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Pursuing Peace: Strategies Employed by INGOs to Foster Trust between Tamil and Sinhala Communities in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka

A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine how INGOs in Sri Lanka work to increase social capital and trust between two specific ethnic groups- the Tamils and Sinhala. The study uses a qualitative approach, where this dissertation draws on Michel Foucault's Discourse Analysis with the concepts of power/knowledge and governmentality as central themes in the empirical data. The empirical data is provided by five prevalent international organizations that were present towards post-war Sri Lanka, from 2009 and onwards. The strategies employed by the different organizations are defined in relation to the thirty principles of The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as their relevance is universally recognised for setting standards in a post-war context. In relation to the particular discourse of peace and reconciliation, this research identifies two contrasting themes: "Empowered and Included" and "Marginalized and Excluded." The former explores themes such as Recognition, Empowerment, and Engagement in Peace and Reconciliation, while the latter delves into Lack of Implementation, Vulnerabilities, and Marginalization in peace processes. By investigating these themes, the study analyzes the intricate interplay between INGO interventions and the historical and existing socio-political landscape, offering insights into fostering trust and social cohesion among ethnic groups in a post-conflict society.

Keywords: INGOs, Sinhala, Tamil, Strategy, Governmentality, Discourse, Foucault

Abbreviations

INGO: International Non Governmental Organisation

FDA: Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

SLFP: Sri Lankan Freedom Party

UNP: United National Party

IDP: Internally Displaced Persons

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1. Introduction to Research Area

International Non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are deemed to be independent of commercial businesses and government agencies. The foundational purpose of these many different types of organizations which fall under the category of INGOs aims to serve the public good and pursue a public interest agenda (Hall-Jones, 2006). In Sri Lanka, they have been actively engaged in various initiatives to address the socio-economic disparities and foster reconciliation between the Tamil and Sinhala communities (ibid).

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, these organizations tied close knots with the mainstream press as an attempt to publish their own content. However, since the late 20th century, several INGOs still face several challenges concerning publications in various news outlets, as the response has fueled an approach where media is carefully tailored to fit the requirements of news outlets (Cottle & Nolan, 2007; Fenton, 2010). Civil society actors such as INGOs and advocacy networks are deemed to become all the more significant as traditional news media models are vulnerable to diminishing audiences & increasing censorship (ibid).

According to (Lewis & Moose, 2006) non-governmental organizations play an immense role in global social development. Their ability to maintain institutional independence and political neutrality is perceived to be essential when determining the credibility of non-governmental organizations (ibid).

In the past decades, there has been a considerable increase in public diplomacy on behalf of non-state actors as efforts to engage in numerous development processes among the public. Civil society actors such as International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and other independent media channels are deemed to become all the more important in the traditional news sphere, as the traditional media model is threatened by the overall availability of free content online and decreasing audiences (Sharma, International NGO Journal Vol. 5(4) pp. 84-87, 2010). The mainstream news media model is deemed to be exposed to challenges such as shrinking audiences, and the overall availability of free content online.

Countries' authoritarian histories are also considered contributors to certain media outlet contexts. Such right-wing authoritarian regimes in the form of military dictatorships were notorious for their well-publicized surveillance and propaganda (Dinas & Northmore Ball, 2019). Societal pressures stretch to numerous associators with past regimes, the past is frequently discredited in elite and public debate.

1.1 Relevance of Study

This thesis is relevant because by understanding the numerous strategies utilized by INGOs and how it potentially can contribute to various stakeholders, policymakers and affected communities by fostering social capital and trust-building through careful interventions as a means of avoiding unintended consequences.

Existing literature has focused on the functioning of the humanitarian regime through the process of institutionalization categorized by agency competition. However, the process from institutionalization to implementation has rarely been systematically examined. As there are different peacebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka trying to ignite social cohesion between the Sinhala and Tamil communities through the empowerment of local populations in decision-making processes and cross-community cooperation (Sorbo et al, 2011). The humanitarian INGO sector is often dominated by a small percentage of large-scale INGOs. There is limited research on in-depth case studies of specific INGO initiatives, in relation to contextual factors which influence overall effectiveness (Aneja, 2014).

This thesis addresses the research gap by exploring a more in-depth case study of INGOs initiatives and strategies, analyzing the impact of implemented strategies in a local context. By conducting an analysis that addresses ethical considerations of INGO interventions, from cultural sensitivity to power dynamics and possible unintended consequences it is easier to gain a more cohesive and in-depth understanding of the development agenda.

1.2 Delimitations

Numerous major mainstream news outlets are essentially dominated by large, wealthy INGOs that have the resources to recruit experienced journalists and continually update their media technology. The restructuring of INGOs, both in terms of organizational structure as well as redistribution of resources in consonance with social norms is something that requires financial and cultural capital (Lang, 2013; Powers, 2016B).

As news coverage in many media outlets has shrunk due to intense globalization, non-governmental organizations face the risk of becoming institutionalized. The process of institutionalization entails that INGOs are now expected to produce reports, policy statements, and press releases e.g. to uphold the expectations created by stakeholders which include: donors, journalists, and government officials (Powers, 2011). The critical problem of competition also arises as NGOs compete for public attention and limited funds. This thesis acknowledges the broader context and complexity of post-conflict reconciliation in Sri Lanka. The study will focus on strategies that are utilized by INGOs and their impacts on inter-ethnic relations, and not on the role of other stakeholders in relation to peacebuilding initiatives.

1.3 Outline of Thesis

This thesis aims to present the stated research problem and answer the research question in 7 sections. After the introduction, the background section will contextualize the chosen research area. This specifically brings up the political landscape in Sri Lanka, the history of Sri Lanka's ethnic tensions, the significant social capital maintained in this particular context, and the role of International Non-Governmental Organizations. The following chapter introduces previous literature which conceptualizes the aims of INGOs strategies as a means of fostering trust between the Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups. The theoretical section focuses on the theories that constitute a framework for the analysis. Through the utilization of Michel Foucault's Discourse Analysis, with a focus on the notion of power/knowledge, discourse theory, and governmentality. The following chapter focuses on the selected empirical data, in this particular study of strategy documents. The analysis is structured in three different parts which explore the peace and reconciliation aspirations, categorizations of Internally Displaced Persons, and the technologies

of governmentality. Lastly, the main findings of the thesis are concluded with space for further research.

1.2 Aims and Significance

This thesis seeks to examine specific strategies employed by INGOs in Sri Lanka in order to build social capital and foster trust between the Tamil and Sinhala communities. Understanding these strategies is critical in order to assess the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives and identifying practices that aim to promote sustainable inter-ethnic cooperation. The Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) is suited as a guideline for the research methodology.

1.3 Research Question

The research questions have been developed to achieve the aims of the thesis. They read:

1. How are strategies formulated by International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) employed in Sri Lanka to promote social capital and foster trust between the Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups?
2. How do INGO strategies align with broader discourses on peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka and globally?

2. Background

This section provides an overview of previous studies on which strategies INGOs employ in order to promote social capital and foster trust. There are key concepts defined in order to gain a better understanding of the context by understanding the historical preconditions both politically and socially.

2.2 The Definition of Social Capital

Pierre Bourdieu defined social capital as a dynamic phenomenon. Through the establishment of the social platform, the notion of social capital was coined (Swain, 2004). “Capital” was defined by Bourdieu as not only economic but also conceptualized in the context of social reproduction and power. There is a strong emphasis on structural constraints and unequal disparity amongst institutional resources (Dika and Singh, 2002). Social capital is strongly dependent on various forms of stratification which can be acquired by individuals through “more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.119).

Putnam (1996) conceptualizes social capital into two different forms; bridging and bonding. Bridging is defined by social networks that bring together individuals who are inherently different, whereas bonding focuses on accentuating social networks that bring people of similar ethnicity, age or gender together. Applied to the case study of Sri Lanka, in the context of ethnic mistrust, the assimilation of the Tamil people enhances the bonding of social capital. This is prevalent when communities are isolated and tend to adopt a strong sense of identity (Putnam, Goss, 2002, p.1-2; Svendsen, Svendsen, 2004, p.57). Because the social support is strong, bonding can widen the gap between different communities and strengthen ethnic conflict (ibid).

2.3 Sri Lanka’s political context

Dating back to British Colonial Rule, the strategic implementation of different policies to separate the Tamil and Sinhalese was utilized to create a clear divide between the two ethnic groups. The British legislation provided the Tamil minority with better educational opportunities and government employment, with the consequential effects of turning the Sinhalese majority against the Tamils (Bandarage, 2009).

Once universal suffrage was granted in Sri Lanka in 1931, the preconditioned political set-up induced a big mistake by Tamil and Sinhalese elites that neglected to modify the existing political structure at the time of independence. This was to avoid complete political dominance by one ethnic majority, however, by the time elections were conducted the Sinhalese already had a significant majority in the council (Wilson, 1998). As Tamil tried to advocate for a ‘fifty-fifty’ representation, the already Sinhalese majority had already voted for a proportional representation, which had a direct impact on numerous legislations implemented by the administration (ibid). A direct implication of the proportional representation was to eliminate the voting rights of all Indian Tamils living in Sri Lanka. This was the first step in reversing the power-play to the Sinhalese minority, as this administrative change ensured that the Sinhalese could attain a two-thirds majority in order to induce constitutional changes without the vote of the Tamil minority (Bandarage, 2009).

At the time of Independence in Sri Lanka, the national language was altered from English to both Tamil and Sinhalese. The change induced was to provide several more government jobs to members of the lower class, as it was before confined to solely the English language. However, discontent from the Sinhalese population concerning the inclusion of Tamil as a national language grew stronger. In order to gain political dominance in the 1956 election, the establishment of the “Sinhala-only” incentive was the main political agenda as a means of gaining Sinhalese votes (Ponnambalam, 1983). The victory of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), which was the main Sinhalese opposition to the reigning party United National Party (UNP), marked the start of ethnic outbidding in the political scene (ibid).

2.4 Brief Introduction to the History of Sri Lankas’ ethnic Conflict

Post-independence cohesion after British colonial rule failed. Ethnic differences between the Tamil and Sinhalese were ultimately manipulated by politicians for political dominance. As Sinhalese nationalists gained power and immediately limited Tamil employment and access to education (Bush, 1990). The emergence of rebel Tamil forces was primarily due to the ethnically-based party system where the majority group is in control, risking the alienation of a minority group. Through the implementation of drastic language policies, like “Sinhala-only”

which directly aimed at marginalizing the Tamils (ibid). Another factor is when members of an ethnic group assimilate into other cultures, the sense of identity weakens. In order to preserve culture and interests there runs a risk of increased demands for secession (Horowitz, 1998). Neil DeVotta (2004) elaborates on ethnic particularistic tendencies in state institutions, where marginalized communities may oppose as a retaliation to an ethnocracy. Violent escalations due to institutional failure and ethnic tensions have the potential to lead to ethnic violence against ethnonational lines. The Sinhala-only movement is deemed to have a cataclysmic effect on the alienation of Tamils, fueling several other discriminatory policies that targeted the seclusion of the Tamils (ibid).

The aftermath of the civil war has had detrimental effects both economically and socially. Goodhand and Lewer (1999) define the civil war in Sri Lanka as multi-casual, which inhibits many different levels (micro, meso, and macro) that are inevitably interconnected. Several overlapping factors led the Tamils to abandon the Sri Lankan state, ranging from the political failure of Tamil leadership in government institutions to the successive disintegration of trust and social capital between the Sinhalese and Tamils (O'Brian, 2012).

The subordination of the Tamil minority after the establishment of the “Sinhala-only” legislation distinctly separated the Tamils from the Sinhalese, strongly enforcing ethnonational borders within the country (Navaratnam, 1991). Through the colonization of the Northern and Eastern provinces, continuous cultural assimilation was assured as a means of diminishing the needs of the Tamil minority. These resettlement initiatives were to drastically reduce the voting strength of the Tamil people, and discredit the importance of their traditional homelands in the East and Northern provinces (Wilson, 2000).

2.5 Significance of Social Capital and Trust-building in Post-conflict Societies

Trust is deemed to be a fundamental notion in the field of peace research. Based on the model of security dilemma (Walter, 1997), the exploitation of various trust forms is vital to civil war settlement. De Juan & Pierskalla (2016) discuss how diminished trust in political entities has the ability to destabilize trust-building processes and the implementation of peace agreements. This inevitably increases the risk of conflict recurrence. Rothstein (2003, p.14-17) elaborates further

on the notion of social capital, contextualizing the vital aspects which are necessary for social capital to thrive. There is a strong accentuation on the idea of trust, as social capital cannot be owned individually but is rather an exchange between people. In post-conflict contexts such as Sri Lanka, ethnic tensions caused by civil unrest can instill distrust and feelings of betrayal politically and socially (Broome and Hatay, 2006). It is through local institutions which foster horizontal networks, that social confidence can be gained in order to collectively solve the problem of national distrust (Putnam, 2002, p.143-144).

Rothstein establishes a definition of social trust on the thoughts of reality found in individuals. This way of thought is often fostered from primary experiences, therefore, it is not uncommon in post-conflict societies that mistrust between different communities can become a strong identity of a group (Rothstein, 2003, p.154).

2.6 INGO involvement in Sri Lanka

During the British Colonial Rule, Christian missionaries were frequently present in the Northern part of Sri Lanka, providing the Tamil minority with more access to an English education, automatically resulting in an advantage when obtaining employment within the civil service. This ignited a profound socioeconomic differentiation between the Sinhalese and Tamils that stretched all the way to the civil sector (Bandarage, 2009).

In the beginning of the 20th century, the remaining population was granted voting rights, the political power of the Tamils slowly started to diminish. The continued domination of the Tamil became a rationale for Sinhalese preferential policies that had the sole aim of breaking down the current power structure. The various legislative implementations from colonial rule are considered to be one of the most dominant preconditions that led to the secessionist movement in Sri Lanka (Kulandaswamy, 2000,p.21).

Non-governmental organizations have had a long involvement in Sri Lanka; however, it wasn't until the 1980s and 1990s that there was a visible rise in foreign aid funding. These initiatives were fueled by economic, religious, and political concerns (Orjuela, 2005). The presence of INGOs divided the organizations into two different categories: first and second-generation

organizations. First generation organizations are deemed to advocate on behalf of the church, which dates back to before the start of the civil war. Whereas, second-generation organizations are considered to be a phenomenon that has operated on the basis of foreign funding as opposed to the advocacy of religion (ibid). However, there exists no strong evidence to suggest that INGOs are able to effectively impact conflict at a local level through strengthening social capital.

3. Previous Studies

When conducting in-depth and comprehensive research concerning different topics within the field of development, it is vital to gain further understanding to fully comprehend the full impact of development interventions (Escobar, 1995). A crucial aspect of the comprehensive research is to attain a deeper understanding of possible implications, especially in the context of strategic trust and peace reconciliation interventions. The structure of strategy plans withholds great significance in influencing the interpretation of information. To gain a clear overview and comprehensive foundation of previous literature within this particular field, a thorough analysis of existing literature and studies pertaining to the relevant discourse is undertaken. The contextualization of the development discourses both academically, but also institutionally is vital to provide relevant context in the field of development (McEwan, 2001; 2019, Zein-Elabdin, 2001).

Previous research relevant to the efforts of INGOs in enhancing social capital and fostering trust between the Sinhala and Tamil communities has primarily centered on the practical execution of strategies. Through the utilization of qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews which have been employed to analyze certain aspects of the subject (Uyangoda, 2007). Existing literature has highlighted the influence of state power in constituting solutions to Sri Lanka's long history of ethnic conflict, however, there is a lack of scholarly analyses which enrich the knowledge discourse, putting a focus on how information is interpreted depending on its contextual framing and how language is perceived. With a focus on the developmental challenges the local government experiences on a community and provincial level, the discourse stretches beyond national politics (Akurugoda, 2018). There is a lack of insight into the formulations of strategies and policies within INGO structures, thereof the accentuation of language in this particular dissertation in order to perceive, analyze, and be critical towards different aspects within the development discourse.

Constructive deconstruction entails analyzing the numerous meanings that words can maintain, depending on their context in the development discourse. Raymond Williams (1976) states that

depending on the context, and the combination of individual words “establish one set of connections while often suppressing another” (Williams, 1976, p.25).

3.1 General Development Discourse

The notion of development is perceived to be a hard concept to define, as it is observed as a set of beliefs and interpretations within the context of social progress. Post-war growth has shifted the idea of development from a liberal political agenda, with a large focus on economic growth to a more multifaceted approach that instead encapsulates a participatory and neo-liberal perspective (Hopper, 2018, p.26). The general development discourse is not considered to be a monolithic concept but a complex discourse shaped by ideologies, perspectives, and knowledge processes that are defined through subjectivity (Escobar, 1995; Crush, 1996).

The general development discourse has evolved through historical debates concerning modernization and theories rooted in social evolutionism. This particular approach aims to develop the trajectories and meanings of social challenges that persist in social processes (Chae, 2008). Epistemological grounds derive from poststructuralist ideas which highlight the importance of language and development discourse as a systematic organization of power through the subjectivity of social actors and their actions (ibid).

3.2 Postcolonialism Discourse of Development

The Postcolonial development discourse has been subjected to a lot of criticism, where interests have developed over time to suit the interests of the Western-based intellectual elite. Thus tending to become institutionalized due to the adaptation of the language used by the Western academy. The overall significance of the discourse itself has removed the focus from how power relations persist (McEwan, 2009).

McEwan (2009, p.327-333) claims that postcolonialism theory is a strong object towards other development discourses despite some apparent similarities. The notion of postcolonialism has challenged traditional views on current discourse, particularly on the view of the material effects of the dominant discourse and the true objectives of knowledge and power. The challenges between knowledge and power are most evident in discussions concerning gender in relation to

development. The ethnocentrism of general development discourses has been widely criticized by postcolonialist critiques, where the affluence within indigenous communities in hunter-gatherer societies is distinguished. The critique in which development is subdued from a postcolonial perspective can be perceived as something temporary, however, McEwan highlights the importance of language in how interventions are interpreted, understood, and implemented (ibid). The Postcolonialist discourse emphasizes the importance of figurative language that is used in order to convey messages within the development discourse. The way in which metaphors, images, and other rhetorical utilities are often misleading as they create a distorted worldview. By diminishing negative prejudices and instead creating a false interpretation of the Global South and other indicators of development by diminishing the role of economic and social factors in relation to development. Other scholars build upon this notion of differentiation between the Global South and the Global North. Discourses that derive from Western development have tendencies to bring forth other racialized forms of power and inequality (Kothari, 2006). The controversy that has followed the debate concerning the interpretation of the term race can easily lead to contradictions and misrepresentations in the development discourse. Marcus Power (2003,p.12) builds further upon this critique, highlighting the importance of racial formations in the current discourse, where developed countries frequently take interest in the needs of less sufficient countries based on their own political, economic, and cultural agendas. The term race derives from “socially determined categories of identity and group association” (Bonilla- Silva, 1997, pp.472).

3.3 Participatory Development in Sri Lanka

Despite the war coming to an end, language remains one of the greatest challenges the island of Sri Lanka has to face. Since the post-colonial period, the English language was perceived as a threat, specifically something that divided the two ethnic groups which exist. Several corporations since then have attempted to bridge the linguistic gap through many initiatives that focus on language as a tool to reach sustainable socio-economic development through a participatory approach. The Performance Improvement Project established by the German International Cooperation (GIZ) shows the need to incorporate language as a means of gaining social cohesion. The author contextualizes the importance of language in this case, where the intention to strengthen bilingualism between Sinhala and Tamil is not a feasible option as Sinhala

is associated with communal dominance, further disparaging Tamil institutionally by being unequal in the constitution (Kennett, 2002).

At a provincial level, the English language is a tool that ultimately links local government actors, INGOs, and other development actors that operate in conflict-affected areas where Tamil is the dominant language. After a long civil war, the need to communicate with foreign actors in order to be seen in the international arena utilized the English language as the connotations of racism and nationalism were not present. The introduction of the English language aimed to provide a space where critical thinking allows individuals to constitute their own discourse. However, freedom of speech continues to be an extensive problem, where rote learning and behaviorism are based on outdated models that let existing hierarchies and stereotypes persist (ibid).

4. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

By addressing the research question concerning the strategies that are utilized by International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in order to promote social capital and foster trust between the Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, a Foucauldian discourse analysis framework can be applied. By delving into underlying power dynamics and discursive practices in which INGOs operate in post-conflict societies, by trying to understand how these incentives are already deeply intertwined within broader power structures and knowledge regimes and not isolated actions; the true contextual meaning can be uncovered.

The main topic of this dissertation is to understand what strategies are employed in order to promote social capital and trust, and whether or not they are deemed as participatory or reinforce hierarchical and perpetuate power dynamics. By utilizing a Foucauldian lens, this thesis will aim to provide a detailed analysis and understanding of the different dynamics that influence notions of social capital and trust-building in the case study of post-conflict Sri Lanka. The aim is to broaden the research and discourse concerning peacebuilding in ethnically divided societies.

4.1 Power/Knowledge

French Sociologist Michel Foucault contends that knowledge and power are intertwined. The notion of power ultimately creates new subjects of knowledge, while the effects of power are brought about by knowledge (Foucault, 1980). Foucault specifies that all knowledge we know occurs contextually in an intricate system of power relationships that gives way for the knowledge to develop. The agenda of an organization, whether it is research-oriented or organizational is determined by power relationships. They have the power to determine which agendas are considered to be legitimate or authoritative in a specific context. The notion of power, which can be translated into self-regulation as a mechanism of social control can be defined as “a government” (Foucault, 1977). He further divides the notion of power into three different categories: sovereign, disciplinary, and governmentality. The first two categories function on an *individual* level whereas the third takes the form of a notion of governmentality (Bacchi, 2009, p.26). Through the utilization of disciplinary powers like the law and policies that solely focus on the individual, alongside sovereign power, that constitutes what is allowed or

prohibited in society (Pierce, 2020). Whereas disciplinary power takes form through surveillance as a means of producing “calculable subjects” (Bacchi, 2009, p.27). As opposed to the first two ideas of power, the notion of governmentality operates on a population level through the implementation of social and economic policies as a means of maintaining order in society (ibid).

Power, or the notion of *biopower* is considered to be the most important notion in Foucault's theory as it serves the foundational basis for the analysis of the discourse. Power is essentially what creates tension between and among individuals. It is a continuous process that perpetuates a confrontation between power and resistance. Through either strengthening, changing or reversing the roles in the power versus resistance equation, there is an apparent effect on the lives of people due to how these forces are embodied in context-specific situations. Both concepts are dependent on one other, they are defined in terms of the other (Powers, 2001).

Foucault refers to power as power/knowledge as these two concepts are intertwined and dependent on one other in relation to resistance. Power is defined as a multi-layer construct which is a direct production of social relations that are culturally, socially, and symbolically created. To further build upon the notion of power, in the context of physicality where the Foucauldian framework incorporates the body as a vessel for power in relation to the rise of capitalism. This emerging political scene is categorized by Foucault as “bio-power” (Kehily, 2001).

4.2 Bio-power and Modern State Rationality

Under the category of bio-power, power is decentralized and a product of the social relations exchanged between individuals. Therefore, the physicality of individuals plays an imperative role in regard to the regulation of collective bodies, such as specific social groups (Kehily, 2001).

The genealogy of power and the archaeology of discourse shifts focus to the notion of governmentality in different historical contexts. Foucault defined the term modern governmentality through which populations were governed in the context of European history (Dean, 2010, p.266). More specifically, how resources, human populations and commercial transactions were considered as possible routes for governmental involvement. What we

recognize as ‘the state’ nowadays was founded in the context of Western liberal societies with the ever growing concern of how to regulate population in the eighteenth century (ibid). However, in this dissertation, the definition of the term governmentality will be narrowed down to solely its association with bio-power. The importance of bio-power in relation to capitalism is deemed to be indispensable (Rutherford, 2000, p. 114). The way in which bio-power techniques are utilized by state institutions for economic and social advancement is a foundation for the prosperity of Capitalism. Colin Gordon (1991,p.141) elaborates on the idea of moral strengthening in society by saying “[m]an is not naturally suited for society, but through discipline.” Disciplinary power made it possible to invade the delicate dimensions of individuality but also regulate society as a whole (Rutherford, 2000, p.114).

4.2 Discourse Theory

The idea of a “discourse” is considered to be multidimensional, with several possible definitions. Pitsoe and Letseka (2013) define discourse as a notion that is utilized in the context of language, more specifically to speech patterns and the usage of language in a community. It is through this discourse that power and knowledge are intertwined, ultimately how we as individuals are created and accept the reality we experience (Foucault, 1977). As the notion of a discourse is a social construct, the concept is perpetuated by those who withhold the power.

In the context of a Discourse analysis, Michel Foucault deems the researcher to be the tool. By using discourse analysis, the intricate power relations and effects that pertain within many disciplines can be analyzed. It is vital to be aware of how power and resistance are conceptualized within a given context in order to understand their role within a discourse (Powers, 2001). Discourses take the form either orally, textually, or socially. However, Our perception of language constitutes an important role in reconstructing and reproducing different power relations depending on which dimension is accentuated. Dimensions such as class, culture, gender, sexuality, age and disability, etc. are deemed to be the most influential when analyzing power relations in a discourse (Pitsoe and Letseka, 2013). Foucault elaborates further on the discourse theory, establishing the principle of discontinuity. The principle of discontinuity entails allowing complex powers to exist, in which discourse can either be an

instrument to power, or also obstruct it, establishing a starting point for opposing strategies (Foucault, 1978, p.101).

4.3. Governmentality

Foucault's conceptualization of the state and government derived from a micro-power of thought concerning prison and sexuality. He is no longer concerned with how power is conceptualized around sovereignty, law, and command but instead how it is utilized in concrete situations; establishing the subject and subjective (Foucault, 1982). The idea of governmentality emerges as a solution, as opposed to 'a thing.' He describes it as 'a prism' that aims to control a new emerging object: the population. This idea clearly exhibits a relation of 'the self' with technologies of domination (Lemke, 2001).

The notion of governmentality strays from ideas of discipline which take form in prisons, schools or asylums that aim to reform designated groups under supervision. Unable to enforce such supervision on every individual, the notion of governmentality focuses on setting conditions, constituting beliefs or desires. By "arranging things so that people, following only their self-interest, will do as they ought" (Scott, 1995, p.202).

5. Methodology and Data

The thesis follows a qualitative approach, in which the chosen methodological approach of a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. In the following pages, the strengths and weaknesses of this particular method will be discussed. Additionally, the collected empirical data will be presented where research limitations are specified for both the researcher and the chosen methodology.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis is conceptualized as a constructivist approach because the discourse centers around the intertwined influence of social practices, actions, and information in relation to power dynamics (Agger, 1991; Burr, 1995; Hodges et al., 2008; Sharp et al., 2017). The notions of structuralism and poststructuralism are derived through a perspective that focuses on deconstructing knowledge and information (Khan, 2018; Khan & Raby, 2020). The structures that construct rules, principles, laws, cultural practices, individual behaviors and language e.g. are determined through persisting elements. From an epistemological perspective, structuralism focuses on deconstructing components to reveal the truth within a text, but also behind its true meaning (Khan, 2018). Poststructuralism instead puts a larger focus on the weight of individual interpretation, stating that the meaning of a single experience is unique depending on one's relation to one's own knowledge (Agger, 1991).

Foucault claims that power persists everywhere, straying from the traditional view which defines power as something people use to control other individuals. Instead, Foucault defines power as productive and relational. It actively shapes the formation of our identities and relationships with others in society. The defined power dynamic is exercised institutionally in forums such as schools and religion. These mechanisms create a framework wherein people on an individualistic level are anticipated to conform to predetermined societal expectations, which reinforces the influence of power within society (Foucault, 1976). Power, as conceptualized by Foucault, plays a vital role in shaping behavior through the process of normalization. The notion of power is interwoven into knowledge, discourse and our idea of truth in a diffused and pervasive manner, strongly influencing how we experience our everyday lives (ibid).

5.1 Limitations and Strengths of the Methodology

The main clauses of the discourse analysis focus on the notion that social actions as individuals are interconnected through socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts. These contexts are produced, reproduced, and resisted through continuous social relations. However, Foucault firmly constitutes that the discourse is not subdued to only the “meaning” of a context. Instead, the discourse focuses on how the meaning is built and plays out in settings that are deemed to be interactional (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). Therefore, the true definition of a discourse analysis can fuel confusion for inexperienced researchers as many theorists disagree on what exactly the term means.

Another critique of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis is the rejection of “realism.” Among discourse theorists, there are disagreements concerning what is constructed and what is deemed ‘real’ (Kendall and Wickham, 1999). Foucault's perspective on realism is categorically defined as a historical question as opposed to a broader epistemological perspective through the reconstruction of events that challenge our perceptions of what seems normal or natural (Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2017, p.120).

When referring to the archaeological perspective of the Foucauldian discourse, there are some limitations that arise when referring to historical texts. Based on the sole assertion that we are dependent on what is preserved textually, which is a manifestation of a discourse. The texts we obtain refer to other manifestations; therefore, it is important to be aware of this limitation when collecting textual data. As it is not so much about analyzing a text, but rather trying to understand what a discourse presents in the text (Hook, 2001).

Discourse analyses also have the tendency to generate detailed pieces of work from generally small samples. This can be perceived as time-consuming and harmful to the generalizability of the conducted research (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.372). In the case of this dissertation, the aim is not to generalize, but instead to try and understand the chosen discourses in a specific context. In order to avoid any tendencies of confusion, in the fourth chapter the theoretical terms are explained (ibid).

5.2 Principles of Foucauldian discourse analysis

In the book *Using Foucault's Methods* (1999), Kendall and Wickham structure five steps for conducting Foucault's discourse analysis. The first step constitutes recognizing if the discourse is presented as a fact. The second step is to identify how the particular discourse is constructed, with careful consideration to what is included or excluded within a given context (Kendall and Wickham, 1999). Within this discourse construction, the researcher must be aware of the subject positions that are allowed or disallowed (Ussher and Perz, 2014, p.221). What consequences does such subject positioning have on subjectivity and social practice? By reflecting on the validity and reliability of the sources, the fourth step is fulfilled as it can show a clear indication of what is normalized and what is not. The final step is to be aware of who benefits from the particular discourse (Kendall and Wickham, 1999). To create a foundation for the analysis, collecting a 'corpus of statements' which is a collection of discourse samples about an object relevant to a specified inquiry based on historical variability. An important principle which is highlighted by Ayllon and Walkerdine (2017) is the criteria in which the chosen statements must fulfill in order to show how power/knowledge operates in different contexts.

5.3 Researcher Limitation

Scholars have had trouble defining the term qualitative research as it is not based on one specific theory or paradigm, as well as defined by an obvious set of methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Silverman (2010) states that qualitative research sometimes entails leaving out contextual sensitivities, with more of a focus on meanings and experiences. It has also been criticized to be biased, and has a diminished quality due to dependence on the individual skills of the researcher. The quality of the research can easily be influenced by the researcher's own personal biases and prejudices (ibid).

The terms *reliability* and *validity* are viewed as important components that are associated with qualitative research (Anderson, 2010). As qualitative studies are more commonly small-scale, theorists have debated as to whether or not the findings of qualitative research is deemed appropriate for generalizations. The problem of subjectivity also arises in relation to qualitative research, where the research is generally interpretive. The identification of themes, and discourses are defined prior to the collection of data. This ultimately influences the outcome of

research, as there are a plethora of factors that determine how data is interpreted. External factors such as cultural, social, and economic risks influence the objectivity of the study (Mwita, 2022, p.622).

5.4 Significant presence

The policy documents establish the foundation for the empirical data of this dissertation. All documents utilized in the study are available to the public and accessible through the Internet. All policy documents used for data collection were analyzed closely before the start of the analysis. There were five different INGOs chosen for this study, carefully selected based on their work to increase social capital and trust-building between the Tamil and Sinhala. The biggest influence for the selection of INGOs was the significant presence of organizations, and varied strategic objectives in a post-conflict environment. This approach is deemed to be relevant as the aim of this thesis is to understand which strategies employed by INGOs are most effective in increasing social capital and trust between Tamils and Sinhala. The time period for this particular study has been narrowed down to the end of the civil war, at the end of 2009 and onward, with the exception of the Swedish International Development Agency. This dissertation contextualizes the role of INGOS in post-conflict societies, specifically in the case of Sri Lanka at the end of the country's civil war in 2009 (Bowen, 2009).

The first chosen international organization is Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). I was unable to find a strategy plan for the organization's efforts in Sri Lanka and therefore chose to constitute a foundation from their Sida Country Report from 2007 (SIDA, 2008).

The second international organization is Oxfam. The operational scale of the organization is established through its Strategic Plan 2014-2019 (Oxfam, 2019). The organization is active in the scope of 12 out of the 25 districts, with a clear distinction in the Northern, Eastern and Uva provinces (ibid).

The third international organization is Save the Children. The operational scale of the organization is established through its Strategic plan for 2019-2021 (Save The Children, 2021).

The organization is present in six of the provinces - Northern, Uva, Southern, Western, Central and Sabaragamuwa, covering approximately 11 out of the 25 present districts in the country (Save the Children, 2021, p.2).

The fourth international organization is World Vision. The operational scale of the organization is established through its National Impact Report 2021 (World Vision, 2021). World Vision is an established Christian organization, which was deemed to be an interesting addition to the study as Christian INGOs maintained a large presence in the 1980s in Sri Lanka (Saravanamuttu 1998). World Vision is present in 15 of the 25 districts, with a clear concentration in Central, Eastern, and Uva provinces (World Vision, 2021).

The fifth international organization is the International Committee of the Red Cross. The operational scale of the organization is established through their Strategic Plan from 2008-2021 (Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, 2021). The presence of the International Committee of the Red Cross through the Sri Lankan Red Cross Society has been present in 18 districts, particularly present in the Eastern and Northern provinces (ibid).

5.5 Policy documents

In order to explore the themes of peace and reconciliation, it is a vital part of the research process to utilize a document that is internationally recognized and deemed relevant to the chosen discourse. For this particular discourse ‘The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement’ which were founded in 1998 will constitute a foundation for this analysis (International Organisation for Migration, 2023). Written by Francis Deng, these principles are specifically tailored in order to suit the context of internally displaced persons (IDPs). In the specific case study of Sri Lanka, with a complex history of civil unrest, this particular document can be perceived as relevant to the study. In the next section, the selected documentations will focus on the main discourse of peace and reconciliation alongside other relevant themes such as: displacement, protection and assistance. The aim of the analysis is to attempt to interpret why and how these identities are constructed. The concept from Foucault’s Discourse theory that was deemed to be best suited is ‘governmentality.’

6. Analysis

The following chapter will analyze the discourse of peace and reconciliation with a case study of post-conflict Sri Lanka. It is presented in three parts: peace and reconciliation aspirations, categorizations and themes, and peace and reconciliation technologies. Refining the categorization of these INGOs, highlights the importance of the role power relations play in these contexts, but more importantly how these chosen categorizations are part of a broader discourse on INGOs and the role they play in Sri Lanka.

The question of *“How are strategies formulated to promote social capital and trust between the Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups”* can be scaled down for a more detailed discourse analysis. Instead, a question like: *“How do INGOs discursively construct the concepts of reconciliation, peace, and community trust in their interventions between Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups?”*

6.1 Peace and Reconciliation Aspirations

This section analyzes the themes within the peace and reconciliation discourse amongst a selection of strategy policy documents formulated by the five INGOs: SIDA, Oxfam, Save the Children, World Vision, International Committee of the Red Cross in Sri Lanka and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

6.1.1 Subject Positions and the Vulnerable Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are divided into thirty different principles. In order to maintain relevance to the conducted study, there will be a focus on three objectives in the document, as they withhold most relevance for addressing peace and reconciliation in the context of IDPs and ethnic conflict; 1) Protection against arbitrary displacement; 2) Safe and voluntary return, resettlement or integration of IDPs; 3) Building awareness concerning the specific vulnerability of IDPs due to their displacement (United Nations, 1998). The formulated objectives provide a relevant frame of reference for the aim of this particular study. The first stated principle, concerning arbitrary displacement, shines a light on the importance of fostering harmony and most importantly avoiding ethnic tensions as they fuel further displacement. The second principle of resettlement and return, focuses also on establishing trust between two different communities, in this case, the Tamil and Sinhala. By

creating an environment without fear which enables both ethnic groups to coexist or settle anew enhances trust-building initiatives. The subject positions that are apparent are Included versus Excluded inhabitants. In this particular context, Included inhabitants are referred to as a group of people who are provided protection in the face of conflict, whereas Excluded inhabitants are referred to as a group of people who are not protected in the face of conflict, due to a plethora of reasons (Cadeado, 2018).

6.1.2 Contrasting Aspirations

When analyzing the numerous policy documents in relation to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, there are several contradictions that are apparent and arise in this particular context. The Rights-based approach versus the Needs-based dichotomy. The Rights-based approach strongly accentuates the importance of the human rights of every individual, which attempts to induce systematic changes in order to advocate empowerment (AWID, 2022). However, this term stretches to a much broader context here the dichotomy not only incorporates the legislation on a national level but also in relation to international human rights conventions (ibid). As O’Callaghan and Pantuliano (2007, p.8) explicitly explain:

“[...] understanding assistance as a right, rather than as charity, moves the humanitarian endeavor beyond the voluntary provision of assistance to the provision of assistance on the basis of a legitimate claim for it on the part of its beneficiaries. This involves a conceptual shift whereby victims of beneficiaries become rights holders, and humanitarian agencies become their advocates.”

This constitutes that INGOs strategies are not defined by already existing needs internally but by duties and expectations established by external factors in the context of the Global Development Agenda (Aneja, 2014, p.90). The Needs-based dichotomy, on the other hand, is defined as a top-down approach that establishes beneficiaries as passive recipients of assistance. This differs greatly from the rights-based approach as there is little focus on trying to understand underlying structural factors and only a focus on providing aid (AWID, 20022).

6.2 Categorisation: The Empowered and Included versus the Marginalized and Excluded

The next section of the analysis focuses on how peace and reconciliation aspirations are shown in the subject objectives of the empowered and included, and how they are referred to in the selection of INGO policy documents and in relation to the notion of governmentality in Foucault's theoretical framework.

6.2.1 The Empowered and Included

The three main themes in the United Nations principles which are relevant to terms of the empowered and included are recognition, empowerment, and engagement in peace and reconciliation.

6.2.2 Recognition

INGOs that work within the framework of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement strive to recognize the rights of displaced communities and protect their sense of identity. **Principle 1** in the UNIPD (1998) states “ Internally displaced persons shall enjoy, in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law as do other persons in their country. They shall not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of any rights and freedoms on the ground that they are internally displaced” (UNDIP, 1998).

The prolonged conflict resulted in a large number of internally displaced persons, particularly within the Tamil community. The ethnicisation of the Tamil and Sinhala is deeply rooted beyond cultural borders, into the political system where the intensification of the ethnic conflict in the late 20th century has caused political parties to promote their own interests while excluding others (Uyangoda, SIDA, 2010, p.42).

The notion of social cohesion/inclusion is a significant theme that is magnified when referring to the term of recognition. World Vision (2021) “Builds individual and collective agency, resilience, and action ” as a means of creating an identity discourse that stretches beyond ethnonational borders. This brings up other themes which play a significant role in influencing the policies of INGOs. The notion of diaspora dynamics is especially prevalent amongst the

Tamil community and has largely influenced foreign policies in Sri Lanka in several Western donor countries (Harris, 2010, p.4). The inducement of an ethnonational identity has resulted in a Sinhala diaspora, where politics and media rhetorics have attempted to gain further influence. Through emphasizing terms such as “social inclusion” and “social cohesion” which are present in all five policy documents, the strategy ultimately formulates a vision where Tamil and Sinhala communities are free to interact without barriers (ibid).

The International Committee of the Red Cross takes the theme of social cohesion/inclusion even further to specifically state:

“[...] providing equal opportunity for all, irrespective of race, sex, class, age, ethnicity, caste., social background, political affirmation or religious belief.” (Sri Lankan Red Cross, 2021, p.28).

Thus further defining the term “agency” and what it entails.

6.2.3 Empowerment

Principle 22 in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, (1998) states:

“Internally displaced persons, whether or not their liberty has been restricted, shall not be discriminated against as a result of their displacement in the enjoyment of the following rights:

- a) The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, opinion and expression;
- b) The right to seek freely opportunities for employment and to participate in economic activities;
- c) The right to associate freely and participate equally in community affairs;
- d) The right to vote and participate in governmental and public affairs, including the right to have access to the means necessary to exercise this right; and
- e) The right to communicate in a language they understand.”

In this particular context, where historical grievances of ethnonational conflict have been present in Sri Lanka. The adherence to this particular principle can be perceived as a reflection of Foucault’s notion of governmentality. INGOs by nature are perceived as independent organizations in relation to government entities, however, the presence of INGOs can be viewed as a potential threat to some governments. With a wide geographic and operational scope, the presence of INGOs may undermine government initiatives/goals (Morton, 2011, p.344). In Sri

Lanka, the relationship between local politics and INGOs can be deemed as a possible hindrance, once applying the notion of governmentality. If you are ‘on the right side’, there are numerous resources available, however, if you are on ‘the wrong side’ resources are limited and power is constrained (Spencer, 1990). If the governing party operates locally, then local needs are more likely to be fulfilled, however, if the opposition withholds power, local development risks facing devastating consequences (Hettige & Bigdon, 2003). In Oxfam’s strategic plan, there is a strong focus concerning this particular principle, where a theme that underpins the organization’s work follows “ Individuals and communities will challenge formal and informal power structures to highlight and address the interests of the poor and vulnerable” (Oxfam, 2019, p.15). The statement can be broken down into two different themes. The first focuses on collective empowerment by including both “individuals and communities” which is relevant to both the idea of personal agency and the mobilization of collective groups. This notion of collective empowerment, as a means of erasing ethnonational borders poses a risk to the idea of governmentality.

6.2.4 Engagement in Peace and Reconciliation

In the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the term “ Engagement in Peace and Reconciliation” is not explicitly expressed. However, the notion is implied in several principles as the ideas of peace, human rights, and restoration of normalcy are highlighted. The most relevant principle to this particular theme is **Principle 6** which states:

“1. Every human being shall have the right to be protected against being arbitrarily displaced from his or her home or place of habitual residence.

2. The prohibition of arbitrary displacement includes displacement:

- a) When it is based on policies of apartheid, “ethnic cleansing” or similar practices aimed at/or resulting in altering the ethnic, religious or racial composition of the affected population;
- b) In situations of armed conflict, unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative reasons so demand [...].

Using an archaeological lens based on Foucault (1972), it becomes apparent that the principle assumes a universal definition concerning “ethnic cleansing” and “arbitrary displacement.” How do these widely established and institutionalized definitions yield to different actors’ notions of

subjectivity? The universal definitions of these terms in relation to the chosen discourses are limited by rules which cause a hindrance to how the language is perceived (Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2008). This clearly shows how power/knowledge relations function depending on the historical context, revealing concealed epistemological antecedents in relation to the conducted inquiry (ibid).

To address the question concerning how peace discourses influence and have been influenced by norms pertaining to displacement in this particular context is multi-dimensional. The discourses, framed by dominant institutions such as the UN, are shaped by already established norms on displacement. The way in which we talk and think about a particular subject influences our actions in relation to that particular subject (Karlberg, 2005). In Western liberal societies, the power discourse is dominated by an adversarial perspective that can be manifested politically, organizationally or socially. In this particular context, the defined nexus between power, language and knowledge has a deep impact on how peace discourses operate. The language formulated and utilized through institutions not only has the ability to shape how the term 'displacement' is perceived but how peace interventions are strategized (ibid). Foucault (1972) highlights that even if an analysis of discourse is conducted, the notions of universal truth are challenged from the perspective of a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. All meanings are contingent on historical or cultural contexts. The example of discourses formulated by dominant institutions such as the UN, using a universalistic framework may deeply affect how peace discourses are implemented through INGOs; as the global discourses do not always reflect the local challenges and dynamics. Methods that are deemed universally effective need to be questioned as they might be influenced by dominant power structures (ibid).

6.3 The Marginalized and Excluded

Using the same principles established by the United Nations Guide for Internal Displaced Persons, the perspective of the marginalized and excluded can be utilized to explore other themes within the peace and reconciliation discourse.

6.3.1 Lack of implementation

Principle 6 of the United Nations Guide for Internally Displaced Persons (1998) refers to the protection from arbitrary displacement, more specifically because of reasons that are related to ethnic or religious reasons. The implications that persist in a post-conflict context are more likely to leave marginalized communities facing large challenges. In this particular context, the marginalized community is perceived to be the Tamils. When using the lens of governmentality in relation to Principle 6, it is apparent that there are two factors that are conducive to the discourse of peace and reconciliation. An ethnically-based party, where the majority group is separated by “interethnic party divides” (O’brian, 2012, p.1) which in this case are the Sinhalese, are likely to cause the exclusion of a minority group. The second factor is conducive with the first, which constitutes “the loss of group members through assimilation and the migration of ethnic strangers into the potentially separatist region” (Horowitz, 1989, p.262-263).

6.3.2 Vulnerabilities

When examining principle 6 of the United Nations Guide for Internally Displaced Persons (1998) the term ‘vulnerability’ can be contextualized in relation to the peace and reconciliation discourse. Concepts that build upon the notion of ‘vulnerability’ such as ‘social and cultural vulnerability’ and ‘economic vulnerability’ are deemed relevant in this particular context. World Vision's strategy plan (2021) states:

“[...] Transforms systems, social norms, and relations to enable the most vulnerable to participate in and benefit equally from development interventions[...].

Anthias and Hoffmann (2021) further discuss the concept of ethnic territories within a broader discourse of governmentality. Binary analytical categories such as “power” vs “resistance,” “global/national” vs “local,” and “internal” vs “external” are analyzed and further criticized. The authors accentuate the process in which these binaries have the ability to instill bounded understandings of cultural identities surrounding ethnicity and their strong geographical influence. However, these terms are aimed to be defined by wider regimes of truth that take into consideration the rooted history of globalized power relations and how they narrate current discourses (ibid). The aims of the strategy plans are elaborated further, by posing questions that

try to understand how those who are targeted are ‘supposed’ to benefit from these initiatives. The wider regimes of truth and instilled power relations formulated through the language discourse have the ability to either perpetuate, instrumentalize or refuse based on subjectivity and interpretation.

The Red Cross Strategy Plan (2021) states the following:

“Reduce stigma and discrimination in the society through improved community behaviors and increase social acceptance whilst upholding human dignity, working with different vulnerable disadvantaged groups.” (p.27).

By using the language discourse and utilizing terminologies such as to “reduce stigma and discrimination” the strategy plan ultimately shifts from a bounded understanding to a more holistic perspective which takes into consideration the different regimes of truth and more complex globalized power relations.

6.3.3 Marginalization in Peace Processes

IDPs risk facing marginalization based on the reasons for their displacement. The marginalization in the peace process can prove to be a detrimental consequence to the discourse of peace and reconciliation as it reinforces divisions between communities, only strengthening ethnonational borders. Neil DeVotta (2016) explores the reasons why the Tamils demanded a secession, constituting the following framework:

“The more particularistic interactions permeate institutions representing the state, the more likely it is that those marginalized will mobilize in opposition. The more ethnically based such particularism is, the more the state would likely regress to ethnocracy. And when such an ethnocracy and its accompanying institutional decay forces those dispossessed and discriminated against to retaliate by mobilizing along ethnonational lines...the stage will be set for ethnic violence” (DeVotta, 2016, p.16).

The implementation of drastic language policies, like “Sinhala-only” in 1956 which directly aimed at marginalizing the Tamils by enforcing ethnonational borders within the country further fueled ethnocentric legislation (Navaratnam, 1991). The ethnocentric legislation has visibly been prioritized in favor of the ethnic majority, however, it has occurred at the expense of the Tamil Minority. DeVotta (2004) explores the idea of linguistic nationalism and ethnic conflict, arguing that language politics is considered to be the most important cause of the conflict in Sri Lanka. The concept is divided into two different perspectives, the first notion is central to the idea that linguistic nationalism has formed Sri Lankan nationhood in a way that excludes Tamils, positing them as foreigners, thus contributing to the persisting violence and ethnic exclusion. On the other hand, the concept of linguistic nationalism can be applied to the Tamils, constituting that the demand for a separate state was completely justified (DeVotta, 2004). The idea of linguistic nationalism is not only considered to be a consequential effect of institutional exclusion or the monopolization of social mobility but also in the legitimization of such social and cultural exclusion (ibid).

6.4 Technologies of Governmentality

This next section explores technologies of governmentality that are utilized to disrupt peace and reconciliation aspirations within this particular study. This section aims to focus on the resistance that pertains in relation to knowledge/power. The two main ideas that will be explored are Censorship and Information Control and Restrictive Legal Frameworks.

6.4.1 Censorship and Information Control

Ever since the 1980s, the government has instilled control over the movement of journalists into war-stricken areas. There are numerous administrative formalities that have to be obtained, such as an approval from the Ministry of Defence. However, an approval is more likely to be denied than approved, which results in the unofficial movement of journalists into military territory (Ubayasiri, 2002, p.66), Many of these journalists and the individuals that aid them risk facing prosecution on their return. By controlling the movement of information within the country, there is a guarantee that only a small percentage reaches news outlets both within Sri Lanka and out of Sri Lanka (ibid).

6.4.2 The issue of media freedom

As Foucault (1976) states, where there exists power/knowledge there is automatically resistance. In the case of Sri Lanka, the issue of media freedom has been deemed to be a big problem. State-owned media are part of larger institutions that perpetuate propaganda and regulate information in favor of the ruling political party (Uyangoda, SIDA, 2010, p.53-54). The private-sector of the media is however, significantly smaller and therefore more limited. Economic limitations are prevalent, as private newspapers are dependent on the state for securing bank loans or in some cases advertising revenue. In the few cases where single media actors have managed to withhold economic security to publicize information, have been met with backlash juridically or with physical violence, resulting in some tragic cases in death (ibid). In the case of Sri Lanka, the media has played a large role in maintaining the ethnopolitical agendas, thus only widening the gap in the ethnic conflict due to persisting resistance to the peace and reconciliation process. The colloquial mainstream press, both Tamil and Sinhalese are easily perceived to be ethno-nationalistic. Whereas the private sector still maintains a Sinhalese nationalistic approach. The limited room left for alternative viewpoints has not instilled change in the ethnopolitical climate (ibid). In study no.25 conducted by SIDA (2010) the duality of the media is formulated by Uyangoda (2010) as:

“[...] the media in Sri Lanka has been playing a dual role on issues related to ethnic conflict, conflict settlement, peace-building, democratic and political reforms.[...] Thus, it has been part of the problem as well as part of the solution of the Sri Lankan crisis of governance, democracy and ethnic relations.”

This particular quote clearly shows the complexities present in the Sri Lankan media landscape. The presence of bias and prejudice ultimately perpetuates stereotypes and fuels ethnic tensions. Using a more propagandistic approach to reporting, it leads the way to more challenges and risks for INGOs in the peace and reconciliation process.

6.4.3 Restrictive Legal Frameworks

Legal frameworks are implemented by governments as a means of controlling the operations conducted by INGOS within specific territories. Concerns surrounding foreign influence or national security are one of several reasons that fuel the implementation of restrictive legal frameworks.

6.4.4. Control over foreign funding

After the tsunami in 2004, there was a sudden influx of international funding and foreign assistance channeled through INGOS. This raised concerns from the government and other civil society actors concerning the interests of International agencies. With the growing internationalization of the ethnic conflict, the government began to target NGOs, ultimately pinpointing them as agents of Western countries with only the sole interest of fulfilling their own ideological agendas (Edrisinha, 2010). Since then, there have been countless developments with the aim of regulating and controlling foreign funding into INGOS. Incentives such as *The Inland Revenue Act* of 2006, aimed to introduce a tax on foreign funding received by INGOS and NGOs in the country, with concerns stemming from the ‘inadequate’ regulation of non-governmental organizations (ibid). Another initiative to exert control over foreign funding is the example of the appointment of a *Select Committee of Parliament to Investigate NGOs*; in which a committee was selected to monitor the financial management of resources received through foreign funding. This was to monitor the impact of INGO initiatives in relation to national sovereignty and territorial integrity in the country. The aim was to appeal the existing legislation concerning the regulation of INGOS and instead establish a more comprehensive which includes restrictions on the grant of visas to foreign staff (ibid).

7. Conclusion

When exploring the strategies of multiple INGOs in post-conflict Sri Lanka, the influence of sociopolitical, historical, and cultural dimensions is deeply rooted in the question being explored. A central part of this particular discourse is the role in which INGOs play when attempting to formulate strategies, as reflected in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, to try to improve social cohesion between the Sinhala and Tamil ethnic groups.

Through the lens of governmentality, posited by Michel Foucault, two different perspectives can be analyzed. The first is the aims of INGOs, by exploring themes of inclusion, recognition and empowerment in relation to other dynamics of power which are channeled through various forms of resistance. In this particular study, the forms of resistance pertained to the censorship and control of information, particularly in the media as well as the implementation of restrictive legal frameworks that focus on the regulation of funding to International organizations. The explored notions of “Empowered and Included” versus “Marginalized and Excluded” constitute a framework that is aimed to understand the interplay of these power dynamics.

Answering the formulated research question - *“How are strategies formulated by International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) employed in Sri Lanka to promote social capital and foster trust between the Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups?”* Even though it is apparent that INGOs frame their specific strategies based on ideas of inclusion, recognition, and empowerment there are numerous challenges that persist as the local sociopolitical climate and historical agenda has instilled insecurity to these ideals. Following the second research question, *How do INGO strategies align with broader discourses on peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka and globally?* There is a clear distinction between rights and needs-based approaches which bring several more challenges to this particular discourse, however, the most important aspect is that the constituted strategies remain adaptive. Through a thorough understanding of the historical complexities which pertain, as well as the ever-evolving dynamics of the present INGOs can critically understand their own role in the peace and reconciliation discourse. How their own

preconceived notions of culture and language have the ability to yield or inhibit change within this particular context.

To conclude, the analysis was conducted by examining five different INGOs and their strategy plans. Overall, there were many similarities between the organizations in relation to the peace and reconciliation discourse, however, from a critical perspective the language was sometimes perceived to withhold a more bounded understanding and less of a holistic perspective. Thus, the exploration of different regimes of truth and power dynamics is inhibited due to the intricacies of power, media, history, and identity. Peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka is a complex endeavor, however, brings forth a genuine commitment to foster trust and social capital between the Tamil and Sinhala characterized by a long and tumultuous historical trajectory.

8. Further Research

A subject to be considered for further research to this dissertation is whether INGOS are considered to be the new colonists. Does their influence through incentives focused on economic, social or peace-building do more harm than good? The research questions posed in this thesis are complex, leaving no definite answer. However, in order to gain more multi-dimensional perspectives on the notions of social capital and trust, it would be interesting to incorporate other actors. Examples of these actors range from the presence of the military to the presence of global institutions such as the United Nations. How do they contribute to the reconciliation of social trust in post-conflict societies? Do they yield peace or pose more as a threat?

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