

On the Move Towards a Peaceful Future?

A case study of Sri Lanka and its challenges in the search for
positive peace

Abstract

This essay focus on Sri Lanka's way towards positive peace and its difficulties, with the help of peacebuilding theories. It may be argued that the country since the end of its 26 year long civil war has gone into a state of negative peace. To analyze Sri Lanka's further post-war development, some special aspects of the conflict is highlighted, such as the international relations, the political systems and the efforts in rebuilding, rehabilitating and reconcile the society. The findings from these studies are compared with some issues which need to be dealt with in order to underpin the building of positive peace. This essay's conclusions suggest that the peacebuilding processes is currently working slow and with doubtful visions. Much effort must be put in issues which sparked the conflict, involving dealing with the political structures and the deep rooted mutual fears.

Keywords: Sri Lanka, positive peace, peacebuilding, post-war, Sri Lankan Civil War

Characters with spacing: 69.998

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Purpose & Research Question.....	1
1.2	Method	2
1.3	Limitations and Acknowledgements	4
2	Theory	5
2.1	Positive Peace.....	5
2.2	Peacemaking & Peacebuilding.....	5
2.3	Reconciliation	7
2.4	The Leadership Pyramid	8
2.5	The Participants and the Deep Rooted Causes	9
2.6	Analytical Tools	10
3	Case Study.....	11
3.1	Short Conflict Background and Summary	11
3.2	Who Were the LTTE?	12
3.3	International Relations During and After the Civil War's Ending.....	14
3.4	The Political Climate in Sri Lanka.....	15
3.5	What is Done for the Rebuilding, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation?	17
3.5.1	Internally Displaced Persons	18
3.5.2	Rebuilding	19
3.5.3	The Sri Lankan Collective Trauma	19
4	Analysis	21
4.1	The Reconciliation Processes.....	21
4.2	The Society's Involvement.....	23
4.3	Transformations of Negative Systems	24
4.4	The Deep Rooted Causes	25
4.4.1	The Tamil Alienation.....	25
4.4.2	The Fear.....	26
5	Conclusion.....	28
6	References	29

Abbreviations

DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
GoSL	The Government of Sri Lanka
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNP	United National Party

1 Introduction

The first thing I noticed when my cousin drove away from Bandaranaike International Airport that November morning in 2009, was all the army soldiers by the side of the road. I asked him about the situation, and he replied in delight:

"The war is over! You can go everywhere! The government killed the terrorists!"

People I spoke with, mainly relatives who had been unaffected by the war's 26 year long history, praised the victory over the LTTE - clearly without further thought on the civilian losses. Maybe they were unaware of the reported atrocities, maybe they were blinded by the country's enthusiasm. Two things stood clear; the war was over and the country would bloom due to better economy and increasing tourist industry. Everybody was agreeing that the war was over, but no one mentioned peace. Was peace unimportant, or was it just not present?

1.1 Purpose & Research Question

The purpose of this essay is to investigate the peace process in Sri Lanka and try to evaluate which path Sri Lanka as a nation may be on towards a state of positive peace. By looking at different elements of the society, it will highlight some of the challenges Sri Lanka as a nation has met in the search for positive peace, and what they might have missed. The result could be academically helpful by two aspects: first it will put some of the peace process' good and worse to light, and second it may give examples of the challenges post-conflict societies may meet in the search for a state of positive peace.

The definition of the word peace may be considered diffuse and subjective, but to make some kind of distinction the meaning can be divided into two categories; negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace occurs in a society where armed or physical conflict is absent, but the underlying conflict exists. In a society defined by positive peace, the conflict as such is rather absent. The positive peace in post-conflict societies is often linked with structural peace work; peacebuilding. Successful peacebuilding will hopefully lead to a sustainable peace were the risk of relapsing into conflict will be low. The positive peace is always the best alternative to consider, but also the hardest of them to reach.

How does the peacebuilding work develop in Sri Lanka and what kinds of challenges may post-war Sri Lanka meet in search for positive peace?

1.2 Method

To find out what challenges Sri Lanka has to deal with in the search for a positive peace, there is a need to explain what defines positive peace. This term is diffuse and dependant on many variables and has no absolutely clear definition. Instead, some overarching categories presented in the Theory chapter and used by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) will be kept in mind when defining the term. By having guidelines for positive peace defined, important issues which may have causal connections to the peace process might be put to light.

The struggle for positive peace has connections with strategic long-time approach which can be categorized under the field of peacebuilding. There are several strategic needs connected with the term peacebuilding, such as the need for rebuilding societies and dealing with deep rooted conflict causes. With help from John Paul Lederach's and Dennis J. Sandole's extended theoretical work in the peacebuilding field, some important needs for peacebuilding and its search for positive peace will be identified. These peacebuilding needs will then be used as guidelines when analyzing the case.

Lederach's "*Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*", is a well respected work in the peacebuilding field, dealing with issues such as the importance of reconciliation, good structures and processes, and resources needed in the building of a society which hopefully will be defined by positive peace in the long run. With "*Peacebuilding: War and Conflict in the Modern World*", Sandole is working with Lederach's theories and explaining issues regarding peacebuilding in today's modern violent conflicts. These two books will be this essay's theoretical ground in the investigation of Sri Lanka's post-war society development for peace. The term peacebuilding is a wide concept which could be discussed by many deep aspects in this conflict, possibly making up thousands of pages. Therefore, the aim with this essay is not to make a comprehensive overview of Sri Lanka's post-war development in the aspect of peacebuilding; rather it will provide a short presentation of the country's post-war state by reflecting on some important issues connected with peacebuilding and the building of positive peace. The overarching issues which Lederach reflects on most frequently in his work are the concept of reconciliation, the importance of the society's involvement in the peacebuilding process, the transformations of negative systems and the dealing with the conflict's deep rooted causes. Therefore, these four needs will be the main theoretical analytical tools used in the analysing of this case.

As implied in the introduction, the case is selected with inspiration drawn from real life experiences from post-war Sri Lanka. However, no sources presented in this essay are collected from the field by the author. Instead, the case material is collected from second- and third-hand sources, mainly from recognized scientific authors and journals. This is a qualitative study, based on a smaller amount of collected scientific resources. Just like any study, a qualitative kind brings a question about validity and reliability. Its critics name problems

such as the difficulties in replicating earlier qualitative studies, since they tend to be less structured than quantitative studies and dependant on earlier researchers' resourcefulness. The smaller amount of researched material brings up the question of the author's subjectivity.¹ In trying to increase a qualitative study's validity and reliability, the researcher should preferably have a connection to the field and the correspondents, and get the material reviewed by colleagues.² While this essay has been reviewed by colleagues trying to confirm the information is unbiased and correct, it is still dependant on previous researchers' good and trustful work. There should also be a sense of confirmability, where the researcher would address that there was no personal valuations brought into the research and that the execution and result was not coloured by the aim of proving the theoretical framework right..³

No hypothesis will be made, instead the conclusion will be drawn by analyzing some given important variables from the case with the theoretical framework. The risk of having a hypothesis guiding the essay to a conclusion will be lower. The aim is having a conclusion guided by the theoretical work in connection with the case findings.

The variables will be picked from some overarching categories which seem to affect the conflict the most according to the used literature. First, there will be a presentation of the past and the present with a short conflict summary and a description of the LTTE and the perception of them. This is made to give a small picture of the conflict's complex nature. Second, Sri Lanka's international relations involving politics, economy and organizations will be presented. Third, there will be a presentation of the political situation within the country. Fourth, there will be a look at the rebuilding and reconciliation of the society and the rehabilitation of the victims, and what are implemented. The first two categories are important since they shaped the conflict, while the last three categories are picked since they highly affect the situation today.

The theoretical framework will be compared and analyzed with relevant case findings, in trying to find out how the current situation in post-war Sri Lanka are developing in the search for positive peace.

¹ Bryman 2008, 368-369

² Bryman 2008, 354-356

³ Bryman 2008, 354-356

1.3 Limitations and Acknowledgements

The results from this work neither claim to illustrate all the problems nor the full solution to the Sri Lankan issues with reaching positive peace. However, the purpose is to show some aspects in which the work may have failed or succeed. The different categories investigated are picked since they seem to be the most relevant based on the literature being used and earlier knowledge in the case. Having a personal background in the country, issues may be raised regarding my political stance. With a family belonging to the Christian middle-class minority in a war-unaffected part of the North-Western Province, I never had a greater personal concern about the LTTE. However, my view has always been a unified Sri Lanka rather than a split one, but with a society in peace and equal rights among the people.

This essay will preferably require some knowledge of the background of the Sri Lankan conflict. The conflict will be shortly summarised, as well as its main sides; the government and the guerrilla LTTE. The conflict has no clear bad and good side; it is rather grey and severely infected after years of divided societies and fears, some of its roots which will be presented.

2 Theory

2.1 Positive Peace

Peace as a term is hard to define. The Peace and Conflict Studies guru Johan Galtung has tried to divide peace into two major distinctions; negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace refers to existing conflicts where the violence is absent. A state not dealing with internal violence or wars with neighbouring states could by this be defined as states in negative peace. To say when a society has reached a situation of positive peace is hard to define and dependant on several variables. SIPRI do annually present data of the world's states in a list called Global Peace Index. 23 important variables, divided into three categories, are evaluated.⁴

- *Measures of ongoing domestic and international conflict* – indicators measures the state's ongoing intra- and interstate wars.
- *Measures of societal safety and security* – focus on several aspects, from crime rates and perceived civil safety to human rights standards.
- *Measures of militarization* – a state's military build ups, access to weapons etc.

Defining positive peace is hard even for the experts in the field, with many variables needed to be taken into account. To make a short definition in this essay, these three categories will be kept in mind. Does the state experience ongoing conflicts and how does it deal with the militarization and safety regarding the civil population and the respect for human rights?

2.2 Peacemaking & Peacebuilding

To bring a conflict situation to an end or prevent it from further escalation, two main overarching categories of strategic framework might be used; peacemaking and peacebuilding. The goal with peacemaking is to deal with the

⁴ SIPRI Yearbook 2009, 85-90

most urgent factors of the ongoing conflict. This may be dealt by both peaceful and violent means. The outcome may not be an overwhelming peace, but at least a situation where the direct violence has ended. The direct peace methods used in the peacemaking category may result in a situation where the physical armed conflict is absent, but the conflict as such still exists; a state of negative peace.⁵ With peacebuilding, the goal is positive peace. This structural framework is often signified by long-term conflict solving, where the goal is to deal with the problems' roots and prevent further negative spread. In short, peacemaking and its direct strategies are addressed to settle conflicts, while peacebuilding and its structural methods often takes over to achieve stabilization and long-term peace. Instead of negative peace where the conflicts remain, the goal for societies must be substantial positive peace.⁶

To either to prevent or settle a conflict, there is a need to identify the elements that trigger the negative situation. These elements could be global, such as poverty. They could also be specific for the conflict, such as interstate discrimination towards some groups of people. As soon as the elements triggering the conflict are identified, the focus must be on solving them. Depending on which phase the conflict has reached, the aims of the actions for peace will vary. In an underlying conflict which has not gone as far as escalating into something more severe, the goal will probably be preventing it from further negative development. When it has already become an active conflict, the goals may vary from management of it to settlement. When it has been settled, the goal may shift to approaches with more long-term peaceful results, such as resolution or transformation.⁷ Seen by this, the structural peacebuilding approach seems to be used particularly before a severe conflict has emerged, or when a conflict has become settled. The direct peacemaking approaches are rather used to halt an active conflict.⁸

When peacemaking strategies have been carried out positively, the result may be that the conflict will be referred to as solved. Peace treaties might have been signed or the main enemies to peace may have been defeated. Nonetheless, the underlying conflict may still exist and the society will therefore be dealing with a situation of negative peace. A state may be in peace by looking at the treaties, but the reality where soldiers are patrolling the streets to keep the security and where small armed gangs still remain, says something different. A state like Nicaragua are not mentioned in reports of countries struggling with even minor conflicts, but the small armed organized multiparty structures existing there could in the worst of situations easily be the spark of a interstate conflict.⁹ Most of today's conflicts seem to be linked with poorer developing countries, the most of them internal where the competitions are between two or more clearly defined identity groups. The number of conflicts in the world seems to be on a constant height; even

⁵ Price 2010, 530

⁶ Ramsbotham 2005, et al

⁷ Sandole 2010, 33-34

⁸ Ramsbotham 2005, et al

⁹ Lederach 1997, 5-10

though some come to an end, new ones emerge.¹⁰ Several of them are linked to the same regions; conflict's floating nature tends to spread over state borders. With this in mind, there seem to be a need to view conflicts not just within a state with negative tendencies, but rather in whole regions which in situation of conflict may be troubled with its spill over effects. It is here Lederach's overarching thoughts about peacebuilding comes to its main points. Direct strategies for peace may settle the most alarming troubles such as full scale war, but structural ones must be used to reach situations of positive peace.

Liberal peacebuilding is a concept used with great promotion from the West. With this liberal peacebuilding, much emphasis is put on democratization processes and the building of market economies and building of institutions which would promote the modernization of the societies and underpin the peacebuilding. Though prosperous examples from the West, the result has been far from perfect in states such as Bosnia, Sierra Leone, Northern Ireland and even Sri Lanka during the early 2000's. While theoretically good institutions and frameworks may have been built, individual and group perspectives have tended to be overlooked. The liberal peace is transferred with force and dependent on outsiders, all in trying to reach the same good results as the role models. What is missed out is the root perspective, where the individuals do get rights but remain largely unaffected by the liberal changes, this making them undermined. Here too, a wider view is required to meet the civil society's needs and demands in the peacebuilding.¹¹

Focus shall still be on settling the conflict, but it shall also be on the post-war situation. As important; the peacebuilding must have a holistic view, covering not just the top leaders but the entire affected society and its components.¹²

2.3 Reconciliation

The fear of the enemy may be deeply rooted because of the often long-term existed nature of conflict and the highly negative perception of the enemy, who in many cases are living just around the corner. With this follows a great challenge in trying to overcome these negative perceptions and fears. This polarized fear is a great instrument which many leaders create, reinforce and use when trying to win power and distinct themselves from the enemy – "*If we don't dominate, we will be dominated*".¹³ Because of conflicts' floating nature and their unique dimensions, different conflicts needs their own kind of solving; all conflicts can not be solved by exactly the same framework.¹⁴ However, there are some needs which have to

¹⁰ Lederach 1997, 10

¹¹ Richmond 2009, 55-57, 68-72

¹² Sandole 2010, 33-36, 43

¹³ Lederach 1997, 15

¹⁴ Lederach 1997, 23

be focused on in the building of a sustainable peace; such as reconciliation among the people, the involvement of the whole society and its leaders in the peacebuilding process, make effective transformations of the negative systems acting in the conflict and find the core of the deep rooted problems.¹⁵

The goal with reconciliation is to build new relationships between antagonists. This requires them to meet and come to terms with the past and the future, to deal with what has happened and what kind of future they want to have. The relations between them may be highly infected, but it is of great importance that the parties feel a need to solve the problems and that there is some mutual respect between them in the peace negotiations. The vision shall not be on finding a perpetrator and a victim, but about how to do better in the future.¹⁶ Reconciliation can be seen as built on four cornerstones; truth, justice, mercy and peace. There must be trustfulness and acknowledgements about what has happened and things have to be dealt with in fairness and justice, but influenced on forgiveness and acceptance rather than an eye for an eye. Reconciliation make place for the painful past to be revealed, but also for truth and mercy to meet in hope for a peaceful future.¹⁷

2.4 The Leadership Pyramid

Too achieve successful long-term results, more than just the top leaders of the society must be involved in the peace process. Different types of leaders from different levels of society need to be approached with different types of strategies.¹⁸ With the help from Lederach's leadership pyramid, three overarching levels of leadership can be seen in comparison with the number of population affected by conflict. The pyramid is pictured with the top leaders in the narrow top, with the middle-range leaders in the broader part and the grassroots leaders at the great bottom. The top leaders, such as politicians and important military or religious figures, represent the first level; track 1. Here the focus is on high-level negotiations and emphasis on cease-fires. The second level, track 2, with middle-range leaders involves academics, NGO:s, leaders in respected sectors and different kind of ethnic and religious leaders. These kinds of actors make room for strategies such as peace commissions, workshops and training in conflict resolution. Track 3's grassroots leaders represent leaders of local communities, health officials and local NGO:s, to mention a few.¹⁹ It is the top leaders who traditionally are the most involved when dealing with direct strategies for peace. They are the ones who are seen as the main leaders of their society, and therefore the ones who got the ability to contribute in peace negotiations and sign the

¹⁵ Lederach 1997, 151-152

¹⁶ Lederach 1997, 33

¹⁷ Lederach 1997, 29-31

¹⁸ Richmond 2009, 72-74

¹⁹ Sandole 2010, 44-45

treaties, as well as being among the head targets in violent disputes. However, conflicts can rarely only be solved from the top in hope for the rest of the society to follow. Decisions made from high instances are far from always met with support from the society, often due to peoples' feelings of having needs or opinions which has not been met and acknowledged by the decision makers in the top. Seen by the holistic peace view, the structural work must include as many parts of the society as possible. According to Lederach's theories, the middle-range leaders here become a key factor. Positioned in the middle of the leadership pyramid, they got the ability to influence both the top leaders and the society with help from the grassroots leaders. They got a connection to both track 1 and 3, known to the top leaders but working among the grassroots, often with a great sense of trust. They got ability to make an impact of the political power, but can work under greater flexibility. They also know the context of the people in the grassroots levels, but are fare less affected by daily survival vulnerability.²⁰ Their difficulties are many times their lack of recognition, since they might be dismissed because they do not represent the official power in hand. Lederach argues for greater support of middle-range actors in conflict situations, since they with their unique balance between top and bottom might be the ones who are the most effective actors in the building of a long-term peace.²¹

2.5 The Participants and the Deep Rooted Causes

Conflicts leave its participants in new realities when they have seized to be. Former soldiers must become normal citizens and the victims must be able to move on. The infrastructure needs to be rebuilt, as well as different institutions. Two well applied strategies to transform post-war societies are Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR). The aim with DDR is to disarm and demobilize former warring parties, including women and children, and reintegrate them in the post-war society. This could be made by offering them help with treatment and new occupations, sometimes in the military or police institutions. The SSR focus lies on with a holistic view rebuild the society and its infrastructure and institutions. These strategies are most recognized used by the UN's peacekeeping forces, but may still be an important factor in getting the war affected people back to normal life in peace and thereby preventing further recurrence of violence.²²

The most crucial part in the peacebuilding process may be to identify the deep rooted causes of the conflict, and these need to be dealt with to reach an end to the conflict. By direct methods for peace, this may as told be done by eliminating the clearest enemy or sign a peace treaty. But the root causes are

²⁰ Sandole 2010, 44-48

²¹ Lederach 1997, 94-95

²² Jarstad & Sisk 2008, et al

rarely just some political leaders; it traces further back in complexity touching issues like poverty, discrimination and fear of the enemy. The societies here need to deal with the task of going beyond the physical issues, looking at aspects regarding the conflicts social, economic and political roots.²³ Raising awareness, targeting these roots and dealing with them successfully may pave the way for a positive peace where the people hopefully are reconciled. Positive peace is a process which reaches beyond peace agreements and military victories. It needs to put the underlying conflict tendencies to light and dealing with its roots. The goal is to overcome the conflict society's mistrusts and deal with its wrong-doings. The goal is to strengthen the society and make the peace solid, and by that preventing it from relapsing into conflict.²⁴

2.6 Analytical Tools

In trying to find out the path Sri Lanka is on in its peacebuilding process, four important needs in building of substantial peace can be picked from Lederach's peacebuilding theories:

- Reconciliation among the people
- Involvement of the whole society and its leaders in the peacebuilding process
- Make effective transformations of the negative systems acting in the conflict
- Find the core of the deep rooted problems and deal with them

How does the reconciliation processes develop and what issues affect the people? To which extent do the different levels of the society affect the process and what is being done? Which are the negative systems and what is done about them? And maybe the most important; are the deep rooted problems identified and what is done in solving them? By looking at several different aspects of the Sri Lankan conflict and post-war society with these needs in mind, a conclusion about the country's development towards peace may be reached.

²³ Price 2010, 531

²⁴ Price 2010, 531

3 Case Study

3.1 Short Conflict Background and Summary

The Sri Lankan conflict is mainly between the Sinhalese (74 % of the population) and the Tamil minority (18 %), with roots that can be traced back to the years of the British colonization.²⁵ Sri Lanka got several different minority groups with different religions, with the Sinhalese overrepresented in the south and west, and the Tamils in the north and east. The conflict does not have any certain religious motives, it was created by the inequalities between the groups, where English speaking Tamils had a favoured position among the colonists, making the Sinhalese feel alienated within their own country.²⁶ Sri Lanka, then called Ceylon, became independent in 1948. The state was officially a democracy, but the Sinhalese nationalist movement influenced the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and they in turn left the Tamil minority with a disproportionate political share. To prevent further anti-Tamil feelings, several attempts to strike a post-colonial balance were tried in hope of generating fairness and equal opportunities among the people.²⁷ Instead, the disproportional share was intensified when the newly elected government in 1956 proclaimed the Sinhalese Only Bill, giving the country only one official language; the Sinhala - leaving the Tamils and Tamil speaking Muslim community aside. The act was seen as a way for the GoSL to secure Sinhalese representation in the highest administrations.²⁸ With further disadvantageous development for the Tamils which included being denied equal opportunities for education and employment, mainstream politicians began to advocate for a separate Tamil state (Tamil Eelam). By this new vision and the denial from the GoSL, several armed groups emerged among the Tamil youths, which put the ground for the forming of The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, *LTTE*.²⁹

Tension arose between the GoSL forces and the LTTE, which became both the Tamils leading political voice and armed force. In the wake of a deadly Tamil ambush killing 13 Sri Lankan Army soldiers in 1983, riots by Sinhalese

²⁵ Price 2010, 533

²⁶ Arambewela 2010, 370-371

²⁷ Arambewela 2010, 371

²⁸ Samarasinghe 2009, 440

²⁹ Arambewela 2010, 371-372

extremists began to spread around the capital and the south. The anger was directed on Tamil civilians, killing hundreds in violent acts which lasted for days until GoSL put in forces to regain control. 400,000 Tamils fled to India and Western countries. These happenings gave the spark to what became the Sri Lankan Civil War, which lasted for 26 years. Several attempts were made to stop the war, such as interventions from India and peace negotiations. The ceasefire in 2002 became criticized from all sides. Some saw it as an opportunity for GoSL to build international support against LTTE, while others saw it as an opportunity for LTTE to rebuild new strengths for a final battle. The ceasefire began to crack when Mahinda Rajapaksa was elected president in 2006. He had won with great support from Sinhalese voters, but with very few from the Tamil and Muslim side. The war restarted in 2006 and the aim was clear, GoSL would not trust LTTE in another negotiation. GoSL under Rajapaksa were prepared to put the war to a final end with military means.³⁰

The GoSL Army made great military wins and advanced far north, securing areas which for decades had been under LTTE control. The GoSL army managed to successfully capture LTTE in smaller areas, while the guerrilla in desperation brought civilians into the last battles, in accusation of using them as human shields. Without witnessing journalists and with accusation of violation of human rights, the GoSL captured and killed the endorsed LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran in May 2009, declaring LTTE defeated and the civil war over.³¹

3.2 Who Were the LTTE?

The discrimination of the Tamil minority by the GoSL became a spark for resistance. Sri Lanka was a multiethnic state, but acted in its politics as the opposite and the great Sinhalese majority were favoured. What among the Tamil's started as non-violent campaigns, moved towards a struggle with military means.³²

The Sinhalese fear of a Tamil movement may be explained as a majority's minority complex. The Tamils are a minority in a national context, but seen in a geopolitical context they are in majority; 60 million Tamils are living in Tamil Nadu, the southern tip of India. While the Tamils before the outbreak of the war feared for their legal rights, the Sinhalese feared for a split of the island with the pressure from Tamil Nadu.³³ The complex was further triggered due to the Tamil minority's stronger positions during the British rule and especially after the violent acts from armed Tamil youths, which made large portions of the Sinhalese

³⁰ Samarasinghe 2009, 442-444

³¹ Samarasinghe 2009, 444

³² Orjuela 2010, 15

³³ Samarasinghe 2010, 451

people perceive them as a threat to their identity and security. After the riots in 1983, the support for an armed struggle towards independence grew massively among the Tamils and also from India.³⁴

The GoSL became the clear enemy which led to calls for a Tamil unity, concealing differences in class, caste, gender and background. The LTTE became the outstanding dominant force and anyone criticizing them was labelled a traitor. The two leading Sinhalese parties often expressed fear of the LTTE led Tamil movement, labelling them as terrorists which fuelled the ethnic conflict.³⁵

The LTTE became internationally labelled as a terrorist organization from several countries and organizations, including USA, India and the EU. Fuelling this decision may have been their reputation of having the highest rate of suicide bomb attacks in the world, killing both the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President Premadasa in the early 90's.³⁶ Despite this, they remained being the natural spokespersons for the Tamil people, liquidating competing Tamil leadership and having great support among both the Sinhalese Tamils in Sri Lanka and the great diaspora abroad. Approximately one-fourth of the Sri Lankan Tamil population is living abroad, a highly influential community accountable for raising great sums of money to the LTTE over the years.³⁷ Besides this, the LTTE became a network which in its controlled areas in the north and east established its own mini-state.³⁸

As late as 2006, a military end by the GoSL in the conflict seemed far away in the eyes of the expertise. The LTTE with its ill met demands, well established networks and organized forces, involving even children and women, could not be defeated by the GoSL as long as they were unable to fight the war on both a tactical and strategic level.³⁹ By the time President Rajapakse began to tighten the Sri Lankan forces, the LTTE began to crack as the eastern leading commander Colonel Karuna broke out of LTTE and later joined the side of GoSL. The loss of strength in the east and the international label as a terrorist organization, was a great backlash for LTTE.⁴⁰ Battlefield success for the Sri Lankan Army and LTTE attacks in Colombo in the south increased the support among the Sinhalese population against what they considered an anti-terrorism war.⁴¹

The killing of leader Prabhakaran marked the end of the LTTE and the end of the war, but not the end of the conflict. The struggle for independence continue to have a great support among the diaspora, but the loss of a leading unified organization make the efforts nearly powerless.⁴²

³⁴ Orjuela 2010, 15

³⁵ Orjuela 2010, 16

³⁶ Pape 2003, 343

³⁷ Rupesinghe 2006, 269-271

³⁸ Rupesinghe 2006, 280

³⁹ Rupesinghe 2006, 288

⁴⁰ Orjuela 2010, 18-19

⁴¹ Mac Guinty 2010, 215

⁴² Orjuela 2010, 19

3.3 International Relations During and After the Civil War's Ending

When the war proceeded towards its ending stages and civilian casualties began to escalate, a great challenge came about as the warring LTTE groups moved into the no fire zones reserved for civilians. The situation became hard to tackle for the GoSL as the battles continued while LTTE forces held civilians hostage. The Sri Lankan army was sat under hard pressure from international media, donors, human rights groups and the huge Tamil diaspora, who all begged GoSL to end the violence and start negotiating with LTTE. GoSL wanted to keep on, trying to reach a final end of a war which would only relapse if negotiations would be attempted. GoSL further deported foreign media and unsuitable aid workers from the zones, denied entry from supposed pro-LTTE parliamentarians from Sweden and Canada and attacked local TV-stations and newspaper offices. The only journalists allowed entrance with the army were they considered reliable providers of unbiased information by the GoSL.⁴³ The mainstream media in Sri Lanka are to large extent controlled by the GoSL, known for presenting biased political information. Free media criticizing the rule are vulnerable and violence towards outspoken journalists occur.⁴⁴ Reporters Without Borders ranked Sri Lanka 165th out of 173 countries in its 2008 Press Freedom Index, which is a great decrease since 2002's score of 51st out of 139 countries.⁴⁵

The international community, with mainly the Western powers, has put hard pressure on Sri Lanka to ensure human rights, labour rights and good governance in the country.⁴⁶ Especially accusations of human rights violations have been met with anger from GoSL. GoSL have hailed the winning of the civil war as a success story in the global war on terrorism. On the contrary, the West, called for an investigation of human rights violations, upsetting the GoSL blaming the Western states for hypocrisy with the ongoing missions in Iraq and Afghanistan in mind. The GoSL have put much blame on the Tamil diaspora, believing them lobbying some states politicians into biased position against Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, other third-world countries take Sri Lanka party in question, preferring defend one of their own in these questions. The suspicion against the West have made GoSL to take action against journalists and NGO:s criticizing their methods, blaming them of being Western lackeys.⁴⁷ This has also been a brick in Sri Lankas shift with partners in trading and diplomatic issues. China and

⁴³ De Alwis 2010, 434-435

⁴⁴ Orjuela 2010, 51-55

⁴⁵ Samarasinghe 2009, 447-448

⁴⁶ Samarasinghe 2009, 455

⁴⁷ Samarasinghe 2009, 449-450

India are now becoming the country's most important trading partners and donors.⁴⁸ These partners are publically better suited for the GoSL. Western powers put demands for civil rights and justice to cooperate, while countries like China are working by the Asian model; they do not go around and teach others how to behave.⁴⁹ Instead, they work around the conflict with the respect of the sovereignty.⁵⁰ The increasing interest from China and India has made the both states willing to put support for Sri Lanka, including military.⁵¹

3.4 The Political Climate in Sri Lanka

GoSL is very proud to present Sri Lanka as one of the developing world's eldest democracies. They also got a history of peaceful changes in the political power, often altering between the two historically main political parties; UNP and SLFP, and their associated parties. Issues are raised though because of the ethnically fragmented ways of voting. UNP and SLFP got a great support from the Sinhalese majority, which is much equally divided between the two parties. Each of these two parties normally reaches up to 1/3 of the Sinhalese voting electorates. The Tamil and Muslim minorities, together 25 % of the island's population, usually prefer to vote for their ethnic political parties.⁵² When President Rajapakse was elected in 2005, he could do it with an overwhelming majority of Sinhalese voter. The votes from the Sri Lankan Tamil and Muslim minorities were very low compared to other ethnic groups. The so-called plantation Tamils, who originate from Indian immigrants who came to work at the plantations during, have in tradition good relations with the major Sinhalese political parties.⁵³ The dominant discourse regarding political Sri Lanka has been that of a multi-cultural society, but where the Sinhalese are in clear majority and therefore dominate. With the LTTE out of picture, the domination has become even clearer. Today, there are no other political actors who can challenge the political situation unless the GoSL want to bring a change.⁵⁴ While the neighbour India has managed to hold together its multiethnic state, Sri Lanka has failed to integrate its ethnic groups for a common national vision.⁵⁵

Economic and moral arguments exist which suggest that ethnically diverse states should promote an inclusive society for all its citizens. While minority groups should be included in all political levels, the reality points out that many conflicts emerge because of underlying ethnic discrimination even in the national

⁴⁸ Orjuela 2010, 20

⁴⁹ De Alwis 2010, 435, 438

⁵⁰ Goodhand 2010, 345

⁵¹ Orjuela 2010, 17

⁵² Samarasinghe 2009, 450

⁵³ Samarasinghe 2009, 443-444

⁵⁴ Orjuela 2010, 19

⁵⁵ Samarasinghe 2009, 439

elections. Pre-1978, the Sri Lankan election system was based on a plurality model; a winner takes it all-model which gave room for acts such as the Sinhala Only Bill. This system was changed in 1978 to a party list with proportional representation, forcing the Sinhalese politicians to become more open in their minority views. As a bad coincidence, the armed violence began to emerge at the same time. As the violence came, the politics became heavily polarized and the leading Tamil party was excluded from the parliament.⁵⁶

The latest election held in 2010, the first election since the end of the civil war, stood between the sitting President Rajapaksa and his former ally, Army General Sarath Fonseka. Both had been driven by the Sinhalese nationalist agenda with crucial involvement in the war's ending, and both were dependent on the Tamil vote. Fonseka proved to win in the north and eastern regions with a prominent deal of Tamil voters. Notwithstanding, riding on the waves of the success in the war, Rajapaksa won in the Sinhalese regions, giving him the national election victory. The election was heavily polarized between the parties and tension was created in the aftermath, indicating that further divides and conflicts are likely to occur in even in future Sri Lankan politics.⁵⁷

To make your voice heard, it is highly preferable to be on the GoSL side. The few leading Tamil politicians who are not, have focused on the cause of internally displaced persons (IDP). The ones who are with the GoSL focus on addressing the Tamils troubles and the reconstruction of their societies.⁵⁸ Even though low, there are expectations for political change which would entail getting the Tamils into the state. One is on the long-planned power devolution to the provinces, which would allow more self-rule for Tamils in the provinces which they dominate. This is not likely to be implemented in a near future though. This power should be devolved to provincial councils, which has been promised to be implemented since 1987, but which in the eastern and northern provinces have been put to the future due to the war. The GoSL is also divided in the question of devolution, since many nationalist figures rather believe in the unitary of the state. The GoSL are not likely to implement further devolution unless President Rajapaksa takes the lead, which seems unlikely due to his earlier lack of interest. Hopes for power sharing exist too, where the Prime Minister post could be reserved for a represent of a minority group. However, these visions are clashing with Rajapaksa's unitary visions. His manifesto since the end of the war has been for a unified Sri Lanka, where people votes as Sri Lankans and recognize themselves not as Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslims, Burghers or other minorities, but as ones who love their country and ones who does not.^{59 60}

In the hopes for political transformations, the issue of good governance may be important in the longer peace perspective. A first step would be the implementation of the heavy civil society supported 17th amendment. The

⁵⁶ Sharif 2010, 277-279

⁵⁷ Orjuela 2010, 19

⁵⁸ Samarasinghe 2009, 446

⁵⁹ Samarasinghe 2009, 451-453

⁶⁰ Orjuela 2010, 23

amendment would establish a National Constitutional Council, which would have the authority to recommend suitable individuals for state institutions, as to major offices of the state. The President would be able to reject their recommendations, but not being able to pick candidates.⁶¹ President Rajapaksa has so far avoided implementation of this act, instead picking brothers and cousins to some of the highest posts within the GoSL. Overall, the political landscape of Sri Lanka has been ruled by political families, linked together through generations.⁶²

3.5 What is Done for the Rebuilding, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation?

President Rajapaksa was really early on clear with his stance towards LTTE; they were a group which stood in the way of Sri Lanka's development and also a part which could not be negotiated with anymore.⁶³ The GoSL were prone to label LTTE as a terrorist organisation, which in speculation could give GoSL an international push in the ongoing war on terrorism. As a consequence of the surrounding of the LTTE into smaller areas in the north, the civilians came at the crossfire. Civilians were reported to be held as human shields by the LTTE, which made the numbers of civilian casualties to rise when the Sri Lankan army decided to carry on with their attacks. Overall, the conflict came with a high price on human lives; the conflict was in 2008 responsible for the highest number of battle-related deaths globally.⁶⁴ While the GoSL urged for national celebration, the President drew parallels between himself and Kings of the past with high rising popularity among the Sinhalese. The GoSL announced a national Victory Day and portions of the Tamil minority hoisted the national flag in fear of the consequences if they did not.⁶⁵ Although the military phase of the conflict has ended, a great work is left in treating the victims, rebuilding of the societies and reach reconciliation among the people. The numbers of displaced persons are huge, as well as the number of people who have experienced the violence. A large portion of the northern and eastern areas are underdeveloped or destroyed as a result of the war. Ensuring the Tamil peoples' rights, President Rajapaksa has promised the international community that he will reach a political solution to address the Tamil grievances.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Samarasinghe 2009, 453-454

⁶² Uyangoda (Orjuela edit) 2010, 55-58

⁶³ Samarasinghe 2010, 443

⁶⁴ Orjuela 2010, 9

⁶⁵ Orjuela 2010, 9-10

⁶⁶ Price 2010, 536-539

3.5.1 Internally Displaced Persons

When launching the offensives, the GoSL threw out unwelcomed media and limited the access for NGO:s, both international and national, some of them Tamil aid organizations. This affected the humanitarian standards and increased the civilians' vulnerability.⁶⁷ It is argued that the greatest concern for the GoSL is the large groups of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who remain in camps in the north. By being trapped inside their own country and therefore not being referred to as refugees, they were not a subject of protection under international law. Instead, they were and remain under the GoSL sovereign responsibility. Being displaced close to the conflict zone, they have been much susceptible to violence, lacking access to humanitarian aid.⁶⁸ In supposed fear of investigations for war crimes, the GoSL have tried to prevent information from the war zones and the camps to leak, making the truth shrouded in mystery. According to testimonies from the areas points towards atrocities made by the national forces, were civilians trapped in the fire zones were treated as combatants. The army launched well planned attacks from multiple fronts, making the civilians flee through difficult landscapes. Clean water and medical help became hard to find and food more expensive, resulting in cases of starvation. Hundreds of thousands became interned in camps as IDPs. The UN, international humanitarian agencies and media were ordered to leave the areas and have not been allowed back into the areas since.⁶⁹ Even with the armed war over, the Sri Lankan Army is growing, making Sri Lanka the by far most militarized country in South Asia compared to its size. Some are recruited by DDR processes, bringing soldiers from former Tamil paramilitary groups, even if there are no plans to date to integrate former LTTE soldiers into the national army.^{70 71} Not just living under bad circumstances inside the camps, many of the IDPs may have been exposed to traumatic violence, including being held as human shields under army shelling. The President promised to begin to close the camps when the war ended, but the process has been slow. The goal of the GoSL is to peacefully reintegrate the IDPs into the new Sri Lankan society, including secure a safe return to their homelands and improve their relation to the state. Meanwhile, the IDPs inside the camps are very much unaware of the processes involving their reintegration. They are treated as a collective mass of suspects, prevented from forming communities inside the camps in risk of mobilisations. Witness reports about the IDPs tell stories about people who has just given up, sitting quiet on the ground like a defeated population. Much unaware of their rights, some of them want to return home, while others rather stays until the security in their home areas can be assured.⁷² By

⁶⁷ Price 2010, 529-530

⁶⁸ Price 2010, 529-532

⁶⁹ Somasundaram 2010, 2-6

⁷⁰ Samarasinghe 2009, 437

⁷¹ Goodhand 2010, 356

⁷² Price 2010, 536-538

the September 2010, the UNHCR reported that approximately 156,000 IDPs had returned to their home regions, while 108,000 still remained displaced.⁷³

3.5.2 Rebuilding

As the situation is now, many of the IDPs have no home to return to. Basic infrastructure is broken, with hospitals and school needed to be built and roads to be reconstructed. Housing, communications, electricity and water systems need to be restored before relocating the victims.⁷⁴ Almost every house in the underdeveloped northern areas is reported to be damaged and destroyed according to the Red Cross.⁷⁵ For GoSL, the rebuilding is a central issue in unifying the country. The country had reached a victor's peace, where the peace now is enforced on the society. The GoSL view of reconciliation is meant satisfying the society's basic needs with education, clean water, electricity and shelter, while other reconciliation processes are set aside. Extensive investment is put on the infrastructure with thousands of kilometres roads to be built and economic investments in power plants and tourist initiatives for the east. Getting self-sufficient in the agriculture sector is a top goal. It is a top-bottom driven development, which is criticized for putting negotiations about the deep rooted causes in the shade. The involvement of middle-range actors and political structure changes are put aside for post-war reconstruction program with a presumed cost of 1,8 billion USD over four years.⁷⁶

3.5.3 The Sri Lankan Collective Trauma

In the early 2000's, surveys made by the German University of Konstanz in the much war affected region of Vanni in northern Sri Lanka, found out that 92 % of the primary school test group children had been exposed to potentially terrorizing experiences, including armed violence and witnessing deaths of loved ones.⁷⁷ Many people have also gone through other traumatic experiences without being treated, including the great tsunami in 2004. Samples from surveys investigating traumatic experiences among IDP children in the north-east just prior the army offensive, proved that the tsunami for many children were just as traumatic as the war, for some even worse. 70 % of the children of the sample had been traumatized by the war to some degree.⁷⁸ Both the war and tsunami, which

⁷³ Arambewela 2010, 373

⁷⁴ Arambewela 2010, 374

⁷⁵ Price 2010, 539

⁷⁶ Goodhand 2010, 351-355

⁷⁷ Somasundaram 2010, 6

⁷⁸ Catani 2009, 3-8

affected the already poor Tamil minority hard, have stressed a need for rebuilding of homes and treatments of its victims. The country as its whole got a decent living standard, good education and newborn children may expect a long healthy life, a rate even higher than East European standards. This statistics are not accountable for the northern and eastern areas though. A great need for social work is stressed, one kind of workingforce which Sri Lanka lacks in academic professionals. There are a lot of people working with social work issues, but few who got the education needed. Instead, the social work has often been taken care of the uneducated civilians, such as former orphans who has stayed in their institutions their whole lives. Only the war have resulted in approximately 350,000 IDPs, while there seen to the whole country probably are nearly half a million people in need of social work support due to war and natural disasters. Even if the civil society may play a good part in the social rehabilitation, the country would need more educated social workers to help the many who are in need of support.⁷⁹

The long violent history which for the civil society culminated with full scaled war, resulting in displacements, killings and mysterious disappearances of loved ones, have provoked what can be described as a collective trauma among the affected. Traumatic stories unknown for many Sinhalese remains to be told in a wider context.⁸⁰ There are few models of reconciliations existing in the principles of universal human rights. Popular models to refer to are those used in Ireland and South Africa, where the civil society have had a part in the reconciliation process, i.e. from truth commissions.⁸¹ However, there exist examples from where the civil society's involvements have spoiled the peace process. There where several mobilised pro-peace groups who supported the peace talks, efforts which became spoiled when Sinhalese nationalist groups demanded the international initiators out of the talks.⁸²

⁷⁹ Zavirsek 2010, et al

⁸⁰ Somasundaram 2010, et al

⁸¹ Arambewela 2010, 374

⁸² Jarstad & Sisk 2008, 197-198

4 Analysis

It could be argued that Sri Lanka has gone into a new period of negative peace. The armed conflict is now absent, but as the underlying conflict is far from solved. Sri Lanka can not yet qualify as a society recognized by positive peace. Nevertheless, is the country on its way to such a state?

4.1 The Reconciliation Processes

President Rajapaksa did declare the ethnic diversity as somewhat of a dead term after the war's ending. Instead, he described the people of Sri Lanka as people who love their country and people who do not. This could be seen as inclusive for the minorities, but also threatening. Who decides which people love their country or not?⁸³ Are the people who fought for an independent Tamil Eelam loving Sri Lanka? What will happen with their rights if they are considered not to? What may increase the Tamil discomfort is the GoSL's view of the LTTE. As noted, the LTTE was more than just an organization; it was a network controlling whole societies with backing from a huge Tamil diaspora. The LTTE was the dominant voice for the Tamil peoples' fight for Tamil Eelam, separated from a Sri Lanka many did not feel they were belonging to. Officially declaring the LTTE a terrorist organization and with a military offensive characterized by high civilian costs, the situation became extreme. The Victory Day celebration and its surrounding issues could illustrate the infected split. While GoSL called for celebration, hundreds of thousands Tamils had been displaced, killed and had their hometowns demolished. A Tamil acceptance of the GoSL and the society they represented could have been easier.

A start would be to put major efforts in rebuilding their much destroyed societies and infrastructure. The outcome of the rebuilding plans are yet to be seen, but there are theories suggesting that a major rebuilding process may be the key in winning the hearts and minds of the Tamils. Securing the IDPs and other civilians return to good conditions may increase their trust in the GoSL and enhance the reconciliation process.⁸⁴ The greatest fear is if the rebuilding becomes the only reconciliation process. As noted in the negative effects of liberal peacebuilding, focus on only economic related development will not solve the

⁸³ Orjuela 2010, 24

⁸⁴ Price 2010, 539

problem. The GoSL puts efforts in rebuilding, but if the individuals are left outside and the deep rooted causes unaddressed, then the conflict may be left unsolved. The GoSL are enforcing a victor's peace with a risky outcome. Several of the GoSL sponsored plans in the east regarding business and tourism are locally feared to gain the Sinhalese centred power and foreign investors, in a modern form of interstate colonization.⁸⁵ Just as the former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe during the early 2000's believed that economic development would undermine the Tamil nationalism, the GoSL seem to believe that reconstruction will be a shortcut to security. Wickremasinghe's liberal peacebuilding failed in its difficulties of meet the civil need. The fate of Rajapaksa's similar strategy is in the hands of the future.^{86 87}

Also DDR processes are underway, where former soldiers are transformed into the still growing Sri Lankan army. However, none of them are former LTTE members active in the war's ending. Tamils are treated as suspects, even the civilian IDPs who are guarded by heavy military security arrangements in the camps. In getting through with the reconciliation, the GoSL must let go of parts of their anxiety and be more broadminded. The Tamils were the clear losers and if the GoSL want a unified Sri Lanka, then it has to be unified for everyone. Hopefully, improvements will be made in time as the war related anxiety let go. This involves the Sri Lankan army, which has been growing even if the war has ended. Seeing soldiers patrolling every IDP camp and crossover in Colombo will not increase the feelings of true security. Overall, Sri Lanka becomes even more militarized while the civil safety does not seem to increase much, seeming to be moving away from the primary positive peace development.

With a lot of citizens with traumatic memories from the war, there is a need for social work support. Many societies have been exposed to what can be described as collective trauma, which have to be dealt with. Reports from IDP camps indicate that people have given up their faith in their future. Other reports show high rates of people been affected with war related traumatizing events. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka is reported having lack of educated social workers who could be useful in these tasks. The GoSL must put greater efforts in dealing with the large numbers of people needing social support to get back in the society and its reconciliation process.

Today, no one under 25 years of age (46 % of the population) have ever experienced a peaceful Sri Lanka, and another 23 % were under 15 years of age when the war emerged.⁸⁸ If the peoples' needs are not met, there is a risk of a collapsing reconciliation process. The huge Tamil diaspora, still in anger with the GoSL and their violent acts, has certainly not given up their faith in a Tamil Eelam. If the civilians are not met with enough inclusiveness, the emergence of

⁸⁵ Goodhand 2010, 355

⁸⁶ Venugopal (Newman, Paris, Richmond edit) 2009, et al

⁸⁷ Goodhand 2010, 360

⁸⁸ Samarasinghe 2009, 457

new nationalistic networks in the legacy of the LTTE and with support from the Tamil diaspora would not be unthinkable.

4.2 The Society's Involvement

Sri Lanka is a country ruled by an elite of powerful families. It is a top-bottom driven society where the minor leaders may find it hard to get their voices heard. The important track two negotiators from Lederach's theories do not seem to have that strong recognition from the GoSL as wished for in a post war developing society. Human rights organizations and NGO:s were kicked out from the warring zones already from the beginning of the offensive. Many of them remain unwelcomed back, several blamed of being pro-western or pro-LTTE lackeys, which does not promote the positive peace process.⁸⁹

The relations with Western powers have become weakened, as concerns with the GoSL's treatment of Tamil civilians have been expressed. While the UN and several Western powers have blamed the GoSL for state supported repression and violence towards the Tamil minority, the GoSL have blamed the Western powers of hypocrisy with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in mind. In addition, the GoSL have enhanced its relations with China and India. While Western cooperation partners put interest in human development and civilian rights, countries like China has other policies which will not put as much pressure on Sri Lanka regarding these issues.

Seen from the material, Sri Lanka does not seem to have strong links between the different levels of society, especially as the GoSL opposes further power devolution to the provinces and its institutions. As a result of the war, organizations that could have put important work in the track two fields were kicked out from the affected zones. The ones that are welcomed back seem to lack recognition from the GoSL, which would be important to promote change. Instead, reporting the affected peoples needs and grievances to the GoSL will be the task of trusted partners. This may mainly involve politicians working with the GoSL, some of them fighting for the Tamil societies' rights. NGO:s, human rights organizations, other politicians or parts of the civilian society, may be neglected. Media and organizations criticizing the GoSL have been accused of being Western lackeys looking for money. The bad relations with Western countries are negative for the reconciliation process and the civil societies' involvement. As the Western powers want to see an inclusive strategy involving the whole society, the GoSL are working the other way around, opposing power devolution and puts a lot of trust in military solving.⁹⁰

Post-war Sri Lanka seems to proceed with its highly top-concentrated power centralization. More inclusive strategies involving the whole society may

⁸⁹ Goodhand 2010, 353

⁹⁰ Price 2010, 450

be needed, but the GoSL's anxiety of losing power is in the way. Not to forget their unwillingness to adopt policies of Western powers that in perceived hypocrisy is pointing its finger about Sri Lanka's wrongs and rights. While the GoSL got a strong hold of the power, the civil society seems much uninvolved.

4.3 Transformations of Negative Systems

The Sri Lankan conflict have been affected by several negative systems during the conflict, but the two major might be connected to two counterparts; the Sri Lankan political system and the Tamil movement for Tamil Eelam.

The Sri Lankan political system has a long history of being affected by ethnic voting and leaders bound to elite of political families. Blamed of being a multi-cultural society where the ethnic majority reigns, some improvements has been made to include the minorities, such as the proportional voting system. However, the choices of electorates still prove the Sinhalese domination. In the latest election of 2010, the main oppositional candidate which received the highest voting numbers from the Tamil eastern and northern provinces was Sarath Fonseka. Both Fonseka and President Rajapaksa had crucial roles in the army victory and both were looking for being recognized for it. One of them would be the next president and the Tamil minority had no other choice but to vote for the least bad alternative in hope of a better future. In addition, the two candidates developed a bitter rivalry, which got Fonseka under arrest alleged for military corruption soon after the elections.⁹¹

For a move towards a positive peace, good governance may be effective because of its nature where the decision makings by the state's institutions are done in a democratic, transparent and responsible way and where corruption is put aside. Working well, good governance could make questions about power devolution less important – a question the GoSL have showed little interest in during the struggle for a unified Sri Lanka.⁹² However, the GoSL do not seem to work in a way toward good governance either. The 17th amendment, where a National Constitutional Council are to pick the institutes' representatives, remain unimplemented. Instead, the president is picking his own ministers, many of them relatives. The power of Sri Lanka is shared among elite families whose own interest may go ahead of the state's best. The frostier connection between Sri Lanka and the Western world is one example. Sri Lanka is cooperating with states like India and China, states that do not ask questions about the country's human development. The Western states may show double standards in their critique of the war's ending, but neglecting assistance from organizations and other middle-

⁹¹ BBC, 2010-08-19

⁹² Price 2010 453-454

range initiatives which could help the hundreds of thousands civilians in need by calling them Western lackeys, make the GoSL put politics in front of the peoples' best. Sri Lanka got a long way to go in developing their political systems to be inclusive to all its citizens. The ruling parties do rarely want to give away their great power over the society, but in getting the civil society into the system they have to make some sacrifices. Developing good governance, integrating minorities better into the political system and try to break the elite families ruling over the country are some issues that must be put to question. As well as tolerating outside help for the human needs.

While the GoSL must change, the same goes for the Tamil diaspora. They got a great role in lifting up their peoples needs, but they may also spoil the peace process if not accepting a unified Sri Lanka. With the LTTE working as a highly developed network, great amounts of money could be transferred into its accounts from the diaspora which became an essential part in the LTTE's existence. No such unified group struggling for Tamil Eelam exists today, but if the Tamil dissatisfaction continues, the emerging of such a group would not be unrealistic. Efforts should be made to prevent such provoking activities from the diaspora. The LTTE was a terrorist organization with its violent attacks on civilians, and supporting them may have been a move in the struggle for a Tamil state, but not in a struggle for peace. Instead, the efforts must be focused in reforming the existing political system of Sri Lanka.

4.4 The Deep Rooted Causes

To identify the deep rooted causes, we must understand the central aspects of the conflict. Two main reasons may be recognized in this case; the alienated feelings among the Tamils who suffered from lack of rights and recognition, and the dual fear between the two major sides. As Sri Lanka may be considered being in a state of negative peace, these deep rooted causes must be put into attention and be dealt with. Otherwise, there will be a clear risk of relapsing into armed conflict.

4.4.1 The Tamil Alienation

Do the Tamils really feel like a part of the new Sri Lanka? Contrary from the days of the Sinhala Only Act, the Tamil language is now one of Sri Lanka's two official. The political election system is also more inclusive with its proportionate rules, even if the ethnic voting still is central. The biased nature might be seen from the latest election where oppositional candidate Fonseka clearly won the Tamils' votes. The prospect of the Tamil population getting a candidate of Tamil origin with real chances of winning a national election, seems far away today.

This as a result of the political climate and the present perception of Tamils among the Sinhalese since the war has just ended. Nevertheless, the Tamils need to be allowed to have stronger trusted voices in the GoSL.

The Sri Lankan army still got a high presence in the north, where the relatively well-paid soldiers are working with the physical infrastructural work. As noted, the rebuilding and infrastructural development is key question for the GoSL, which comes with risks, even within its implementation. Instead of letting the Tamil population into the rebuilding of their own societies paid by the GoSL, this more expensive inefficient alternative is depriving local workforces of jobs.⁹³ The growing Sri Lankan army is letting former Tamil combatants in, but none of those who fought for the LTTE. The GoSL seems to categorize the former LTTE controlled areas as unstable, having the military working to ensure a controlled rebuilding of the society. It may also be argued that the GoSL is afraid of employing Tamils who might have had connections with the LTTE and with their salaries possibly could support a new armed resistance. But with a poor unemployed and ill trusted Tamil civil society, their lack of permitted contribution to their societies may lay ground for new independence movements.

Fuelling the alienation to the most extreme may be the treatment the civilians, mainly Tamils, experienced in the war zones during the war's ending stages. Being between the LTTE and the GoSL army, they were put under fire and forced to flee from their damaged or destroyed homes. Some Tamils were, based on their ethnicity and suspected LTTE linkages, deported with current whereabouts unknown.⁹⁴ Hundreds of thousands were held in camps as IDPs and over 100,000 still remain, even if promised to return home as soon as possible. The return may be done to safe societies in good conditions which is a reason of the slow process. Meanwhile, the conditions in the camps are reported to be bad, isolated and the IDPs has little information about the surrounding world and their rights. Many of these IDPs are reported to be in bad psychological conditions. Question is if the GoSL would allow these kinds of treatments to larger groups of Sinhalese people, or if it is allowed to go this far because of ethnicity.

4.4.2 The Fear

The LTTE tactics involving clear terrorist activities provoked a deep fear among the Sinhalese since all civilians became potential targets. The same fear spread to the much threatened politicians, who also feared for a Tamil independence with support from Indian province Tamil Nadu. The fear among the Tamils came from two instances; the fear of not supporting the LTTE and the fear of the GoSL. And if the GoSL won the war, would they acknowledge the Tamils' legal rights? Above all, both groups had built up a polarized distance between each other after three decades of war and a post-colonial era defined by

⁹³ Samarasinghe 2010, 437

⁹⁴ Goodhand 2010, 352

separation, culminating with the riots and displacements of the early 80's. As the country celebrated Victory's Day in 2009 and driven by a state supported propaganda machine, many Sinhalese felt the conflict was solved. The unexpected LTTE bombings would have come to an end, as well as the violence in the north. For the Tamils who had become IDPs, got relatives killed or/and homes destroyed, the reality was something completely different. Having been living in a mini-state with a rule that had been eliminated, the Tamils from the former LTTE controlled areas had to be put in a new society under the former enemy's rule.

To get rid of the fear which underpins this serious conflict, its reasons should be put into light and letting the whole society be aware of the problem. For a Sinhalese, knowing that the armed conflict is over and all the terrorists killed are not the final solution of the overall conflict. To reach a positive peace, the issues regarding the conflict must be latent, confronted and negotiated to reach a sustainable peace.⁹⁵ To get rid of these existing fears, the GoSL and the regional leaders have a great responsibility to engage the whole society in overcoming these fears. The state's systems need to be more inclusive, the media more unbiased and active work need to be put into the societies involving treating, rebuilding and reconciling. Though have been putting efforts in rebuilding the demolished societies in the war torn areas, the GoSL have been taken several wrong steps since the war's end, even in the way they are making the rebuilding.

The celebration of Victory's Day was a symbolic bad start which put the polarized situation to light, and following efforts in expanding the army was not the right move to minimize the already existing fears. In South Asia's by far most militarized country, the soldiers can be seen everywhere. When travelling through the capital Colombo in late 2009, a soldier could be seen every 30 meter along the main roads. The IDP camps with war traumatized people are held and managed by soldiers. These military strategies that are used in the north in post-war societies may have bad consequences for the unified multi-ethnic Sri Lanka. The presence was motivated of security reasons during the war, but now this mainly ethnically Sinhalese army may be perceived as an occupation army by the civilians, fuelling the fear.

Half a million Sri Lankan's are in need of social work support, many of them because of traumatizing issues as a result of the conflict. In addition, there is a need of having social workers educated to provide efficient help. If the GoSL would switch its heavy army support into support for the cure of people with traumatizing memories and fears, maybe the need of an army in the future would decrease. The high presence of an army does not make the civilians necessarily calmer; rather it may be contra-productive. Instead, money should be but into systems of action which would work towards mutual understanding of the conflict and its roots, which would be an important part of dealing with both sides' fears.

⁹⁵ Lederach 1997, 67-71

5 Conclusion

The Sri Lankan Civil War has come to an end, but the conflict remains in the shade. The state has gone into a phase of negative peace, without clear concern about if it will relapse into conflict or not. The GoSL ended the armed conflict successfully by direct means. However, while the armed violence is now absent, the needed structural work is not going as successful. By looking at some crucial aspects of peacebuilding, it is worrying to see that the GoSL is failing in several parts of the long-term work. The criteria for positive peace set by SIPRI tells about a state on the wrong way. The state has a high and increasing military cost, which indicates that the GoSL is not convinced about the peace stability. This also affects the population's perceived safety negatively. Human rights are overlooked and the media's freedom low. Instead of dealing with the conflict's causes which are still existing related to ethnicity, politics, alienation and polarized fears, the GoSL seem to remain focused on the fear of a Tamil struggle for independence, while they at the same time want to solve the problem with economic development. It is a victor's peace, where the GoSL try to enforce the peace on the civil society, without dealing with some of the most important issues regarding the conflict. The politics is still ethnically based, deep rooted mutual fears still persist and great parts of the population are in need of social help because of the war. Meanwhile, the national military cost is increasing. The GoSL want to build a new Sri Lanka, but while neglecting the still existing conflict the peace may stay negative.

6 References

- Arambewela, Nadeeka; Arambewela, Rodney (2010), "Post-War Opportunities for Peace in Sri Lanka: An Ongoing Challenge?", *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 22:3
- Bryman, Alan (2008), "*Samhällsvetenskapliga metoder*", Liber, Malmö, 2nd edition
- Catani, Claudia (edit) (2009), "Treating Children Traumatized by War and Tsunami: A Comparison Between Exposure Therapy and Meditation-Relaxation in North-East Sri Lanka", *BMC Psychiatry*, 9:22
- De Alwis, Malathi (2010), "The 'China Factor' in Post-War Sri Lanka", *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 11: 3
- Goodhand, Jonathan (2010), "Stabilising a Victor's Peace? Humanitarian Action and Reconstruction in Eastern Sri Lanka", *Disasters*, vol. 34
- Jarstad, Anna K.; Sisk, Timothy D. (2008), *From War to Democracy: Dilemmas for Peacebuilding*, University Press, Cambridge
- Lederach, Jean Paul (1997), *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, United States Institute for Peace Press, Washington
- Mac Ginty, Roger (2010) "Social Network Analysis and Counterinsurgency: A Counterproductive Strategy?", *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 3: 2
- Newman, Edward; Paris, Roland; Richmond, Oliver P. (2009), *New Perspectives on Liberal Peace Building*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo
- Orjuela, Camilla (edit) (2010), *Power and Politics, In the Shadow of the Sri Lankan War*, Sida Studies no. 25
- Pape, Robert A. (2003), "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism", *American Political Science Review*, 97:3
- Price, Natasha (2010), Integrating 'Return' with 'Recovery': Utilising the Return Process in the Transition to Positive Peace: A Case Study of Sri Lanka", *The Round Table*, 99: 410
- Ramsbotham, Oliver; Woodhouse, Tom; Miall, High (2005), *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, Polity Press, Cambridge (2nd edition)
- Rupesinghe, Kumar (2006), *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures and Lessons*, Foundation for Co-Existence, Colombo (2nd edition)
- Samarasinghe, S.W.R.de.A. (2009), "Sri Lanka: The Challenge of Postwar Peace Building, State Building, and Nation Building", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 15:3
- Sandole, Dennis J.D. (2010), *Peacebuilding, War and peace in the Modern World*, Polity Press, Malden
- Sharif, Iffath A. (2010), "Does Political Competition Lessen Ethnic Discrimination? Evidence from Sri Lanka", *Journal of Development Economics*, 94

(2009), *SIPRI Yearbook 2009*, Oxford University Press, New York

Somasundaram, Daya (2010), "Collective Trauma in the Vanni: A Qualitative Inquiry into the Mental Health of the Internally Displaced Due to the Civil War in Sri Lanka", *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, 4:22

Zaviršek, Darja; Herath, Subhangi M. K. (2010) "I Want My Future, I Have a Dialogue Social Work in Sri Lanka Between Neo-Capitalism and Human Rights", *Social Work Education*, 29: 8

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11033368> (2011-05-25)