

International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Sri Lanka

- A study about social capital and trust between the two ethnic groups,
Tamil and Sinhala in Sri Lanka

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Who's to say
What's impossible
Well they forgot
This world keeps spinning
And with each new day
I can feel a change in everything
And as the surface breaks reflections fade
But in some ways they remain the same
And as my mind begins to spread its wings
There's no stopping curiosity

(Jack Johnson, Upside Down)

Abstract

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Title: International non- governmental organizations (INGOs) in Sri Lanka - A study about social capital and trust between the two ethnic groups, Tamil and Sinhala, in Sri Lanka.

Supervisor: Kristina Göransson.

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The purpose of this study was to examine how INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase social capital and trust between the two ethnic groups, the Tamils and Sinhala. The study is qualitative, and the empirical material was collected through semi-structured interviews. Representatives from seven INGOs and one professor from Sri Lanka were interviewed. The INGOs worked in many different ways to increase social capital and trust. They used many different working methods, depending on which strategy they had chosen. Distinct strategies were, e.g., empowerment, participation and avoiding project names such as peace building. Different methods were, e.g., community projects, work at micro, meso and macro levels and the use of volunteers as ambassadors. For the INGOs in Sri Lanka to be able to work as effectively as possible towards increasing social capital, trust and sustainable peace, it is important that the methods follow the strategies used. At the same time, they must consider the difficulties inherent to minimizing their own influence. There were difficulties for INGOs in working with and applying their strategies and methods. There was an apparent connection between their methods and strategies, which showed that the interviewed INGOs worked in a carefully prepared way.

Keywords: Social capital, Sri Lanka, trust, dialogue, International Non-Governmental organization (INGO), Tamil, Sinhala.

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1. Acknowledgements

This thesis has been carried around by me through a lot of places, both psychically and physically. It has been written in my mind, by hand and computer throughout Sweden and Sri Lanka. I want to thank everyone that I meet on this travel but mainly everyone who stood by. I especially want to thank my friends and family. The one person I want to thank especially, especially is Fredrik.



(Picture taken by the Author)

2. Map of Sri Lanka



(<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/sri-lanka/>)

3. Introduction

Every time I arrive at the Sri Lankan airport, after collecting my luggage, I go outside. When I finally leave the airport to be embraced by the country and breathe the air of Sri Lanka, I think that I have landed in paradise. However, I am saddened when I realize what the country has been through during the past few decades, and I strongly desire that the country will be able to recover.

At the beginning of 2009, newspapers around the world reported on the end of the nearly three decades of civil war in Sri Lanka. The newspapers announced that there was peace in the small country situated in the Indian Ocean, just off the Indian east coast. The sudden end of the war aroused my interest, and I began to think about the difficulties that must arise when the restoration process begins. Although the militant guerillas were defeated by the Sinhalese government and the country was declared to be united, the country has a history of war, and its inhabitants have for long time known nothing but rivalry between the two major ethnic groups, the Tamil and Sinhala. I thought that there must be a difference between creating peace in a country and uniting people from different ethnic groups. I became curious about how this difference was addressed in Sri Lanka, and I asked myself about who was working to unite the different ethnic groups and how.

There was a time when Sri Lanka was a part of British India. The British came to the island in 1796, and in 1815, they had defeated the whole island, even the independent kingdom in the mountainous area. From that time, Sri Lanka was a British colony, until declared independent on February 4, 1948. During the British rule, large groups of Tamil people were moved to Sri Lanka from India to be used for labor in the tea industry (LiF, 2006), among other occupations.

Approximately 80 percent of the population in Sri Lanka is Sinhala, and the majority of the remaining 20 percent are Tamil. The Tamils live mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the country, but there are also many living in the biggest city, Colombo¹ (Ibid).

¹ Colombo is often mistakenly considered the capital of Sri Lanka. While Colombo is the biggest city, the capital is, in fact, Sri Jayawardenapura.

For many years, there has been a civil war fought between Tamil guerilla groups, mainly the Liberation of Tamil Tigers Eelam (LTTE), and the government, which mainly consists of Sinhala. A common view among both researchers and grassroots Tamil and Sinhala people about the main cause of the conflict is that the Sinhala majority thought that the Tamil minority was favored by the British during colonial times, while the Sinhala were discriminated against. Some researchers and people with Tamil origins claim that the reason for the conflict began when the Sri Lankan government began to discriminate against the Tamil minority after independence. This is further explained below (Roberts, 2009).

Following independence, there were attempts to correct the fact that Sinhala had been discriminated against, by favoring the Sinhala in many official contexts. The effect was that the Tamil were discriminated against instead, e.g., by denying the Tamil's right to vote. Therefore, many Tamil organizations began to work towards becoming an independent state. Initially, the struggles were made by democratic means. However, following the enactment of a law banning discussion of a separate state of the country, TULF, the Tamil's political party, and the national movement began to use more violence. Subsequently, in 1983, the civil war between the government and the Tamil separatists, mainly the LTTE, was announced (Roberts, 2009).

The war continued intermittently until the spring of 2009, when the military forces of the government managed to take control of former LTTE-controlled areas, and the LTTE leader was found dead (Ibid).

As previously mentioned, the war and peace in Sri Lanka spurred my interest in studying who was working to unite the different ethnic groups and how. According to the well-known American philosopher, political economist and author, Francis Fukuyama, it is seen in developing countries that organizations existing between the family and the state are of great importance. This is, according to Fukuyama, referred to as "the rise of the civil society" (Fukuyama, 2001). The civil society can be seen as the third sector in a society, with the state and the marketplace as the two others. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), together with other types of civil organizations, are a vital part of this third sector. With respect to community-based initiatives and in societies of developing countries, NGOs are playing an

important role (Potter and Binns et al., 2008:119). This is also the case in Sri Lanka, which is a developing country.

Both during and after the civil war, I found articles in the media wherein the Sri Lankan government criticized some parts of the civil society, in particular, the work of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) stationed in Sri Lanka. The government was arguing that some of these had helped the LTTE in the war by, e.g., supplying firearms. I then began to consider that these INGOs, through different projects, aim to increase the trust and dialogue between different ethnic groups, and I began to wonder about the difficulties of their work and what constitutes a successful project. I began to wonder if it was not hard to operate and implement projects in Sri Lanka in a climate, wherein, according to the newspapers, in one should be suspicious of INGOs.

With respect to the above mentioned, I chose to proceed with my Master's thesis.

4. Problem formulation

As mentioned in the introduction, it is clear that it will take a lot of hard work to influence Tamil and Sinhala so that they can be closer and live in a united country. There is a lack of dialogue between the two groups and has been for a long time. The civil war in Sri Lanka has affected the whole country, and when it ended in 2009, the people began to hope for the ability to finally develop Sri Lanka to its potential. The peace and development researcher Camilla Orjuela (2010) argues that there is still no good dialogue between the Tamil and Sinhala people, which makes a need to improve the dialogue to be able to develop the country and reach a sustainable peace. She states that a country with a great amount of social capital is easier to develop. Social capital is the sum of trust between the different groups in the society. To create dialogue between different groups, there must be a climate of trust and a dialogue for establishing good, sustainable relationships. Thus, dialogue between Tamil and Sinhala people is important for the creation of social capital. Further, Jayatilleke Bandaralage (2009) argues that social capital plays a highly important role in the development of a country and that it is as important as physical and human capital. It is even as important as the natural assets in a country. Bandaralage argues that ethnic conflict and war can lead to a reduction of trust, and according to him, it is certain that the trust between Tamils and Sinhala in Sri Lanka has been damaged due to ethnic conflict. Now that the armed conflict has ended, it is important to rebuild trust.

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) constitute a large share of the institutions in Sri Lanka and are, as mentioned above, a part of the third sector. The third sector is based on the importance of social capital. According to Lyda Judson Hanifan, who was the first to introduce the concept of social capital, communities gain from cooperation between individuals; otherwise, he argues, they are socially helpless if alone (Putnam and Goss, 2002). Social capital became a popular term for NGOs and international following its use by development practitioners in the 1990's (Potter and Binns et al., 2008:119). It is viewed as the glue that holds the society together, according to Bandaralage (2009:115): "Institutions and social capital are inter-related rather than separate components." Jonathan Goodhand, David Hulme and Nick Lewer (2000) argue that development workers often use the concept of social capital, which has encouraged a focus on development interventions that

work to create dialogue between different groups, communication, cooperation and participatory practice.

There are many INGOs in Sri Lanka that work on different kinds of projects to improve dialogue and create trust between different ethnic groups. As mentioned above, the INGOs' involvement during the civil war has made the government suspicious of their work. Therefore, many INGOs have had a difficult time operating and implementing their projects because there have been spanners in the wheel. Many papers, both international and local, Tamil papers as well as Sinhala, mention the government's suspicion towards INGOs. The Wall Street Journal (WSJ, 2010), for instance, writes that "criticism of Mr. Rajapaksa's² government is not looked on kindly, which is impacting democratic discourse. Violent attacks on journalists and media offices have continued, and these incidents are not being conclusively investigated." They continue by stating that "today, even many supporters of the government are afraid to speak their minds" and that INGOs also should move carefully in their projects and not interfere too much with the political rule of the president. The local newspaper Daily News (2010) writes that public management reform minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka said that the UN should not be allowed to interfere in Sri Lanka's internal affairs, even though Sri Lanka is a member state. The BBC (2010) argued the same. The local paper The Sunday Leader (TSL, 2010) wrote that it might be difficult for some INGOs to operate fully as they wish because of the suspicious eyes of the government. These are the kinds of statement found in various articles by different papers. When I think about these statements, in a context in which INGOs in Sri Lanka work not only amidst the tension between Tamil and Sinhala but also in the face of suspicion towards their work, I wonder how INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase dialogue between different ethnic groups and create social capital.

Institutions can coordinate human behavior through social capital, meaning that INGOs can help create social capital as well as help people to cooperate with each other and increase dialogue and trust between them (Bandaralage, 2009). All of the above-mentioned makes me think of questions such as: What does one mean when referring to social capital in Sri Lanka? What do the projects for increasing social capital look like? Are there many INGOs working

² The president of Sri Lanka, 2011.

to create social capital and trust in Sri Lanka? What do those projects look like? How do INGOs help to create social capital for individuals and communities?

According to the above-mentioned and the framework for this thesis, I will examine INGOs in Sri Lanka and how they work to increase social capital and trust.

4.1 My purpose

The aim of this study is to investigate how INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase social capital and trust between the Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups.

4.2 My research questions

- How do the INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase social capital and trust between the Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups?
- What strategies and different techniques do they use to create social capital and trust?
- What are the main difficulties according to the INGOs when working to increase social capital and trust?

5. Previous research

In this chapter, I will present the previous research on the subject of dialogue and social capital in Sri Lanka. When reviewing research about Sri Lanka, the civil war, political difficulties and ethnic issues are often central. Most studies are made by social scientists who examine the effects of the civil war, the power structures and power balances, from both political and economic perspectives. The power struggles between the LTTE and the government have been a hot topic for research. There are many Western researchers who focus on Sri Lanka. There are not as many Sri Lankan researchers, and the literature from them is often hard to obtain. However, there are some Sri Lankan researchers who are more distinguished, but most often they do not live in the country. According to The Sri Lankan researcher Karthigesu Sivathamby (2005), it can be difficult for Sri Lankan researchers to feel safe in Sri Lanka because there is a danger in expressing thoughts that are sensitive. Jayantilleke Bandaralage (2009), Sunil Bastian (2010), Asoka Bandarage (2009), N. Manoharan (2008), Karthigesu Sivathamby (2005) and Michael Roberts (2009) are some researchers with roots in Sri Lanka. They have all written about the separatist conflict in Sri Lanka, ethnicity and ethnic violence. The aim of this study is to investigate how INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase social capital and trust between the Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. There is not much research that examines how INGOs create dialogue between the different ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, but there is less literature on social capital, trust building and the importance of creating dialogue in a Sri Lankan context. When examining how INGOs work to create dialogue between different ethnic groups in other countries, there is some literature, especially in countries where there has been ethnic conflict, but most of this literature is connected with peace building and mediating processes. Some of the literature concerning conflict, ethnicity and peace building might be relevant for my research because it can explain cooperation between people and networking and can contribute to greater understanding of the issues that arise with conflict and peace building in a post-war country: uniting people. I have, for instance, referred to Aleksandra Ålund (1999) in my research, and she has written about ethnicity. Of relevance to my study is her discussion of the relationships that ethnicity can create, e.g., that people can view each other in terms of “us” and “them” and can feel fear towards each other due to prejudices and lack of knowledge about each other.

Political scientists Kate Schecter and Judyth Twigg (2003) provide another example of conflict. They have written about social capital and cohesion in post-Soviet Russia. They examine the amount of social capital and cohesion in post-Soviet Russia as well as examine where social capital might be built further to improve relationships following the war. They also discuss the negative effects of social capital, e.g., by uniting groups such as the mafia in Russia. Their research contributes to mine by providing differences and similarities to the case of Sri Lanka.

Camilla Orjuela (2003) (2004) (2008) (2010) is a researcher from Sweden who has written about civil society, peace work and identity politics in Sri Lanka. In her doctoral thesis, she writes about what the civil society contributions are to peace and the problems that can occur in civil society peace work. She discusses the variety of civil society actors who have been trying to improve interethnic relations and argues that NGOs and INGOs have been very important during the last two decades. They help to allay the wounds of war and the development of the country as well as to involve people in society through different projects. Orjuela examines how crucial civil society actors are for creating a sustainable peace. Orjuela also problematizes the concept of civil society and asks the questions regarding who is doing what kind of work, why, how and with what results (Orjuela, 2004:13-22). Orjuela has further written several articles about Sri Lanka, social capital, civil society and building peace (e.g., Orjuela, 2003, 2008, 2010). Together with Sunil Bastian, Sepli Kottegoda and Jayadeva Uyangoda, she conducted research in 2010 for the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) on Sri Lanka and changes that have occurred in the country following the war. The four authors write about power structures in relation to the conflict and highlight: 1) the power dimensions both globally, nationally and on the local level; 2) power structures in political reform; 3) the ways in which the power in Sri Lankan society is gendered; and 4) politics and the market economy. According to the Orjuela et al., these four power structures are important for understanding the post-war reconstruction. They not only argue that there are uneven power structures but also attempt to challenge them in Sri Lanka. To challenge the power structures, there is a need for dialogue and social capital, and this will shape the future of Sri Lanka. According to the four authors, “it will take time, efforts and political compromise to change the underlying structures and culture that laid the foundation for the violent events and the growth of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).” They argue that it takes a long-term change both in the culture and societal institutions, and it is important

that people feel included and communicate with each other (Orjuela and Bastian et al., 2010). This research is interesting for my study in the sense that it touches upon the underlying difficulties of the conflict and the ethnic divide. Sunil Bastian has also written articles about social capital and state reforms in Sri Lanka. In one article, he argues that a dialogue between the different ethnic groups is important for preventing people from social exclusion. He argues that the Sri Lankan government has a great responsibility to create a secure transformation, from war to post war and development. According to Bastian (2009), it can be easy for the government and other actors who want to develop Sri Lanka to become too focused on economic growth and rebuilding the country but to achieve sustainable development, Bastian argues that there must be a good dialogue among the different ethnic groups. There should also not be any social exclusion. He defines good dialogue as occurring when two parts have mutual trust towards each other and can share experiences and ideas without getting into a violent fight.

Jonathan Goodhand, together with David Hulme and Nick Lewer (2000), has written articles about social capital in Sri Lanka and examines—but mostly questions—how social capital might be eroded by violent conflict and civil war. They argue that violent conflict and civil war does not erode social capital; it might weaken it, but sometimes it can also strengthen social capital. They also examine the importance of external agencies and underscore the difficulties and implications for these agencies. They examine the transformation of social capital in relation to the civil war and argue that social capital cannot be understood in isolation. Bandaralage (2009) has written an article about the erosion of social capital in Sri Lanka that disagrees with Goodhand, Hulme and Lewer (2000). Bandaralage argues that conflict such as civil war erodes social capital. He employed Sri Lanka as a case study and argued by comparing the past and present in Sri Lanka that social capital has decreased and been eroded.

The two researchers of foreign affairs and international and global relationships of states, Takashi Inoguchi and Zen –U Lucian Hotta (2006), conducted a quantitative comparative study of social capital in ten Asian countries, including Sri Lanka. They have investigated the amount of social capital in each of the ten countries in relation to existing political rule and other variables. Their research differs from the present work, but it was interesting to read about social capital research conducted with methodology different from the one employed here. It is based on research conducted by Inoguchi, in which he focused on ten different

countries in Asia and the general trust at different levels of the society and analyzes the key dimensions of social capital. It was conducted through surveys given to different individuals in village communities across the ten different countries. The purpose of his study was to discover some underlying dimensions of social capital and to reflect on the nature of political culture in the different countries, in terms of social capital. This study differed from mine in the sense that my study is a qualitative one. The study made by Inoguchi and Hotta can be used for the present research purposes to compare Sri Lanka to other countries to further understand social capital in a larger context.

6. Methodology

In this part of my work, I will explain my methodology and illustrate some of the experiences and difficulties encountered during the collection of material.

6.1 Choice of method

I have performed a qualitative case study and used semi-structured interviews. My choice felt extremely natural; employing the qualitative research method was the best method for answering my research questions. I chose the qualitative method because it strives for meaning and understanding, which is what I wanted to gain from my research when examining how INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase social capital and trust between Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups. The quantitative method strives to find quantifiable results. Some researchers criticize qualitative research, arguing that the results cannot be verified, whereas the quantitative research method is more measurable and the results are easier to verify. The qualitative method though is typically employed when researching political or social issues because the method is more subjective than the quantitative method (Denscombe, 2000:240-241,259-261). I studied the work of the INGOs in Sri Lanka and looked deeply into their work. My purpose is not to generalize, thus, I chose to conduct a case study. The characterization of case study is that the study must have depth rather than breadth. It focuses on something special rather than the general, it takes a holistic approach instead of examining single facts, and it also permits several sources instead of only one research method (Ibid:43).

6.2 Semi structured interviews

I used semi-structured interviews in my study. I wanted my interviewees to speak freely and develop their thoughts and opinions to help them focus on what was of importance (Denscombe, 2000). For example, when I conducted my interviews, the interviewees were permitted to speak freely about their thoughts, feelings and experiences. All of them talked a lot and shared many stories, but if they began to diverge by discussing irrelevant issues, I was able to interfere, e.g., one of the interviewees began to talk about his/her children when discussing the INGO's youth projects. I then had to remind the interviewee about the interview and say, "Well, let's get back to the interview questions." This did not occur often, approximately four or five times total. According to Gillham (2005:70), semi-structured interviews provide a lot of information because they are flexible and allow the interviewees to

talk. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:209), the interviewer does not collect the statements of the interviewee; they are created together with the interviewer. The questions the interviewer asks leads the interviewee to discuss particular issues of interest. The active listening of the interviewer affects how the answers are given, and this partly decides the pattern of the interview. I felt like an active listener when conducting the interviews. I asked several follow-up questions and asked the interviewee to develop their thoughts and answers in cases where I wanted a further and deeper understanding of the matters explained by the interviewee. Because of the possible difficulties with comparing answers in a semi-structured interview, I chose to have a structured interview guide (May, 2005). It is important to construct a structured interview guide with questions that are in line with the purpose of the research. It is also important that the questions are short, clear, have a clear structure and a line of argument (Gillham, 2005:72-74). It is a process to create an interview guide. A good way to begin is to do some “brain storming” and then structure the guide according to different sections and remove sections that feel unnecessary (Ibid:19-20). It is also good to have some sub-questions (Ibid:24-25). This is exactly what I did. I first wrote down thoughts that came to me when thinking about my subject and purpose. I then tried to develop questions from these thoughts and divide the questions into different sections. I set the interview guide aside for a couple of days, and when I returned to it, I realized that some questions were irrelevant. I then did some more “brain storming” and developed new questions and sub-questions. I asked a friend for help and tested my interview guide on my friend to ensure that she understood all of the questions.

A consequence of using semi-structured interviews is that the interviewer might affect the interviewee in different ways, which can affect the reliability of the empirical material. I discuss this further when discussing objectivity and reliability (Denscombe, 2000). According to Denscombe (2000), semi-structured interviews might violate the privacy of the interviewee. To prevent this, I tried to make my interviewees feel comfortable during the interview. I also told them before beginning that they should be open with me and tell me if there were any questions that they did not feel comfortable answering. All the interviewees answered all questions, but some hesitated on some questions or laughed nervously. When this occurred, I tried to comfort them and remind them that they would remain anonymous and that I would treat everything they said with highest confidentiality. After reminding them about this, they

were calmed and more willing to answer and discuss why they felt that the question was sensitive.

6.3 Sample and selection

I chose to interview seven different INGOs for this study. They were selected by first observing which INGOs were working in Sri Lanka, which of them worked directly or indirectly to improve or increase social capital, dialogue and trust between the Tamil and Sinhala, and then I tried to observe where in the country the INGOs operated. I selected the INGOs that covered the biggest geographical area with their projects and, therefore, had the ability to influence a large number of communities. This selection was relevant because I wanted to examine how INGOs in Sri Lanka work with Tamils and Sinhala in different areas in Sri Lanka. I decided to interview managers in the INGOs to receive a broad picture of the work done by the INGOs. Beyond this, I also interviewed one professor from Sri Lanka who works with development issues, post-war reconciliation and INGOs in Sri Lanka.

I contacted the INGOs by email before I went to Sri Lanka. Some responded to the email, but the majority did not. This was at first a bit stressful, but instead of emailing the INGOs that had not responded to the first email, I followed up by telephone. This was much more effective, and I was able to refer to the email that I had sent. By phone, I could then book interviews. I did not make contact with all the organizations before arriving in Sri Lanka to do my fieldwork. When I was there, I asked the INGOs that I visited if they knew of any contacts for any other INGOs that might be relevant to my work. They were helpful, and I obtained my last interview subjects through this method. According to Esiasson (2007:291), this is called the snowball sampling method.

6.4 Presentation of the INGOs

INGO green has been operating in Sri Lanka since the nineteen eighties. They work in partnership with the local governments and communities. The INGO work in 15 districts of Sri Lanka and has many volunteers. The INGO has many Scandinavian donors and is active in six countries. The INGO also has development activities implemented by partner organizations in several countries.

INGO red is active in more than 150 countries. The INGO work a lot with volunteers and has about 100 million volunteers throughout the world. The INGO was established more than 100 years ago. It is active in 25 districts in Sri Lanka and it was in the nineteen nineties that the branches in North and East were established.

INGO black was established in the nineteen forties. The INGO has about 10,000 staff members and have more than 80 offices worldwide. INGO purple work whit development projects but also with providing humanitarian relief to countries in need. Their biggest goal is to assist the poor. INGO blacks biggest funding for projects in Sri Lanka comes from donors in China, Russia, Japan and the Asian Development Bank.

INGO dark blue has been active in Asia for about sixty years. They collaborate with private and public partners as well as government institutions. The INGO has about 20 offices throughout Asia. It is founded mostly from USA but also get funding from countries in Europe. In Sri Lanka the INGO has about 14 offices and many volunteers both national and international.

INGO yellow has worked in Sri Lanka since the nineteen nineties. They work with a network of different partners throughout the country and has their office based in Colombo. The INGO was established 25 years ago and is active in Africa, Asia, the South Caucasus, the Middle East, the UK and Latin America. They have more than 15 field offices around the word.

INGO purple is an INGO that was established in the nineteen fifties. They work in many countries in both Asia, Africa and in the Middle East. They have about 7000 staff members throughout the world. INGO purple have been most active in Sri Lanka the past twenty years. The INGO now have about six offices throughout Sri Lanka with both international as well as national staff members. They work close to the national and local government institutions, the grassroots and NGOs. INGO purple get funding from several different donors but most from UK and Australia.

INGO light blue is active in more than 150 countries. It was established in Sri Lanka in the nineteen sixties. INGO light blue cooperate with governmental institutions as well as donor countries, local NGOs regional development banks and the private sector. They have both local and international staff members throughout Sri Lanka.

6.5 Limitations

According to Denscombe (2000), a case study must be limited and defined to be distinguished from other cases. This case study is limited to INGOs and their work in Sri Lanka. The political situation in Sri Lanka, the lack of dialogue between the two biggest ethnic groups and the difficulties for INGOs to work and function in Sri Lanka made me choose this country for my fieldwork.

I chose to interview seven different INGOs for this study. First, I conducted research on which INGOs were working in Sri Lanka, and then I selected the largest INGOs that worked directly or indirectly to improve dialogue. Thereafter, I asked managers in the INGOs for an interview and tried to interview more than one manager at each INGO.

According to Denscombe (2000:157), it might sometimes be difficult to ascertain whether the interviewee is being truthful. When an interview is based on concrete questions, it is easier to compare the answers to other interviews or other sources to discover the truth. This method of controlling the truth is more difficult when the interview questions are based on feelings, expectations and experiences of the interviewee. I posed some questions that were based on actual facts, but many questions were primarily based on the feelings, views and experiences of the interviewee. The answers of the interviewee might not always relay the “truth” of an actual situation or relation, but the statement nevertheless expresses the truth of the interviewee’s experience, and thus, it might be the truth for him or her (Kvale and Brikmann, 2009:270). One can ask what truth really is. According to the Habermas theory of consensus, truth is built on the ideal that there should be a dialogue without dominance. This is an abstraction of the power relations that exist in the discourses of reality. Marx theorized that humans need to prove truth, and if something can be proved, then it is the truth. If one examines the truth from a hermeneutical perspective, the social science theories are viewed as a sort of practice that helps to interpret and articulate the meaning of human action. However, this articulating might penetrate the self-understanding of individuals and then change the reality for these actors. The point is that truth in the social sciences is not a reflection of independent objects because the objects that are used in the social sciences are not dependent on human understanding; they are rather constituted by it (Ibid:275-276). According to Denscombe (2000:158-159), there are some practical ways to learn the truth, e.g., compare information from interviews with other sources, such as interviews with individuals in the

same area or other sources, such as documents and observations. Another method is to share the transcribed documents with the interviewee. Through this method, the interviewee is given the opportunity to reflect upon what was said and whether the shared information is correctly understood. I asked the INGOs after each interview if they wanted me to send them the transcribed documents. Some wanted this, while others did not care. I conducted several interviews at each INGO, and thus, I was able to compare the answers. I also tried as much as I could to observe the work of the INGOs while I was visiting them, e.g., by asking them if I could have a tour of their office building and meet other co-workers. All of the INGOs were cooperative, and I had the opportunity to meet others to chat about their work. At some INGOs, I had the opportunity to follow them in their fieldwork, e.g., I followed one INGO to a village north of Colombo. In this field visit, I had the opportunity to meet with the villagers and talk more with the INGO staff working in the field. I was also able to watch some workshops that they conducted. During the field visits, I had the opportunity to observe in depth the way the INGOs worked while in action and how they integrated with the locals. The field visits were only one-day visits, and when I visited the INGOs, I spent 2-5 hours conducting the interviews, chatting with the staff and observing work. To obtain more information about INGOs and their work, I interviewed a Sri Lankan professor of Social Science and Development Studies that had great knowledge about INGOs' work in Sri Lanka.

6.6 Procedure and accomplishment of interviews

It demanded some logistical and administrative qualities from my side to gather all the interviews. Some of the INGOs that I had booked interview time and dates with in beforehand changed their appointments while I was in Sri Lanka because they had more important meetings that came up for them to attend on. It was sometimes hard to get a hold of some INGOs to be able to rebook the appointments so it demanded me to be extremely active and flexible to be able to set a meeting. It could also sometimes be hard to travel to the different INGOs because of the distance between them and from the place where I lived but due to my previous knowledge of Sri Lanka and previous visits my sense of orientation helped and I did not book in too many interviews during one day. I rather focused on one or two INGOs. I was fortunate to be able to meet all the interviewees that I wanted to.

After conducting my first interview I listened to it immediately when coming home. I hoped to get a picture of my achievements so that I could improve before the next interview. I also

wanted to see if my prejudices had influenced the interview. Before I listened I felt that I had not influenced the interview but after listening I noticed how my evocations of what the interviewee said could be seen as a way to control the answer of the interviewee towards something I wished. But in the same time it was hard to separate influences from the prejudices from valid reflective questions (Thomson, 2002). After conducting another interview and also after listened through it, I experienced myself as being much more secure in my role as an interviewer and that my questions were reflective and neutral towards the interviewee and the subject.

After conducting each interview I listened through it carefully and then transcribed it as soon as possible. I transcribed every word and also when relevant I wrote down if the interviewee got excited, nervous or if we laughed and so on. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:208) there is a risk of understanding the transcribing as a direct translation of the spoken word. They mean that it should be seen as a hybrid between a spoken discourse that develop over time and a written text that is created for a distant audience (Ibid). When it comes to validity, it is not certain that others experience the taped interviews exactly as I do. Despite this I see transcribing as necessarily. Its advantage is greater than its methodological disadvantages; it is like a hybrid that permits ideas to be brought forward from one context to another.

6.7 Objectivity and reliability

According to Denscombe (2000), it is of great importance when conducting interviews to be aware of and reflect upon the things that the researcher might take for granted because values, opinions and ideas can matter to the researcher. My social background, age, gender, experiences and education are facts that might affect the results. According to Aspens (2007), religion and traditions might also be of importance. I have tried to be aware of this and have discussed it in attended study groups both before and during my work. The study groups consisted of other masters students, and we, e.g., discussed the importance of considering reliability when conducting the interviews; an important factor of reliability was that I am a Master's student from Sweden with roots in Sri Lanka. My mother is from Sri Lanka, and I can speak fluent Sinhala, which was beneficial for the research because I could connect with the locals and also conduct interviews in Sinhala when needed. On the other hand, this might also be negatively affect reliability because there is a risk that people might view me as being

from “one side”– being a Sinhala and not a Tamil. According to Aspers (2007), some interviewees might perceive people from the West as intruders (Ibid). In the same way as people might perceive me a Sinhala, they might also perceive me as being from the West. Because of the above-mentioned, I have been careful to remain neutral towards the interviewees and to inform them about the purpose of the research and my questions.

I conducted the interviews in a context that was familiar to the interviewee, e.g., in their offices or a place where it was quiet and without interruptions. The effect of this might be that it was easier for the interviewee to open up and feel safe during the interview (Denscombe, 2000). Sometimes, it can be difficult to make the interviewee understand the importance of sitting in a quiet, private place because some of the INGOs were very busy, and I observed that people in Sri Lanka often try to do many things at the same time. On occasion, I kindly explained that it was important that I had their whole focus when conducting the interview. I was taping my interviews, and one of the disadvantages of this might be that the interviewee feels uncomfortable and inhibited. This might affect the given answers if the interviewee does not feel as comfortable talking as much (Denscombe, 2000). No one asked me to turn off the Dictaphone during the interview, but there were occasions when the interviewer hesitated and said, “Oh, right you are taping this, heh,” and laughed nervously when talking about sensitive matters. I then tried to calm the interviewee, explain that he or she was anonymous and gave them the opportunity to turn off the Dictaphone. No one took the opportunity to turn off the Dictaphone and became calmed by my words and continued. Many times following an interview and after turning off the Dictaphone, the interviewee began talking about many interesting things. The positive aspect of taping the interviews is that it strengthens the reliability by the ability to transcribe (Denscombe, 2000). I asked for permission before using the Dictaphone and also tried not to put any focus on it during the interview. I had a small Dictaphone so it was easy not to put focus on it. I also transcribed the interviews word for word to strengthen their reliability.

I never had to use an interpreter when conducting my interviews, as I am fluent in both Sinhala and English. The interviews were mainly conducted in English, but in some cases, in Sinhala or a mixture of both languages. It was an advantage for me not to have to use an interpreter because it can be difficult to find good interpreters. When using an interpreter it is easy for the interpreter to take over the interview or ask the questions in another way than was

intended, such that the interviewee's answers are affected by the interpreter's own thoughts and ideas (Denscombe, 2000). I did not have these problems, which permitted me to think about other things.

6.8 Ethical matters

Before I conducted the interview I legible explained about my research and informed about the purpose of the study and asked for uncertainties which gave the interviewee the opportunity to ask questions. All the interviewees participated of their own free will and they could be anonymous if they wanted. I had an agreement form to guarantee the anonymity which stated that I in no circumstances would write the interviewees name or reveal their identity. It also stated that the information given in the interview will not be used in any other context. This contract was signed in duplicate in the beginning of the interview and was for me and the interviewee. Before the interview I asked for permission to tape it.

I have decided not to use any of the names of the INGOs or interviewees because some of them requested to be anonymous. Some of them wanted to be anonymous referring to the suspiciousness that was between the government and INGOs and some brought up the censure that is in Sri Lanka and explained that the government does not like others to talk bad about them. All the names are therefore fictive. According to Kvale (1997:110) the ethical discussion is often a consideration between the scientific value of the result and the risk for negative consequences for the participants of the study (Ibid). As I see it, a scientific study, regardless of the possible benefits, should have as minimal risks as possible for the participants. I have given the INGOs and the professor that I interviewed the fictive names, red, yellow, dark blue, light blue, green, black, purple and pink.

6.9 Analysis of the empirical material

My analytical work is based on a hermeneutic perspective. This means that I have interpreted my empirical material based on the notion that there is a general context, whose existence can be demonstrated by the statements. The interpretations and the quality of these are dependent on my own imagination and ability to interpret (Repstad, 1999). It therefore becomes important to me to show in my analytical reasoning which bases my interpretations rest on. The analysis will be done under specific themes that the empirical evidence will also be

produced under. These themes are based on the previous research, my purpose and my theoretical points.

With respect to knowledge production, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:70) argue that the results should be viewed as a process in which the researcher has an active role and that the result not only reflects the opinions of the interviewees. On the contrary, it is quite possible that the interviewees do not agree with my analysis. This does not have to be viewed as a problem, it is primarily a result of the approach of the study (Ibid). The analysis can still be based on different statements from the interviewees but mostly on my involvement, which inevitably brings a subjective element. According to Kvale (1997:190-192), there are several different ways to interpret qualitative material. Qualitative research involves interpreting the answers of the interviewees. This interpretation is always made based on specific questions and perspectives. Therefore, it is possible that different researchers interpret material differently. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:70), qualitative interpretations imply an interaction between the researcher and the researched; it is the hermeneutic circle. For me, this has meant a sense of well-reproduced context from the made interpretations such that the reader can follow and understand the result.

Given my specific questions, starting points and theoretical tools, the goal of interpretation and analysis of the material should be sufficiently rigorous and well-reasoned to be perceived as credible (Kvale, 1997:190-192).

6.10 Concepts

NGO – Stands for Non Governmental Organization and is according to the World Bank a "private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development" (World Bank, 2011).

INGO – Stands for International Non Governmental Organization and has according to the World Bank "the same mission as a non-governmental organization (NGO), but it is international in scope and has outposts around the world to deal with specific issues in many countries" (World Bank, 2011).

7. About INGOS

INGOs have existed since the eighteenth century. INGOs were very important for the anti-slavery movement and the women's right to vote. Many INGOs started off as NGOs, working with injustice in their home country, especially with poor, before the welfare systems were established. Much of the staff during this time was women and volunteers; people with a big heart that wanted to help others in need. They often got funding from rich families (Potter, 2008).

It was not until the Geneva Disarmament conference in the 1940s that INGOs reached a prime. In this conference the ideology of disarmament was discussed. Several countries took part in this conference and the importance of INGOs was highlighted; organizations that were not politically and governmental. This was right after the Second World War and the Cold War (Global policy forum, 2011).

The name INGO came into use after 1945, which was the year of the establishment of the United Nations Organization. INGO was defined by the UN as, any international organization that is not founded by an international treaty (Stephenson, 2000). The term is often used to refer to organizations that do not form part of the government and are not for profit business. NGOs themselves can be local, national, or international. Sometimes international NGOs are referred to as INGOs (Potter, 2008). It was explained by the UN, that the vital role of INGOs was, work considering sustainable development. INGOs and NGOs are legal constituted organizations created by a person that operated independently from any government. The term non-governmental organization has unlike the term inter-governmental organization no generally agreed legal definition. In many contexts INGOs and NGOs are called civil society organizations. Civil society is a term that became popularized at the end of the Cold War to describe what appeared to have been missing in state-dominated societies, broad societal participation in and concern for governance, but not necessarily government. Civil society is thought to be the necessary ingredient for democratic governance to arise. INGOs and NGOs are one part of civil society (Orjuela, 2004).

After 1945 there was rapid development of the non-governmental sector in the western countries. This was due to the emerging welfare. Together with globalization the non-governmental sector grew bigger. Especially during the 1990s and 20th century the

globalization has played a vital part in the development of INGOs. In nations where problems could be hard to solve, INGOs could play a vital part and be helpful (Global policy forum, 2011). While it is often argued that INGOs are the voice of the people, representing grassroots democracy, a counter argument is made that INGOs have tended to reinforce, rather than counter, existing power structures, having members and headquarters that are primarily in the rich northern countries (Potter, 2008). Some also believe that INGO decision-making does not provide for responsible, democratic representation or accountability. Others believe that INGOs have become a significant third force in international systems, paralleling, although not yet equaling, the expanding role of inter-governmental organizations in the political sphere and the rapid globalization of business in the economic sphere. As the UN explains it, INGOs are an essential part of the legitimacy without which no international activity can be meaningful (Stephenson, 2000).

The aim of INGO is that they together with NGOs should fill a gap in governmental services. Many INGOs are ruled by the donors who require that the INGOs demonstrate a good relationship with the government in the development countries that they operate. INGOs have been found to have closer ties to on-the-ground realities in developing countries and, perhaps more important, to be able to deliver development aid considerably more cheaply than states or intergovernmental organizations (Global policy forum, 2011).

8. Theoretical framework

To answer my purpose, which is to investigate how INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase social capital and trust between the Tamils and Sinhala in Sri Lanka, I must incorporate knowledge from the theoretical world. I will analyze my empirical material according to the theory of social capital because it helps to analyze INGOs work in creating social capital in the Sri Lankan society. Social capital concerns the connections between social contacts and social networks (Putnam, Goss, 2002) It is criticized, however, for not being able to “deepen the understanding of the economic and social forces and inequalities that underpin conflict” (Goodhand and Lewer et al., 2000:292). Because I am going to examine how social capital and trust is created between Tamil and Sinhala people—and not focus on the conflict—this criticism will not affect my work fully. On the other hand, because I am examining the creation of social capital and trust, it is difficult to ignore the conflict because the conflict is one of the facts that has threatened the building of trust. The conflict can also be something that distinguishes the situation in Sri Lanka and, therefore, influences the work of creating trust and social capital. Furthermore, there are different forms of conflict. In Sri Lanka, today, there is no armed conflict, but political, economic and social conflicts persist, which I must consider in my research. I choose not to focus on the past conflict, but I am aware that I must consider it. There are also other theories that work with capital, e.g., human capital, that concern human beings in a different way. Because human capital refers to knowledge and personality attributes and how these affect the productivity of individuals and groups, it is not appropriate for analyzing the relationship between different groups and the state, which is the strength of the theory of social capital (Adams and Sydie, 2001:529). This is why I choose this theory.

The French sociologist, philosopher and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu is famous for his discussion of different forms of capital. He uses the different forms of capital, such as economic, social, symbolic and cultural capital, to explain and analyze societies and power relations in social life. Bourdieu’s analysis is made via three concepts: field, habitus and capital. Bourdieu discusses different fields and defines a social field as a system of relations between positions possessed by specialized individuals and institutions that work towards a common goal, e.g., politics (Bourdieu, 1993:162-165). The social field can be viewed as a gamepad with rules that create the framework of a certain social game, called, e.g., politics,

economy or religion. To participate, the participants must have resources that are accepted in the game. Bourdieu calls these resources capital and argues that there are different forms of capital, e.g., social capital. By using Bourdieu's analysis, one can examine the different forms of capital and the relationship between them, and thereby it is possible to conduct research on power structures and acknowledgements within different societal regions (Bourdieu, 1990). Because I want to examine how INGOs work to create social capital and trust between different ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, I will not concentrate on the concept of social capital, as mentioned by Bourdieu. Putnam (1996:187) has put forward a good definition of what distinguishes social capital from, e.g., human or physical capital. Putnam defines it the participation of individuals in formal and informal social networks, their norms regarding reciprocity and their level of compassionate trust. I have chosen to focus more on the social capital concepts brought forward by Robert Putnam and his followers. Below, an introduction and background to social capital will be presented followed by chapters explaining the theory more thoroughly.

8.1 Social capital

Development research and the work of INGOs primarily centers on the issues of the provision of basic needs and self-reliance. However, it is important to consider alternative development, i.e., participatory development and growth. Questions arose from this new form of development: who was to participate and how? The terms civil society and social capital became important. As previously mentioned, the organizations that existed between the state and the family were viewed as being very important, what Fukuyama referred to as "the rise of the civil society" (Fukuyama in Potter et al., 2008:119).

Hanifan was the first to introduce this concept in 1916. He thought that there was a need for the community to renew its involvement and sustain democracy and development. According to him, the community would gain from cooperation between individuals instead of them being socially helpless, which, according to Hanifan, was the case if individuals remained solitary (Putnam, Goss, 2002:4). Bourdieu made the notion of social capital famous in Europe by arguing that social capital was "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that occur to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:119). Coleman subsequently (in the 1980's) helped to develop the concept of

social capital (Putnam and Goss, 2004:4). Coleman argues that social capital is a resource that facilitates cooperation and is distinguished from other kinds of capital (Coleman, 1988). Fukuyama further explains social capital: “social kinship as an instantiated informal norm promotes co-operation between individuals” (Fukuyama, 2001:7). According to him, trust, networks and civil society do not constitute social capital, but according the above definition, trust, networks and civil society are a result of it (Ibid).

Putnam is the most famous with respect to social capital theorizing, and he explains it as being a collective—more than an individual—resource (Stolle and Rochon in Edwards, 2001:144). Putnam argues that social capital facilitates actions between individuals that must be coordinated. These connections can be with respect to trust, social networks and norms of reciprocity. In a society, this adopts the forms of internal confidence, civic virtue and a horizontal organized civic engagement. When embedded in a network of reciprocal relations that are social, the civic virtues are the most powerful. Social capital can still be low even if a society has many virtues. This occurs if the individuals of the society are isolated. If the society has many of these virtues, it can more easily overcome the dilemma of collective action. For individuals to be able to participate in the development of the society, social capital is a need (Putnam, 1996:201). Putnam also argues that voluntary engagement in organizations is good for the democracy of a country. “Public social capital benefits the wider society beyond the boundaries of the group itself” (Stolle and Rochon in Edwards, 2001:144).

Bo Rothstein (Rothstein, 2003:14-15), who is also prominent in the field of social capital, has done research on why some societies have been affected by corruption, economic underdevelopment, discrimination and violence between ethnic groups. Rothstein thinks that the definition of social capital made by Putnam is too wide and therefore needs to be narrowed down. Rothstein argues that human beings need access to certain kinds of resources, to avoid irrationality and distrust. This access is a special kind of capital, namely social capital.

8.2 Social capital with focus on trust

There are different forms of social capital but what one can say is that social capital increase if used and weakens if not used. The confidence of people grows when they trust each other (Putnam, 1996:204-206). According to Rothstein (2003:14-17) one crucial aspect for social

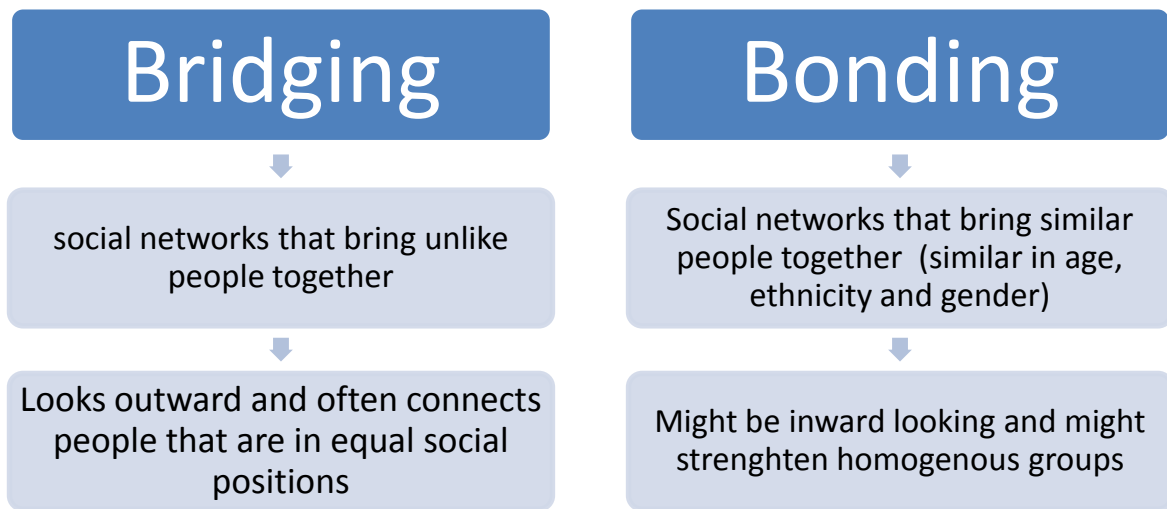
capital is social trust. He says that it depends on how the actors see themselves when looking at trust and whom they trust and says that a country with high social trust often have a stable economy and a low level of corruption. It is not possible for people to own social capital; it can only be a part of their life but not be owned individually.

According to Broome and Hatay (2006) the loss of trust can be a result form a civil war where neighbors can have fought with each other and, or a result form betrayal by the immediate family and social network.

According to Putnam (2001:143-144) it is of great importance that the local institutions in a country have a high quality. Then one can reach a working democracy. He means that horizontal networks, which create communication and social confidence, are important since these can solve the dilemma of the collective action. There are also vertical networks that concern the social density in a society. Therefore local institutions become important.

Rothstein (2003:110-112) further writes about networks and he means that it facilitates cooperation on the local level. If a person has many social networks it can help him in many ways. If these are widely spread and there is mutual trust between the people in the networks it could be a nice resource when e.g. finding a job. The social contacts do not have to be on a personal level but the ones on that level are called strong ties e.g. the immediate family. Social contacts that are less strong are called weak ties. Mostly the strong ties are not as important as the weak ties created between different groups. According to Putnam (1996:210), weak ties can be used to create bridges among groups made of strong ties and can therefore be better when building up a society. According to Svendsen and Svendsen (2004:35) it is important to have both strong and weak ties in a society. Therefore is important to give opportunities for people with different backgrounds to meet and network or else people and different groups of people can become isolated.

There are different forms of social capital according to Putnam. He divides it in two groups; bridging and bonding. The two are explained in the figure below.



(Figure made by the author)

In most groups both bridging and bonding is mixed. When groups are isolated and there is mistrust there can be a bonding of social capital and exclusive networks that emphasize a certain kind of identity. The social support can be very high inside this group. This kind of bonding can be too strong and ethnic conflicts often lead to strong bonding social capital (Putnam, Goss, 2002:1-2; Svendsen, Svendsen, 2004:157). Rothstein argues that when a person is learning, it does not only depend on the genetics, also social relationships are of great importance because people get affected by people they trust and their attitudes (Field, 2005:4).

8.3 How to create trust

According to Putnam, the level of trust and social capital in a country or in societies can be explained not only by the number of social networks and level of civic engagement among people but also by the common norm of mutual exchange of privileges. This norm makes it easier for people to cooperate, and the mutuality between two people creates two forms of norms. One is a balanced norm: individuals trade items of equal value. The second norm is generalized: as a favor, without expecting something in return, but with the view that someone in the future will mutually do the same thing. A society based on the generalized norm is better off and more efficient than one based on the balanced norm (Putnam, Goss,

2002:7, Putnam, 2001:141). The general norm emphasizes the interest among people and is important for social capital. Close social networks will be created when people know what they can expect from each other, and in return, this creates a larger space of mutuality (Putnam, 1996:206-208). When building the generalized norm of mutuality, weak ties might be better than strong ties (Putnam, Goss, 2002:10-12). According to Putnam, close networks help to create a common background and norm and are important because they thereby help to create cooperation, communication and mutuality (Putnam, 1996:109).

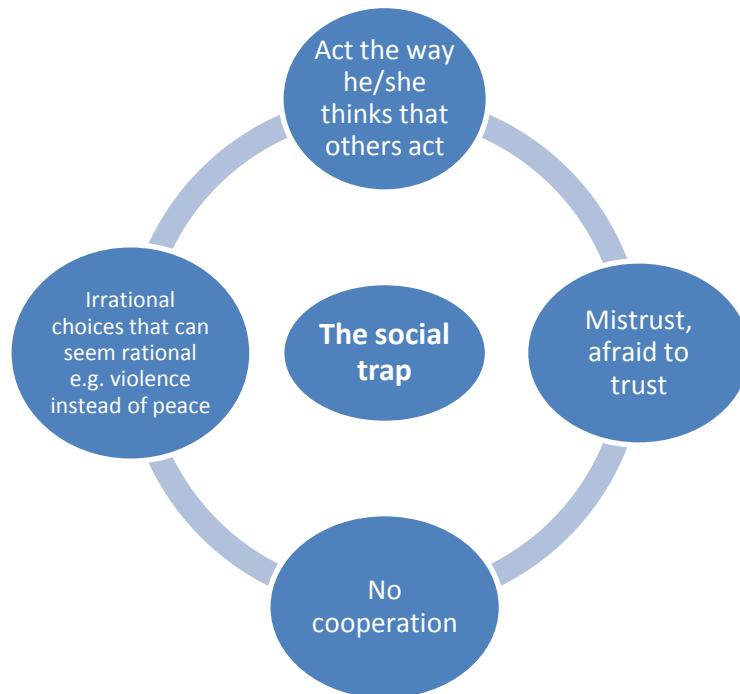
To strengthen social capital in a society, public and private structures should be changed so that people want to increase their civic engagement. According to Putnam, individuals are responsible for committing and that many areas in the society, such as schools, workplaces and areas off public activities, can be changed to create social capital. He argues that it is important that people connect with others that have different social, political and professional identities, e.g., youth from different ethnic groups can meet and learn about each other (Putnam, 2001:432, 434). According to Putnam, to create social capital, it is important that local and national institutions work together and help each other. A strong state often has effective institutions and active civic engagement (Putnam, 1996:213, 223). A national crisis can ease the creation of social capital, e.g., through a natural catastrophe or a war (Putnam, 2001:422).

According to Rothstein, social trust is based on the thoughts of reality found in individuals. This reality is often created during childhood and from primary experiences. Sometimes, hatred and mistrust between different ethnic groups can become a part of the identity of a group (Rothstein, 2003:154). To create opportunities where the different groups can communicate, trust can be created, and when one is communicating, others often follow (Ibid:159). It is important that the people interact often and that there are conditions for them to meet. The opportunity to build trust increases if people have incentives to meet and can meet at a varied place. A varied place could be found, e.g., in the school building (Ibid:163).

Both Rothstein and Putnam mean that it is important that there are good meeting places for people with ethnic diversity to meet and that the school is a good place since the youth are the ones to build the future (Rothstein, 2003:159). Rothstein further mean that it is possible for individuals to invest in social capital e.g. individuals should participate in different

organizations and organizations should build opportunities for weak ties to be created (Ibid:113-114).

8.4 The social trap



(Figure made by the Author)

The term social trap was coined by John Platt and symbolizes the perceptions that a person can have in different situations which mean that a person act in relation to what he or she thinks others will act (Rothstein, 2003:158). Individuals, groups and organizations cannot cooperate in the situation of a social trap. There is too much mistrust between the actors. Often situations such as domestic conflicts would gain form people cooperating but for this to happen there have to be some sort of trust between the actors. There have to be an understanding and trust that the other part will do their share. If not, the actors can be trapped in the social trap and because of mistrust chose conflict even if they want peace. In this situation the actors are often afraid to trust each other. Ethnic conflict and corruption is examples of social traps (Ibid:22).

To get out of a social trap, social capital is necessarily. It is hard to make people that have mistrust each other for a long time to cooperate and trust each other. It can be done by changing the foundation of their opinions and make them think and believe that others also

will cooperate open and truthfully. If there is social capital in a country then it is harder for people to get caught by the social trap (Ibid:14).

9. Empirical material and analysis

The aim of this part of the study is to explain how INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase social capital and trust between the Tamils and Sinhala in Sri Lanka. This will be done by identifying categories from the information collected in the interviews and, thereafter, connecting this with the theoretical approach. The following categories represent different sections in this chapter:

- INGO work in Sri Lanka
- Bridging and bonding
- Weak and strong ties
- The INGOs view of creation of social capital in the Sri Lankan society
- The INGOs view of creation of trust between different ethnic groups

9.1 INGO work in Sri Lanka

According to Orjuela, the importance of INGOs and NGOs in Sri Lanka has increased over the past few decades (Orjuela, 2004:21). The INGOs are important actors in the civil society, and an important function of the INGOs is to develop social capital (Orjuela, 2004). The INGOs in Sri Lanka work in many different ways to develop social capital and increase dialogue between different ethnic groups, even though this might not be their primary aim.

INGO green have a program cycle of five years, and the current cycle began in 2009. They work a lot with child rights and child development. They also have an economic empowerment program for economically inactive people. INGO green state that they work on social and political poverty with a focus on empowerment. They have a youth branch that works with youth between the ages of 17 and 30.

INGO red have a lot of different inventions, with the goal to develop Sri Lanka and increase the dialogue between the different ethnic groups. They have both hardware programs,³ whereby they, e.g., build houses or provide the community with water supply and sanitation,

³ Hardware programs are programs or projects that have results that one can touch, e.g., a house, toilet or well.

and they have software programs,⁴ with the aim being to encourage people to participate in the development of their communities.

INGO black are located all over the country. They work to create dialogue between the different ethnic groups, similar to INGO red, through hardware and software programs. They have many programs and workshops for youth.

INGO dark blue and yellow both work on socioeconomic issues. They both think that socioeconomic stability is important for the development of a country and for cooperation. Therefore, they focus on the business community and improving the environment for business investment and local economic development. INGO dark blue focus mainly on the meso level of the society. Further, INGO yellow also work on improving governance and human rights, with a focus on increasing justice.

INGO purple work often on livelihood⁵ projects, and similar to INGO yellow and dark blue, they also focus on the socioeconomic community development, attempting to achieve integration and conflict sensitivity among people in the communities. They also have software programs, such as workshops, as well as hardware programs, e.g., construction projects.

INGO light blue uses many different methods to achieve their goals. They work to increase justice and human rights, and thereby, in an indirect way, they improve social capital, trust and dialogue between Tamils and Sinhala. They also work on empowerment projects and (very often) drama performances to increase awareness about all kinds of matters. They actively work to increase dialogue between Tamil and Sinhala by creating forums for people to meet and, through drama performances, approach issues to discuss in workshops and in the forums.

An interesting effect of the work of the INGOs and the methods they use—as well as their approach to emerging issues—is how they view the problems in Sri Lanka. The INGOs have different perceptions of the conflict, but all are similar to each other. They all view the

⁴Software programs are programs or projects that concern soft components, such as, e.g., feelings or friendship. Unlike a building, one cannot touch the results of a software program.

⁵According to the Oxford dictionaries, livelihood means “a means of securing ones necessities of live” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2011).

conflict as still apparent. Even if there is no longer an armed conflict, a political, social and economic conflict still exists, according to the INGOs. There are also different perceptions among the INGOs of what root causes of the conflict are most important to address and solve. The INGOs conducted various research projects in different communities, have participated in previous research and engaged themselves in the communities to increase their awareness of the issues in the areas, to find similarities or differences and understand what issue(s) are most important to approach and work on. A problem or issue mentioned by the INGOs that must be considered is that some people in some areas are not responsive to projects, including awareness training and building dialogue, workshops and interaction because they must fill their basic needs first. In these areas, the INGOs focus more on hardware programs, such as building new houses and improving infrastructure, but at the same time, they have an indirect component of the program, which is to talk to people and help people to cooperate on different goals.

9.2 Bridging and bonding

"They work in one team and you find that this is the first step towards peace building and even in all other programs we have Sinhala and Tamil people in the program and also in our staff, in the organization" (Green)

This is how the manager of INGO green explains their work to create dialogue between the different ethnic groups, sitting at his office in Colombo while the rain was pouring down outside. I learned later, after conducting more interviews, that this is the common notion in which INGOs worked: cooperate on all levels with the different ethnic groups. He further explained that they try to bring the different ethnic groups together for a dialogue by gathering them for different projects but without naming the projects with words like peace building. Instead, they invite people to come and discuss community improvement, and in these meetings/projects, they discuss all kind of matters. The INGO explained that they were eager to give the same amount of space to both ethnic groups in these meetings. They worked with simultaneous interpreters in the cases when needed. After discussing different matters, they usually tried to create different smaller groups and set up goals to be achieved. Then the groups could work together to reach the goals with the INGO as a facilitator. According to

Putnam, it is important that organizations strive not only towards bonding social capital but also towards bridging it. By helping people to bond, the organizations help to create social capital, build interpersonal trust and strengthen community ties, similar to bridging, but bridging works better when setting people from different ethnic groups together, as INGO green did by creating discussion groups for Tamils and Sinhala. Bonding social capital occurs when people are socializing with people who are like them, e.g., individuals with the same ethnicity. To create peaceful societies in a diverse multi-ethnic country, one needs to have a second kind of social capital: bridging (Putnam, 2002:11-13). Orjuela (2003:203) concurs: “dialogue and newly formed relations can bridge some of the prejudices and ignorance that divide Sri Lankan society, or even prevent violence.” INGO green observed that the discussion groups helped the people to connect and thought that the results from the work were good. He could see that people had started to connect with each other and overcome their ethnic differences.

If the INGOs were working in only one area, focusing on one ethnic group, then there might be a risk that they would not be able to shrink the existing social problems or create trust between the different ethnic groups. Fortunately, all the INGOs worked hard to include all ethnic groups. Social capital can be problematic when it takes a negative form. In some groups, social capital might be extremely bright and intense but it can at the same time develop non-democratic norms or be useless and even harmful for others outside the group (Rothstein, 2002:98). If the INGOs work to create bridges from one group to another, they foster communication and understanding between the different ethnic groups. When doing this, they can help to prevent the problems of social traps. If there is a mutual distrust and a lack of social capital between two groups, then bridging can help them to overcome this and build trust (Putnam, 1996:196-198). The more social capital there is in a community, the less opportunity there is for people to be caught in a social trap. Below is an example of how INGO purple works with bridging;

“It is important that people from the different ethnic groups meet each other and come to each other to network and create a dialogue. We usually go to the locals and talk to them to find out what they want. Then we create meeting places. Yes! And when this happens it is important that we create communication channels for the people.” (Purple)

Another INGO that that focused more on the business level and the economic markets said:

“We have exposure visits and networking meetings all for the purpose of conflict transformation. So the idea is that when people, business people from the north and south meet, they realize that they have some basic elements that they are contesting, the issues are similar and they get an entry point to talk about” (Yellow).

To increase the dialogue and help to create bridging social capital between Tamil and Sinhala people, it is important to change the way some people perceive each other. It would be easier for people to trust one another if they had more understanding and similar feelings towards each other. Fear is an aspect to consider, especially when there has been ethnic conflict. If people are afraid of each other, it is more difficult for them to connect, open up and communicate (Roberts, 2009). Approximately half of the INGOs did not mention the aspect of fear when talking about the creation of trust, dialogue and cooperation between the groups. INGO red talked about it, indicating that many people feel afraid even though the war is over, especially the ones living in the northern, war-torn parts of the country. Many people are still afraid of a return to war and what will happen to them now. INGO black explains that it takes time for people to exhale and feel entirely safe again. It is about trust and being able to let other people in. During the war, the people in the northern area did not know whom to trust because, perhaps, they feared individuals might be in the LTTE or government spy and lived in fear of expressing their thoughts and ideas because they never knew what might happen.

It is of importance to change people’s opinions to change and overcome fear. People need to believe in each other and believe that others will cooperate without threatening their existence. They cannot view each other as “us” and “them” (Ålund, 1999:30). It is important that the INGOs create a climate wherein everyone is viewed as Sri Lankans and not Tamil or Sinhala. To achieve this, trust is very much needed. INGO black explains how their help in times of flooding in Sri Lanka created trust:

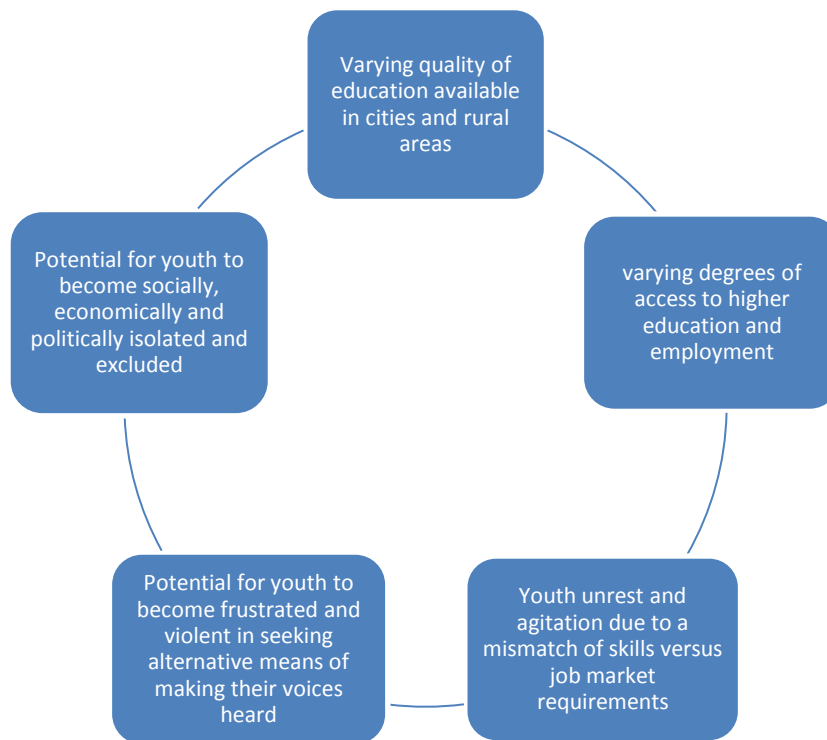
“We have different groups in different areas and if something happened in one area and they need help the other groups in other areas come to help. For example when it has been flooding, which it has during the past time, groups from different areas came to help the ones in need and then there trust can be

created. By those things people understand that they get help if they are in danger and friendships can educe.” (Black)

According to Inoguchi and Hotta, individuals with lower incomes are less helpful to others. They argue that the reason may be that these people do not have the resources to help, or they want to be helped themselves before they can help others. This was mentioned by some INGOs as well: there is a need for people to fill their own basic needs, such as finding a place to live, a job and sort out life in a settled post-war context, before being able to help others and participate in, e.g., workshops.

A general tendency of INGOs was to point out the importance of getting people together to meet and discover that they actually have a lot of similarities, but they argued that this takes time. All of the INGOs have different ways of approaching the difficulties and problems in Sri Lanka and have different methods to achieve trust, dialogue and social capital between the Tamils and Sinhala.

INGO dark blue said that “the causes of conflict are entrenched in the fabric of our society” and that they manifest themselves in different ways. INGO dark blue explained the causes of conflict by giving an example regarding youth:



(Figure made by the Author)

INGO dark blue further discuss the importance of having good institutions in a society and that it is important to work with the government to make this happen. INGO light blue cooperates with the ministry of social integration and national languages and calls them a pioneer in addressing one of the root causes off the civil war: language. INGO light blue recall for me the year 1956, when president S.W.R.D Bandaranaike declared Sinhala the primary language, the language of conduct, in Sri Lanka. She explains that this cut out many of the opportunities for Tamils, e.g., they lost access to employment in some areas and opportunities to work for the government or private sector. Before this, the language of conduct was English, and at that time all ethnicities had to learn English and conduct themselves publicly in English. Pink explains that it is important to have good working institutions that work on language issues in Sri Lanka. He believes that it is important that at least governmental institutions can work in Tamil, Sinhala and English. The ministry of social integration and language was established two years ago and, with the help of INGO light blue, provides free education all over Sri Lanka for the Sinhala to learn Tamil, and vice versa. INGO light blue believes that to unite Sri Lanka, increase the dialogue between the different ethnic groups and make people more willing to communicate with each other, there is a need to decrease the language barriers. Language can most certainly be a factor that makes people

divide themselves into “us” and “them” groups. Furthermore, INGO purple talk about this but highlights the importance for the business and private sector to be conflict-sensitive and that they have a lot of power to help develop a sustainable peace. This will be discussed further in following chapters.

9.3 Weak and strong ties

In some areas of Sri Lanka, Tamil and Sinhala are formally civil to each other, but you never see Tamil buy merchandise in a Sinhala store, or vice versa, according to INGO purple blue. She further explains that there have been improvements following some of the projects of INGO purple. She says that there is a change in how people approach each other and that they are more open towards others. Another aspect that INGO purple talks about is acceptance. Slowly, it is becoming more and more acceptable in some communities to engage with Tamils, and vice versa. INGO dark blue observes the change by observing processes. By defining a process where it was not defined before, e.g., creating a channel for communication, achievements can be observed by asking questions such as: how far have the process reached? The general tendency expressed by all the INGOs is that they first observe a change in people’s attitudes and then in their behavior. The change in attitude can be observed, e.g., by people addressing issues differently at workshops or suddenly being able to say that Tamil and Sinhala need to cooperate. The change in behavior might be that people from different ethnic groups greet each other on the street.

In a society, there might be a high level of trust between different segments, but within a segment there might be almost none. Generally, people trust others that are similar to themselves such as, e.g., their family or close friends, but have a more difficult time trusting people that are outside this inner circle. People who have a more general form of trust towards others are often more positive and tolerant towards fellow human beings, while others have a more negative way of viewing other people and their future and ways to change it (Rothstein, 2003:158). Accordingly, it is important for the Sri Lankan society to build trust. The INGOs all expressed similar views of what trust means, but still they worked in different ways to build trust. INGO dark blue work to build trust by helping small enterprises to connect with other enterprises from different areas in Sri Lanka and also by helping them to invest in other areas and employ the available labor from the areas they invest in. They work on conflict-sensitivity investment and business, meaning that if a company is going to invest in, e.g.,

Jaffna⁶, INGO dark blue work with them to ensure that they will work with people in Jaffna so that it the company will not be perceived in a negative way. INGO dark blue ensures that the company employs people from the region they invest in and do not import labor from the outside as a first resource because that can cause conflict.

“We want people to create that conflict sensitivity of what their company could do to the community and where their business could fit.” (Dark blue)

INGO dark blue’s way of working on trust is similar to that of INGO yellow and purple. The other INGOs work on trust at another level. They try to get community members and people from the grassroots together to build trust, e.g., through workshops, awareness training and, as mentioned before, creating goals together with the people and then together working to reach these goals to solve problems.

The INGOs talked about what can threaten trust, and all of them concluded that trust can be threatened by people who do not keep promises, betrayal and a lack of honesty at different institutions. Trust between individuals can also be threatened by individuals not meeting others’ expectations. The INGOs, therefore, argue that it is important that people are clear of what the INGOs are doing. The INGOs also have to be aware of what people’s expectations are when working.

Weak and strong ties are similar to bridging and bonding and address the same issues, but the difference is that weak and strong ties can be viewed as inside the bridging and bonding mechanism. Between different groups, there might be strong and weak ties between and within them as well as both bridging and bonding.

Some INGOs worked a lot with volunteers. The volunteers helped with INGO work and received some education and work experience as well as the opportunity to go to different meetings and trips with volunteers from other parts of the country. The activities of volunteer groups make different ethnic groups meet and share ideas and experiences. Many of the volunteers were young, and the INGOs wanted to invest in them because they are the leaders of today. After the volunteers went back to their communities, they shared their knowledge

⁶ A town in the northern parts of Sri Lanka.

and experiences, e.g., talked and gave lectures to younger kids in schools. Through this work, weak ties grow and can create social capital.

It is important that social networks spread trust among its members. The more trust there is among individuals in a society, the more opportunities there are to cooperate and thus create even more trust. Even if INGOs cannot create strong ties between the Tamil and Sinhala groups they work with, they can create weak ties, which can induce people to trust those they would not normally trust. The weak ties can then extend and also include strangers. By having these informal relationships, a person can reach much further and gain more opportunities than if the person were only to have access to the strong ties, e.g., the immediate family and close friends (Putnam, 2001). For INGO dark blue, when working to increase dialogue between the ethnic groups and achieve a sustainable peace, the goal is to make every individual able to achieve its full potential.

According to Rotstein (2003:110), the INGOs do not have to strive to create strong ties in their work. Weak ties are sufficient. It is not necessary for people to trust their surroundings entirely. Many the INGOs in this study worked to set weak ties between the Tamil and Sinhala people. For instance, many of them had different workshops, sport activities, arranged celebrations or discussion groups where the different groups could meet and interact. When the people meet, they realize they have similar problems, and they find issues to discuss. When this occurs, they slowly can develop an understanding for each other and, subsequently, a friendship. INGO red thought that this can be achieved but pointed out that it cannot be achieved in only a couple of training sessions. It needs to be a gradual process of building trust because people need time to digest what has occurred. INGO green said:

“You have to challenge the existing norms and believes and realities. Create discussions to challenge. We try to have discussion points where people recognize themselves and from that we create a dialogue where people can talk about their experiences. People then realize that they have common problems.” (Green)

INGO dark blue explained:

“Without the violent conflict there, the opportunities for people to see what else could be done and especially as business as an engine for growth, it cuts cross

ethnicity, it has a potential to cut cross ethnicity, where the profit motive makes it easy for people to cut and communicate.” (Dark blue)

After meeting with and participating in INGO activities, the people can go home with new knowledge and understanding, which they tell their family and friends about. When an individual activates and mobilizes a chain of ties, the person’s socially embedded resources may turn into social capital. As INGO yellow said, it is not only important that people participate in activities and communicate with each other, it is also important that they network after the meetings and workshops, for instance. According to INGO yellow, it is difficult to know what happens after people go home and in between the meetings. One way to know that people network is to observe time that lapses before a change in attitudes occurs. INGO light blue observes results when people begin automatically addressing different issues and in how people change the way they talk. INGO dark blue also experienced this:

“In one of the forums a business sector leader said that the end of the war does not mean that there is an end of conflict. So something like that for a business person to say is that all our work and dialogue has somehow permitted that discourse so they are able to actually say these things. This is an indicator of success because you are bringing the conflict sensitivity to a lot of sectors that do not usually think of this as a priority.” (Dark blue)

9.4 The INGOs view of creating social capital in the Sri Lankan society

The creation of social capital in developing countries such as Sri Lanka can be undermined by, e.g., inefficient government performance and authoritarian regimes (Bastian, 2009). Many INGOs explained the hardship of the suspicion of the government towards INGOs in Sri Lanka. Sometimes, the INGOs have felt that the government acted in opposition to them, e.g., by not extending visas for some foreign coworkers. On the other hand, some INGOs can understand this because there have been betrayals from INGOs towards the government throughout history, and there have been issues with INGOs helping out the LTTE. Because of this, some of the INGOs think the government’s suspicion is positive in a sense, as a way to prevent the return of violent conflict. Pink also agreed on this reasoning and talked about rumors that there were INGOs who had helped LTTE.

A domestic conflict might divide the population into different camps, e.g., in Sri Lanka, the different camps were divided by ethnicity (Roberts, 2009). The conflict in Sri Lanka has decreased the trust that existed and the ability for individuals to cooperate. The social capital has declined. According to Bandaralage (2009:111-112), social capital can be eroded by violent conflict, and he argues that there has been an erosion of social capital in Sri Lanka because of the civil war. Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme (2000:390-391), on the other hand, argue that it is not necessary for social capital to become eroded by violent conflict. According to them, there is little to say about the relationship between social capital and conflict. They mean that it is important that one not only observe social capital as one entity but to also consider other processes as well, such as political and economic processes. They do not agree with Bandaralage that violent conflict erodes social capital. INGO dark blue says that conflict is not entirely a bad thing. They argue that it is a progressive thing that helps to resolve issues and lead to transformation. In addition, Goodhand and Lewer et al. (2000:401) agree that conflict can trigger social change.

It is not easy to create social capital, but it can be achieved by building bridges between different communities and between the communities and the state. By cooperating, individuals are often better off. INGO green work with many government institutions, especially Samudhi, which is the governmental development program. It is similar to a social service program for poverty eradication. INGO green are providing and supporting the technical know-how to handle certain matters, e.g., child rights. INGO green also work closely with the Sri Lanka ministry of child and women development.

“They look at our work and we are working with quite a lot of communities where we are importing knowledge in these issues.” (Green)

Social capital can be context-dependent. A person who goes to the INGO workshops or works as a volunteer at one of the INGO projects does not have to gain general trust automatically. However, the person can be affected by the work that he or she participates in, which subsequently can generate trust. One problem to the person not building any general trust can be that the group that he joined is too coherent. The persons' views and beliefs go unchallenged, and, instead, the ties within the group can become strengthened and social capital created only within the group, while mistrust can develop towards other groups (Schechter, Twigg, 2003:9-10). Groups that already have a large amount of social capital can

have an advantage over groups that do not have as much, and then, for example, political and economic inequalities can increase (Putnam, 2003:9). Therefore, social capital can be valuable for some while hurtful to others, depending on its characteristics and use. INGO red explained that there were some communities in Sri Lanka with only Tamil people, and vice versa. There, it was difficult to work on increasing the dialogue between the different ethnic groups because villages consisting of only, e.g., Tamils, are more closed, and people know less about other ethnic groups. In these places, the INGOs had to operate differently than they would in mixed communities, to build trust between Tamils and Sinhala. According to Rothstein (2003:142), networks are created with people in the surroundings. Orjuela (2003:203) argues that one individual's peace of mind that will bring peace to his or her surroundings, beginning in the family and then the village, the country and the world. "If people are harmonic and united locally, this will serve as an example showing that peace is indeed possible also at a higher level" (Ibid).

An indication of social capital can be that people participate in the activities brought forward by the INGOs. The INGOs offer activities that generate regular contact between the different groups in a community. Through the activities, the different groups can develop different goals and set up further activities. During the meetings, people get to share ideas and experiences, which, in the long run, make the INGOs influence the way people perceive themselves and their surroundings. According to Fields (2005:12-13), a person's social relationships achieved by, e.g., being a part of INGO activities can maintain and affect the way he or she perceives reality. The social capital that was built will most often be maintained by the person forever.

Often, the programs introduced by the INGOs include activities or groups forums for discussing community problems. The next step is to make the people uphold these discussion groups without the INGO as a facilitator. The idea is that the people should maintain discussion groups when they return their communities (in the cases where the people have met outside their communities) or without any facilitator. They should continue to talk about issues and be able to reach agreements together on how to solve problems. INGO purple explains the work by saying:

“It takes a lot of dialogue workshops and activities like that to make sure it becomes a part of a normal, all-inclusiveness.” (Purple)

In cases where the groups meet outside their own communities because the communities are divided (only Tamil and only Sinhala), it can be difficult to create more social capital than the social capital created when the groups meet. At the same time, when the different groups from the coherent communities return home, they confront their surroundings, and their knowledge and experiences can be spread to the rest of the community. Then second-hand weak ties can be created. With the weak ties, trust and understanding follow. One aspect to consider when working on building trust and social capital between the different ethnic groups is the caste system. INGO purple talks about this and argues that the caste system in Sri Lanka is not very distinguished, but in some particular areas, it can be prominent. Therefore, sometimes, even if people are from the same ethnic group, it can be difficult to work. According to INGO purple, the caste system is centuries old, and the INGO has no right to say, “Hey, the caste system is out now.” They argue that it is important to be aware of its existence and, sometimes because of it, work at different levels. Goodhand, Lewer et al. (2000:401) mean that cast system can create and strengthen bonding social capital.

The INGO’s view of creating trust between different ethnic groups can be summed up and explained by the quotation below from INGO red:

“Trust comes if you are in a bad situation and someone is looking for you!” (Red)

The glue in all social life is the ability to trust and be trustworthy (Putnam, Goss, 2002:7). The levels of trust between human beings differ according to country, city or community (Putnam, 2002:7). Pink thought there was a great need to develop trust in Sri Lanka and said that just because there is armed conflict one day, it does not mean that trust automatically is there. It is important to work actively to build trust, according to pink. The INGOs explained that many people in Sri Lanka are frustrated with the country’s political, economic and social situation. For many people, conflict and the insecurity that civil war brings are a part of their daily lives. This affects the people of course. Some children have been brought up to believe that other ethnic groups are the reason for their bad situation, and they blame other groups for the conflict situation, which affects the child. It is the life of many children. INGO black explains it below:

“Something we have to consider is that there are people, a generation of people in some parts of the east and some parts of the north that have not seen a regular Sinhala person because they have lived just by themselves, purely on their own... so that generation has no idea of the co-existence with other ethnic groups... so they have not seen anything other than the fighting forces of the Sri Lankan army where there are mainly only Sinhala people. So that generation of people has completely sort of... I mean, they know nothing of other cultures.” (Black)

On the other hand, pink says that there are some communities in Sri Lanka where there are no problems between Tamils and Sinhala. They live together side by side, integrated, and there are no problems between them, according to pink. He also mentioned that it is important to remember that in some places, there are great friendships among the different ethnic groups. All of the INGOs concur and work not only to create social capital and trust but also to increase and improve it.

To reach a sustainable peace and a sustainable dialogue between the Tamil and Sinhala, there is a need to concentrate on the younger generation in Sri Lanka. In the parts of the country where the conflict has been more apparent, the opportunity for the younger generation to improve their lives and the affected resources in their lives is lower, e.g., their education has been affected by the war. They have not been able to generate the same social network as the younger generation in other parts of Sri Lanka (Ibarguen, 2004a:5). If they receive the opportunity to participate in the community, they can develop the society and also manage to control their future, which they, in many cases, could not do during the civil war. The ability to participate in the community might help the younger generation to develop ties to other people, and if they feel that they have the power to change and improve the society, they might also be empowered to believe in a change for the future.

Many of the INGOs believed in working with the younger generation to achieve sustainable change and development. INGO green had a youth branch facilitated by the managers of INGO green. The youth branch worked in different areas of Sri Lanka and tried to have as many Tamil as Sinhala members, e.g., if the chairman was Tamil, the secretary or economist would be Sinhala, such that they always divided themselves 50/50. INGO green also had a vision that the children and the youth are the future citizens of today and not tomorrow, meaning that it is important to invest in the youth for Sri Lanka to reach a sustainable future, a

sustainable peace and development. INGO green try to challenge existing norms that they think hinder development. They try to increase the rights of children and youth. Typically, in the youth groups, they hear different prejudices about other ethnic groups, but INGO green explains that when the different groups meet, they realize that they have a lot in common.

The above-mentioned have links to trust building, when people that are different, e.g., those that have different ethnicities, they come together, their concepts will be challenged, and they might see that many of their concepts are false. In these cases, social capital can be seen as promoting learning. People obtain new knowledge and can make new social connections (Field, 2005:30). The general view of the INGOs is that trust is seen as the relationship that comes from friendship.

To build social capital, people need to interact with each other and engage with people that are different from themselves. They need to react beyond their social and political identities. Typically, participating in sport activities, art or cultural celebrations could ease the difficulties of engagement and interaction (Putnam, 2000:432). There should be meeting places and forums to express opinions and where people from different ethnic groups can meet with each other (Svendsen, Svendsen, 2004:165). A general tendency among the INGOs was to point out the importance of different ethnic groups meeting with each other and that it was important to have places to meet to make this happen. Some INGOs also mentioned the hardship of getting people involved and engaged but said that when having places where people could meet, it was easier to make them come together. INGO dark blue have, among other things, created an internet forum where people can go and discuss different matters. However, there is a lack of knowledge among the Sri Lankans regarding how to use the internet, and the majority do not have computers. INGO purple, on the other hand, argues that it is important to use, e.g., rehabilitation of the infrastructure as a catalyst for getting people involved. By only saying that you are going to conduct awareness training and such, participation might not be as successful. Pink and INGO green concur. Orjuela (2003:209) argues that spreading information and encouraging dialogue is the best one can do to build trust. She even calls it essential for trust building.

The forums and meeting places can help to create bridging social capital. If there are no places for the different groups to meet, then it can be easy for them to fall back into distrust

because they cannot benefit from each other (Svendsen, Svendsen:167). It is important when creating trust and social capital that there is a long-lasting relationship and for this to occur, there is a need for meeting places. INGO dark blue said this:

“ We believe that one of the challenges here is that regional voices does not come together to actually share their challenges and if we are able to achieve that then that is one of the ways in sort of trying to build trust and sustain peace.” (Dark Blue)

There is a high level of distrust in Sri Lanka, and people are afraid of others taking advantage of them and tricking them into something bad (Elisson, 2003:72). INGO yellow explains that trust is created through genuine rhetoric and promises, but sometimes much time is needed. INGO yellow argue that some people in Sri Lanka are scared, bitter and angry because they suffered greatly in the civil war.

“I do not know how to build trust without coming to turn with the past and reaching to some understanding of what have been happening.” (Yellow)

INGO light blue also touches upon this, saying that the minorities often are weak, even after the conflict, such that they cannot just come up and say, “Hey these are the problems, this is what it wrong, come and fix it” (Light blue). The amount of trust would be higher if people were to believe that the society works as a whole (Rothstein, 2003:34). If a country seeks to avoid the distrust that possesses the climate, it is of importance that the state invest in creating good and honest institutions where people are treated equally (Ibid: 155). All of the INGOs agreed that the government institutions have to be strengthened. The majority of the INGOs worked on this in one way or another. INGO dark blue mentioned that there are many complaints from Tamil people that when they go into a government office, they must speak in Sinhala or nothing is accomplished. INGO green explained that there is a new kind of freedom in some of the war-torn areas, e.g., a husband can beat his wife and nothing happens. Before, during the war, if he did this, there would be consequences because there was a rule, the LTTE rule. During the war or the LTTE rule, these matters were controlled in a different manner. During the LTTE rule, in the parts controlled by the LTTE, without having an inquiry, something bad would occur to the ones that had committed a crime (or that someone said committed a crime). Further, INGO green argues, “when the freedom is there, the

freedom to exploit is also there.” Therefore it is important that the state invest in creating good and honest institutions. INGO yellow thinks that there is still a political conflict driven by the failure to devolve powers to the periphery to strengthen the national government. There is a social justice problem and with institutions being responsive to people’s needs and desires for justice. INGO light blue works with the ministry of justice concerning legal issues. They have mediation boards in cooperation with the government to improve the legal justice. They help people understand each other, provide interpreters and work as mediators. INGO light blue view this as a part of their work in creating dialogue between different ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. The people have to learn how to sit across the table from a Sinhala or Tamil person that they have, e.g., hated for some years or been at war with. That is the first step towards something good. However, if the government institutions were to work better, the INGO work would be different and better. Bandaralage (2009:134) argues that it is necessary to strengthen government institutions to re-establish individual trust in institutions. Moreover, Goodhand, Lewer et al. (2000:401,404) agree on this and argue that the most hardwearing social capital is socially embedded networks and institutions. They continue by saying that there is a need for the state in Sri Lanka to implement state processes to strengthen governance.

“We work very much with institution building which can help trust building which can help in creating social capital in the long run and also then help to prevent armed conflict and sustain peace.” (Light blue)

10. Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to answer the question of how INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase social capital and trust between the Tamils and Sinhala. The following questions were asked: How do the INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase social capital and trust between the different the Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups? What strategies and different techniques do they use to create social capital and trust? What are the main difficulties, according to the INGOs, when working to increase social capital and trust? To answer these questions, theories about social capital and social capital focused on trust have been used. There is no simple answer that can reflect all aspects and dimensions. The work that the INGOs do to create social capital is difficult to evaluate.

How do the INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase social capital and trust between the different ethnic groups? A straight answer to this question is tricky to give. All the different INGOs worked in different ways to achieve increased social capital, trust and dialogue between the different ethnic groups in the society, and this was a very impressive insight. Many INGOs are doing different things, but at the same time, they are reaching towards the same goal: to develop Sri Lanka by increasing social capital and trust between members of the society. The INGOs attempt to make a difference by reaching towards different levels of the society. Some reach to influence micro levels, others towards meso or macro levels. Many INGOs work with different levels at the same time and cooperate with many different institutions. A common characteristic of all the INGOs was that they believed in the importance of influencing different parts and levels of the society to create a sustainable development process and a sustainable peace. A conclusion is that INGOs play a vital part in bringing people from different ethnic groups together and creating weak and strong ties as well as bridges between them, and in that sense, they also build trust and social capital. However, it is not enough to escape the social trap, and the work must continue and become more focused to gain a sustainable peace. It is important to keep in mind that INGOs cannot drive the development process on their own. The state has a crucial role to play in the creation of more democratic structures, and the weak institutions of the Sri Lankan state need to be strengthened. The structures of the society are often deeply rooted in cultural and social norms

and can, therefore, be extremely difficult to change. Social capital must be built into different levels of the society and by different institutions in the society. INGOs are only one section working to create social capital and trust. It is important to keep in mind that social capital can exist and develop in one specific context but not in another; even if there may be a high level of social capital and trust within ethnic groups, it may not exist between them. The INGOs play a vital role in gathering people to take part in important discussions and experience new things together.

An interesting aspect was that the INGOs viewed the conflict through different lenses, which influenced the strategies they choose to increase social capital and trust between the different ethnic groups. They used many different working methods, depending on which strategy they had chosen. Distinct strategies were, e.g., empowerment, participation and calling a project a peace-building project. Different methods are, e.g., community projects, work in both micro, meso and macro levels and the use of volunteers as ambassadors.

What strategies and different techniques did the INGOs use to create social capital and trust? A general aspect was to use strategies that made people come together physically and participate in workshops and different projects. To make people trust each other, it was important to make them meet and integrate with each other. A successfully used strategy was to subsequently follow up on this integration by creating different forums where the participants could meet again, discuss opinions and thoughts, to later on be able to improve their situation. Both Putnam and Rothstein insist that it is of importance to provide meeting places for citizens. The INGOs create many meeting places for the citizens, but it is not sufficient: the state must also do its part. The state has the means to bring people together, and it is highly important that it uses these means, e.g., by creating mixed schools or mutual TV shows.

Another well-used technique was not to refer to the programs as peace-building projects, or projects to improve dialogue between Tamil and Sinhala or dialogue training. Instead, it was important to attract people with words such as empowerment and development, which are positive words that make people want to come and discuss improvements for their community instead of difficulties between the different ethnic groups. Once there, it was easy for the INGOs to begin discussing different issues concerning ethnicity because it is something

penetrating the whole country. As people learn to trust each other, there is an opportunity to facilitate democratic advances and it is more likely that the country's institutions will be more effective in promoting faith and trust among its population. An increased social capital will strengthen the civil society and trust, which in return will strengthen social capital. It is an ongoing circle of influence.

What were the main difficulties according to the INGOs when working to increase social capital and trust? The main difficulty explained by the INGOs working to increase social capital and trust was that some areas and communities in Sri Lanka are not ready for work (projects, workshops etcetera) concerning dialogue and integration. Some people needed to fill their basic needs first because all their belongings had disappeared or been destroyed in the civil war, and many people in that situation had not sufficiently grieved over the losses and destruction from the conflict. Therefore, some people were not ready for dialogue and trust-building projects, even though it has been one year since the war was declared ended. Some INGOs adopted a more humanitarian approach to working with these individuals, helping them to fulfill their basic needs, but at the same time, they had trust building in mind and tried to plant some seeds by talking about ethnicity and the future. I observed that it is important to always have in mind the importance of creating sustainable peace and that the INGOs worked with that in all projects, even if the main purpose was not to create social capital and trust to reach a sustainable peace. I would find it interesting to return in a couple of years to observe how these places have developed and how the building of social capital has developed.

Another general difficulty was that the government was suspicious of INGOs, which made it difficult for INGOs to work in some areas. The strategy for overcoming this difficulty was to be humble and cooperate with governmental institutions, try to improve them and, even there, plant some seeds to improve the trust between the different ethnic groups and, in some cases, between institutions in the society.

The INGOs highlighted and acknowledged the importance of creating trust and social capital in many different sections/levels of the society—not only between grassroots people that constitute the society but also between institutions—and of compelling these institutions to cooperate more. It is impressive to observe how many ways there are to achieve one thing; the

INGOs focused on different levels and areas but, at the same time, had similar goals, and this is exactly what is needed, according to the different INGOs. A conclusion that I observe is that what is lacking in the society is government actions that create social capital and trust between the different ethnic groups. Social capital and trust is more widespread in countries where there is a democracy that is well functioning and developed. It is important to keep in mind that that many scholars of social capital, such as, e.g., Rothstein and Putnam, are from Western countries and have a Western point of view. This might reproduce the view that what works in Western countries should also work in a developing country, e.g., Sri Lanka. Social capital and trust are concepts that are essential when seeking to have and create working institutions, and these concepts are dependent on each other and can be difficult to create in a situation without working institutions or democracy, and vice versa.

Returning to the suspicion from the government towards INGOs, many INGOs can understand this. This was a fact that I initially had a difficult time understanding. However, when thinking about Sweden, if it were Sweden that had engaged in civil war and there were rumors about some INGOs working to help the guerillas in Sweden, then probably the Swedish government would have reacted in the same way and been suspicious towards the INGOs, to gain control over the situation and prevent further civil conflict.

It is possible to discuss the extent of INGO rights to participate in the development of a country, and the discussion can develop differently, according to the extent of aid the country needs, and it is also possible to ask how much responsibility the government of a country should have.

The following is a figure that illustrates my reasoning for how the strategies, difficulties and methods used by the INGOs are connected.



Strategies- are goals and directions concerning the work e.g empowerment, participation, not naming projects peace-building etcetera.

Difficulties-

is what make the methods not go towards the strategies e.g. suspiciousness from the government, basic needs have to be fulfilled, need working institutions.



Methods -

are what the INGOs do that is hands on/with the community e.g. community projects, work in both micro, meso and macro levels, volunteers as ambassadors.

(Figure made by author)

For the INGOs in Sri Lanka to work as effectively as possible towards increasing social capital, trust and sustainable peace, it is important that the methods correspond to the strategies used and, at the same time, oppose and consider the difficulties of minimizing their influence. The difficulties impede the INGOs from using their strategies and methods. There is an apparent connection between methods and strategies, which demonstrates that the INGOs I interviewed work in a carefully prepared way.

The INGOs observed the Sri Lankan government to be slightly inconclusive with respect to solving the problems that must be solved and view themselves as important components in the development work, e.g., by encouraging different governmental institutions to cooperate by implementing different projects, not only with the grassroots, such that they treat different ethnic groups with respect, but also in the governmental institutions. However, neither trust

nor bridging or bonding nor any other aspect of social capital can fully promote peaceful development in the society. I believe that the lack of social capital between the ethnic groups is only one aspect, while, e.g., poverty and injustice play their part.

I think there is good potential for Sri Lanka to increase the existing social capital and create trust! I have hope and who is to say what is impossible? It is important to remember that the world keeps spinning for each new day and that change is possible.

"Let this be a fruitful era." (Pink)

11. Further research

A subject for further research in relation to this thesis is whether INGOs are the new colonists when coming to a country, helping to rebuild and giving their input on how to develop institutions and such. It would also be interesting to examine how INGOs affect governmental institutions in Sri Lanka: in what way might their interference be positive versus negative? It might also be interesting to return to Sri Lanka in five or ten years to observe whether the social capital has increased, if the trust and dialogue between Tamils and Sinhala have increased, how much they have increased, whether or not the projects conducted by the INGOs worked, how large the impact has been and which one has worked the best.

As I mentioned before, the questions that this thesis has attempted to answer are complex and difficult to analyze. This makes it interesting to investigate how other players can affect the peace-building process, the creation of social capital and the building of trust between ethnic groups who are in conflict. For instance, how does the presence of the military affect these aspects or how do global institutions such as the UN or NATO contribute to a sustainable peace? In a world where even the poorest countries have access to cell phones and computers, it might also be interesting to see how social media can influence ethnic groups.

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13. Appendix 1 - Interview guide

The guide below was used when I was conducting my interviews. The questions was used as guidance for me during the interviews and was not always asked in the same order as presented below and sometimes not in the direct way as written in the guide.

Interview guide

Can you please tell me your name, your position and the name of the organization that you work for?

The organization and briefly about the projects

For how long have the organization been working in Sri Lanka?

What kind of projects do you have that works directly or indirectly with increasing the dialogue between the Tamil and the Sinhalese people?

What kind of projects does the organization have that works directly or indirectly with increasing the dialogue between the Tamil and the Sinhalese people?

What is the organization doing in relation to other organizations, NGOs, INGOs? (Cooperation or competition with other organizations?)

Approaches for creating dialogue and key success factors

How do you work in reality? (Which techniques do you use for the dialogue?) (How are the projects created/put forward? The mission/vision?)

I heard about this project.... (Have examples of projects and ask specifically, if the interviewee cannot come to think of any good projects/techniques themselves)

Which key factors in your work techniques are most important for/when creating a successful dialogue?

How do you know which techniques that works? (Is it by old experience?)

Peace building

What does peace building mean for you, can you please explain?

In what way, directly or indirectly do you work with peace building?

What contributions does your work give to peace building in Sri Lanka? Can you give some examples?

In what way could previous knowledge about peace building and conflict resolution be fruitful when working with projects in Sri Lanka? (Does Sri Lanka differ from other post-conflicts?) (What is those success factors based upon?)

Trust

How do you define trust? (What does trust mean for you?)

How do you think is the best way to create trust between different ethnic groups? (Sri Lanka as case study)

How do you think trust is threatened?

Results

In what way can you see a result of increased dialogue between the Tamil and the Sinhalese people? (With people I mean the ones in the community)

What are the results from the work? (From the projects mentioned before)

How do you measure the results?

Being an INGO in Sri Lanka

What are the main difficulties when being an international organization working in this area with projects about increasing the dialogue between the different groups?

How has the ethnic conflict (the increase of the conflict, two/one year/s ago) been affecting your work? Please give examples! (Have you ever felt any danger?)

Did you have to change your ways of working due to the ethnic conflict, the violence two/one years ago?

Have/ how have your ways of working been changed after the war ended (the one year post-war?)

How do you understand the governmental view on you as an INGO? (The Sri Lankan government)

I have read and heard a lot about the government being very suspicious towards international organizations working in Sri Lanka, what is your view on this? (Is it right?)

(If the interview person find the government being suspicious this following question will be asked) How do you cope with the suspiciousness from the government? (And their unwillingness to cooperate?) (Any special techniques?) (Does it affect your work? How does it affect your work?) (If it does affect it, is it positive or negative?)

Other

Something else you would like to add?