviour of the Sri Lankan government than Canada. However, perversely, Canada's weaker position within these fields permits Canada to act in greater alignment with Tamil diaspora interest group preferences than the UK.

Chapter VI - Canada and the United Kingdom causal comparison (2009): Overcoming the LTTE's legacy and activism to stop the violence

In the first empirical chapter of this project, I analyse decision-making processes in Canada and the United Kingdom during the final six months of the civil war in Sri Lanka. The first section begins with a brief description of events in Sri Lanka between January to May, 2009 when Sri Lankan government forces aggressively incursioned into the Tamil-dominated North engaging in heavy fighting with LTTE forces, ultimately leading to the latter's defeat. This period witnessed the worst violence of the civil war and a humanitarian disaster.

The second section looks briefly at the evolution of Tamil diaspora interest groups in both host countries following the proscription and collapse of the LTTE in the West. I focus on the growth of the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) as the principal representative body for the Tamil diaspora in Canada, its early support from left-of-centre politicians and its emulation of the structure and tactics of more established Jewish diaspora organisations. Similarly, during this period, UK representative organisations such as the British Tamil Forum (BTF) and Tamils for Labour also formed through the support of left-of-centre politicians and the emulation of Jewish diaspora groups. This section concludes that despite the earlier advantages Canadian Tamil

diaspora interest groups may have had given the early empowerment of diaspora organisations through Canadian government funding, the collapse of the LTTE and the 'chilling effect' on advocacy in both countries rendered this comparative advantage insignificant.

With this background, I outline events in the host countries between January and May, 2009 through constructing a causal sequence with a focus on interventions by Tamil diaspora interest groups to influence government and responses by government to events in Sri Lanka. Both contexts witnessed direct lobbying tactics where meetings were held between Tamil diaspora elites as well as massive, contentious demonstrations in Ottawa, Toronto and London. Despite both countries having taken steps aligned with the preferences of Tamil diaspora interest groups, the application of the theoretical framework to this causal sequence reveals a number of distinctions which led to Tamil diaspora interest groups having comparatively more influence in the UK than in Canada:

Firstly, Tamil diaspora elites were not viewed as credibly by the Conservative government in Canada as the Labour government viewed their co-nationals in the UK. Through Tamils for Labour, Tamil diaspora elites had penetrated the Labour party to a greater extent and were viewed more credibly than their Canadian counterparts were from the perspective of the Conservative government. Furthermore, the Canadian Tamil diaspora lost credibility with government when its demonstrations became too contentious and associated to closely with the LTTE. In contrast, UK Tamil diaspora elites were viewed as credible representatives throughout the conflict process. Secondly, Tamil diaspora interest groups in the United Kingdom had trusted, political inside advocates which their Canadian co-nationals lacked. Labour Members of

Parliament liaised with the office of the Foreign Secretary and petitioned his office directly on behalf of Tamil diaspora elites, including leveraging contentious action to bring greater pressure to bear on government. Thirdly, while both Tamil communities are concentrated strategically in constituencies, only the British Tamil diaspora was viewed as politically salient for the governing party at this time. Finally, as later shown Chapter V, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in the UK was a potent rival constituency, arguing against the preferences of Tamil diaspora interest groups. However, the Labour government chose to act in line with diaspora preferences despite their not being aligned with its foreign policy interests. In Canada, rival constituencies had little impact and were not consequential to the government's disinclination toward diaspora interests.

Finally, this chapter argues that the United Kingdom expended its leverage in the international community to its fullest extent, including through efforts to bring the issue to the United Nations security council. It also put great strain on its important bilateral relationship with Sri Lanka. In contrast, the Canadian government was unable to take action internationally due to its comparatively weak status, but when given the opportunity to similarly admonish the Sri Lankan government directly it neglected to do so.

Chapter VII - Canada and the United Kingdom causal comparison (2013): The aftermath of conflict and transnational activism for justice

In the second empirical chapter of this inquiry, I consider decision-making processes in the host countries leading up to the 2013 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka. I open this chapter by describing the context in Sri Lanka following the end of the civil war which provided the impetus for continued

diaspora activism. The Rajapakse government continued to persecute the Tamil population through forced disappearances and other repressive measures, as well as restricting a number of fundamental rights and freedoms. Additionally, despite considerable external pressure, the government also resisted calls to implement a transitional justice process and continued to view the Tamil diaspora as a conflict actor.

The second section describes how the end of the civil war also substantively impacted the Tamil diaspora and its organisations in Canada and the United Kingdom through the formation of new diaspora organisations, including transnational ones in the form of the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) and the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE). Additionally, it will argue that Tamil diaspora interest groups enhanced their leverage with domestic political actors due to deeper penetration into the host country's political parties, especially governing conservative parties. These overtures to conservative parties were met by increased interest in diaspora communities on the part of Tory strategists, who saw them as a means of garnering an expanded voter base.

The third section of this chapter presents the casual sequence encapsulating this period's foreign policy decision-point: attendance at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2013. Scheduled to take place in Colombo, Sri Lanka Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and UK Prime Minister David Cameron faced significant pressure from Tamil diaspora interest groups to boycott the summit. As he had warned he might in 2011, Prime Minister Harper opted to boycott the summit. By contrast, Prime Minister Cameron attended the summit, but used the opportunity to cast a spotlight on the Sri Lankan government's human rights record and treatment of Tamils causing the Rajapakse regime substantial embarrassment.

The application of the theoretical framework to these events returns a number of deviations from the previous cases. Firstly, a 'sea-change' took place in this period in the relationship between Tamil diaspora interest groups and conservative parties both through interest groups building inroads into the parties and conservative parties' viewing the Tamil diaspora as more salient. Secondly, diaspora strategy became more sophisticated; in Canada, contentious outside lobbying was far less consequential as inside access to government became more reliable. Similarly, in the UK the Tamil diaspora relied more on political pressure rather than contentious action. Thirdly, the Sri Lankan government sought to become a more powerful rival constituency but was unable to turn sympathies away from Tamil diaspora interest groups. However, the FCO in the UK had more success in this case than in the last one in countering Tamil diaspora interest group preferences. Fourthly, regarding policy alignment, the Canadian Tamil diaspora found itself entirely aligned with the Conservative government at this stage, leading to a number of positive changes. However, as in the last case, Tamil diaspora interest group preferences were not aligned with the UK's, leading to the attendance of the Prime Minister at the summit.

Finally, in looking at Canada's and the UK's roles at the Commonwealth, this chapter concludes by arguing that Canada's less dominant role in the institution allowed it to boycott the summit without putting the institution at existential risk. In contrast, no amount of diaspora pressure could have prevented the UK from attending the summit given the UK's dominant position within it. However, I conclude this chapter by arguing that Tamil diaspora interest groups in fact had more influence in the UK, as they were able to extract a number of substantive concessions from the government during the Prime Minister's visit.

Chapter VIII - Conclusion: Diasporas are a force in foreign affairs, so what's next?

Following the restatement of the research puzzle, the second section begins by summarising the conceptual contributions this project makes in the literature review, which is the tying together of the diasporas and interest group literatures through the construction of the concept: 'Tamil diaspora interest group' as well as inclusion of the transnational literature. Secondly, it summarises the causal factors I set out to explore within the case studies.

The third section takes up the arguments I laid out in the empirical background chapter. Firstly, it was reported by Tamil activists in the 2000s that a 'chilling effect' limited advocacy in both countries following the proscription of the LTTE in the 2000s. Later analyses demonstrate this to have been the case and it detrimentally impacted Tamil diaspora interest groups in 2009, especially in Canada. Secondly, this section introduced literature arguing that the settlement and integration processes in Canada should have led to the creation of Tamil diaspora interest groups earlier in this country than in the UK. However, the chilling effect following the LTTE's proscription rendered these early advantages irrelevant as both diasporas had to rebuild their credibility. Finally, in looking at foreign policy processes, it was expected that Canada's should be more porous due to its less influential bureaucracy. However, while the FCO was a powerful rival constituency in the UK, Tamil diaspora interest groups were still more influential in the UK than in Canada.

The fourth section revisits the conclusions of Chapter VI and VII where the theoretical framework was applied to the decision-making causal sequences and compared against one another. In summary, my investigation argues that Tamil

diaspora interest groups have had influence over both host countries' foreign policy toward Sri Lanka, with varying degrees of success. In respect of the existing literature on diasporas and foreign policy, this analysis concludes that diasporas must be viewed as credible by governments; they must be politically salient in view of the government as well as concentrated in political districts; policy alignment with the host country is not always necessary to achieve influence; partisan, inside advocates are consequential with regard to penetrating policymaking processes; and, contentious lobbying strategies are far more effective when there are inside advocates in place to leverage them. Finally, the international roles played by Canada and the UK act as constraints on government decision-making; for instance, permitting Canada to act in line with Tamil diaspora interest preferences in Chapter VII, while restricting the British government from doing the same.

The final section of the chapter concludes with projections for future research opportunities. Firstly, further precision might be added and greater generalizability acquired through the addition of more cases and the application of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). There are enough country cases with sufficiently large diaspora populations to build a mid-sized set of cases which would be ideal for a QCA analysis. Secondly, a most different case design could be brought to bear on this question by looking at the Tamil diaspora in countries such as the US, Switzerland or Norway, where the Tamil diaspora is large but proportionally smaller than the UK and Canada and where there are clear systemic differences. Thirdly, a comparative analysis of two diasporas compared against one another in one of the host countries, such as the Jewish or Sikh diasporas, would add further understanding of what distinguishes diaspora interest groups. Finally, having added further empirical substance to the

question if diaspora interest group influence in the UK and Canada, further scholarship may wish to consider normative questions, such as are these groups compromising the national interest?

The below literature review begins the exploration of existing scholarship in this area and creates a number of useful concepts which will be employed throughout the dissertation, beginning by defining the Tamil diaspora.

Chapter II - Literature review

Tamil diaspora interest groups, transnationalism and foreign policy influence

This chapter proceeds in two sections. Firstly, the existing literature speaks often of an 'diaspora' as a unitary actor pressuring governments, but descriptive inquiries demonstrate the concerted efforts of formalised diaspora interest groups. For this reason, I begin this chapter by disaggregating three integral concepts: 'diaspora', 'interest group' and 'transnational network', constructing a working definition of 'transnational Tamil diaspora interest group' which is employed throughout the rest of the dissertation. Diaspora interest groups share some of the same characteristics as other interest groups, with some important distinctions.

Secondly, through the analysis of diasporas such as the Irish, Jewish and Cuban diasporas in the United States, as well as the Turkish and Armenian diasporas in Europe, scholars have already identified a number of relevant characteristics possessed by diasporas which are considered determining factors for whether or not they will influence policymaking. Actor characteristics and institutional determinants such as diaspora size, resources, alignment with existing policy preferences and the presence of rival groups are presented and categorised with the help of the interest group literature. The interest group literature also explores the strategies available to diaspora interest groups such as direct lobbying and outside, contentious activism.

Conceptualising 'transnational Tamil diaspora interest groups'

Exploring the phenomena of interest in this inquiry cannot be undertaken without first building a solid conceptual understanding of the key actor in question: 'transnational

Tamil diaspora interest groups'. This section unpacks three conceptual components of this term: 'Tamil diaspora', 'interest group' and 'transnational' with a view to creating a term which can be confidently operationalised in the empirical sections. With this in mind, I argue firstly that the Tamil diaspora is an archetypal, largely conflict-driven, stateless, victim diaspora having an antagonistic relationship with the home-state. Secondly, interest groups led by the Tamil diaspora share some characteristics associated with conventional interest groups, but differ fundamentally in others and I offer a definition on this basis. Finally, I argue that Tamil diaspora interest groups are also inherently transnational, especially through the strategies they pursue which often involve a "top down" approach whereby pressure is put on the homeland via host country governments.

What is the 'Tamil diaspora'?

The first conceptual component of the subject-matter of interest is the 'Tamil diaspora', the grievance-bearing constituency seeking to alter host-country foreign policy to align with its preferences. Problematically, semantic ambiguity has long surrounded the concept of 'diaspora', with some scholars arguing the term has been too loosely applied and become anaemic as a result (Cohen, 2008: x; Brubaker, 2005). Others have sought to bring clarity to the concept by imposing conditions on what immigrant communities should be included under the diaspora umbrella term, with most using the Jewish and sometimes Greek and Armenian diasporas as the "classical" or archetypal diaspora cases (Brazier, 2008: 38; Cohen, 2008: 6). There have also been useful attempts to categorise diasporas, usually developed on the basis of their method of migration from home country to host

country.¹ These categorizations range from a dichotomous taxonomy like victim and non-victim diasporas, while others are considerably more multifarious.

Along with the Jewish diaspora, the literature's focus on the Sikh diaspora provides a relevant parallel with the Tamil diaspora, which critically shares with the Jewish and Sikh diaspora a geographically and spiritually situated idealised homeland, (Cohen 2008: 114, Fair 2005). Dufoix (2008:66; 2003) distinguishes diasporas in their relations with the homeland, including those having an "antagonistic" relationship, whereby the diaspora seeks to "liberate" their existing or imagined homeland, and additionally points to the important distinction between stateless and state-linked diasporas.

State-linked diasporas are generally larger, less cohesive and are not likely to have an antagonistic relationship with the home country, such as the German or Italian diasporas in North America. On the other hand, stateless diasporas like the Tamil diaspora are likely to be more unified and assertive in their collective activities. Lyons (2007: 10) identifies conflict-generated diasporas such as the Palestinians from the Middle East, the Kurdish diaspora or the Sikhs from the Indian subcontinent. Given that the vast majority of Tamil emigres arrived in the UK and Canada as refugees fleeing Sri Lanka's civil war, they are an exemplar of this type. Furthermore, the Tamil diaspora in the context of this dissertation should also be considered a 'far' diaspora, meaning members are largely geographically distant from the homeland, rather than a 'near' diaspora.²

¹ This inquiry will continue to apply the term 'home country' or 'homeland' to refer to the diaspora country of origin and 'host country' to refer to the country in which the diaspora currently resides. While Um (2007) has made a convincing argument for rejecting it from a transnational standpoint, its utility in the political context is inescapable.

² It must be pointed out that many Sri Lankan Tamils fled to nearby Tamil Nadu, on the southern tip of India, where Tamil is the majority language and Indians of Tamil extraction have lived for centuries (Venugopal,

According to Cohen's (2008: 17) nine 'common features of diaspora' the Tamil diaspora in Canada and the UK can confidently be situated into the diaspora literature as a stateless, mostly conflict-generated, victim diaspora whose members originated largely as refugees, are dispersed far from the homeland and who can be said to have an antagonistic relationship with their home-state. The Tamil diaspora in both Canada and the United Kingdom meet the basic conditions set out by scholars in the literature to be defined as an "archetypal" or "classical" diaspora, summarised by Cohen (2008: 177) as the traumatic dispersal from an original homeland and the salience of the homeland in the collective memory of a forcibly dispersed group.

However, as Amarasingam (2013) and Wayland (2003, 2004) have noted, a Tamil diaspora did exist in Canada and the UK prior to the beginning of the civil war. Many Tamils arriving since the 1950s were economic migrants from the higher economic strata of Tamil society in Sri Lanka, entering the learned professions such as law, medicine, academia and others (Zulfika, 2014: 110). As will be described in Chapter V, the organisation within the Tamil community in response to the conflict began at a nascent stage in both countries with these earlier waves, but interest groups quickly came to be dominated by refugee migrants following 1983.

It is not intellectually expedient for this project to separate the British and Canadian Tamil diaspora into 'two diasporas': Conflict-generated and non-conflict generated, for two reasons. Firstly, as will be demonstrated in later chapters, early activism, and activism

2006). As the focus of this inquiry is on Tamils in the British and Canadian contexts, the experience of the Tamil diaspora located in Tamil Nadu will not be considered by the project.

which continued well after many refugees began arriving in Canada and the UK was led by or certainly supported by members of the Tamil diaspora who had arrived before the war in Sri Lanka began. This separate migratory experience caused tension, but for the purposes of this inquiry, which is focused on activism, these strands of the diaspora can be taken together given their common objectives of campaigning for Tamil rights, for an independent homeland and for the alleviation of Tamil hardship both in Sri Lanka and in the host countries.

Secondly, it is not useful to sub-divide the Tamil diaspora into ‘mobilised’ and ‘non-mobilised’ for the purposes of this inquiry. Undoubtedly, at various periods there were members of the Tamil community who did not engage in activism for a variety of reasons, including preoccupation with settlement and integration issues, fear of reprisal from host country governments or for a desire to separate themselves from the conflict both physically and later while in the host country.³ The emphasis is on diaspora interest groups, which assumes that those engaged as professional members, volunteers or as grassroots protesters (i.e. those writing letters or signing petitions) are to some extent mobilised.⁴

For the purposes of this inquiry, the Tamil diaspora in Canada and the UK is a largely conflict-driven, stateless, victim diaspora having an antagonistic relationship with the home-state. I focus on members of the diaspora who are in part mobilised and have

³ Throughout the project, the term “Tamil community” will be used interchangeably with “Tamil diaspora” as in interviews with activists and those being engaged by interest groups similarly refer to the “Tamil community” as often as “Tamil diaspora” as common parlance.

⁴ For a comprehensive discussion on diaspora mobilisation, see Koinova (2011).

become activists, either at the elite level of Tamil diaspora interest groups or grassroots members who have been made active by them.

What is a 'diaspora interest group'?

As with the concept of diaspora, 'interest group' has often been ill-defined and yet is used frequently across sub-fields under many synonyms like 'pressure group' or 'lobby group'. Before discussing diaspora interest groups, the latter term must also be clarified by briefly reviewing the conceptualisation of interest groups and defining 'diaspora interest group'. The following section discusses the conventional characteristics of interest groups and disaggregates those criteria with variations inherent in diaspora interest groups.

Debate in the literature on what organised interests should be considered interest groups ranges from Truman (1954), Wilson (1990) and Richardson (1993) who broadly define an interest group as any organization advocating its interests to government. Others argue for limits, such as the exclusion of institutions and corporations from what should be defined as interest groups (Jordan et al., 2004). For the purposes of this project, Jordan et al. (2004) put forward a useful set of criteria for interest groups which can be used as the basis for defining diaspora interest groups, including Tamil diaspora interest groups.

Firstly, Jordan et al. (2014) argue that interest groups are only organised for a specific collective political end, such as the abolition of slavery or global nuclear disarmament. Following from this, the goal must be attainable and the group will likely disband following the realisation of the objective; interest groups as part of the suffragette movement seeking votes for women would be considered such groups. Secondly, interest groups must be non-governmental bodies and they must not be seeking to form a

government themselves.⁵ Thirdly, interest groups are representative groups, but their objective is not principally to elect representatives to parliament with a view to forming government, but this may be a strategy employed by them.⁶ Finally, interest groups possess formal, normally voluntary membership which has some control over the leadership, likely through internal democratic processes such as the annual election of board members. The bulk of interest group resources are often derived from the membership, which is partly how their ownership over the organisation is derived.⁷

‘Diaspora interest groups’ retain some of the above criteria, but others do not necessarily apply. A working set of criteria for diaspora interest groups involves varying the above criteria where uniquely appropriate to diaspora interest groups. Firstly, diaspora interest groups are not necessarily impermanent bodies driven solely by one issue. Diaspora interest groups might be associated with one issue area, such as the Jewish diaspora’s activism on behalf of Israel and the Tamil diaspora’s for Tamil Eelam, but these groups often petition government on a range of issues, including settlement and immigration issues.⁸ Diaspora interest groups are more often permanent bodies, with evolving and changing advocacy agendas.

⁵ For instance, arms-length government boards or other levels of government within the state such as municipalities, despite seeking to extract concessions from government, are not interest groups; the resources, legitimacy and membership of these state actors are not divorced from the apparatus of government.

⁶ For instance, Green parties which emphasise environmental issues are not interest groups as their *raison d’être* is to advance their issues through electing members, rather than to petition government.

⁷ In exchange for membership, voting rights are often conferred and members have the right to influence the policy direction and objectives of the group. Labour groups are examples of interest groups which operate in this way.

⁸ Issues are given priority through consultation with members of the diaspora, sometimes through local bodies in a federated model, as is the case with the British Tamil Forum (Personal communications, British Tamil Forum, 2015).

Secondly, diaspora interest groups are also non-governmental bodies seeking to influence the policies of host country governments and are not attempting to become government. However, as in the case of Tamils for Labour or Labour Friends of Israel, diaspora interest groups may adopt the strategy of gaining influence through the selection of candidates, supporting candidates aligned with the preferences of the group or to defeat candidates who do not reflect those preferences (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015).

Thirdly, membership is drawn principally if not exclusively from members of the diaspora community itself and is done on a largely voluntary basis, such that financial contributions are not necessary and certificates of membership or other formal conferences of membership are not issued. However, funding for diaspora interest groups is often drawn from the membership, which raises questions of legitimacy. Rather than being legitimised through their stand on specific issues of policy, as an environmental interest group may be, diaspora interest groups are viewed as being representative of their specific set of ethno-religious constituents. In the case of Tamil interest groups, they must be seen to represent the 'views of Tamils' to authority figures, rather than just reflecting a set of policy preferences (Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Labour, 2015). This legitimacy is achieved through an apparatus that connects interest groups to the grassroots, such as the British Tamil Forum's network of councils or the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' connection to Canada's Jewish federations (Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, 2018).⁹

⁹ This distinction is of great consequence, as one of the key strengths of diaspora interest groups are their

'Diaspora interest groups' can thusly be defined as permanent, representative, non-governmental entities which are not seeking to form government, have no fixed agenda of issues, derive legitimacy from infrastructure set up to connect with diaspora grassroots and have no formal mechanisms for conferring membership, but are based on a sense of ethno-cultural belonging. Broadly speaking, diaspora interest group objectives normally comprise efforts to improve the lot of diaspora members in the host country or to work toward goals in the imagined or existing homeland.

Another deviation from the above criteria is that diaspora interest groups are also transnational in nature. The following section delves more deeply into this final aspect of diaspora interest groups, as the transnational nature of diaspora interest groups is an important distinction from some other domestic interest groups.

Are Tamil diaspora interest groups inherently transnational?

This inquiry's focus is principally on the actions of domestically oriented Tamil diaspora interest groups, but diaspora interest groups are inherently transnational, which has implications for the analyses in the empirical chapters. This final conceptual section does three things: Firstly, I argue that conceptualising diaspora interest groups as 'ethnic' interest groups is inaccurate. Secondly, the literature's security-oriented lens used to

ability to mobilise very large numbers of their membership to take action, including through voting, on issues which are deeply important to its membership (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015). Whereas more conventional, issues-based interest groups have members who may prioritise other issues over those advanced by the interest group when voting or taking action. For instance, while human rights may be a primary concern for Amnesty International members, they may prioritise issues more pertinent to their immediate concerns such as tax reform or health insurance. However, members of a diaspora may consider the issues facing it as a collective of equal or greater weight than those immediate concerns facing all voters.

consider the LTTE is not useful in application to post-LTTE organisations. Thirdly, I argue that conceptualising diaspora interest groups as transnational is pertinent for two reasons, firstly with reference to shared identity frames and secondly through institutionally transnational legitimisation. Finally, I argue that Tamil diaspora interest groups should be considered transnational as a function of the strategies they adopt in putting pressure on the Sri Lankan government via host country governments.

Firstly, a principal distinction between ‘ethnic interest groups’ and ‘transnational diaspora interest groups’ is that membership in the latter is self-ascribed (Vertovec, 2005). The existing scholarship contends that diaspora groups do not make a clear break with the homeland, which distinguishes them from the ‘ethnic group’ concept (Landolt, 2008); rather, individual members of the Tamil diaspora abroad voluntarily associate themselves with a transnational diaspora, or they do not. Transnational Tamil diaspora interest groups cannot claim to give voice to Tamils as an ethnicity, but rather as Tamils who self-ascribe to being a member of a transnational diaspora community of Tamils who retain an emotional connection to their idealised homeland: Tamil Eelam.

Secondly, transnational analyses of the Tamil diaspora have rightly historically focused on the extensive transnational networks developed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the blurring of security concerns internal *and* external to the state (Adamson, 2005; Lahneman, 2005). Fair (2005) argued that it was the transnational nature of the LTTE which allowed it to evade pressure from host countries for as long as it did. The LTTE as a borderless security threat is instructive and will feature in my own discussion in Chapter V. However, this inquiry’s case studies are focused on the post-LTTE

era, when new types of transnational Tamil organisations developed. While the Sri Lankan government has made efforts to frame Tamil diaspora interest groups in the West as a security threat (Sri Lanka Campaign for Justice, 2014), contemporary Tamil diaspora interest groups resemble to a far greater extent domestic representative entities adopting legitimate, democratic strategies to exert pressure rather than violent means in the host country or homeland.

Alternatively, Tamil diaspora interest groups should be considered transnational in two separate, but related ways: Firstly, diaspora interest groups are constructed by diaspora identity entrepreneurs through the use of identity frames based on transnational networks with co-nationals abroad, shared narratives of dispersion and through maintaining a connection to a real or imagined homeland (Adamson, 2012: 34; 2007; Brubaker, 2005; Guarnizo, 2003; Kenny, 2000). Diaspora organisations such as those operated by the Ukrainian, Jewish and Tamil diaspora exist fundamentally as operationalised outgrowths of these identity frames. In this way, all of the Tamil diaspora interest groups I reference in this project should be considered transnational.

Secondly, some diaspora interest groups may also be institutionally transnational in operation as well. Taking the Jewish diaspora as an example, the Commonwealth Jewish Council (CJC), which is headquartered in London, United Kingdom, is legitimised through being formally affiliated with other Jewish diaspora organisations based in Commonwealth member countries (Commonwealth Jewish Council, 2018). The CJC exists to represent other Jewish diaspora organisations at the transnational level, in this case within the Commonwealth. Thusly, the CJC is both transnational in its use of the same ethno-religious

identity frames used by domestic Jewish organisations, and also through it being a transnational body legitimised by the membership of other Jewish diaspora organisations.

Finally, diaspora interest groups can also be considered transnational through the strategies they adopt. At the same time as Shain (1995) and Huntington (1997) put forth their formative works on diasporas in the policy opaqueness of the post-Cold War era, Keck and Sikkink (1999) introduced their seminal work on transnational advocacy networks (TANs). In response to the breakdown of the traditional bipolar order, the authors mothball staid, bipolar alignments: Specifically, a rejection of the agent / structure dichotomy and the domestic / international dichotomy. In approaching transnational actors, they argue these moulds handicap scholarship.

Keck and Sikkink (1999: 13) do not deny that transnational advocacy networks seek to modify state behaviour, and they also assert that channels of influence and opportunity windows, such as legislatures and the bureaucracy, originate at the domestic level. However, their analysis transcends the domestic when they argue that advocacy networks broaden their campaign frames to attract allies internationally with a view to compelling target states from the “top down” in what they call the “boomerang effect”. As well as rejecting the domestic / international artifice, their analysis lends itself to a combined focus on agents, the advocacy networks, and the political structures which constrain their efforts.

Keck and Sikkink (1999: 16) define a transnational advocacy network as:

... those actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services.

Levitt (2001) identifies social fields which define diaspora modes of connection such as economic, cultural and political modes, as well as distinguishing between high

(international) and low (community) transnational fields. As Levitt looks at diaspora influence on homeland politics, Østergaard-Nielsen (2003; 2001) adopts a similar line of enquiry in Europe and identifies two-way 'political transnational practices' of diaspora groups: Direct cross-border participation in the home country, such as voting and fundraising and indirect participation via the institutions of their host country.

This project is situated within the political social field that Levitt describes and focuses on the indirect participation in home country politics via host country institutions. I also intend to consider Keck and Sikkink's 'Boomerang Effect', as I will argue that the end of the civil war and the struggle for a Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka led to the transitioning of advocacy exclusively to the transnational field: Tamil diaspora interest groups were expected to lobby host country governments to campaign internationally for the creation of Tamil Eelam. Through the adoption of this strategy, Tamil diaspora interest groups must further be conceptualised as transnational.

To summarise, diaspora interest groups are inherently transnational because they operate across borders through de-territorialized social spaces and networks, maintaining linkages with members in their homeland and those in other host countries; diaspora identity-entrepreneurs use transnational identity frames to construct interest groups, such as continued identification with the real or imagined homeland and through shared narratives of dispersion; some Tamil diaspora interest groups are legitimised through being institutionally transnational, comprised of a membership of other diaspora interest groups; and, finally, Tamil diaspora interest groups should be considered transnational as a function of the "top down" strategies they employ to put pressure on the homeland via

the host country.

The first section of this chapter argues that the ‘Tamil diaspora’ is best defined as a largely conflict-driven, stateless, victim diaspora having an antagonistic relationship with the home-state. In the second section, I conceptualised ‘diaspora interest group’ as permanent, representative, non-governmental entities which are not seeking to form government, have no fixed agenda of issues, derive legitimacy from infrastructure set up to connect with the grassroots and have no formal mechanisms for conferring membership. Finally, I argued that diaspora interest groups are inherently transnational and should be separated from earlier conceptualisations of ethnic interest groups and that security-oriented frames relevant for the LTTE are no longer useful. Rather, Tamil diaspora interest groups should be considered transnational as they are constructed through the use of identity frames, through institutionalised transnational membership and through the “top down” transnational strategies they pursue to put pressure on the homeland government.

Diasporas and host-country foreign policy impact

Having conceptualised the actor of interest for this project, in this second section I consider the literature on diasporas and foreign policy to situate this project within existing empirical debates and argue that it is best situated in the exiting strand of ‘empirical’ research rather than more normative discussions. The second part of this section extracts from the existing scholarship the determinants, or ‘causal factors’, that determine if and how diasporas impact foreign policy. The upcoming empirical chapters will isolate these factors and determine their impact on the cases discussed. It will also add

to these and challenge existing assumptions about the interrelations between factors, but first this chapter will explicate on what has already been uncovered by existing scholarship.

Tamil diaspora interest group influence: A question of 'whether' rather than 'should'

Scholars have been discussing the extent to which diasporas influence host country politics since the 1970s. Armstrong's (1976) primarily functional foray analysing diasporas in the political sciences attempts to give categorical structure to the subject-matter, in response former Senator Charles Mathias (1981) instigates a more normative discussion on diaspora influence on U.S. foreign policy, advancing that liberal-democracies are more prone to influence by ethnic diasporas because of their heterogeneity and multiple institutional access points.¹⁰

Huntington (1997) argued that the end of the Cold War brought with it new opportunities for domestic interventions into foreign policy, warning specifically of the domestication of US foreign policy through diasporas influencing priorities, where the benefits become increasingly transnational and represent a cost to the domestic "common good". In his seminal piece, Shain (1995) takes an opposing view, arguing that diaspora groups are well-positioned to export American values abroad and their policy preferences often align with broader U.S. objectives. This normative debate asks the question: Does

¹⁰ Armstrong segments diasporas into 'mobilized' and 'situational' and posited a number of hypotheses related to the character of diasporas and political elites.

diaspora influence in host country foreign-policymaking compromise the national interest?¹¹

A more recent debate in the normative diaspora literature is where this field merges into the extensive literature on civil wars and whether diasporas are best described as perpetrators of conflict or part of the solution. Orjuela's (2008) descriptive analysis of the Tamil diaspora finds they are likelier to contribute to conflict continuation, while Koinova's (2011) research contends that diasporas may also play a moderating influence. Smith and Stares (2007) edited volume on the subject crystallised the debate with scholars on both sides demonstrating that the role of diasporas in conflict perpetuation or resolution is very much case dependent.

While enticing, these normative strands are not where this inquiry is best situated. This project follows in the tradition of scholarship which speaks directly to the empirical literature on the question of whether or not diaspora interest groups are substantively impacting foreign policy at all, or if other factors better explain decisions. For instance, Saideman (2001) begins to unpack conditions by which diasporas are more or less likely to influence foreign policy, a theme added to by Ogelman et al. (2002) who compare the Turkish diaspora in Germany and the Cuban diaspora in the U.S.

Most extensive studies into the phenomena of diaspora groups influencing foreign policy is centred in the United States. Ambrosio's (2002) collection of case studies of ethnic lobbies in the U.S. throughout the last half century builds a picture of the dramatically increasing importance of these groups and their capacity to "capture" American foreign

¹¹ For the Canadian context, see Granatstein (2008).

policy. Also with a focus on the U.S., Redd and Rubenzer (2010) are among the first to quantitatively test existing hypotheses related to diasporas and foreign policy influence, finding that a diaspora's proclivity to vote likely garners them more capital than their size.

With respect to the Tamil case in particular, Amarasingam (2015), Godwin (2012), Fair (2005), Lahneman (2005) and Wayland (2003, 2004) provide descriptive analyses of the Canadian Tamil diaspora and look at how influential they have been on Canadian foreign policy *vis a vis* the conflict in Sri Lanka. Specifically, these analyses contribute through describing the capacity of the Tamil diaspora as it pertains to its ability to influence foreign policy. Speaking directly to my question, a recent contribution by Seligman (2016) describes the changing foreign policy approach of the Harper government since the beginning of the Conservative Party's mandate in 2006. Seligman argues that the Tories were initially cool to Tamil diaspora preferences, owing to its association with the LTTE. However, following the defeat of the LTTE and the Conservative Party's wider ethnic outreach strategy, the Harper government became demonstrably more sympathetic to Tamil diaspora preferences.

Carment and Landry (2011) return the debate in Canada to a normative lens and argue that recent Canadian governments have increasingly sought political favour from diasporas through orienting Canadian foreign policy toward the preferences of diaspora communities, referring specifically to the Jewish and Tamil diasporas in Canada.

Some of the questions discussed above are of a normative nature, such as whether or not diaspora advocacy compromises the national interest or if they are 'peace-makers or peace-wreckers' in the context of civil wars. These debates are contentious, important and

still ongoing. However, there is another strand of scholarship in this literature asking more empirically oriented questions, such as how do diasporas influence foreign policy? If they do, when does this take place and what conditions are advantageous or disadvantageous? Given that these empirical questions regarding the Tamil diaspora remain largely unaddressed in the UK and underexplored in Canada, my contribution is to help fill this gap, leaving more normative questions to future scholarship.

Furthermore, I speak specifically to the question of diaspora interest group influence in parliamentary democracies, but unlike the aforementioned, I take a comparative approach, analysing one diaspora interest group landscape in Canada and the United Kingdom to ascertain what causal factors in each case specifically abet or hinder Tamil diaspora interest group influence and whether or not the policy process is being impacted by their activism.

The empirical strand in the above literature has uncovered a number of determinants believed to impact diaspora interest group influence. The next section reviews some of these contributions, categorised through the aid of the interest group literature, with an emphasis on the isolation of potentially causal factors.

Determinants of diaspora interest group influence

This inquiry is best situated into the tradition questioning the influence of diaspora interest groups on foreign policy decision-making; it is therefore useful to consider how the interest group literature, which is not often taken in tandem with the diaspora literature, categorises factors which are likely to impact interest group success. Dür (2008), identifies

four determinants of interest group success: Interest group resources, the political institutions they operate within, the characteristics of the policy field in which they are active and interest group strategies. It is through similar categories that the various factors elucidated in the existing literature are grouped below.

The first set of factors are considered 'actor characteristics' which are elements inherent to the diaspora and diaspora interest groups. Such factors include the size of the diaspora; the concentration of the diaspora within political districts and the resources available to the diaspora, such as institutional capacity (i.e. permanent interest group staff) and financial resources. Secondly, 'institutional factors' are discussed because they can limit and enhance points of access, or political opportunities (Giugni, 2004: 21).

Institutional permeability refers to factors such as voting rights and the openness of the policy process for specific policy issues. Contained within the institutional permeability category are considerations regarding characteristics of the specific issue, which may determine the extent to which interest group preferences can be reflected in government policy, i.e. do the preferences of the interest group align with the policy objectives of the government? Finally, what strategies the interest group chooses to deploy are determinants of success, in particular the intersection between elite level modes of pressure and collective action strategies. The below discussion begins by considering actor characteristics.

Actor characteristics of diaspora interest groups

Firstly, *diaspora actor characteristics* are determinants which the literature argues explain why, or why not, interest groups are able to impact foreign policy as a function of those determinants inherent to the diaspora and/or their interest groups (Landolt, 2008; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Ogelman et al., 2002). Diaspora mobilisation, size, numerical significance in parliamentary constituencies, political salience, diaspora interest group financial and institutional resources, group homogeneity and learning are all determinants which are inherent to diaspora interest groups.

Diasporic mobilisation is the extent to which interest groups are able to draw on the support of their grassroots more broadly (Koinova, 2011; Redd and Rubenzer, 2010; Shain and Barth, 2003; Saideman, 2001). The Tamil diaspora may have as many as 400,000 members in Canada, but if the diaspora population cannot be mobilised to support collective preferences, decision-makers are less likely to respond positively to articulated preferences. An illustrative distinction is between the Jewish community, which has demonstrated its ability to mobilise around specific issues, and the Chinese diaspora which is far less able to mobilise around diaspora issues.

Related to diaspora mobilisation is the *size of the diaspora*, and the role of this factor is still in contention. Scholars have argued that being a proportionally small minority allows for greater group cohesion and limits the potential for rival constituencies to emerge and oppose elite preferences (Olson, 1993; Ogelman et al., 2002). However, other scholars (Uslaner, 2012) have advanced that larger diasporas are more influential because they are viewed politically as more potent constituencies. Ultimately, this is a relative, context-dependent question as it depends on how large the country population is and how

relatively large the diaspora in question is in comparison to others. Regardless, the diaspora has to be large enough to form a coherent organisational apparatus and to communicate its preferences (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016), so for this reason I contend that a 'large' diaspora is advantageous to diaspora interest groups.

Related to size and mobilisation is *numerical significance within parliamentary constituencies*. Scholars overwhelmingly agree that diaspora interest groups are at a significant advantage when they can call upon the grassroots to vote based on policies toward homeland issues and that, further, those members have enough clout to influence the outcome of a particular electoral contest (Redd and Rubenzer, 2010; Geislerova, 2007; Saideman, 2001; Mathias, 1981). In a First-Past-the-Post system, having a large but dispersed diaspora may not be viewed by government as strategically consequential because their numbers are too small in individual constituencies where each electoral contest is fought, while regionally concentrated diasporas are expected to have more leverage at the political level, as has been argued is the case for the American Cuban diaspora.

In reference to capacity, the literature argues that the extent of *diaspora group resources*, i.e. capacity to donate, community infrastructure and community networks, among other factors are important considerations in explaining possible influence (Landolt, 2008; Fair, 2005; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Diaspora mobilisation with respect to grassroots engagement is one element of capacity, but another element is the extent to which diaspora interest groups have requisite knowledge of political systems and political

capital; have financial resources to print literature, distribute letters to Parliamentarians and spend time at the seat of government; as well as organise political events. All of these considerations are bound up in whether or not diaspora interest groups are well-resourced.

Building on political concentration, but less often referenced is the degree to which diasporas are viewed as *politically salient* by decision-makers. As Ogelman et al. (2002) note with regard to the Cuban diaspora in Florida, the constituencies in which the diaspora are concentrated must be considered strategically significant by decision-makers. If the government does not believe it can garner support from a specific diaspora, it will be less likely to respond sympathetically to its demands.

The literature argues that *diaspora group homogeneity* is critical in providing a united front to government (Ogelman et al, 2002). If there is ideological or organisational discord within the diaspora in the same host country, especially when the diaspora has multiple interest groups claiming to represent it and working at cross-purposes, this can greatly reduce the strength of the diaspora to have its preferences represented in government policy. Related to group homogeneity, and not thus far articulated in the literature, is whether or not diasporas are viewed as *credible* by decision-makers. If diaspora interest groups are not seen as legitimate, representative voices of the diaspora decision-makers are less likely to consider their demands.

Previous scholarship has noted that *learning* within interest groups impacts the capacity to influence policy (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Given that this project considers diaspora interest groups over time in both contexts, I will discuss the extent to which they

learned through previous experiences and, the extent to which they have learned from more established diasporas.

Institutional factors and political opportunity structures

While the above actor characteristics are determining factors that affect a group's capacity to influence foreign policy, the institutional framework in which diaspora groups operate determine the possible points of access, or political opportunity structures, through which they are able to exert pressure (Giugni, 2004: 21). Dur (2008) argues that political institutions are an essential structural consideration in the analysis of interest group advocacy and the literature argues that a number of institutional factors are possible determinants of diaspora interest group success, including host country inclusivity, the presence of rival constituencies, alignment with host country foreign policy goals, parliamentary permeability and international role constraints.

Host country inclusivity refers to the capacity for members of the diaspora to participate in the political process, such as their eligibility to gain citizenship, to have the right to vote or to join a political party (Fair, 2005; Lahneman, 2005; Ogelman et al. 2002; Saideman, 2001). Although less tangible, enveloped within this factor is the extent to which diaspora members are able to participate in the partisan political process, such as joining political parties and being able to organise members of the diaspora within political parties, for instance to vote in leadership and constituency nominations.

The presence or absence of *rival constituencies*, normally in the form of a rival diaspora from the same, often contested home country may blunt the ability of diaspora

interest groups to have their preferences reflected in host country foreign policy as they may have countervailing interests (Saideman, 2001). For instance, Palestinian advocacy organisations which are not sympathetic to Israel may form a rival constituency to pro-Israel Jewish interest groups.

In the last decade, scholars have tended to include the degree to which diaspora interest group preferences *align with existing host country foreign policy goals* as a possible institutional factor which might determine their success (Redd and Rubenzer, 2010; Mearsheimer and Walt, 2008: 79; Ambrosio, 2002). These are issue-specific factors; if diaspora interest group preferences reflect those of the government's, scholars argue they are more likely to succeed in advancing their agenda.

I will consider the unique features of parliament and those distinctions between Canada and the UK, by considering *parliamentary permeability* (Redd and Rubenzer, 2010). The institutional variations which may have an impact on access include the extent to which parliament is involved in decision-making and the influence of the bureaucracy. Furthermore, the inquiry will consider opportunities to meet with politicians and civil servants, as well as the ability to impact parliamentary bodies, such as Select Committees.

Finally, the ability for Tamil diaspora interest groups to influence foreign policy is predicated on the international context within which foreign policy decisions are made (Chittick, 1975: 2). Unlike advocacy related exclusively to the domestic context, foreign policy decision-making is institutionally constrained by the capacity for states to act in the international field, whether it is in respect of the international system as a whole, sub-system associations of states or bilateral relationships other states (Chapnick, 2008). In

the cases discussed in the empirical chapters, Tamil diaspora interest groups demanded Canadian and British governments take action through the wider international sphere, for instance at the United Nations Security Council, the Commonwealth of Nations and through their bilateral relationship with Sri Lanka. In order to understand if interest groups were successful in influencing government, government actions need to be analysed within the international fields of interest to ascertain the extent to which they had the capacity to act in line with diaspora group preferences.

With a view to constructing the limits within which Canada and the UK could conceivably act in response to diaspora preferences, I introduce a role theory theoretical lens through which to explicate the institutional international constraints limiting host country behaviour. Role theory was derived out of the bend toward structuralism and could be considered an appendage of the Domestic Structures Approach.¹² The approach has been used more frequently in recent years, including Chafetz et al. (1996) to explain the acquisition of nuclear capabilities and Oppermann (2012) to explain Germany's decision-making on Libyan intervention in 2011. Indeed, Gaskarth (2013) himself uses Role Theory to explain Britain's role in the world. He quotes David McCourt, who describes Role Theory as a "set of expectations about the behaviour of an actor in a given social position." In Role Theory, the 'social position' of the state is its perceived role among other state-actors within the international system, a subset of the international system or in a

¹² Scholars have considered the domestic sources of foreign policy such as pressure groups, the media and public opinion in what is referred to as the Domestic Structures Approach. Scholars identified sources of influence beyond the state's borders from actors such as NGOs and multinational corporations (Rosenau 1984, Gourevitch, 1978). Putnam's (1988) two-level game approach famously incorporated the two sources of influence through considering both internal and external pressures.

bilateral relationship

Role theory's key strength is its ability to analyse and explain state behaviour through the perceived role a state holds, both in the wider international system and in various subfields. Sitting at the intersection between FPA and international relations, role theory incorporates "a process-orientation that joins agents and structures," (Thies, 2009). In essence, role theory is able to cross multiple levels of analysis with a lens on multiple actors because it applies a similar framework for analysing actors at multiple levels. The below vignette illustrates role theory's value for my project:

Canada and France are both members of La Francophonie sub-system association of French-speaking states. The former is a pivotal actor while the latter is the sub-system's dominant actor. A fellow member of La Francophonie, a smaller state in sub-Saharan Africa, is in violation of the sub-system's values and member states are faced with the decision to suspend the member and/or take additional action outside the sub-system.

In this context, the differing roles of Canada and France lead to different foreign policy options. Internationally, Canada is able to exert little to no influence, whereas France can seek to bring the matter forward to the UN Security Council or intervene militarily in the country. At La Francophonie, Canada can be expected to have some leverage with fellow members to encourage suspension, but France is likely to have much more. Finally, with far deeper bilateral ties with the sub-Saharan African state, France will likely have considerably more leverage on the state's government than will Canada, but this also leads to economic concerns for France.

Within France and Canada, members of the sub-Saharan African state's diaspora are demanding these governments take action against the government of their homeland. Canada responds by voting to suspend at La Francophonie, but takes no other action, while France similarly votes for suspension and, it also seeks to take the matter to the UN Security Council, where it is vetoed from the agenda by Russia and China.

As observers determine whether or not the diaspora influenced Canada and France in their respective decisions, they have to take into account the extent to which each state was capable of acting within the three spheres of interest: The international system, the sub-system and bilaterally. If Canada only responds by voting for sanctions at La Francophonie, and France responds similarly but also raises the matter at the UN Security Council, it cannot be concluded based solely on these decisions that the diaspora was more

influential in France than in Canada. Role theory argues that states are constrained at various spheres due to their roles within them and this is of utility to this analysis because Canada and the UK play different roles in international spheres as well as in their bilateral relationship with Sri Lanka – it is only through understanding these role limitations that we can conclude if Tamil diaspora interest groups were able to influence foreign policy outcomes.

Diaspora interest group strategies: Disaggregating contentious and non-contentious strategies of persuasion

Along with actor characteristics inherent to each diaspora and diaspora interest groups, as well as the institutional, political opportunities available to interest groups, achieving influence may also depend on the strategies diaspora activists employ to gain access and leverage with decision-makers. For this reason, I also analyse the strategies undertaken by Tamil diaspora interest groups to influence policymakers and the below section discusses some of these strategies. It pays particular attention to the distinction between non-contentious and contentious strategies, both of which were used by diaspora interest groups to influence decision-making.

Dur (2008) notes four types of lobbying: direct lobbying (Hansen, 1991: 12); outside lobbying, such as campaigns (Kollman, 1998: 4); selection of decision-makers, such as engaging in elections and nominations (Saideman, 2001), or through exercising structural power. My analysis of Tamil diaspora group strategies turns up evidence of activism which can be interpreted through the first three strands Dur puts forward. Firstly, direct lobbying is demonstrated by meetings held between elite members of Tamil diaspora interest

groups and elected officials or bureaucrats, and this strategy features throughout the four cases. Direct lobbying affords interest groups the opportunity to provide information to decision-makers as well as to make emotional appeals (Hansen, 1991: 12). Secondly, strategies to influence the selection of decision-makers refers to the efforts of Tamil diaspora interest groups to either support candidates for office whose preferences align with theirs, or efforts against those standing in opposition. Instances of this type of strategy will also be discussed in the empirical sections.

These first two strategies employed by Tamil diaspora interest groups are considered non-contentious by this inquiry. Diaspora interest groups also engaged in outside lobbying, which was characterised by very large, continuous and contentious demonstrations mostly, but not exclusively in the 2009 decision-making process I analyse. As Kollman (1998: 8) argues in his seminal work on outside lobbying, these strategies as employed by interest groups vary in their effect and can have negative consequences for interest group preferences. The inclusion of the below literature on contentious politics aids in defining actors involved in claims-making, the type of contentious action employed and the nexus of interaction between actors.

Firstly, contentious politics has been defined as actions which are, “episodic rather than continuous, occurs in public, involves interaction between makers of claims and others, is recognized by those others as bearing on their interests, and brings in government as mediator, target, or claimant,” (McAdam et al., 2001: 5). In this project, claims-makers are Tamil diaspora activists and, in most cases, Tamil diaspora interest groups which make claims privately to government decision-makers as representatives of

the Tamil diaspora or a constituency within it. However, these interest groups also engage in public claims-making through organising demonstrations and can in this way also be included as actors in contentious politics.

Regarding the other component of this definition, the Canadian federal government and the British central government are exclusively the targets of claims-making in the cases explored in the empirical chapters. Tamil demonstrators in both cases did direct grievances toward others targets, such as the United Nations and the United States, but I am concerned with the response of these governments specifically as the principal targets for claims-making.

Secondly, McAdam et al. (2001: 7) discuss what is meant by “institutional” and “unconventional” contention. Institutional contention is contention where the groups and the actions are largely routinized in their frequency, claims and with respect to the target of claims-making. An example of institutional contention would be the nuclear disarmament movement in the 1960s, which witnessed regular demonstrations over a long period of time voicing similar demands and directed at consistent targets. An example of unconventional claims-making might be anti-globalisation protests taking place at a Group of 7 summit given these demonstrations are likely not a regular occurrence in the jurisdiction in which they are located. This distinction with regard to Tamil diaspora demonstrations will be explored in Chapter VI.¹³

¹³ Porta and Tarrow (2005: 2) refer to ‘domestication’, “the playing out on domestic territory of conflicts that have their origin externally”. The impetus for Tamil diaspora collective action is derived externally, from events in Sri Lanka such as the violent end to the conflict in 2009. However, the application of this term to the cases explored needs to be caveated as there was no counter-protest of note on the part of Sinhalese interests and no significant antagonistic confrontations between Sinhalese or Tamil groups.

Finally, what is of greatest consequence to my analyses is Tilly's focus on social interaction, which is the interplay between claims-makers and targets (Passy, 2009). Tilly argues that there are shared meanings and expected repertoires between demonstrators making claims and the targets of claims. What will be analysed in the empirical sections is the interplay between Tamil diaspora demonstrators and Canadian and British government targets, looking specifically at the nexus of these two elements where two other actors of consequence are located: Tamil diaspora interest group elites and inside advocates which are both sympathetic to Tamil diaspora interests and are also trusted by the targets, in this case Members of Parliament from the same party. Tilly argues that variation in shared meanings between demonstrators and targets changes the dynamic in contentious politics, and the roles of interest group elites and inside advocates in creating a communications bridge between demonstrators and government will prove consequential to foreign policy outcomes.

In summary, given the nascent stage of research on this question in the UK and the need for further research in Canada, my exploration of Tamil diaspora interest group influence on Canadian and British foreign policy is best situated into the existing empirical scholarship asking questions regarding 'if' and 'how' diaspora interest groups influence policy, rather than 'should' they be doing so. Normative questions for these two countries are better explored in later research.

The literature on diasporas and foreign policy over the last two decades has identified a range of factors which authors argue abet or hinder diaspora interest group capacity to influence foreign policy. The inherent characteristics of diasporas, such as their

size and unity, will be discussed in respect of the impact they have on Tamil diaspora advocacy. In like manner, the institutions within which diaspora interest groups must act can open up or constrain their opportunities for access, including parliamentary permeability and the presence of rival constituencies, and these will be an analytical focus. Finally, diaspora interest groups can employ a number of strategies to gain access and leverage with decision-makers including direct lobbying, influencing candidate selection and contentious action. These three sets of factors will form the basis of the analytical lens of inquiry I use to unpack the empirical cases.

Conclusion

The first section of the literature review set out the conceptual framework through the construction of critical definitions. The principal actor analysed by this inquiry are 'transnational diaspora interest groups'. While there has been much discussion of the 'diaspora' concept in the literature, as well as a similar process of definition for 'interest groups' in a separate body of literature, this section brought these strands together to create a working definition of 'Tamil diaspora interest group'. Furthermore, the inherently transnational nature of the Tamil diaspora is also discussed, arguing that a new transnational lens is required for analysis following the LTTE-era and that Tamil diaspora interest groups are transnational in their shared identity frames, the legitimisation of some based on a membership of other diaspora interest groups and in their transnational strategies.

Secondly, this chapter argued that the inquiry is best situated in existing empirical

debates rather than normative ones, which are best left to further explorations.

Additionally, it categorised a number of determinants the existing literature has identified as having an impact on the extent of influence diasporas have on foreign policy. The exploration of these determinants form the analytical framework for the investigation of the empirical cases with a view to isolating what effect they had on the decision-making process and, by extension, the foreign policy outcome. This fine-grained approach will serve to explain why Tamil diaspora interest groups had more influence over the policy-making process in one case, rather than in another.

The following theoretical framework continues the above discussion by arguing that the central objective of this inquiry is to uncover causation within the empirical cases discussed, it defines causation and distinguishes between causal mechanisms and causal factors. I conceptualise and present the causal sequence this inquiry will create for each case study, thereby adding a temporal as well as spatial dimension to the comparative analysis. I also define influence, which is integral to the outcome definition of each analysis.

Chapter III - Theoretical framework

Causation, causal processes and influence

The literature review chapter summarised some of the scholarship over the last two decades grappling with the question of diasporas and their influence on host country decision-making, constructing critical concepts, identifying determinants and crafting decision-making constraints. The following theoretical framework defines causation for my purposes, how I uncover causation in the empirical sections and what is meant by 'influence', which is this project's outcome of interest.

In the first section, I briefly revisit some of the existing literature and its claims regarding causation, diasporas and foreign policy. What is missing in some of these investigations is a fine-grained, microfoundational analysis of specific decision-making processes and the isolation of instances of diaspora intervention and the influence they had directly on the outcome. Secondly, I draw on the work of comparative historical methodologists to define causation for the purposes of this inquiry. A causal inquiry begins inductively by identifying an association and then delving deeper into causal processes to uncover causation. The process by which this is achieved is through the search for causal mechanisms. While I adopt this approach, I argue that I am looking for more than causal mechanisms and therefore choose to term these determinants 'causal factors'. Thirdly, in addition to the search for causal factors, I add a temporal lens to the investigation as I support the argument that causal analysis should be equally concerned with 'causal sequencing'; which is the arranging of events into a causal narrative or pathway such that causal factors can be discussed with reference to their temporal impact on one another. I demonstrate how I will use causal sequencing to further interrogate the empirical cases. Finally, as my chief concern is explaining

influence, I define influence for the purposes of this project and argue that influence is an outcome, rather than a causal factor.

Earlier efforts to isolate causation and diaspora interest groups

This is not the first inquiry to make the argument that diasporas are influencing the foreign policies of the host countries they have settled in. While this project differs by homing in on Tamil diaspora interest groups specifically, comparing two parliamentary democracies and looking precisely at decision-making processes, a number of other forays have made similar causal arguments and the below is a brief revisiting of those contributions.

Mathias (1981) argues that the Greek diaspora was successful in the 1970s in persuading the United States in bringing forward an arms embargo against Turkey. In like manner, Mearsheimer and Walt's (2008) analysis of the American lobby supporting Israel demonstrates convincingly that the 'Israel lobby' has considerable influence given that the US's support is demonstrably not in its national interest. Their analysis concludes that it must be the Israel lobby causing these changes. I make similar arguments, particularly in the British context, demonstrating that the UK government acted in line with Tamil diaspora preferences in spite of its national interest. Taking the same approach, Ogelman (2002) argues that the American Cuban diaspora influenced US policy toward Cuba in specific instances given there can be no other explanation for these decisions. Cochrane (2009) also speaks to causation and clearly demonstrates the linkages between the American Irish diaspora, their lobbying efforts and outcomes in respect of the Northern Ireland Peace Process. He argues in parallel that the Tamil diaspora in Canada has had an influence on the human rights agenda in Sri Lanka, but

does not point to instances where the diaspora impacted a specific decision point.

While in the American context there are arguments in favour of diaspora influence framed around specific decision points, in the Canadian context descriptive assumptions are useful background, but there are few examples of clear lines of causation. Riddell-Dixon (2008) advances that diasporas do seek to influence foreign policy, citing the activities of Asian groups following the 2005 tsunami, and the efforts of Haitians and those from Darfur to encourage a response to crises in their homelands. Similarly, Singh (2008) advances that the Canadian government on the part of Prime Minister Stephen Harper sought to appeal to diasporas through foreign policy decisions, and that elite-oriented diaspora groups are more successful than grassroots groups. Finally, Carment and Landry (2011: 287) also suggest Canada's foreign policy is more open to domestic influence and that diaspora electoral concerns factor into those decisions.

In the Canadian context, there are often-referenced assumptions about diasporas having influence, but rarely are specific decision-making processes investigated. What I outline below for the Canadian and British political contexts is a fine-grained analysis and an analytical lens focused at the microfoundational level on specific foreign policy decision points designed to isolate and explain causation.

Causation and exploring microfoundational causal sequences

The diasporas and foreign policy literature has sought to isolate causation in respect of diasporas and their influence on domestic, host country decision-making toward issues facing their homeland. With a view to adding greater rigour to these investigations, I adopt an approach put forward by comparative historical

methodologists who assert that the search for causation is in essence the search for causal mechanisms, in particular through a microfoundational approach that unpacks the 'black box' of causation within decision-making processes.

In his discussion on comparative historical methodology, Mahoney (2004) advances that an inductive approach is where the analyst observes an association and then explores more deeply to identify causation through locating causal mechanisms. In the four cases explored empirically, the 2009 decision on intervention during the end of the Sri Lankan civil war and the 2013 decision to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in Sri Lanka, it was plain to observe that Tamil diaspora interest groups had clear preferences for host countries' decisions, they undertook strategies to impact decision-making, and British and Canadian governments in response to events in Sri Lanka made decisions on the issue. Inductively, I observed processes which resembled causal processes and therefore merited a causal investigation.

Falleti and Mahoney (2015) and Stroschein (2012: 51) argue that the search for causation in political science research is fundamentally the search for causal mechanisms. Agreeing with this approach, I uncover causation at the microfoundational level, which is the context-driven path connecting causal factors and an outcome (Gerring, 2010). This is distinct from testing hypotheses or propositions as the objective is not necessarily to test an overarching covering theory, but to understand causation within a specific context which might then be compared against other contexts. As Gerring (2010) states, this inquiry is interested in understanding more than X causes Y, but *how* X causes Y.

The diaspora literature advances that interest group characteristics, political

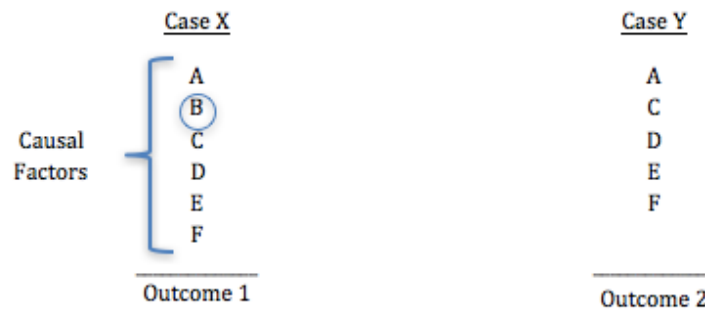
institutions, issue characteristics and interest group strategies are what cause diaspora interest groups to have influence over host country foreign policymaking. I uncover causation through sequestering these causal factors and determining the extent of their impact. For instance, the literature argues diasporas require financial resources to impact foreign policy, that political institutions must be permeable, that diaspora interest group issue preferences must align with the government and that strategies must be commensurate with the context; the causal analysis conducted herein explores these suppositions by isolating them within a causal process.

I am searching for 'causal factors' to explain causation because causal mechanisms are necessarily transitory rather than static. Gerring (2010) identifies framing, learning and networks as instances of causal mechanisms. While learning and to some extent networks are both discussed in this inquiry, other elements are also discussed which do not fit this categorisation, such as the resources diasporas possess and their credibility. While these may not be considered conventional causal mechanisms, they have nevertheless been identified by the literature as relevant factors contributing to the effectiveness of diaspora interest groups. For this reason, I consider determinants which are not only active, such as learning and framing, but also static or 'situational' as they have been identified as relevant, referring to all of these determinants as 'causal factors'.

In summary, my theoretical approach is to conduct a search for the causal factors set out in by the literature believed to impact interest group influence: If a foreign policy outcome is identified in Case X, but is not found in Case Y and the only observable variation is the absence of causal factor A in Case Y, then the analysis will conclude that the missing causal factor explains why the foreign policy outcome was not

present in Case Y. This logic is represented in summary in the below figure:

Figure 3.1 Logic of causal factor comparison



The causal factors to be discussed in each of the four cases include interest group ‘actor characteristics’ (diasporic mobilization, size of the diaspora, numerical significance within parliamentary constituencies, diaspora group organisational resources, credibility, diaspora group homogeneity and learning); ‘institutional factors’ and issue alignment are considered, with an emphasis on host country inclusivity, the presence of rival constituencies, alignment with existing host country foreign policy goals and parliamentary permeability; finally, I also explore the strategies interest groups undertake in an effort to change foreign policy, summarised as direct and outside, contentious modes of pressure. The below summary table represents the presence or absence of causal factors within each decision-making case and whether or not policy outcomes align with interest group preferences.

Table 3.1 Causal factor comparison

Causal Factors	Case X	Case Y
Actor Characteristics		
<i>Diasporic Mobilization</i>	X	X
<i>Diaspora Size Numerical significance in parliamentary constituencies</i>	X	X
<i>Diaspora Group Resources</i>	O	X
<i>Credibility</i>	X	X
<i>Group Homogeneity</i>	O	O
<i>Learning</i>	X	X
Institutional Factors		
<i>Host Country Inclusivity</i>	X	O
<i>Presence of Rival Constituencies</i>	X	X
<i>Policy Alignment</i>	O	O
<i>Parliamentary Permeability</i>	X	O
<i>International role constraints</i>	X	X
Diaspora Strategies		
<i>Inside lobbying</i>	X	X
<i>Outside lobbying</i>	X	X
Influence attainment	Partially Positive	Status Quo (Negative)

As each of these causal factors is discussed, the analysis concludes on its ultimate impact on foreign policy outcomes, which temporally concludes the cases and whether or not it tends to agree with existing assumptions in the literature. However, in later cases where the causal factor is not viewed to have changed and remains static (i.e. diaspora size and concentration), it will be taken for granted and not discussed again. Describing what is meant by ‘outcomes’ for this inquiry follows the next section, which discusses causal sequences.

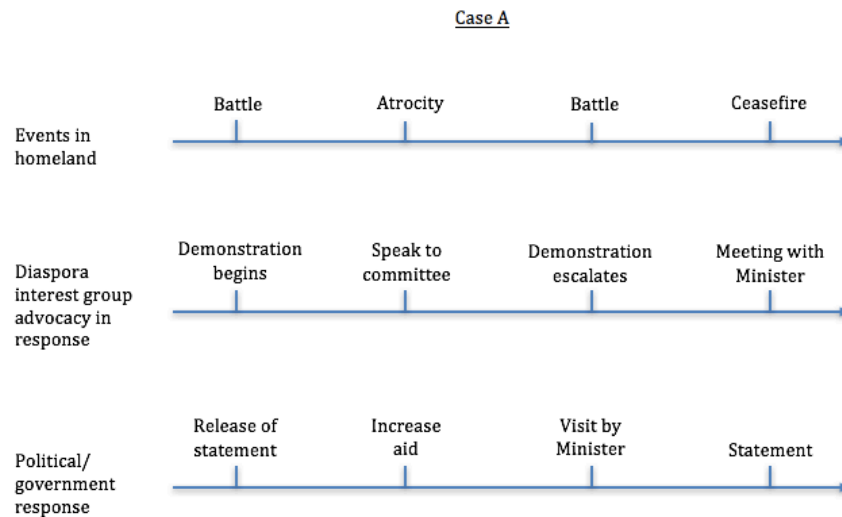
When interventions matter: Constructing causal sequences

Causation is discussed through isolating causal factors and understanding their

impact on decision-making processes. However, what is of equal interest is how the causal process unfolds within each temporally and spatially bounded case. I create causal sequences, which can also be referred to as 'causal chains' or 'causal narratives', comprising the context within which causal factors are isolated and their impact assessed. In other words, concluding that a specific intervention on the part of Tamil diaspora interest groups impacted foreign policy decisions is important, but an even more interesting contribution is to be able to determine *when* this happened during the decision-making process.

Thelen (1999) argues that causal analysis is inherently sequential analysis. The analysis undertaken in this inquiry does not consider the phenomena of interest as 'snapshots' in time, but as unfolding causal processes where one event leads to another and ultimately to a foreign policy decision-point on the part of the government. A sequence is a temporally ordered series of events (Falleti and Mahoney, 2015), in this way, the case studies built for this inquiry are constructed as linear sequences of events where occurrences are included for their causal relevance to the occurrence of another event, delimited by the decision-point itself which is how the end of each case is temporally bounded. The arguments put forward are thusly causally sequential and the four case studies analysed in the empirical sections are essentially a series of decomposed events bounded temporally and spatially; once constructed, they can then be compared across cases which are similarly temporally and spatially bound (Abbott, 1995; Griffin 1993).

Figure 3.2 Logic of causal sequencing



As with all ordered sequential arguments, the relative order of the events in a case study's sequence is causally consequential for the outcome of interest (Falleti and Mahoney, 2015; Abbott 1995). The comparative historical approach further demands that it is sequences of events which are compared rather than just the events themselves. For instance, in the 2013 cases where British and Canadian governments had to decide whether or not to attend the CHOGM in Sri Lanka, it is not only the CHOGM summit which is relevant. What is of critical importance are the causal processes leading up to the CHOGM itself, beginning for instance in the Canadian case with Prime Minister Harper's 2011 commitment to boycott the summit if Sri Lanka's human rights record did not improve. Had a causal sequence dating back to the beginning of the decision-making process not been built and analysed, a valid explanation of the decision could not be made.

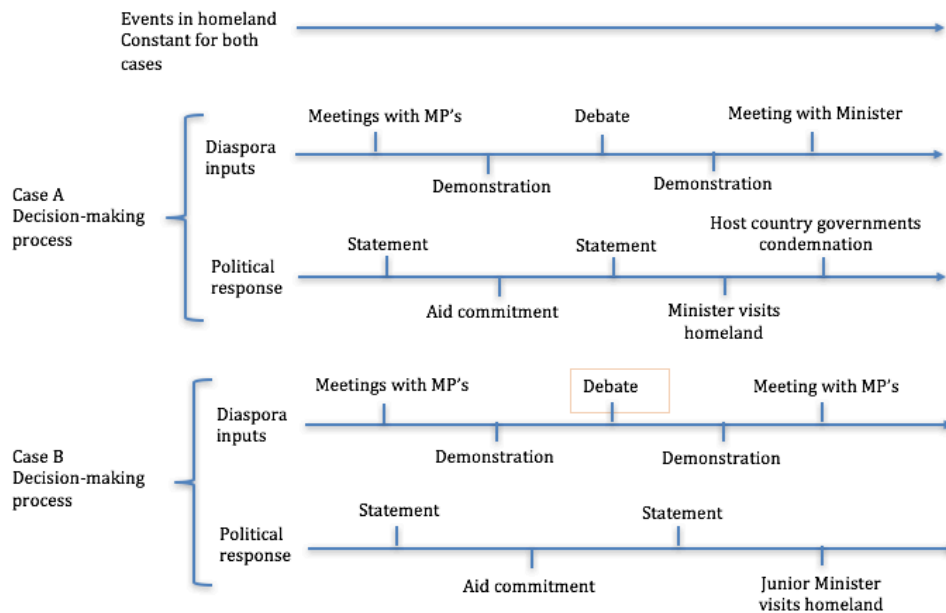
Finally, in her analyses on diaspora mobilisation, Koinova (2011a) speaks of conjunctural causation, which refers to the relationship between causal factors. Comparative historical analysis not only considers independent causal factors, but sequential analysis discusses factors in combination in temporal order. This is an important component adopted in this analysis. For instance, Godwin (2012) focuses only on the contentious actions undertaken by the Tamil diaspora in Canada in 2009 to explain diaspora influence on foreign policy outcomes. However, as the empirical analysis below demonstrates, it is only when lobbying efforts at the elite level are considered in tandem that the causal sequence is comprehensive.

In his seminal analysis, Griffin (1993) argues that a narrative is the organisation of data into a chronologically sequential order, constructing the content into a single coherent story. Causal sequences are presented as Griffin suggests for each case in the form of a decision-making process, forming the context which is necessary for isolating causal factors. The construction of an events narrative also explores the conjunctural relationship between the factors discussed.

Stroschein's (2012:50) microfoundational approach to search for causal mechanisms through event trajectories, in her case processes for mobilisation and policy responses in the Balkans, provides a useful template for this inquiry's isolation of causal factors in a similarly constructed temporal sequence. She argues that mobilisation and policy formation are trajectories represented better visually as a line rather than a data point and the empirical approach deployed here is grounded in the same logic. Similarly, through the outlining of events I also isolate causal factors. Where this project differs is its search for determinants which are not necessarily mechanisms, but which may also have explanatory power.

The below causal sequence demonstrates visually the analysis of each case:

Figure 3.3 Causal sequential comparison



Defining influence over decision-making

The theoretical chapter has so far reviewed earlier forays into diasporas and foreign policy influence, described what I take to mean causation, how I expect to determine causation and how causal sequences will be constructed to uncover causal factors, their interrelations and outcomes. What remains to be provided in this chapter is the description of the outcome which delimits each case and is ultimately the measure of whether or not Tamil diaspora interest groups had influence over foreign policy. This section defines 'influence' and argues that influence refers to 'control over outcomes'.

Disaggregating influence and power

Influence is often conflated with power, with the latter concept having been the subject of debate in political scholarship for centuries. Arts and Verschuran (1999) address this debate by borrowing the following from Cox and Jacobson (1973: 3): “Influence is to be distinguished from power. Power means capability; it is the aggregate of political resources that are available to an actor ... Power may be converted into influence, but it is not necessarily so converted at all or to its full extent.” I adopt the same definition and argue further that influence is an outcome, not a causal mechanism. Diaspora interest groups either achieve influence, such as compelling a government to retain an existing policy, or they do not, such as a government taking a decision against the stated preferences of an interest group. It is not precise or conclusive enough to argue that diaspora groups ‘have influence’, as some of the existing scholarship contends. This would be sufficient to argue interest groups possess ‘power’, but influence can only be demonstrated when a specific decision-making process and its outcome are considered against interest group preferences.

Dür and De Bièvre (2007) further offer a useful conception of influence by defining it as “control over outcomes.” The closer an interest group is able to influence a process, the more influential they are. Dur (2008) borrows from Nagel (1975: 29) to tie influence to causation: “a causal relation between the preferences of an actor regarding an outcome and the outcome itself.” In essence, the more a diaspora interest group is able to exert control over the foreign policy process, the more they are likely to have achieved influence. The mere perception of influence has often been enough for observers to conclude that diaspora interest groups possess influence. However, simply because a foreign policy outcome aligns with the preferences of Tamil diaspora interest groups does not mean that they have had influence over the process and therefore over

the outcome.¹⁴

Discerning influence in foreign policy outcomes

Despite numerous analyses into diaspora interest group influence on foreign policy, few existing studies precisely conceptualise foreign policy outcome measures. The overarching term to be used in this project to describe foreign affairs decision-making outcomes will be 'foreign policy outcome' or simply 'policy outcome'. At a functional level, Arts and Verschuren (1999) term successful policy outcome as "goal-achievement." While Dür and De Bièvre (2007) more precisely consider two types of policy outcome: official position taken by public authorities and policy implementation. Within this analysis, I consider statements by government as a policy outcome, as are more 'substantive' actions such as commitments of aid and actions at the international, sub-system or bilateral level.

Adding greater precision, Baumgartner et al. (2009) use a simple rubric for measuring policy change as a function of interest group activity: Significant, moderate, none. Klüver (2013) similarly adopts a simple definition borrowing from Barry (1980) where success is the attainment of policy goals. Additionally, as with Dür and De Bièvre (2007), outcome can either be the expression of a policy preference (i.e. statement in parliament or at an international body) or it can be the implementation of a policy (i.e. vote taken at an international body or application of sanctions). What is of consequence

¹⁴ Cox and Jacobson (1973:3) argue: that "... influence means the modification of one actor's behaviour by that of another, (symbolically: A -> B)." This inquiry is not seeking to isolate diaspora interest group influence over systems, i.e. are they able to change the policy-making process systematically, but whether or not they have influence over policy outcomes. It may be that changing the process requires a change to the policymaking system, but this is relevant only insofar as it leads to influencing the outcome. As noted above, foreign policy decision-making is undertaken by a small number of actors and it is influence over these actors by Tamil diaspora interest groups that the inquiry will seek to uncover.

here is that outcome, in whatever form it takes, is explained at least in part by the intervention of diaspora interest groups.

The outcome analysed in each case is not characterised dichotomously, i.e. change or no change, but is considered ordinal, with outcomes that may be negative (opposed to the preferences of the group), positive (in line with the preferences of the group) or unresponsive. Studies which characterise outcomes as binary (between change or no change) fail to consider that the maintenance of the status quo may also represent either success or failure for the group. In the instance of the Tamil diaspora, for example, the once long-held policy of the Canadian and British governments to not list the LTTE as a terrorist organisation would have been considered by this rubric as a successful policy outcome. Foreign policy outcomes are thusly measured as:

1. Negative policy change
2. Partially negative policy change
3. Status Quo (positive or negative)
4. Partially positive policy change
5. Positive policy change

For the purposes of this project, I argue that influence refers to ‘control over outcomes’ and distinguish it from power, which can be discerning in the holding rather than deployment. Influence is the outcome upon which this inquiry will conclude its case study analyses, rather than as a causal mechanism. Secondly, the interest group literature provides a number of precise measurements of policy outcome and I adopt an ordinal series of possibilities to allow for greater analytical rigour.

Conclusion

The theoretical framework presented in this chapter builds the scaffolding necessary to answer the research puzzle as presented in the first chapter. Other

scholars in this field have sought to discover the same phenomena in host countries, through the Tamil diaspora as well as others. However, this project departs from these earlier forays by more precisely defining the actor in the form of 'diaspora interest groups' rather than simply the diaspora as a monolithic whole. Furthermore, this inquiry takes a more fine-grained approach by homing in on the decision-making process itself; isolating the inputs from diaspora interest groups to determine their impact.

As Comparative historical theorists advance, the search for causality is essentially a search for causal mechanisms. In this case, I use a fine-grained, microfoundational approach to isolate the causal factors the literature believes to contribute to foreign policy change, i.e. diaspora size and policy alignment with the host state. Through setting up the same decision-making processes and comparing them against one another, I am able to understand which causal factors were advantageous to diaspora interest groups and which weren't in each case.

Not only is it useful to understand how diaspora interest groups influence foreign policy, but when. For this reason, I outline the decision-making process through causal sequencing; by setting out the decision-making process as it happened, in a linear way, it is more likely that the critical inputs by diaspora interest groups can be isolated. Furthermore, causal sequencing allows for the observation of conjunctural causation and the interaction between causal factors.

Finally, the chapter defined the boundary of the causal sequence through discussing the foreign policy outcome measure: influence. Influence is not a causal factor in this instance, but it is something that Tamil diaspora interest groups either achieve or do not. Rather than setting a binary outcome measure, I further argue that

influence can also be partial rather than total.

Having established the theoretical approach, the upcoming chapter discusses how other scholars have addressed similar questions and defends the selection of a most-similar, cross-case comparative methodology to analyse data; it discusses the utility of a comparative method to uncover causal factors and it defends the selection of the project's cases. Finally, I introduce the research design with an emphasis on the importance of interviews to acquire the necessary data.

Chapter IV – Methodology and research design

Getting to the heart of the matter

The existing research on conflict considers a range of exogenous influences on the trajectory of civil war, including the involvement of diasporas. This project is situated within the scholarship that homes in on Tamil diaspora intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict and its aftermath via the efforts of diaspora interest groups to pressure host country governments to change their policy toward Sri Lanka. Specifically, the research puzzle investigates whether or not Tamil diaspora interest groups have caused a change in Canadian and British foreign policymaking toward the conflict in Sri Lanka and if so, how they did this. At the heart of this puzzle is causation, and the foregoing theoretical framework discussed causation and the comparative historical approach adopted to isolate causal factors and to create a causal sequence based on microfoundational evidence. It also laid out what the inquiry takes to mean ‘influence’ and the disaggregation between contentious and non-contentious strategies adopted by Tamil diaspora interest groups to optimize power in response to institutional constraints.

The following methodology chapter presents the investigative apparatus chosen to analyse and collect the evidence required to discuss the research puzzles restated above. It does this firstly by canvassing existing approaches taken to answer similar questions and presents the logic behind the selection of a qualitative, most-similar, cross-case comparative methodology. I further defend the choice of using a comparative method for its utility in investigating decision-making processes, its construction of internal validity and for its replicability. Secondly, it defends the selection of country cases, the selected diaspora actors and the temporal boundaries for

the decision-making processes within the cases by arguing that choosing cases with so many parallels allows for the isolation of subtle distinctions which explain foreign policy outcomes. Finally, the research design adopted for the project is put forward, describing the type of evidence required to build the aforementioned causal sequences, how this data was collected and triangulated to ensure validity, as well as the importance of semi-structured interviews given that foreign-policy decision making is often undertaken 'behind closed doors'.

Choosing a cross-case, comparative method: Existing research methods and methodology selection

The selection of methods begins with ruling out those methods which are not suitable given the puzzle being explored. Gerring (2001: 209) notes there are essentially nine overarching methods available to researchers: Experimental, statistical, Qualitative Comparative Analysis, most-similar, most-different, extreme-case, typical-case, and counterfactual.

Over the last two decades, investigators have adopted a number of these methods to unpack the foreign policymaking process in respect of diasporas. Beginning with primarily descriptive forays, the following discusses some of the existing methodological approaches used in this field of inquiry, why they are not ideal for this project and it concludes by selecting a most-similar, cross-case comparative method.

Within-case analyses such as those of Amarasingam (2015), Hess and Korf (2014), Orjuela (2008) and Wayland (2003, 2004) have offered foundational descriptive depth to the study of the Tamil diaspora in Canada. They have primarily focused on the Canadian, and less so the British Tamil diaspora context, paying

attention to its extensive community infrastructure, internal politics between Tamil groups and the legacy of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). These studies, particularly those in Canada, provide essential data used by me to determine which diaspora organizations were most active and at what time; which ones engaged in lobbying or had roles in collective action, versus which were mainly service providers; and, provided information which would not have been available to me due to my cultural and socio-economic position. However, the analytical processes used in these enquiries are not designed to uncover causation, and therefore not ideal for this inquiry.

Redd and Rubenzer (2010) employ Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) in their expansive study. This approach is not ideal for this enquiry's research puzzle as there are too few cases being considered, which also explains why statistical methods are not possible.¹⁵ I analyse four cases, with a much larger number of causal factors believed to contribute to decision-making. A statistical method might be applicable if the inquiry were looking at state responses to the Sri Lankan civil war across the entire system, but that would not speak to the influence of diaspora interest groups as the Tamil diaspora is concentrated in only a small number of these. With respect to QCA, which has many advantages, the number of cases here is also too small. In addition, QCA generally considers only a few causal conditions (Rihoux, 2013; Ragin, 2008). However, as has been advanced in the literature, there may be as many as a dozen possible factors influencing the outcomes this inquiry is interested in, leading to an

¹⁵ Quantitatively, Baumgartner et al. (2009) consider hundreds of lobbyists over more than one hundred issue areas across multiple electoral cycles in the US. They assess the success of lobby groups over time by assigning ordinal outcome variables: significant, moderate or none with respect to meeting their objectives. The authors consider the amount of media attention captured by an issue area, the arena of decision-making (i.e. executive or legislature), whether a group employs a prominent advocate, amongst a range of other factors.

unmanageable number of possibilities for a QCA design.

On the other end of Gerring's list of possible methods are a range of comparative methods.¹⁶ Fair's (2005) comparison of the Tamil and Sikh diasporas in Canada is likely the best known comparative case study involving the Tamil diaspora, but since then there have been no analyses directly comparing the diaspora in the two largest Tamil host countries: Canada and the UK. Elsewhere in the literature on diasporas and foreign policy, comparative case studies have predominated, such as Kenny's (2000) archival approach to comparing the Poles and Jews in the United States; Ogelman's (2002) analysis of the Cuban diaspora in the US and the Turkish diaspora in Germany; and Totoricagüena's (2005) examination of the Basque diaspora across 22 jurisdictions as a single case. Smith and Stares (2007) authoritative collection of case studies considers diaspora involvement in peace processes and Cochrane (2009) offers a similarly compelling comparison between Canadian Tamils and the American Irish, focusing on how these diasporas impact conflict outcomes.

Lately, the scholarship has begun to develop increased analytical rigour. Koinova's (2011) inquiry comparing the Lebanese and Albanian US diasporas is one of the first attempts to unpack the relationship between causal factors and outcomes with an emphasis on intervening processes, in this instance through within-case process-tracing. To make results more generalizable, Koinova (2013) adds more cases through temporally segmenting by events in the homeland, with a view to capturing

¹⁶ Also taking a qualitative approach, Uslaner (2012) uses Jewish diaspora interest groups in the United States as a foil for other groups to assess their comparative influence. She quantifies influence by providing activity data, such as claims Jewish diaspora interest groups influence the passage of 100 pieces of legislation per year, had 2000 meetings with members of Congress and he includes in her measurement the number and calibre of personalities attending interest group events. Quantifying the influence of Tamil diaspora interest groups would be possible if only activity data were being considered, but because this inquiry is interested in a specific outcome associated with the Sri Lankan issue, it is not possible to measure influence as a function of activity without considering outcomes.

mobilisation in the US and UK. As discussed in the foregoing chapter, I adopt her approach to enhance rigour through adding a temporal dimension.

With the small number of cases in this inquiry and the relatively large number of causal factors considered, the comparative method best suited to answering the research puzzle is the most-similar, cross case comparison design developed initially by J.S. Mill (van Heuveln, 2000). Mill's method of agreement begins firstly by observing that more than one case exhibits the same phenomena; in this instance in Canada and the UK, Tamil diaspora interest groups both lobbied government on the same issue and both governments were required to make a foreign policy decision in response to the same extraterritorial impetus. Secondly, these two cases exhibit at a superficial level similar causal factors, i.e. the same well-resourced diaspora, concentrated mostly in one region of a liberal, parliamentary democracy which uses interest groups to advance their agenda in respect of a confined decision-point. Finally, despite the overarching similarities between these two cases, there is variation in respect of the outcome. The paramount rationale for selecting this method is its emphasis on identifying causation within cases, which is the principal objective of this inquiry.

In each time period, two cases are compared: Canada and the United Kingdom. Through the development of a causal sequence, the inquiry looks for each causal factor to ascertain its presence or absence. If there is a different outcome in the cases, then the inquiry explains the difference through isolating the presence or absence of these factors. For instance, the literature argues that diaspora concentration in political districts will lead diaspora interest groups to have more influence over host country foreign policy. If, after considering all other factors and finding that all others are present in all cases, with concentration in political districts differing in both cases, then

the inquiry will argue that this is the factor with the most explanatory power.

The comparative method introduced above is operationally suitable for uncovering foreign policy decision-making processes and answering the research puzzle. The following section expands on how this comparative method addresses internal validity and replicability.

Advantages of the comparative method

Having selected a most-similar, cross-case comparative methodology, the following section expands on the advantages presented by the methodology. Firstly, this methodology emphasises decision-making, which is the chief concern of this inquiry. Secondly, it supports internal validity through its logical setting of temporal and spatial boundaries, and finally, it ensures that the investigative process is replicable.

Firstly, comparative methods are based on the assumption that social science research is often about individual or collective choice (Bechhofer and Paterson, 2000: 4). Regardless of whether or not the actor in question is a government department, democratic polity or individual politician, actors are faced with a finite set of options. On the one hand, decision-makers in the cases analysed below may have chosen to align their decisions entirely with the preferences of the Sri Lankan government, which would have meant in 2009 doing nothing to impinge on its ability to defeat the LTTE, or in 2013, to attend the CHOGM in Sri Lanka with full-throated support for the government. On the other hand, governments in 2009 might have chosen to condemn the government, apply sanctions against it or in the case of the UK, intervene militarily. In 2013, decision-makers might have chosen to boycott the summit altogether. This comparative, cross-case method sets temporal and spatial limits defined by the

decision-making process and in so doing creates the 'black box' within which causal factors can be analysed and the rationale for the decision explained.

Secondly, this methodology creates internal validity through the systematic selection of geographic and temporal boundaries. Were I using a non-comparative method such as process tracing, I would have to justify which actors, time periods and outcomes are being considered. However, in this inquiry I set these limits based on the circumstances in the cases being compared. For instance, there would be little utility in comparing a period before 1983 with a period starting from 2013 given the degree of variation - it wouldn't explain anything, just as there would be little utility in comparing against an actor with little involvement in the process, such as the finance Minister, and that of the Foreign Secretary. Comparison helps to set meaningful boundaries and to determine which actors are relevant to the narrative.

Finally, a most similar, cross-case comparison is systematic in that it sets the same geographic and temporal boundaries for each case, investigates the same causal factors and inserts the same actors. This systematic approach is replicable in that other scholars will be able to interview the same individuals and build the same processes to test for validity. Additionally, future scholars will be able to deploy this method to explore the conclusions drawn here in other cases; for instance, exploring if the same causal factors have the same impact if Jewish diaspora groups in Canada and the UK are compared during the 2006 war with Hezbollah.

A comparative method is the approach best suited to undertaking data collection and analysis for this project as it allows for the construction and comparison of causal sequences, the isolation of causal factors and therefore, the analysis of decisions and decision-making processes; it furthermore ensures that the process is replicable for the

analysis of this evidence, as well as for the methods adopted in other contexts and/or with other actors. Finally, it allows for the uniform setting of spatial and temporal boundaries – the selection of cases is described in greater detail below.

Case selection

Comparative case selection considers the locations for comparison as well as the actors within these locales which are expected to be compared (Bechhofer and Paterson, 2000: 46). In this study of foreign affairs, the principal actors of interest are groups advocating on behalf of the preferences of the Tamil diaspora (i.e. the Canadian Tamil Congress and the British Tamil Forum). The strategies of these actors are aimed at persuading foreign policy decision-makers, primarily in government to take action in line with their preferences (i.e. Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird and British Foreign Secretary David Miliband). Since I am interested in knowing how much influence these diaspora interest groups have on domestic host country governments, two country cases have been selected: Canada and the United Kingdom, forming the spatial boundary of this comparison. Finally, two temporal periods are considered within these country contexts: 2009 and 2013. These periods are defined by decision-points wherein the governments of Canada and the United Kingdom were required to make a decision in reference to events in Sri Lanka. In the first instance, governments had to respond to the violent end to Sri Lanka's civil war. In 2013, these governments had to decide on whether or not to attend the CHOGM hosted in Sri Lanka. This section argues for the selection of the above introduced actors and contexts.

Selection of diaspora actors and country cases

With regard to diaspora interest group selection, the Tamil diaspora was chosen for two principal reasons. Firstly, this inquiry is interested in contributing to the civil wars literature, necessitating the selection of a diaspora which continues to be engaged in a conflict or conflict aftermath in their homeland. The Hindu Indian or Hong Kong Chinese diasporas might have been compared if we were interested in understanding how diasporas affect bilateral trade flows (Singh, 2009), but the hunch is that they would have had little activity in respect of conflict. That said, the Sikh (Fair, 2005), Jewish (Walt and Meirsheimer, 2008) or Palestinian (Koinova, 2014) diasporas might have been selected as conflict-generated diasporas. However, as will be discussed in greater detail in the upcoming empirical background chapter, the Tamil diasporas of the UK and Canada are similarly sized, mobilised, concentrated in electoral districts and share comparable migratory patterns to a greater extent than the above diasporas. In short, it was highly likely there would be activity to analyse and the Tamil diaspora suited the most-similar case design.

Secondly, the descriptive evidence offered by earlier studies exploring the organisation of Tamil diaspora groups produces evidence of organisations founded specifically to lobby government (Amarasingam, 2015); ICG, 2010); in short, I knew there would be diaspora interest groups to analyse and this evidence also indicated that the diaspora has been petitioning government on matters in Sri Lanka. The early hunch was that if these groups existed, there would be evidence available to analyse, a causal sequence to build and individuals to speak to who would be able to provide information on their activities. Finally, because it was assumed that there would be very little documentation due to the nature of the foreign policy process (Riddell-Dixon, 2008), only diaspora interest groups which are recently active could be chosen. While the

Vietnamese diaspora was active in lobbying government during after the Vietnam war for instance, there is little evidence to suggest they have been active lobbyists in recent decades and therefore it is less likely individuals would be found to interview (FVPPA, 2002).

Canada and the United Kingdom were selected as country cases for comparison for three reasons: The unit of analysis, in this case, the Tamil diaspora; the systemic characteristics of both polities, and their positions within various international spheres. Firstly, the inquiry is interested in understanding Tamil diaspora interest group engagement with host country governments. Canada and the UK are home to the largest Tamil diaspora communities in the world and share a number of features in common, including migratory and settlement patterns (Deegalle, 2014; Braziel, 2008; Zunzer, 2004). While other countries such as Norway and Switzerland also have large Tamil diasporas (Cochrane, 2009; Hess and Korf, 2014), existing scholarship pointed to Canada and the UK as having the most active diaspora interest groups and therefore the greatest likelihood of activity for analysis.

Secondly, Canada and the UK share many systemic features in common. They are both Westminster-style parliamentary, first-past-the-post systems with ideologically similar parties (Gaskarth 2013; Gecelovsky, 2011). Furthermore, they are both liberal states with relatively limited barriers to entry and participation in politics for newcomer communities (Fair, 2005). Given these parallels, and those of the Tamil communities themselves, the expectation would be that the foreign policy response to events in Sri Lanka should be largely the same. However, at several decision points analysed by this project, this is not the case, which allows for the possibility of a most-similar case comparison. The puzzle being explored is at the heart of inquiry: What

explains the different outcomes? Had the US been compared with Canada, systemic divergence would have been an all-to-easy explanation, as would comparing Canada with France, where the latter has a proportionally much smaller Tamil diaspora.

Finally, Canada and the UK have many systemic and Tamil demographic similarities at the domestic level. Another similarity, this time at the international level, is the UK's and Canada's membership in the Commonwealth (Mackrael, 2014). Cases three and four explore the UK and Canada's decision to attend the Commonwealth summit in 2013 located in Sri Lanka. This decision point is unique to members of the Commonwealth, which excludes non-member states such as the US or continental European states. Australia offers a similarly constructive comparison, not least because of the relatively large Tamil diaspora and parallel systemic features, but fieldwork resource restrictions would have limited data-gathering opportunities.

Selection of temporal boundaries

Case selection conventionally involves selecting spatial, geographic or political units in a qualitative analysis which undertakes to explain processes within one case or to compare a small number of other cases against one another. This inquiry brings to bear the same principles of case selection, but with application as well to temporality, rather than just geographically-bounded cases. The emphasis on the analysis of these two country cases through time is grounded in the assumption that temporal cases are not static entities, but processional trajectories which change through time (Stroschein 2012; Tarrow, 1998: 200). Not only are cases themselves not static, but decision-making processes are also processes which must be considered through time.

For this reason, the inquiry creates temporal cases within the two political units. The first temporal period considered is January to May, 2009. During this period, the Canadian and British governments were faced with virtually the same decision at the same time: How to respond to the violent end of the Sri Lankan civil war. As will be presented in greater detail in Chapter 6, this period witnessed mass civilian casualties, alleged human rights abuses and crimes against humanity in Sri Lanka (Lunn et al, 2017). The Tamil diaspora in both countries responded to these events in Sri Lanka by intensively lobbying political elites, as well as mobilising thousands of demonstrators (Amarasingam, 2015; Godwin, 2012; Pragasam, 2012). Both governments were called upon to respond to the crisis and, in addition to addressing the issue in Sri Lanka, had to reckon with the interventions by the Tamil diaspora. The decision-making process which extends throughout this period is analysed comparatively to ascertain the extent of influence Tamil diaspora interest groups had on decision-makers in both contexts.

The second temporal boundary homes in on the 2013 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In the aftermath of the civil war, inquiries into the conduct of the government of Sri Lanka during the close of the civil war indicated culpability in a range of human rights abuses (UNHCR, 2015; Sri Lanka Campaign, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2009). The Sri Lankan government failed to acknowledge the validity of these reports, properly investigate the claims or otherwise put in place a credible transitional justice process. In response, Tamil diaspora interest groups campaigned to urge the British and Canadian governments to protest the Sri Lankan government's intransigence and continued persecution of Tamils via the Commonwealth summit, with a view to convincing heads of government to boycott the summit. The decision-making process in this case stretches back several years before

the decision-point in mid 2013 to when the location of the 2013 CHOGM was being decided; and then homes in on the months preceding the summit when both governments were under pressure from the Tamil diaspora. Once again, British and Canadian governments were faced with the same decision regarding Sri Lanka; making it possible to compare Tamil diaspora inputs and determine the extent of influence in both cases.

The rationale for the selection of the interest group actors, the country cases and the temporal periods is done with a view to crafting a most-similar cross case comparison, providing a focus on decision-making processes and foreign policy outcomes. Tamil diaspora interest groups were chosen due to their many parallels in the UK and Canada; similarly, the UK and Canada were chosen as the country cases due to their systemic similarity. The upcoming analyses delve deeply into the temporally-bounded decision-making processes to determine what the subtle differences were which explain the outcome. Before considering the empirical context, the final section below discusses the research design for this project.¹⁷

Research design

This research design section firstly recognises the data gaps in the cases I

¹⁷ With the goal of better understanding causation and acquiring advanced methods of data collection, I undertook a number of methods training programmes. At University College London, my MPhil discussed quantitative and qualitative methods; the latter focused on case study construction and data gathering techniques, including interviewing subjects. Similar subject-matter was presented at the world's top school for qualitative methods in the social sciences at the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research at Syracuse University, where I undertook studies with leading scholars in comparative historical approaches, causation, causal mechanisms and data organization. Finally, I also had the opportunity to attend the European Consortium on Political Research Summer School in Lubjyana, Slovenia with a specific focus on Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), introducing important data arrangement and analysis techniques. With this preparation, the below research design is presented with a focus on interview techniques.

analyse. There is an ample amount of secondary-source data from the Canadian case, in particular for the LTTE-dominated era and the formation of new Tamil diaspora organisations following the civil war, but there is limited causal data or information from the perspective of government advocacy targets. There is far less secondary source data in the UK context prior to 2009 and during the 2009 episode, but some international research organisations have produced research on the post-2009 formation of Tamil diaspora interest groups. Furthermore, there is no secondary source data on the partisan-affiliated diaspora interest groups, such as British Tamil Conservatives and Tamils for Labour.

Secondly, this section discusses the sources that were selected to address these gaps in the secondary-source literature. Firstly, I scanned records of debates at Westminster and the Canadian Parliament with a view to gathering information on policy and political positions. Secondly, I canvassed various diaspora and non-diaspora media sources, largely for data on events in Sri Lanka and the host countries, but also for public statements by political officials. Finally, given that much of the discourse on foreign policy processes takes place 'behind closed doors', I engaged in a series of interviews with current and former political elites, diaspora interest group elites, human rights groups and academics in Canada and the UK.

Thirdly, I discuss the use of a semi-structured interview approach which emphasised the building of rapport with subjects and narrowing techniques to focus on the decision-making points of interest. Through purposive sampling, I was able to hold interviews which mirrored roles in both host country contexts with a view to ensuring a comprehensive picture was created of both political contexts and decision-making processes. I also discuss interview locales and provide more detail on subjects. Finally,

through the use of a 'data spiral' approach, I discuss how this information was analysed.

Existing data and identifying data gaps

As noted in earlier chapters, extensive descriptive efforts dating back nearly two decades have already been undertaken in the Canadian context, allowing for a heavier reliance on secondary sources in this country context (Amarasingam, 2015 and 2014; Zulfika, 2014; Godwin, 2012; Udugampola, 2010; Orjuela, 2008; La, 2004; Wayland, 2004; Hyndman, 2003; Wayland, 2003). These contributions trace the evolution of the diaspora and its organisational structure from earlier waves of migration to the post-LTTE period. However, there has been less attention paid to the diaspora's engagement efforts with Canadian politics at the federal level.

What is missing from these earlier inquiries is the discussion on the advocacy efforts of Tamil diaspora interest groups, in particular the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) during both the 2009 conflict escalation and the 2013 decision on whether or not the Prime Minister should attend the CHOGM in Sri Lanka. In addition to there being little data speaking to causation, there are few references to the views of diaspora interest group advocacy targets such as elected politicians and cabinet ministers, or political staff and civil servants. The literature in the Canadian context over the time periods considered, and stretching back to earlier periods is credible and well-researched, but there are gaps in the causal narrative which this research design addresses.

In the United Kingdom, contributions are of a more recent nature, with descriptive evidence found in ethnographies of the diaspora which have added great conceptual depth (Deegalle, 2014; Pragasm 2012). However, there are very few studies

investigating the Tamil diaspora in the UK prior to Orjuela's (2008) work in the civil wars literature, which provides the most incisive look at the Tamil diaspora in the UK, in particular with regard to the Sri Lankan conflict. However, there is little emphasis on Tamil diaspora interest groups.

Following the end of the civil war, a number of non-academic sources offer rich descriptive information regarding the landscape of the UK diaspora post-LTTE, especially contributions by campaigning organisations such as International Crisis Group (2010) and the Berghof Foundation (2010; 2011) with a focus on the formation of Global Tamil Forum (GTF), Together Against Genocide (TAG) and the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE). These inquiries discuss the referenda that followed the end of the conflict and the elevation of the struggle for Tamil self-determination to the transnational stage. While the British Tamil Forum (BTF) is touched on, party-affiliated interest groups such as British Tamil Conservatives (BTC) and Tamils for Labour are absent. As in the Canadian context, the literature does provide information on the post-LTTE landscape as advocacy ascended to the international level and in the host countries. However, there is limited information on the intersection between diaspora interest group advocacy, for instance in post-conflict transitional justice, and decision-making targets at the bureaucratic and political spheres within the host countries.

These contributions offer essential descriptive information about the interim period between 2009 and 2013 and post-conflict transnational advocacy, but they don't focus on causation. Additionally, there is very little detail offered on the party-affiliated lobbying organisations which act at the intersection between Tamil advocates and political targets and there is little to no data presented from the perspective of interest

group advocacy targets, such as politicians and civil servants.

The research design below addresses some of these data gaps through providing information at the intersection of Tamil diaspora advocacy and decision-making targets. In order to build an internally valid, systematic comparison of the four cases and ensure the causal factors outlined can be thoroughly interrogated, the information gaps in each case must be filled to create a causal sequence which is mirrored as much as possible in each case. Furthermore, the research design triangulates this data through the use of a range of sources resulting in data 'saturation', whereby the same information begins turning up from different sources. The following section discusses these data sources.

Data sources

With a view to addressing the above data gaps, the research design gathers data from the following sources: Firstly, through transcripts of parliamentary debates and the proceedings of parliamentary committees. These documents provide important statements on Sri Lankan policy from cabinet ministers, statements by party leadership and interventions by MPs engaged on this subject. Secondly, data is drawn from the mainstream media as well as from Tamil diaspora media. These sources are essential for building the causal narrative as they offer data on events taking place in Sri Lanka, public demonstrations and interventions on the part of the Tamil diaspora in the host countries, and statements by decision-makers at the political level. Media sources help to 'fill in' the causal strands which form the basis of the decision-making process, allowing for the isolation of causal factors and to observe the interaction between contentious action, interest group elites and decision-making targets. Finally, data is drawn from semi-structured interviews. As described in detail in Chapter V, Foreign

policy decision-making is a process rarely carried out through legislative debate and outcomes are not normally manifested in votes. For this reason, interviews are essential to understand when and how diaspora interest groups have intervened and to ascertain the response of advocacy targets to these interventions.

Firstly, data was drawn from parliamentary and committee debates. During virtually all of the temporal cases compared in this inquiry, issues pertaining to Sri Lanka and references to the Tamil diaspora were made in debates in the British and Canadian parliaments. Through Hansard services offered by both parliaments, debates were accessed and analysed for the viewpoints of various MPs, in particular those prospective interviewees whose comments could be raised for further explanation. Foreign policy decision-making is not necessarily observable in these contexts, but policy points are often articulated through communications in these settings, in particular in statements by foreign ministers inside and outside parliament, which are heavily relied upon in the empirical chapters. These debates are often important for isolating political sympathies and influences. For instance, MPs in both contexts referenced meetings with diaspora interest groups and demonstrations as sources for their interventions, offering important validation for the analysis of diaspora interest groups as relevant actors in the policy process.

Two debates in particular are accessed, both in reference to the 2009 case studies. In Canada, Tamil diaspora interest groups were successful in compelling parliamentarians to host an emergency debate in January 2009 which involved participation by all major parties, including statements by party leadership and senior Ministers from the government (Hansard UK, 2009). In the UK, debates on Sri Lanka were held in the 2009 case study in late April. In addition to important interventions by

the opposition Conservatives, a major speech by Foreign Secretary David Miliband referencing critical joint interventions with the Americans is delivered (Lunn et al, 2009). These debates and others offer crystallised policy positions and political sympathies regarding the conflict cycle in Sri Lanka and function as a way to benchmark policy change.

Secondly, with respect to media sources used to build a reliable account, Ties borrows from Larson (2001: 348) to advocate for the use of media sources as external criticism. Two types of media sources were selected for data, primarily events data: Tamil diaspora publications and mainstream media. Important developments in the Tamil diaspora and its response to the civil war was found in the rich, chronological articles provided online by TamilNet and also on LankaWeb (Udugampola, 2010), dating back to the 1990s. While essential for chronological representation, the overt bias and perceived sympathies of these outlets required that all events be triangulated by consideration of non-diaspora media and through reports by NGOs such as International Crisis Group (2010) and Human Rights Watch (2006, 2010, 2011). The use of diaspora media sources allowed for the precise dating of events referenced in interviews, and so these sources were returned to well into the analytical process.

The second type of media drawn upon were articles in the mainstream media. These media sources were largely online articles in traditional print media such as the UK's *The Guardian* and the *Telegraph*, and Canada's *Toronto Star* and *National Post*. Articles from large news networks such as state broadcasters the BBC and the CBC were also consulted as major events in Sri Lanka as well as contentious actions in both countries were widely reported. However, as with diaspora media sources, these sources were consulted with the knowledge that some had a recurring slant in their

coverage.¹⁸

Finally, this project involved doing fieldwork, almost exclusively carried out through elite interviews. Fieldwork is the collection of information from a locale outside of the academy in an area relevant to the subject-matter in question (Bechhofer and Paterson, 2000: 91). Gold's (1958) continuum regarding fieldwork, from participation on the one end to observation on the other is relevant to this inquiry (Bechhofer and Paterson, 2000: 92). I was employed at the British Parliament during the research period, which afforded me unique access to elite interviewees as well as to the inner workings of Westminster, in particular the policy process. However, immersion into the field produces risks associated with the observer becoming the participant. While working on some foreign policy projects, I never engaged on the Sri Lanka issue or with Tamil diaspora activists on professional grounds and don't believe the distinction between observer and participant was ever breached. The following section discusses the data gathering approach through fieldwork in more detail.

Interview approach

This project brought the principles of triangulation to its data collection approach, with a view to avoiding pitfalls such as selectivity and omitted variable bias on material derived from a number of credible sources (Thies, 2002; Collier and Mahoney, 1996). The systematic approach to subject selection ensures the internal validity of the study. In addition to triangulating through consulting media and

¹⁸ Through a critical discourse analysis of Canadian media reporting on the 2009 demonstrations Sriskandarajah (2010) found that outlets had clear leanings, with the right-of-centre *National Post* being more critical of the Tamil demonstrations, and the left-of-centre *Toronto Star* being more sympathetic. Only through consulting a range of sources in both countries was the causal narrative built. Mainstream media outlets were most helpful in ascertaining the timing of events, rather than seeking opinion on the wider issues in Sri Lanka.

parliamentary sources, for each country case interviews were conducted with actors carrying out similar roles in an attempt to ensure 'role alignment' between cases to acquire parallel perspectives. For instance, government Members of Parliament active during each case, including Cabinet Ministers, were interviewed to ensure the perspective of the 'target' is captured. In like manner, Tamil diaspora interest group activists were also interviewed in both countries, including from a range of organizations, particularly in the the UK where there has been historically more fragmentation than in Canada. Additionally, bureaucrats were interviewed to ascertain their role in the decision-making process, specifically their engagement with diaspora interest groups and their sources for information on the issue. Finally, interviews were conducted with human rights organisations familiar with diaspora interest groups, the advocacy targets and strategies used by interest groups, these included the Sri Lanka Campaign for Justice, Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group.

I adopted a purposive sampling strategy, which meant that sourcing of interviewees was based on preliminary knowledge to select those who would have knowledge of the foreign-policy making process with respect to Sri Lanka during the time periods of interest, and had been involved in decision-making or the pressure brought thereon. Fieldwork targets were sought out through secondary sources such as aforementioned articles and through snowball sampling whereby some elites made introductions to others, both in the political sphere and within Tamil diaspora advocacy groups. Targets were interviewed because of their participation as actors during decision-making processes, having attended meetings, demonstrations or through other means. Interviews were brought to a close when relevant sites in both country cases had been visited, relevant actors interviewed and ultimately a credible causal narrative

triangulated with contributions from various sources had been established (Bechhofer and Paterson, 2000: 102).

Of critical importance to this inquiry was access and rapport (Creswell, 2007: 123) as interviewees were almost exclusively elites, many of whom are very selective of their engagements and suspicious of those seeking to interview them. Access in both contexts to political elites was secured often through existing political networks, given I've been involved politically at Westminster during the interview process and active in the past in the Canadian political context. Introductions were provided by those who were close to the interviewees and this not only granted access, but also afforded a level of trust which aided in the candour of the discussions. Taking a semi-structured interview approach ensured all discussions were pointed and directly relevant to the interviewee's own experience, which was key to maintaining 'respect' as the appearance of limited knowledge may have resulted in rapid termination.¹⁹

Aberbach and Rockman (2002) argue that open-ended interviews increase response validity. While it may be true that unprompted information may flow more freely, unstructured interviews are notoriously difficult to compare. Given that this project's approach is to compare cases as well as event episodes over time, this study took a balanced approach, with a semi-structured discussion at the outset, leading to a

¹⁹ The interview process was approached with the objective of achieving representativeness, veracity, comprehensiveness and saturation. The type of interview selected for this research design was as crucial to ensuring the above were achieved. Interviewees, especially politicians and former politicians, are careful about their electoral prospects or their legacy. In like manner, interest group activists cannot be seen to slight those politicians whose decisions they may still depend on. For this reason, there was a need to "press" respondents from time to time or to ask questions in such a way which would allow respondents to answer truthfully without putting themselves at political risk. For instance, politicians rarely admit they have been influenced by interest groups as the public is sometimes skeptical of the motivations of so-called "special interests" (Ridell-Dixon, 2008). For this reason, asking a question multiple times in different ways to allow the respondent to accurately describe the episode was necessary in several cases. For this reason, the opposite of a structured interview, such as a non-directive or reflexive approach would, have allowed respondents to 'get off easy'.

more precise series of questions as the interview focused in on the Tamil case and the time period in particular. Employing interview 'narrowing' allowed for the building of rapport, the collection of unspecified information as well as the ability to compare answers over time and across cases.

With respect to locale, in large part two sets of interviews were conducted, first in the United Kingdom in 2015 and second in Canada in 2016. Interviews in the UK took place entirely in London, where Westminster is located and where the vast majority of Tamil diaspora elites reside and work. Most interviews with political and bureaucratic elites were held in and around the Palace of Westminster, oftentimes at Portcullis House which contains the offices of Parliamentarians and a lobby area with coffee shops. Interviews with Tamil diaspora activists, both presently engaged in advocacy and those no longer involved, as well as those who still hold positions of authority, were held in a variety of locations including coffee shops at major transit hubs, restaurants outside of central London and at locations at or near Westminster. Several interviews with non-governmental organisations were held at their offices in Greater London.²⁰

Interviews in Canada were predominately conducted in Toronto, although some were conducted via telephone and a handful took place in Ottawa. Many of the political actors I interviewed in the Canadian context were no longer active on political or Tamil issues, but recalled vividly their engagement on the file. Due to my long involvement in

²⁰ On several occasions, interviews took place at pubs where alcohol was consumed. Alcohol is a common feature of political culture in general and at Westminster in particular. I took formal notes only while the interviewee and I had two pints of ale or less, believing that interviewees who had consumed more were entering into a position of vulnerability. I do not believe any ethical boundaries were crossed as all interviewees were elite political or diaspora elites 'well-seasoned' in public affairs and professional in their department. However, I found the act of consuming alcohol with them as a powerful trust-building, collegial endeavour which led to frankness and also clarity.

Canadian politics and through closed networks I accessed through elites in this environment, I was able to interview former high level foreign policy staff and former, senior cabinet ministers engaged on the Sri Lanka issue. In person interviews were similar in atmosphere to the London context, where both coffee and alcohol was consumed in moderation.

With a view to ensuring representativeness, nearly thirty interviews were conducted roughly split between the two country contexts in total. I interviewed sitting Members of Parliament, former MPs and cabinet ministers; committee chairs and current and former politically appointed staff from all major parties in Canada and the UK. In addition to elected and formerly elected politicians, I spoke with senior bureaucrats in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as well as in the Canadian Department of Global Affairs.

Regarding the Tamil diaspora, I spoke with the leadership and/or founders of a number of activist groups, including Global Tamil Forum, British Tamil Forum, the Canadian Tamil Congress and groups affiliated with the Labour and Tory parties. In addition, I spoke to human rights activists familiar with the Sri Lanka issue, including the Sri Lanka Campaign for Justice and Peace, International Alert and Human Rights Watch. I spoke to a number of academics familiar with the issue through their own research at the University of Toronto, York University, the School of Oriental and African Studies and a number of others from Greater London institutions. Finally, I organised a workshop in 2016 on transitional justice with a focus on Sri Lanka at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. No interview targets declined interview requests.

With respect to barriers, language, race and political position were never viewed

to have limited candour or access. Indeed, my position within relatively closed political networks and having been involved in politics resulted in a 'peer to peer' type of exchange where the power balance was roughly equal in interviews with both senior activists and political operatives. Only in cases where I interviewed former cabinet ministers was there a discernible power imbalance which may have limited my forthrightness. As a precondition for all interviews, I committed to complete anonymity. Many of the actors I interviewed continue to be heavily engaged on this file, are widely known public figures or have recently left office and are sensitive to their legacy. Anonymity was essential for obtaining candour and, likely in some cases, veracity.

With respect to recording procedures, all interviews were recorded by hand in notebooks I maintain in a secure location. Unlike interviews relating to matters such as trade negotiations or intelligence, the data collected through these interviews likely does not have legal or security sensitivity. However, due to the politically sensitive nature of the commentary for both political and former political elites, as well as sensitivities regarding ongoing advocacy efforts of those Tamil activists I encountered, I deemed it wise to refrain from using any recording devices.²¹

Finally, Bleich and Pekkanen (2015) note that "saturation" is an important means of identifying comprehensiveness. During the interview process, when interviewees began to report the same events, junctures or outcomes and causal processes mirror one another with increasingly diminished variation, a level of confidence can be established that the chronology and causal narrative is credible and

²¹ Interview notes will be available upon request, but will not be published as some comments were not meant for public consumption and there is the possibility of political or advocacy damage resulting in their wider consumption.

comprehensive.

Data analysis

Data in this inquiry was derived from a number of disparate sources, including media outlets, parliamentary debates, Hansard, departmental statements, press releases and from interviewees familiar with the foreign policy making process regarding Sri Lanka. The organisation of data as well as its subsequent analysis emphasised two objectives: To be chronologically accurate and to allow for the construction of causal processes. An existing method of organisation as described by Creswell (2007: 150) is an accurate description of the processes undertaken by the inquiry referred to as a 'data analysis spiral'. Initially, the data was gathered through the sources identified above. Secondly, it was transcribed, read and notes were taken where points of causal interest could be identified. Thirdly, the data was written out and described in their temporal and geographic contexts. Finally, the chronologies were laid out for analysis through comparison and summarized visually as is often the case in most-similar case designs identifying similarities and isolating explanatory distinctions.

Firstly, as articulated by Event History analysts, the organisation and representation of data with chronological accuracy is essential to identifying causation (Stroschein, 2012). Interviewees and other primary sources referenced events from the beginning of the civil war to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in 2013, but also touched on earlier periods beginning in the 1980s. While attempts were made to frame discussion focused on these time periods, dialogue and data gathering often jumped between periods and reference was made to how change took place over time. For this reason, interview data and other data was transcribed and organised based on

the time periods constructed and information pertinent to the causal sequence, i.e. diaspora interest group learning was analysed in interim periods and bookends the temporal cases, allowing for relevant 'transition' information between cases.

The second objective, identifying causation, the organisation of data began by identifying key causal factors in each case. This led to the representation and analysis of processes, firstly in the individual cases. Analysis was then conducted in a comparative context, laying side-by-side each chronological narrative to develop a causal sequence to investigate the presence and absence of factors in each case. This comparative design provided a focused perspective which illuminated the causal factors of interest.

In respect of research approach, the inquiry adopted a conventional case study approach. In this respect, as above the data was organised marginal notes were made, chronological cases were constructed and described, comparative analysis undertaken through the consideration of preconceived assumptions about the role of causal factors and the causal narratives were compared through summary tables isolating factors believed to contribute to the decision-making process and thusly the outcome (Creswell, 2007: 157).

The presentation of the causal sequence was an essential exercise in transparency. Rather than simply discussing the causal processes or even limiting representation to just the causal summary, presenting the causal narrative provides descriptive information, the identification of consequential processes (such as learning) over time and affords other analysts the opportunity to draw their own conclusions and to challenge those of this inquiry.

Conclusion

Through canvassing the existing literature looking at the Tamil diaspora and its engagement in the political process in Canada and the UK, this inquiry determines that the most suitable means for comparing causal sequences in the UK and Canada is a most-similar, cross-case comparison. With the small number of cases and large number of causal factors being analysed, this method is ideally suited to uncovering causation and determining how much diaspora interest groups influence foreign policy in each case. Furthermore, the comparative method chosen for this project has a number of advantages, including its ability to focus on decision-points comparatively between each political context; the internal validity offered by the systematic selection of the temporal and spatial boundaries; and, its replicability both for this context as well as for its potential use in others.

Case selection is likely the most important decision faced by any researcher adopting a most-similar case comparison. The Tamil diaspora was chosen as the diaspora interest groups of interest as they were viewed through existing data to be active advocates seeking to change host country policy in a civil war, and the Canadian and UK cases were selected as political spaces due to the presence of large, concentrated Tamil diaspora, their institutional similarities, liberal political culture and because of their membership in the Commonwealth. Finally, the temporal boundaries for these spatial cases were selected as they were identified as being decision-making processes in both countries, whereby both host governments were called upon to make a decision at roughly the same time regarding the same issue.

Over the last two decades, a number of existing inquiries into the advocacy of Tamil diaspora interest groups in Canada and the UK have turned up invaluable

descriptive data. In the Canadian context, earlier efforts traced the evolution of interest groups since the arrival of migrants up to the transitional period following the end of the civil war. Although of a more recent iteration, data in the UK also exists in secondary sources on the post-LTTE and post-civil war era on the landscape of Tamil diaspora organisations. However, what is missing in these earlier forays is causal information describing processes between diaspora advocacy and foreign policy decisions, the perspective of advocacy targets and a number of crucial diaspora interest groups, including party affiliated organisations in the UK.

The research design adopted by this inquiry addresses these data gaps by thoroughly canvassing three, distinct sources allowing for the triangulation of data. Data is drawn from parliamentary sources such as debates and committee hearings where political stances and foreign policy points are made available. Secondly, the causal sequences which are composed primarily of events data is gathered through canvassing a range of mainstream media sources as well as Tamil diaspora media sources. Finally, decision-making process information and the views of both the advocates and advocacy targets are taken into consideration through semi-structured interviews. These interviews were semi-structured where a rapport was formed and a level of trust built between myself and the interviewee.

Taken together, this data was transcribed and fitted into a chronological, causal sequence that presented data through three strands: Events in Sri Lanka, activities by diaspora interest groups and political decision-making. Through a data analysis spiral, the information was compared with a view to isolating causal factors and determining the extent of their impact. These processes are laid in a way that is replicable and transparent, with the hope that future scholars may repeat these steps either in this

political context or to be used in another.

Chapter V - Empirical background

Challenges and opportunities for Tamil diaspora interest groups

Through the comparison of four case studies set in Canada and the United Kingdom, this project uncovers the extent to which Tamil diaspora interest groups influenced foreign policy in these host countries. However, before the cases studies are investigated, the following chapter provides essential descriptive background in three relevant areas: The landscape of Tamil diaspora organisations prior to the periods of interest with an emphasis on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and its legacy; the migration and settlement of Sri Lankan Tamils to Canada and the UK; and, the foreign policy processes and international roles of Canada and the United Kingdom.

Through this descriptive information, I argue that domestic and international historical and institutional circumstances both advantaged and hindered Tamil diaspora interest groups in the host countries. In summary, this chapter argues that Tamil diaspora interest groups were equally disadvantaged domestically by the legacy of the LTTE in both host countries, but that Canada's integration and settlement policies, as well as its foreign policy process, better positioned Canadian Tamil diaspora interest groups in advance of the decision-making processes analysed in the upcoming chapters. Furthermore, Canadian and British roles are compared in the international, sub-system and bilateral spheres arguing that while the UK is far more comparatively dominant in all of these spheres, this perversely creates wider opportunities of influence for Canadian Tamil diaspora interest groups.

Firstly, a detailed description of the Sri Lankan civil war is offered, with a specific focus on the grievances articulated by Tamil activists. This historical background section then delves deeper into the transnational nature of the civil war in Sri Lanka as

the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) sought to deploy the large Tamil diaspora in the West as a resource abroad during the conflict. Its agents and front organisations operated for years in both countries until it was rendered illegal, first in the UK and then in Canada. This section argues that the legacy of association with the LTTE tainted later Tamil diaspora interest groups and impeded their ability to engage with decision-makers in the host countries.

Secondly, this chapter discusses processes of migration. Paralleling the conflict in Sri Lanka, tens of thousands of Tamils fled Sri Lanka to Canada and the UK. This exodus began with the outset of the conflict in 1983 and continued well into the 2000s. Allerdice (2011) and Bloemraad (2007) argue that processes of migration, settlement and integration affect the capacity for and direction of diaspora activism. Through an extensive review of Canadian and British migration policies, with a focus on Tamil migrants, this section argues that Canada's settlement and integration processes better empowered the Canadian Tamil diaspora to engage government on issues in Sri Lanka than was the case for Tamils in the UK.

Thirdly, this chapter looks extensively at the foreign policymaking processes in Canada and the UK. As argued in the literature review, Tamil diaspora interest groups are seeking to influence foreign policy, which makes them foreign policy actors. As such, these interest groups must act through the structural confines of the foreign policymaking processes in each country, which it will be argued offers a limited number of points of access. Despite having substantively alike institutions and policymaking processes, variation between Canada and the UK better suits the Tamil diaspora in Canada than it does in the UK. This section argues that, despite Westminster being more porous than the Canadian House of Commons through less rigid party discipline,

Tamil diaspora interest groups are nevertheless comparatively disadvantaged in the UK due to the greater influence of Whitehall bureaucrats over the policymaking process.

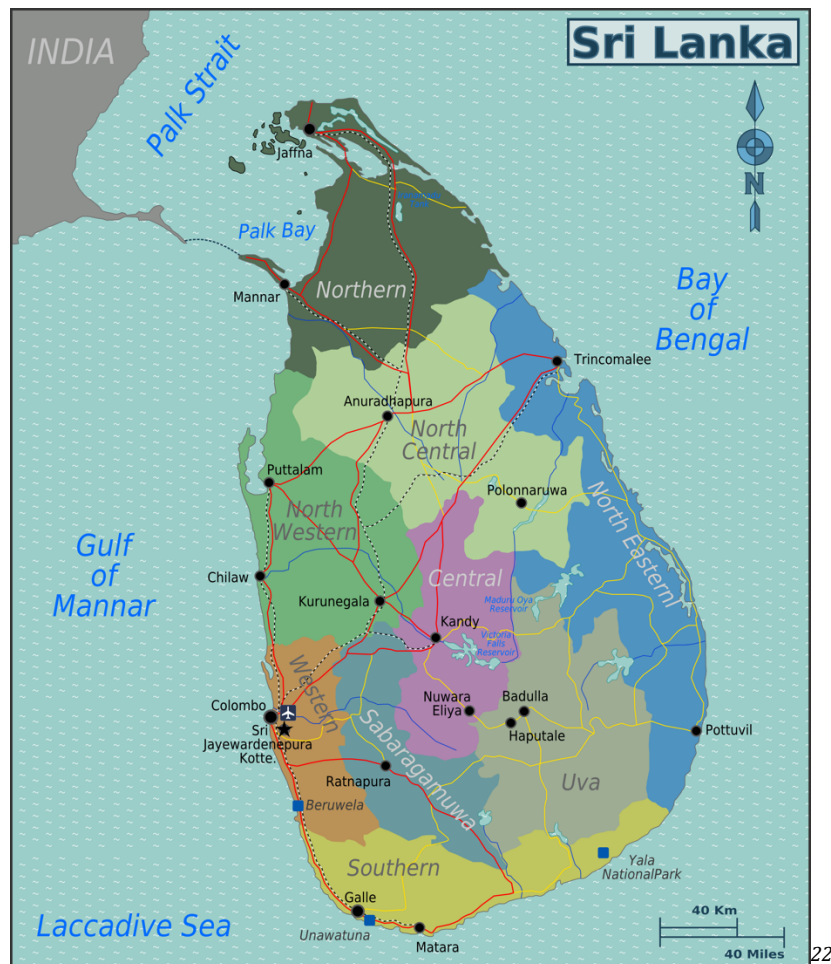
This section concludes by reviewing the roles played by Canada and the UK in the international sphere, their roles in the Commonwealth of Nations and their bilateral relations with Sri Lanka. While being an influential power in the Commonwealth, Canada is considerably less influential than Britain both in the wider international system and in its relations with Sri Lanka. Canada's less influential position internationally affords it more freedom to adopt foreign policies more reflective of domestic concerns, such as those of diasporas, as there is little expectation that Canada's policy decisions will substantively alter international norms or institutions.

Taken together, this chapter concludes that despite diasporas facing a number of challenges in both country cases leading up to the decision points examined, the Tamil diaspora in Canada is comparatively more advantaged in its advocacy efforts than its counterparts in the United Kingdom.

Sri Lanka's 26-year, transnational civil war and the securitization of the Tamil diaspora

The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Canada and the UK originates in large part as a consequence of the brutal civil war which enveloped the island of Sri Lanka following independence from Great Britain. This section begins by charting the history of the conflict with a focus on the grievances asserted by the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. The second section considers the transnational element of the conflict through a deeper exploration of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), their efforts to extract resources from the large Tamil diaspora in Canada and the UK and its enmeshing within the wider Tamil diaspora organisational landscape. Finally, this section concludes by

arguing that the inextricable links between the LTTE and the Tamil diaspora led to the securitization of the Tamil diaspora and the tainting of Tamil diaspora interest groups with the legacy of the LTTE, which hindered their efforts to influence host country foreign policy.



Decolonisation and the roots of Sri Lanka's civil war

Twenty-six miles off the southern tip of India is the island of Sri Lanka, previously known as Ceylon. Totalling 61,610 square kilometres, it has a population of

²² https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d4/Sri_Lanka_Regions_Map.png
 Attribution: By User:(WT-shared) Burmesedays, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection Sri Lanka Maps, OpenStreetMap [1] (:Image:Sri_Lanka_Regions_Map.svg) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0)], via Wikimedia Commons

over twenty-one million people (CIA World Factbook, 2009). Of these, 73.8 per cent identify with the Sinhalese ethnic group; 7.5 per cent are Sri Lankan Moors (Muslim), 4.6 per cent are Indian Tamils, and 3.9 per cent are Sri Lankan Tamils. In 1981, 74 per cent of Sri Lanka's inhabitants identified as Sinhalese, while 18.2 per cent identified as Tamil (Manogaran, 1987: 4). From an outsider's perspective, there is little to differentiate Sri Lankans who identify as Tamils, and those who identify as Sinhalese. Indeed, "there are no genetically inherited characteristics in terms of which we can differentiate Sinhalese from Tamils." (Committee for National Development, 1984: 43). While distinct, the Tamil and Sinhalese languages are related in both syntax and grammar. With respect to religion, a majority of Tamils have traditionally identified themselves as Hindus, while the Sinhalese principally identify as members of the Buddhist faith.

Historically, both the Sinhalese and Tamils trace their ancestry back to India and developed autonomous kingdoms, independent of one another, and went through various periods of cooperation and conflict for roughly two thousand years (Manogaran, 1987: 2). Sri Lanka was colonised by Europeans in the 16th century. The Portuguese, who first conquered the island, left the status quo intact, and allowed the two peoples to continue to exist independently of one another. The island was later taken over by the British, who imposed their own governance structure and dismantled the existing system in favour of five, and later twenty-two, arbitrarily defined districts. The Tamil-speaking people resided mostly in the Northern and Eastern districts, but it was during this time that internal forced migration began to disrupt the traditional demographic geography of the island.

Throughout the British colonial period, the Sinhalese maintained economic

superiority over the Tamil minority through their control over most of the arable land in Sri Lanka. As a result, many Tamils entered the learned professions, such as medicine, law, and academia. To improve their lot, many learned English under British occupation and joined the existing administrative service (Manogaran, 1987: 7). It was in the 1920s, as the British began to delegate more authority to Sri Lankan natives, that tensions began to rise between the two ethnic groups. Universal suffrage was instituted in 1931, but despite this, the early electoral structure of Sri Lanka was regionally distributed, which disadvantaged the Tamils given their smaller numbers. Sri Lanka peacefully declared independence from Britain in 1948, and the new state structure quickly began to reflect the wishes of the Sinhalese majority.

The conflict in Sri Lanka has its roots largely in the process of de-colonisation and in the aftermath of independence. Following 1948, the Sri Lankan government, dominated by the Sinhalese, instituted a series of nationalist policies and laws to the detriment of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. These policies included: the complete deprivation of citizenship for roughly 900,000 Tamils in the new state; the closure of public service jobs to Tamils, along with the implementation of an entry quota in universities aimed at reducing Tamil students; Sinhalese was adopted exclusively as the official language of the new state, Buddhism was given prevalence in the new constitution; and the neglect and disregard of Tamil majority areas for new infrastructure projects began and would become a hallmark of government policy for decades following independence (Gopal, 2000: 153).

Given these exclusionist policies and the explicit nationalism exhibited by the Sinhalese leadership, calls for an independent Tamil state began being made openly as early as 1950 (Manogaran, 1987: 12). However, the majority of Tamils sought a semi-

autonomous Tamil state in a larger federal framework. Two agreements, the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact of 1957 and the Senanayake-Chevanayakam pact of 1965 were negotiated in good faith to address Tamil concerns, but neither were implemented as a result of hard-line opposition among Sinhalese elites (Manogaran, 1987: 12). Non-violent protests among the Tamils, as well as anti-Tamil rhetoric and violent opposition from the Sinhalese, characterised this post-independence period.

In 1972 a new constitution, which established Sri Lanka as a republic within the British Commonwealth, was drafted by the Sri Lankan government. As had been the case almost twenty-five years earlier, Sinhalese was again enshrined as the official language of Sri Lanka, and Buddhism was given a special place, virtually as the state religion (Manogaran, 1987: 13). It was in the early 1970s that disaffected Tamil youth, excluded from jobs and places in the country's universities (Ratnatunga, 1988: 388), began to form nascent radical groups beyond the control of the Tamil political elites (Gopal, 2000: 152). One of the most powerful of these groups was the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), whose first violent attack was against the Mayor of Jaffna in 1975. Between their creation and 1983, the LTTE are believed to have been responsible for more than 265 acts of civil disobedience, ranging from bombings to robberies and vandalism.²³

²³ During this time, the Sri Lankan government took a number of steps to address the concerns of Tamil groups, including: Tamil was instituted as a national language in 1977; the Tamil community was granted constitutional rights as of 1978; the standardization of education was lifted, and regional autonomy was advanced through the creation of District Councils (Ratnatunga, 394). Despite these commitments, the Tamil political leadership under the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), criticized the government for its failure to fully or effectively implement these concessions. The frustration of the Tamil community was only reinforced by the results of continued exclusionist policies, which had adverse effects, including an unemployment rate for Tamil youth of 41 per cent, as compared to 29 per cent for Sinhalese youth; the degradation of Tamil-area infrastructure due to state neglect, particularly agricultural infrastructure; and a number of concerns related to the supposed devolution of powers to District Development Councils, which in effect gave Tamils very limited control over their own affairs (Committee for National Development, 1984).

In July 1983, intermittent attacks by Tamil separatist groups rapidly led to an escalation in violence and ultimately precipitated the civil war. The killing of thirteen Sinhalese soldiers led to massive, violent anti-Tamil riots leaving dozens dead. The government was accused of doing nothing to stop the unrest and was further believed to have abetted attacks on Tamil civilians (Gopal, 2000: 156). After the deaths of some 400 Tamil civilians, and the mass exodus to India of 150,000 others, the first World Tamil Eelam Conference was held in New York to strategize for the establishment of an independent Tamil state in Sri Lanka.

Following the expulsion from the Sri Lankan parliament of the mainstream Tamil political leadership, the TULF, radical separatist groups gained new legitimacy among the Tamil community and effectively assumed the leadership of the separatist struggle. The rest of the 1980s were characterised by international attempts to end the conflict, mainly through Indian influence. The presence of an Indian peace-keeping force failed to create conditions necessary for a lasting peace. Despite American involvement as well, attempted settlements in 1987 and 1988 did not produce a peace and, with pressure from all sides, the Indian force left in 1990. Aggressive warfare resumed between the LTTE-led separatists and Sri Lankan government forces well into the mid-1990s (Gopal, 2000: 159-171).²⁴

Uyangoda (2005: 22) suggests that the most successful attempt at a political solution for the conflict came in 2002. With extensive international involvement in a Norwegian-led negotiation process, and supplemental incentives (US\$4.5 billion), the

²⁴ The agreements in the 1980s failed to produce a settlement due to the exclusion of the LTTE in the negotiating process, which would further characterise the peace-process in the 1990s. The Sri Lankan government sought to devolve further power through the constitution to regional governments in the hope of placating the separatists, but again the exclusion of the Tigers from the process degraded the legitimacy of any unilateral solution (Uyangoda, 22).

process produced a ceasefire between the hostile parties, six rounds of talks and a proposal for a federated state. Despite Western promises of economic aid and other commitments as incentives for sticking to the ceasefire, the LTTE again reneged, citing their exclusion from the talks taking place in Washington DC, and the failure of the Sri Lankan government to adequately meet the terms of the agreement.

In 2005, the political climate changed with the election to the Sri Lankan presidency of hard-line, nationalist Mahinda Rajapaksa, who had not been part of the 2002 peace process (Bandarage, 2009). During that election, Tamils were persuaded by their leadership to boycott the process, which ultimately influenced the outcome in favour of Rajapaksa. Following the election, the President consolidated considerable executive powers, including a significant amount of control over the legislative and judicial branches of the government and he assumed the roles of Minister of Finance and Minister of Defence (Large, 2016: 48).

The first major offensive by either side following the 2002 ceasefire was a successful land-grab by the Sri Lankan government in September, 2006 (BBC, 2017). The LTTE responded with several assassination attempts and violent retaliatory attacks, leading to further incursions and land seizures by the Sri Lankan government. In May of 2008, the government formally broke from the 2002 ceasefire and captured large tracts of land in the north formally held by the Tigers. The final throes of the conflict began in the fall of 2008, with a Sri Lankan offensive that made deep gains in Tiger-held territory, with victory eventually being declared by the president on May 19th, 2009 over the LTTE (BBC, 2017).

While there were salient territorial, economic and political considerations, the twenty-six-year conflict in Sri Lanka is defined in the literature as an ethnic conflict, in

which ethnic identities were constructed, reinforced, foiled against the other, and most importantly, mobilised by political elites to obtain specific outcomes (Bush, 2003: 6). For Sinhalese political elites, particularly the nationalist elements of the leadership, the post-colonial vision for the country was one in which the majority could feel secure and in control of state institutions, and not exposed to threats from the minority (Uyangoda, 2005: 11). Their historical frame told of the oppression of the Sinhalese by the Tamils, and created a mentality that they were in fact the threatened minority in the larger regional picture of south-east Asia. For their part, the Tamils actively pursued a federalist state through peaceful means, before turning to violence in pursuit of a fully autonomous, sovereign state: Tamil Eelam (Bush, 2003: 12).

Having considered the origins and chronology of the civil war in Sri Lanka, the following section homes in on the transnational level of the Sri Lankan civil war, the LTTE's influence abroad and its extensive network of fundraising within the large Tamil diaspora. Recognising the financial and political advantages of having an organisational presence in host countries, the LTTE constructed one of the most sophisticated diaspora fundraising apparatuses in the world, drawing tens of millions of dollars annually from Tamils in the UK and Canada. However, as a result of its deep enmeshment within the Tamil diaspora its eventual proscription as a terrorist organisation in Canada and the UK greatly tainted both the diaspora and diaspora interest groups seeking to emerge out of the LTTE's shadow. This section argues that the marring of Tamil diaspora interest groups through this legacy significantly hindered their advocacy in the host countries.

The LTTE abroad: Transnational conflict and the Tamil diaspora in Canada and the UK

Diasporas are communities simultaneously embedded in multiple societies and, through an increasingly globalised context, are changing the international security environment (Adamson, 2007; 2005). The parallel emergence of the LTTE in the Canadian and UK host countries alongside the growth of the Tamil diaspora is an extension of the conflict to the transnational sphere beyond Southeast Asia. As noted in the literature review, scholars have considered at length the influence of the LTTE abroad on the endurance of the civil war in Sri Lanka (Cochrane, 2009; Orjuela, 2008; Adamson, 2005; Fair, 2005), but what has been less often discussed is the affect of the LTTE on the perception of the Tamil diaspora in their host countries by foreign policy elites and the detrimental impact of the LTTE's legacy on efforts by subsequent diaspora interest groups to influence host country foreign policy. This section discusses the transnational nature of the Sri Lankan conflict, the LTTE enmeshment into the Tamil diaspora landscape in Canada and the UK and argues that its legacy tainted subsequent Tamil diaspora interest groups, greatly hindering their advocacy efforts in the first cases I explore.

The impetus for the LTTE's enhanced operations abroad came in the late 1980s and early 1990s, following dramatic changes in the geopolitics of the conflict. The end of political support for the LTTE by India and its increasingly hostile scrutiny of its operations in Tamil Nadu caused the LTTE to seek resources and support elsewhere. Located in affluent, influential Western countries and with continued sympathy for its aims, the growing Tamil diaspora became an integral part of the LTTE's support network (Venugopal, 2006).²⁵

²⁵ The LTTE recognised early on the inherent value of the Tamil diaspora, which gained access to resources through its dispersion to wealthier Western countries. The LTTE's external affairs were managed by the International Secretariat, which consisted of publicity and propaganda wings; extensive

With the aim of creating a Tamil national homeland governed by the LTTE, the LTTE's sophisticated international publicity efforts were directed principally toward the Tamil diaspora (Zunzer, 2004). The diaspora was then to serve as the "front-facing" interlocutor with host country governments, aiming to build international political support for Tamil self-determination. Through the LTTE's International Secretariat and the Tiger Organisation of Service Intelligence Services (TOSIS), the LTTE managed quasi-diplomatic offices in as many as 54 countries, with a greater presence in major Western states with large Tamil diasporas.²⁶

The International Secretariat and TOSIS coordinated these quasi-diplomatic service groups which consisted of a network of pressure groups, media units, charities and others sympathetic with the wider struggle for self-determination (Zunzer, 100, 2004). Propaganda efforts abroad in the early years were often rudimentary, made up largely of pamphlets at local libraries, mail-outs and community broadcasts. Recognising that there was more to be gained by expanding its communications channels, the LTTE employed "councillors", which operated within front organisations whose main aim was to mobilise the diaspora.

One of the most important operational arms of the LTTE abroad was the

fundraising infrastructure; and arms procurement and shipping (Chalk, 2000). It is this international secretariat that ultimately managed the LTTE's much-vaunted transnational networks, in particular its perceived control over the Tamil diaspora in countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom. In addition to the Secretariat, a more clandestine office known as the Tiger Organisation of Service Intelligence Service's (TOSIS) was involved in managing operations within the diaspora (Chalk, 2008).

²⁶ Propaganda was conducted through international front organisations, such as the Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations, the Swiss Federation of Tamil Associations, the French Federation of Tamil Associations, the Federation of Associations of Canadian Tamils (FACT), the Ilankai Tamil Sangam in the US, the Tamil Coordinating Committee in Norway; and the International Federation of Tamils in the UK. Based in Canada, the World Tamil Movement (WTM) was founded on 17 October 1990 and became one of the most effective front organisations of its kind, organising political gatherings, cultural programs and distributing LTTE publications (Zunzer, 2004). The UK's British Tamil Organisation performed a similar function.

publicity and propaganda wing, the Eelam Political Administration, which was managed until 2006 by Anton Balasingham from London. The LTTE's sophisticated publicity and propaganda efforts exported the narrative of Tamil liberation abroad and through the diaspora, with the aim of enhancing a sense of proximity to the conflict, encouraging international support and discrediting the Sri Lankan government. The Administration advanced three key narrative pillars: Tamils are the innocent victims of Sinhalese discrimination and repression; the LTTE is the only organisation capable of representing the aspirations of the Tamil people; and, Sri Lanka cannot be at peace until the creation of Tamil Eelam, an independent state governed by the LTTE (Chalk, 2008). Through the use of hotlines, videos of large-scale military operations, and the broadcast of speeches and major rallies, the LTTE was able to politicise the diaspora and shape how it viewed the conflict in Sri Lanka and, indeed to some extent, how it viewed itself and its role in the conflict while abroad (Sriskandarajah, 2005).

The LTTE was as strategic in how it framed itself to international audiences outside of the diaspora as it was within Tamil diaspora communities. In particular, it was cognisant of fashionable global movements and favourable frames into which the Tamil struggle for a homeland might be inserted. It often masked itself as a 'peace' organisation, championing a legitimate struggle for the self-determination of an historically oppressed minority in a post-colonial context. Within this frame of peace-building the LTTE worked to deepen its international credibility through strategic alliances with global human rights organisations (Chalk, 2000).²⁷ Some observers note the 2001 United Nations conference on racism and the alternative NGO declaration at

²⁷ Organisations include the Canadian Relief Organization for Peace in Sri Lanka, International Educational Development Inc. (IED), the World Council of Churches, the Australian Human Rights Foundation, the International Human Rights Group and the International Federation of Journalists.

that summit as evidence of the efforts of the LTTE to influence international affairs through NGOs (Venugopal, 2006).²⁸ Through enhancing its efforts abroad and building strategic alliances, the LTTE framed itself to Western governments as a peace movement and more deeply legitimised the Tamil struggle and the desire for an independent Tamil homeland (Chalk, 2000). Consequently, most Western governments throughout the 1990s viewed the LTTE as a liberation struggle rather than a terrorist organisation.

With respect to the LTTE's fundraising capacity, complete accuracy pertaining to the amount of money raised by the LTTE abroad through the Tamil diaspora cannot be known. Some estimates suggest that diaspora contributions to the LTTE may have comprised as much as 80-90 percent of the secessionist movement's budget by the mid-1990s. Through donations directly from the diaspora, funds skimmed off of contributions to NGOs and contributions from Tamil businesses, the LTTE is believed to have received as much as US\$200 to US\$300 million annually from abroad (Chalk, 2008). From individual Tamil donors in the diaspora, annual contributions ranged from US\$240.00 to US\$646.00 per year per household, with households in the UK contributing on average US\$600.00 per year. Front organisations were essential to this fundraising network. For example, FACT in Canada raised between \$12 million and \$22 million annually before being proscribed a terrorist organisation (La, 2004).²⁹

²⁸ In the United States, the LTTE was particularly effective at infiltrating credible international organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and International Crisis Group. By allying itself with and integrating itself into existing international organisations, the LTTE was able to infiltrate the US State Department as well as congressional committees and various research bureaus. Despite the fact that the United States proscribed the LTTE in 1997 as a terrorist organisation, the LTTE continued to advance the narrative of Tamil victimhood and steer US administrations away from making the destruction of the organisation a priority (Mendis, 2014).

²⁹ Evidence indicates that the LTTE operated a system of business loans, whereby newly arrived Tamils seeking to set up in business would receive loans from the LTTE in exchange for a portion of their profits. Many Tamil businesses were compelled to contribute financially, both through direct coercion and for

To ensure compliance amongst the diaspora, the LTTE established a range of methods for the collection of contributions. It is widely agreed that the LTTE used a system resembling a form of taxation, as well as one of extortion, to ensure contributions to the movement were widespread. Tamil families and businesses in the United Kingdom and Canada were expected to contribute regular “donations” to the LTTE (Human Rights Watch, 2006).³⁰ In pursuit of contributions from intransigent targets, representatives of the LTTE used coercive methods including regular telephone calls, frequent visits to the residences of families and outright threats to relatives of diaspora families remaining in Sri Lanka (Human Rights Watch, 2006). Many Tamil families, even those which did not support the LTTE or had misgivings with its conduct in the war, nevertheless gave money due to a climate of fear instilled by stories of violence and murder against dissenters in the diaspora (La, 2004).³¹

As a means of propagating its messages and collecting funds, the LTTE exercised control over community institutions, such as temples, churches and community centres. With as many as forty temples in Toronto and over twenty in London, the LTTE controlled temples through compelling operators to transfer institutional ownership to the LTTE or demanding they make vast financial contributions. Temples were also a

fear of losing business if they were seen not to be sympathetic to the Tamil struggle. It is estimated that between 1998 and 1999 in Canada, US\$6.5 million was raised through LTTE business activity (La, 2004).

³⁰ Volunteers canvassed Tamil neighbourhoods in Toronto and London on a weekly basis, knocking on doors and distributing LTTE materials in exchange for small donations, sometimes asking donors to contribute to special projects such as supporting a major offensive. In the 1990s in London, as many as 1000 individuals were contributing through monthly instalments of between 10-30 pounds per month. In Canada and the UK sophisticated, computerised databases were used to track contributions and maintain consistent financial contributions (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

³¹ The LTTE fundraising apparatus reached such a level of sophistication that operatives having access to household banking records could track remittances being sent back to families in Sri Lanka. Shortly thereafter, LTTE members in Sri Lanka would arrive at those households and demand a portion of the money received. Remittances collected by the LTTE were channelled through foreign banks, other interlocutors or smuggled by hand into the country. In 1999, Sri Lanka’s Gross Domestic Product was US\$20 billion. When compared with the US\$1 billion received in remittances by the country annually, the opportunity for extraction on the part of the LTTE was considerable (Chalk, 2004).

common point of request for individual donations and community hubs where LTTE propaganda was often disseminated. Its dominance of social, religious and cultural institutions and organisations reinforced the association between Tamil identity and support for the organisation (Human Rights Watch, 2006).³²

The LTTE's powerful and extensive network of fundraising in the UK and Canada became one of the world's most successful diaspora resource extraction operations, offering a consistent source of funds to finance the conflict in Sri Lanka. However, while being likely the most influential and omnipresent Tamil organisation in Western countries, the LTTE was not alone. A number of other Tamil diaspora organisations, many of them oriented toward settlement and integration, were also established. The following section discusses Tamil diaspora organisational landscapes in Canada and the UK, demonstrating the extent to which the LTTE had infiltrated diaspora advocacy and service organisations.

Two sides of the same coin? The LTTE and Tamil diaspora organisations in Canada and the UK

From the earliest years of Tamil migration to the West the diaspora formed organisations to support Tamil members, in particular those serving the interests of recent arrivals from Sri Lanka to Canada and the UK. The first non-cultural Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora organisation founded in Canada was the Tamil Eelam Society of Canada

³² Even after the organisation was made illegal in Canada and the United Kingdom, it was still able to control the conflict narrative received by the diaspora and collect funds through front organisations. While threatening intransigent families unwilling to contribute to the organisation was not uncommon, outright dissension against the LTTE within the diaspora was dealt with far more harshly. Vandalism, arson and death threats were often levied against dissenting groups and individuals. The LTTE's ruthlessness as exemplified in its destruction of rival groups was also meted out against detractors, including violence against family members in Sri Lanka, forced detention and abuse for returnees accused of dissension abroad as well as beatings and reports of murder against dissenters (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

(TESOC) in 1978, which was founded by members of the diaspora who were not conflict-generated emigres as those in later waves would be (Amarasingam, 2015: 71). The political unrest in the late 1970s in Sri Lanka was the impetus for TESOC's creation, with the principal aim of advancing the idea of Tamil Eelam in Canada. The organisation rapidly gained legitimacy in the view of policymakers and was an integral force in advocating for the "Special Measures Program", which was implemented by the federal government to support the arrival of refugees (MacDonald, 1984).³³

TESOC capitalised on Canada's liberal system of integration when it succeeded in its petition to the Canadian government in the 1980s to become the official provider of settlement services for the Tamil community. Ceasing political activity, TESOC began receiving government funding for disbursement in 1990 to support settlement and integration services for Tamil newcomers (Amarasingam, 2015: 83).³⁴ Founded somewhat later in 1986, the World Tamil Movement (WTM) became the most hard-line diaspora organisation with respect to its views on the Tamil independence movement and was perceived to be the diaspora group closest to the LTTE in Canada. The WTM worked to influence the internal operations of other diaspora groups as a means of advancing its agenda, including putting forward candidates for election to their

³³ The program was a scheme applied to a specific set of persecuted applicants which allowed Canadian residents to make family sponsorship claims for first and second degree relatives while placing less relevance on the established points system. However successful this effort may have been, the government instituted a visa regime in 1983 in response to the crisis where no visa for entry to Canada from Sri Lanka had been previously required, ostensibly to prevent those not facing persecution from taking advantage of the system.

³⁴ The founding of TESOC was paralleled by the founding of the Society for the Aid of Ceylon Minorities (SACEM). Unlike TESOC, SACEM took an apolitical approach from the outset, focusing largely on the provision of settlement services for new arrivals. The Canadian Tamil Chamber of Commerce is an outgrowth of the founding of SACEM. However, the differing approaches of TESOC and SACEM led to tension contributing to a lack of coordination between them (Amarasingam, 2015: 81; International Crisis Group, 2010).

leadership, (Amarasingam, 2015: 83).³⁵

As the number of diaspora groups continued to grow, the TESOC, WTM and Society for the Aid of Ceylon Minorities (SACEM) united in 1992 with seven other groups to form an umbrella organisation, the Federation of Associations of Canadian Tamils (FACT). This allowed groups to retain separate identities, but allowed the diaspora to speak with one voice (Amarasingam, 2015: 85). Efforts such as this, however, afforded the LTTE-aligned WTM to seek greater influence over the internal affairs of other groups. The WTM became the most dominant force in the umbrella group and efforts through these channels were made in particular to gain control over the affairs of TESOC, which was then in receipt of funds from the Canadian government for settlement purposes. These activities sowed considerable discord within community organisations.³⁶

The mobilisation of the Tamil diaspora in the UK in the 1980s and 1990s resembled to some extent the same trajectory as that in Canada. Interviewees active in the 1980s noted that mobilisation was led most often by emigres to the UK who had arrived prior to 1983 as economic migrants or as students (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015). These Tamil activists, who demonstrated and campaigned at universities for the Tamil right to self-determination were generally well-educated, integrated and middle class.

The earliest example of Tamil diaspora mobilisation can be found in the UK, with the founding of the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students by Elayathambi

³⁵ A leftist organisation known as the Tamil Resource Centre (TRC) was also founded in the 1980s. Despite its left-wing alignment, it did not support the LTTE (Amarasingam, 2015: 85).

³⁶ During the 1990s, FACT organised conferences, protests and other actions to support the struggle for Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka. However, as the 1990s progressed, the view that the LTTE was an organisation committed to liberation and self-determination began to shift.

Ratnasabapathy. The group organised protests beginning in 1975 in London and Manchester (Amarasingam, 26: 2015). Protests continued throughout the 1980s, but mobilisation was not sophisticated. Unlike the Tamils in Canada who became involved and influential in the Liberal Party, the UK diaspora was not as active in organised party politics or connected to elite members of either major party despite being able to vote on arrival. Their tactics were rudimentary, such as sending letters to MPs written sometimes in Tamil and organising demonstrations which had little impact on government views with respect to the civil war in Sri Lanka (Personal communications, Together Against Genocide, 2015).

Despite a relative lack of engagement at the political level in the early years, the LTTE headquartered its international apparatus from London. Owing to its strategic location at the heart of international NGO activism and media networks, the UK became a fertile ground for LTTE fundraising and capacity-building. Tamil opposition groups have argued that the LTTE operated in the UK in a similar fashion as it did in Canada, through a number of front organisations registered legally as charities with tax credit status. Organisations included: the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO); Chencholai, which raised money for those orphaned by war; TEEDOR which donated funds for economic development in the north; the Tamil Refugee Action Group, United Tamils Organisation (UTO), and the International Federation of Tamils, which was believed to be the principal LTTE front organisation in the UK (FACTb, 2015).³⁷

³⁷ Organisations such as these were set up as charities for two reasons. Firstly, as registered charities, these groups were able to capitalise on the legitimacy this status granted them and in-so-doing cultivate contributions from both the Tamil diaspora and the general public. Several groups received funding for operations from government bodies, including Camden Council and the British Refugee Council. Secondly, receiving charitable tax status allowed for the international transfer of funds out of the UK and rendered these transfers exempt from paying taxes, as they would have had to do as a commercial entity. In addition, as a commercial entity, these organisations would have had to render explanations to government as to the usage of these funds, which they were absolved of doing as charities.

As was the case in Canada, the LTTE's web of front organisations and infiltration into non-LTTE diaspora organisations deepened their control over diaspora activism and entrenched the view in the minds of elites that Tamil diaspora organisation was a thoroughly LTTE affair. As the 1990s progressed, suspicion about the activities of the LTTE in Canada and the UK grew and the organisation was ultimately listed in the 2000s as a terrorist organisation. The following section details the proscription of the LTTE in Canada and the UK.

The Proscription of the LTTE and its collapse in Canada and the UK

Over the course of the 1990s, a number of incidents contributed to the reframing of the LTTE and its affiliates from a freedom-fighting organisation to a terrorist group in Western countries. The first incident occurred in 1991, with the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The Indian government had evolved from actively supporting the LTTE and other secessionist groups, to being engaged in an outright conflict with the LTTE in the late 1980s as its peacekeepers ended operations in the north. The dramatic move on Indian soil soured the view of Western governments toward the LTTE and brought into focus its ruthless tactics (Bandarage, 2009). Secondly, following a period of negotiation and peace processes in the early 1990s, the LTTE withdrew from peace talks with the Sri Lankan government in 1995, stoking the conflict's escalation. It was this development, more than any others in the Sri Lankan conflict, which led the US government to proscribe the LTTE a terrorist organisation in 1997 (U.S. Department of State, 1997).³⁸

³⁸ While not leading immediately to a domino effect in other Western countries, the US's listing of the LTTE as a terrorist group further eroded the LTTE's favourable narrative in the West and forced it to retreat further behind front organisations such as the World Tamil Movement.

Domestically, organisations associated with the LTTE in Canada, such as FACT and the WTM increasingly became politically corrosive.³⁹ Shortly after Canada became a signatory to the United Nations convention against terrorism in February 2000, Canadian media erupted with reports that Canadian Finance Minister (and future Prime Minister) Liberal MP Paul Martin and Maria Minna, International Development Minister, had attended a fundraiser in Toronto organised by FACT for the Tamil Relief Organization (TRO). Their controversial attendance was raised repeatedly in House of Commons debates as the opposition Canadian Alliance party admonished the government for attending the dinner given the perceived association of FACT with the LTTE (Hansard, 2001). Suspicion about the activities of FACT existed throughout the 1990s and the organisation was eventually shuttered in 2000 following advice by Liberal Members of Parliament that it was too closely aligned with the LTTE (Amarasingam, 2015: 89). That same year the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) was founded, which continues to act as the principal voice of the Tamil community.⁴⁰

For its part, the Sri Lankan government worked closely with law enforcement organisations in Western countries with large Tamil diaspora populations to counter LTTE operations in those host countries. The Sri Lankan government also lobbied these same host country organisations to designate the LTTE as an illegal terrorist

³⁹ In addition to security reports published by Canada's intelligence agency, CSIS, FACT had been linked to terrorism through WTM leadership, in particular Manickavasagam Suresh. Suresh arrived in Canada in 1990, ostensibly as a refugee to head the WTM after having been involved previously in the leadership of the LTTE in Sri Lanka. Following an investigation by CSIS, Suresh was arrested in 1995 and deemed a threat to national security. Tamil diaspora organisations engaged in advocacy efforts to free Suresh and the case became a landmark against terrorism in Canada (Suresh v. Canada, 2000).

⁴⁰ Some argue the CTC was founded as an outgrowth of the collapse of FACT. Many other members of the community assert that the CTC was founded as a rights-based organisation and an outgrowth principally of the anti-violent gang youth movement, the Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre (CanTYD). As will be articulated in Chapter 6, the CTC took years to become active in public engagement with political leaders, principally because it did not have the knowledge to do so and because of the legacy of association with the LTTE.

organisation (Corley, 2012). Unlike the episodes discussed in upcoming chapters, the Government of Sri Lanka was successful in its efforts to take advantage of the changed perception of the LTTE in the 1990s. As Western governments became increasingly concerned with terrorism and greater attention was paid to the activities of believed front organisations, the Sri Lankan government through its High Commissions and through professional lobbyists sought to persuade Canadian and British politicians to make the LTTE illegal, similar to the United States (FACTb, 2015). Despite this pressure, the Liberal governments in Canada of Jean Cretien (1993-2004) and Paul Martin (2004-2006) refused to proscribe the LTTE, arguing that to do so would hinder the Norwegian-backed peace process (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015), while others have argued that it was deep links forged between the Tamil diaspora and the Liberal Party that influenced the government regarding its proscription (Geislerova, 2007; Collacott, 2013).⁴¹

Ultimately, it would take a change in government to have the LTTE listed as a terrorist organisation. In 2006, the Liberal government was defeated by the Conservative Party under Calgary Member of Parliament Stephen Harper. Harper formed a minority government and moved quickly to add the LTTE and other organisations supporting it in Canada to the list of terrorist groups. In 2008, the Conservative government led by Minister of Public Safety Stockwell Day listed the

⁴¹ While reported on by interviewees, evidence for the internal influence of the Tamil diaspora inside the Liberal Party rarely surfaces (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016). However, one instance in 2006 demonstrates the power of Tamil diaspora mobilisation. Following the defeat of the Liberal government in 2006, a leadership race to replace the former Prime Minister got underway. One prominent leadership candidate for the Party was Toronto Member of Parliament Bob Rae. Rae was asked to commit to Tamil diaspora activist leader Father Francis Xavier that he would delist the LTTE if he were elected leader and subsequently Prime Minister in exchange for 45 Tamil delegate votes. Rae refused to make the commitment and those 45 delegates were committed to another candidate (Fatah, 2006).

World Tamil Movement as a terrorist organisation following a two-year investigation. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), shortly after the LTTE was listed in 2006, raided the Toronto offices of the WTM and evidence was collected of their support for the LTTE (Amarasingam, 2015: 89).⁴²

In the UK, the process to render the LTTE an illegal terrorist organisation began in the late 1990s, before the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks. Then Labour Party Home Secretary Jack Straw, who later served as Foreign Secretary was pressured by both the LTTE and its UK sympathisers to allow the LTTE to continue to operate, continuing to frame itself as a liberation movement and its front organisations in the UK as charities engaged in relief efforts (Orjuela, 2008).

On the other side, the Sri Lankan High Commission applied intense diplomatic pressure to convince the UK to do the opposite. They worked to reframe the LTTE as a terrorist group, taking advantage of increasing global attention to terrorism and the operations of terrorists in Western countries. Some commentators have also argued that the Indian government was quietly pressuring the Home Office to do the same through its renewed channels of communication with the British government (Orjuela, 2008).

Despite the political pressure from Tamil diaspora voters in the UK, many of whom aligned with the Labour Party, in 2001 the British government added the LTTE to its list of terrorist organisations and thereby made it illegal for it to operate in the UK. This decision would have profound implications for the diaspora and for the conflict itself (Fair, 2005).

⁴² However, interviewees and other sources active during this period argue that the Canadian government viewed the LTTE from the early 2000s onward as effectively a terrorist organisation (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016).

As well as impacting the trajectory of the conflict, the ramifications of the proscription of the LTTE by the British and Canadian governments deeply impacted the perception of the Tamil diaspora in these host countries and served to delegitimise the diaspora's organisational efforts for years to come. The decision also stigmatised members of the diaspora in the view of elites and non-elites alike, tainting them with an association to terrorism.

Securitized and Tainted: The Post-LTTE 'chilling effect' on Tamil diaspora advocacy

The securitization of the Tamil diaspora and its tarnished association with the LTTE is directly tied to the above discussion on the extensive reach of the LTTE in both host countries, its creation of front organisations long before it was made illegal, its extensive enmeshing with non-LTTE organisations and, most importantly, it having ultimately been rendered a terrorist organisation. The following section discusses the securitization of the Tamil diaspora in both host countries and concludes by arguing that its association with the LTTE had a deleterious impact on the advocacy efforts of Tamil diaspora interest groups leading up to the two empirical cases analysed. Firstly, it argues that a wider discourse on diasporas and security negatively impacted the Tamil diaspora. Secondly, elites and non-elites implicitly associated the Tamil diaspora with the LTTE, which led to the diaspora feeling 'criminalised' following the LTTE's proscription. Thirdly, the Sri Lankan High Commission actively lobbied British policymakers against associating with the Tamil diaspora through insinuations that they represent a security threat. Finally, these elements taken together which securitized the Tamil diaspora constrained the ability of the Tamil diaspora to engage with politicians in the 2000s, especially conservative politicians.

Firstly, in the 2000s a wider discourse on international security crystallised the view that conflict-driven diasporas are a potential security threat in the host country through being potential incubators of extremism and radicalization (Smith et al, 2017), as well as being distant conflict actors in the homeland. Canadian security agencies broadly speaking developed a policy of monitoring the behaviour of conflict-generated diasporas in Canada, including the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora for a range of reasons, including the potential for activists in the host country to launch violent attacks in response to events in the homeland as well as fundraising to support terrorism abroad (Amarasingam, 2014). A similar, security-oriented perspective prevailed in the UK and research into the perceptions of other conflict-generated diaspora activists indicated during this period a hesitation to express political identity in the UK, including the use of potentially illegal symbols, such as the LTTE flag, and the organisation of events as a consequence of their securitization (Vimalarajah et al, 2011). There was a palpable sense of fear and confusion during this period for Sri Lankan Tamil activists who were unsure as to what was permissible and what was illegal.

Secondly, in addition to ill-defined legislation leading to a climate of fear and confusion, much of the public discourse leading up to the 2009 Tamil diaspora demonstrations conflated being Tamil with being a member of the Tamil Tigers, so much so that a reference to 'Tamil' was often followed by 'Tiger' (Jeypal, 2013). The same explicit association can be seen in the UK, where before the year 2000 Tamils in the UK were often questioned about their association with the Tamil Tigers, whereas after 2000, it was assumed that all Tamils were Tigers (Berghof Peace Support, 2011). In the minds of non-Tamils, both elites and non-elites, Tamils were not only racialized but also heavily stigmatized by the LTTE and by extension became associated with

terrorism. The Tamil diaspora became conflated with terrorism by virtue of its perceived domination by the LTTE (Jeyapel, 2013). The enmeshing of the LTTE into the affairs of groups not involved in the conflict, such as cultural associations and humanitarian groups, inhibited their ability to organise following the LTTE's proscription. This was especially true for Tamil activists seeking to engage officials in politics and government.

Finally, playing an active role in the marginalization of Tamil diaspora activism was the Sri Lankan High Commission, which under this climate was able to suppress Tamil diaspora events, including cultural and philanthropic activities; law enforcement froze bank accounts and questioned and arrested Tamil activists in some cases without explanation (Vimalarajah et al, 2011). The Government of Sri Lanka via the Sri Lankan High Commissions worked aggressively to delegitimise Tamil diaspora organisations and representatives, arguing to political elites that these organisations were “poison” and not to be trusted as they were still being influenced by the LTTE. As a consequence, Tamil diaspora representatives were viewed as a threat to national security by foreign offices and Cabinet (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015).

The proscription of the LTTE exacerbated the perceived association between Tamils and Tamil Tigers, leading to members of the diaspora feeling ‘criminalised’; there was a view that not only was the LTTE itself proscribed as a terrorist organisation, but that the diaspora as a whole felt it had been put “on notice” (Personal communications, British Tamil Forum, 2015). Interviewees active in the 2000s in both countries identified a ‘chilling effect’ between 2001 when the proscription took effect in the UK and the late 2000s, as it was not clear on the part of diaspora activists what types of advocacy were permissible and which were not; particularly whether or not the

LTTE flag could be displayed.

The melding of these ethnic and political associations, along with the proscription of the LTTE and active efforts by the Sri Lankan High Commission to delegitimise Tamil activists, served to greatly undermine the ability for Tamil activists to engage with political and bureaucratic elites, in particular the latter. Suspicion was fuelled among political elites in both countries and within mainstream parties, especially within conservative parties, that Tamil representatives had dubious associations and backgrounds, including with terrorism (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015; British Tamil Conservatives, 2015). The risk was too high that some in sensitive political positions might become tainted through their association with Tamil activists (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016).

In Canada, from the perspective of political and foreign affairs elites, there was a need in the 2000s to utilize interlocutors to serve as a trusted filter between the Tamil diaspora and political decision-makers. Indeed, the Foreign Minister relied on a trusted Tamil Conservative professional located in Ottawa to make introductions to Tamil diaspora interest group activists, rather than simply engaging directly due to the continued taint of the LTTE's legacy (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2015). Similarly, British Tamil Conservative activists noted that it wasn't until 2010 that British Conservative politicians began to interact with representatives from the Tamil diaspora in any respect. Before 2010, there was a nearly complete "freeze" on engagement due to the perceived association of the Tamil diaspora with the LTTE and by extension with terrorism (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015).

In summary, the LTTE operated extensively in Canada and the UK throughout

the 1990s and, through front organisations, well into the 2000s. The LTTE became so deeply enmeshed into the Tamil diaspora organisational landscape that public perception held little distinction between the LTTE and the Tamil diaspora. Following the proscription of the LTTE in the host countries, a new discourse on securitization and the efforts of the Sri Lankan government, Tamil diaspora activism experienced an extended “chilling effect”, which greatly hindered their advocacy efforts in the years to come. The re-emergence of Tamil diaspora activism in the post-LTTE period is discussed in the Chapter VI, but before proceeding along this line, the following section details the history of Tamil migration to Canada and the UK, arguing that Canada’s *laissez faire* system of integration led to the more rapid development of Tamil advocacy to government in Canada.

From integration to interest groups: How regimes of immigration, integration and settlement influence diaspora advocacy

Following their arrival to Canada and the UK largely as asylum-seekers, processes of settlement and integration began for Sri Lankan Tamils. The following section argues that Canada and the UK, both with robust social support systems for asylum-seekers, afforded newly-arrived Tamil migrants the opportunity to advocate on behalf of homeland issues rather than host-country issues. However, Canada’s more liberal approach to immigration and its integration processes, which favours the funding of diaspora support groups, led to it being a comparatively more advantageous context for the formation of diaspora organisations.

It has been recently argued that two principal settlement and integration practices influence the direction of activism. Firstly, settlement regimes which provide

social and welfare assistance, housing support and initiatives supporting access to employment offer an opportunity for community activism to be directed more toward grievances in the homeland, rather than working to address immediate concerns in the host country environment (Allerdice, 2011; Bloemraad, 2007).

Secondly, the direction of diaspora activism is influenced by settlement processes and, in particular, whether or not settlement services are offered by bureaucrats or diaspora-run providers. In her research, Allerdice (2011) compares the activism of the Sudanese diaspora in Australia and the United States with a focus on how different settlement regimes may have impacted the direction of their political activism.⁴³ She finds that 75 percent of Sudanese diaspora groups in the United States are engaging in political activity directed towards the situation in South Sudan. When compared to Australia, 70 percent of activist organisations are engaging in politics directed inside Australia. This difference is explained by the divergent mechanisms of settlement assistance. In the Australian case, settlement services are provided through centralised institutions formally operated by the state, rather than through decentralised, informal mechanisms via the diaspora community, which is generally the case in the United States. This *laissez faire* mode of delivery in the US leads diaspora elites to direct engagement toward issues focused more on the homeland as this is the preference of diaspora service organisation elites.⁴⁴

While both diaspora communities benefitted from extensive social service

⁴³ She defines political activism as raising funds to support relief efforts in the homeland and pressuring host country elites to engage on the issue in the homeland.

⁴⁴ Looking specifically at four refugee groups in the Netherlands, Fennema and Tillie (2000) argue integration processes, in particular political inclusion, correlate strongly with political participation by diasporas. Integration programmes have the potential to instil trust in the political process on the part of the diaspora and they provide the structural space for diaspora elites to network and gain access to host-country policymakers.

support, only the Tamil diaspora in Canada was entrusted from the earliest days with resources from government to help settle incoming migrants in a similar fashion to the approach outlined for Sudanese migrants to the US. For this reason, the Canadian Tamil diaspora was stood in better stead with regard to the formation of diaspora groups advocating on issues related to the homeland. This next section begins by providing essential descriptive data on the Tamil diaspora in Canada and the UK. Secondly, the migratory processes of Sri Lankan Tamils arriving to Canada and the UK is discussed. Thirdly, the processes of settlement and integration are put forward in both country contexts with a focus on the Tamil diaspora. In conclusion, I argue that the settlement and integration mechanisms adopted in Canada led to the earlier development of Tamil diaspora interest groups in Canada.

The Tamil Diaspora in Canada and the UK

The worldwide Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora is believed to number anywhere from half a million to over a million members, with the largest populations in Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.⁴⁵ Beginning with the Tamil diaspora in Canada, before 1983 there were roughly 2000 Sri Lankan Tamils living in Canada. These Sri Lankan Tamils were generally wealthier professionals from higher caste families, many of whom had resided first in the United Kingdom and arrived in Canada already familiar with Western culture and social norms (Zunzer, 2004). Following the 1983 riots and the beginning of the civil war in earnest, Tamils began to arrive in Canada *en masse* as conflict-generated refugees. Despite not having been a favoured destination for Tamils

⁴⁵ Sizeable Sri Lankan Tamil populations are also found in the United States, Switzerland, Germany and Norway (Orjuela, 2008). The largest number of Tamil diaspora members are located in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu on the southern tip of India, but are often considered a distinct diaspora from those Tamils who have settled in the West.

in the past, emigres viewed Canada as an auspicious destination due to fewer restrictions on immigration as compared to countries such as Britain and Germany. As will be outlined below, Canada's generous system of social benefits and its policy of multiculturalism made it a compelling destination.

There are between 250,000 and as many as 400,000 Sri Lankan Tamils living in Canada today (Lahneman, 2005; La, 2004). Some estimate that as many as 200,000 Tamils are living in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) alone, with this population of Sri Lankan Tamils being larger than any other in the diaspora and larger than any concentration of Tamils now living in Sri Lanka (Mendis, 2014).⁴⁶ With respect to their places of settlement in Canada, the majority of first generation Sri Lankan Tamils settled in the region of Toronto in the northeast referred to as Scarborough; a very culturally diverse region of Toronto, Scarborough has included at least five federal electoral districts which serve to segment the region politically as well as to an extent geographically.⁴⁷

Estimates on the size of the Tamil diaspora in the United Kingdom are even less accurate than the Canadian context due to the fact that the UK census captures individuals identifying only as "Other Asian" and does not capture the type of language spoken, nationality or ethnicity. Prior to 1983 the Sri Lankan population was roughly 30,000 and in 2002 it was close to 110,000; 60,000 of whom are refugees. The UK Labour Forces Survey estimates there are 102,950 Sri Lankan-born workers and that

⁴⁶ The Canadian census in 2006 lists 103,000 Tamil-speaking Canadians whilst the Sri Lankan High Commission believes there were as many as 300,000 Tamils in Canada as of 2012 and roughly 75,000 Sri Lankans of Sinhalese origin. Tamil is one of the top 25 languages spoken in Canada. The Canadian census takes into account linguistic factors such as what language is most often spoken in the home. However, data on ethnicity is not collected.

⁴⁷ As in the United Kingdom, Sri Lankan Tamils are now moving out of the downtown of Toronto to more affluent, residential areas like the suburbs of Pickering, Ajax, Markham and Whitby (Udugampola, 2010). Despite this trend, the vast majority of Tamils still live in the Scarborough area of Toronto.

Sri Lankans are the fourth largest Asian diaspora in the UK. Numbers range anywhere from 100,000 to as high as 250,000 (Fair, 2005). Sri Lankan Tamils are concentrated in London and Greater London, with large, identifiable communities in areas of London such as Rayner's Lane, East Ham, Southall, Wembley, Harrow and Ilford (Deegalle, 2014). 50,000 Tamils are believed to call London home and 90 percent of Tamils reside in the southeast of England. Outside of London, Sri Lankan Tamils also reside in Leeds, Bradford and Lancashire (Cowley-Sathiakumar, 2008).

The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in the United Kingdom is composed of at least three distinct streams of migration. The first wave is a post-independence wave of migration, composed largely of upwardly mobile Tamil professionals with high English proficiency and a high level of education. Many Sri Lankan Tamils left as opportunities in higher education began to be restricted on the basis of nationalist policies aimed at reducing the number of Tamils in university and in the civil service (Deegalle, 2014).⁴⁸

A second wave arrived in the 1970s, and were made up of slightly lower caste migrants with a lower level of education. Many belonging to this wave were young men who did not integrate quickly into the United Kingdom (Cowley-Sathiakumar, 2008). A third wave of migration was composed almost entirely of asylum-seekers fleeing violence in Sri Lanka following the 1983 riots and the eruption of hostilities between the government in Colombo and Tamil separatists, as well as between the various factions of Tamil separatist groups fighting amongst one another. This final wave of migration has been by far the largest and has only ebbed in recent years (Orjuela,

⁴⁸ The National Health Service (NHS) accepted the qualifications of Sri Lankan medical doctors and many Sri Lankan Tamils availed themselves of this opportunity.

2008).⁴⁹

Broadly speaking the Tamil diaspora in Canada and UK have followed similar migratory patterns and are heavily concentrated in the largest urban centres of Toronto and London. With some idea of the population of Sri Lankan Tamils in these two countries, the next section proceeds with a discussion of Canada's system of immigration and how this impacted Tamil emigres.

With open arms: Sri Lankan Tamil migration to Canada

Canada's immigration system prior to 1962 favoured white Europeans on the basis of racial preference, making it difficult for potential migrants from countries such as Sri Lanka to gain entry. Following 1962, a new system was put in place which emphasised family reunification, potential professional contribution and humanitarian assistance, culminating in the 1966 *Trudeau White Paper* which cemented a non-discriminatory points system (Zulfika, 2013). In 1976, Canada ratified the 1951 *Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and adopted the *Immigration Act* in the same year, which codified Canada's 'about-face' from a policy of racial exclusion to one of openness. Canada went so far during this period that it adopted a system admitting refugees without a cap (La, 2004).⁵⁰

Along with the *Immigration Act*, the 1970s also witnessed Canada becoming the

⁴⁹ With respect to the migration of Sri Lanka's Sinhalese majority, the bulk of out-migration from the Sinhalese community are lower class labour migrants, many of which arrived in the Middle East to work as domestic staff. The West is home to over 100,000 Sinhalese migrants, mostly living in the UK and Australia (Orjuela, 2008). These migrants to the West are generally middle class and educated; they are less concentrated than the Tamil diaspora and are highly integrated into British and Western society.

⁵⁰ The legislation adopted in 1976 obliged the government to accept all refugee claimants arriving in Canada. No refugee could be deported without an adjudication process and claimants were given two opportunities to demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution as defined in the 1951 Convention. While waiting for the right to work in the country, provincial authorities ensured asylum seekers the receipt of social and welfare benefits until being granted the right to work.

first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as state policy through the 1971 *Multiculturalism Policy of Canada* (Ostergard-Neilson, 2003). The policy ensures newcomers and newcomer communities can maintain their cultural identity while seeking to integrate into Canadian society (Pier 21, 2018). With this as a backdrop, new entrants to Canada experience an environment where national legislation enshrines their right to retain their culture and traditions.

Migration from Sri Lanka began with a small number of professional, educated elites beginning in the 1950s when Canada began to receive technical emigres under the Colombo Plan.⁵¹ Prior to 1983 and the beginning of the civil war, there were roughly 2000 Tamils living in Canada. In addition to professional migrants arriving directly to Canada, this population of Tamils also included well-educated middle class economic migrants who had arrived via the United Kingdom, taking advantage of Canada's membership in the Commonwealth (Hyndman, 2003).⁵²

From the beginning of the civil war, immigration from Sri Lanka to Canada rose dramatically and acceptance rates for Tamil refugees was very high.⁵³ Even after the creation of the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board in 1989, which brought more rigour to admittance processes, Tamil refugee claimants had an 80 percent success rate until 1998. Added to the favourable acceptance rate, many Tamil migrants bypassed

⁵¹ Canada's connection to Sri Lanka at this early period in its history, mostly via the Commonwealth, is evidenced by the fact that Canada is credited for being responsible for helping to build Sri Lanka's airport.

⁵² Sri Lankan Tamil refugees began applying for asylum in Canada at one of the country's most receptive admittance periods. The largest number of immigrants received in any decade was the 1990s, when 2.2 million immigrants were admitted during a particularly violent period of the Sri Lankan civil war. Between 1980 and 2005, the rough breakdown of Canada's migrant acceptance by category was: economic class (60%), family class (25%) and refugees or protected persons (15%) (Elrick, 2007).

⁵³ The first refugee boat full of Tamils was rescued by fisherman off the eastern coastal province of Newfoundland and Labrador in November 1986. The refugees were resettled in Toronto, as the vast majority of asylum seekers from Sri Lanka would be. Immigration officials accepted the migrants with the support of the existing Tamil diaspora. Throughout the 1980s, 85 percent of Sri Lankan claimant applications would be approved; much higher than the average acceptance rate.

conventional assessment procedures. Between 1986 and 1989 some 26,500 refugees were admitted to Canada (Zulfika, 2013).⁵⁴ Despite having a population of less than twenty million, between 1991 and 2001 Sri Lanka was the fifth largest source country for immigrants to Canada. Between 1992 and 1999, Sri Lanka was Canada's largest source country for refugees, with 80 percent of claims heard approved in 1999 and 77 percent in 2000.⁵⁵

Put in frank terms, the Tamil diaspora could not have begun migrating to Canada at a more propitious time with regard to its immigration policy. As will be described below, Canada's settlement and integration policies which provide basic welfare and employment assistance, along with funds for diaspora groups to manage the settlement process, offered fertile ground for diaspora engagement in public affairs.

Tamil settlement and integration in Canada

Canada has a long tradition of providing settlement and integration services to newcomers through a decentralised funding and programme provision apparatus which sees the federal government fund hundreds of immigrant-serving organisations across the country – many of them run by diasporas.⁵⁶ Between 2005 and 2006, for instance,

⁵⁴ Sri Lankan Tamil refugees also benefitted from a refugee regime in Canada which was greatly in flux in the 1980s, with legal battles over claimant processes leading to a massive, unmanageable backlog of claimants. The government eventually permitted express entry to many without them having to go through oral testimony (Amarasingam, 2015: 76).

⁵⁵ Also of importance with regard to choosing Canada as a migration destination was the 1997 decision by the United States State Department to render illegal the LTTE in the US as a terrorist organisation. Following this decision, no Tamils entering the US under suspicion of membership in the LTTE were granted asylum (Mendis, 2013).

⁵⁶ There are a number of designations within the refugee class: Government Assisted Refugee, Privately Sponsored Refugees and Joint Assistance Sponsorship. In the first category, refugees receive income assistance from the federal government for one year. Afterwards they are able to receive social assistance if they are not able to find employment. Privately Sponsored Refugees are expected to receive support from the sponsoring agency, such as a church or Mosque. Jointly sponsored refugees can receive government support for as much as 24 months, while the co-sponsoring private entity provides emotional and social support for up to 36 months. Government assisted refugees receive support from 23 designated locations across English Canada through the Resettlement Assistance Program.

the federal government spent CAN\$445 million on integration services (Elrick, 2007). One example of this is the above noted, Tamil Eelam Society of Canada (TESOC) which provided integration and settlement services for the Tamil community.

Additionally, bodies such as the UNHCR, UNRISD and the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), which is the federal government's immigration and settlement delivery department, all have their own definition of and processes for refugee integration. The CIC's approach to integration includes seven different programme areas, with the goal of ensuring "newcomers contribute to the economic, social and cultural development needs of Canada." Programme spending in this area alone exceeded \$1 billion in 2010-2011.

Canada's approach to integration puts the burden on both the migrant and the host country society. For the former, they must work to engage in Canadian society and practice "basic Canadian values," (Hyndman, 2011):

Canada's approach to integration is one that encourages a process of mutual accommodation and adjustment by both newcomers and the larger society. Newcomers' understanding of and respect for basic Canadian values, coupled with Canadians' understanding of and respect for the cultural diversity that newcomers bring to Canada, is fundamental to this approach. As well, the cooperation of governments, stakeholders and other players, such as employers and volunteers, in providing newcomers with the support they need for successful economic and social integration helps Canada realize the full benefits of immigration (CIC, 2010c: 29).

With regard to naturalisation, the Canadian government encourages new migrants to seek citizenship and Canada has one of the highest naturalisation rates, with 70 percent of migrants being naturalised as of 2001. Along with China and India, Sri Lankan migrants are in the top ten source countries with the highest rates of naturalisation (Elrick, 2007). To gain Canadian citizenship, applicants must have lived in Canada for three of the last four years prior to application; speak English or French; be a permanent resident and pass a citizenship test. Since 1977, Canada has allowed

Canadians to hold more than one type of citizenship.⁵⁷

Canada's 'about-face' with respect to immigration policy in the 1960s and 1970s made it a propitious destination for Sri Lankan Tamil asylum-seekers desirous of living in a liberal, Western country. Furthermore, its regimes of settlement and integration, as well as espousal of a multicultural philosophy afforded the Tamil diaspora a fertile ground for the organisation of interest groups. The following sections discuss these frameworks in the UK, which would undergo changes to its immigration system during the same period, but with the opposite trajectory.

Turning a cold shoulder: Sri Lankan Tamil migration to the United Kingdom

In contrast to Canada, the United Kingdom was for much of the 20th century a relative net exporter rather than importer of migrants (Sommerville et al, 2009). Following the Second World War, Britain's colonial legacy defined its immigration policy via the *British Nationality Act of 1948*, which permitted access to the country for citizens from Commonwealth countries without hindrance. Motivated by a desire to cement Britain's position at the head of the post-Imperial Commonwealth of Nations, these policies led to a large intake of migrants from former colonies such as India, Pakistan and Jamaica.

However, unlike Canada which ended a system giving preference to whites in the 1960s, Britain's immigration system was heading in the opposite direction. Following the "South Asian Surge" in the late 1950s of migrants from India, Pakistan, Ceylon and other countries in the region, popular anxieties over the entrance of non-whites led to a

⁵⁷ According to statistics Canada, as many as 1.8 percent of the Canadian population hold dual citizenship. Both a relatively liberal system of naturalisation and the ability to hold dual citizenship are low barriers to entry for migrants to become integrated and exercise the right to vote.

series of legislative reforms to “close the door” and make it harder for new migrants, including refugees, to settle in the UK (Spencer, 1997: 147).

Legislative reforms in the 1960s and 1970s, culminating in the 1971 *Immigration Act* all worked to limit immigration to at least “net-zero” and empowered the Home Secretary with considerable discretionary powers. These legislative changes formed the backbone of UK immigration policy during the early stages of Tamil refugee migration to the West. The period was defined by an emphasis on limitation, including the passage of the *British Nationality Act, 1981* which removed the automatic right to receive British citizenship despite being born on British soil. Further administrative hurdles were put up, including those limiting students and those visiting the country from claiming permanent residency (Spencer, 1997: 149).⁵⁸

Through the efforts of both Labour and Tory governments, between the 1960s and 1990s rates of immigration and emigration largely mirrored one another (Hatton, 2005). With regard to other factors, such as the issuance of work permits, the policy of limitation can be seen throughout the 1980s and until 1997, when permits issued fell to as low as 15,000 in 1982. With many Tamil refugees fleeing Sri Lanka in the 1980s and 1990s, the UK did not offer as propitious an opportunity for immigration in contrast to Canada during the same period.

Regarding refugees, UK laws on asylum seekers are based on the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. However, it did not have a statutory law governing asylum until 1993 (Home Office, 2017). As with

⁵⁸ While Britain was attempting to close the door to migration, it must be said it was taking steps to make the country less hostile to diverse communities. During the same period, a number of anti-discriminatory laws were also passed to support integration processes, leading ultimately to the passage of the 1976 *Race Relations Act*.

immigration, asylum policy was very much at the discretion of the Home Office. Conservative governments in the 1980s and 1990s restricted immigration and visa-requirements were introduced for refugee-producing countries. The perception of refugees in general was largely a negative one as they were portrayed as a drain on the welfare system and illegal entrants (Spencer, 1997: 149).⁵⁹

Despite the fact that the UK's policy framework was not as receptive as Canada's, it has nevertheless been a popular destination for refugees, including Tamils. Along with Somalia and Turkey, Sri Lanka featured regularly in the late 1980s and 1990s as a top source country for asylum-seekers arriving in the UK (Stationary Office, 1998). Applications by Sri Lankans to the UK compared with those from other source countries were considerably lower from 2001 to 2014. In 2001, they were 6 percent of the total, making it the 5th highest source country for that year. Of those who made an application, four in ten were granted asylum.

When looking solely at the timeline of the Sri Lankan civil war and the rapid increase in Tamil asylum-seekers from that country, British immigration policy can be virtually halved into two periods. Britain in the 1980s and for much of the 1990s was not a country receptive to migrant inflows. Indeed, the government established policy hurdles to limit immigration to the country and during this period the inflow of refugee migrants was considerably less than Canada. However, by the late 1990s and the coming to power of the Labour government under Prime Minister Tony Blair, a new immigration policy was put in place which saw a discernible rise in the number of new migrants, including those from Sri Lanka.

⁵⁹ The United Kingdom received between 20,000 and 40,000 asylum applications per year in the early and mid-1990s, increasing slightly each year between 1987 and 2002. By 2002, the United Kingdom had received 15.2 percent of the worldwide total of 555,310 asylum applications in that year.

Tamil settlement and integration in the United Kingdom

As with immigration policy during this period, there are distinctions between the Canadian and British contexts with regard to settlement and integration. While Canada developed an accommodating stance and engaged diaspora organisations early on in the integration process, the UK only began formally adopting integration measures in the late 1990s and 2000s and only until much later proffered resources to diaspora groups to aid settlement. For much of this period, government policy largely reflected overarching popular opinion regarding integration, which placed the onus solely on migrants to work to integrate into British culture and made no mention of a similar responsibility being placed on the wider society to make an effort to welcome newcomers. Refugees were expected to essentially “discard” the culture, traditions and language brought with them and become “British” (Hyndman, 2011). In short, the UK’s early policy bends more towards an assimilation approach in contrast to Canada’s model, which encourages the retention of homeland country traditions. Refugees were not considered a major issue and not perceived in a negative fashion until the 1980s by the British populace, when public opinion began to view them negatively. In fact, some scholars point to that change in perception with the arrival of the first airliner containing 44 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in 1986 (Chakrabarti, 2005).⁶⁰

Prior to 1999, refugees arriving in Britain were admitted to the same welfare provision as permanent British residents. The 1990s witnessed the enactment of

⁶⁰ The *Immigration Carriers’ Liability Act, 1987* placed the onus of refugee authenticity on the emigres. This was only one of a number of changes which worked together to progressively make it more challenging for refugees to make a successful claim for UK protection. The introduction of ‘transit visas’ which prevented possible claimants from making refugee claims on UK soil while stopping over or changing between flights was one such measure meant to ‘close the door’ (Chakrabarti, 2005).

refugee application-making and provision of social services, including the 1999 *Immigration and Asylum Act* which removed conventional benefits from refugees and created the National Asylum service (BBC, 2013d).⁶¹ While social benefits may have been retrenched during this period, the UK began to move away from looking at refugees as individuals to be 'settled', but as members of society where integration should be supported (Allwood and Wadia, 2010: 32). A separate asylum-seekers support system was eventually established providing 70 percent income support.⁶²

The UK Gateway Protection Resettlement Programme, which works in partnership with the United Nations Refugee Agency, is currently one of the programmes supporting resettlement for asylum seekers. The programme provides refugees with a twelve-month package of housing and integration support by both local authorities and NGOs. The Mandate scheme provides support to refugees through the Home Office and assists refugees from all over the world who are housed and supported by a close family member in the UK (Home Office, 2017).⁶³

Conceptually, the term "integration" began to be used in the mid-1990s and appeared in the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*, which enhanced the role of NGOs and the voluntary sector and created a minor role for refugee community associations. The

⁶¹ The National Asylum Support Service (NASS), which administers the new system, also instituted a policy of "dispersion" which works to settle refugees in parts of the country outside London and the South East (Allwood and Wadia, 2010: 28).

⁶² The Labour Party's 1998 attempt to reform Britain's piecemeal system of immigration and integration continued an attempt to balance, on the one hand, ensuring refugees received the support required to meet basic needs, but on the other hand to stymie the view that the UK is an easy place for false claimants to gain access to generous benefits schemes (Chakrabarti, 2005). These duelling objectives continue to distinguish the UK's policy from Canada's, which has not been motivated by a desire to curb support as deterrence to fraudulent applications.

⁶³ Asylum support is also provided by the Home Office to those awaiting a decision on their asylum application. Under Section 95 of the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*, refugees can either receive accommodation-only support where they receive accommodation but must support themselves otherwise; subsistence-only support where they receive cash to support themselves, or both subsistence and accommodation support. After an asylum-seeker receives refugee status, they are taken off these provisional schemes and then required to apply for mainstream benefits.

Refugee Integration Strategy (2000) emphasised the need for refugees to fully exercise their rights and responsibilities. Finally, it was only in 2000 when a refugee integration policy was put into place, making finance available for integration services and making community organisations eligible to provide integration services (Sommerville et al, 2009).

Unlike Canada's immigration reforms in the 1960s and 1970s which made the country more accessible to Tamil asylum-seekers, the United Kingdom's immigration system worked to prevent migration in large numbers and to "close the door" to asylum-seekers like those fleeing Sri Lanka. Similarly, the UK's lack of integration support efforts and its approach to settlement which involved, until recently, allotting conventional benefits to migrants, did not provide Sri Lankan Tamils with a fertile environment for interest group formation with an orientation toward the homeland. The final section below argues that Canadian Sri Lankan Tamils were better positioned as activists in this respect.

The Tamil diaspora as better-positioned activists in Canada

The Tamil diaspora in Canada and the UK share many parallels, including largely similar migratory patterns and settlement patterns in the host country, being situated in a small number of localities within the country's two largest cities, Toronto and London. In respect of host country policy, during the years when Tamil asylum-seekers arrived *en masse* in both countries, they could expect to have their basic needs met by government programming and services which, as the literature suggests, leads to a direction of advocacy that more quickly turns to issues and events in the homeland. However, there are number of distinctions between the two cases and the literature

argues these may have some bearing on the evolution of Tamil diaspora organisations. The below concludes this section by arguing that the Tamil diaspora in Canada was more propitiously placed to form diaspora organisations due to a more receptive approach to integration and a settlement regime more favourable to the creation of diaspora groups.

Firstly, Canada's consistent receptivity to new migrants in respect of its immigration policy led to a massive influx of Tamil refugees throughout the periods under consideration, beginning from the early 1980s when the civil war began. Its multiculturalism policy and the general sentiment of openness amongst the Canadian public led to Canada becoming an appealing destination for Tamil migrants and would continue to be so. In the United Kingdom, decades of policy meant to curb the entry of immigrants and refugees beginning in the 1960s had the opposite effect. Labour governments and succeeding Tory governments in the 1980s and 1990s implemented immigration policies which made the UK a less attractive option for Tamil refugees which is reflected in the smaller intake of refugees from Sri Lanka during this period.

This more receptive approach to migration policy extended to regimes of settlement and integration. The Canadian government has for decades provided financial resources and programming to assist in the integration of newcomers into Canadian society, while de-emphasising the need for newcomers to shrug off their ties to the homeland through its espousal of multiculturalism rather than assimilation. The Canadian immigration system puts an onus on wider Canadian society to accept the unique culture and heritage of new arrivals as a contribution to a larger Canadian mosaic. In contrast, the UK has traditionally expected immigrants to de-emphasise their unique cultures and to more deeply integrate into British culture. However, the dramatic changes in immigration policy following the election of the Blair government

in 1997 made the country more receptive and larger numbers of Tamil refugees began arriving after this time.

Secondly, settlement processes are viewed by the literature as an important part of the institutional apparatus determining the level of activism, as well as the direction of activism undertaken by diaspora communities in host countries. In Canada, various levels of government have worked to support refugees immediately upon arrival through the provision of housing, social benefits and other services. It is clear that incoming Tamil refugees would not have been left wanting for the basic necessities of life in Canada and relatively no need to advocate for the provision of such necessities. In the United Kingdom, the government has also opted to provide similar services to incoming refugees in past decades, but these benefits were not schemes specific to assisting refugees until recently. The critical difference between these two cases is the direct funding allocation to diaspora organisations in Canada, including Tamil diaspora organisations, which are mandated on behalf of the government to provide settlement services upon arrival. Unlike in the UK, since the 1980s Canadian Tamil diaspora elites formed robust service organisations linked to government, which provided them with financial resources as well as an early awareness of government operations, whereas in the UK until only recently new emigres received support through the same funding schemes as native British residents, depriving them of the capacity and knowledge afforded their Canadian counterparts.

When taken together, Canada's more receptive immigration and integration policies, as well as its generous, diaspora-led approach to settlement created a system more favourable for Tamil diaspora interest groups to form diaspora organisations, enter into the public discourse and advocate for the homeland rather than host country

issues.

Along with immigration, integration and integration policy, Tamil diaspora interest group activism has been greatly impacted by the foreign policy approach of the UK and Canada. As migration policy has impacted Tamil diaspora groups as actors, foreign policy approaches have affected them through creating or diminishing political opportunity structures. The final section of this chapter discusses Canadian and British foreign policy processes, arguing that Canadian foreign-policy-making is more porous to diaspora interest groups.

Porous policy processes? Canadian and British foreign policymaking compared

As argued above, owing to the urgency of the conflict in Sri Lanka and the relatively favourable host country settlement circumstances, Tamil diaspora interest groups in Canada and the UK have had the opportunity to focus their activism in both countries on the conflict and its aftermath in Sri Lanka. In essence, Tamil diaspora interest groups are seeking to influence the foreign policymaking processes of Canada and the United Kingdom in respect of the conflict in Sri Lanka.

The first section below discusses Canadian and British foreign policymaking with a focus on the actors of interest to external forces such as Tamil diaspora groups; these actors include members of Cabinet, especially the foreign Minister, parliament and career civil servants. As in many other respects, Canadian and British systems of foreign-policy-making are unambiguously similar. However, distinctions exist which impact diaspora interest group access to the policymaking process. This section will argue that greater freedom on the part of MPs in the UK, which is commonly thought to advantage interest groups, is less consequential for diaspora group access. Rather,

Canadian Tamil diaspora interest groups are better placed than their British counterparts as the bureaucracy is less influential in policymaking in Canada than it is in the UK.

The second section looks at the global context in which Canada and Britain act. Role theory argues that states are confined in their behaviour to one another based on the roles they play in various spheres of the international system. Canadian and British roles are compared in the wider international system, the Commonwealth and in their bilateral relations with Sri Lanka. Britain plays a more dominant role in all three spheres than does Canada. However, I argue that this dominance in fact constrains Britain's ability to put pressure on Sri Lanka at the behest of Tamil diaspora interest groups and therefore limits its ability to respond to their demands. On the other hand, in Canada, the government has a greater ability to respond favourably to diaspora preferences, advantaging Tamil diaspora interest groups in this context.

Canadian foreign policymaking

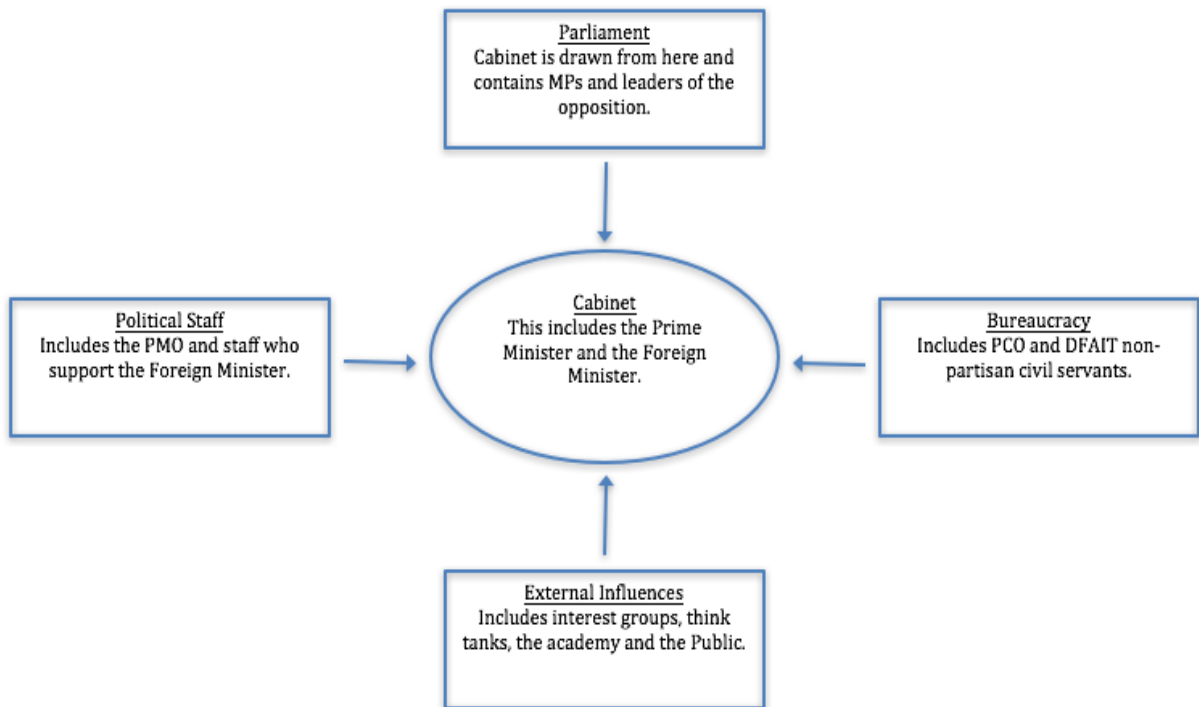
There are theoretically three spheres associated with Canadian foreign policymaking: The Cabinet, which contains the Prime Minister and the Foreign Affairs Minister, as well as the professional civil service, which serves Cabinet; the parliament, from which members of the Cabinet are drawn; and, external actors, which includes diaspora interest groups.

Beginning with Cabinet, as would be expected in a Westminster-style democracy, Canada's foreign policymaking is dominated by the Prime Minister, which has often

reserved foreign policymaking as the sole preserve of this office (Chapnick, 2008).⁶⁴ In Canada the Prime Minister appoints a member of Cabinet as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his or her influence over the foreign affairs process is at the Prime Minister's discretion. For instance, during the long tenure of Canadian Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chretien (1993-2003), foreign affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy was given considerable autonomy and led a number of important global initiatives, including taking the lead on the successful international effort to ban landmines (Tomlin, 2007). Similarly, under Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2006-2015), his long-time Cabinet confidant John Baird was given a large degree of independence in crafting Canada's foreign policy stance (Personal communication, former Canadian political staffc, 2016). Ultimately, the degree of influence held by the Minister of Foreign Affairs or indeed the Cabinet is at the discretion of the Prime Minister.

⁶⁴ The orbit of the Prime Minister in Canada is composed of two principal bodies: The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Privy Council Office (PCO), dominated by civil servants. The former is comprised of politically appointed staff with demonstrated loyalty to the party of government or at least to the government's agenda. The PMO is directed by the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff who is responsible for providing politically oriented strategic advice and managing the Prime Minister's political staff. This position is an extremely influential one and, unlike in the United Kingdom, has been at the centre of government decision-making for decades.

Figure 5.1 Foreign policy actors

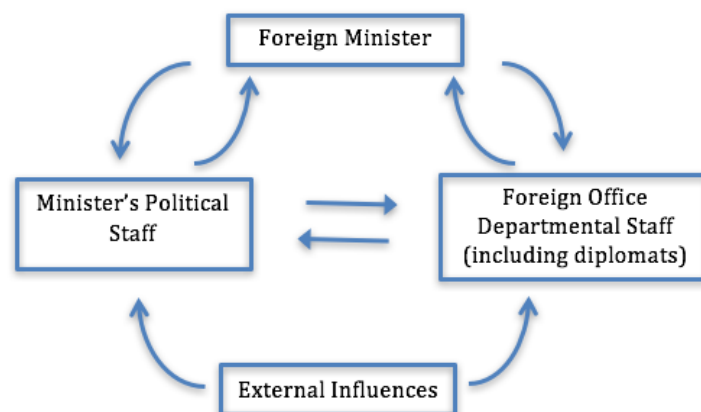


Within the Harper Government Cabinet there was a smaller body to which some foreign affairs issues of great international consequence or those directly affecting Canada were discussed (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016). The issues facing Sri Lanka discussed in the below empirical chapters did not arrive at this appendant body, but the issue of whether or not Prime Minister Harper would attend the 2013 CHOGM did, as all issues pertaining to the Commonwealth are discussed at this level (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016).

The other office with the greatest proximity to the Prime Minister is the Privy Council Office (PCO), which leads the bureaucracy whose senior civil servants have

influence over foreign affairs (Riddell-Dixon, 2008).⁶⁵ The interplay between political imperatives and the civil service is at the heart of the formal manufacture of foreign policy. Former politically appointed elites in the foreign Minister’s office described the foreign policymaking process: There is a relatively consistent interaction between diplomats, departmental civil servants and politically appointed staff. In some cases, statements are prepared by civil servants, reviewed by political staff and sent to the Minister’s Director of Communications. In other cases, the Minister directs that a statement be drafted by the civil service, the draft of which is then approved by political staff and sent to the Minister to be signed-off on (Personal communications, Canadian political staffc, 2016).

Figure 5.2 Foreign policy processes



This nexus does not account for informal inputs into the foreign policy process, which generally take places between advocacy groups, such as Tamil diaspora interest groups, and politically appointed staff. Unlike in the United Kingdom, where the FCO

⁶⁵ The PCO is led by the Clerk of the Privy Council who is the head of the civil service in Canada. The PCO is a strictly non-partisan office where staff are selected based on merit and policy expertise. As other members of the Prime Minister’s cabinet liaise with the civil service through the office of their Deputy Minister, so the Prime Minister is advised by professional civil servants via the Clerk of the Privy Council. Non-partisan advice on foreign policy is collected through this office and conveyed to the Prime Minister or his or her PMO staff.

dominates the provision of information and expertise to decision-makers, Canada's more expanded role for partisan elites has afforded enhanced opportunities for access to non-governmental organisations to contribute to the foreign policymaking process (Personal Communication, former Canadian political staff, 2016). Staff at non-governmental interest groups prioritise network-building, in particular with partisan 'insiders', who influence the public discourse within which ideas, preferences and agendas are decided.⁶⁶ An instructive vignette offered by one interview demonstrates the power of trusted political insiders for diaspora issues (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016):

A group of young, Conservative members of Asian descent approached the Foreign Minister at the time at a Conservative Party gathering to discuss the issue of "comfort women" during WWII and asked him to raise this with his Japanese counterpart on an upcoming official visit. Despite this issue not being formally agreed on as being part of the agenda, the Minister nevertheless raised the issue.

These interactions are far harder to capture given the informal, and often casual nature in which dialogue transpires. However, interviews with Tamil diaspora and foreign policy elites elucidated on in the empirical chapters will shed light on these interactions.

Regarding parliament, as in many other matters of policymaking, parliamentarians are limited in the extent of their influence over foreign policy. Firstly, the constitution proscribes foreign policymaking as the exclusive domain of the executive branch of government. Unless the Prime Minister decides to hold a vote on a matter of foreign policy, to gain confidence for a controversial issue for instance, votes are rarely held on such matters.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ While the civil service in Canada engages in policy consultations, interest groups are aware that capital is better spent on engaging political staff who are more closely connected to Ministers. In this respect, the Canadian foreign policymaking process can be said to be more porous to the provision of external policy advice than in the UK, where the august networks centred in Westminster and Whitehall are far harder to penetrate.

⁶⁷ Parliament has rarely decided international affairs and has no constitutional authority to do so (Dewing

Secondly, as the British House of Commons is limited in its influence by party discipline, the Canadian Parliament is even more so.⁶⁸ Unless the governing party has a minority of seats in the House of Commons, as was the case in Canada between 2004 and 2011, the Prime Minister has a virtual monopoly on decision-making. Members of Parliament are directed by Party whips on how to vote and, with various threats including banishment from the party caucus, in almost all cases vote as directed by the office of the party leader (Schmitz, 2008: 225). While in the UK House of Commons' disobedience is commonplace, Canada's elected legislature, at half the size and having much less a tradition of legislative autonomy, is far more rigid (Galloway, 2013). Interviewees noted that MPs did on occasion raise the issue of Sri Lanka with the Foreign Minister, but in general parliamentarians outside of Cabinet had very little influence over the foreign policymaking process.⁶⁹

What is perhaps distinct between the Canadian and British systems, which on the surface appear very similar, is the degree to which external sources influence foreign

and McDonald, 2006), but on occasion Prime Ministers desiring legitimacy on a controversial decision may seek a mandate from the House of Commons despite not having a legal obligation to do so. As Prime Minister Cameron did in 2015 on the decision to intervene in Syria, so too did the Conservative government of Stephen Harper when it was faced with the decision of continuing military operations in Iraq and authorising engagement in Syria. The vote on this deployment in March, 2015 passed in the House of Commons (Campion-Smith, 2015). However, these instances are uncommon and would be expected only in cases of personnel deployment in international combat zones. It is unlikely a binding vote in parliament on Canada's role in a conflict, such as the one in Sri Lanka, would ever come to a vote as there was no possibility of Canada engaging actively in the conflict.

⁶⁸ As in the case of the United Kingdom, the parliamentary foreign affairs committee has often been a place where substantive dialogue on foreign affairs occurs. Informed by expert witnesses, this committee provides a space for meaningful discourse if not as high profile as the House of Commons (Marlin, 2016). Despite having more freedom for dialogue, the committee members are nevertheless selected based on the power balance in parliament and votes in these committees largely follow the same partisan lines.

⁶⁹ While the above is true with respect to decision-making, Members of Parliament not in government still have the ability to initiate debates on various subjects including on foreign affairs. As will be demonstrated in Chapter VI, the Sri Lankan civil war was one of these issues and the debate served to raise the issue on the government's foreign policy agenda.

polycymaking (Marlin, 2016).⁷⁰ In Ottawa, interest groups representing diaspora stakeholders such as the Canadian Tamil Congress, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress are engaged in the foreign polycymaking process (Carment and Landry, 2011). Diaspora interest groups are amongst the most active in foreign policy and became increasingly more active during the Harper government from 2006-2015.

With respect to engaging the public directly, Canada's foreign polycymakers have approached the public for input to varying degrees. During the tenure of Lloyd Axworthy as Foreign Minister, many viewed the process as being more porous to external expertise and input than has traditionally been the case, allowing civil society groups access to the foreign policy making process. In contrast, some have viewed the brief premiership of Paul Martin (2004-2006) as a "one-man-show" where the executive limited external influence (Chapnick, 2008). Despite the perceived disinclination of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper to receive advice from foreign affairs elites, some have argued that his government was nevertheless open to engaging with representative interest groups and that their views were often consulted on matters of foreign policy (Personal Communication, former Canadian political staffc, 2016). In large part, unlike on other matters of public policy, the wider public has rarely been consulted on foreign affairs through direct consultative processes.

Canada's foreign polycymaking process is dominated by the Prime Minister, who determines the extent of their own involvement over it versus that of the Foreign

⁷⁰ Canada has a healthy network of foreign policy experts and interest groups engaged on foreign affairs issues. Ontario hosts the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University, the University of Ottawa is on the doorstep of parliament, as well as leading centres of international scholarship at the University of Toronto, Waterloo and at other universities in Canada.

Minister. While the bureaucracy has some advisory capacity and control over the mechanics of policymaking, politically appointed staff have more authority over the policy process. As will be seen in the UK, Parliament has a very limited role in policymaking the public are not often consulted on these matters. Despite rigid party discipline in the House of Commons, the fact that Parliamentarians have little input on foreign affairs renders this possible barrier largely irrelevant. Additionally, the limited role of the bureaucracy in formulating foreign policy and the powerful role of politically appointed staff creates opportunity windows for diaspora interest groups to insert themselves into the policy process.

Canada's international roles

Having explicated on the foreign policymaking process, the below section discusses Canada's role at relevant levels of the international system arguing that it has limited influence in all spheres considered here apart from the Commonwealth. As a consequence of this limited role, the Harper government's policy following a 2011 review was to take clear, unambiguous positions on international issues with a view to compelling more powerful actors to take stronger positions.

Beginning with Canada's role in the international system, Canada has often been termed a "middle power", meaning it has very limited capacity for military projection, but can participate in a modest way in international coalitions (Bow and Lennox, 2008). Economically, Canada has the tenth largest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (World Bank, 2016), has long been a member of the Group of 7 (G7) countries and is a powerful actor in commodities markets and in other areas. However, despite having one of the most vibrant civil societies in the world (Carment and Landry, 2011), very few international

organisations have their principal headquarters in Canada nor do international media organisations base their operations in the country. At the United Nations, Canada rarely acts independently and in interviews with Tamil activists, they viewed Canada's involvement at this level as negligible as it generally votes along the lines of its traditional allies (Personal Communication, Together Against Genocide, 2015).⁷¹

Over the last two decades Liberal and Conservative governments have taken distinct paths in their political engagement in international institutions. The Liberal governments of Chretien and Martin were reliably multilateralist, leading the international community on issues such as banning landmines and climate change, acting as a reliable member of institutions such as the United Nations and playing the conventional role as peacekeeper and coalition partner (Keating, 2011). The Conservative government's approach was different; it distanced itself from the UN, with the Prime Minister rebuffing opportunities to speak at the UN General Assembly. It was highly critical of institutions such as the UN Human Rights Commission and visibly fell back from the leadership role Canada had played in international negotiations to curb climate change (Klein and Barlow, 2015).

Canada's role as a Middle Power internationally cannot be said to confine it to a limited leadership role in all spheres. The Commonwealth is one sphere in which Canada has exercised a degree of leadership beyond its traditional role in the wider international system. The first Commonwealth General Secretary Arnold Smith was Canadian (1965-1975), the Commonwealth of Learning, an intergovernmental organisation, is headquartered in British Columbia and Canada traditionally contributes

⁷¹ However, Canada has always held one of the ten rotating Security Council seats at the UN when an application has been made, save for 2010 (Ibbitson and Slater, 2010).

as much as a third of the Commonwealth's operating budget. Former Canadian Senator Hugh Segal has been a member of the 'Eminent Persons' group engaged in reforming the Commonwealth and many Canadians have benefitted from participation in the Commonwealth Games and the Commonwealth Scholarship programme (Commonwealth of Nations, 2017). While all votes are weighted equally, interviewees noted that Canada holds considerable influence in Commonwealth discourse (Personal Communication, Commonwealth elite, 2016).

However, reliable engagement at the Commonwealth has not always held across Canadian governments. As noted above, the Liberal and Conservative governments diverged in their level of engagement at international institutions, and the Commonwealth is no exception. Earlier Liberal governments played a largely traditional role at the Commonwealth and often adopted an apolitical stance expected of states in reference to the internal affairs of other members. However, the Conservative government was far more vocal in its criticism of other states at Commonwealth meetings (Personal Communication, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016).⁷²

Finally, bilateral political and economic ties between Canada and Sri Lanka have been historically strong.⁷³ As noted above, the disintegration of the British Empire and

⁷² One interviewee used the Commonwealth forum to condemn member states it believed were failing to live up to the Commonwealth's values of respect for human rights, including Sri Lanka. This Minister viewed the Commonwealth as having failed to take action against delinquent members, grew embittered with the institution and questioned its utility to support respect for human rights (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016).

⁷³ In the regional sphere of South Asia, unlike the United Kingdom, Canada has a number of institutionalised ties. Canada is a member of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), which was formed in 1989 to facilitate economic growth in the Pacific region through reducing trade barriers and improving business conditions domestically in each of its 21 member states (Global Affairs Canada, 2017). Canada also maintains a permanent mission at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which is a regional intergovernmental organisation of Southeast Asian states aimed at economic growth, social progress and creating peaceful and stable relations between states (Global Affairs, 2017). Despite Sri Lanka not being a member of either of these organisations, Canada's regional participation and economic linkages demonstrate a strong interest in Sri Lanka's immediate regional neighbourhood.

its evolution into the Commonwealth created natural ties between former colonies, even those with fundamentally different histories and colonial experiences such as Sri Lanka and Canada. These ties were evidenced in the earliest days of Sri Lanka's independence, when Canada became a member of the Colombo Plan, which was created at the Commonwealth Conference on Foreign Affairs held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1950 (Colombo Plan, 2017).⁷⁴ In addition, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has managed a decades-old bilateral development plan for Sri Lanka with annual assistance amounting to roughly CAN\$6 million (Consulate General of Sri Lanka, Toronto, 2009). During the South Asian tsunami, Canada and individual Canadians pledged an unprecedented amount of money to support relief efforts. Economically, Canada and Sri Lanka have had a strong trade. Canada is the destination for 2.2 percent of Sri Lanka's exports while 1.2 percent of its imports arrived from Canada, with the total value of exports to Canada standing at CAN\$259 million (Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2017).

In summary, Canada's role internationally as a sometimes multilateralist, Middle Power has allowed Canada to engage in coalition-building around specific issues, such as land mines and climate change. However, Canada historically has not had the leverage to compel other states to behave according to its preferences. Canadian foreign policymakers under the Harper government were conscious of Canada's limited influence over global affairs, in respect of Sri Lanka as well. Prior to 2010, statements from the foreign affairs department had been relatively "bland", but after 2010 the government sought to contextualize statements and to take positions which were

⁷⁴ An intergovernmental organisation now composed of 26 states, the plan was conceived to further economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific. Under this plan, Canada was heavily involved technically and financially in developing Colombo's international airport in the 1950s.

viewed to be “unequivocal” and “strong” on a range of foreign policy issues. The motivation for this was to help “move the needle” in relation to other countries’ policies on the same issues. In this way, Canada could be viewed as a pole on a particular issue opening up the space for other countries to move their position closer to Canada’s but retaining nuance (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016).

British foreign policymaking

To a greater extent than in Canada, foreign policy processes in Britain are a complex dialectic between a relatively well-defined set of actors which are largely present regardless of which party is in power or Britain’s foreign policy aims at any given moment. However, what changes dramatically between administrations, issues and objectives is the degree of power and influence enjoyed by actors at various points within constantly shifting sets of interactions.

The conflict which characterises British foreign policymaking is a set match between a predictable cast of actors, who are principally: The Office of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet he or she chairs, parliament, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and a host of external influences such as policy experts, advocacy organisations and diasporas. Other actors, which will be seen to be consequential in this analysis, include the Queen, who presides over the Privy Council and is the ceremonial head of the Executive, and the Foreign Secretary, who sits at the nexus of Cabinet, Whitehall bureaucrats at the FCO and the elected Parliament (Gaskarth, 2013: 43).⁷⁵

⁷⁵ ‘Whitehall’ is a commonly used euphemism for the British government’s bureaucracy. Analogous to ‘Foggy Bottom’ in Washington DC in reference to foreign affairs, Whitehall is the name of the street leading up to the parliament buildings in London. Alongside Whitehall Street many major government departments are housed, including the Home Office, the Treasury, the Ministry of Defense and the Foreign

The principal actor in any foreign policy interaction is the Prime Minister. As in the Canadian context, foreign policy decision-making is largely confined to the Cabinet, over which the Prime Minister is the dominant figure. Unless a coalition government is in place (as was the case between 2010 and 2015), virtually all executive authority is concentrated in the Office of the Prime Minister and power issues from it at his or her discretion. Some Prime Ministers, most famously Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair, concentrated foreign policymaking inside Number 10 Downing St.⁷⁶ Since the Blair Years (1997-2007), many have argued that Britain's oft-maligned engagement in the American-led war in Iraq was a function of Blair's concentration of power in Number 10 and his unwillingness to engage other actors in the foreign policy process (Martin, 2016).⁷⁷

During the brief tenure of Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Tony Blair's successor and former Chancellor of the Exchequer, much foreign policy decision-making was devolved to his Foreign Secretary, David Miliband (Gaskarth, 2013: 15). Despite his youth, he was given significant leeway and independence, being viewed as a powerful statesman in his own right. Importantly for this analysis, he was given virtually a 'free hand' to address international crises such as those in Georgia in 2008 and in Sri Lanka

and Commonwealth Office. Like the US State Department, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is considered one of the 'Great Offices of State' alongside the Treasury and the Home Office.

⁷⁶ 'Number 10 Downing Street' or simply 'Number 10' are common euphemisms for the Prime Minister's Office and is a reference to the home and working office of the Prime Minister and some of his staff. It is situated a short walk from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office along Whitehall in central London.

⁷⁷ The Prime Minister chairs the Cabinet, which is the body of Ministers overseeing various civil service ministries and who are accountable to parliament along with the Prime Minister as Members of Parliament (Selden, 2004). Cabinet has historically been seen as the principal political decision-making body of the government and the mechanism through which executive decisions are conveyed to the civil service for implementation. It serves as a theoretically confidential forum for discussion between the Prime Minister and his or her Ministers. In some instances, as under Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher, Cabinet's power over foreign policy waned considerably. However, in other instances, the Foreign Secretary has had more autonomy.

in 2009. Foreign Secretary William Hague, who held office during the David Cameron-led coalition government, was similarly given a large degree of freedom to engage in foreign policy matters without the constant intervention of the Prime Minister.

Regarding parliament, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary are both members of and accountable to Parliament. As in Canada, at separate intervals the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary must stand in the House of Commons to answer for their and their department's decision-making as members of the opposition parties lob questions aimed at challenging the government.⁷⁸ Parliament can serve as an important accountability mechanism for foreign affairs issues, but ultimately it has little to no formal influence over foreign affairs decision-making as foreign policy is conventionally considered the preserve of the executive.

The interest group literature argues that in legislatures where there is less parliamentary discipline, interest groups are able to exert greater pressure over legislators and thereby achieve more influence (Baumgartner et al., 2009). Comparatively, British MPs are less constrained by party discipline than their Canadian counterparts. This reality likely grants more access to interest groups in the UK than in Canada. However, given that foreign policy is the chief preserve of the executive in both countries this is unlikely to aid Tamil diaspora interest groups to a great extent.

Having much more influence over foreign policy historically is the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Officially operating as a conduit of information and expertise as well as an implementation body, the FCO is directed by the Permanent Under Secretary and is sometimes characterised as an informal source of opposition to

⁷⁸ The Foreign Affairs Select Committee is a permanent parliamentary body of Members of Parliament from all parties which meets regularly to discuss foreign policy matters and engage external witnesses who provide expertise and opinions (Gaskarth, 2013).

government preferences. The Under Secretary of the FCO manages Britain's vast diplomatic network of embassies and High Commissions around the world as well as the corresponding 'Desk Offices' which receive, collate and analyse information from diplomatic missions and other sources (Personal communications, Desk Officer, South Asia Department, FCO, 2015).⁷⁹ The FCO identifies and reports on developments in other countries, offers consular services and advice to business and is a key component to setting the UK's foreign affairs agenda.⁸⁰

Alongside these more formal actors in the foreign policy process, less formal actors participate in policy networks which inform, to varying degrees, these principal elements during the foreign policy making process. The Prime Minister's Office or the Foreign Secretary may seek to engage elite networks of foreign policymaking, such as those located at world-class universities in London and the surrounding area, think tanks such as Chatham House and the Royal College of Defence Studies, as well as one of the many other established centres of expertise in foreign affairs.

In like manner, the Foreign Commonwealth Office actively seeks to engage with expertise and stakeholders in its capacity as a channel through which to inform the Foreign Secretary. Interviews with Tamil diaspora organisations as well as other diaspora organisations noted they are regularly called upon by FCO bureaucrats to make official representations on behalf of their constituent members or for preferences

⁷⁹ Countries which are members of the Commonwealth of Nations, such as the United Kingdom, Britain and Sri Lanka share High Commissioners rather than Ambassadors and High Commissions rather than embassies.

⁸⁰ Despite the vast resources of the FCO, it has at times been at loggerheads with the Prime Minister's Office, with the former demanding influence through its knowledge and expertise, and the latter doing so given its democratic legitimacy. As noted earlier, Prime Minister Thatcher famously side-lined the FCO (Powell, 2013), whilst Foreign Secretary William Hague in contrast actively engaged the FCO as stakeholders through seeking submissions from staff and Ambassadors.

on challenges facing their country of interest (Personal communications, Labour Friends of Israel, 2015).⁸¹ It is as an external actor seeking to influence the Prime Minister, parliament and the FCO that Tamil diaspora interest groups are best situated in the landscape of foreign policy making actors.

With respect to direct engagement with members of the public, foreign affairs is not an issue the above actors conventionally seek public input on. Perhaps an exception to this is through the use of public diplomacy, which has at times sought to connect directly with members of the public on foreign policy issues (Gamlen, 2014). However, as in the Canadian context, British foreign policymaking is undertaken largely by elites in government or those external actors which are able to gain access to the process.

The ability for Tamil diaspora interest groups in the UK to engage in this process is at the heart of the empirical cases considered here and access very much determines the extent to which they have had influence over decision-making. Britain's foreign policymaking process has long been the preserve of elites with access to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and their staff, along with the FCO. While diaspora groups along with other external inputs to the policy process have had access and been called upon by the FCO, as in Canada, diaspora interest groups have largely been more successful in seeking to build relationships with those at the political level. However, due to the more limited role for political staff in the UK in comparison to Canada, and the greater influence of the FCO, Tamil diaspora interest groups in the UK have fewer access points in comparison to their Canadian counterparts.

⁸¹ A number of interviewees working for organisations affiliated with other diaspora groups in the UK noted their dissatisfaction with this process, as they felt they were often being consulted simply for due diligence purposes and their views were not likely to be conveyed in a meaningful way.

The United Kingdom's international roles

In the wider international system, Gaskarth (2013: 67) has identified the United Kingdom as a pivotal power, rather than a Great power. The UK has a power projection capacity far greater than most other states, ranking seventh in 2016 for comparative global military spending (McCarthy, 2016). Its economy is the fifth largest in the world and it is the fourth largest financial contributor to the United Nations. The United Kingdom sits at the heart of the world's most powerful institutions: It is one of five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, a founding member of the G7/G20 group of the world's most powerful economic state actors, a member of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) along with a host of other institutions. In all of these organisations the United Kingdom plays a 'pivotal' role in global affairs.

Of particular consequence to this inquiry, the United Kingdom is a member of the Commonwealth.⁸² The Commonwealth was formally inaugurated in 1949 and functionally, the British Monarch remains the nominal head of the Commonwealth and presides over meetings of the executive heads of member states, known as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM) which convene every two years. The location of the meeting changes from meeting to meeting and is chosen by consensus. The Commonwealth is in principal a consensus-based decision-making body and maintains a wide variety of cultural, professional and athletic networks and organisations aimed at creating ties between its 54 member states (Ugwukah, 2014). The membership of the Commonwealth is predicated on agreement to a set of unifying

⁸² The Commonwealth is referred to variously as 'The Commonwealth', the 'British Commonwealth' and the 'Commonwealth of Nations'. This enquiry will refer to the institutions as simply 'The Commonwealth'.

principles and values and, at times, has disciplined members for violating this criteria, including during the Nigerian civil war in late 1960s, early 1970s, Apartheid South Africa and Zimbabwe. The United Kingdom is the Commonwealth's dominant actor.⁸³

The UK is a pivotal power in the international system and the dominant actor in the Commonwealth, which also includes Canada and Sri Lanka as members. In Southeast Asia, the United Kingdom has cast itself as a pivotal player, both in its relationship with India, the regional superpower and Sri Lanka (Blair, 2002). In the case of the former, the UK's relationship has not always been warm, in particular during the Cold War when India's association with the Soviet Union strained relations and closed economic policies prevented deep trade ties. However, in the early 1990s Britain and India began to engage anew culminating in the Indo-British partnership in 1993 under then Prime Minister John Major (Swire, 2002). Tony Blair continued to build a stronger relationship with India, including championing India as a future permanent member of the UN Security Council, committing over 300 million pounds to its bilateral development programme in India by 2003/04, increasing funding for Indians studying in the UK, and the UK was India's second largest trading partner at this time at 5 billion pounds per year.⁸⁴ The UK has expended substantial resources to remain influential in

⁸³ In addition to the Queen remaining as the head of the Commonwealth, the Secretariat for the Commonwealth is based in London, along with a half dozen other organs of the Commonwealth and Britons retain a very senior administrative positions (Commonwealth Network, 2017). The UK, along with other advanced economies, like Canada has assisted African, Caribbean and Asian states through preferred trade arrangements, skills transfer and development assistance. In addition to being at the epicenter of Commonwealth administration, Britain is the Commonwealth's largest economy and is at the centre of diplomatic networks converging on London.

⁸⁴ During the Coalition government, Britain's largest diplomatic network in the world resided in India and British Prime Minister David Cameron visited India three times. In recent years, the United Kingdom has been the third largest source of foreign direct investment in India and, similarly, India is the third largest foreign direct investor in the UK after France and the US. With an Indian diaspora of 1.5 million, remittances are worth nearly US\$ 4 billion annually and over 20,000 Indian students study in UK universities (BBC, 2015).

Southeast Asia, and its relationship with Sri Lanka has been a linchpin for this strategy.

The United Kingdom and Sri Lanka have shared diplomatic relations since Sri Lanka gained independence, with the country's second overseas mission opening up in London. According to the Sri Lankan High Commission in London, the UK is one of its most important overseas relationships. Indeed, in the years following independence, Britain retained considerable influence over Sri Lankan foreign affairs through a 1947 external affairs agreement, resulting in many of Sri Lanka's foreign trading partners in the early years being sourced by former members of the British Empire (Kandaudahewa, 2015).⁸⁵ Historically, Britain committed bilateral development aid for humanitarian purposes on an annual basis, with contributions peaking at almost 11 million pounds in 2005/06. These regular contributions ceased in 2006 when Sri Lanka was designated by DFID as a middle income country (Taylor and Townsend, 2009). Britain has also offered debt-relief assistance, as in 2005 at £41 million, and during the 2009-2010 period which saw a £2 million conflict prevention fund developed along with additional aid for conflict prevention. £13.5 million was further committed for reconstruction in the North and East under a humanitarian fund.⁸⁶

Sri Lanka and the UK have deeply linked economic ties and the UK has been one of Sri Lanka's most important trading partners. The UK has long been Sri Lanka's second largest export market after the United States, with 10 percent of Sri Lanka's exports

⁸⁵ Queen Elizabeth II has visited Sri Lanka twice since independence and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher opened the Victoria Dam in 1984, the construction of which was funded in large part by the United Kingdom. More than 6000 Sri Lankans travel to the United Kingdom for higher education opportunities, more than to any other country (Jefferson, 2010).

⁸⁶ Sri Lanka has received foreign aid from the Department of Foreign and International Development (DFID) for other programmes, such as the Global Mine Action Programme, support for diplomatic efforts, libraries, cultural centres and language training (Jefferson, 2010). The British Council operates a range of programmes in Sri Lanka aimed at enhancing English language skills in the country.

directed to the United Kingdom at a value of over US\$1.1 billion as of 2014. British imports to Sri Lanka average about US\$ 290 million annually (Sri Lankan High Commission, 2017). The UK is one of Sri Lanka's largest foreign direct investors and as of 2011, 110 UK companies operated in Sri Lanka. Tourism is an extremely important component of the Sri Lankan economy and British nationals account for 20 percent of foreign tourists and 30 percent of earnings from tourism.⁸⁷

Britain has long recognised Sri Lanka's strategic importance and historically maintained defence links as well as economic and cultural ties. In advance of Sri Lankan independence in 1947, a defence agreement was signed, committing the signatories to "... give to each other such military assistance for the security of their territories, for defence against external aggression and for the protection of essential communications as it may be in their mutual interest to provide." The agreement also permitted the UK to maintain military installations and forces on Sri Lankan territory to advance the stipulations of the agreement (Taylor and Townsend, 2009).⁸⁸

With respect to arms sales, unlike the US, the UK and EU have not embargoed arms sales to Sri Lanka. UK arms sales are constrained by the EU Consolidated Arms Export Licensing Criteria, which prohibits sales under certain conditions, such as in cases where exports may prolong internal conflict or aid in internal repression. On this

⁸⁷ The Sri Lankan economy is highly liberalised, permitting one hundred percent foreign ownership in most sectors. Until the 1970s, like most South Asian countries, Sri Lanka was highly protectionist. However, Sri Lanka became one of the first countries in the region to open up to trade and foreign direct investment, with constitutional protections for foreign investment (Sri Lanka High Commission, 2017). In addition to being a long-term economic interest for the UK in South Asia with respect to trade and investment, Sri Lanka is also in the midst of one of the world's most important shipping lanes. Colombo has the number one ranked port in South Asia, servicing 33 lines, is considered the "gateway" to the Indian subcontinent and is a centre-point for east to west lines.

⁸⁸ The structure of the Sri Lankan military has been highly influenced by the UK and British military traditions and, through the Commonwealth, Sri Lankan nationals are permitted to serve in the UK armed forces.

basis, the UK has for more than a decade assessed exports to Sri Lanka on a case by case basis. In 2008, 4.1 million pounds was authorised covering body armour, communications equipment and other largely non-offensive assets (Taylor and Townsend, 2009).

In summary, the UK plays a pivotal role in the international system, a dominant role at the Commonwealth and is one of Sri Lanka's most important bilateral relationships, recognising its strategic importance in the Southeast Asian region. The final section below discusses Canada and the UK in comparative context and argues that the UK's role in some of these spheres limits the influence of diaspora interest groups on foreign policy outcomes.

Foreign policy challenges for Tamil diaspora interest groups in the UK

Having reviewed the foreign policymaking processes and global positioning of both Tamil diaspora host countries, the following concludes that in both respects Tamil diaspora interest groups are likely better positioned to have influence in Canada in comparison to their counterparts in the UK.

Firstly, the literature argues that legislatures where parliamentarians are less subject to party discipline will be more porous to external interests, such as diaspora interest groups. Canada's parliament has historically been far stricter in respect of votes aligning with the preferences of political party leadership than is the case in the UK. Conventional thinking would lead to the assumption that Tamil diaspora interest groups would be more likely to have influence over policymaking in the UK than Canada. However, given that foreign policymaking is often undertaken by the executive rather than at the legislative level, this traditional assumption isn't likely to hold true in

the following cases.

On the other hand, Tamil diaspora interest groups are likely to be disadvantaged in the British context due to the more influential role played by Whitehall bureaucrats over the foreign policymaking process. Non-partisan, career civil servants are more likely to be sensitive to Britain's national interest than are those serving at the political level, as the latter are also required to be responsive to the preferences of constituents and the wider electorate. In the Canadian context, during the Harper government the professional foreign affairs civil service did not have the same comparative influence that FCO staff did over Labour and Coalition governments. Tamil diaspora interest group activists in the UK have had to engage both political elites and bureaucrats, whereas in Canada their advocacy targets are largely political elites.

In addition to domestic institutional advantages, the Tamil diaspora also faces hurdles in its advocacy in the UK owing to the UK's role in the world, the Commonwealth and with regard to Sri Lanka. As a pivotal power, the UK's capacity to exert influence internationally is far greater than Canada's, which suggests that it is far more constrained in its actions due to the greater weight it carries. While Canada has more influence in the context of the Commonwealth than it does internationally, the UK is still a more dominant actor in this forum, again meaning it has more responsibility than does Canada and less freedom to act in line with the preferences of Tamil diaspora interest groups. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the UK's relationship with Sri Lanka is far deeper, more complex and financially much more consequential than Canada's. The risk with respect to the bilateral relationship between the UK and Sri Lanka is much higher than between Canada and Sri Lanka.

Taken together, Tamil diaspora interest groups in Canada are better placed in

respect of the foreign policymaking process and in Canada's international positioning than their co-ethnics in the United Kingdom.

Conclusion

This chapter provided essential descriptive information with regard to the history of Sri Lanka's long and traumatic civil war, as well as the transnational nature of the conflict via a discussion on the role of the LTTE abroad. In both countries the legacy of the LTTE tainted the Tamil diaspora as well as Tamil diaspora interest groups. The key challenge for diaspora activists in the 2000s was an effort to gain credibility and rehabilitate their image and this will be discussed in greater detail in the upcoming empirical chapter.

Secondly, descriptive information was also discussed on the migratory patterns of the Tamil diaspora to Canada and the UK, as well as the immigration, settlement and integration processes used by both states which welcomed the largest numbers of Tamil asylum-seekers fleeing the conflict. However, the divergent approach to migration policy make Canada a more propitious destination throughout much of this period. Canada's openness to refugees since 1983, its generous system of social support and its approach to integration provided a receptive environment for Tamil refugees. The UK's slow shift to a more open migration policy and its approach to settlement and integration led Canada to be a more advantageous environment for the development of Tamil diaspora interest groups and advocacy toward the homeland.

This chapter also provided descriptive information on the foreign policymaking process in Canada and the UK. Both of these parliamentary democracies have a foreign policymaking process which is largely elite-driven, with little opportunity for input from

the public and only a handful of points of access outside of these elite circles. Where these systems differ is in respect of the expanded role for political appointees in Canada and the greater influence of the FCO in the UK. During both Liberal and Conservative governments in Canada, interest groups including diaspora groups were able to access the policymaking process through engaging with politically-appointed elites, which will be reinforced in later chapters. Similar channels of access have been available to interest groups in the UK through Members of Parliament and to a lesser extent political staff, but the FCO has long dominated information provision and is a powerful actor in the policy process. Given that politicians are likely more receptive to interest groups with voting constituencies, diaspora interest groups would likely find penetrating the Canadian process less challenging than in the UK, where FCO interests, which are not sensitive to political pressure, are far more powerful.

Finally, Canada and the UK exist internationally in very different roles. Canada's limited position in a number of institutions such as the UN Security Council and its status as a middle power in other spheres means that its direct or multilateral influence over a country such as Sri Lanka is limited. However, along with the United Kingdom, Canada is an influential actor in the Commonwealth in which Sri Lanka is also a member. The UK is an influential, "pivotal" actor in a number of other spheres, including at the UN Security Council and in the region itself. This makes the UK a powerful direct target for invention, but it is constrained in its ability to act given its greater level of responsibility.

Having provided the necessary empirical background to ground this project, the next section considers the years following the listing of the LTTE in Canada. Diaspora advocacy organisations founded or reinvigorated toward the end of the 2000s struggled

to gain credibility and legitimacy, in large part due to the perception of continued association with the now illegal LTTE and this had a deleterious impact on their advocacy during the first decision-making window analysed in 2009.

Chapter VI – Canada and the United Kingdom causal comparison (2009): Overcoming the LTTE’s legacy and activism to stop the violence

The foregoing empirical background chapter argued that Tamil diaspora interest groups faced a number of challenges in advance of the 2009 crisis in Sri Lanka. Interest groups in both countries were tainted by the legacy of the LTTE and the association with terrorism. In respect of the settlement and integration processes in the host countries, the literature suggests that Canada’s diaspora interest group should be better placed as advocates than their British counterparts. Finally, the institutional environment in the UK is likely to be more challenging for diaspora interest groups.

It is under these circumstances that this chapter explores two empirical cases in the form of decision-making processes. Between January and May, 2009 the Canadian government of Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Labour Government of Gordon Brown in the UK were faced with the decision of how to respond to the brutally violent conclusion to the Sri Lankan civil war. During this period, Tamil diaspora interest groups lobbied government through intensive direct lobbying as well as outside, contentious pressure to demand host country governments act to end the Sri Lankan army’s offensive in the north. At the heart of this inquiry is the project’s research question: During this decision-making process, did Tamil diaspora interest groups influence foreign policy outcomes in Canada and the UK?

This first empirical chapter argues that Tamil diaspora interest groups in Canada influenced the foreign policy discourse through arranging a major debate on the Sri Lankan civil war in the House of Commons, eliciting strongly sympathetic remarks from Members of Parliament from all parties and largely brought about a multi-partisan consensus position on the issue. However, the Tamil diaspora failed to persuade the

Canadian government to take stronger action, such as sending the foreign Minister to Sri Lanka. In the British case, I observe that Tamil diaspora organisations similarly lobbied elites in the Labour government of Gordon Brown to compel the UK to take action against the government of Sri Lanka to end its offensive in the north of Sri Lanka. As in Canada, massive, continuous demonstrations were organised in London and intensive direct lobbying also took place. Despite the UK having more to risk in its relationship with Sri Lanka, Tamil diaspora interest groups can point to a number of victories, including Foreign Secretary David Miliband travelling to Sri Lanka to directly admonish the Sri Lankan government, and his efforts with his American counterpart to apply considerable bilateral and multilateral pressure on Sri Lanka.

As outlined in Chapter V, UK Tamil diaspora interest groups occupied a less advantageous position in comparison to their Canadian counterparts due to the later formation of diaspora interest groups and the more potent opposition of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. However, through the analysis of actor, institutional and strategic factors, I argue below that British Tamil diaspora interest groups were more influential for three overarching reasons. Firstly, the formation of Tamils for Labour built critical inroads with the governing Labour Party, which led to more sympathy for their preferences within the party and access channels to Cabinet. In contrast, the Canadian Tamil diaspora interest groups struggled to build inroads with the governing Conservatives and were still tainted by the association with the LTTE. Secondly, the Tamil diaspora was not viewed during this decision-making period by the Canadian Conservative government as politically salient, whereas in the UK the Tamil diaspora was viewed as an important constituency for the re-election prospects of the Labour government. Thirdly, the contentious strategy employed in the UK added to the

leverage of Tamil diaspora interest groups, whereas in Canada demonstrations which slipped out of the control of interest groups greatly hindered efforts in the later stages as diaspora interest groups lost the ability to speak for the whole of the diaspora and was no longer viewed as credible.

This chapter begins by articulating events in the homeland and the slow erosion of the peace process begun in 2002, leading to the final stages of the war in 2009 which were marked by shocking brutality on both sides of the conflict and a massive human rights crisis felt keenly by the Tamil diaspora in Canada and the UK. The second section describes the period of time in the host countries leading up to the decision-making period in 2009, which witnessed dramatic changes in the landscape of Tamil diaspora organisations. In Canada, the Canadian Tamil Congress became a credible voice for Tamil concerns with linkages to all parties, but was still challenged by the associational legacy of the LTTE, especially with the governing Conservative Party. This period also witnessed the founding and increasing sophistication of a larger number of Tamil organisations in the UK, including the non-partisan British Tamil Forum and the Labour-affiliated, Tamils for Labour. The Tamil diaspora in both countries took inspiration from the more established Jewish diaspora, which explains the founding of a party-specific lobby group in the UK and not in Canada.

The third section discusses the decision-making period in both cases from January to May 2009, when the Canadian and British governments were faced with the decision of how to respond to the crisis and summarises this narrative with the causal sequence described in Chapter II. Following this description of events, the fourth analytical section compares the two cases via the theoretical framework, which firstly assesses the impact of causal factors categorised as actor characteristics, institutional

factors and diaspora interest group strategies.

Finally, I conclude that Tamil diaspora interest groups in the UK impelled government-decision-making in the UK to a greater extent than in Canada because while in neither context did diaspora preferences align with foreign policy, the UK went further in acting in line with diaspora interests. Additionally, when viewed through international role constraints, the UK had more to lose in acting in line with diaspora preferences than Canada and yet it went further in advocating for their cause.

The bloody final throes of the civil war: 2002-2009

Having emerged from a decade of near continuous fighting in the 1990s, the LTTE's gains by 2000 placed them in a position of strength and they declared a unilateral ceasefire at the end of 2000 (de Silva, 2012: 168). A mutually-agreed ceasefire between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE was soon cemented under the auspices of the Norwegian government (Wickremesekera, 2016: 174).⁸⁹ However, in addition to the LTTE's surprise withdrawal from the peace talks, a number of other factors served to scupper the process, including the exclusion of the Muslim minority from negotiations, the LTTE's demand for a five-year guarantee of continued control post agreement, and disagreements over the disbursement of disaster relief aid following the December 2004 tsunami which devastated the island (Lunn Et al, 2009). The 2005 Sri Lankan presidential election proved to be a turning point in the quiescent conflict, with the election to the presidency of hard-line Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP)

⁸⁹ The ceasefire was monitored by the Scandinavian-led Ceasefire Monitoring Committee and negotiations for a permanent settlement began with early signs of optimism through an LTTE declaration indicating they would settle for less than complete sovereignty in the north.

candidate Mahinda Rajapakse in 2005 (de Silva, 2012: 178).⁹⁰

At the same time, it was apparent the LTTE were preparing to resume open hostilities, including through an intensified fundraising effort in the diaspora. 2006 offered early signs of hope following talks in Geneva, but by April 2006 the ceasefire was effectively over with the deaths of at least 191 on both sides in renewed violence.⁹¹ At the beginning of 2008, the Government of Sri Lanka formally withdrew from the ceasefire and the power asymmetry between the LTTE and the government became apparent as fighting went on throughout 2008, with the government continuing to make strategic gains (Lunn Et al, 2009).

In early January 2009, government forces moved rapidly into LTTE-held territory, entering their de facto capital, Kilinochchi, on 2nd January and by 25th January they had captured the town of Mullaithivu (de Silva, 2012: 193). The rapidity with which government forces were able to advance and acquire LTTE land surprised many, including those in the diaspora (Personal communications, Global Tamil Forum, 2015). Under considerable pressure, LTTE fighters retreated to a small strip of land in the Vanni area along the beach, trapping tens of thousands of civilians in the midst of intense fighting where the LTTE made their last, desperate stand.

By February 2009, more than 250,000 civilians had been displaced by the conflict with as many as 7000 civilian casualties (HRW, 2009). The Sri Lankan government rejected two internationally mediated ceasefires (5th February and 23rd

⁹⁰ Rajapakse had campaigned with scepticism toward the faltering peace process and, thanks to unpopular economic reforms by the previous administration and a call by the LTTE for Tamil voters to boycott the election, he assumed office with a strong mandate.

⁹¹ Through 2006 to the end of 2007, conventional fighting resumed. The LTTE's perceived strength appeared exaggerated and with large increases in defence spending, the Sri Lankan army made significant gains, including taking control of the East of the country (Wickremesekera, 2016: 186).

February, respectively), the second of which the LTTE agreed to, but balked at the requirement to disarm. Repeated gains by government forces prompted Colombo to declare a 12km-long zone along the Mullaitivu western coast a “no fire zone”, resulting in a further densification of civilians and fighters along the coast. In an act of desperation, the LTTE conducted a suicide air attack against a government building in Colombo. The month of March witnessed continued bombardment of Vanni by government troops and the number of civilians inside the no-fire-zone grew unabated. Pressure from the international community on both sides intensified, as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay accused both of war crimes (BBC News, 2017).

In April, an increasingly weakened LTTE appealed for an end to the violence, calling on the government to enter into negotiations on 14th April (Lunn Et al, 2009). On 26th April the LTTE leadership issued a unilateral ceasefire. The government scoffed at these gestures but, bowing to international pressure, it committed to cease using heavy weaponry and aerial bombardment against the remaining rebels in the no-fire-zone. Additionally, the government rejected conditions attached to a US\$1.9 billion IMF emergency loan and further denied that US pressure had caused delays to the agreement. The month also witnessed massive civilian displacement with as many as 115,000 fleeing the battle zone in a single week.

The war officially came to an end on 18th May, amidst celebrations in Colombo and the televised display of the body of long-time LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran.⁹² Throughout the intensification of the conflict in the first five months of

⁹² Sri Lankan president Rajapakse attempted to allay concerns about the treatment of Tamil civilians, but amidst widespread accusations of human rights abuses there was considerable concern abroad with regard to the treatment of Tamils and former combatants (Lunn Et al, 2009).

2009, numerous human rights organizations accused both sides of violating humanitarian laws and committing crimes against humanity (Human Rights Watch, 2010). The troubling list of charges against the Sri Lankan government included: Failure to admit observers to the battlefield and restricting data gathering on civilians; shelling in proclaimed civilian “safe zones” and on clearly marked hospitals; as well as the disproportionate use of aircraft and heavy artillery.⁹³

Both sides have since been accused of summarily executing and mistreating prisoners, as well as the raping of civilians. Caught between two belligerent parties, as many as 7000 civilians were killed and 13,000 wounded (Human Rights Watch, 2010). With little access to humanitarian support or international NGOs, many civilians were unlawfully detained and prevented from accessing adequate medical treatment and other types of assistance. The situation for tens of thousands of Tamil civilians during these months was desperate, and proved to be a powerful impetus for family members in Canada and the United Kingdom to take action to advance their interests (Canadian Tamil Congress, 2009b).

The final throes of the Sri Lankan civil war were an extremely anxious and traumatic time for the Tamil diaspora in Canada and the United Kingdom. Many Tamil families had relatives trapped during the intense fighting and a lack of international monitors and restricted access for humanitarian organisations left many families uninformed as to the status of relatives (Amarasingam, 2015). Tamil diaspora interest

⁹³ For their part, the LTTE's record with respect to civilian deaths is similarly disconcerting. NGOs found that the LTTE prevented civilians from fleeing the battleground in which the LTTE made its final stand. While attempting to cross over to the government side, civilians reported being fired on by LTTE cadres, killing and wounding many. As had been the case in the past, the LTTE placed civilians in combat zones with the intent to deter Sri Lankan forces from shelling the position, which is known as 'human shielding'. Additionally, they recruited large numbers of civilians into forced labour in battle zones and used children as combatants.

groups mobilised grassroots Tamils to protest and intensely lobbied politicians in response to these events. However, these efforts were only possible through their having evolved into sophisticated, professional interest groups, a process described in the following section.

Overcoming the LTTE (Early 2000s-2009): Tamil diaspora host-country interest groups

As presented in detail in Chapter V, the LTTE's influence within the diaspora in both host countries during the 1990s and the early 2000s was considerable. However, the 2000s witnessed the rapid decline of the LTTE in the UK and Canada, being rendered illegal in both by 2006. In response, diaspora community elites looked to new ways to represent the diaspora to decision-makers. In Canada, this led to the establishment and revitalisation of the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) and the creation of the British Tamil Forum (BTF) in the UK. What is common in both cases is the emulation of and support from the more established institutions of the Jewish diaspora, the challenge of making inroads with conservative parties and the creation of credibly representative organisations. In contrast to Canada, the United Kingdom developed a party-specific interest group: Tamils for Labour, with a view to circumventing a bureaucracy traditionally ill-disposed to their preferences.

This section concludes that the subsequent 'chilling effect' discussed in Chapter V which followed the proscription of the LTTE continued in 2009 despite advances on the part of diaspora interest groups to expunge the taint of the LTTE. The perceived association with the LTTE remained especially amongst conservatives, but diaspora activists had more success in building legitimacy with left-of-centre parties.

Tamil diaspora interest group organisation in Canada: A centralised model

As the LTTE, the WTF and other front organisations in Canada weakened and then collapsed in the early 2000s, Tamil diaspora elites founded and vitalised the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) to become the principal voice of the Tamil diaspora in Canada on domestic issues facing the Tamil community, as well as the organisation tasked with representing the cause of Tamil Eelam and the interests of Tamils in Sri Lanka to the Canadian government (Amarasingam, 2015).

The impetus for the CTC's founding was the perception that existing organisations were associated to the LTTE and therefore potentially tainted by terrorism. Interviewees noted that while many at the political level supported the Tamil community and its aspirations for self-determination, their consciousness of their reputation in the public sphere led them to express to diaspora leadership the need for a "fresh" representative body, free of the taint of the LTTE and one that provided a clear and credible voice for the entirety of the Tamil community in Canada (Personal Communications, staff member, Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016a). The founding of the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) in 2000 was a response to this need. However, until 2006 the CTC was not operationally active or effective, firstly as a consequence of the lull in fighting in Sri Lanka and, more importantly, because Tamil diaspora elites did not have an understanding of how to lobby political elites effectively.⁹⁴

An organisational turning point for the CTC came in the form of inter-diaspora

⁹⁴ The CTC lacked the sophistication of an established interest group with a continuing presence in Canada's capital Ottawa and did not have the requisite "professional" appeal. As a consequence, the CTC was unable to frame itself convincingly as being the legitimate representative body of the Tamil community in Canada, leading to scepticism and disinterest on the part of decision-makers, especially Tories (Personal Communications, staff member a. Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016).

emulation, in particular of the far more established and organised Jewish diaspora. The leadership of the CTC met in 2006 with their counterparts in the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) which became a model for its operations.⁹⁵ The leadership of the CTC believed that the Jewish diaspora was an established and sophisticated representative diaspora organisation, and it sought to become more proficient in engaging elected officials. The CTC adopted the same model of soliciting operational funds from diaspora members for both functional reasons and to secure greater legitimacy. From this point onwards, the CTC hired professional staff to build relationships on a fulltime basis and cultivated an image of a professional lobby group, all the while framing itself as the sole representative and official conduit between Canada's Tamil diaspora and political elites (Personal communications, staff member a. Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016).

The CTC's strictly non-partisan approach allowed it to speak credibly to MPs from all parties and slowly build relationships of trust, in many cases just by "being seen" in Ottawa on Parliament Hill. The CTC organised events at Parliament and slowly MPs from all parties and regions began to develop an awareness of the community and its issues.⁹⁶ Left-leaning parties, such as the social democratic NDP (New Democratic Party) and the Liberal Party were the most receptive to their overtures. As will be demonstrated in the UK, once these early relationships were made and the CTC was viewed as credible, politicians actively began to help the CTC unsolicited, including through introductions to MPs from other political parties (Personal communications,

⁹⁵ In meetings, the CJC offered guidance on how to engage with policymakers and insisted the CTC must become more "professional" and that it needed to be more assertive in reaching out to Canadian politicians.

⁹⁶ As one interviewee noted, when MPs from Western Canada with no connection to the Tamil diaspora began attending CTC events, they knew they had achieved a new level of sophistication.

staff member a. Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016).⁹⁷

Along with the NDP, Liberal Party and the Quebec separatist party the Bloc du Quebecoise, the CTC actively began to build connections with the right-leaning Conservative Party of Canada. As in the UK, this proved more difficult for three reasons. Firstly, the the Conservative Party held seats at this time principally in Western Canada and in rural communities where the Tamil community has limited representation; as a consequence, and unlike Liberal and NDP MPs, most Tory MPs did not feel as compelled to act on behalf of Tamil constituents. Secondly, the taint of association with the LTTE was felt more keenly by Conservatives, who prioritised to a greater extent security and public safety issues (Personal communications, former Canadian political staffb, 2016). Finally, the Conservative Party had been historically less receptive to representations from minority communities and did not prioritise to the same extent reaching out to diasporas as left-leaning parties did (Seligman, 2016).

By 2009, the Canadian Tamil Congress was a sophisticated, professional interest group. With several fulltime staff and a permanent office in Scarborough, Toronto the CTC consolidated its position as the “official” voice of the Canadian Tamil diaspora, became a regular presence on Parliament Hill and developed close relationships with MPs. Its emulation of the Canadian Jewish community, with its one, non-partisan lobby group led to the development of the CTC as the official voice for Canada’s Tamil community and for the struggle for a Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka. However, despite its

⁹⁷ For instance, it was through introductions by MPs from other parties that the CTC was first introduced members of the Bloc Quebecois (BQ) and the Conservative parties, neither of which had a representative MP in Tamil areas. In the case of the former, despite having never met Tamils or been aware of the civil war in Sri Lanka, the Bloc Quebecois immediately became sympathetic to the Tamil cause and then BQ leader Gilles Duceppe appointed his Deputy Leader to be the “official” conduit between the party and the Tamil diaspora via the CTC.

success with left-of-centre parties, the CTC had not established strong links and access points to the Conservative Party by this time, which continued to view the diaspora with scepticism. As is argued below, the Canadian context parallels the UK in many respects, including in the establishment of closer ties to left-of-centre parties.

Tamil diaspora interest group organisation in the United Kingdom: A quick line to Labour

Unlike in Canada, the UK Tamil diaspora did not have as numerous or well-developed organisations in the 1990s and early 2000s, owing to later waves of refugee migration and different settlement and integration systems as outlined in Chapter V. Following the proscription of the LTTE in 2000, UK Tamil diaspora leadership interfaced ineffectively with politicians and bureaucrats on an individual, piecemeal basis and not through representative bodies (Personal communications, Together Against Genocide; Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Labour, 2015). However, as in the Canadian context, political allies from the governing Labour Party advised that without an organisation that legitimately and credibly represented the Tamil diaspora, political and bureaucratic elites would not respond to overtures to meet, let alone respond to conveyed preferences (Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Labour, 2015).

In response to this need, the British Tamil Forum (BTF) was founded by Tamil diaspora elites in 2006 with Nathan Kumar as first chair with a view to enhancing the credibility of diaspora representatives. In earlier years, those making representations on behalf of the diaspora were not viewed as being invested with the authority to speak for “all Tamils”. As a consequence, the BTF embraced a democratic, grassroots model

with more than two dozen local forums and monthly general meetings.⁹⁸ In addition to bringing a more legitimate, representative voice to political leadership, the BTF began to encourage political engagement amongst Tamil members. At the municipal and national level, the BTF remained non-partisan, but offered support and encouragement to Tamils getting involved in political campaigns for all major parties (Personal communications, British Tamil Forum, 2015).⁹⁹

Additionally, diaspora leadership acknowledged the privileged access to Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) bureaucrats enjoyed by the Government of Sri Lanka through established diplomatic channels. The Sri Lankan High Commission was distinctly partisan in that it did not represent the perspective of the Tamil movement for self-determination, indeed it worked to discredit UK Tamil representatives. As discussed in Chapter V, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was motivated more by what could be described as the 'national interest', whereas political elites were more amenable to Tamil diaspora concerns due to the perceived electoral advantages in doing so; the Labour Party, with many constituencies in London, was especially sensitive to this (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015).

In an effort to circumvent the influence of the FCO, the Tamil diaspora took the step of forming Tamils for Labour. As in the Canadian case, Tamils were far more likely to join the left-of-centre Labour Party and to support Labour Party politicians. Thanks

⁹⁸ Like the CTC, the BTF grew in the coming years into a sophisticated lobby group with credibility at the political level. The BTF developed a high degree of strategic awareness, including an awareness of public and intra-community messaging. For instance, it often adopts two messaging tracks: A harder line within the Tamil diaspora itself and a more moderate tone in public and in communication with political elites. What also became apparent to the BTF and other activists at this time was the conflicting operational imperatives of the FCO and the political leadership.

⁹⁹ There was a pressing need at this time to provide a voice for the Tamil diaspora in the ongoing peace negotiations taking place at the international level in 2006. With the peace process excluding the LTTE, there was no international body to allow the diaspora to engage with government during the pivotal negotiation process.

to deeper sympathies within Labour for their cause, the BTF built strong relationships with MPs such as Joan Ryan, Keith Vaz and Jeremy Corbyn.¹⁰⁰ Through meetings with the likes of Labour Lord Noon and MP Keith Vaz, the head of Prime Minister Tony Blair's Minorities Task Force, Labour Tamil activists built networks in the upper echelons of the party. At the Ethnic Minorities Task Force conference in Leicester, the idea for 'Tamils for Labour' was conceived and it was subsequently launched in parliament shortly thereafter with Sen Kandiah as its head (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015).¹⁰¹

As in the Canadian case, an important model for the Tamil diaspora community in respect of its partisan lobbying strategy was the far older and more established Labour Friends of Israel (LFI). Since the 1950s, LFI became a mainstay in Labour circles with accepted, institutional status, allowing it to host events and receptions at Labour Party conference, organise a booth at the party's conference and deploy resources from the Jewish community of Labour supporters to advance the Labour Party and its candidates (Personal communications, Labour Friends of Israel, 2015). The success of LFI in building a permanent base of support, along with trusted, partisan channels of access proved a formidable model for the Tamil diaspora in the UK (Personal

¹⁰⁰ The gathering of support from politicians began first at the grassroots level in 2007, but Tamil elites were unable to escalate this support to the Westminster-level due to their lack of organisation. One MP and early supporter noted that Tamils were "on the outside, looking in" with no understanding of how to lobby (Personal communications, former GTF staff member and current Labour Party staff member, 2015). Of critical importance was the early involvement of sympathetic MPs, in particular Siobhan McDonough and Joan Ryan. Both of whom became engaged due to representations from the large Tamil minority in their constituencies. They became committed to the Tamil cause and actively assisted the Tamil community in building an effective lobby group, especially in developing an organising apparatus at Westminster, teaching activists how to engage with Members of Parliament and opening up new political networks. McDonough, Ryan and others were instrumental in creating access and 'bringing the Tamils into the system' (Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Labour, 2015).

¹⁰¹ Interviewees suggested that the Labour Party's more sympathetic orientation toward those perceived as victims of conflict was a likely reason for their early support.

communication, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015).

In addition to building partisan networks within government, Tamils for Labour was created to combat the prevailing perception that all Tamils were terrorists. The Government of Sri Lanka was working assiduously to discredit the Tamil community in the view of Cabinet and the FCO as a threat to national security and too caustic to engage with.¹⁰² A turning point in the changing perception of the Tamil diaspora was a meeting between Tamils for Labour and Foreign Secretary David Miliband, which was convened by MP interlocutor, Keith Vaz. Vaz, Sen Kadijah and other professionals from the Tamil community affiliated with Tamils for Labour addressed Miliband with the issues impacting their community. One attendee described Miliband as being “surprised” at the level of professionalism of the community. Prior to this meeting, Miliband had only ever been provided information from FCO civil servants in respect of the Tamil community, which advised him to distance himself from UK Tamil organisations (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015).¹⁰³

In the years preceding the 2009 decision-making context discussed in the next section, the Tamil diaspora in both host countries had made great strides in overcoming

¹⁰² As a result of this pressure, numerous early meeting requests were turned down and even parliamentary champions were being stained with having “terrorist sympathies” through associations with the Tamil diaspora (Personal communication, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015).

¹⁰³ In addition to BTF’s founding and Tamils for Labour, in 2006/07 supportive Members of Parliament founded the All Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils (APPG for Tamils). APPGs are issue-specific parliamentary bodies with formalised memberships of MPs and Peers having access to facilities in the Palace of Westminster. With the British Tamil Forum acting as secretariat, the development of the APPG for Tamils was a key milestone in the legitimisation of the Tamil diaspora as an interest group and signalled the growing importance of the Sri Lanka issue to Parliamentarians. Through the initial backing of Tamils for Labour’s Sen Kadijah, and MPs McDonough and Ryan, the APPG has been instrumental in lifting Tamil issues onto the agenda at Westminster and ensuring questions are asked on this issue in parliamentary committees and at Question Time. The APPG was headed at time of writing by Conservative MP James Berry, listed members from both the Houses of Commons and Lords and continued to act as a multi-partisan forum for supportive parliamentarians (Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Conservative Party, All Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils, 2015). The APPG would serve as a permanent, multi-partisan forum of support for the Tamil diaspora, ensuring a broad consensus on fundamental issues pertaining to the conflict in Sri Lanka.

the legacy of the LTTE and creating representative, credible organisations. However, in both cases the Tamil diaspora was still struggling at this time to make inroads into conservative parties, which would have detrimental implications for the Canadian Tamil diaspora. However, with a Labour government in office in the UK, Tamil diaspora interest groups had far more leverage despite their being established later than their Canadian counterparts and the presence of the countervailing FCO.

Events in the host countries: Decision-making periods in Canada and the United Kingdom

The research puzzle I introduced at the outset of this project requires a fine-grained investigation of decision-making processes with reference to events in Sri Lanka, capturing interventions by Tamil diaspora interest groups and whether or not these interventions are causally connected to foreign policy outcomes. Having presented the political and humanitarian context in Sri Lanka during the months of January and May 2009 and the landscape of Tamil diaspora interest groups in Canada and the UK in the lead up to events in 2009, the following causal sequences present a chronology of events in the host countries, with an emphasis on diaspora interest group interventions and foreign policy decisions made by host country governments.

As discussed in the theoretical framework chapter, a microfoundational, comparative analysis follows these chronologies and isolates the instances of distinction between the two cases with a focus on the actor, Tamil diaspora interest groups, the institutional context domestically and internationally, as well as the strategies employed by interest groups to permeate decision-making processes. I conclude the analytical section by determining if diaspora interest groups had influence on foreign policy, whether more influence was achieved in one case in contrast to another and

what explains this distinction.

Diaspora interest groups and decision-making in Canada: Early success followed by a faltering approach

Motivated by the catastrophic losses of the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) engaged in a series of meetings throughout January and into February, 2009 with Members of Parliament from all three major parties asking the government of Canada to put pressure on the United States to, by extension, pressure the Sri Lankan government to end its campaign in the north and accept a ceasefire; to allow access for humanitarian aid to Tamil civilians trapped by the fighting in the north; to permit access to impartial monitors to the conflict areas and to recognize the Tamil demand for self-determination (Personal communications, staff member a. Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016, TamilNet, 2009i). The CTC expected Canada to respond to these demands by exerting bilateral, diplomatic pressure on Sri Lanka as well as through “diplomatic pressure, economic and trade sanctions, and influence at the United Nations and Commonwealth of Nations,” (Canadian Tamil Congress statement, 4th February). With regard to strategy, Tamil diaspora elites employed direct lobbying strategies (Dur, 2008; Hansen, 1991: 12) and outside lobbying, contentious strategies (McAdam et al., 2001: 5) manifested in the first instance by meetings and an emergency debate, and in the latter as demonstrations in Ottawa and Toronto.

Beginning with direct lobbying, a series of meetings with parliamentarians culminated in a historic emergency debate in the House of Commons on 4th February, attended by the Minister of foreign affairs Laurence Cannon, the leader of the New Democratic Party, Jack Layton and dozens of other Members of Parliament. Most MPs made statements which were broadly sympathetic to the demands of Tamil diaspora

interest groups and the government responded by calling on the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka to accept a ceasefire; permit the evacuation of the sick and wounded; and, allow the delivery of humanitarian aid (Hansard Canada, 4th February, 2009). Opposition Members of Parliament demanded that the government take further action, including a Ministerial delegation to Sri Lanka; recall Canada's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka and, take action through international forums such as the Commonwealth (Hansard Canada, 4th February, 2009).

In addition to statements reflecting the need for an immediate ceasefire and access to the conflict zone for humanitarian workers and monitors (Foreign Affairs Canada, 2009a), the Harper government committed CAN\$3 million in humanitarian aid funding as announced on 3rd February by the Minister of International Cooperation (Hansard Canada, 2009), the Hon. Bev Oda. Statements empathetic to Tamil concerns, the additional aid commitment and the high level interventions on the issue at the 4th February debate were viewed by political elites as effective and a direct result of the direct lobbying efforts of the Canadian Tamil Congress and MPs allied with its interests (Personal communications, Former Canadian political staff, 2016). As sympathetic statements from the Canadian government continued as the conflict grew more intense, the most direct action taken by the Canadian government followed on 4th May with a visit to Sri Lanka by International Cooperation Minister Bev Oda, where CAN\$3 million was committed for humanitarian aid. While there, she asked for a ceasefire and access for monitors to the conflict zone (Toronto Star, 2009a).

With regard to contentious action, major demonstrations began in the last week of January, with as many as 45,000 Tamils participating in a "human chain" in downtown Toronto on 30th January with the aim of raising awareness of the

humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka amongst the non-Tamil population (Taylor, 2009). The first, large demonstration in Ottawa coincided with the parliamentary debate on 4th February with thousands of participants, most of whom were bused in from Toronto by the CTC (Tamilnet, 2009d). Dozens of MPs from all parties attended and spoke at the demonstration, further indicating the extent to which the CTC had compelled a consensus position on the issue by all parties. However, senior Conservative Party foreign affairs elites indicated they were not moved greatly by these and larger demonstrations, articulating that as conservatives they are not disposed to respond to contentious means of pressure (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016; former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016).

As the conflict cycle escalated through March and April, demonstrations in Toronto were a constant fixture, growing in contention as Tamil diaspora elites ceded control to more impassioned younger, grassroots members of the community (Personal communications, Amarasingam, 2016; staff member a. Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016; The Star, 2009b). In addition to the appearance of the LTTE flag, which had been banned by the CTC during earlier demonstrations due to the association with terrorism, the demonstrations also began to inconvenience non-Tamil Torontonians and became a public safety issue. These grassroots demonstrations reached their crescendo on 10th May when as many as 8000 Tamil demonstrators blocked the Gardiner Expressway, a major transportation artery into the city, risking public safety and greatly increasing the level of contention (Marlow et al., 2009). Diaspora elites admit they completely lost control of the demonstrations by this point, with Canadian media negatively covering the event (Godwin, 2012).

The appearance of the LTTE flag in later, considerably more contentious

demonstrations further distanced Tamil diaspora elites from the governing Conservatives, such that by April they refused to meet formally with representatives of the CTC (The Star, 2009b). In the view of Conservative elites, the open association with the LTTE meant there was no potential for them to publically support the demonstrators or to respond to their demands as they were no longer a legitimate voice of grievance (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016). Left-leaning parties including the NDP and Liberal parties continued to meet with the CTC, but given they were not in government there was little opportunity for them to redirect Canada's foreign policy.

In the early part of this decision-making period, direct and outside lobbying strategies resulted in meaningful influence on the part of the CTC on the political leadership at the federal government. The 4th February debate and parallel demonstration conveyed multi-partisan unity in support of the Tamil community and several decisions by the government, including committing further aid and calling in the Sri Lankan High Commissioner reflected the CTC's. However, as will be discussed following a description of similar events in the UK below, the Canadian government did not go as far as the British government in its remonstrations, due largely to the diaspora's lack of inroads into the governing party, the loss of credibility and unity during the demonstrations and the diaspora's lack of political salience to the Conservative party.

Diaspora interest groups and decision-making in the United Kingdom: Labour inside advocates open the door

In the British context, Tamil diaspora interest groups leading direct and outside lobbying efforts were the British Tamil Forum (BTF), Tamils for Labour, Tamils Against

Genocide and a variety of youth organisations, such as the Tamil Youth Organisation, which helped to mobilise outside lobbying protests (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015; Together Against Genocide, 2015; TamilNet, 2009a; 2009g). Demands conveyed by diaspora elites as well as those carried by demonstrators to UK political elites mirrored to some extent those in Canada, which included the Government of Sri Lanka agreeing to a ceasefire; access to the conflict zone for humanitarian assistance and international monitors; and, calls for Tamil self-determination (The Guardian, 2009). The principal deviation in demands between the two host-states reflects the UK's far more pivotal role on the world's stage: In addition to demanding the UK government put direct diplomatic and economic pressure on Sri Lanka, Tamil diaspora elites also demanded the UK put pressure on India to host peace talks; to bring the issue to the United Nations Security Council and to work through Britain's Special Relationship with the US to exert pressure on Sri Lanka (Personal communications, Together Against Genocide, 2015).

Regarding direct lobbying, Tamil diaspora elites principally from the BTF and Tamils for Labour held ongoing meetings with senior Members of Parliament from all three major parties¹⁰⁴, but engaged for the most part with the Labour Party and the Liberal Democratic Party, which had been more receptive leading up to this period and with whom the diaspora had built far stronger ties than with the Conservative Party (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015).¹⁰⁵ Like the NDP's Jack Layton in Canada, interest group elites worked through several interlocutors, in particular Lee

¹⁰⁴ The BTF also made presentations in parliament, including one by Tamils for Labour founder Sen Kandiah on 10th February 2009 (BBC, 2009).

¹⁰⁵ Prime Minister Gordon Brown's first intervention in parliament on the conflict's escalation was on 14th January, 2009 in response to Tamil diaspora inside advocate MP Keith Vaz (TamilNet, 2009c).

Scott from the Liberal Democrats and Siobhan McDonough and Joan Ryan from Labour.¹⁰⁶ The principal distinction between these two cases is the level of access Tamil elites gained to the government and Foreign Secretary David Miliband through these partisan interlocutors.¹⁰⁷

Outside lobbying through demonstrations followed a similar trajectory in the UK as in Canada, although protests were concentrated exclusively in London. The first major demonstration took place on 18th January in the form of a candlelight vigil outside 10 Downing Street attended by roughly 8000 activists. Shortly thereafter on 31st January a far larger demonstration of as many as 50,000 activists protested along Whitehall to 10 Downing Street (The Guardian, 2009). As in Canada, a constant presence of demonstrators continued in Parliament Square outside the houses of Parliament throughout March and April. The first two weeks of April witnessed some of the largest demonstrations, with as many as 100,000 attending a protest on 11th April (BBC News, 2009). Levels of contention increased as some activists were arrested, Tamil demonstrators leaping into the Thames from Westminster Bridge and with a highly publicised series of hunger-strikes serving to animate demonstrators.¹⁰⁸

Despite pressure from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to limit the government's response to the conflict so as not to damage ties with the Sri Lankan government or with India, the regional power in southeast Asia (Personal

¹⁰⁶ MP advocates were often involved in parliamentary debates during this period, as on 5th February when MP Jeremy Corbyn asked if the government was considering sanctioning Sri Lanka through the Commonwealth (TamilNet, 2009i).

¹⁰⁷ On 27th March a conference in London hosted by World Tamils Forum involving 45 delegates from 21 countries gathered to discuss the conflict, calling for a ceasefire and a political solution. Attended by MPs Des Browne and Siobhan McDonough, Browne noted that the British government was doing everything it could to bring about a ceasefire, (TamilNet, 2009d).

¹⁰⁸ The Foreign Affairs select committee received a number of material interventions on the Sri Lanka matter during this time, including four petitions submitted by MPs dated respectively 22 April, 29 April, 29 April and 30th April (Hansard, 2009).

communication, Together Against Genocide, 2015), Tamil diaspora interest groups can claim a number of victories through its direct and outside lobbying efforts. Firstly, unlike in Canada, the UK was able to use its privileged relationship with the United States to join with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a 4th February declaration calling for a temporary ceasefire, access to the conflict zone for humanitarian assistance and international monitors, and for a long-term political settlement (Lunn et al, 2009).¹⁰⁹ Secondly, Prime Minister Gordon Brown became directly involved in the issue through his appointment of a Special Envoy to Sri Lanka, high profile MP Des Brown, former Secretary of Defence, demonstrating that this issue was a foreign policy priority at the highest levels of the executive (Sparrow, 2009).¹¹⁰ Thirdly, Foreign Secretary Miliband and his French counterpart Bernard Kouchner made a high profile visit to Sri Lanka in late April to meet with President Rajapakse, calling for an end to the conflict, to increase humanitarian aid and to find a long-term settlement to the conflict meeting the aspirations of all Sri Lankans (Nelson, 2009). Fourthly, two debates were held in Westminster Hall, Parliament on the issue involving MPs at the highest levels including the Foreign Secretary and Tory Shadow Foreign Secretary William Hague, one on 30th April and a second on 14th May, respectively.¹¹¹ As in Canada, these debates demonstrated a broad consensus empathetic of Tamil diaspora elite preferences (Hansard UK, 2009). Fifthly, at the behest of the government, a multi-partisan delegation of five MPs led by Special Envoy Des Brown visited Sri Lanka to once again

¹⁰⁹ Foreign Secretary David Miliband further made efforts to raise the issue at the UN Security Council (TamilNet, 2009k), but these attempts were stymied by fellow permanent members Russia and China.

¹¹⁰ Earlier in the conflict's cycle, Foreign Secretary Miliband's Ministerial statement on 21st January, 2009 notes that Prime Minister Brown had already written to President Rajapakse regarding the crisis and advised on an upcoming visit by a DFID humanitarian expert to Sri Lanka (TamilNet, 2009k).

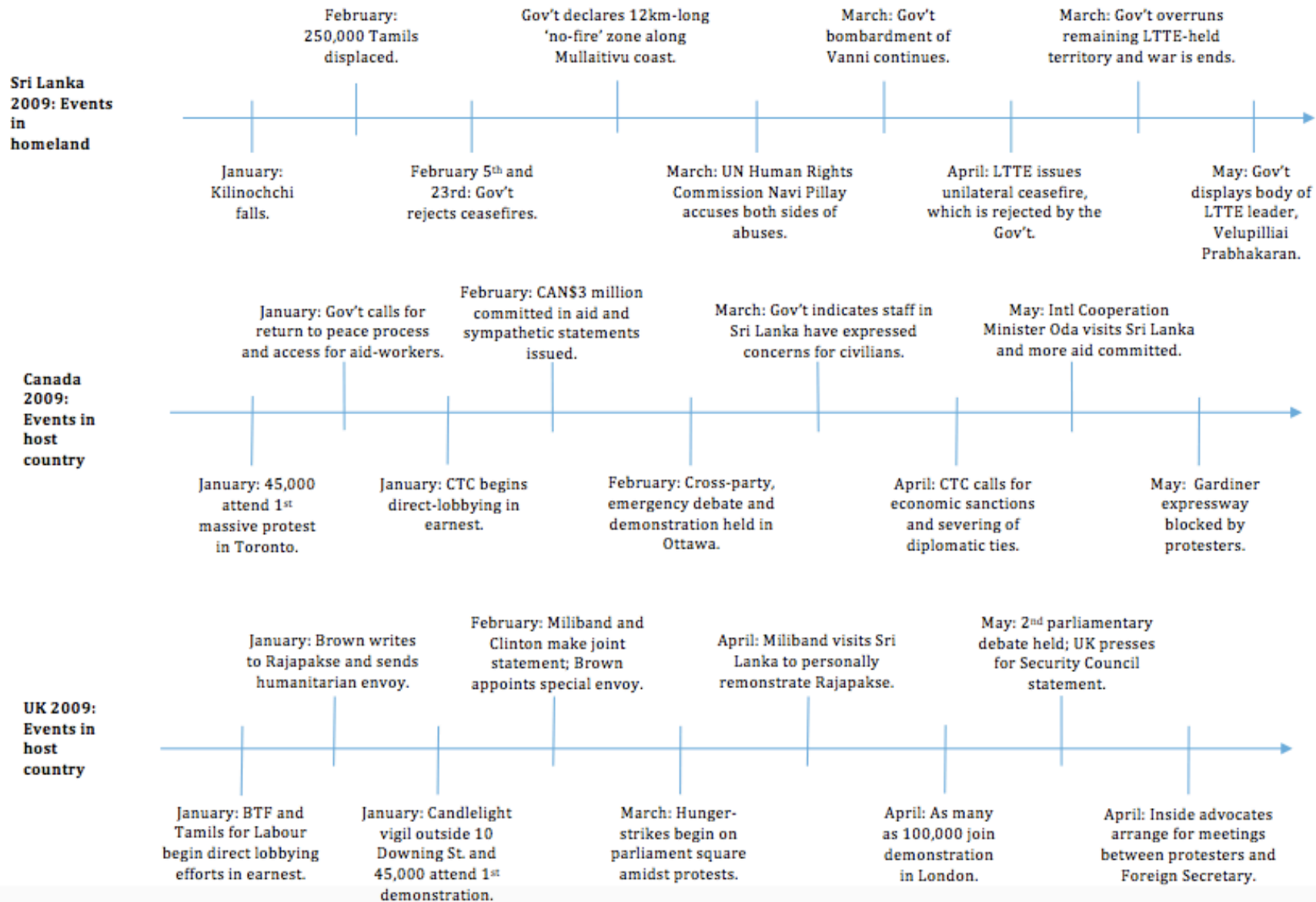
¹¹¹ During this period, the Foreign Secretary was pressed on the issue during Foreign Secretary's questions (Hansard, 2009).

pressure President Rajapakse to end the campaign in the North (Daily News, 2009). Finally, the UK deployed its clout at the United Nations Security Council, alongside France, to bring the matter forward for discussion to the Council, but was blocked by fellow permanent members Russia and China (TamilNet, 2009k).

The FCO was steadfastly in opposition to a number of these efforts, especially the visit to Sri Lanka by the Foreign Secretary as it believed it would have a deleterious impact on UK-Sri Lanka relations. Despite this pressure, the Brown government took a range of actions to respond to Tamil diaspora interest group interventions, with both activist interviewees and those close to government arguing that Tamil diaspora interest groups were instrumental in impelling government action (Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Labour, 2015; Tamils for Labour, 2015), in part due to the inroads they made with the Labour government, the political salience of the diaspora to government and the ability of diaspora elites and inside advocates to leverage contentious action. The below analytical section summarises the impact of causal factors involved in both cases on the government action described above.

Figure 6.1: 2009 decision-making causal sequence summary

Figure 6.1: 2009 decision-making causal sequence summary



Analysis: Explanatory distinctions and foreign policy outcomes

As discussed in the above decision-making periods, the Harper government in Canada and the Brown government in the United Kingdom responded to Tamil diaspora interest group demands to take action during the final stages of the conflict in Sri Lanka. Tamil diaspora interest groups in both host countries undertook direct lobbying strategies and outside lobbying strategies to convey preferences and exert pressure on the government to act in line with their preferences. I apply the theoretical framework of this project to the above event trajectories through comparing the characteristics of Tamil diaspora interest groups, the domestic and institutional constraints within which interest groups acted and the strategies they employed to gain access to decision-makers and leverage. This section concludes by summarising the distinctions that I argue explain the variation in foreign policy outcomes toward Sri Lanka.

Causal factorial analysis

The below table summarises the presence (“x”), or the absence (“o”) of factors the literature argues impact the influence diaspora interest groups have on host country foreign policy outcomes and the following discussion expands on the impact of these factors.

Table 6.1: 2009 causal factor comparison

Causal Factors	Canada	United Kingdom
Actor Characteristics		
<i>Diasporic Mobilisation</i>	X	X
<i>Diaspora Size Numerical</i>	X	X
<i>significance in parliamentary constituencies</i>	X	X
<i>Diaspora Group</i>		

<i>Resources</i>		
<i>Political Salience</i>	O	X
<i>Credibility</i>	X	X
<i>Group Homogeneity</i>	O	X
<i>Learning</i>	X	X
Institutional Factors		
<i>Host Country</i>	X	X
<i>Inclusivity</i>		
<i>Parliamentary</i>	O	X
<i>Permeability</i>		
<i>Presence of Rival</i>	O	X
<i>Constituencies</i>		
<i>Policy Alignment</i>	O	O
<i>International Role</i>	O	X
<i>Constraints</i>		
Diaspora Strategies		
<i>Inside lobbying</i>	X	X
<i>Outside lobbying</i>	X	X
Influence achieved	Partially Positive	Partially Positive

Actor characteristics

Beginning with actor characteristics, *diasporic mobilisation* was achieved in both country cases with tens of thousands of Tamil protesters attending rallies in Toronto, Ottawa and London indicating that Tamil diaspora grassroots were extensively mobilised in both host countries (Koinova, 2011; Redd and Rubenzer, 2010; Shain and Barth, 2003; Saideman, 2001). Both cases also met the criteria for *diaspora size* (Uslaner, 2012). In an interview with a former Canadian Cabinet Minister and in discussion with former Conservative staff members in office in 2009, they noted that while having a large diaspora does not necessarily obligate the government to take action, it does raise the profile of the issue and it is unlikely the government would have become as engaged on the file as it was had it not been for the large Tamil diaspora (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016; former Canadian political staffc, 2016). Similar arguments were made by Labour MPs in the UK, indicating that had it not been for interventions by Tamil diaspora members at the constituency level, they would not have become so involved (Member of Parliament UK

Labour, 2015; former GTF and current Labour Party staff member, 2015).

Related to size is *numerical significance within parliamentary constituencies* (Redd and Rubenzer, 2010; Geislerova, 2007; Saideman, 2001; Mathias, 1981). The Canadian Tamil diaspora is concentrated in the north-east quadrant of the City of Toronto, Canada's largest city in an area called Scarborough. Exact numbers of Tamil diaspora members living in at least five federal constituencies in this region of Toronto is not known, but Canadian census data reveals the largest number of Tamil-speakers in Canada to be concentrated in this area (Toronto.com, 2015). The same is true for the UK in London, especially in places like Rayner's Lane, East Ham, Southall, Wembley, Harrow and Ilford where large communities of Tamils are located (Deegalle, 2014; Orjuela, 2008).¹¹²

However, as the literature argues, it's not enough for diasporas to be concentrated in political districts, but they must also have *political salience* to the governing party. In the case of the Conservative government in Canada in 2009, they did not view Tamil-dominated constituencies as strategic, and thusly did not view the Tamil diaspora as strategically significant (Personal communications, former Canadian political staffb, 2016). In contrast, the governing Labour Party did view the Tamil diaspora as politically strategic (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015).

The difference between earlier lobbying efforts and those following the creation and enhancement of diaspora interest groups is that political elites began to view Tamil

¹¹² These constituencies, populated by Tamils on the outskirts of central London, were viewed as important constituencies for Labour, especially in this period and ones which would later be viewed as strategic by the conservatives. They include Harrow, East Ham, Southall Broadway, Northwick Park, Preston, Wembley Central, Sudbury, Ilford North and Ilford South.

diaspora interest groups as *credible* representatives of their diaspora. Numerous Tamil elites noted that it wasn't until political elites viewed Tamil representatives as credible that they begin to entertain their views (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015; Together Against Genocide, 2015). By 2009, Tamil diaspora interest groups in both countries were viewed as credible, but the taint of association with the LTTE still led Conservatives to be wary of their representations (Personal communications, Former Canadian political staff, 2015; British Tamil Conservatives, 2015). This was a critical disadvantage for the CTC, especially when LTTE flags were brandished, as Tamil groups were no longer viewed as credible. UK Tamil groups remained credible representatives throughout the decision-making period.

Regarding Tamil diaspora interest group resources, scholars such as Wayland (2003; 2004) and Orjuela (2008) have explored the extensive cultural, social and financial infrastructure in place within both Tamil diasporas and other interviewees noted that by 2009 interest groups were well-resourced (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015).¹¹³ Additionally, some interviewees argued that the ability for groups such as Tamils for Labour and later the British Tamil Conservatives to mobilise election volunteers and voters has been more consequential than financial support for politicians (British Tamil Conservatives, 2015).

Group homogeneity is viewed as important by the literature. Evidence from the Canadian and UK Tamil cases indicates a considerable degree of internal division within the diaspora, in particular in the Canadian case where elites lost control of protesters, who began displaying LTTE flags in opposition to elite preferences. This had

¹¹³ By the late 2000s, the BTF had the resources to take out a 40,000 pound, full-page ad in a major British newspaper signed by 81 Tamil groups as an open letter to Prime Minister Gordon Brown (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015).

detrimental implications for advocacy in Canada. In the UK, there was division between diaspora and human rights organisations also regarding the use of the LTTE flag, but in the view of political elites they were able to present a “united front” (Personal communications, Sri Lanka Campaign for Justice, 2015; Together Against Genocide, 2015).

Learning was a consequential causal factor for both diasporas. The Canadian Tamil diaspora learned how to operate as a professional interest group from the more established Canadian Jewish Congress and, similarly, the UK Tamil diaspora constructed its first partisan-affiliated interest group, Tamils for Labour, through following the example of Labour Friends of Israel (Personal communications, staff member a. Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016; British Tamil Conservatives, 2015). The level of sophistication achieved by both groups by 2009 is at least in part a consequence of inter-diaspora emulation.

Institutional factors and political opportunity structures

In addition to actor characteristics, institutional factors also have causal implications through constraining or abetting the capacity for the Tamil diaspora in both host countries to influence decision-makers. Beginning with *Host country inclusivity* (Fair, 2005; Lahneman, 2005; Ogelman et al. 2002, Saideman, 2001), I argued in Chapter V that immigration, settlement and integration processes permitted diaspora interest groups to form earlier in Canada, which should have been advantageous. However, as demonstrated by interest group formation following the proscription of the LTTE, both diasporas had formed sophisticated organisations by 2009. Any advantage which Canadian Tamil interest groups may have had was eroded during the ‘chilling

effect' in the late 2000s during which the Canadian Tamil diaspora had to reinvigorate interest groups and dispel perceived associations with the LTTE. In respect of political participation, both countries permit participation without citizenship within political parties, and while British Sri Lankans can vote in elections as Commonwealth citizens in the UK, acquisition of Canadian citizenship is not arduous (Electoral Commission, 2018; Government of Canada, 2018).

Similar to host country inclusivity, *parliamentary permeability* is an important factor with regard to access. In 2009, neither Canada nor the UK had particularly restrictive frameworks for interest group lobbying and both diasporas were able to gain meetings with parliamentarians at the constituency level and on Parliament Hill and Westminster. The hosting of several, major debates in the main halls of these parliaments is evidence of permeability. However, both diaspora interest groups struggled to permeate conservative parties. The CTC was not able to engage directly with the foreign Minister, let alone the Prime Minister, while Tamil diaspora interest groups in the UK had forged inroads with Cabinet which they were able to leverage during this decision-making process.

Like host country inclusivity, *rival constituencies* may also constrain activism by diaspora groups. In both Canada and the UK (Saideman, 2001), Singhalese Sri Lankan interests can be viewed as being opposed to the preferences of the Tamil diaspora (Godwin, 2012). While in both cases non-governmental Singhalese groups were largely absent from lobbying, in the UK context especially the Singhalese dominated diplomatic service actively worked to discredit Tamil interest groups, particularly via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, impeding access in the early and mid-2000s (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015). By 2009, diaspora interest groups had to

some extent neutralised FCO hostility such that they were by then actively being canvassed for their view (Personal communications, Desk Officer, South Asia Department, FCO, 2015). However, the FCO remained largely opposed to Tamil preferences, in particular the visit of Foreign Secretary Miliband. As noted in Chapter V, the political sphere is more sensitive to electoral interests and thusly more permeable to diaspora interest groups, which proved to be the case in the UK. In Canada, the bureaucracy was not viewed as being as great an impediment to the Tamil diaspora, as it was not as heavily relied upon for its expertise by the Conservative government (Personal communications, Former Canadian political staffc, 2016; Carment and Landry, 2011).

Alignment with existing host country foreign policy goals was found to be of consequence in both cases (Redd and Rubenzer, 2010; Mearsheimer and Walt, 2008; Ambrosio, 2002). In Canada, where the Conservative government pursued an anti-Terrorism policy with fervour (Holloway, 2006), Tamil diaspora association with the LTTE diminished the credibility of diaspora interest groups in the view of policymakers. As noted in Chapter V, Britain had in 2009 considerable economic linkages with Sri Lanka and a long and positive post-colonial relationship. The stand taken by the UK government against the Rajapakse regime did significant damage to this close relationship, as the FCO advised it would. In this way, the preferences of the Tamil diaspora were not aligned with the UK government's substantive trade relationship with Sri Lanka.

As I argued in Chapter II, the level of influence Tamil diaspora interest groups exercised over Canadian and British governments in respect of the conflict in Sri Lanka in 2009 can only be assessed when *international role constraints are taken into account*.

Canada and the United Kingdom were both constrained to some degree in their response to the 2009 crisis by pre-set boundaries related to their level of influence within the wider international community, especially the United Nations, the Commonwealth and in their bilateral relations with Sri Lanka. Beginning with the United Kingdom, I argue below that the Labour government took greater risk than Canada in going further to try and end the conflict.

I argued in Chapter V that the United Kingdom had greater capacity to act in changing the outcome of the crisis through its pivotal role in the international community, its dominant role at the Commonwealth and by putting bilateral pressure on Sri Lanka through being one of the country's most important trading and diplomatic partners. I also argued that these influential roles carry with them greater risk. Firstly, at the international level, the UK took action via the Special Relationship through Secretary Miliband's numerous joint statements on the conflict with Secretary of State Clinton. Given the formative stage of Miliband's relationship with Clinton, this expended considerable capital with the US without a direct benefit to the UK. Additionally, the UK worked through the United Nations in seeking to bring the issue to the UN Security Council, failing only when blocked by fellow members Russia and China. In this arena, the UK responded to diaspora interest group demands to the furthest extent possible (ICRtoP, 2018).

At the Commonwealth, the UK as the dominant actor might have exerted more pressure on Sri Lanka as had been done in the past with Zimbabwe and South Africa. However, despite a meek statement being issued by the Commonwealth toward the end of the conflict (HRW, 2009), the UK did not deploy its full influence here as a consequence of pressure from the FCO, which advised that to do so might put in

jeopardy the Commonwealth as a whole given the UK's dominant role within it.

Ultimately, the UK might have done more in this sphere, as the Conservative opposition argued, but did not.

Finally, as presented in Chapter V, the United Kingdom is Sri Lanka's second largest trading partner and British imports are nearly US\$300 million per year, with Britain as one of the country's largest foreign direct investors. Recognising its strategic importance in South Asia, the UK has retained close ties with Sri Lanka since independence. Despite this, and pressure from the FCO to do the contrary, the UK put this long-standing relationship at near existential risk in its opprobrium of the government, culminating in Secretary Miliband's direct chastisement of President Rajapakse. The UK's response, as in the international sphere was at the boundary of its capacity to act. Numerous interviewees argued that only India had the power to stay the government's campaign in the north and as a consequence of the ongoing election in that country, it was unwilling to do so and no amount of British pressure on India would have altered that position.

The UK in two of the three international spheres of focus expended considerable capital in response to the conflict in Sri Lanka, at risk of its own national interest. Interviewees from both the governing Labour Party and Tamil interest group activists have argued that the pressure from diaspora interest groups is what compelled the government to act to this extent.

Chapter V argued that Canada's role as a multilateralist, middle power permits it very little capacity to influence the behaviour of other states through global mechanisms. Indeed, Canada was not at this time a rotating member of the UN Security Council and thusly had no capacity to raise this issue at that international forum.

Additionally, the Harper government's disregard for working through the United Nations more broadly might have led it to spurn that channel even if it were on the Security Council. With regard to the Commonwealth, as was the case with the UK, opposition members called on the government to act through the consensus-driven body. However, despite Canada's more influential position in this body than in the wider international system the Canadian government chose not to take more direct action such as calling for Sri Lanka to have its membership suspended.

Finally, Canada's robust and historic relationship with Sri Lanka permitted it some leverage with the government, although only marginally so in comparison with the UK. Regarding direct, bilateral action, the visit in May 2009 by International Cooperation Minister Bev Oda witnessed a much less impactful statement than issued during Secretary Miliband's visit. Indeed, her tepid intervention with low-level bureaucrats in respect of the conflict, in comparison to Secretary Miliband's taking to task of President Rajapakse, conveys both Canada's comparatively diminished status and its unwillingness to go further in condemning the government of Sri Lanka's actions. Unlike the UK, Canada could have gone further in both its language and its actions in condemning the government. Additionally, its less consequential relationship with Sri Lanka had fewer associated risks, which is to say it had more room to act than the UK, but did not.

When taken together, the United Kingdom faced greater associated risks than did Canada in its response to the conflict in Sri Lanka and, despite pressure from the FCO to do otherwise, the Labour government took firm action internationally and bilaterally to the furthest extent that was likely possible. The influence of Tamil diaspora interest groups was casually related to the government having taken such action. In contrast,

the Conservative government in Canada could have done more at both the Commonwealth and bilateral levels and faced fewer risks, but it chose not to.

Diaspora interest group strategies

Finally, having considered 'static' characteristics inherent to the diaspora and those institutional elements which create or restrict opportunities, the interest group and diaspora literature also discusses strategies deployed by diaspora interest groups to advance their agenda with government and political actors. As outlined in the literature review section, Tamil diaspora interest groups engaged in three forms of lobbying efforts to influence decision-makers: Direct lobbying, selection of decision-makers and outside lobbying or contentious action.

Firstly, between January and May 2009, representatives from numerous Tamil organisations engaged in meetings with politicians in both countries 'behind closed doors' to present decision-makers with diaspora community preferences. The Canadian Tamil diaspora, through the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) was successful in engaging politicians in earlier weeks of the crisis, leading to an historic emergency debate in the Canadian House of Commons on 4th February, 2009, which was a first for the community. The CTC was successful in hoisting the civil war onto the political agenda and creating a broad consensus position across parties (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016). Similarly, the British Tamil Forum (BTF), Tamils for Labour and other diaspora groups held meetings with senior leadership of all three major parties, in particular securing several meetings with Foreign Secretary David Miliband, who met on numerous occasions with Tamil representatives, including protesters. Additionally, a number of debates were held in parliament and the Prime

Minister became involved through the appointment of a special envoy to Sri Lanka.

Secondly, in advance of this decision-making period, actions had been taken by diaspora interest groups to penetrate internal party politics through candidate selection. The CTC had mustered diaspora members to become involved in Liberal party internal politics, including the leadership election of MP Bab Rae (Fatah, 2006). In like manner, Tamils for Labour was in part created to support candidates for office within the Labour Party in the UK which were seen as supportive of Tamil diaspora preferences (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015).

Finally, with regard to outside activism as defined by Kollman (1998: 4) and McAdam et al. (2001), Tamil diaspora interest groups engaged in contentious claims-making through consistent, unconventional outside lobbying via mass demonstrations throughout the decision-making period.¹¹⁴ In addition to demonstrations, further actions such as hunger-strikes and other self-harming actions, as well as provocative measures such as public disruption of roadways were also employed. Protesters converged on three main sites during the decision-making period: Ottawa, Toronto and London in numbers which varied from dozens to tens of thousands and which ranged in intensity from orderly protests attended by politicians, to demonstrations which put public safety at risk. Where these cases diverge is in what Tilley refers to as “social interaction” (Passy, 2009), which is the interplay between claims-makers and government.

¹¹⁴ Tamil diaspora interest groups engaged in a protest cycle in 2009 with a near continuous presence at consistent venues and this could be perceived as routine by the target (government). However, to categorise these actions as the same as those associated with labour, the environmental movement or the nuclear disarmament movement is not useful as these movements have a consistent repertoire of action extending for decades, rather than months and respond to events which are related thematically, but not necessarily causally.

In the Canadian case, the interaction between protesters and the Conservative government began as indifference in the view of the Conservative government and culminated in May 2009 with virtual repugnance. Unlike left-of-centre politicians who attended and spoke at CTC-organised rallies, the Conservative government did not respond favourably to public demonstrations and, when they became too contentious and associated with the LTTE, claims on the part of the diaspora became less legitimate. The lack of interaction in the Canadian case between demonstrating claims-makers and the government offered no additional leverage and in fact reduced the credibility of the CTC in the view of government as they no longer had control over intensifying protests.¹¹⁵

In contrast, inside advocates from the Labour Party were able to leverage the level of contention brought by the demonstrations through inviting demonstrators to meet directly with the Foreign Secretary. In one instance, 12 demonstrators met for two hours with Miliband where they made emotional appeals through conveying harrowing stories of their own family members (Personal communications, Member of Parliament UK Labour, 2015). These emotional appeals from demonstrators had a causal impact on Miliband's response to the conflict.

Furthermore, Tamil diaspora elites in the UK retained a degree of organisational control over the demonstrations throughout, including through liaising directly with members of the London Metropolitan police (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015). This maintenance of authority resulted in diaspora interest

¹¹⁵ In Toronto, the degree of contentiousness reached such a peak that many commentators have argued the demonstrators surpassed what the public was willing to tolerate, resulting in a considerable loss of sympathy (Godwin, 2012). Indeed, all interviewees from the Conservative government at the time argued that the Tamil diaspora "went too far", allowing the Tories to reject engagement and spurn their advances (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016; personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016).

groups continuing to act as the legitimate representative of the Tamil diaspora, which was not the case in Canada. Finally, while controversial, the contentious level of demonstrations nor the presence of the LTTE flag in the UK did not diminish the credibility of Tamil diaspora elites or the objectives of the activists, allowing diaspora interest groups to retain their credibility with government (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015). In Canada, the association with the LTTE was a turning point in the view of the Conservative party, which would not respond to petitions actively associating with the terrorist group.

The causal factors identified by the diaspora and interest group literature as actor characteristics, institutional characteristics and strategies to achieve influence as identified above offer compelling arguments taken together in this chapter's conclusion.

Influence attainment

As noted in the theoretical chapter, the literature has thus-far used a primarily binary means of describing foreign policy outcomes, essentially 'influence' or 'no influence'. However, as this inquiry has demonstrated, this is too simplistic a measure when it comes to influence achievement. Tamil diaspora interest groups in both countries had influence at points during the decision-making period discussed. In addition, diaspora interest groups in Canada and the UK can point to statements from all parties and from the government demonstrating sympathy with their preferences, including calling for a ceasefire and for Tamil self-determination.

However, influence was demonstrated more substantially in the UK, including through the Prime Minister's appointment of a special envoy, the engagement of US Secretary of State on the issue through joint statements and especially the Foreign

Secretary's visit to Sri Lanka where he met with President Rajapakse and admonished him in person. The Canadian response was much more tepid, with only a small commitment of aid, a discussion with the Sri Lankan Ambassador to Canada and a late-stage visit by a junior Minister whose demands of the Sri Lankan government were lackadaisical in comparison to the UK. All this in spite of the greater domestic and institutional constraints faced by the British government.

I have adopted the below criteria by which to measure the extent to which the Tamil diaspora was able to influence British and Canadian policy outcomes:

1. Wholly negative policy change
2. Partially negative policy change
3. Status Quo (positive or negative)
4. Partially positive policy change
5. Positive policy change

It should be noted, in particular, that no policy change may represent either a victory or a defeat for the interest group.

Under this criteria, both diasporas can be said to have achieved a *partially positive policy change*, meaning both government's responded partially in line with diaspora interest group preferences. However, both are characterised as partially positive as governments did not respond to the fullest extent of their ability in respect of the international spheres of interest. In the international context, Britain responded to the furthest extent possible in seeking to bring the issue to the UN Security Council and in engaging with the United States to pressure the Sri Lankan government. Canada had no capacity to take action internationally. In respect of the Commonwealth, neither state took action to the extent possible. Both states could have taken action at that level in the form of statements calling for disciplinary measures, such as Sri Lanka's suspension from the Commonwealth and through cajoling other member states to do

the same given their influential positions within the body. Neither state sought to take action in this forum. Finally, in respect of the bilateral relationship, Canada engaged in discussions with the government via diplomatic channels and International Cooperation Minister Bev Oda visited the country, but pressure on the Sri Lankan government was minimal. In contrast, the British government admonished the Sri Lankan governments' actions at the highest level. However, the British government did not undertake or threaten more substantive measures, such as economic sanctions or other measures.

Conclusion

The cross-case comparison of decision-making processes undertaken in this chapter is set in front of the final stages of the Sri Lankan civil war, in which Sri Lankan government forces waged a campaign of annihilation against the LTTE in the north of the country. A humanitarian crisis emerged in which thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils were killed and tens of thousands displaced, leading ultimately to the defeat of the LTTE in Sri Lanka and the mobilisation of the Tamil diaspora in Canada and the UK.

Mobilisation was undertaken principally by Tamil diaspora interest groups which had emerged or been revitalised in the years following the proscription and collapse of the LTTE in the host countries. In Canada, the Canadian Tamil Congress emulated more established Jewish diaspora organisations to develop a fulltime, professional office with a presence in the country's capital. They developed channels of access to political elites, in particular with left-of-centre parties in part through the aid of sympathetic inside advocates. In like manner, the British Tamil diaspora emulated Jewish diaspora groups with the aid of inside advocates to become a legitimate, representative interest group. In addition, Tamils for Labour was founded with a

specific mandate to enhance Tamil diaspora credibility, circumvent the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and build trusted, partisan channels of access to the Labour government. In both cases, diaspora interest groups made great strides to emerge from the legacy of the LTTE and the 'chilling effect' its proscription ushered in.

The decision-making processes analysed in this chapter through causal sequences details events between January and May, 2009 in both host countries. Tamil diaspora interest groups asserted a number of demands of government, undertook direct lobbying advocacy and contentious, outside strategies to articulate these demands and to pressure governments into taking action aligned with their preferences. The Conservative government in Canada responded by participating in a diaspora-instigated debate in the House of Commons, committed further humanitarian aid and ultimately dispatched its International Cooperation Minister to Sri Lanka. The Labour government in the UK responded with further measures, including the appointment of a special envoy by Prime Minister Brown, efforts to bring the issue to the UN Security Council, in-person remonstrations of President Rajapakse by the Foreign Secretary and joint statements with the United States.

Having created the causal sequences, the theoretical framework applied to the cases discusses causal factors with a view to explaining why the UK responded more fully to the preferences of Tamil diaspora interest groups than did the Canadian government. Firstly, with respect to actor characteristics, while both diasporas were large enough, mobilised and concentrated in political districts, the British Tamil diaspora was viewed as politically salient, while the Canadian diaspora was not. Additionally, while both diasporas had greatly enhanced their credibility with government in advance of 2009, the collapse of group homogeneity in Canada

contributed to the former no longer being viewed as credible by the government. Finally, I argued that Canadian Tamil diaspora interest groups were likely to be better placed advocates due to Canada's system of integration and settlement, but the chilling effect following the LTTE proscription weakened this advantage resulting in both countries have the same access opportunities.

Secondly, regarding institutional factors such as parliamentary permeability, both countries had made significant inroads with left-of-centre parties and struggled in common to build access with Tory parties. In Canada, with a Conservative government in power, this lack of access greatly diminished the advocacy of diaspora interest groups during this period. In reference to rival constituencies, Canadian Tamil advocates experienced few challenges from those opposing their interests, while in the UK the FCO was a potent rival constituency to British Tamil interest groups. However, due to inroads built within the Labour party, diaspora elites were able to circumvent FCO pressure resulting in the Foreign Secretary's visit to Sri Lanka. Both diaspora interest groups were not fully aligned with host country foreign policy; the Canadian Tamil diaspora's flagrant association with the LTTE during protests conflicted with the government's anti-terrorism agenda. In the UK case, Britain's robust trade and diplomatic relationship with Sri Lanka risked substantial strain through actions on the part of the government. Finally, through the lens of role theory, the UK's pivotal and dominant positions in international fora enhanced the risk of action against Sri Lanka. However, its efforts through the Special Relationship and the UN Security Council, as well as its direct bilateral intervention through the Foreign Secretary's visit witnessed it put great pressure on Sri Lanka through international channels. When given the opportunity, Canada's interventions internationally, sub-nationally and bilaterally were

non-existent or muted at best.

Finally, regarding Tamil diaspora interest group strategy, both diasporas undertook direct lobbying efforts with decision-makers and sought to influence parties structurally. In addition to the Canadian Tamil diaspora's failure to penetrate the Conservative Party, the distinction between the two cases lies in contentious politics. Although both cases witnessed massive, ongoing and contentious demonstrations, only British Tamil diaspora interest groups were able to leverage pressure brought to bear by these demonstrations through Labour inside advocates. In the Canadian case, the CTC lost credibility and leverage through these demonstrations in later stages of the decision-making process, in particular through losing control of contentious demonstrations and the brandishing of LTTE flags.

Ultimately, Tamil diaspora interest groups in both host countries attained a degree of influence over foreign policy outcomes, but despite more challenging institutional constraints British Tamil diaspora interest groups attained more influence over foreign policy outcomes through having greater access to the Labour government, being more politically salient and through better leveraging contentious action.

Chapter VII – Canada and the United Kingdom causal comparison (2013)

The aftermath of conflict and transnational activism for justice

Following the defeat of the LTTE in Sri Lanka in 2009, Tamil diaspora interest group advocacy focused on compelling the Rajapakse government to put in place a legitimate transitional justice process and to end persecution of Tamils in Sri Lanka and abroad. As in the previous cases, this chapter addressed my research puzzle by arguing that Tamil diaspora interest groups in both host countries had considerable sway over Conservative governments through pressure to boycott the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Colombo in 2013 to protest the Rajapakse government. Canada's Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, chose to boycott the summit and to withdraw funding from the Commonwealth. However, British Prime Minister Cameron chose to attend the summit, but used the occasion to turn attention to human rights abuses against Sri Lankan Tamils. This chapter will conclude that Tamil diaspora interest groups had influence over both decisions, but it had more influence in the British context as the UK's decision was not in alignment with its foreign policy objectives.

The first section provides background on the impetus for Tamil diaspora interest group advocacy following the end of the conflict and leading up to the CHOGM in Sri Lanka. Firstly, in response to obfuscation and intransigence on the part of the Rajapakse government, Tamil diaspora interest groups advocated for a credible, international transitional justice process to be set up with a view to investigating alleged war crimes on the part of the Sri Lankan government during the final months of the war. Secondly, interest groups sought to bring attention to host country governments of the ongoing human rights violations and persecution of the Tamil

minority in Sri Lanka and abroad.

Following the close of the civil war and with a view to continuing advocacy after the demise of the LTTE, the landscape of Tamil diaspora organisations changed as new, transnational organisations emerged and existing domestic interest groups grew in sophistication. The second section introduces new transnational organisations such as the Global Tamil Forum and the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam and discusses the growing sophistication of the Canadian Tamil Congress and the creation in the UK of British Tamil Conservatives. With conservative-dominated governments now in place in both host countries, Tamil diaspora interest group elites sought to make inroads with Tory parties as conservative strategists began to view the Tamil diaspora as strategically salient.

The third section creates the causal sequence of the decision-making period of interest in this chapter: The Harper and Cameron governments were both faced with the decision of whether to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) or to boycott it. Having threatened to stay away from the summit should Sri Lanka not improve its human rights record in 2011, the Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, announced he would not attend. His British counterpart faced intense pressure from Tamil diaspora interest groups, in particular British Tamil Conservatives, but ultimately chose to attend the summit. However, his visit to Sri Lanka turned the spotlight on the country's human rights record and lack of a credible transitional justice process as designed by Tamil interest group elites.

The fourth analytical section of this chapter applies my theory to determine causation and whether or not Tamil interest groups influenced decisions regarding CHOGM. The analysis of causal factors outlined in the literature uncovers a number of

distinctions since 2009 as well as between the two cases in this instance. Regarding actor characters, diaspora interest groups better mobilised young activists to take out membership in Conservative parties and in so doing build networks and trusted channels of access. This is distinct from 2009 when neither diaspora was able to penetrate Conservative parties. Regarding political salience, by 2013 the Conservative party in Canada was much more attuned to the interest and needs of the Tamil diaspora, while in the UK the Conservative party also viewed the Tamil diaspora as salient. Thirdly, diaspora interest groups were both viewed as credible by Conservative governments, unlike in 2009 when the CTC was not viewed as such by the Canadian government. Fourthly, in respect of institutional factors, diaspora activists were contested by a number of rival constituencies, especially the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK which ultimately stymied efforts by the diaspora. Fifthly, in this case diaspora preferences were aligned with Canada's "principled" approach to foreign policy, whereas the Tamil diaspora's preferences greatly contrasted with the UK's desire to avoid strained relations in Southeast Asia as well as its role in the Commonwealth. This final point, which speaks to the role constraints faced by the UK explains why Prime Minister Cameron did not attend.

Finally, I conclude in the fifth section by arguing that Tamil diaspora interest groups had influence over conservative governments in both countries, but the UK diaspora was able to exert greater influence over the government's behaviour than in the Canadian case, where the government was already entirely aligned with diaspora preferences. This is so because the British government could not have boycotted the summit; instead, it worked directly with Tamil diaspora interest groups to 'choreograph' Prime Minister Cameron's visit with a view to embarrassing the

Rajapakse government and draw attention to the plight of Tamils in the north of the country.

Post-civil war Sri Lanka and the pursuit of justice

This section details the impetus for diaspora activism following the end of the 2009 civil war, which emphasized two key demands: Firstly, compelling the intransigent government of Mahinda Rajapakse to conduct a legitimate and credible transitional justice process and, secondly, ending the continued persecution of the Tamil population, both within Sri Lanka and transnationally. It begins by describing the international processes which led to findings of evidence of government war crimes in 2009 and details the continuing persecution of Tamils.

In the immediate aftermath of the civil war, the Rajapakse government secured two important political victories, firstly through a joint statement with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon after his visit to the island (United Nations, 2009), and secondly a vote at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) which failed to call for an international investigation into alleged war crimes (Pidd, 2009). This in contrast to the European Union, which called for a commission of inquiry into the conflict.

In the absence of international calls for a credible investigation into the conduct of the war, diaspora groups such as the Canadian Tamil Congress and the British Tamil Forum, as well as non-Tamil diaspora international advocacy groups like Human Rights Watch demanded an international investigation as evidence of atrocities surfaced (Yuen, 2009). In the months to follow, the UN Secretary General was moved under increased pressure to investigate and appointed a 'Panel of Experts' in 2010 which released a report in 2011 pointing to war crimes and crimes against humanity having

been committed by both sides.

The international campaign for justice culminated in a March 2013 resolution passed at the UNHCR which called on the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to investigate alleged violations of international law (Sri Lanka Campaign, 2014). After years of obfuscation under the Rajapaksa government (Large, 2016), the OHCHR was able to conduct an investigation following the election of a new Sri Lankan government in January, 2015 under President Mathiripala Sirisena. In summary, the findings of the report (UNHCR, 2015):

... demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds to believe that gross violations of international human rights law, serious violations of international humanitarian law and international crimes were committed by all parties during the period under review.

Specifically, unlawful killings were committed by both sides, including of Tamil civilians by Sri Lankan government forces, as well as of surrendered Sri Lankan Army combatants by the LTTE. The Government of Sri Lanka engaged in detaining Tamils, numbering in the thousands, under arbitrary arrest.¹¹⁶ Despite being unable to ascertain the full extent of the use of rape and sexual violence against males and females, the investigation found credible evidence that this was conducted on a large scale by or with the knowledge of the Government of Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka Campaign, 2014).¹¹⁷

In its report, the OHCHR directly denounced the former Rajapakse government's

¹¹⁶ There were many credible reports of abductions at checkpoints and by "white vans" leading to hundreds of cases of forced disappearances. There was widespread evidence that while in custody or arbitrary arrest many Tamils were tortured and subjected to cruel and inhumane treatment.

¹¹⁷ In addition to these violations, the Government of Sri Lanka was accused of inhibiting movement in conflict zones for both civilians and civil society aid organisations, which allowed already inhumane conditions to further deteriorate. These limitations impeded civilian access to medical attention, the provision of the essentials for life and prevented civilians from fleeing the conflict zone. The LTTE was accused of similar violations, in addition to the outright killings of those civilians attempting to leave areas under its control for use as human shields, the conscription of children as combatants and the extrajudicial killings of Sri Lankan Army combatants.

active inhibiting of the pursuit of justice following the conflict. It is alleged that in the period following the conflict the Government of Sri Lanka used infrastructure development in former conflict areas to deflect attention from its attempts to stonewall accountability processes (Sri Lanka Campaign, 2014). The government's own investigative mechanism, the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Committee (LLRC), was set up largely in response to international pressure from the US and Europe. It's lack of independence, evident pro-government bias and the absence of demonstrable follow-up left it widely panned, including by the British Prime Minister (Human Rights Watch, 2011).¹¹⁸

In a post-civil war climate of restricted rights and liberties, the Rajapakse government continued to carry out abuses against the civilian Tamil population as well as against Tamil leadership.¹¹⁹ The Sri Lanka Campaign for Justice and Peace found in its 2014 report that a "cycle of impunity" led to "sustained persecution" against the Tamil population, taking the form of continued militarization of the northern and eastern areas of the island as well as attempts to change the demographic composition of these areas; impunity for human rights violations such as enforced disappearances, sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and confinement, as well as murder; a breakdown of the rule of law, no movement toward reconciliation and an increasingly authoritarian trajectory

¹¹⁸ Despite the end of hostilities, the Sri Lankan government retained the use of emergency powers and the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) to maintain its control over the movement of the Tamil population in territory formerly held by the LTTE. Throughout much of 2009, the government continued to detain civilians in military controlled detention camps against international law. Six months after the end of the war, as many as 280,000 individuals were confined in what were termed "welfare camps" and as many as 129,000 remained there into 2010, 80,000 of whom were children. In addition, as many as 10,000 were imprisoned for suspected involvement with or for harbouring sympathies for the LTTE (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

¹¹⁹ Candidates for the main Tamil coalition party, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) were harassed by Sri Lankan Army officers, student activists were beaten and subjected to arbitrary confinement and journalists faced life threatening violence. The editor of the anti-government *Uthayan* publication was beaten so severely he was placed on life support (Sri Lanka Campaign, 2014).

on the part of the government, including the intimidation and detention of journalists.¹²⁰

While denying these crimes, the government admitted to pursuing a policy of land acquisition, where Tamil land was confiscated by the government principally for military purposes. Sri Lankan military spokesman Brigadier Wanigasuriya justified this policy on the basis that (Sri Lanka Campaign for Justice, 2014):¹²¹

[w]e have eradicated the direct armed violence in the country by defeating terrorism within the island. However, the separatist ideology still has wings. It is a major threat to national security. As you know, there are several groups amongst the vast Tamil Diaspora active in Western countries propagating the ideology of a separate state. They are far detached from the ground reality and act only for their own wellbeing in those countries where they enjoy special privileges either as refugees or powerful vote blocs. Some politicians openly support them mainly due to the ability of those groups to sway the votes of the Tamils in the respective areas.

This defence of a crime against humanity suggests that the Rajapaksa government continued to advance a narrative of ongoing war in spite of the abrupt finality of the civil war itself. It further indicates that the government's aggressive anti-Western turn following the civil war (Large, 2016), combined with its conflation of the entire Tamil diaspora as in effect members of the LTTE, put members of the Tamil diaspora at violent risk.¹²²

The Rajapaksa government drew a direct linkage between the Tamil diaspora,

¹²⁰ Abuses were as flagrant as military personnel assuming civilian attire, abducting civilians believed to have an association with the LTTE and transferring them to undisclosed detention centres where they were severely physically and sexually abused for weeks; often until a confession was signed on documentation written only in Sinhalese. These systemic acts of violence constituting crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute, 1998 were principally directed against those perceived to hold nationalist or LTTE sympathies; individuals believed to be mobilising international opinion against Sri Lanka on accountability and human rights issues, and those perceived to be in defiance of the government. Later, maintaining any formal or informal association with international diaspora groups resulted in persecution (TAG, 2012).

¹²¹ Further to this point, Sri Lankan Defence Minister and brother of the President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, continued the narrative that the LTTE remains an active threat to Sri Lanka through the activism of the international Tamil diaspora, in his own words: "the rump of the LTTE's global establishment is still active."

¹²² The government's disdain for the West revealed itself even in its diplomatic appointments, with a number of generals implicated in war crimes allegations posted to ambassadorial positions in major European capitals (Sri Lanka Campaign, 2014).

the LTTE, international activism and activism in Sri Lanka (Large, 2016). To discourage international activism and to prevent mobilisation against it, the government targeted members of the Tamil diaspora returning from abroad. A 2012 report by Together Against Genocide (TAG) called on the British government to reconsider its post-war asylum policy for Tamils on the basis of twenty-seven cases demonstrating human rights abuses against members of the Tamil diaspora returning to Sri Lanka.

Specifically, the report argues that Tamils returning “from a country whose government or media have been critical of the Sri Lankan government and/or have called for progress towards accountability and reform” are at a substantially greater risk of being detained and tortured by the government (TAG, 2012).¹²³

Further to this policy of deterrence against activism, the government sought to de-legitimise political sympathizers with the Tamil cause abroad. A Sri Lankan defence attaché in London alleged that, “the LTTE has cultivated sympathisers in all three major political parties”. The effort to delegitimise the Tamil diaspora and their allies was officially confirmed in 2014, when the Sri Lankan government listed fifteen Tamil diaspora organizations as registered terrorist organisations. Amongst those listed included the Canadian Tamil Congress, the National Council of Canadian Tamils, British Tamil Forum, Global Tamil Forum and the Australian Tamil Congress. The listing of these organizations made it a criminal offence in Sri Lanka to maintain association with these groups or their members, as well as further endangering members of the diaspora

¹²³ Cases reported by TAG carried with them common themes: Individuals returning from abroad, often from studies were detained at the airport without charge, taken away in white vans to undisclosed locations, tortured and in some cases raped and then were released when a ransom was paid. With regard to activists, there is evidence suggesting that the Sri Lankan government collected information on Tamils who had taken part in Tamil activism abroad, including large protests against the government in London. Some detainees were shown photos of themselves taking part in protests before being tortured.

returning to Sri Lanka.

The measures taken by the Sri Lankan government to associate the Tamil diaspora and diaspora organisations with the LTTE and with terrorism more broadly served to both deter activism in Sri Lanka, as well as to deter activism abroad given the threat of repression and persecution in the homeland (TAG, 2012).

A continuing climate of fear of persecution and repression for Tamils in Sri Lanka and Tamil diaspora activists, as well as the Rajapakse government's refusal to put in place a credible transitional justice process served as the advocacy motivations for diaspora interest groups during this period. Tamil diaspora advocacy efforts culminated in 2013 when Canadian and British Prime Ministers were called upon to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka. This decision point is the focus of this chapter, but before it is discussed the changing landscape of Tamil diaspora organisations is presented.

Taking the fight abroad? Post-LTTE transnational diaspora organisations

In a climate of frustration and continued persecution, this period witnessed the outgrowth of a number of new Tamil diaspora organisations and collective efforts, including a transnational government: The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE), a transnational coalition of domestic interest groups: The Global Tamil Forum (GTF), a transnational referendum organised by Tamil National Councils (TNCs) as well as a number of other groups, including youth organisations first galvanised by the demonstrations in 2009.

Transnational Tamil organisations emerged in the years following the end of the civil war for three reasons: Firstly, as outlined in the section above, Tamil advocacy was

severely restricted in Sri Lanka through the continuation of repressive, wartime policies of the Rajapakse regime which necessitated the diaspora utilising international channels through which to pressure the government, which is a tactic entirely befitting of Keck and Sikkink's (1998) 'boomerang effect'. Secondly, following its catastrophic defeat in Sri Lanka, the LTTE was unable to regroup in the diaspora. Broadly speaking, the diaspora viewed the failure of the LTTE as the final assertion that violent means of bringing about a separate state for Tamils was no longer a viable course of action. Having attempted ineffective strategies of non-violent resistance in Sri Lanka up to the 1980s, this turn of events led to a 'post-war consensus' that international diplomacy via pressure from host governments was the only remaining option for Tamil self-determination (TamilNet, 2010). Thirdly, the events of 2009 galvanized and united the Tamil diaspora as never before and activated a new generation of Tamil diaspora members. Tamil diaspora elites capitalised on this momentum and unity by founding a number of transnational Tamil organisations as well as exercises in democratic representation.

Beginning with the TGTE, the LTTE leadership which remained following the end of the conflict sought to shift the Tamil centre of gravity from Sri Lanka to the transnational diaspora through the establishment of a transnational governance body (Vimalarajah and Cheran, 2010). It further understood that the only means to achieving the broader objectives of the Tamil movement for self-determination was through international diplomacy via pressure from the diaspora on host-country governments (Amarasingam, 2015: 148).¹²⁴ The creation of the TGTE was announced in the weeks

¹²⁴ The movement towards the establishment of a transnational government was undertaken immediately following the end of the war by Kumaran Pathmanathan (KP). KP had been the principal international arms procurer for the LTTE and was appointed to lead the organisation following the death of long-time

following the war's end in Malaysia with a view to meeting these two objectives

(TamilNet, 2009h):

As a political structure, democratically elected Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam is a must of the present times to internationally justify Tamil rights and to work for a separate nation state, considering the given conditions of Eezham Tamils and the internationalised political milieu of the island of Sri Lanka.

The TGTE held elections amongst the transnational Tamil diaspora in 2010 for its leadership where nearly 30,000 Tamils voted. A hard-line faction aligned with the LTTE and led by New York-based lawyer with LTTE connections, Visvanathan Rudrakumaran emerged victorious, forming a 'cabinet' with Rudrakumaran as the 'Prime Minister' (Amarasingam, 2015: 243). However, the TGTE quickly became fractured with infighting largely between those in support of the Rudrakumaran leadership and those against.¹²⁵

During the same period, the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) was established in July 2009 as a transnational coalition of Tamil organisations with the aim of advocating for the right to self-determination of the Tamil people and to direct efforts toward the continuing humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka (Personal communications, Global Tamil Forum, 2015; TamilNet, 2009f). Composed of the numerically largest and most well-resourced diaspora groups, it included amongst its constituent members the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC)¹²⁶, the British Tamil Forum (BTF) and twelve organizations from

LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran at the close of the civil war. After fleeing Sri Lanka for Malaysia, KP declared the establishment of the TGTE and led the group for a few short months until his arrest and extradition to Sri Lanka in August 2009. He passed the leadership of the organisation to Visvanathan Rudrakumaran, a New York-based lawyer with strong LTTE connections.

¹²⁵ Despite these internal setbacks, the TGTE with its Secretariat in Geneva pressed Ban Ki-Moon to refer Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and in 2011 TGTE leadership were invited by the newly formed government in South Sudan to visit the recently created country.

¹²⁶ As new transnational organisations came together, such as the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) and the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) the CTC participated at varying levels. With respect to the former, the CTC joined with other diaspora organisations worldwide to become a founding partner, as Canada's official representative when the GTF was formed in 2010 (CBC, 2010). The CTC continues to be formally a member of the GTF, but its engagement is largely symbolic and its actions in Canada are in no

five continents. The GTF has been described as a largely elite-driven initiative which initially had a humanitarian focus, but through the influence of the BTF evolved to engage in political advocacy (International Crisis Group, 2010).

Based in London, the official launch of the GTF was held in the Gladstone Room of the House of Commons in February 2010 and attended by Foreign Secretary David Miliband, Shadow Foreign Secretary for the Conservative Party William Hague and Liberal Democrats' Shadow Foreign Secretary Ed Davey along with Tamil advocate MPs from several parties such as Siobhan McDonough, Joan Ryan and Keith Vaz. Some of the organisations from the fourteen countries represented met privately with Prime Minister Gordon Brown (Personal communications, former GTF staff member and current Labour Party staff member, 2015).¹²⁷ It was through the efforts of Labour activists outlined in the earlier chapter that the GTF was quickly integrated into the UK's political leadership.

However, not long after its founding a bitter schism opened up between the more established British Tamil Forum (BTF) and the GTF.¹²⁸ The former continued to espouse a 'harder line' in the post-war landscape, with its advocacy for the establishment of a

way directed by any international organisations, preferring to focus on the domestic context in which it has leverage (Personal communications, staff member a. Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016). As will be discussed in the section focusing on the UK, the GTF has, and indeed is perceived as having, a largely UK focus while acting through it in some international spheres, such as in Geneva at the UNHCR.

¹²⁷ Between 2010 to 2015 while out of office, former Labour MP and early inside advocate Joan Ryan served as the Executive Director of the GTF.

¹²⁸ The bitter schism remained isolated largely to the United Kingdom where the GTF is most active. Indeed, several parliamentarians noted that they have often found themselves as interlocutors between these organisations, owing to their desire to attempt to reflect the wide breadth of opinion within the British Tamil community (Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Labour, 2015; Member of Parliament, UK Conservative Party, All Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils, 2015). However, some parliamentarians such as Labour's Joan Ryan did not hesitate to associate with one over the other. The GTF remains an active and professional lobby group in London and Tamil representative bodies in the diaspora outside of the UK continue their membership. This partisan leaning also led to a closer alignment between the BTF and the Tories, with many interviewees noting that differences on the issues have lent a partisan bent to the GTF and the BTF (Personal communications, British Tamil Forum, 2015).

sovereign state for Tamils as the principal and overarching objective of activism for the Tamil diaspora. The GTF, on the other hand, has advocated for a 'softer line', limiting itself to calls for self-determination leading to a gradual, constitutional establishment of an autonomous Tamil region with devolved rights for linguistic and education policy (Personal communications, British Tamil Forum, 2015; Global Tamil Forum, 2015).¹²⁹

In an effort to re-legitimise the Tamil movement for self-determination, the creation in 2009 and 2010 of Tamil National Councils (TNCs) in diaspora host countries led to organised referenda throughout the diaspora. The referendum in Canada was organised by the Coalition for Tamil Elections Canada and was held on 19th December, 2009 using advanced voting equipment, procedures similar to those carried out in general elections and objective vote monitors. Voting took place in major urban centres across the country on the below ballot question (TamilNetl, 2009):

I aspire for the formation of the independent and sovereign state of Tamil Eelam in the north and east territory of the island of Sri Lanka on the basis that the Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka make a distinct nation, have a traditional homeland and have the right to self-determination.

Nearly 50,000 Tamils voted in the Canadian referendum, resulting in more than 99% voting in favour of the ballot question.

The referendum process had high levels of participation across the diaspora with support for a Tamil national homeland receiving nearly unanimous consent at 99% (International Crisis Group, 2010). The referendum in Britain was held on 31st January 2010, with turnout at nearly 65,000 voters and an emphatic result of over 99% voting in

¹²⁹ Transnational linkages with the Tamil political establishment in Sri Lanka developed in different trajectories for both groups. The GTF preferred a close relationship with the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) in Sri Lanka, whereas the BTF opposed the willingness of the TNA to work with the Rajapaksa government and participate in democratic processes on the island. The TNA was largely responding to the post-war climate, in which Tamils in Sri Lanka were desirous of cooperation rather than confrontation after so many years of war (Personal communications, former GTF staff member and current Labour Party staff member, 2015).

favour of an independent Tamil homeland. The process was supported by all British Tamil diaspora groups including the BTF as well as the TYO, which was active in mobilising voters to turn out. Several British Members of Parliament and Councillors supported the process and confirmed the importance of the vote as giving legitimate voice to the aspirations of the Tamil diaspora.

The Global Tamil Forum (GTF) and the Transitional Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) emerged as the leading transnational governance organisations, with participation from both the Canadian and British diaspora groups. Referring to the conceptualisation of transnational Tamil diaspora interest groups in Chapter II, the Transitional Government of Tamil Eelam, should not be conceptualised as an interest group. Its principal aim has been to serve as a decision-making forum, rather than to champion specific issues or to petition domestic governments; indeed, its objective is to serve as a transnational government (Amarasingam, 2015: 156).

However, the second transnational organisation formed during this period, the Global Tamil Forum, bears far more hallmarks of an interest group in that it serves as a coalition of other interest groups, seeks to petition government and international bodies to make change, and does not claim to be a government in exile (Personal communications, former GTF staff member and current Labour Party staff member, 2015). For this reason, the latter factors into the below analysis while the former is not.¹³⁰

The period following the end of the civil war brought with it a seismic shift in the

¹³⁰ Additionally, other organisations such as the Tamil Youth Organisation (TYO) and the Tamil Information Centre (TIC) engaged in mobilisation and advocacy at the domestic level, while maintaining a transnational apparatus. Organisations such as these were joined by ACT NOW in the UK, which was composed of largely non-Tamil members seeking to raise awareness of Tamil issues amongst the broader population (Vimalarajah et al, 2011).

diaspora and in the often complicated landscape of Tamil diaspora organisations. As new transnational organisations emerged, domestically-oriented Tamil diaspora groups in Canada and the UK continued to grow in sophistication and finally develop inroads into conservative parties. The below sections discuss these processes in Canada and the UK with an emphasis on efforts to build leverage with conservative-led governments.

*Tamil diaspora interest group organisation in Canada: The CTC builds stronger ties with the Harper Government*¹³¹

As I argued in the Chapter V, an extended ‘chilling effect’ following the proscription of the LTTE led to the CTC’s failure to penetrate the Conservative government. The period between the end of the civil war in 2009 and the CHOGM in 2013 was marked by a number of changes which decisively aided the CTC in its advocacy efforts with Conservatives. For instance, diaspora interest group strategy changed with a greater emphasis on building trusted, partisan networks within the Conservative Party through the development of young activists and, the overall strategic approach became more tailored to the Conservative government’s foreign policy alignment rather than through contentious means as evidenced in the foregoing chapter.

Firstly, in regard to the CTC’s approach to building inroads within the governing Tories, there remained a level of distrust and angst amongst many in the Conservative Party given the continued perception of a link between the diaspora and the LTTE. As a consequence, Tamil diaspora organisation outreach to the Conservative Party met with

¹³¹ A number of other organisations also formed during this period, including grassroots organisations which were founded by youth involved in the demonstrations in 2009. The National Council for Canadian Tamils (NCCT) and the Tamil Youth Organization (TYO) view themselves as more grassroots-oriented and to some extent in opposition to the more established CTC; often assuming more ‘hard-line’ positions on Sri Lanka (Amarasingam, 2015: 172).

limited success initially, (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016). What began to change this perception was more concerted and programmatic efforts by the CTC to deepen ties with the Conservative Party internally, which was motivated by the growing belief that the Liberal Party had for too long taken for granted the support of the Tamil diaspora and that it was unwilling to take stronger positions as well as more tangible action in response to Tamil diaspora interest group preferences (Amarasingam, 2013; personal communications, Commonwealth elite, 2016).

Beginning in 2011 with Prime Minister Harper's warning to the Government of Sri Lanka regarding its hosting of the CHOGM (Blanchfield, 2012), the CTC began to view Conservative foreign policy as more in alignment with its own preferences and, more importantly, it viewed the Harper government as more willing to take a stronger stance than the Liberals.

A more sophisticated approach to lobbying resulted from this changed perception, with greater investment on the part of the CTC to building partisan channels of access through the involvement of Tamil activists in the political process. The CTC began managing a programme which encouraged younger members of the community to become engaged as activists in party politics, and follow them through their political development (Personal communications, Staff member b. Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016). The programme ensures activists become involved as party members and staff who share sincere, personally held beliefs which align with their party of choice. In much the same way as Tamils for Labour, CTC partisan activists built networks of trust within party circles, which served to dilute the paranoia that once hampered Tamil activism, as well as create partisan access points with party leadership. In the view of Conservative government insiders, CTC activists gained greater political leverage

through young Tamil activists becoming involved at the political level (Personal communications, former Canadian political staffb, 2016; Weerawardhana, 2013).

In addition to efforts to create inside advocates, the CTC became more sophisticated in its strategy to approach government. Rather than relying on outside lobbying proven ineffective in 2009, CTC activists ensured they tailored their proposals “behind the scenes” to better reflect the government’s language and approach to foreign policy. For instance, rather than simply presenting a set of demands in meetings with cabinet Ministers and MPs, Tamil conservative activists liaised with Tory Ministerial staff in advance to probe what was possible and to frame requests accordingly. Additionally, rather than making specific, tangible requests which might lead observers to think the government was being influenced unduly by special interests, activists made more symbolic demands which allowed the government to come to their preferred policy decisions based on the information they had provided (Personal communications, former Canadian political staffb, 2016). Finally, Ministers and staff noted the importance of bringing to bear emotional appeals. As was the case with Foreign Secretary Miliband in the UK, Tamil Conservative activists were now in a position to make emotional appeals based on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka and this approach had an impact (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016).

From the perspective of the Conservative government, interviews with Tory-appointed government staff serving in foreign affairs at the time noted a greater emphasis on outreach to diaspora communities in Canada in general (Personal communications, former Canadian political staffc, 2016). For decades dominated by the Liberal Party, diaspora communities began to more seriously consider other parties as

options in Canadian elections, due partly to the increased attention paid to them by the Conservative Party and the NDP (Singh, 2009). Tory strategists began to look to make inroads into the Tamil community in Toronto through messaging more specifically targeted at the community. It also did so by recruiting Tamil candidates or those with strong ties to the diaspora to seek election in constituencies heavily populated by Tamil Canadians (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016).

The impact of the CTC and Conservative Tamil activists began to reveal itself in subtle government decision-making. For instance, unlike during the 2009 episode, the Conservative government began to refer to what had taken place in 2009 in Sri Lanka as a 'genocide', a cornerstone narrative for the Tamil community (Tamilcnn, 2015). Secondly, the Tories began to more clearly and frequently refer to the 'Tamil nation', as a way of legitimising to a greater extent the desire for self-determination and the special place of Tamil nationhood on the island of Sri Lanka. Finally, in the 2015 federal election, the Conservative Party committed in its manifesto to opening a diplomatic mission in Jaffna, a commitment UK Tamils would seek from parties in their own country (Tamil Guardian, 2015).

Ultimately, the increased interest on the part of the Conservative Party and the Tories' inroads into the Tamil diaspora, and its more sympathetic tones to their issues, cemented firm relationships built on trust. One MP noted that they would engage with the CTC in advance of meetings with the Sri Lankan High Commission and accept their briefings, remarking to the CTC, "you don't even need to lobby anymore," (Personal communications, staff member b. Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016).¹³²

¹³² The Conservative Party in particular had gone "180 degrees" in their engagement on Sri Lankan issues, from being distrustful of the Tamil community due to its past links to the LTTE, to appealing directly to

Tamil diaspora interest group organisation in the United Kingdom: The founding of the British Tamil Conservatives

In the years following 2009, the most consequential development for the Tamil diaspora with respect to lobbying the British government was the founding of British Tamil Conservatives (BTC). As was the case in Canada, the British Tamil diaspora had long-established links with left of centre politicians, owing to the party's inherently more sympathetic leaning to their perspectives on Sri Lanka and the more deep-seated scepticism of some Tories towards the Tamil diaspora's association with the LTTE which prevented making inroads with the Conservative Party (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015).

In 2008, Diaspora Tamil elites were conscious of the fact that the community was "putting all its eggs in one basket" in its formal engagement solely with the Labour Party (Personal communications, Together Against Genocide, 2015). As a consequence, leading Tamil conservatives founded the British Tamil Conservatives (BTC) in October of that year. Modelling itself on Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI) and the American Israel Political Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the BTC set about building relationships between Tamil Conservative professionals and party staff, with a view to confronting stereotypes that Tamils were associated with terrorists or always vote Labour (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015). Early supporters of the organisation, including London area MPs Robert Halfon and Lee Scott, served a similar function as early Labour inside advocates Joan Ryan and Siobhan McDonough. These MPs opened up networks with senior MPs and staff, created access for BTC

Tamil voters with increasingly "Tamil-friendly" policies with regard to the conflict in Sri Lanka (Personal communications, Staff member a. Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016).

representatives at Westminster and ensured the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils was balanced with Tory representatives.

As was the case in Canada, the Conservative Party at virtually the same time began to recognise the importance of building bridges with diaspora communities with a view to securing more support, in particular in urban constituencies (Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Conservative Party, All Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils, 2015). The Conservative Party actively began to reach out to diverse communities, cultivate activists and candidates and ensure that representative diaspora bodies such as the BTC were supported by Tory party elites (Grayling, 2015). The BTC officially became an affiliated body within the Conservative Party in 2012 and has held a reception at Conservative Party conference every year since then. The reception has become one of the largest events at the annual conference, attracting senior members of the Conservative parliamentary party (Tamil Guardian, 2016).

In addition to the party conference, the BTC organises annual fundraisers to financially support Conservative MPs and candidates who have expressed support for the Tamil community. However, as one early organiser of the BTC noted, the strength of the BTC is not in its financial support, but in its ability to mobilise thousands of Tamil voters to support Tory candidates aligned with Tamil community preferences, and to dispatch hundreds of Tamil volunteers to provide services for Conservative election campaigns (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015).¹³³

The BTC has also never shied away from asserting its influence to block candidates unfavourable to Tamil issues. As in the case of some Liberal Democrat and

¹³³ Deploying a Tamil specific “get out the vote system”, the BTC has provided campaign support for dozens of Conservative candidates, claiming it was directly responsible for unseating three Liberal Democrat Cabinet Ministers in the 2010 election.

Labour candidates, the BTC has specifically targeted their resources against the campaigns of candidates not sympathetic to Tamil issues. This approach also extends to within the Conservative Party, where it has actively pressured previously unsympathetic MPs and candidates to become more amenable to their views (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015).¹³⁴

As was the case with the CTC, the BTC established an internship programme which encourages young Tamil Conservatives to get involved in Westminster politics through interning with MPs. Establishing trusted, partisan networks afforded a far greater degree of access for the Tamil community to Conservative Party elites, with the BTC acting as a known and trustworthy interlocutor.

Numerous interviewees noted that while it took the Conservative Party longer to develop trusted inroads and to sympathise with the Tamil cause, once they “got it”, the Conservatives took more concrete steps to advance Tamil preferences than did Labour (Personal communications, Together Against Genocide, 2015).¹³⁵ As will be argued in the upcoming section, through changing policy and taking a hard-line against the Rajapaksa regime, interviewees agreed that the Left often “gets it first”, but when the Right finally begins to sympathise with diaspora grievances, they take their support further into concrete action (Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Conservative Party, All Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils, 2015; Together Against Genocide, 2015).

¹³⁴ Prominent Conservative MPs Liam Fox and James Wharton were amongst those less sympathetic MPs, and are now counted as some of the most supportive Tory politicians for the Tamil community.

¹³⁵ A common refrain also heard from interviewees in Canada with the respect to the Liberal Party, which had for too long taken the Tamil community “for granted”. Assuming their support was assured, the Liberal Party did not act with the same firm support for Tamils as the Tories began to do after the 2011 election.

Like Tamils for Labour, the BTC became one of the most powerful assets for the British Tamil community, in particular after the election of the coalition government in 2010 with Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron at the helm. It became the driving force in the 'sea-change' within the Tory party, from being initially sceptical to being outspoken in its support for the Tamil community. The next section discusses Tamil interest group activism during this period and focuses in particular on events surrounding the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2013.

Events in the Host Countries: Decision-making periods in Canada and the United Kingdom

In the previous chapter, I addressed this project's research puzzle by arguing that Tamil diaspora interest groups in both host countries had some influence, but that this influence was muted in Canada primarily due to a lack of inroads into the Conservative government as well as its contentious strategy. In the UK they were far more successful due to their network within the Labour Party and the fact that it viewed the diaspora as strategic. The same fine-grained, microfoundational approach is used to outline the causal sequences which encapsulate the decision-making processes in both host countries leading up to the 2013 CHOGM. The analysis section then undertakes to isolate causal factors and identifies the key distinctions between the Canadian and UK cases to ultimately explain why one Prime Minister boycotted the CHOGM while the other attended.

Diaspora interest groups and decision-making in Canada: On the same page

Having positioned itself as a more credible and strategic interest group than it was in 2009, the Canadian Tamil Congress took as its chief political demand of the

Conservative Government of Stephen Harper that Canada boycott the 23rd Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 15th-17th November, 2013. The CTC sought to bring about a political consensus on the issue through direct lobbying and to convey to the Conservative government that this would be a key point of leverage over the Rajapakse government which Canada was well placed at the Commonwealth to exert (Personal communications, Staff member b. Canadian Tamil Congress, 2016). As argued in Chapter V, government meetings were not often held by leading, non-partisan members of the CTC directly with the Foreign Minister, but between Tamil Conservative activists and senior foreign affairs political staff with close links to the Foreign Minister. This guarded against the perception that the government was being unduly influenced (Personal communications, Former Canadian political staff, 2016). However, while the CTC did not bring about aggressive outside pressure on the government, it spoke through Canadian media and engaged in outside activism to achieve this goal, with the latter a fraction of the scale of 2009 and discernibly less contentious.¹³⁶ The central issues of concern which led to the CTC calling for a boycott were outlined in a September, 2013 letter to Foreign Minister Baird, which included compelling the Commonwealth to take action against the deterioration of the rule of law in Sri Lanka, an end to the continued persecution of Tamils in Sri Lanka and the implementation of a credible transitional justice process (Canadian Tamil Congress, 2013).

With regard to the government's decision-making on attending the CHOGM, Civil

¹³⁶ Outside lobbying through demonstrations were undertaken during this decision-making period, but unlike in 2009 they were less numerous and sustained, considerably less contentious and the direction of advocacy was toward the Government of Sri Lanka rather than toward the government of Canada which, in this case, was aligned in its actions with the preferences of the Tamil diaspora (Toronto.com, 2013).

servants in Foreign Affairs (DFAIT), political staff and politicians familiar with the Sri Lanka file in the early 2010s reported that the decision to boycott the summit was an incremental one. Canada had previously sided with the United Kingdom and others in 2009, explored further in the upcoming section, to move Colombo's hosting of the summit in 2011 to 2013 given the political situation facing the country at that time (Telegraph, 2009). At the 2011 CHOGM in Australia, Prime Minister Harper became one of the Sri Lankan government's harshest critics, effectively putting the Rajapaksa government 'on notice', indicating that boycotting the 2013 summit was a possibility should discernible improvements in its human rights situation not be made (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016; Ljunggren, 2011). As a means of assessing progress in Sri Lanka in the interim, Foreign Minister Baird sent a fact-finding mission of Canadian MPs and staff to Sri Lanka in 2012 led by Member of Parliament Chris Alexander. The delegation, which had been requested by the CTC, returned with photographic, video and testimonial evidence indicating that the humanitarian situation for Tamils in Sri Lanka had hardly improved since the end of the civil war (Clark, 2012). In addition to this delegation, the government's special envoy for the Commonwealth, Senator Hugh Segal also visited Sri Lanka in 2013 with the same mandate (Baird, iPolitics, 2016; personal communications, Commonwealth elite, 2016).

Following from these investigations, Prime Minister Harper personally announced while attending an Association of Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Indonesia on 7th October 2013 that he would not attend the November CHOGM in Sri Lanka (National Post, 2013). He also threatened in his statement to review Canada's financial contributions to the Commonwealth. Instead, Parliamentary Secretary Deepak Obri was sent by the Harper government to represent Canada. Staff

reported that Obri was sent with the mandate to “raise hell” at the summit over the Rajapakse government’s record on human rights (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016).¹³⁷ During his visit, Obri visited the north of the country and laid a wreath in memory of the Tamil victims of the civil war (Canadian Press, iPolitics, 2013). Along with boycotting the 2013 CHOGM and condemning the government through its modest representation, the Harper government went one step further and held back Canada’s regular contribution to the Commonwealth Secretariat, which amounted to as much as a third of the Commonwealth’s operating budget (Canadian Tamil Congress, 2014; Mackrael, 2014). Canada’s \$20 million annual contribution to the Commonwealth, \$5 million of which is directed towards the operation of the Commonwealth Secretariat, makes it the second largest financial contributor to the organisation.

Additionally, the CTC was successful in bringing about a consensus position amongst all three major parties, both in respect of its preferences regarding Sri Lanka itself and in Canada’s policy toward the Sri Lankan government and CHOGM, including calls to boycott the summit. The Official Opposition New Democratic Party launched a campaign on 23rd April 2013 demanding the Conservative government boycott the summit through its Shadow Foreign Minister, Paul Dewar and Tamil MP Rathika Sitsabaiesan (NDP, 2013). Similarly, then Liberal foreign affairs critic and long-time Sri Lanka observer Bob Rae called on the Tories to boycott the summit (TamilNet, 2013).

Regarding the decision-making process and as indicated in chapter V, policy

¹³⁷ While there was agreement domestically, British Tamil diaspora groups expressed concern with the timing of Harper’s boycott (Personal communications, Together Against Geocide, 2015). Announced in October, 2013 one month before the CHOGM was scheduled, some within UK diaspora interest groups argue the decision to boycott was made too early and there was a missed opportunity to potentially extract concessions from the Government of Sri Lanka.

decisions regarding foreign affairs issues such as Sri Lanka are not conventionally discussed at the cabinet-level (Personal communications, former Canadian political staffc, 2016). However, given that the decision pertained to the Commonwealth, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister did raise it at the Cabinet committee on foreign affairs in a largely advisory capacity. Globally, Canada engaged in conversations with the British government in advance of the decision to boycott the summit. In those conversations Canada advised that it was prepared to “go it alone” and boycott the summit without the blessing of the UK. Interviewees emphasised that while the relationship with the UK remains very close and organic, Canada is a sovereign state and reserves the right to make its own decisions free of British influence (Personal communications, former Canadian political staffa, 2016). The decision to boycott was ultimately taken by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Affairs Minister who were entirely aligned on the policy outcome.

Canada’s Tamil diaspora, as represented at the political level by the Canadian Tamil Congress, was successful in aligning its preferences with those of the Conservative government in 2013, unlike the decision-making case in 2009. As will be argued in the analysis section, Canada’s role allowed it to follow through entirely in line with Tamil diaspora interest group preferences. As outlined below, despite British Tamil diaspora interest groups attaining similar levels of sophistication, they would not be able to force the British government to boycott due to its dominant role at the Commonwealth.

Diaspora interest groups and decision-making in the United Kingdom: A bridge too far

This final section argues that both Labour and Conservative governments were

heavily influenced by input and pressure from Tamil diaspora interest groups and it is during these interactions that the diaspora demonstrated the most influence over government, despite pressure from the FCO to do otherwise. With the efforts for advancing the rights of Tamils in Sri Lanka and abroad now entirely taking place at the transnational level, events at the Commonwealth level became all the more critical.

British Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown in November 2009 attended the CHOGM in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago along with leaders from 49 of the 52 member countries of the Commonwealth. As is customary, the members of the Commonwealth vote to award the location of the body's next meeting two years hence to one of its members. Following on the heels of the civil war, an expectant Sri Lanka was eager to be awarded the CHOGM for 2011 as validation for its anti-terror policy and as a signal it was emerging from decades of unrest and prepared to host a summit of this magnitude (Telegraph, 2009).

Sri Lanka had expressed its interest in hosting the summit two years earlier in 2007 and in the intervening two years Commonwealth heads had agreed to award the CHOGM to Colombo for 2011, including the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. According to interviews with Tamils for Labour, diaspora political activists met with Prime Minister Brown in advance of the 2009 summit to argue the Sri Lankan government was not suitable to host the CHOGM in 2011 given the allegations of war crimes at the close of the civil war and evidence of its continued persecution of civilians since then (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2009). Following this engagement, Brown agreed to intercede at the 2009 CHOGM and to persuade other

heads of government to reconsider this honour for Sri Lanka (Telegraph, 2009).¹³⁸

Following additional dialogues and support from Canadian Prime Minister Harper and Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Gordon Brown sought to block Sri Lanka from hosting the CHOGM in 2011. A source in the Prime Minister's Office (No. 10 Down St.), noted on behalf of the Prime Minister (Watt, 2009b):

We simply cannot be in a position where Sri Lanka – whose actions earlier this year had a huge impact on civilians, leading to thousands of displaced people without proper humanitarian access – is seen to be rewarded for its actions ... The prime minister will continue to talk to other leaders about this, but is clear this won't wash.

Despite pressure from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to do otherwise, the Prime Minister was successful in his efforts with Australia's Rudd to "block" Sri Lanka from hosting the summit in 2011 (Personal communications, Together Against Genocide, 2015). Instead, it was agreed that the summit would be held in Perth, Australia (Watta, 200a).

In dialogue with several Tamil political activists in Britain, there was a consensus that diaspora interest groups were instrumental in persuading Gordon Brown to direct the Commonwealth to postpone Sri Lanka's hosting of the next CHOGM to 2013 (Sri Lanka Campaign, 2009). They had held meetings with his office and with other influential figures in the Labour government in advance of the 2009 CHOGM, bringing to bear evidence of war crimes committed by the Sri Lankan government, which were at that time only alleged, and of the evidence of continued repression in the months after the conflict had ended.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Additionally, leaders from Tamils for Labour engaged leaders from non-Western countries to back moving the meeting. The British government was sensitive to the fact that it might be seen as imperious in its advocacy to move the meeting without the support of other member states, in particular from the Global South. Tamil elites had access to a South African Cabinet Minister who was willing to back Brown's efforts to move the CHOGM, which added much needed legitimacy to the move (Personal communications, Tamils for Labour, 2015).

¹³⁹ The United Kingdom, as noted above, had voiced its concerns about the Rajapaksa government's

The British and Canadian delegations were united in their opposition to awarding the Sri Lankan government the CHOGM for 2011, with a view to putting in place a two-year window in which the Sri Lankan government would be on “probation”, with the expectation that it would take tangible steps toward reconciliation and integrating the Tamil population.¹⁴⁰ As the CHOGM approached in 2013, Tamil diaspora advocates from the GTF, BTF, TAG, the BTC and other organisations maintained a consistent level of communication with the FCO and senior Tories in the Coalition government, demanding the UK boycott the summit (Personal communications, Together Against Genocide, 2015; British Tamil Conservatives, 2015). Following the visit to Sri Lanka of Alistair Burt, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for South Asia, he noted that as of February 2013 Britain had not yet decided whether to attend the Sri Lanka CHOGM and continued to have concerns as to Sri Lanka’s progress since 2011 (Burt, 2013).

Meetings between Tamil diaspora elites and the government began in earnest six months prior to the CHOGM, with senior Ministers such as Hugo Swire engaging with the BTC to ensure there was a direct line of communication between them and government decision-makers. In addition to meeting with political representatives, diaspora elites were also engaged with the FCO bureaucracy and met with them as many as three times per month in advance of the CHOGM (Personal communications, Together Against Genocide, 2015; British Tamil Conservatives, 2015). While the level of

behaviour toward the Tamil minority and that this was the principal reason behind its unwillingness to support a 2011 CHOGM in Australia rather than Sri Lanka. Gordon Brown was also able to convince Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper to back his efforts to have the Commonwealth meeting moved to 2013, (Personal communications, Sri Lanka Campaign, 2009).

¹⁴⁰ As noted above, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper was clear in his expectations for Sri Lanka for the intervening two years, threatening to boycott the 2013 CHOGM if there was no perceptible improvement on the ground in Sri Lanka.

engagement was a demonstration of success in itself in comparison to only a few years earlier, the FCO was still not amenable to their views and advocated staunchly to the Prime Minister that he attend the CHOGM (Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Labour, 2015). Their perspective was born of the reality that the absence of the UK at the highest level may jeopardise the Commonwealth itself, could create challenges with India and that the UK's absence from the meeting was not in the national interest.¹⁴¹

Despite pressure from the FCO, Tamil diaspora elites had not given up on the possibility of a boycott. With respect to tactics, the Tamil diaspora at this point could not afford to be subtle and exerted considerable pressure on the Tories in private (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015). The BTC used its leverage and threatened to withdraw its political and financial support should Prime Minister Cameron attend the CHOGM. Externally, protests on the scale of 2009 were not witnessed but were nevertheless organised by the BTF (Personal communications, British Tamil Forum, 2015). In addition, the British Tamil Forum and other diaspora organisations mobilised the grassroots through a letter-writing campaign to ensure that political elites were aware that Tamils in Britain were watching the government's decision-making closely.¹⁴²

The Tamil diaspora was made aware by inside advocates that Prime Minister Cameron was in no position to boycott the summit following confirmation that The

¹⁴¹ Diaspora interviewees noted that political pressure could not be brought to bear on the FCO and that meetings and engagement with elected representatives was the only avenue through which to influence government (Personal communications, Together Against Genocide, 2015).

¹⁴² The opposition Labour Party, now led by Ed Miliband, the brother of former Foreign Secretary David Miliband, also aligned with the preferences of the Tamil diaspora in calling for a boycott of the CHOGM right up to the meeting itself. As in Canada, a virtual consensus across the political spectrum had been attained on post-war issues in Sri Lanka (Tamil Guardian, 2013).

Prince of Wales would be attending in the Queen's stead (Personal communications, Together Against Genocide, 2015). Unlike Stephen Harper, as the Prime Minister of the UK and given the UK's dominant role in the Commonwealth, Cameron was unable to avoid attending the summit as it might have led to many other heads of government abstaining and the entire Commonwealth project unravelling. Knowing the political ramifications of this decision and in a position of conciliation, Downing Street asked Tamil diaspora elites what could be done to use his presence in Sri Lanka to turn the spotlight on their issues (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015).

Rather than focus their energy on deriding the government for attending, diaspora elites sought to work with the government to ensure that the maximum amount of benefit could be extracted from his visit. In the days and weeks in advance of the CHOGM, Tamil diaspora elites worked directly with 10 Downing St. staff to 'choreograph' his visit. With a view to building into his schedule symbolic and literal protestations against the Government of Sri Lanka, the Tamil diaspora was able to extract a number of important concessions from the government including an overarching commitment to use his visit to highlight human rights abuses in the country. Firstly, he began his meeting with President Rajapakse by addressing straight on the repression of journalists, attacks on Christians and Muslims and the seizure of land. For his part, Rajapakse accused Cameron of pandering to the Tamil diaspora in the UK (Mason, 2013).¹⁴³ Secondly, following this meeting Cameron travelled north to become the first world leader to visit Jaffna since Sri Lanka was granted independence in 1948. In doing so, he missed the opening ceremony for the CHOGM in Colombo. In

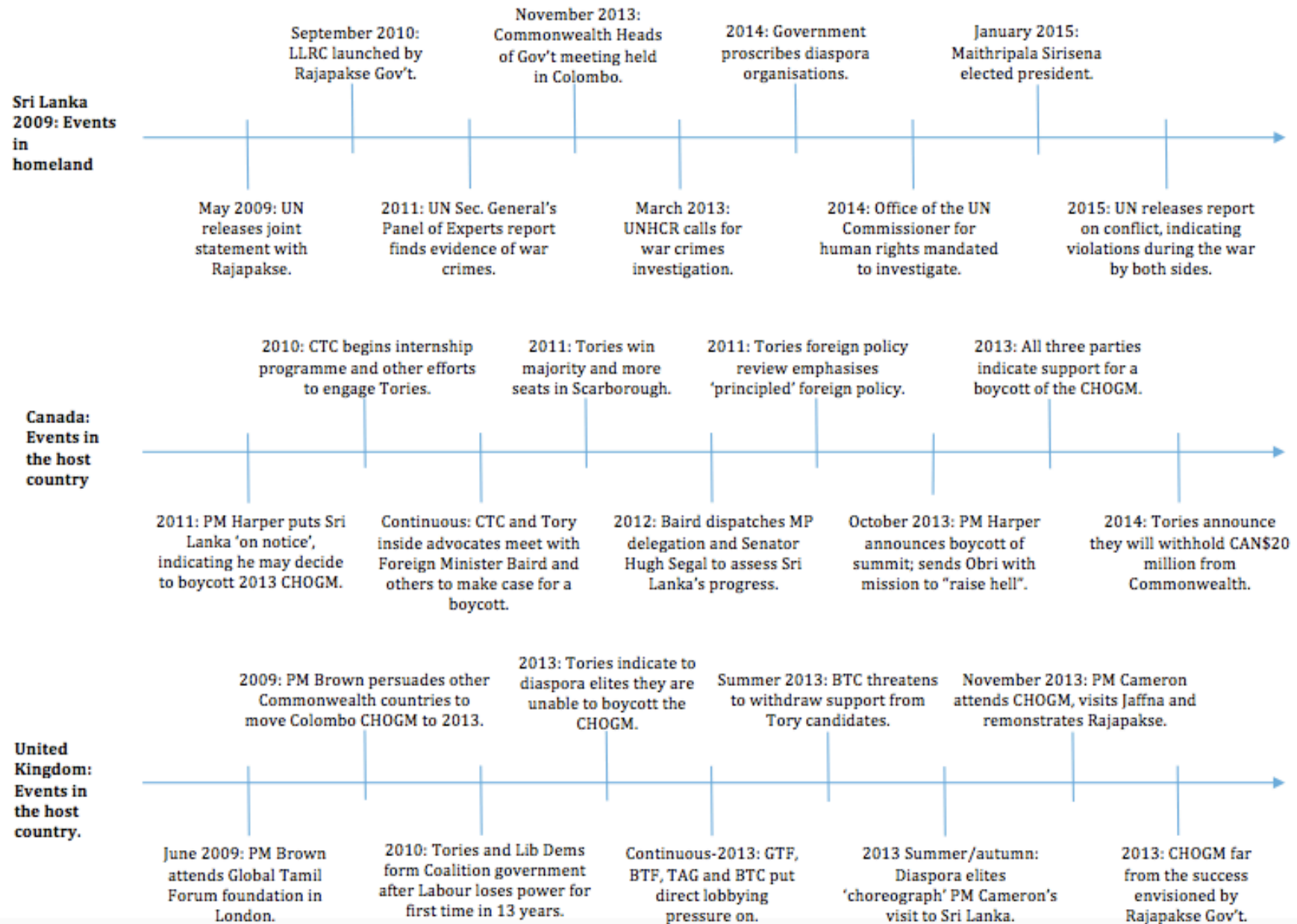
¹⁴³ He also raised in the discussion, which was characterised as "animated", the release of widely viewed Channel 4 documentary offering evidence of the shocking and brutal treatment of Tamil civilians at the end of the civil war.

addition, the Tamil diaspora believes they were successful in wrangling small victories from the Tories, such as Cameron's refusal to accept a garland of flowers upon his arrival, his refusal to sign a formal book of courtesy, his refusal to travel in a Sri Lankan car and a commitment from him to raise their issues with the Government of Sri Lanka (BBC, 2013a).¹⁴⁴

During this decision-making period, the Tamil diaspora in both countries reached new levels of sophistication, took advantage of the increased interest in diaspora communities on the part of conservative parties and exerted considerable influence over government decision-makers, in particular in the UK. Despite ultimately not boycotting the summit, the Cameron government delivered a number of concessions to Tamil diaspora interest groups and in-so-doing put significant strain on bilateral relations with the Sri Lankan government. The following section revisits the factors discussed in Chapter VI to determine what changes since 2009 might have led to diaspora interest groups having more leverage with Canadian and British Conservative-led governments.

¹⁴⁴ While great pressure was undoubtedly brought to bear on government through these diaspora elites, some interviewees argued that Cameron's concessions to the UK Tamil diaspora were motivated through financial contributions to the Conservative Party by affluent Tamil donors (Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Labour, 2015).

Figure 6.2: 2013 decision-making causal sequence summary



Analysis: Explanatory distinctions and foreign policy outcomes

The 2013 CHOGM was a critical decision-point during which the capacity for diaspora interest groups to influence government was tested. In Canada, the Tamil diaspora remained engaged with government through the non-partisan CTC, although now with the benefit of a network of partisan Tamil activists providing trusted channels of access to the Conservative Party. The Tamil diaspora in the UK similarly followed the model of the Jewish community and had by this point established highly functional and sophisticated affiliated partisan groups in the form of BTC and Tamils for Labour, which institutionalised partisan channels of trust.

The theoretical framework I outlined in Chapter III is applied to the above decision-making processes. I look at the actor characteristics, institutional factors and strategies which explain distinctions between these cases and the previous two cases to demonstrate that Tamil diaspora interest groups have indeed influenced host country foreign policy outcomes. I argue that host state foreign policy decisions in the Canadian context were positive, in that they were entirely in line with Tamil diaspora group preferences. In the UK, foreign policy outcomes were partially in line with Tamil diaspora interest group preferences, but not to the extent of Canada.

Causal factorial analysis

This section begins by looking at actor characteristics, then discusses institutional factors and finally it considers strategic factors employed by the diaspora. Given that a number of these factors will not have varied since the last chapter, such as

diaspora size, they will not be explicated upon further.¹⁴⁵ As before, the presence (“x”), or the absence (“o”) of factors the literature argues impact the influence diaspora interest groups have on host country foreign policy outcomes are summarised in the below table, and the following discussion expands on the impact of these factors:

Table 7.1: 2013 causal factor comparison

Conditions	Canada	United Kingdom
Actor Characteristics		
<i>Diasporic Mobilisation</i>	X	X
<i>Diaspora Size Numerical</i>	X	X
<i>significance in parliamentary constituencies</i>	X	X
<i>Diaspora Group Resources</i>		
<i>Political Saliency</i>	X	X
<i>Credibility</i>	X	X
<i>Group Homogeneity</i>	X	X
<i>Learning</i>	X	X
Institutional Factors		
<i>Host Country Inclusivity</i>	X	X
<i>Parliamentary Permeability</i>	X	X
<i>Presence of Rival Constituencies</i>	O	X
<i>Policy Alignment</i>	X	O
<i>International Role Constraints</i>	O	X
Diaspora Strategies		
<i>Inside lobbying</i>	X	X
<i>Outside lobbying</i>	X	X
Influence achieved	Positive	Partially Positive

Actor characteristics

Beginning with *Diaspora mobilisation* (Koinova, 2011; Redd and Rubenzer, 2010;

¹⁴⁵ It should be noted that their absence in this discussion does not mean they are no longer relevant. For instance, should economic and demographic shifts served to disburse the Tamil diaspora to a greater extent within one of the host country polities, for instance through migration to suburban areas via the accumulation of greater wealth, than the factor pertaining to density within electoral districts might have had to have been revisited.

Shain and Barth, 2003; Saideman, 2001), in both cases a far larger number of Tamils, in particular youth, became involved and ingrained in the political systems of both host countries rather than exclusively through outside lobbying. Tamil activists became more visible and better networked in both left-of-centre and right-of-centre parties. Indeed, the access created by trusted political activists was essential to communicating diaspora preferences directly to foreign policy elites, something that was not possible in the first two cases with conservative parties in either country. The CTC's deeper penetration of the Conservative Party in Canada and the creation of the BTC in the UK led to far greater access than was the case previously.

As diaspora interest groups became more sophisticated and successful in reaching out to conservative parties, Tories began to view the Tamil diaspora as more *politically salient* than in 2009 (Bhaskar, 2014; Ogelman, 2002). In Canada, the Scarborough-area of Toronto contained five electoral districts which were for many years the sole preserve of the Liberal Party of Canada, considered almost unwinnable by the Conservative Party or the New Democratic Party (Clark, 2011). In 2011, Canada's general election returned a Conservative majority government in which two of these five constituencies were won by the Conservative Party for the first time in recent memory, with another two of the five constituencies won by the New Democratic Party (NDP). The sudden shift in electoral fortunes in once predictable electoral districts awakened a keen interest in the Conservative party to Tamil issues (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016; Ogelman, 2002). To this effect, literature from the Conservative party being sent to these Tamil-dominated constituencies highlighted the government's actions on the Sri Lanka issue, including a 2015 campaign promise to open up a Canadian embassy in Tamil-dominated Jaffna.

Efforts by the Conservative Party to appeal to a more diverse constituency led to a stronger desire to listen to Tamils and to internalize their preferences.

It is also worth returning to the *credibility* factor, which had seen a dramatic evolution between the early 2000s and the 2009 case described in Chapter VI. Since 2009, diaspora interest groups interfacing with policymakers in both countries saw their credibility enhanced as the principal voice for the Tamil diaspora. The BTC in the UK became a trusted, credible interlocutor between the diaspora and the Conservative-dominated coalition government and the CTC, through its youth programme, was viewed more credibly by the Conservative government. The FCO in the UK, which had hitherto largely shunned Tamil diaspora interest groups, developed a relationship with and respect for these groups as legitimate representative voice for Tamils.

Group homogeneity was not a debilitating issue in either country in the earlier period discussed in Chapter VI (Ogelman et al, 2002). The CTC was seen as the principal voice of the Tamil community in Canada and the BTF was viewed in a similar way in the UK, working closely with Tamils for Labour, which had its own, distinct purpose and identity. Following the defeat of the LTTE and the creation of new, transnational Tamil diaspora organisations, in particular the GTF, differences in policies and territorial claims challenged diaspora unity in the UK. Diaspora and political elites in the UK noted that the schism between the BTF and GTF over the final status of Tamil Eelam led to a breakdown in communication (Personal communications, Global Tamil Forum, 2015). However, in advance of the of the CHOGM decision, diaspora elites were able to temporarily bury their differences and unite in the call for boycott. The BTC and Tamils for Labour disengaged themselves from the spat between the BTF and GTF to focus on network-building. Their focus allowed the diaspora to continue to strengthen its

position in policy-making and ensure diaspora schisms did not hamper their political engagement. For this reason, I consider diaspora preferences as homogenous.

Learning continued to be an important factor as diaspora interest groups became more credible and their political networks expanded (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Inter-diaspora emulation continued as well through the British Tamil Conservatives unabashed modelling on more established Jewish organisations, such as Conservative Friends of Israel and AIPAC in the United States. The CTC also became more sophisticated in its strategy with the Conservative government, working harder to tailor its demands to the language and approach of the Tories in comparison to 2009. Neither diaspora employed contentious demonstrations during this period given the Tory disinclination to respond positively to demonstrations.

Institutional factors and political opportunity structures

Having considered characteristics inherent to Tamil diaspora interest groups, the first institutional factor which requires unpacking in this section is that of *rival constituencies* (Saideman, 2001). Tamil diaspora interest groups were challenged by rival constituencies in two ways during this period: The efforts by the Sri Lankan government to reframe itself, the Tamil diaspora and the country to political decision-makers, and secondly, the efforts by the FCO in the UK to prevent Prime Minister Cameron from boycotting the 2013 CHOGM.

Firstly, as more and more politicians and non-Tamil campaigners in both Canada and the UK formally associated themselves with the diaspora and with Tamil diaspora interest groups, the Sri Lankan High Commission hired a professional lobby group to give the Sri Lankan government greater access to political decision-makers. Beginning

in 2008, the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Washington DC hired Patton and Boggs LLP for US lobbying efforts and hired Bell Pottinger Group in Britain to promote their achievements following the war and to deflect calls for a war crimes investigation (International Crisis Group, 2010).¹⁴⁶ In addition to image enhancement, the Sri Lankan government also recognised that its offensive to taint the Tamil diaspora through its association with the LTTE was no longer successful.

Despite these costly efforts, the Government of Sri Lanka was largely unsuccessful in distancing mainstream politicians from the Tamil diaspora for two reasons. Firstly, the government of Mahinda Rajapakse was viewed suspiciously and was indeed reviled by some members of the government in both Canada and the UK. Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Foreign Minister John Baird distrusted the Sri Lankan High Commission and their professional lobbyists from the outset. Several interviewees from the upper echelons of the Conservative party establishment noted that Prime Minister Harper had referred to Rajapaksa as “odious” (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016). The Cameron government similarly had a growing distaste for the Sri Lankan government and no overtures, no matter how polished, were enough to convince the Conservatives that the Sri Lankan government was free from blame over the civil war or that its practices in the post-conflict environment were beyond reproach. Secondly, the approach deployed by professional lobbyists working on behalf of the Sri Lankan High Commission was not

¹⁴⁶ To a greater extent in the United Kingdom than in Canada, the Sri Lankan government via its High Commissions sought to “sanitise” its image in the view of the public through a shift to a focus on tourism. To this effect, an advertising campaign was developed showcasing the stunning natural beauty of the island for the dual purposes of attracting inward investment by British holidaymakers and simultaneously reframing Sri Lanka from a place synonymous with violence and conflict, to a place of serene tranquillity.

successful. Numerous Members of Parliament who met with representatives of the Sri Lankan High Commission reported back to Tamil diaspora activists that they felt their presentations were insincere, the factual pretences of the arguments did not conform with their understanding of the reality in Sri Lanka and that their approach was “arrogant” (Personal communications, Member of Parliament, UK Conservative Party, All Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils, 2015).

The second rival to the interests of the Tamil diaspora in this case was the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in the UK. As in the previous chapter, the FCO was opposed to the Tamil diaspora’s preference of having Prime Minister Cameron boycott the 2013 CHOGM (Personal communications, British Tamil Conservatives, 2015). Given the amount of influence the FCO has over foreign-policymaking the fact that it took the UK right up to the CHOGM itself to commit to attending demonstrates the influence the Tamil diaspora had by then achieved. The FCO believed a boycott by the UK would not be in the national interest because it could damage the Commonwealth and the UK’s influence in it, as well as its privileged relationship with India.¹⁴⁷ Ultimately, these views and the attendance of the Prince of Wales ensured the FCO victory in this context.

Lastly and related to the FCO’s opposition, *alignment with host country foreign policy goals* changed in the Canadian case, but not in the UK (Redd and Rubenzer, 2010; Mearsheimer and Walt, 2008; Ambrosio, 2002). Beginning with Canada, there are a number of lenses through which the Harper government’s decision to boycott the Colombo Summit can be viewed, including its moralistic approach to foreign policy,

¹⁴⁷ In early November 2013, India’s Prime Minister Manmohan Singh became the second Commonwealth Head of Government to boycott the summit after Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, adding pressure to the British government to do the same (BBC, 2013b).

disillusionment with the Commonwealth, emotional investment on the part of Foreign Minister Baird, appointed in 2011, and domestic political expediency. Firstly, following Canada's decision to boycott the summit, Foreign Minister Baird publically justified the decision by indicating the efforts it had taken to pressure the Sri Lankan government to act in line with the preferences articulated above by the CTC. These interventions included (Baird, iPolitics, 2013):

... more than 30 public statements on the situation in Sri Lanka; ten separate Parliamentary interventions; 25 interventions in multilateral fora ranging from the Commonwealth to the United Nations; 89 bilateral interventions with a range of Commonwealth countries, including Sri Lanka ...

The Sri Lankan government's intransigence and its continued persecution of Tamils despite years of pressure through multiple forums violated the "moralistic" element of Canada's foreign policy during this time and this was central to the Prime Minister's boycott. The Harper government's approach to foreign policy varied little from earlier in its mandate, with an emphasis on promoting "freedom, dignity and security," (Keating, 2011: 60).

Secondly, Foreign Minister Baird and Prime Minister Harper, who had initially determined to engage the Commonwealth, became disillusioned with the institution in the months and years leading up to the summit. Baird viewed the Sri Lanka issue as having parallels with South Africa in the 1980s, when then Tory Prime Minister Brian Mulroney led Commonwealth countries against South Africa and ultimately to its historic expulsion from the organisation (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016). However, despite efforts led by Canada to reform the Commonwealth, the emphasis on cultural and business exchange rather than its willingness to pressure its membership over human rights led the Canadian

government to believe the Commonwealth was not living up to its own values.¹⁴⁸ It was the unwillingness of the Commonwealth to hold its members to the standards it set for itself that the Harper government went one step further and withdrew funding from the institution, arguing that subsidising an organisation which failed to hold members accountable was contrary to its principled approach to foreign policy. The disinterest on the part of the Tories more broadly in multilateralism ultimately manifested itself at the Commonwealth.

Thirdly, Foreign Minister Baird was a trusted ally of the Prime Minister and given a great deal of freedom in the international affairs portfolio and believed in the “we won’t go along to get along” approach (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016). He had taken a personal interest in the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka and felt personally committed to seeing their situation improved, in large part due to emotional appeals made to him directly by Tamil Conservative activists. He became an advocate for the Tamil community at the Commonwealth, raising the situation of Tamils in Sri Lanka at Commonwealth meetings in advance of 2013 despite it not being permitted on the agenda and his personal frustration at the lack of progress led in part to the boycott (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016).

Finally, strategists recognised that there was political capital to be built within the Tamil community through the issue of Sri Lanka (Raj, 2013). While all interviewees noted that the Conservative government’s disdain for the Rajapakse regime was based

¹⁴⁸ Further disillusionment with respect to Sri Lanka came when the Australian government, with which he maintained a close relationship, refused to support him in condemning the Rajapaksa government at the Commonwealth and elsewhere. While not directly drawing a connection, Baird and his staff were aware of the assumption that the Sri Lankan government had made assurances to Australia that it would prevent illegal migrants from fleeing to Australian shores.

as much on the government's principled approach to foreign policy, there was no doubt a "ballot box" perspective was part of the calculation and guided Conservative Party messaging directed toward the Tamil community (Raj, 2013). Indeed, the Tories were hardly alone in seeking to make inroads into the Tamil community. The New Democratic Party early on through the work of party leader Jack Layton also sought to better appeal to the Tamil community.¹⁴⁹

With respect to foreign policy in the United Kingdom, since the 2009 episode analysed in the last chapter the United Kingdom experienced a major political shift with the election of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010, replacing the Labour Party after thirteen years in office. Conservative leader David Cameron assumed the office of Prime Minister having won more seats than his coalition partner, with former Conservative Party leader William Hague taking office as Foreign Secretary.

The influence of the Foreign Secretary over Britain's foreign policy, which had withered under the ten-year premiership of Tony Blair, continued to re-establish itself under Cameron as it had under Blair's successor, Gordon Brown. As in the Canadian context, Cameron had a high level of confidence and trust in Hague, whose stature as a parliamentarian and experienced politician ensured he was given a wide berth with respect to his portfolio (Gaskarth, 2013: 17). Hague's powerful position led to a

¹⁴⁹ The NDP recruited Rathika Sitsabaiesan, a young Tamil activist, to run for the party in a Tamil-dominated Toronto constituency. Sitsabaiesan was a long-time NDP activist, as well as an activist for Tamil rights in Sri Lanka and reflects the "new generation" of politically mobilised Tamils. She served as Layton's advisor on Tamil issues before the 2011 election and went on to be elected in the 2011 general election as the first member of the Tamil diaspora to be elected to office in a Western country (Bardeesy, 2011). Layton made his final campaign stop of the 2011 election in her constituency.

widening of access to the foreign policy process.¹⁵⁰ Through a series of measures including a closer working relationship with bureaucrats at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the acceptance of submissions from staff and Ambassadors, Hague fostered a more open environment.¹⁵¹ However, despite the widening interest in taking in the perspectives of external sources, the British government was not able to meet the full demands of the Tamil diaspora and boycott the CHOGM summit because it was in conflict with Britain's role in the Commonwealth, which in turn was unaligned with British foreign policy. In addition to the robust trade and diplomatic bilateral relationship between the two countries as outlined in Chapter V, the UK's policy toward the Commonwealth would have been entirely jettisoned had it chosen to boycott the summit.

As I put forward in the theoretical framework, considering the question of diaspora interest group advocacy and influence through the lens of the *international roles* played by Canada and the UK is important because the project is able to define the boundaries within which host states as international actors are able to act. Host state position, capacity and influence in various spheres constrain behaviour and restrict available options for host countries, meaning that diaspora interest groups, no matter how influential domestically, will only be able to compel state behaviour internationally to be taken so far.

¹⁵⁰ Unlike in the Canadian context, where the Harper government's foreign policy was resentful of organisations like the UN, the foreign policy under the Coalition-led government was deemed to be "bogged down" on questions of the UK's place in Europe and driven by a market-oriented approach emphasising the cultivation of new export markets (Wintour and Sparrow, 2015). With respect to intervention, the United Kingdom wrestled with questions over intervention in conflicts in Syria and Libya while climate change, violence against women and a number of other specific policy issues dominated.

¹⁵¹ His expansion of access points to the foreign policy process resembled to some extent the approach of Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy in the 1990s.

Beginning with Canada, its position had not changed internationally, within the Commonwealth or bilaterally with Sri Lanka in comparison to the foregoing decision-making process. Canada's foreign policy review in 2011 affirmed the desire of the Conservative government to pursue policies which enhanced trade, with a moralistic approach to some bilateral relations and a sceptical approach to multilateral institutions. At the Commonwealth, Canada's pivotal role was put to use in 2009 when it allied with the UK to move Sri Lanka's hosting of the CHOGM to 2013, with the caveat that it make improvements in its treatment of the Tamil minority.

Through Canada's review of its foreign policy approach in 2011 following the coming to office of John Baird as Foreign Minister, Conservative foreign policy elites were aware of Canada's limited capacity to influence the behaviour of other states (Personal communications, former Canadian political staff, 2016). However, what strategists sought to do was to take principled, undiluted positions on international issues, so long as these positions did not infringe on potential trade relationships. The boycott of the Commonwealth is indicative of this. While the UK was not able to boycott the summit itself, foreign policy elites believed that Canada's firm position would permit a country like the UK, with less flexibility to act, to take their position further than they otherwise might with Canada as precedent. Indeed, there is some evidence that Canada's decision did put pressure on the UK to do the same (Blanchfield, 2012).

Despite the above rationale for the Conservative government's decision, there were also associated risks, including a diminished voice at the summit, possible offense to the Queen and the putting at existential risk the Commonwealth as a whole. Firstly, civil servants and political staff were aware that a boycott by the Prime Minister would limit Canada's ability to speak out with authority at the CHOGM on this and other issues

(Personal communications, former Canadian political staffa, 2016). However, when the Rajapaksa government “doubled down” on its defence of its treatment of the Tamil community, the government believed it had no other option. Secondly, the government was reticent to cause embarrassment or in any way damage the Monarchy through its boycott given that the Queen is the Head of the Commonwealth (Personal communications, former Canadian political staffc, 2016; Toronto Star, 2013).¹⁵² Finally, given Canada’s long-standing support for and influence within the Commonwealth, there was a view that Canada’s boycott may existentially imperial the institution as there was already questions at this time being asked about the institution’s utility (Weerawardhana, 2013).¹⁵³

While there may have been some institutional risk associated with Canada’s action at the Commonwealth, there was little bilateral risk with regard to trade given Canada’s limited amount of existing trade with Sri Lanka. As suggested in Chapter V’s discussion of the Harper government’s foreign policy priority of enhancing international trade this decision, which infuriated the Rajapakse government, did not damage a robust trade relationship (Weerawardhana, 2013).

With less risk than the UK, Canada was able to act entirely in line with the preferences of Tamil diaspora interest groups. The United Kingdom, on the other hand, was constrained by two role constraints. Firstly, as articulated in greater detail in

¹⁵² The Queen’s long support of the Commonwealth as its head made the Royal Family sensitive to the Commonwealth’s strength and the boycott of it from one of its original members may have put it and the Queen’s prestige in jeopardy. With a view to limiting damage, the government consulted with Buckingham Palace in advance of the decision and informed the Queen of it in advance (Personal communications, former Canadian political staffc, 2016).

¹⁵³ Similarly, there was concern that Canada’s prestige at the Commonwealth could be damaged irreparably. Indeed, some have made the argument that Canada having been ‘looked over’ for the selection of the post of General Secretary of the Commonwealth may have been directly linked to Canada’s decision with respect to Sri Lanka (Personal communications, Commonwealth elite, 2016).

Chapter V, the UK's deep diplomatic, trade and strategic relationship with Sri Lanka was damaged by its remonstrations in 2009. The UK's boycott of Sri Lanka in this case would have done nothing to improve this relationship and indeed would have placed it under even greater strain. Secondly and of greater importance is Britain's dominant role in the Commonwealth. As evidenced by its manoeuvres at the Commonwealth in 2009, the UK retains paramount influence in the Commonwealth such that it was able to delay Sri Lanka's hosting of the CHOGM, albeit through the building of a coalition of like-minded states. In part because of the controversy around Sri Lanka's hosting of the summit in 2013, discourse at the time was heavily critical of the Commonwealth, with some questioning its utility (Booth, 2013; personal communications, Commonwealth elite, 2016). Such was the level of discussion that the 2013 CHOGM was a particularly sensitive summit such that further blows to its credibility might have destabilised it existentially. Additionally, the decision of the Prince of Wales to attend the summit on behalf of Queen Elizabeth II ensured that its most influential patron desired to bolster the body.

It was on this basis that Conservative party elites communicated to Tamil diaspora elites that Prime Minister Cameron was in no position to boycott the summit. Should the government pursue this policy, it was possible many other Heads of Government would view this as a statement of British non-confidence in the Commonwealth, may lead to its collapse and result in international embarrassment for the Royal Family. Pursuant to Britain's overall foreign policy, given the influence Britain is able to exert through the Commonwealth, this eventuality would be detrimental to the UK's foreign policy aims. For this reason, no amount of further pressure from the Tamil diaspora could have compelled the UK to boycott the summit, even threats by the

BTC to withdraw support. However, “in return” elites were able to extract a number of concessions as outlined in the above section. These concessions were offered to placate Tamil diaspora interest groups with a view to ensuring potential electoral prospects with the Tamil diaspora would not be squandered.

Diaspora interest group strategies

Finally, in looking at strategies deployed by Tamil diaspora interest groups in both host countries, the CTC became much more sophisticated and strategic in its engagement with government, and the UK’s BTC threatened the Tories if they did not conform to diaspora preferences (Saideman, 2001). Tamil diaspora interest groups engaged with policymakers through the help of inside advocates, in the UK Tory inside advocates established by the BTC, such as MP Hugo Swire, who ensured elites were privy to discussions taking place internally and could adjust their approaches accordingly. What is perhaps distinct was the clear threat on the part of the BTC to pull support for the Conservative Party should it proceed to attend the CHOGM. This was not done by Tamils for Labour in 2009 and represents the ‘hard edge’ the BTC is willing to use to exert influence. Activism in Canada was lubricated to a much greater extent in this case by the presence of more established and trusted Tamil party activists within the Conservative party, who provided more partisan channels of trust than were present in the 2009 case.

In respect of outside activism, demonstrations did take place in Canada and the UK, but these were relevant only insofar as they reminded the government of the Tamils as a voting bloc and that they were monitoring its decision-making. Protests had far less impact in this case in the UK, as direct advocacy was stronger and more effective

with a Conservative government, which by inclination is less receptive to grassroots demonstrations. Similarly, the Conservative government in Canada was not moved by grassroots demonstrations, as was clearly seen in the 2009 case where if anything Tamil demonstrations reduced their influence with the Conservatives (Personal communications, former Canadian Cabinet Minister, 2016). In 2013, the more polished and professional approach of the Canadian Tamil diaspora, which deployed emotional appeals in meetings with elites was far more effective. They framed their demands to align with the Tories' prioritisation of a principled approach to foreign policy, and this was more advantageous than the contentious outside activism seen in 2009.

Consequential variations between the two decision-making periods in Canada and the UK offer instructive power, but what is of greatest importance is the change witnessed in both cases in the relationship of Tamil diaspora interest groups and conservative parties, which capitalised on renewed interest on the part of Tory strategists to appeal to Tamil voters, as the below conclusion argues.

Influence attainment

As noted in the previous chapter and in Chapter III, my approach is to add more nuance to the discussion on foreign policy outcomes through the application of the below, non-binary outcomes criteria:

1. Wholly negative policy change
2. Partially negative policy change
3. Status Quo (positive or negative)
4. Partially positive policy change
5. Positive policy change

Tamil diaspora interest groups in Canada were able to bring about a consensus on possible foreign policy outcomes, with all parties advocating for the Prime Minister to boycott the CHOGM in Sri Lanka. The Harper government's decision to ultimately

boycott the summit is entirely aligned with interest groups preferences and, its further decision to revoke funding to the Commonwealth in part in response to the Sri Lankan government's human rights record is further evidence to argue that Canada's decision was entirely *positive* when viewed through the lens of diaspora preferences.

In the United Kingdom, the Cameron government was unable to boycott the summit due to its dominant role in the Commonwealth and the existential risks facing the institution should it have chosen to boycott. However, the extensive efforts the Cameron government made to admonish the Rajapakse government over its human rights record, Prime Minister Cameron's historic visit to the north of the country and further signals of displeasure with the government led to a spotlight being turned on Tamil issues as a function of Cameron's visit. For this reason, I argue that the decision was *partially positive* in view of Tamil diaspora interest group preferences.

Conclusion

I began this chapter by arguing that Tamil diaspora interest groups continued their activism despite the end of the civil war and the defeat of the LTTE. Motivated by the intransigence of the Rajapakse government to put in place a credible transitional justice process and the continued persecutions of Sri Lankan and diaspora Tamils, interest groups sought to pressure Sri Lanka to make change through host countries and in international forums.

Taking the up the cause were new, transnational organisations formed in the diaspora following the collapse of the LTTE; these included the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) and the Transitional Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE). During this time, existing organisations such as the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) and the British Tamil

Forum (BTF) continued to grow in sophistication, deepening their networks at the political level and building partisan credibility with the governing Tories. New organisations, such as the BTC, greatly enhanced the influence of the Tamil diaspora. Paralleling these efforts, governing Conservative parties in Canada and the UK more actively reached out to diverse communities for political support and became far more amenable to the demands of the Tamil community. Indeed, this period witnessed a 'sea change', from a time when Tories were unlikely to engage at all with the Tamil community to a point where they viewed Tamil diaspora groups as credible and sophisticated. This change in part helps to explain the positive and partially positive foreign policy outcomes for Tamil diaspora interest groups in both host countries.

Firstly, regarding actor characteristics, unlike in 2009 the Canadian Tamil Congress had developed partisan channels of access into the Conservative government via inside advocates which it had in part engineered through an internship programme. In addition to the Harper government's decision, the government's policy regarding Sri Lanka over the long term began to more clearly reflect Tamil diaspora preferences. The same was true in the UK, where the Conservative party had been more reluctant to engage with Tamil diaspora activists the British Tamil Conservatives were successful in gaining access to Tory decision-makers and it was these trusted partisan channels which were used in the lead-up to the 2013 CHOGM decision. Secondly, regarding political salience Conservative parties in both countries began to pay greater heed to the preferences of diaspora communities, which before had been more prone to vote for left-of-centre parties. With a view to appealing to new constituencies especially in urban areas, Tory strategists viewed foreign policy decision-making both on the usual sets of national interest and international political constraints factors, as well as

through a “ballot box” lens. Thirdly, through having built partisan channels of access, the organised Tamil diaspora was viewed as more credible by this period than they were by Conservatives in 2009.

Fourthly, in considering institutional factors, Tamil diaspora interest groups were confronted by a rival constituency in the form of the Sri Lankan government, but these interventions met with limited success. What had more impact was the opposition to Tamil preferences in the UK by the FCO, as was the case in the previous chapter. While Tamil diaspora interest groups now had a relationship with FCO officials, its interests were not viewed by bureaucrats as being in the national interest and therefore were opposed to Prime Minister Cameron boycotting the CHOGM. Fifthly and related to this point, while Tamil diaspora interest groups were not in line with Canadian foreign policy interests in 2009, in 2013 the Sri Lanka issue fit within the Conservative government’s desire to exemplify a “principled foreign policy” and had no qualms taking issue with multilateral organisations, including the Commonwealth. In the UK, boycotting the CHOGM was not viewed as being in line with foreign policy interests as it would have conflicted substantively with the UK’s trade interests in Sri Lanka as well as its geopolitical power in Southeast Asia. Additionally, with regard to international role constraints, Canada’s pivotal role at the Commonwealth meant there were risks associated with Canada’s boycott, but these risks did not put the Commonwealth in existential jeopardy. However, with the UK as the dominant actor in the Commonwealth, the boycott of Prime Minister Cameron could have been an existential blow to the Commonwealth, which was another reason for the FCO’s opposition. Finally, Tamil diaspora interest group strategies became more sophisticated in this decision-making process in both countries in comparison to the

Chapter VI; where there had once been contentious outside lobbying, diaspora interest groups were aware this strategy was less appealing to Conservatives and thusly focused more on direct lobbying.

In conclusion, it is clear that the Conservative government's decision was entirely in line with Tamil diaspora interest group preferences and thusly I call it a 'positive' foreign policy change. In the UK, while the Prime Minister ultimately attended the summit, I assert that the policy outcome is 'partially positive' as Cameron's visit to Sri Lanka was used to highlight human rights abuses and Tamil issues in general and was not a public relations victory for the Rajapakse government (Sri Lanka Campaign for Justice, 2013). Despite this, I determine that the UK's Tamil diaspora interest groups were in fact more influential than in Canada. Given that its own interests were starkly in contrast to diaspora preferences, the UK government still worked 'hand-in-hand' with diaspora elites to 'choreograph' his visit to Sri Lanka from start to finish.

Chapter VIII - Conclusion

Diasporas are a force in foreign affairs, so what's next?

Diaspora interest groups as transnational conflict actors

Observers in Canada and the United Kingdom have argued that diasporas influence Canadian and British foreign policy (Sri Lanka Campaign for Justice, 2014; Carment and Samy, 2013; Rayner, 2010), but a comparative, fine-grained analysis of foreign policy decision-making processes with diaspora interest groups as the intervening subject of interest had not yet been conducted to examine these claims. With a view to exploring these claims of influence in a parliamentary context, my inquiry focused on Tamil diaspora interest groups in Canada and the UK and answered the question of whether or not they had influence on foreign policy decision-making in respect of host country government responses to the final phase of the Sri Lankan civil war and on the decision to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Sri Lanka.

I introduced the research puzzle in Chapter I by situating this project within the literature on civil wars exploring the influence of external actors on conflict (Buhaug et al, 2009; Lacina, 2006; Hartzell, 2001) and more specifically within the stand of that literature discussing Tamil diaspora lobbying of host country governments toward the conflict in the homeland (Orjuela, 2008; Fair, 2005). Specifically, my chief concern was to answer the question: Have Tamil diaspora interest groups had influence over Canadian and British foreign policymaking toward the Sri Lankan civil war and its aftermath? I argue that they did, but subtle differences in diaspora interest groups, institutions and strategies explain why interest groups had more influence in some cases than in others.

Furthermore, I also sought to explore why it appeared that Tamil diaspora interest groups had more influence in the United Kingdom than they did in Canada, and the answer to that lies in the microfoundational analysis of the actors involved, the institutional factors structuring these processes and the strategies employed by interest groups. These factors are discussed and summarised below, but before that this chapter summarises the efforts to conceptualise ‘transnational Tamil diaspora interest groups’ and the empirical context facing diaspora interest groups in advance of the first decision-making process I analysed.

Conceptualising ‘transnational Tamil diaspora interest groups’

The literature review chapter first undertook to conceptualise the actor of interest to this project ‘transnational Tamil diaspora interest groups’ which was employed in part throughout the project as the focus of interventions in foreign policy decision-making. Secondly, it explored and categorised the determinants identified by the diasporas and interest group literatures as having an impact on the extent of diaspora influence on foreign policy, which will be summarised in the third section of this chapter.

Firstly, I canvassed the extensive literature on diaspora conceptualisation and argued that the Tamil diaspora should be considered an archetypical diaspora not unlike the Jewish and Greek diasporas which are often considered the ‘classical’ diaspora models. I defined the Tamil diaspora as a mostly conflict-generated, victim diaspora whose members originated largely as refugees, are dispersed far from the homeland and who can be said to have an antagonistic relationship with their home-state (Braziel, 2008; Cohen, 2008; Dufoix, 2008; Lyons, 2007; Brubaker, 2005; Dufoix,

2003).

Secondly, from this conceptualisation of 'Tamil diaspora', I then expanded on this definition through exploring the literature on interest groups, which argued that diaspora interest groups share a number of components as conventional interest groups including: being organised for specific collective ends, are not seeking to form government, are representative of interests and normally have voluntary memberships (Jordan et al., 2014). 'Diaspora interest groups' diverge from this conceptualisation in some respects, such as being permanent bodies with shifting policy agendas, may involve themselves in electoral processes and are often viewed as being representative of the whole of the diaspora, rather than just voluntarily acquired membership. I therefore defined 'diaspora interest group' as permanent, representative, non-governmental entities which are not seeking to form government, have no fixed agenda of issues, derive legitimacy from infrastructure set up to connect with diaspora grassroots and have no formal mechanisms for conferring membership.

Finally, I entered into a discussion on the transnational nature of diaspora interest groups, arguing that they are transnational because they maintain linkages with the homeland and with diaspora interest groups in other states, employ transnational identity frames to construct interest groups (Adamson, 2012: 34; Adamson, 2007; Brubaker, 2005; Guarnizo, 2003; Kenny, 2000), are in some cases legitimised through transnational diaspora group memberships, and pursue transnational, "top down" strategies to put pressure on the homeland through host country advocacy (Keck and Sikkink, 1999).

Having conceptualised the actor of interest for this project in the form of 'transnational Tamil diaspora interest groups', the second section of the literature

review argues this project is best situated in the literature that speaks to the empirical rather than normative investigative strand, which asks questions related to *whether* diasporas have influence on host country foreign policy, principally because these questions have not been fully explored in the Canadian and British parliamentary contexts (Koinova, 2011; Redd and Rubenzer, 2010; Orjuela, 2008; Saideman, 2001).

I then borrowed categories from the interest group literature to group together the determinants the existing literature argues impact diaspora influence on foreign policy: Actor characteristics, institutional factors and interest group strategies (Dür, 2008). Characteristics inherent to diasporas believed to influence their impact on policy outcomes includes diaspora mobilization (Koinova, 2011; Redd and Rubenzer, 2010; Shain and Barth, 2003; Saideman, 2001), size (Uslaner, 2012), numerical significance in parliamentary constituencies (Redd and Rubenzer, 2010; Geislerova, 2007; Saideman, 2001; Mathis, 1981), political salience (Ogelman et al., 2002), diaspora interest group financial and institutional resources (Landolt, 2008; Fair, 2005; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003), group homogeneity (Ogelman et al, 2002) and learning (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Institutional factors are the domestic and international structural determinants which create political opportunity structures which include host country inclusivity (Fair, 2005; Lahneman, 2005; Ogelman et al. 2002, Saideman, 2001), the presence of rival constituencies (Saideman, 2001), alignment with host country foreign policy goals (Redd and Rubenzer, 2010; Meirsheimer and Walt, 2007; Ambrosio, 2002), parliamentary permeability (Redd and Rubenzer, 2010) and international role constraints (Gaskarth, 2013; Thies, 2009). Finally, I isolated three types of strategies employed by diaspora interest groups to gain access and leverage with decision-makers (Dur, 2008): Direct lobbying (Hansen, 1991), the selection of

decision-makers (Fordham and McKeown, 2003; Saideman, 2001) and outside lobbying (Tarrow, Tilly, 2009; Kollman, 1998). These determinants are discussed as ‘casual factors’ in the empirical chapters and the results of these explorations are summarized following the below section, which discusses the lead-up to the decision-making processes and identifies a comparative advantage for Tamil diaspora interest groups in Canada.

A comparative advantage for the Canadian Tamil diaspora? Comparative histories of transnational conflict, migration, and foreign affairs

The first chapter dealing with empirics, Chapter V, provided the requisite background to the analysis of the 2009 and 2013 decision-making case comparisons in Chapters VI and VII, arguing that Tamil diaspora interest groups in both host countries were disadvantaged by the legacy of the LTTE, Canada’s migration policy offered a more favourable environment for diaspora group formation, and that Canada’s foreign policymaking processes were more porous to external influences such as interventions from diaspora interest groups.

Firstly, I argued that the deep entrenchment of the LTTE in the diaspora greatly disadvantaged Tamil diaspora interest groups in their lobbying efforts, especially in the first cases I analyse in 2009. Until the 1990s, the LTTE had successfully framed itself as a ‘liberation’ organisation fighting for Tamil self-determination in a post-colonial context (Chalk, 2000). However, events such as the assassination of the Indian Prime Minister and the LTTE’s withdrawal from the 1995 peace process led to increasing scepticism of the organisation and its front groups in Canada and the UK (Bandarage, 2009). By the early 2000s, the UK had proscribed the LTTE and Canadian politicians

were growing increasingly cautious of associating with Tamil diaspora groups due to the perceived association with the LTTE. With the election in 2006 of the Conservative government in Canada, the LTTE was also listed as a terrorist organisation, further ushering in a 'cooling effect' on Tamil diaspora advocacy in Canada and the UK (Amarasingam, 2015). A feeling that the whole diaspora had been 'securitised' prevailed and a climate of uncertainty over what types of advocacy was permitted and which weren't rendered diaspora advocacy non-existent or ineffective for much of the 2000s (Vimalarajah et al, 2011; Berghof Peace Support, 2011). As explained in Chapter VI, the efforts of diaspora and political elites to revitalise and create new diaspora interest groups changed this dynamic, but the Tamil diaspora was tainted by the LTTE during the 2009 decision-making process, especially in the view of Conservative parties.

In the second section, I discussed Tamil diaspora migration, settlement and integration in Canada and the UK through the lens of migration policy in both host countries, arguing that discernible differences in these countries' policies advantaged Tamil diaspora group formation in Canada. Beginning with residency statistics, Canada and the UK both have large Tamil diasporas concentrated mostly in urban areas which arrived through similar waves of asylum-seeking migrants from the 1980s to the 2000s (Deegalle, 2014; Mendis, 2014). When migration policies are compared during this periods, Tamil migrants sought asylum in Canada during a propitious time of openness (Zulfika, 2013; Ostergard Neilson, 2003; Hyndman, 2003), whereas the UK had been less receptive until the 2000s to migrants (Home Office, 2017; Spencer, 1997: 149). As Canada's multicultural policy ensured the maintenance of Tamil identity, settlement and integration policies empowered diaspora groups through allowing them to undertake settlement and integration for new arrivals. This contrasts with the UK, where in the

1980s, 1990s and early 2000s arrivals were offered the same benefits as job-seeking British rather than through the state affording diasporas the opportunity to provide settlement services themselves. Additionally, the British government put much less emphasis on integration in comparison to Canada. I conclude by arguing that Canada's migration, settlement and integration policies provided more fertile ground for diaspora group creation than in the UK.

The third and final section compares foreign policymaking and international role constraints for both host countries. There are many parallels with respect to parliamentary and decision-making processes in Canada and the UK, but some important distinctions. Firstly, I argue that Westminster's less rigid system of party discipline may benefit interest groups operating in other issue areas, but it doesn't advantage diaspora interest groups as foreign policymaking is almost exclusively taken 'behind closed doors' at the Cabinet level (Chapnick, 2008; Dewing and McDonald, 2006). Secondly, foreign policymaking processes should in fact be more porous in Canada than in the UK, as bureaucratic foreign policy elites in Canada have less influence over decision-making than they do in the UK, becoming a less potent rival constituency (Gaskarth, 2013: 15). In respect of international role constraints, the United Kingdom occupies a pivotal role in world affairs, a dominant role in the Commonwealth and is one of Sri Lanka's most important bilateral relationships, whereas Canada is a much weaker actor in comparison (Gaskarth, 2013; Bow and Lennox, 2008). With the UK having more to risk in economic and strategic positioning than Canada, Tamil diaspora interest groups will be more likely to influence foreign policy in the latter than in the former.

The analysis of case studies in Canada and the UK in 2009 and in 2013 discussed

these assumptions and their bearing on foreign policy outcomes, as well as exploring the actor, institutional and strategic factors which the existing literature on diasporas and interest groups argue impact diaspora interest group influence. The outcome of these analyses are discussed in comparative context in the following section.

Decision-making processes compared: Influence achieved, but diaspora interest groups struggle to overcome international role constraints

Having provided the requisite empirical background, a cross-case comparison was undertaken in Chapters VI and VII of causal sequences depicting decision-making processes, Tamil diaspora interest group interventions and foreign policy outcomes. In the theoretical chapter I argued that my project is set within the tradition of scholarship which seeks to uncover causation in foreign policymaking, with a view to isolating where diaspora interest group interventions *caused* foreign policy outcomes. Through the work of comparative historical analysts, I adopted the approach that isolating causation is best done through a microfoundational exploration of causal processes to discover causal mechanisms (Faletti and Mahoney, 2015; Stroschein, 2012). I argue that my theoretical framework is better described as a search for ‘causal factors’, as some determinants I search for are more static (Gerring, 2010). As outlined in Chapter II, my analysis is a search for the impact of three sets of causal factors which the literature on diasporas and interest groups have identified influence interest group success, which are actor characteristics, institutional factors and strategies. Following the creation of causal sequences which temporally depicted the decision-making processes and diaspora interest group interventions, these sequences were compared against one another through a cross-case comparison and the impact of the causal

factors were assessed in each. I am ultimately interested in explaining influence, which as I argue in the final section of Chapter III is an outcome in the form of a 'foreign policy outcome' rather than a causal factor in itself (Klüver, 2013; Dür and De Bièvre, 2007; Arts and Verschuren, 1999).

Chapters VI and VII applied the above summarised theoretical framework to two decision-making processes in Canada and the UK. Firstly, in 2009 Tamil diaspora interest groups were compelled to lobby host country governments to take action to end the violence in the north of Sri Lanka during the final, desperate phase of the Sri Lankan civil war. In this case, both host countries responded to diaspora interest group interventions through foreign policy statements and actions, with the UK taking more substantive action than its Canadian counterpart. Secondly, I unpacked the decision faced by Canadian and British Prime Ministers to attend the 2013 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Sri Lanka. Tamil diaspora interest groups in both host countries were united in their efforts to compel governments to boycott the summit in protest of the Rajapakse government, but while Prime Minister Harper chose to boycott, Prime Minister Cameron ultimately attended the meeting. However, due to the interventions of Tamil diaspora interest groups, Cameron's visit to Sri Lanka embarrassed the Sri Lankan government and raised awareness of the plight of Sri Lankan Tamils.

In comparing these decision-making processes, this section revisits questions contained in the research puzzle and offers conclusions drawn from the analyses in Chapters VI and VII. Firstly, in respect of the overarching question, these explorations demonstrate that Tamil diaspora interest groups have influenced foreign policy decision-making in parliamentary host countries. In 2009, foreign policy outcomes

were partially positive in so far as foreign policy outcomes are compared with diaspora interest group preferences. Political parties in both host countries issued broadly sympathetic statements regarding the conflict and a relatively broad consensus position on the issue was brought about by diaspora interest groups. However, the UK went to greater lengths in alignment with diaspora preferences, including through a high-level visit by UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband to Sri Lanka to personally remonstrate Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse, as well as efforts at the international level to bring about a ceasefire. Canada's response was far more muted in comparison, with a small increase in humanitarian aid and a visit by a low profile Cabinet Minister whose comments were tepid at best.

In contrast in 2013, Canada's foreign policy outcomes were entirely positive in the view of Tamil diaspora elites through the boycott of Prime Minister Harper of the CHOGM and also Canada's withdrawal of financial support for the Commonwealth. As juxtaposed with the UK, British Prime Minister Cameron attended the Commonwealth summit despite intense pressure from Tamil diaspora lobbyists. However, I count this as a partially positive response and argue that diaspora interest groups actually had more influence in the UK than they did in Canada on foreign policy outcomes due to the extent to which Tamil diaspora elites worked with 10 Downing Street staff to choreograph Cameron's visit, which brought attention to the plight of Tamils and embarrassed the Sri Lankan government.

Secondly, the microfoundational exploration of these decision-making processes addresses the second aspect of my research puzzle, which is to explain why different decisions were taken by these governments and how much they were influenced by Tamil diaspora interest groups. The scholarship on diasporas and interest groups have

suggested a number of factors impact the extent to which diaspora interest groups will have influence on policymaking and the below summary highlights the distinctions between causal factors which explain why greater influence was attained in some cases in comparison with others.

Actor Characteristics

Chapters VI and VII described the trajectory of Tamil diaspora interest groups from the 2000s when they were tainted by the legacy of the LTTE, to the 2013 decision-making period when diaspora interest groups had achieved a degree of sophistication that granted them access to decision-makers at the Cabinet level. Canada's centralised model through representation almost solely by the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) reflects the same model as the more established Jewish diaspora. Similarly, the more fragmented model in the UK where non-partisan interest groups such as the British Tamil Forum (BTF) and Global Tamil Forum (GTF) operate alongside partisan-affiliated interest groups like Tamils for Labour and British Tamil Conservatives, also parallels older Jewish diaspora groups.

A number of similarities were identified between the cases, including diaspora size, extensive mobilisation of a large number of diaspora members, possessing resources commensurate with lobbying decision-makers, learning over time as well as emulation of more established Jewish diaspora organisations, and being similarly concentrated in electoral districts, mostly in Toronto and London. However, the cases are distinct in a number of important ways. Firstly, of the four cases, the Tamil diaspora was viewed as *politically salient* in all cases but Canada in 2009, which was the instance where Tamil diaspora interest groups were the least influential. This changed in 2013

when the Conservative government viewed the Tamil diaspora as an important part of its outreach to ethnic communities. Secondly, Tamil diaspora interest groups differed in the Canadian case in 2009 from the others in respect of *credibility* and *groups homogeneity*. The Canadian Conservative party in 2009 continued to perceive the Tamil diaspora as tainted by the LTTE and, partly as a consequence of this, Cabinet did not directly engage with representatives. This is distinct from the UK during the same period where inside advocates had helped create channels of access to government for diaspora elites. Additionally, when group homogeneity collapsed in Canada in 2009 as diaspora elites lost control over demonstrations, they also lost credibility and were no longer viewed as the legitimate representative voice of the Canadian Tamil diaspora. Thirdly, between 2009 and 2013 diaspora *mobilisation* changed in both countries. The CTC made a greater effort to mobilise and integrate young Tamils into the Conservative Party to build the partisan channels of access it had lacked with government in 2009. In the UK, the British Tamil diaspora formed British Tamil Conservatives for much the same reason, and to be able to put greater pressure on the government electorally. Overall, through these mobilisation efforts internal to conservative parties, the credibility of diaspora interest groups improved and by 2013 Conservative government officials engaged directly with Tamil diaspora elites in both countries.

Institutional factors

Following a discussion of the characteristics inherent to diasporas and diaspora interest groups, I explored the extent to which variation in institutional factors had causal implications for diaspora interest group influence on foreign policy outcomes. With respect to similarities across cases, host country inclusivity was broadly the same

for diaspora interest groups in both host countries in both time periods; I argued that processes of migration, settlement and integration had allowed for the earlier formation of Tamil diaspora interest groups in Canada, but that these more advantageous processes were muted by the 'chilling effect' which the Tamil diaspora experienced in both host countries following the proscription of the LTTE; finally, in respect of political participation, such as voting rights and access to citizenship, there were no meaningful distinctions between cases. What offers more explanatory power are the differences between cases which help to explain divergence in foreign policy outcomes.

Firstly, *parliamentary permeability* varied between some cases. In 2009 Tamil diaspora interest groups struggled to penetrate Conservative parties in both host countries. However, the impact of this challenge was most keenly felt in Canada where the Conservatives were in power. The Tamil diaspora's lack of inroads into the Conservative party made Cabinet less porous to their interventions than was the case for Tamil diaspora activists in the UK, which were petitioning a Labour government into which they had built channels of access. This changed in 2013 through efforts to build inroads with Conservatives, which made Cabinet at this time permeable to interest groups in both host countries.

Secondly, *rival constituencies* played a much more potent and deleterious role in the UK than in Canada in both decision-making periods. As argued in Chapter V, Canada's less influential foreign affairs bureaucracy led to political interests prevailing on the part of the government, which made decision-makers more amenable to interventions by Tamil diaspora interest groups in 2013 when they were viewed as more credible and salient. Despite being viewed as politically salient and credible by British governments in both 2009 and 2013, Tamil diaspora interest group preferences

were challenged by the influential Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which was not sensitive to political motivations. Tamil diaspora interest groups overcame this challenge in 2009, as evidenced by the visit of Foreign Secretary Miliband to Sri Lanka, which the FCO opposed. However, in 2013 Tamil diaspora interest groups were unable to persuade the Cameron government to boycott the CHOGM in Sri Lanka in part due to arguments by the FCO that Britain's national interest would be jeopardised to too great an extent. Efforts by the Sri Lankan government to discredit the Tamil diaspora, primarily in the UK, had a negative impact in the 2000s, but Tamil diaspora interest groups overcame these interventions and began to be viewed as credible by political elites.

Thirdly, alignment with *existing host country foreign policy* had a greater impact in Canada than it did in the UK. In Canada in 2009, Tamil diaspora interest group perceived associations with the LTTE, including through the brandishing of LTTE flags at demonstrations, conflicted with the government's anti-terrorism policy. However, by 2013 and following the Harper government's foreign policy review, Canada's pursuit of a 'principled' foreign policy which was sceptical of multilateral organisations aligned with Tamil diaspora interest group calls to boycott the CHOGM. In the British context, Tamil diaspora interest group preferences were never entirely aligned with government foreign policy objectives. Britain's deep economic relationship with Sri Lanka and its strategic importance in Southeast Asia created significant risks to taking action against the Sri Lankan government, and yet both the Brown and Cameron governments took a range of actions against the Sri Lankan government, putting considerable strain on this bilateral relationship. In 2009 during the conflict's final months the UK directly remonstrated the Rajapakse government and sought to bring the issue to the UN Security Council. Furthermore, in respect of Sri Lanka's hosting of the CHOGM, this

relationship was put under even greater strain when the Brown government orchestrated its postponement from 2011 to 2013. This policy continued during Prime Minister Cameron's visit for the 2013 CHOGM, when he chose to flagrantly bring to light human rights issues facing Sri Lankan Tamils. However, with regard to the Tamil diaspora's chief demand of a British boycott, Britain's desire to remain dominant in the Commonwealth prevented this foreign policy outcome.

Finally, related to foreign policy alignment are the *international role constraints* placed on states through the roles they occupy at various levels of the international system, subsystems and bilateral relations between states. In the 2009 decision-making process, Canada's limited role in the international system and bilaterally with Sri Lanka in 2009 afforded it the opportunity to take stronger action against the Sri Lankan government with less risk to its interests, however, it chose not to. Whereas the UK employed its international capital to put pressure on the Rajapakse government via interventions with the United States and at the United Nations Security Council. Additionally, these actions put considerable strain on its robust bilateral relations with Sri Lanka. Despite facing significantly greater risks to its role in multiple international arenas, the British government acted more closely in line with Tamil diaspora interest group preferences than did Canada.

In the 2013 decision-making process, which was set exclusively at the sub-system level, Canada jeopardised its pivotal role at the Commonwealth by boycotting the summit and withdrawing funds to the Commonwealth Secretariat. Unlike in 2009, the Canadian government was more willing to risk its international role status in the Commonwealth, such that some have argued a Canadian was ultimately 'passed over' as Secretary General of the Commonwealth due to Canada's strong position on the Sri

Lanka issue. As noted in Chapter V, part of Canada's foreign policy approach in 2013 was to take decisive, unequivocal positions on international issues to allow more influential countries to take positions closer to Canada's. Canada's decision in 2013 is consistent with that approach.

With regard to the UK, its dominant position in the Commonwealth, which was under some existential pressure during this period, prevented British Prime Minister Cameron from boycotting the summit; had he done so it would have further jeopardised the entire Commonwealth institution. For this reason, the FCO argued convincingly that Prime Minister Cameron could not boycott the summit and no amount of pressure from Tamil diaspora interest groups would have changed this outcome. However, the UK government worked "hand in hand" with Tamil diaspora interest group elites to 'choreograph' his visit, which ultimately shed a spotlight on Tamil human rights issues in the country and embarrassed the Sri Lankan government. There is no other explanation for this outcome other than the interventions of Tamil diaspora interest groups, which is why I still argue that they had more influence over the UK government than their counterparts did in Canada despite not boycotting the summit.

Tamil diaspora interest group strategies

In Chapter II, I outlined four types of strategies pursued by interest groups, and my exploration of Tamil diaspora interest group interventions demonstrated evidence of three of them. Firstly, *direct lobbying* was employed by Tamil diaspora interest groups in both decision-making periods and in both host countries. In the Canadian case in 2009, direct lobbying was essential to securing the historic parliamentary emergency debate on February 4th during which high-profile MPs and Cabinet Ministers

spoke sympathetically toward Tamil interest group preferences. However, due to factors noted above, direct lobbying toward the Conservative government was already challenging and became impossible later in the decision-making process. In contrast, Tamil diaspora interest group elites engaged throughout the decision-making process with the British Cabinet at the highest level, witnessing a number of important outcomes as a consequence such as the Prime Minister's involvement through the appointment of a Special Envoy, the Foreign Secretary's visit and efforts at the international level. Thanks to Labour MPs who acted as inside advocates, a seamless channel of access was available to activists throughout this process.

Secondly, *outside lobbying* strategies were in evidence to a far greater extent during the 2009 decision-making processes. Grassroots members of the Tamil diaspora, sometimes numbering in their tens of thousands, engaged in contentious claims-making through consistent, unconventional outside lobbying via mass demonstrations throughout the decision-making periods. In Canada, early demonstrations in Ottawa and Toronto were well-orchestrated affairs by the CTC and at times involved left-of-centre MPs taking part as speakers. However, these demonstrations were met by indifference on the part of Tories in the first instance, and later with repugnance as they became more contentious and visibly associated with the LTTE. These outside lobbying strategies had a detrimental impact on interest group interventions with the Conservative government. In contrast, outside lobbying was far more effective in 2009 in the UK. Despite reaching similar levels of contention and association with the LTTE, Tamil diaspora interest group elites were still able to maintain some control over demonstrations, including through liaising directly with the Metropolitan Police. The demonstrations were made more effective through the efforts of Labour inside

advocates, who at times brought demonstrators into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to meet directly with the Foreign Secretary, such that demonstrators could make emotional appeals to government to take action. While in 2013 Tamil diaspora interest groups did employ demonstrations in both host countries, these demonstrations were on a much diminished scale, were not continuous and were also not contentious. In Canada, the alignment of the Conservative government with diaspora interest group preferences did not necessitate demonstrations to put pressure on the government and instead they were directed toward the Sri Lankan government. In the United Kingdom, demonstrations were also held to ensure government understood the political ramifications of its actions, but interventions at the direct lobbying level were much more consequential.

Finally, Tamil diaspora interest groups engaged in the selection of decision-makers. In Canada prior to 2009 there is evidence of Tamil diaspora involvement in left-of-centre party nominations, in particular the Liberal leadership campaign in 2006. However, there is no evidence of similar involvement in the Conservative party either through selecting candidates or as major donors in the years leading up to 2009. By 2013, the CTC's efforts inside the Conservative party to encourage young Tamils to become activists and to get involved in Conservative campaigns greatly enhanced their leverage and credibility with party elites. The evidence of this strategy is clearer in the British context, where party-affiliated diaspora groups such as Tamils for Labour and British Tamil Conservatives (BTC) are mandated to engage specifically in these types of internal party dynamics. In the 2009 case, Tamils for Labour had built a network of Tamil Labour activists which mustered diaspora resources to support Labour candidates aligned with the diaspora's preferences. This leverage in part created and

supported inside advocates, which in turn provided access at the Cabinet level. By 2013, the growth in influence of the BTC within the Conservative party through hosting events at party conference, financially supporting candidates aligned with Tamil diaspora interest group preferences and operating a network of Tamil party activists had greatly enhanced access and leverage with the Cameron government. It is through these access channels that Tamil diaspora interest group elites were able to engage with 10 Downing Street directly in advance of the 2013 CHOGM. Indeed, open threats to withdraw support from Conservative candidates should the Cameron government not align itself with Tamil diaspora preferences further compelled the government to respond to diaspora interest group interventions.

Opportunities for further research

This inquiry's contribution to the empirical strand of the civil wars literature on diaspora influence on conflict could be taken further through a number of future investigations. Firstly, with the addition of more cases and the use of QCA, greater generalisability could be achieved. Secondly, a most-different method could be applied to highlight the impact of greater variation in the either the actor of interest or in the institutional nature of the polity. Finally, having investigated this question empirically, a normative lens might now be applied to these findings to determine if diaspora interest groups are having a deleterious impact on the national interest of host countries.

Firstly, Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is a cross-case, comparative method using pairwise comparisons to isolate anomalies across cases to observe causation through difference (Ragin, 2008, Rihoux, 2013). Based on Boolean algebra, its

proponents have argued that it borrows strengths from both qualitative and quantitative traditions, in particular the conceptual rigor of the former, but with greater validity and broader generalizability. Ultimately, QCA is able to isolate necessary and sufficient conditions through recognising similarities and differences between cases. With the use of software applications, QCA is able to handle as many as fifty different cases with a view to uncovering causal mechanisms and identifying the variation between cases which explain outcomes. The four cases explored here could be added to by cases where other diasporas have been active in lobbying host country governments, and there is a rich descriptive literature already in existence from which cases might be drawn. In so doing, the conclusions drawn here could be expanded to have greater theoretical generalisability than is possible with the comparison of only a handful of cases.

Secondly, rather than taking the most-similar approach applied here, a most-different comparative approach could offer similarly interesting results. For instance, diaspora activism in parliamentary host countries could be compared against the same diaspora lobbying in countries which use proportional representation to determine if concentration in constituencies is indeed an explanatory factor. This could include a comparison of Tamil diaspora activism between the United Kingdom and Norway, which also has a sizeable Tamil diaspora. It would also be fruitful to explore the activism of two different diasporas in the same parliamentary host country emphasizing key decision points, such as comparing activism by Tamil diaspora interest groups in the 2009 case explored here with that of the Jewish diaspora during the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah. In doing so, researchers may uncover more insights as to the importance of actor and institutional factors, as well as how strategies differ

depending on the issue and institutional constraints.

Finally, while there have been extensive debates on normative questions of whether or not diasporas are having a deleterious effect on the national interest through influence on host country foreign policy in the United States, there remains a need for further exploration of this question in Canada and the United States. In Canada, as inferred in this project, some have argued that the country lost the opportunity to have one of its nationals head the Commonwealth as a result of its decisions on Sri Lanka. Furthermore, others have argued Canada failed to gain a seat on the UN Security Council as a result of its policies on Israel and the Middle East. In the UK, as this project asserts, British relations with homeland countries there negatively impacted by foreign policy decisions influenced by diaspora interest group advocacy; leading to questions of whether or not these interventions are desirable when weighed against the national interest.

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