Peacebuilding, Policy and the Case of Decoupling in Sri Lanka

- tracing the network

Ósk Sturludóttir

Lokaverkefni til MA–gráðu í Mannfræði

Félagsvísindasvið

HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

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Abstract

The process of shifting from internal violent conflict to sustainable peace is a complicated and multifaceted one. Peacebuilding is a relatively recent umbrella term used to denote the varying efforts undertaken to 'build peace.' Whether aimed at economic recovery, the building of infrastructure, institution-building or rehabilitation of ex-combatants, emphasis is directed by accepted policy of the state or (I)NGOs. Peacebuilding policy does not however necessarily direct actual practice on the ground. While policy is an important tool in terms of defining action and offering legitimacy, it is in tandem with other social mechanisms that practice is directed.

The aim of this thesis is to shed light on the interrelated nature of official and unofficial structures and how this plays a role in peacebuilding by focusing on the role of networks. I will show, using Sri Lanka as a case study, that through decoupling 'gaps' are created between official structures and actual practice. Through the activation of informal networks people can both circumvent such 'gaps' or maintain them. Attention to the workings of networks can thus give invaluable information in peacebuilding.

This thesis is based on six months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Sri Lanka September 2009 – February 2010.

Útdráttur

Þróunin frá hörðum innanlandsátökum til varanlegs friðar er flókin og margþætt. Friðaruppbygging er nokkurt nýlegt hugtak sem er notað til að lýsa ýmissi viðleitni til að treysta frið í sessi. Hvort sem átt er við efnahagslega endurreisn, burðarvirki samfélagsins, eflingu stofnana eða aðlögun fyrrverandi hermanna, þá ráðast áherslurnar af viðurkenndri stefnu ríkisins eða óháðra félagasamtaka. Það er ekki þar með sagt að sú stefna sem er lögð til grundvallar friðaruppbyggingar ráði athöfnum á vettvangi. Þótt stefnumótunin sé mikilvæg til að skilgreina framkvæmd og skapa lögmæti, þá stjórnast athafnirnar einnnig af öðrum félagslegum þáttum.

Markmið þessar verkefnis er að varpa ljósi á tengslin á milli opinberra og óopinberra aðila og hvernig þau eru hluti af friðaruppbyggingu, með því að beina athyglinni að tengslanetum (e. *networks*). Ég mun sýna fram á að með sundurliðun (e. *decoupling*) er skapað ósamræmi milli opinberrar afstöðu og raunverulegrar framkvæmdar á Srí Lanka. Með því að virkja óformleg tengslanet getur fólk leitt hjá sér slíkt ósamræmi eða viðhaldið því. Með því að skoða starfsemi tengslaneta er því hægt að fá ómetanlegar upplýsingar hvað varðar friðaruppbyggingu.

Þessi ritgerð byggir á sex mánaða vettvangsrannsókn á Srí Lanka, September 2009 – febrúar 2010.

Preface

This thesis came into being with the support and participation of a great number of people, at home and in the field. I want to use this opportunity to give special thanks to my informants who shared their time, expertise, and lived experience. Because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter they could not be named, yet it is their experiences that form the foundation for this paper. I also wish to thank my advisor Prof. Kristín Loftsdóttir for her support and guidance throughout.

The thesis counts for 60ECTS, as part of the Master's programme in anthropology.

Contents

Image 1: Map of Sri Lanka

1. Introduction

Peacebuilding has increasingly been recognised as an important element in terms of development as well as regional, and even global security (Brahimi Report 2000; "Principles for Good" 2007). Peacebuilding is a complex process that addresses multiple factors in a post-conflict scenario in order to prevent a resumption of hostilities. Despite action plans, policy frameworks and a variety of research addressing how peacebuilding is best accomplished many peacebuilding efforts have proved unsustainable and ineffective (Sending 2009). The UN, OECD-DAC, World Bank and most bilateral donors support a liberal peacebuilding model that emphasises democracy, a market economy and rule of law. Within this model state-building has increasingly been recognised as an essential component of peacebuilding, as it has been shown that a strong (responsive) state works to both combat poverty as well as discourage a turn to violence. In state-building as well as peacebuilding in general, local ownership and building on the local context, that is existing institutions, have been recognised as extremely important if peacebuilding is to be legitimate and ultimately successful ("Principles for Good" 2007). Despite talk about local ownership and sensitivity to local context these principles seem difficult to put into practice. There is a variety of literature addressing the reasons for the discrepancy between policy and implementation, written by actors within and outside the peacebuilding sector (see for example: MacGinty 2008; Orjuela 2003; Sending 2009).

In the present paper I will address the part played of informal structures. I will look into how such structures might affect peacebuilding efforts, using Sri Lanka as a case study. This study began with an interest to know how policies play a role in peacebuilding as tools of governance. Policy has been an object of study for political anthropologists among others and my interest was to see how a discourse that takes place mainly in an international arena affects the way peacebuilding is performed in localities. I quickly realised though that policies do not necessarily present a straight path to follow and the task of following the route of a single policy was made difficult because of constrictions of access. The focus on policy did not prove fruitless as restrictions simply threw into light other factors that would otherwise have remained

peripheral, if not undiscovered. Throughout attention was constantly drawn to the importance of informal structures in Sri Lanka. During six months of fieldwork the sometimes limited efficacy of formal structures, as well as the haphazard implementation of policies came up repeatedly. That is not to say that formal structures are absent, rather the workings of a 'shadow structure,' namely informal networks, often appeared more important in driving things forward than formal policy.

Informal structures are not a new subject in peacebuilding. Including spoilers in the peace process, as well as cutting off sources of possible war economies, has long been recognised as important in order to support a fragile peace (Kolstad, Fritz & O'Neil 2008). Informal structures, however, can be robust and resilient. I will demonstrate that they are not completely separate from nor opposite to the formal structure. The formal and informal, although sometimes seemingly opposites, are intertwined.[1] I will argue that when addressing the difficult task of actualising local ownership and legitimacy, attention to the place and role of informal structures is pivotal.

I suggest that the inability to include these factors lies in part in the way policy works, as policy is not conducive to acknowledging the interplay of policy frameworks and the social contexts in which they are produced. Policy is seen here as more than a plan for action. It is a tool of governance that also defines the framework within which action should take place and through which people construct themselves vis-à-vis their surroundings (Shore & Wright 1997). Such a relationship is not one sided, however, as policies exist in relation to the social context in which they are carried out. In order to attain the legitimacy afforded by accepted policy a coherent reality, as defined by said policy, must be compiled out of an often less coherent reality. Policy thus conceals the processes that might influence policy outcome but fall outside prescribed practices (Mosse 2004; Foucault 1985, 2010). While policies might not dictate action 'on the ground' they are non-the-less influential. Through the use of subjectivities (e.g. victim, ex-combatant, vulnerable groups), individuals or groups can activate funds or privileges otherwise inaccessible. They can also be used to close such routes to others that fall outside the scope of set policy. Policies, like

[1] Recognition of this fact has increasingly surfaced in recent peacebuilding policy documents (see for example: DFID Emerging Policy Paper 2009 & DFID Practice Paper 2010).

laws or regulations, can thus work to strengthen some networks, while cutting others (Strathern 2006).

The present thesis is based on ethnographic research conducted in Sri Lanka from September 2009 through February 2010 in the capital Colombo as well as in the Eastern province. The fieldwork consisted of conducting semi-structured interviews as well as gathering data from a variety of sources, such as newspapers, government and NGO websites, policy documents, art and military exhibitions and lectures. This formal data collecting was supplemented with data from informal conversations and participation in day-to-day life.

Sri Lanka has recently emerged from a protracted civil war between the Tamil Tigers who fought for an independent state in the Tamil dominated north and east on the one hand, and the Sinhalese dominated government forces on the other. This is a conflict that has received considerable international attention, partially as a result of an active Tamil diaspora, as well as the use of the internet by Sri Lankan Tamils to tell their story (Whitaker 2004). The conflict is usually portrayed as an ethnic conflict, based on ethnic grievances and ethnic differences (Abeyratne 2004). Fewer note that this last conflict is only one variant of violence that has flared up since the island's independence in 1948, the southern based JVP insurrection in the 1970's being another example. The war against the Tamil Tigers, though, constitutes the most lethal and protracted of these conflicts (Richardson 2005).

In the spring of 2009 the Sri Lankan president stood before the nation and proclaimed the war over. After intense fighting the Tamil Tigers and their leader had been vanquished. The war had been won in a way said impossible by foreign commentators, by military force. The losses were great as civilians were caught with the Tigers as they retreated to ever-shrinking plots of land. At the conclusion of the fighting 300 thousand people were left in refugee camps. Here they waited as the army weeded out any suspected Tigers, before being able to return home and start over. Comprehensive development plans were drawn up for the war-affected areas: *Eastern Revival* (launched in 2007) and *Flourishing North* (launched in 2009). Both plans emphasise economic and infrastructure development. There were however few signs of the state addressing 'softer' sides of peacebuilding, such as reconciliation or accountability. The state-led post-war reconstruction was still approached as a question of national security, as was the minorities question (Goodhand 2010: 342-343, 350).

The Sri Lankan government was criticised for the number of civilian casualties at the end of the war. Although the government vehemently denies accusations of having fired artillery into no-fire zones to which civilians had fled during the final stages of the war, and thereby of committing war crimes, Ban Ki Moon appointed a UN panel on Sri Lanka to address the issue.[2] The EU furthermore withdrew preferential access to its markets (the GSP+ concessions) in August 2010, as the Sri Lankan government does not fulfil Human Rights standards stipulated in the agreement.

The appointment of the UN panel and the withdrawal of the GSP+ had not yet taken place when I arrived in Sri Lanka. Peace had been declared three months prior to my arrival and presidential elections were expected, as the president wanted to renew his mandate in a united Sri Lanka. The country was at once joyous and relieved that the war was over and sights could be set toward a brighter future. Simultaneously the loss was great for a large section of the population and many feared that although the guns were silent (once again), in fact little had changed. It was in this context that the research was carried out.

The paper starts off with a theoretical chapter in which power and policy are defined. Policy is presented as a tool of governance, of which states as well as NGOs have made use (Shore & Wright 1997; Mosse 2004). Peace- and state-building takes place within a policy oriented governance framework and understanding the workings of policy is thus key.

The question of power is addressed in this context as an element in politics and war but above all governance. Michel Foucault's work (1985; 1990; 2010) on subjectivity, knowledge and discourse inform the understanding of power adopted and it is through this angle that the question of discrepancy between stated policy and implementation is addressed.

As the emphasis on policy will reveal, action tends to be tied to a process that is difficult to pinpoint in official discourse. It is therefore necessary to address theories that have to do with unofficial routes of influence. In that context the term network will be introduced as an element that plays a role in such an unofficial structure. Networks are defined using Marilyn Strathern's (2006) analysis of networks

[2] The Panel's report is due on April 12th 2011.

in Papua New Guinea and North America, in which she points (among other things) to the part played of objects in networks – a useful factor when discussing the workings of networks within informal as well as formal structures, which are formed not only by people but also by the objects that they use or desire, such as money, weapons or even mobile phones. Strathern's definition of networks, is especially useful because it addresses how networks are supported, how they are 'cut', as well as what they are composed of. Policy itself can become a tool through which such networks are supported or cut.

In addition to introducing the relevant theories, a short discussion of the main emphasis within peacebuilding policy will be covered before turning to the research methodology used for this thesis. Although the data is based on local experiences the policies discussed are part of a wider knowledge network. Introducing the assumptions and problematics within peacebuilding is therefore important.

The methodology chapter will introduce the ethnographic method, as well as practical and ethical considerations that came up during the fieldwork.

Then, before turning to the main chapter of the present thesis and presenting findings, the history of the conflict shall be addressed. I shall give a short chronological account of the conflict history, before addressing the main strategies for peace adopted by the state in post-war Sri Lanka.

After introducing the context in which peacebuilding is to take place, I shall turn to policy in general and questions of implementation. Using the *National Framework for Reintegration of Ex-combatants to Civilian Life in Sri Lanka* (2009), I intend to point to the various conflicting interests that can fail a policy. Through the factors that affect the implementation of this policy framework I will attempt to show how official structures are actively decoupled from practice.

Finally the role of informal networks will be addressed in terms of instigating action as a contrast to or even in tandem with policy. The chapter will start with a more general description of the importance of networks before addressing how informal networks affect policy implementation, and in turn what kind of implications that might have for peacebuilding. By focusing on informal networks otherwise hidden practices are revealed.

2. Theories of power, policy and peace

There are three themes that played an integral part in the shaping of this research, as well as the deciphering of the data, namely theories on policy, power and the network.

The definition of power used throughout the paper is based on the work of Michel Foucault (1985, 2010 & 1990). His work discusses the workings of power and how that ties in with the place of government. His emphasis on the fluid nature of power and the creation of subjectivities in government is here invaluable.

I will then proceed to introduce the definition of policy itself and its role in governance. Policy is addressed as part of and in relation to a social context. The question is raised, how does policy work (Mosse 2004)? It is here that the question of networks becomes relevant. The workings of networks came up repeatedly during fieldwork when looking into the workings of policy. I use Marilyn Strathern's (2006) analysis of networks, but she bases her work on the science studies of Bruno Latour who included objects as part of networks. Strathern's emphasis on the making and breaking of networks makes this an important addition when analysing the role of policy.

Finally, before concluding this chapter, I will discuss policy emphasis within peacebuilding. Within development, as well as peacebuilding, policy reflects a particular understanding of social, political and economic processes through which development is to take place. The policies discussed in the paper belong to this field and the assumptions that inform the discourse of which they are part is here relevant.

2.1 Bio-power and subjectivities

When talking about government Michel Foucault draws our attention to three interlinked dimensions (Inda 2005: 2). The first he terms reasons of government. This addresses types of knowledge and expertise that define and 'think' human beings so

as to make them responsive to government. The second dimension covers the practical things, the instruments, used through which various actors in government seek to influence human action. Finally, there are the subjects of government. This refers to the various individual and collective identities that arise out of and inform government. The first and the third dimension can thus form a sort of circle, the one influencing the other. Government is here used in a broad sense. It refers to more than simply the activities of the state and its institutions, but to all rational efforts "to influence or guide the conduct of human beings through acting upon hopes, their desires, circumstances, or environment" (Inda 2005: 1-2). Although the state is an important actor in this definition, it is but one of many that aim to exercise control over the conduct of individuals. Peacebuilding and development are part of such government. Development can be seen as not only about creating and supplying the material artefacts needed to relieve hunger or poverty. Terms such as technical assistance, good governance, local ownership, strengthening civil society and participation, are used to (re)define the situation at hand as well the people involved. Through this redefinition particular plans of action are made appropriate, not only for the implementer but also their intended subjects.

Foucault's definition of government rests on an understanding of power as a fluid entity (Foucault 1985). Power is continually created and power relations maintained. It is negotiated and tested. There is no static or permanent state in which power exists. Furthermore, power is not only a force from on high that represses and weighs down on subjects. It works through them. By this Foucault means all the instances that people behave in a certain way, because they have been conditioned to do so, either through upbringing, education or disciplining. People therefore behave in a way to support existing power chains without being directly pushed to do so, and in many cases are not even aware of the fact that their behaviour is modified. A change of circumstances can however bring this fact to a person's attention and a shift in power becomes possible. Foucault's explanation of power thus pushes us to look beyond conspiracy theories of one powerful agent/class/group that manipulates an unwitting powerless other. The more pertinent question becomes, how such power relationships created and maintained (Foucault 1985)?

Foucault did not present any universals, he emphasised that historical processes made particular patterns of power possible and so, rather than look for power in a dichotomous relationship between the classes, as in Marxist theory for

example, he emphasised the particular. Rather than address that which represents universal understanding, universal 'truth' or accepted knowledge, focusing on the particular can bring out the existing, but often disregarded, disjunctures of history. It is in such disjunctures that social change can be located and even understood (Sawicki 1991: 25-28).

Foucault (2010: 7-8) wrote that he studied the different ways in which people become subjects, rather than power in itself. His theorising of power was a way to study how people are objectified as subjects, as were the other terms that he addressed in his many works. In order to understand what he means it is helpful to introduce how Foucault explained the historical development of governance.

Foucault describes in *The History of Sexuality* (1990) how power shifted from being located in a sovereign being to a more symbolic fluid kind of power as we experience it today. By this he argues that power was once believed to be conferred by a greater being, God, to a person, the King or Pope, and that person in turn embodied power on earth. After the advent of the Enlightenment and following the events that sparked the French Revolution more and more voices were raised that doubted the divine right of sovereign rule. The power was with the people and thereby no longer embodied in that one person, but an intangible force that could shift or be shifted from one group to another. Power became a fluid entity no longer tied to the king's body but merely symbolised by his robes.

With this change in the expression of power the mode through which power manifested itself changed as well. The sovereign's power ultimately rested on the right to rule over life and that included taking it if a person was deemed a threat to the ruler or his rule. Foucault describes how the exercise of such power usually manifested itself in a gruesome display of power on the body of the convict, as his or her punishment was meted out in a public space as a warning to others, as well as being a direct exhibition of the king's power (Foucault 1985: 32-69). After the Renaissance power shifted from what Foucault termed 'deductions,' in that taxes were deducted as well as goods and sometimes lives, to an emphasis on the management of life. That is to say that as power rested more in the social body, power became more concerned with making that base grow. Besides ideology that derived from the Enlightenment this development was also linked to the advent of democracy and the rise of capitalism. Together they resulted in a power that acted not through deductions and the taking of lives, but more in the field of administering life and

optimizing it. This was manifested by the state taking over health care, education and corrective facilities. Foucault is not celebrating this shift in his work as an improvement nor as a degradation, for indeed his focus is the creation of subjects and how that process takes place. Power's manifestations, as defined by Foucault, have simply changed. The idea of a right to basic needs, to ones life, to ones body, these concepts changed the location of power. Power is present in the governance of these needs of life, power is present in the governance of bodies and thus power is no longer present in death, for in death the body has escaped the hold of power (Foucault 2010: 260-67).

Although Foucault writes based on Western history his theories carry further, as these same formations of government and the discourses surrounding them were exported to the colonies. David Scott (2005) argues this point using Sri Lanka as a case study. He shows that the Colebrook-Cameron reforms introduced in 1832 signalled a transition from governance based on deductions to one based on disciplining. As part of the Dutch, Portuguese and later British mercantile network governance had relatively little to do with the day-to-day lives and customs of the people of Sri Lanka as long as the companies could extract what they wanted. As emphasis changed in Europe and with the rise of the liberal economic system a mobile workforce was needed, and a shift in values followed. Although set forth as supporting the right of the people the Colebrook-Cameron reforms signalled above all a change in government. Government had to be organised in such a way as to have subjects behave in a desirable way in terms of the state and the economy when following their own best interests. The shift was thus made from deductive power to one of discipline. In an effort to discipline individuals in the 'correct' direction education in the English system was emphasised, courts were introduced along with police. Governing the island thus no longer only had to do with obtaining the material riches it had to offer but in influencing the way in which its inhabitants viewed themselves and their options, as well as the frames in which they could act.

Ironically, Foucault points out, that after the shift in emphasis from deductions to discipline, the number of men lost to war and the number of people made victims to their own regimes has never been higher, even as the number of people sentenced to death has fallen. An anomaly, one might say, if modern governance is supposed to be about the nurture of life. Foucault points out that perhaps this is not such an anomaly as earlier kings went to war to protect their

territory or their rule. Men fought for kings. Today, as government is about life and the society that it defines as its purview, a threat to government becomes a threat to the same. People fight because a threat is considered not a threat to the king, but to the life of citizens. States go to war in order to stay alive. Power is present in life, in its administration. The existence of government has thus been intertwined with actual biological life, the life of the people it governs (Foucault 2010: 260).[3] An example of the effects of such a change can be seen in the advent of terrorism, which operates not only to weaken the state or government through an attack on its infrastructure. Terrorists attack the locus of power, namely citizens (Stepanova 2003: 5). The body becomes a site of violence, as power increasingly revolves around control of said bodies in a politically demarcated space (de Silva 2008: 19).[4]

Foucault's theorising of the workings of government has been criticised for denying the ability of agents to affect the systems in which they live (Arts & Tatenhove 2004: 349).[5] Such a view, however, ignores the many instances in which Foucault points to seeds of change that then led to shifts in power relations. As has been argued, power is not a static entity, nor is it solely repressive. Individuals and groups can make use of various accepted 'knowledges' or 'truths' to exercise power and thereby take part in a particular power structure (Nelson 2005).

Through Foucault's explanation of power one can also trace changes within dimensions of government. With emphasis on the truth of science and reason during the Enlightenment, the reason of government shifts from divine right and duty to the welfare and protection of citizens. This shift, over a period of time, has simultaneously led to a shift in subjectivities as individuals and groups defined and redefined themselves vis-à-vis the reason for government. The instruments of

[3] Achille Mbembe (2003) argues that the opposite of this reasoning can also be true in cases where government can be ensured by criminal action against people that have been defined as 'always already destroyable.' When groups of people are defined *out* of society and even as a threat to society, as was the case with the Jewish population in Nazi Germany, bio-politics is replaced by necro-politics as the survival of the state is in many respects tied to the death of it's enemies, real or imagined.

[4] Power and violence, although they can be interrelated, rest on different foundings. Whereas violence is instrumental in nature, power rests on legitimacy. Although power can be argued to ultimately rest on the ability to use force, using force can also be a sign of power lost. Power rests on the will and support of people. Power and force thus only go hand in hand if the violence can be successfully argued to be legitimate to the people in question (Arendt 2004: 237-241). The question then becomes, when following Foucault's logic, how is that legitimacy created and perpetuated?

[5] Arts &Tatenhove are writing here specifically in terms of policy as an instrument of government, or 'political technology.'

government have changed accordingly, from the blatant use or threat of force to the controlled environment of prisons, education systems and welfare.

2.2 Policy, institutionalised myths and decoupling

One instrument of government is policy. Policy can generally be termed a principle or course of action set down to achieve a set goal. Often used in terms of government, policy can also encompass a 'statement of intent' or 'best practice' for a party, a business or an individual (Shore & Wright 1997: 3-4). Although policies are often explicit, formulated and printed, policy can also be deduced through statements and actions of a government or organisation. Looking at policy as an instrument of government in the Foucauldian sense requires looking further than policy intentions. It requires looking at the role that it plays in conjunction with existing power structures as well as its effects.

Seen in that light policies not only serve to define which way to proceed. Policy categorises and organizes in a way as to make the distinctions, set down in that same policy, appear sensible. Through such distinctions policies objectify subjects and impact the way in which people construct themselves and their conduct, as well as their relationship to their environment or others. Furthermore, by proposing a means of action as *the* correct way forward, policy can muffle other, perhaps just as viable, means (Shore & Wright 1997: 3-6).

David Mosse (2004) argues that focusing solely on the 'top down' effects of policy does not do justice to the complexity of policy as an institutional practice. This diverts attention from: "…the social life of projects, organizations and professionals and the diversity of interests behind policy models and the perspectives of actors themselves" (Mosse 2004: 644). In his article Mosse analyses the impact of policy and changes in policy regimes on a development project in India over a period of ten years. He proposes that things that make for good policy are not necessarily those that make policies implementable (Mosse 2004: 640).

Mosse points out that within development, project planners assume that policy dictates behaviour. He argues that policy plays a more complex role than dictate methods and results of a given endeavour. Policy plays a role, but only as a

part of local realities and the institutional context (Mosse 2004: 639-641). Never the less, if a project fails to deliver the stated objectives of a policy that same project will most likely be 'failed' by a withdrawal of funds due to a lack of legitimacy. It then of course follows that people will act in a way that ensures ongoing funding. What is not guaranteed is that policy changes and policy requirements will change the actual practice on the ground. What will be changed is the way that the project is defined and explained, namely to suit the policy framework (Mosse 2004: 664). Policy, in fact, is more about ensuring political support, that is legitimising, than directing practice (Mosse 2004: 648). Therefore, in order to ensure support for a project, a great deal of work is put into translating policy goals into practical interests and back into policy goals in the different institutional languages of stakeholders. This action of translation though threatens to destabilise a project as each stakeholder's needs takes the project in a slightly different direction. The act of composition thus plays an equally important role, as all these different, and sometimes conflicting, interests are united to again present a common whole in terms of the overarching policy framework (Mosse 2004: 646-647).

The separation of actual practice 'on the ground' and stated intentions within institutions is addressed in an article by John Meyer and Brian Rowan (1977). When studying institutions in the 1970s Meyer & Rowan identified a phenomenon that they chose to call decoupling. They argue that formal structures are rationalised to a level that ignores they are part of a social structure. Although it is maintained that efficacy should determine how well seen an organisation is, it is in fact the use of institutionalised myths that determines an organisation's stability. Institutionalised myths refer here to rules, programs, techniques or policies that have become standard, accepted and therefore unquestioned (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 340; 343-345). Meyer & Rowan found that although an organisation may be producing a product in an acceptable manner, if it does not adhere to these institutionalised myths it will lose legitimacy. In fact it has been shown that organisations that nurture this image fare better and are more stable than those that ignore them. It is assumed that organisations work according to the blue print, in accordance with the formal structure. This assumption disregards the social behaviours and networks that exist within an organisation as well as those of the organisation itself. It also disregards the fact that rules are broken and that decisions are left unimplemented, or if implemented have uncertain effects (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 341-342, 352). What Meyer & Rowan

found was that in response to these uncertainties, organisations decouple their actual activities from the formal structure and actively maintain gaps between the two. By demonstrating that they adhere to an institutional myth, the organisation gains a stamp of legitimacy in that it is following a goal that is accepted and unquestioned (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 356-360).

Decoupling and David Mosse's theory on the workings of policy address the same question from slightly different angles; how organisations or institutions maintain legitimacy and support by representing their activities in a way that corresponds with an accepted knowledge or myth. Policies can constitute such myths and it is through the act of translation and composition that organisations legitimate the work that they do by camouflaging the decoupling that actually exists. Both theories, however, also emphasise that policy, formal structure and social environment are interrelated. Each can influence the other, perhaps simply not in ways or through the routes expected.

It thus remains to address the informal structure, or the social environment, in which policies are played out. If it isn't the institutionalised myth alone that drives or determines outcomes, it is worth looking at the mechanisms that do.

2.3 Networks – persons and objects

Eric Wolf (2001: 166-167, 182), like Meyer & Rowan, suggests that every society has a formal structure that in some way is tied to an informal network. He takes the example of kinship groups, friendship and patron-client relationships, that can function as supplementary to, apart from or intermingled with a formal structure. He uses the *blat* system, or the informal exchange of favours, among Soviet industrial managers as an example of an informal structure which was a needed contravention to the official system itself in order to make it work. He goes on to argue that following these often illusive interpersonal sets will reveal a lot about the hidden mechanisms of what he terms a complex society. Changes in emphasis and shifts in power can be traced to changes in etiquette and form in 'unofficial' structures. The unofficial can thus influence the official, and vice versa (Wolf 2001: 181-183).

Networks between people have long been studied as kinship systems. For example, people create networks based on bloodlines or through marriage. Networks can be created through friendship, enacted by performing expected behaviour as a friend, and in some cases severed if those social obligations are not (perceived to be) fulfilled. But this is but one aspect of networks, as they also include and give access to or exclude people from other things, such as status or property rights (Strathern 2006). A father is an overarching term that does not only signify a biological connection to his offspring, a man can also be a father to adopted children or step-children. Besides social commitments and emotional ties, the term father also denotes a financial responsibility and gives the children a certain right to the father's resources and in some cases social standing.[6]

Although this is of course a crude and simplified example, what needs to be pointed out here is that networks include and are based on a variety of things. How and where such delineations are made are in and of themselves social inventions (Strathern 2006: 489-490). Networks are thus on the one hand the connections between persons, on the other hand we refer to networks also as interconnections between persons and objects, that together can lead to a product or result. Thus a network can also refer to the interconnectedness of objects, tools or even ideas and people that together lead to a certain point or conclusion (or new networks). It is this understanding of networks, based on Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, that is utilised throughout this paper (Strathern 2006: 483).

Latour pointed out that the stronger the allies or the technological mediators, the longer the network. The problem with networks though is that they can carry on for great lengths, so they must at some point be 'cut.' Strathern argues that the invention of property is a way in which to cut a network. It automatically defines who is included and who isn't (Strathern 2006: 484-485).[7] Informal networks can, on the other hand, also be strengthened by the need to circumvent such restrictions.

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[6] For a comprehensive analysis of social dynamics based solely on networks, see: White, Douglas R. & Ulla Johansen. (2004). *Network Analysis and Ethnographic Problems: Process Models of a Turkish Nomad Clan*. Oxford: Lexington Books.

[7] This, I would argue, can also be said of development and peacebuilding policy (or all policy for that matter), as policy is a tool with which we define and redefine who and what are included and how. As Mosse (2004: 646-647) writes: "It involves examining the way in which heterogeneous entities – people, ideas, interests, events and objects (seeds, engineered structures, pumps, vehicles, computers, fax machines and data bases) – are tied together by translation of one kind or another into the material and conceptual order of a successful project."

2.4 Development, security and peace

Before concluding with a discussion on the theories used for this thesis it is necessary to introduce the theory that informs the peacebuilding policies discussed in the following chapters. Peacebuilding policies are created through particular understandings of peace and conflict. I therefore present here a short general introduction to the subject as well as into some of the problematics of peacebuilding with regard to policy and informal structures.

Numbers show that nothing interferes with human development like violent conflict and the insecurity that ensues (Human Development Report 2005: 151). The UNDP pointed out in its 2005 report that conflict usually arises on account of the accumulated effects of several factors, although it is often triggered by a catalytic event. Elements such as poverty, unequal distribution of resources, institutional failure, an undemocratic political structure, as well as conflicts over territory, these are all risk factors. External factors, such as economic shock or regional conflict, can also increase the risk of conflict in a country. Furthermore, many of these causes can also be a result of conflict, constituting a vicious cycle (Human Development Report 2005: 162-163).

Although each conflict is unique in its make-up there are three factors that were identified as common to the majority of states that fall into conflict. First, the state fails (or is unwilling) to provide security. That is security in the broad sense, not only against human rights abuses and violence, but also security against extreme environmental, social and economic risks. The state's failure to supply such security leaves a gap that can be filled by various non-state actors (for good or for ill). Secondly, there is a failure to provide basic services and infrastructure, without which state authority is undermined. Finally, the state's ability to articulate the needs and ambitions of different groups as well as mediate between them is vital in order to prevent violent conflict. In order for that to be possible institutions need to be legitimate and accountable. The Human Development Report points out that states that suffer conflict tend towards institutions that are dysfunctional (Human Development Report 2005: 162-163).[8]

[8] It is interesting to note that development literature, while discussing the structural conditions conducive to conflict and its victims, rarely touches on the fact that wars are fought because someone has something to gain by it. Anthropologists Bettina Schmidt & Ingo Schröder (2001: 4-5) write:

In recent years peace has increasingly been recognised not only as the prerequisite for development and poverty reduction throughout the world, but has also been recognised as a security concern in a regional as well as an international sense (Chauvet & Collier 2008: 15-16). Although internal conflict, the most common type of conflict seen in the world today, is termed an internal affair the repercussion can be felt across country borders. States that are dealing with internal conflict easily become safe havens for terrorists and drug dealers that operate on a global, and not just local, level. The inflow of refugees and disruption of trade means that a security breach in one country can have implications for an entire region and so cannot simply constitute an internal affair. The 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers especially signalled the now global nature of security and gave added impetus to work in support of peace (Human Development Report 2005: 151-152).

This has however also resulted in a blurring of boundaries between development and peacebuilding.[9] Peacebuilding is a term that needs defining especially in terms of this paper. It is an umbrella term that includes preventative measures, peacekeeping as well as post-conflict rebuilding. Whereas peacekeeping aims to contain or stall an ongoing conflict, usually by military means, peacebuilding also addresses the underlying socio-structural factors of the conflict. Peacebuilding is recognised as important in order to prevent a replication of the earlier situation and thus the risk of renewed hostilities (Brahimi Report 2000: part 2, paragraph A10-13). When speaking of peacebuilding it is often used in reference to international efforts, however in this paper peacebuilding is not restricted to international efforts but will also refer to efforts done at the local level (Stepanova 2003: 9). When writing of peacebuilding in the present paper it thus refers to all efforts that aim to solidify peace, whether performed by the state, the business community, independent

"Wars are made by people who can be supposed to have based their decisions on some sort of rational evaluation. More particularly, wars are made by those individuals, groups or classes that have the power successfully to represent violence as the appropriate course of action in a given situation. But war as a long term period of antagonistic practice and ideology could not be sustained if only a sustained if only a small elite were to profit from it. Violence can prove a successful strategy for many different kinds of perpetrators." Violence can be seen as not so much a breakdown and disintegration of society as a reconfiguration. It is important to look at the perpetrator of violence, as well as the victim. In modern society the existence and use of armed forces is often ambiguous in a human rights context. The use of violence by a state thus has to be legitimated to its people, especially if the violence is directed against its own people (Ben-Ari & Frühstück 2003). Focusing only on the victims of war would therefore not reveal the mechanisms that created it.

[9] This blurring of boundaries between development and peacebuilding results in the (increased) politicisation of development projects. Depending on the organisation, some have attempted to distance themselves from the peacebuilding label as, depending on the political climate, it can threaten their status of impartiality.

developmental organisations or citizens' groups. The term thus refers to post-conflict rebuilding, whether infrastructure reconstruction or the 'softer' aspects, such as reconciliation between communities.

State-building has increasingly been recognised as an especially important aspect of peacebuilding (Paris & Sisk 2007: 1-3). As was pointed out in the Human Development Report (2005) conflict often has roots in the failure of the state to deliver in aspects of security, welfare and equal opportunity.[10] Although often addressed in post-conflict scenarios in which international peacebuilding missions take part, the process remains similar in countries emerging from conflict in which fundamental trust and rule of law have been compromised. Practice and policy papers from the *Department for International Development* (DFID) in the UK, give an idea of the importance of state-building as part of peacebuilding.[11] A functioning, 'responsive' state is recognised as necessary in order to support the peace, and thereby avoid conflict, poverty and suffering. Responsive refers here to a state structure that bases its existence on the needs and wants of the public, rather than buttressing its own power (DFID Emerging Policy Paper 2009; DFID Practice Paper 2010). [12] State-building is distinct from institution building, in that the emphasis here is not the strengthening of formal institutions, but on finding ways to improve the relationship between state and society (DFID Emerging Policy Paper 2009: 4).[13]

[10] Alongside this broadening of the concept of security, the expected responsibilities of states toward their citizens has also evolved. The atrocities of Rwanda in 1994 and Bosnia in 1995 resulted in *Responsibility to Protect* (R2P), a document produced by the *International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (ICISS) in 2001. *Responsibility to Protect* emphasises the right of individuals to life and security over the sovereignty of the state, or rather sovereignty is based on the state honouring its duty toward its citizens when it comes to genocide, war crimes or human rights violations (*Responsibility to Protect* 2001: 13-16, 33). *Responsibility to Protect* was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005 (Baylis, Smith & Owens 2008: 535-538). Although *Responsibility to Protect* marked a watershed in state accountability as well as in terms of the responsibility of the international community, this has not signalled an end to state sovereignty as some feared. In fact Peacebuilding Initiative, an NGO focusing on peacebuilding situated in Sierra Leone, among others, criticises the UN Secretary General as despite emphasis on good governance in peacebuilding, there are no tools to hold governments accountable and no mention of reconciliation as an integral part of the peacebuilding process (sierraleone.peacebuildinginitiative.org).

[11] The DFID is used here as an example as it works in dozens of countries all over the world. They work through UN agencies, local governments as well as local NGOs, and the work they do, although focused on the eradication of poverty, is dictated by the situation in each country. It is a good example of a development organisation that bases its principles on elements within the liberal peacebuilding model, namely democracy, good governance and a liberal market economy. It is incidentally also the organisation that ran the project on which David Mosse (2004) bases his analysis of policy, discussed in chapter 2.3.

[12] This emphasis is based on the DAC *10 Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*, agreed on in April 2007. Full text can be found at: www.oecd.org/fsprinciples

[13] The emphasis on state-building can however be problematic in countries which have a strong state. In the case of Sri Lanka, the state is strong and is therefore in a position to dictate to a great degree

Along with added emphasis on the functioning of local state structures, ideas for improving policy so as to better incorporate local context and local ownership are addressed in development and peacebuilding policy. This emphasis can be seen in principles presented by the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD), in which it is also stated that peace- and state-building can not be done from a blueprint, but that international actors must recognise the unique traits of each conflict. It further states that international actors can only act in a supportive capacity. Peace and development ultimately rest on local efforts ("Principles for Good" 2007).

Despite emphasis on the importance of local ownership and building on the local context in development as well as peacebuilding, this has rarely been carried into practice. The structural power of Western peacemaking models does not allow much room for alternative approaches, and it has been argued that where local versions of peacebuilding have been adopted they are likely to be repositioned so as to fit into the liberal peacebuilding model (MacGinty 2008). Despite considerable research that supports the need for local ownership and legitimacy this still remains difficult for peacebuilding actors to implement. There is awareness within peacebuilding of this difficulty and there has been a policy response, emphasising local ownership further. The problem remains, however, as liberal peacebuilding is essentially seen by implementers and sponsors as being true of all countries, above politics and history. It therefore doesn't allow much room for context specific adaptations. Furthermore, international specialists are valued higher than local knowledge, as international specialists stay true to the international model. They therefore concern themselves with international legitimacy to a higher degree, expecting it to translate into local legitimacy, which unfortunately is not always the case (Sending 2009: 4-5). This emphasis within the international community can also have to do with the inherent difficulty in impact assessment in terms of peacebuilding. There is an emphasis among donors to be able to see effects of a given project and fund applications are expected to include impact assessments. The correlation, however, between the organisation's activities and the actual impact on the ground is

what kind of developmental work takes place within its borders. They are also in a position to support a different approach to peacebuilding and stabilisation than liberal Western donors like to promote (Goodhand 2010: 360-362). This includes (I)NGO emphasis on state-building.

very hard to determine, as the proposals hardly take into account influences from other actors or from other external forces (Orjuela 2003: 210).

The emphasis in this paper, based on the data accumulated during fieldwork, is on the role of informal institutions in the implementation of peacebuilding policy. Although a recognised element in any social setting, they are rarely fully addressed.[14] Corruption is an example of the kind of informal activity that agents within peacebuilding have noticed as detrimental to peace. Criticisms of counter corruption initiatives, however, mention lack of efficacy and the failure to address local drives that support corruption (Kolstad, Fritz & O'Neil 2008: 1-2). These are in essence the same complaints as have been pointed out in terms of peacebuilding in general. Although governance reforms have in many areas been poorly implemented and enforced, and therefore had limited impact, focusing on the governance aspect alone has been recognised as too narrow an approach. It focuses on formal institutional gaps, but has not explicitly recognised or influenced the political and socio-cultural dimensions of reform processes relating to governance and corruption. Ivar Kolstad, Verena Fritz and Tam O'Neil argue that what needs to be better understood in addition to the economic context is how 'sets' of (formal and informal) institutions and incentives work together, as well as the importance of informal socio-cultural norms to well functioning formal institutions (Kolstad, Fritz & O'Neil 2008: 1-2, 36-38). I would argue that this is true also of state- and peacebuilding initiatives.

[14] Within peace- and state-building the presence of informal structures is recognised, usually as a derivative of a weak state structure. In advocating inclusive political settlements, addressing causes of conflicts, strengthening state functions and so forth, the peacebuilding community attempts to shift power to the formal structures (DFID Emerging Policy Paper 2009). DFID describes the relationship between formal and informal structures in Afghanistan in the following way: "In Afghanistan, state institutions coexist uneasily with complex, fragmented local power structures, including tribal and clan groups, religious institutions, armed militia and criminal networks. The informal institutions dominate the political economy, forming loose, fluid alliances which resist – or seek to control – the state-building process. Afghan leaders and their international advisers favour the development of strong central authorities to control these informal structures. However, as the organs of the state have gradually extended their authority across territory, there has been a movement of warlords and other informal leaders into politics at the regional level, where they are well placed to resist state-building initiatives that threaten their interests. The fragile nature of the political settlement leaves central authorities with no choice but to accommodate them. State-building is therefore a highly negotiated process, subject to shifting alliances" (DFID Emerging Policy Paper 2009: 4).

2.5 Power, policy and network – the connection

Peacebuilding mirrors a trend within development that has led to a broadening of means through which the elimination of poverty, and in consequence the accompanying security concerns, shall be accomplished. Until the 1980's access to markets and technological assistance were supposed to help countries reach developmental targets. Now the state structure is subject to this project too (toward democracy and good governance), as are aspects of social life through "policy-driven ideas such as social capital, civil society or good governance that theorize relationships between society, democracy and poverty reduction so as to extend the scope of rational design and social engineering from the technical and economic realm to the social and cultural" (Mosse 2004: 642). Through the creation of policy ideas to include social elements, e.g. civil society, such elements are made governable. They become subject to interventions and optimisations.

Never-the-less complaints about the ineffectiveness of policy and peacebuilding, especially with regard to local ownership and local context, remain. I will argue, following Mosse (2004), that this has to do with the nature of policy itself, as rather than direct practice, policy revolves to a great extent around control over interpretation. When studying peacebuilding it then becomes more interesting to ask how official, accepted 'myths' are perpetuated by and yet interlinked with the scattered practices 'below' (Mosse 2004: 645). It then follows that informal structures, or networks can give important clues in how practice is carried forward despite the creation of gaps between practice and formal structure (Wolf 2001; Meyer & Rowan 1977).

Although peacebuilding and development continually adapt to changing circumstances and demands, policy remains central in articulating such changes. In turn networks and interests develop around the identities, or subjectivities, that policies offer (Mosse 2004: 666). How such policies are utilised and articulated not only within a formal structure, but in relation to informal networks as well, then becomes essential when addressing the effects of policy.

3. Methodology

It is generally accepted within anthropology that the spoken or written word is but one avenue of expression. To get a fuller understanding of the subject matter it is necessary to also be aware of things unsaid, things that often are only made present through action (Hastrup & Hervik 1994: 3). Action itself does not take place in a vacuum. The physical domain in which social actors navigate affects the way in which action, as well as symbols and realities are mediated, sustained or resisted. In order to comprehend this interplay the researcher has to be physically present and take part in that lived experience (Lyng 1998: 237). This is accomplished through fieldwork.

3.1 Ethnographic method

Bronislaw Malinowski was the first anthropologist to set ethnographic fieldwork down as a formal methodology in his now classic ethnography *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1985 [1922]). Malinowski spent a total of 30 months over three periods in Papua New Guinea in 1914 – 1918, spending the majority of his time in the Trobriand Islands. Rather than study natives in their 'natural surroundings' as an outsider looking in, as was the custom at the time, Malinowski decided to live among them and study their language as well as their customs. He argued that to truly appreciate and understand their way of life occasional visits into the village would not deliver. The ethnographer had to share in his subjects' everyday lives.

Ethnographic fieldwork is based on participant observation. The researcher does not simply sit as an outsider and note down observations. The researcher has a place (or creates a place) in the field and participates. Depending on the field and the approach chosen by the researcher, the weight on participation and observation can differ, some circumstances favouring the former or the latter (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 3-4). Through participant observation the ethnographic method

allows, and in fact often forces, the researcher to look beyond theoretical speculation as she comes face to face with barriers, evasions, omissions or unexpected action – which results in a deeper understanding of the data than otherwise possible (DeWalt, DeWalt & Wayland 1998).

Fieldwork remains characteristic of anthropology although circumstances and times have changed since Malinowski's stay in Papua New Guinea. Originally anthropologists studied foreign cultures and focused on tribes, a village or a people usually located in a single place. Anthropologists now also perform fieldwork in their own communities, within institutions, in inner city neighbourhoods, or even on the Web. With increased urbanisation and the rise of globalisation demarcation of the field has shifted and, depending on the study matter, ethnographic research is no longer necessarily bound to a single location. Whereas Malinowski could set up camp in a particular village and thereby follow the inhabitants' lives as they unfolded, an urban setting presents a more fragmented field as people's lives are increasingly compartmentalised in separate social spaces (Balasescu 2004).

In circumstances in which continuous presence isn't possible interviews can be an important avenue to approach data during fieldwork. Interviews are furthermore often seen as an accepted activity of a researcher and they thus also constitute a good way to approach informants (Balasescu 2004: 5-7).[15] Interviews can take different forms, although in qualitative research formal structured interviews are rarely used. The emphasis is on approaching events or retellings that are relevant to the informants and in their own words. The semi-structured interview allows the researcher to discuss a certain subject, while influencing the interlocutor's narrative as minimally as possible. Rather than follow a fixed set of predetermined questions, the interview often takes the form of a conversation. The interviewee presents his or her representation of a social reality, while the researcher attempts to stay aware of the context and when needed prods the conversation in the direction of the study matter. By using this method the elements that are most important and relevant to the respondent surface, rather than the concerns and (often misjudged) presumptions of

[15] The term informant has traditionally been used within anthropology to denote a person that supplies the anthropologist with (cultural) information or expertise. I rarely used the term during my research as it has different and, in some contexts, more sinister connotations outside the discipline. The terms interlocutor, and interviewee have been used interchangeably with the term informant throughout the paper. Although I am aware of the subtle differences in meaning, these terms were used as synonyms throughout the study.

the researcher. The interview as a method has not been free from criticism. What people say is not necessarily what they do, nor does the interview present for all an accepted form of communication. However, in tandem with participant-observation interviews can be used to broach things that remain unsaid and approach more in-depth explanations on specific subjects. They can also make one aware of conflicting views and experiences (Davies 1999). Participant-observation and semi-structured interviews can therefore be complementary.

Although Malinowski argued for the importance of being in the field, his position or person were not addressed in the final objective results. It wasn't until the 1960's and 1970's that there was rising awareness that the position of the anthropologist plays a role in how data is collected, analysed and presented. The role that anthropology as a discipline had played in representing the 'exotic other' to a mainly Western reader was also questioned (Asad 1973; Said 1994 [1978]).[16] The anthropologist does not arrive in the field as a blank slate but carries with him his own political and cultural background that influences both analysis and representation. Furthermore the anthropologist's presence in the field can in turn influence the field itself (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 13-18). Making the researcher's motivations and experiences explicit can thus constitute a move toward added integrity in research (Sangarasivam 2001: 95). Furthermore, exploring the link between on the one hand objective results and the on the other hand subjective experience leads to better understanding when studying social mechanisms (Hastrup & Hervik 1994: 1-3).[17]

In the 1990's the role of anthropology was again questioned, along with the cultural relativism that had hereto been espoused, as scholars such as Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1995) called for an engaged, or 'militant,' anthropology.[18] There was a call at this time for a (politically) involved anthropology that took a stand for what was right. Rather than staying in the background analysing actions and meaning while maintaining a (questionably) impartial stance, the anthropologist had a moral obligation to "his" informants that overrode the need for scholarly distance (Gardner & Lewis 1996: 153-160; Scheper-Hughes 1995: 415-416). This stance has been contested. In taking sides the researcher essentially neglects or ignores other aspects

[16] In tandem with the rise of feminism, Marxism and post-colonialism.

[17] Jean L. Briggs' ethnography *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family* (1970) was considered a landmark in this respect as she was one of the first to argue that observing her own experience, actions and presumptions during her fieldwork was an invaluable source of data.

[18] See also: Taussig (1987).

of the circumstances under study that could prove valuable in understanding its mechanisms (Forsey 2004: 66-69).[19] In the words of Christopher J. Kovats-Bernat (2002: 218-219): "If ethnographic data are used to effect social change, that is one thing. But if ethnography itself is nothing more than a methodology for political advocacy, then why should we trust the data it puts forth any more than we trust the heavily biased data produced by partisan policy research institutes (like those affiliated with the tobacco industry) that seek to advance platforms instead of build knowledge?"

Kovats-Bernat does agree though that anthropologists researching in areas of conflict, political or otherwise, will often find it difficult to maintain a scholarly distance from their subjects, although he stresses this does not amount to taking sides. He points out that the methodology, despite added emphasis on reflexivity, assumes that both scholar and data can be separated from the effects of violence. When in the field the researcher constantly has to weigh how much risk is associated with getting data and how much that data would be worth for the study, measuring one against the other (Kovats-Bernat 2002: 210-212). Codes or guidelines for ethical practice have been formulated within the discipline in which responsibility toward informants as well as those that might be affected by the research is stipulated.[20] Kovats-Bernat argues that these codes assume that the anthropologist can foresee the risks associated with the research and should act to minimize such risks. That assumption uncovers a presumed power relationship between researcher and the researched in which the anthropologist is "all-knowing" and in a position of control. This, Kovats-Bernat points out, is rarely the case. Local informants are more often than not much better equipped to assess possible risks than the visiting researcher. Their judgements should therefore, with respect to such risks, be taken seriously and to that end a more "localized ethic" be adopted in terms of how the researcher navigates the field (Kovats-Bernat 2002: 213-214).[21]

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[19] Some have noted that it can be near impossible to maintain neutrality in a conflict situation as different parties to the conflict will demand to know where one stands. This can be important in terms of safety for both the researcher and her informants (see for example: Sluka 1995: 287), but the researcher should also be aware of the implications that such limitations can have for the research.

[20] See for example: *The Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association* (1998) or *Ethical Guidelines* (1988) coined by the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA).

[21] This was also the case during my fieldwork, not only in terms of risk, but in general. In an unfamiliar setting, it is the local who is specialist, not the anthropologist.

Despite the changing nature of the field and the simultaneous adaptation of theoretical and methodological frameworks, there are several points which remain central to ethnographic research. The data analysed is based on human action and experience, its meaning and function in a larger context. Emphasis is still on approaching people in their own setting, rather than one created by the researcher. The approach is qualitative rather than quantitative, in that emphasis is on in-depth study often based on a relatively few cases. Furthermore, although the researcher generally has a research area that he or she is interested in looking into, data collection is unstructured. The categories for interpreting the data are not built into the research design, such as it is in questionnaires for example, and the research design itself is not fixed at the start, as the field determines to a great extent in what direction the research progresses. The approach can therefore be called exploratory (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 3).

3.2 Method, trust and space

Fieldwork was conducted in Sri Lanka over a period of six months from September 2009 through February 2010. Over a hundred people were approached over the course of the research, which resulted in a number of informal conversations and sixty-three formal semi-structured interviews with fifty-seven individuals. The interviews ranged from half an hour to three hours. Thirty-six of these interviews were conducted in the Eastern Province and twenty-seven in Colombo. Of the fifty-seven informants, fifty-three were native to Sri Lanka. Fifteen were women.

The fieldwork took place in the capital Colombo (four months) and in several locations in the Eastern Province (two months). Colombo was chosen because it is the locus of policy formulation and government. The Eastern Province was chosen as it had experienced LTTE control but had been under government control since 2007. Whereas the North was just emerging from the conflict, development initiatives (‘Eastern Revival’) had been launched in 2007 in the East. The impact of peacebuilding policies was therefore expected to be seen and felt in the region.

When I arrived in the field in September 2009 the war had been concluded for just over three months, around 300 thousand internally displaced people were

confined in camps and presidential elections were yet to be announced. The timing of the research is important because security concerns still ran high. The government was also responding to criticisms regarding the final stages of the war as well as regarding the accommodation and right of movement of the IDPs from both local and international agents. The recent conclusion of the war, conducted with considerable sacrifice to life, meant that questions of peace and peacebuilding, not least with regard to reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants, as well as security sector reform (SSR), were especially sensitive. The still remaining threat of, sometimes state sanctioned, violence further made approaching this subject difficult. This remained true throughout the fieldwork period.

The field and the topic chosen for this research project thus contained limitations as to the amount of direct participation that the researcher could take. Policy is formed at high levels of governance and although people were willing to talk about the process I could not watch or participate directly in policy formulation. Nor did I always have direct access to the implementation of peacebuilding policies. Access to reintegration centres or IDP camps was not forthcoming, especially to a university student not affiliated to any organisation.

Emphasis shifted in line with these considerations, as questions centred on more general peacebuilding policies and peacebuilding concerns. Rather than direct implementation, the data is based on local experiences of peacebuilding policies as well as their meaning in a local context. Furthermore, not being affiliated with a particular organisation did not always represent a hurdle, as being a university student lent a certain impartiality as well as an anonymity that proved at times useful.

Another boundary was language, in that I do not speak Sinhala or Tamil and therefore decided to limit the research to people that speak English, rather than work through an interpreter. This was decided for two reasons; the first was financial as the employ of an interpreter would be costly, especially considering that the project was financed by the myself. Secondly, the language barrier created an almost natural boundary in a field that is not easily demarcated. The question of language also influenced the data in terms of newspapers and other articles, many published on the Web. Although newspapers often print the same stories in spite of different languages and a different audience, comparison was not possible because of this limitation. Of course all Sri Lankan informants that spoke English spoke either Sinhala or Tamil too, but not all Sinhala or Tamil speakers speak English. As discourse analysis was

used here in a supportive capacity, it is important to note that it was based solely on the discourse that was carried out in the English medium.

Informants were located in two ways. The first method can be termed snowball sampling, in which an informant is located and he or she in turn points out possible further informants and thus the number of contacts grows in almost an organic way. Informants were also chosen through purposive strategy in which informants are chosen based on their experience and expertise (Esterberg 2002: 93). The melding of these methods allowed for a combination of people with various backgrounds that could shed light on the subject matter.

Although informants' backgrounds varied, the majority of those who partook in interviews were non-state actors or affiliated with an NGO, a handful worked for the Sri Lankan state. This presented a certain bias in terms of perspective. Non-state actors and NGOs in particular often have a contradictory relationship with the state. Although these two sectors often have to cooperate and the NGOs ultimately depend on state approval to carry out their work, NGOs are simultaneously concerned with upholding an independence from the state and can often present a counterbalance to state power, for example as human rights watchdogs. This tension is of course not true of all NGOs. Several NGOs in Sri Lanka have links to the government and the majority of those with whom I spoke, who were associated with an NGO, presented their position as one more complex and nuanced than a dichotomy between opposing poles of state and non-state. What remains true, however, is that the vast majority of them depend on foreign donors to fund their work. This presented an interesting position in which to learn about peacebuilding policy as the NGOs, although concerned about the people with whom they are working as well as passionate about their cause, ultimately are accountable to their donors and they can therefore not be seen as representing civil society.[22] While working within the local context, NGOs have to present their work in a fashion that satisfies donor demands, i.e. in an international policy context, as well as coordinate and work with the state. The people working in the NGO sector therefore presented a situation in which local and global policy interests intersect.

Although further input from people working in the government sector would have been welcomed, peacebuilding was a sensitive topic and many were hesitant to

[22] For a discussion on the role of NGOs and civil society in Sri Lanka see for example: Orjuela 2003.

take part in the study despite promised anonymity. This could have been overcome if I had had more time in the field. Being an outsider lent an air of impartiality as one was not involved in the conflict, nor directly affiliated with anyone working on the island. Although this impartiality opened doors, trust had to be established. Over the six months, as I slowly formed a network of acquaintances and friends, the hesitation to share experiences as well as point out possible informants lessened. People were more forthcoming with their statements. Issues that had been avoided at the start of the fieldwork period and by some declared impossible to look into were toward the end of the fieldwork approachable. Time spent in the field, especially in a situation where trust has been compromised and talking can be seen as risky, is thus invaluable, not only in order to make sense of an often complex reality but in order to get at the heart of things that for a number of reasons are left unsaid. It goes without saying that for this reason this study could have benefited greatly from, and been improved upon, through further time spent in the field.

Informants were approached, especially at the outset of the research, by asking for an interview. As stated above, interviewing is often seen as an accepted activity of a researcher and this provided access that might have been difficult to initiate by other means. The interview as a method was not only chosen as a means to approach people, it was also chosen in order to ensure informed consent in a sensitive setting, more of which I shall discuss in chapter 3.3.

The interview form chosen was that of the semi-structured interview, which allowed considerable space to approach topics from a variety of angles. Analysis of public and official discourse as presented in official statements, newspaper editorials and articles was used to support the data accumulated through these interviews and, along with information gained through informal conversations, provided a wider context. Combined with participant-observation the context of each interview was kept in mind and any contradictions that came up formed the basis for further conversations. The data accumulated through the semi-structured interviews formed the chief part of the data used in this thesis.

The interviews themselves were analysed using a method based on grounded theory (Crang & Cook 2007: 131-149). Several themes present in the data had been recognised during the fieldwork and the interviews were analysed using those themes. In the process a few new themes were recognised and the ones that I started out with were split up or combined to form a single theme, depending on where the material

led me. An example would be my original emphasis on policy and peace, the themes around which the first semi-structured interviews were formed. Different interviewees approached and understood these subjects in a different way, although common points were prevalent. Differences and similarities were noted along with possible explanations. During this process, however, I noticed that the disjuncture between policy and practice came up repeatedly, or in 16 of the initial 22 interviews. This 'disjuncture' formed a theme of its own, which I then added to the interview framework. Awareness of the theme 'disjuncture' in turn led to an awareness of another theme present, namely 'networks.' Towards the end of the fieldwork the term 'disjuncture' was replaced by the more (theoretically) accurate term 'decoupling.' Themes such as 'fear,' 'trust' and 'violence' were identified in more than 9 out of ten of the interviews and could easily have given enough material to form another thesis, however the focus remained policy and peacebuilding. Those themes thus form here part of the context. All of the interviews were analysed in this manner, although in the second reading thirty-two of the interviews that touched more explicitly on the themes of 'policy,' 'peacebuilding' and 'decoupling' were singled out for a third and deeper analysis.

3.3 Ethical considerations and presentation of data

When working in an environment where people can be fearful of talking or voicing political issues there were a number of considerations taken into account when approaching informants and working with the data.[23]

[23] In an environment where terror and fear have become part of everyday life, silence in itself becomes a strategy for survival (Green 1995: 118-119). On the other hand a lot of what one hears about 'the situation' comes in the form of rumour. When official information is not trusted, and control through fear is in fact aided through ambiguity, information becomes a prized asset and at the same time suspect. Each rumour is assessed as it is shared by taking into account from where it originated, from whom and when. Anna Simons (1995: 42-60) wrote of the prevalence of rumours in Mogadishu on the upstart of violence in 1989. She points out that although rumours cannot constitute fact, in a setting where 'facts' are hard to come by or determine, they are, however, accepted as a form of knowledge. The multitude of often conflicting rumours are measured against one another and present a certain logic, a way to understand what is going on. Action is then based on this understanding or logic. Thus, although rumours are not fact, they are important when looking at motivation and reactions to a sequence of events.

First of all, informed consent was upheld throughout the fieldwork period. No information was gathered or used without the interlocutors' consent; no information was used if consent was for some reason withdrawn. As I stated above more than a hundred people were approached for an interview, out of which fifty-seven agreed. A much larger group of people were willing to talk informally. In a sensitive setting asking for an interview was not only a recognised method but also a way in which to make sure that the interlocutors were aware that they were taking part in a research project. Any interesting points that came up during informal conversations were incorporated into later interview frameworks, or if I wanted to include it, I would ask directly.

Of all the people that contributed only three stated that they were willing to speak under name, just over half the informants were not willing to speak on tape and several were concerned as to where and how data was stored in case it got into the wrong hands. It was thus crucial to ensure anonymity. All interviews were listed under a number and names removed. Recordings of interviews were furthermore not saved on the researcher's laptop but on an online file hosting service to which a code was needed for access. A diary was kept, but in Icelandic.

To further ensure anonymity statements and quotes used in the present thesis have been in some cases reorganised, slightly altered so as to not give away the location for example, and in some cases combined with the statements of one or more interlocutor. Because of the small number of women that participated pronouns have in some cases been altered as well, so that the gender of the informant cannot be deduced, in cases where the statements are not gender specific. This is done because the NGO community in the two areas where the fieldwork took place is not so big as to ensure anonymity, much less so when looking into the subject of peacebuilding policy. Specific examples of policy and practice presented by interviewees have therefore not been used in the thesis as it could jeopardise their anonymity.

Several things are done though to stay truthful to the accounts collected. Despite the combining of statements, or changing of pronouns, I have attempted throughout to let the informants' words stand for themselves. Several mentioned a disjuncture in knowledge or 'pieces.' On two separate occasions people said to me: "We don't have peace, we have pieces." I have made an effort to allow that to come through in the utterances selected and the way in which they are organised. Although it is at times tempting to rid the statements of unwanted distractions, to 'sanitise'

them, that robs the data of the lived experience that it represents. Thus although a part of a sentence might refer to a subject slightly unrelated to the point I am clarifying in the chapter, such references are left alone. This also serves as a reminder of the complicated and interwoven nature of peacebuilding.

The time at which an interview took place was important in terms of context, for example whether a statement was made before or after the presidential elections. I have thus throughout indicated which month the interviews took place. Only in places where expressions differ markedly between Colombo and the Eastern Province, and this came up for example with regard to the availability of policy documents, do I indicate where the interview took place.

A tricky middle path is thus sketched out, as the thesis is a compilation of the author and yet it attempts to stay as true to the data as possible, all the while protecting the identity of those involved.

4. Sri Lanka

Upon independence in 1948 the island of Sri Lanka was expected to set an example for other former English colonies for successful development. Sri Lanka had a comparatively high human development index, developed infrastructure and a democratic political system. Further growth was expected based on a prosperous export-oriented plantation sector (Abeyratne 2008: 395-396). The Sri Lankan state offered, and still offers, universal healthcare to its citizens as well as free schooling, all the way to the university level. No one could have foreseen that the island nation would slowly be dragged down into a protracted conflict (Bandarage 2009: 1).

This chapter will give a short overview of the conflict history as well as attempts at restoring peace. I will give a short chronological account of major events since independence up to present day. Ways through which the state aims to consolidate the peace will be addressed in the last section of this chapter, focusing on the emphasis of the Sri Lankan government and the role of (I)NGOs.

4.1 History and background to the conflict

For almost three decades (1983-2009) the Sri Lankan state battled a Tamil separatist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Formed in 1976 the LTTE fought for an independent Tamil state in the North and the East of the island, covering a total of 1/4 of the island's landmass and 2/3 of its coastline.

Ceylon Tamils are the island's largest minority, constituting just under 13% of the population. The total Tamil population counts over 18% if the estate Tamils, of more recent Indian origin, are included. The estate Tamils arrived in Sri Lanka as labourers for the island's tea estates in the latter half of the 19th century. As a group they have generally not participated in confrontational politics or warfare against the Sri Lankan state. Nor has the third largest ethnic group, the Muslims (Richardson

2005: 24-26).[24] The Muslims, or Moors as they are also called, descended from Arab traders that settled on the island in the 8th century. These main ethnic groups are not equally distributed throughout the island. The Muslims are more populous on the eastern coast, especially in the area of Ampara where they constitute 42% of the population. Ceylon Tamils populate mainly the north and east of the island, while the estate Tamils are concentrated around the island's many tea plantations in the Central Province. The Sinhala majority dominates the South, Central and Western Provinces, apart from Colombo city where the minorities account for 60% of the population (Richardson 2005: 26-28).

• 1833	Whole island united under one British administration.
• 1931	British grant the right to vote and introduce power sharing with Sinhalese-run cabinet.
• 1948	Ceylon gains independence as a dominion within the British Commonwealth. Indian Tamil plantation workers disenfranchised and many deprived of citizenship.
• 1956	Solomon Bandaranaike elected on wave of Sinhalese nationalism. Sinhala made sole official language and other measures introduced to bolster Sinhalese and Buddhist feeling. More than 100 Tamils killed in widespread violence after Tamil parliamentarians protest at new laws. The President declares a State of Emergency that will last until March 1959, despite order being restored 13 days after the first events.
• 1958	Anti-Tamil riots leave more than 200 people dead. Thousands of Tamils displaced.
• 1970	The proportional system introduced to ensure representation of Sinhala and Tamil youth in the universities corresponding to their numbers on a national level by lowering the score needed on Sinhala exams. This affects Tamil youths adversely as they had hereto despite counting 11% percent of the students applying filled 30% of the places.
• 1971	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) uprising led by students and activists. Emergency rule introduced and continued until 1977.
• 1972	Ceylon changes its name to Sri Lanka and declares itself a republic under a new constitution. Buddhism given primary place as country's religion, further antagonising Tamil minority.
• 1976	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) formed as tensions increase in Tamil-dominated areas of North and East.
• 1977	Separatist Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) party wins all seats in Tamil areas. Anti-Tamil riots leave more than 100 Tamils dead.
• 1978	Present constitution adopted, introducing the executive presidency.

Image 2. Sri Lanka timeline – events prior to 'Eelam Wars.'
(Adapted from: www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/1166237.stm and Richardson (2005)).

[24] A population census has not been done in the East and North of Sri Lanka, where Tamils are in majority, since 1981. These numbers could therefore have changed.

Soon after independence tensions arose between the Sinhala majority and the Tamil minority, as Sinhala nationalism became an increasingly important factor in Sri Lankan politics. The Westminster model of parliamentary democracy meant that the majority Sinhala parties could form a government without winning the minority constituencies.[25] [26]

Tamils were by many thought to have been privileged under British rule. British minority representation schemes and superior education, especially in terms of proficiency in English, contributed to a high proportion of Tamils in the universities, white-collar occupations and the state bureaucracy (Richardson 2005: 131). After independence the economy slowed down and by the 1950's discontent with the ruling UNP party grew. In 1956 the 2500th year since the death of the Buddha was celebrated and in preparation of this momentous occasion there was an interest to restore the island's legacy as *Sinhaladipa* (island of the Sinhala) and *Dhammadipa* (island of the Buddha's teachings). This religious and nationalist sentiment was soon politicised and resulted in the UNP forming the coalition MEP (People's United Front) with various other Sinhala parties. Originally the emphasis was on getting rid of remaining colonial traces, such as the British presence in Trincomalee harbour. Another issue was replacing English as the language of administration. As many Sinhala did not have adequate control of the English language they could not take higher-level jobs. The Official Language Act was coined to remove English as the official language in order to promote the local languages of Sinhala and Tamil. Sinhala politicians, though, feared that Tamils, with access to superior schooling in their own language (via Tamil Nadu in India), would squeeze out the Sinhala people that the Official Language Act was aimed at supporting. The Official Language Act thus in its final form was a Sinhala only act.[27] The MEP won the 1956 elections

[25] The two main parties that have ruled Sri Lanka since independence are the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). They have formed coalitions with smaller parties to attain parliamentary majorities, but are by far the largest parties on the island.

[26] Partially in an attempt to rob Sri Lanka's left-wing parties of a rural base, the estate Tamils were disenfranchised following independence. This resulted in the support of the rural Sinhala voter being even more important in order to ensure an election (Bandarage 2009: 41).

[27] The "Sinhala only" movement was bolstered on a racialisation of ethnic identity, seen in the rhetoric at the time, which argued for the rightful place of the Sinhala people (DeVotta 2000: 58). James Brow showed in his 1988 study of a Sri Lankan village how nationalist rhetoric and nationalist projects in many respects clashed with a sense of justice and loyalty that relied more heavily on ties to village and kin. As Brow aptly shows in his article, these changes are tied in with the emergence of a more open

largely through the support of the electorate that had been marginalised by the old colonial power. The first thing that the new government did was to pass the Official Language Act. Tamil representatives staged a demonstration in the capital but they were set upon by pro-Sinhala counter demonstrators and the police had to be called to restore order. Violence erupted around the island, especially in recent peasant settlements in the East, leaving a total of 150 dead when peace was restored again 13 days later (Bandarage 2009: 41-46).

The settlements referred to were an effort to increase food production and address the fast growing population in the South-West by settling farmers in the dry-zone in the North-East and East. This undermined Tamil predominance in the Eastern Province and Tamil nationalists charged that the government was purposely settling Sinhala families in the Tamil 'homeland.' Although it has been contested whether the land in question can indeed be termed Tamil homeland, these settlements did change the ethnic composition in these areas, particularly in the East. From the years 1946 - 1971 the Sinhala population in Batticaloa and Ampara districts went from 5.9% to 17.7%. The Tamil population decreased from 50.3% to 46.45% and the Muslim population from 42.2% to 35.1%. In Trincomalee district the Sinhala population went from 20.6% to 28.8% in the same period. The Tamil population correspondingly went from constituting 44.5% to 38.2% and the Muslim population increased slightly from 30.5% to 32%. Coupled with the Official Language Act and the rise of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism there was fear that the Sinhala would overtake these territories and Tamils have no say in their own affairs whatsoever. Federalism became a solution argued for by Tamil nationalists at this time (Bandarage 2009: 47-49).[28]

In the 1965 elections the two largest Sinhala coalition parties UNP and SLFP both stood without a parliamentary majority. The 14 Tamil seats all of a sudden became pivotal to form a majority. Tamil leader S. L. V. Chelvanayakam decided to join Dudley Senanayake and so the SLFP formed a majority. The new government passed laws that allowed the use of Tamil as language of administration in the Eastern

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market economy, as well as a shift of control of resources from local village headmen to political parties via civil servants (Brow 1988: 314-315).

[28] The Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact (1958) agreed upon between President Bandaranaike and the Sri Lanka Tamil State Party (ITAK) recognised Tamil as a national minority language as well as the administrative language in Tamil dominated areas. It also gave Tamils a say in the resettlement programs in the dry zone, among other things. President Bandaranaike however gave in to Sinhala nationalists and abrogated the agreement in April 1958. This led to a massive civil disobedience movement by ITAK, which then escalated into the race riots of 1958 (Wijesinha 2005: 79-81; DeVotta 2000: 58).

and Northern Provinces. All legislation, subordinate rules and orders as well as official publications would be published in both Sinhala and Tamil. The laws also relaxed requirements for Tamil civil servants to show proficiency in Sinhala. Political pressure however meant that the government did not go forward with the promised District Councils that would give Tamil districts a degree of autonomy, nor was the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act implemented. This failure was an additional source of disillusion for the Tamil youth, not only with the Sinhala dominated democratic institutions but their own politicians as well (Richardson 2005: 223-225).

In 1970 the UNP was back in power with enough of a majority not to have to look to the Tamil parties for support. The first thing that the new government had to tend with however was not ethnic conflict. Sri Lanka's first insurrection was staged by the *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna*, or People's Liberation Front (JVP). The JVP was a Sinhala youth movement based in the South of the country. The movement aimed to overthrow the government in a revolution based on Marxist ideologies, while also drawing on Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. Formed in 1968 the JVP had a political front and a military wing. By 1971 the date for the revolution had been set. Fortunately for the government the police got suspicious as two accidents in hidden bomb-building workshops left several youths dead. The police arrested JVP leader Rohana Wijeweera and several others. Those not under arrest decided to launch their revolution early. The army countered the JVP insurrection in four months, with some assistance from India, the Soviet Union, the USA and Britain. The insurgency left 53 security personnel dead and, depending on the source, a thousand or up to ten thousand non-security personnel killed. Sixteen thousand youths were arrested. Small factions of militants kept fighting until 1972 (Richardson 2005: 274-277).

Apart from the insurgency the UNP government faced economic adversity that made it difficult to fulfil the election promises on which it was elected,[29] but it made some significant changes and used its majority in parliament to push through a number of policies. The most significant change can be said to be a new constitution, adopted in 1972. The new constitution replaced the island's name of Ceylon with Sri Lanka, and made Sri Lanka a socialist republic. It also defined the Sri Lankan Republic as a Sinhala speaking, Buddhist country, further alienating the minorities

[29] Caused to a large extent by a steep increase in oil and rice prices. With increased government control of the economy, blame and frustration was soon aimed at the government (Richardson 2005: 296-298).

(Richardson 271-272, 282, 289-292).[30] Furthermore, in 1974 the government introduced a proportional system in the education system that aimed at making sure that Sinhala students were represented in universities corresponding to their numbers. Ceylon Tamil applicants had hereto filled 30% percent of university seats, despite constituting less than 13% of the population. The proportional system was brought about by the then Minister of Justice, who was a Muslim. The bill was not well received by the Ceylon Tamil population as they saw it as yet another attempt by the majority to marginalise them (Richardson 2005: 272). Although that particular bill was soon repealed, from 1976 and onward there was increasing unrest from Tamil militants. However it didn't turn into a full-scale conflict until 1983.

4.2 The 'Eelam Wars'

In July 1983 the worst race riots to have taken place in Sri Lanka broke out in reaction to Tamil militants killing 13 Sri Lankan (Sinhala) soldiers. The 1983 riots signalled a change in the scale of violence and destruction (Tambiah 1986: 70-72).[31] There had been a steady increase in state-sanctioned violence throughout the island since 1970, however, after 1977 violence increased markedly in the Tamil dominated areas as security forces responded more and more heavily to attacks from Tamil militants.[32] The July riots resulted in 300 Tamil deaths, according to the state,

[30] Elected Tamil officials were not consulted on the 1972 nor the 1978 constitutions, another mark of their marginalisation (DeVotta 2000: 62).

[31] There were signs of trouble ahead prior to 1983 as the killing of Police Inspector Guruswamy in Jaffna in 1979 led to a declaration of emergency in the town throughout the year and ultimately the enactment of Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) in 1981. Violence prior to and during local elections in the North in 1981 also signalled a deterioration of security as LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, newly arrived from exile in India, effectively threatened opposing parties and people from taking part in the polls with violence and assassinations. 90% of registered voters stayed at home. Sinhala police officers retaliated to these attacks by burning down the Jaffna library, which left a deep sense of betrayal in the local population. Violence also erupted in the Eastern provinces during the year and so the year 1981 was marked by violent attacks and retaliation. In 1982 Sri Lanka held its first ever presidential elections, to be followed with parliamentary elections. However, the government decided to try and extend its mandate by another six years through referendum. The result of the vote has been highly contested, however the government avoided a general election and kept its parliamentary majority. The Tamil parliamentarians recognised that their electorate had voted for an election and thus they stepped down in 1983 following their six-year term in parliament. This however left the Tamil electorate without any representation in parliament. The referendum weakened the government's legitimacy not only in the eyes of the Tamil electorate, but also with the Sinhala majority as all political parties apart from the ruling SLFP opposed the referendum (Bandarage 2009: 100-104; Richardson 2005: 480-482).

[32] In order to combat the threat posed by the JVP in 1971 the Sri Lankan government had introduced *Emergency Regulations* (ER) and the *Prevention of Terrorism Act* (PTA) (made a permanent piece of

although some NGOs estimated that the number was closer to 3000. Businesses and homes were also targeted and thousands of Tamils fled the country. In tandem with the government's inaction, or inability to act and protect its Tamil citizens during the 1983 riots this gave added fire to the separatist cause.[33] Full-scale conflict ensued (Richardson 2005: 494-495).

• 1983	13 soldiers killed in LTTE ambush, sparking anti-Tamil riots leading to the deaths of several hundred Tamils. Start of what Tigers call "First Eelam War".
• 1985	First attempt at peace talks between government and LTTE fails.
• 1987	Government forces push LTTE back into northern city of Jaffna. Government signs the Indo-Lanka Accord creating new local councils for Tamil areas in North and East and reaches agreement with India on deployment of Indian peace-keeping force.
• 1988	JVP begins campaign against Indo-Sri Lankan agreement – second JVP insurrection.
• 1990	Indian troops leave after getting bogged down in fighting in North. Violence between Sri Lankan army and separatists escalates. "Second Eelam War" begins. Thousands of Muslims are expelled from northern areas by the LTTE.
• 1993	President Premadasa killed in LTTE bomb attack.
• 1994	President Kumaratunga comes to power pledging to end war. Peace talks opened with LTTE. Presidential candidate killed and Emergency Rule introduced again – lasting with brief intervals until present day.
• 1995-2001	"Third Eelam War" begins when rebels sink naval craft. War rages across North and East. Tigers bomb Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist site. President Kumaratunga is wounded in a bomb attack. Suicide attack on the international airport destroys half of the Sri Lankan Airline fleet.

Image 3. Sri Lanka timeline – Eelam Wars I – III
Adapted from: www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/1166237.stm, ipsnews.net/srilanka/timeline.shtml and Richardson (2005).

legislation in 1982) that gave police and security forces increased room for manoeuvre, but also effectively undermined police and armed force accountability. PTA allows the police to detain a person without charges for up to 18 months. It furthermore states that a statement made in police custody is admissible as evidence, rather than having to be stated in front of a magistrate. This means that statements can be made under duress, and yet will be counted as admissible (Tambiah 1986: 41-44). In fact the ER and the PTA gave police the power to be accuser, arresting officer, interrogator, judge, jury and even executioner, with no legal accountability. These acts were deemed necessary at the time to counter the JVP movement, which presented a very real threat to the state as well as to the civilian population. With the rise of Tamil militancy they remained in place and effectively undermined trust in the state, as they gave a window for serious abuse of power (Richardson 2005: 493-495).

[33] The July riots have been called a pogrom, as the destruction was systematically aimed against one ethnic group. In some cases rioters were supplied with electoral registration forms in order for them to locate Tamil properties and others were transported in government vehicles, implicating some local politicians in the destruction. This implication was made worse by the fact that the president as well as police were hesitant to act. Neil DeVotta (2000: 63-66) points out that the pogrom followed the economic transition from a state controlled economy to a more open market based economy. Post 1977 Tamil businessmen had been gaining ground as their Sinhala counterparts could no longer depend on their networks within state institutions. Tamils, however, thrived in a more open economy as they could use their business connections to India. Prior to the July riots Tamils owned 80% of retail trade and 60% of wholesale trade. Interested parties managed to use the July riots to wipe that trade out.

After failed peace negotiations in 1985 Sri Lanka looked to India for help to combat the LTTE. In 1987 the Sri Lankan military pushed the LTTE back to its stronghold around Jaffna and the Indo-Lankan Accord was signed.[34] Indian forces stayed in the North and the East as peacekeeping forces and a local government (the Northeastern Provincial Council government) set up in order to give the Tamil dominated areas some degree of autonomy. At first the Indian forces were welcomed as heroes, but soon the LTTE turned against them as Prabhakaran still wanted full secession. As the LTTE attacked the Indian forces, the local population often bore the brunt of brutal retaliation (Richardson 2005: 545-547).[35] There was also deep discontent with the Sinhala majority that a foreign force was 'occupying' large tracts of their country.[36] Such discontent sparked the second JVP uprising. After being brutally crushed in 1972 the JVP transformed itself into a political party and soon became a sizeable contender. However, after the referendum of 1982 that had artificially maintained the parliamentary balance of 1977, as well as standing accused of having orchestrated the 1983 riots, the JVP went underground again. By 1987 rumours were circulating that the JVP had returned to violent tactics and in 1988 numbers show a hitherto unknown level of violent incidents in the country as the Sri Lankan state was countering terrorism and insurgency across the island (Richardson 2005: 276-277, 547-549; Spencer 2001: 258). Although the JVP mobilised in order to oust the Indian peacekeeping forces, the Indians were not the targets of their attacks. The JVP concentrated on assassinating any Sinhala they suspected of being a supporter of the Accord, in effect introducing a reign of terror in the South-Western part of the country that was to last two years. Counter-insurgency tactics, along with various paramilitary groups, finally brought the insurgency to an end in November 1989 with an estimated

[34] As prescribed by the Accord all Tamil militant groups disarmed, except for the LTTE.

[35] Simultaneously though, the Indian forces also set up, supplied and trained cadres (many forcibly conscribed) for the Tamil National Army (TNA). Its role was to support the Provincial Government upon the withdrawal of the Indian troops, however it was mainly a fighting force against the LTTE.

[36] The LTTE was chasing Sinhala and Muslim families out of the Tamil homeland under what many conceived of as Indian protection, although the LTTE's ethnic cleansing reached height in 1990 when hundreds of Muslims were massacred and thousands were forced to flee their homes, only to return now at the conclusion of the war (Bandarage 2009: 136-138).

total of 40 to 60 thousand Sinhala deaths. Thousands disappeared (Bandarage 2009: 142-143).[37] [38]

With the JVP eradicated, the government could concentrate on the crisis in the North and East. In 1989 the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government formalized a ceasefire and the government ordered the Indian Peacekeeping Force out of the country. The Indian government refused to accept the ceasefire and the withdrawal of its forces until in March 1990. In order to get rid of Indian influence in the conflict, the Sri Lankan government had covertly been arming the LTTE against the TNA while battling the JVP.[39] Once the Indian forces finally packed up and left, the LTTE quickly assumed many of their positions, making sure that the Sri Lankan government couldn't step in. The LTTE was still fighting for cessation (Bandarage 2009: 152-153). Another ceasefire was attempted in 1994, upon the election of President Kumaratunga. War broke out again a year later and lasted until the Norwegian brokered ceasefire agreement in 2002.

The 2002 ceasefire agreement was intended to secure a 'negative peace' in order to build a durable peace. Norway functioned as facilitator and a monitoring mission of unarmed peacekeepers set up offices in the capital as well as six locations in the North and the East.[40] Both parties to the conflict set up peace secretariats and talks at the political level were set up on foreign ground, however the LTTE pulled

[37] Upon his election in late 1987, President Premadasa did try to open lines of communication with both the LTTE and the JVP. The LTTE agreed to talks, but the JVP refused, even though Premadasa offered them seats in parliament (Bandarage 2009: 142).

[38] The security forces and para-military groups focused their attention mainly on male youths from rural, lower classes who were thought to sympathise with the JVP's leftist politics. Many disappeared or were executed without any determination of guilt. The disappearances were never fully investigated, although in one famous case a school headmaster was imprisoned for his part in the disappearance of 13 boys from his school, against whom he bore a grudge. An account and analysis can be found in Jani De Silva's ethnography (2005): *Globalization, Terror and the Shaming of the Nation: Constructing Local Masculinities in a Sri Lankan Village*.

[39] The LTTE seized the opportunity and also forbade other Tamil groups from working in the area at this time. They were told they could join the LTTE or disband.

[40] The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) worked in a preventative capacity, through proactive presence, however they also had a mandate to make inquiries into ceasefire violations, gather information and they worked as liaisons between the two parties. During the first years of the ceasefire, the SLMM could make a ruling on an incident and smaller incidents were dealt as much as possible on the local level. However, as violence rose again (2004 and onwards) the SLMM's room for manoeuvre tightened as their mandate did not change with the changing circumstances. Security concerns led to a halt in marine patrols in 2006 and field patrols were cut back. When looking at mission statements and reports there is a clear change in tone as the conflict escalates. During the first years the SLMM denounces all incidents, however as support for the ceasefire falls and the security concerns increase, incidents are reported with a minimum of information and in neutral tones. Separate reports were made for the facilitator and for the two parties to the conflict (For public mission statements and reports see: http://slmm.info).

out of the talks as early as 2003. Non-the-less the ceasefire held. In 2004 incidents had been escalating but reached new heights when in April Colonel Karuna broke away from the LTTE. He formed his own faction in the East with troops loyal to him, the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP). This led to heavy fighting in the East as the LTTE hunted down suspected TMVP cadres and Karuna's men killed cadres still loyal to the LTTE in the East. The Karuna faction was not part of the ceasefire agreement and so the violence, although condemned, was treated as an internal matter of the LTTE by both the Sri Lankan government as well as the Norwegian facilitators and no action followed.[41] The increase in violations of the ceasefire agreement, as well as the Sri Lankan government's acceptance of spoiler violence in the East, seriously undermined the peace process.[42] Trust was undermined, not only between the two parties to the conflict. The general population lost faith in the process as well as the intentions of the two parties as their actions did not suggest a move toward

[41] Several reports suggested that the Karuna faction was aided by the Sri Lankan government (Höglund 2005: 163). Colonel Karuna Amman, now known as Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, broke away from the LTTE after fighting for them for over 20 years. Colonel Karuna Amman later gave up arms and was appointed National List Member of Parliament for the ruling United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), the coalition led by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, in 2008. In March 2009 he was sworn in as Minister of National Integration and upon joining the SLFP in April 2009 he was appointed Vice President of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.
There were two other former armed fighters that were mentioned several times during interviews as examples of lack of accountability. A common problem post-conflict, as it is important to get these figures into the political process, but not addressing their crimes can lead to a sense of impunity. Many I spoke to expressed great discontent that these men were given seats in government considering their past crimes. Apart from Minister Muralitharan interlocutors mentioned Sivanesathurai Chandrakanthan, commonly known as Pillayan, and Kathiravelu Nithyananda Douglas Devananda, commonly known as Douglas Devananda.
Sivanesathurai Chandrakanthan is the current Chief Minister of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. A former armed fighter of the LTTE, Pillayan broke away from the Tamil Tigers along with Karuna Amman but an internal rift in the TMVP led to Pillayan replacing Karuna as the party leader in April 2007. Under his guidance, the TMVP contested in elections to elect members to Sri Lanka's Eastern Provincial Council, as part of a wider coalition which went on to win the elections. Pillayan, who obtained the most number of preferential votes in the Batticaloa District, was sworn in as first ever Chief Minister of the province on May 16, 2008.
Douglas Devananda, is a Sri Lankan Tamil politician, Cabinet Minister and leader of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP). Originally the EPDP fought the Sri Lankan government for an independent Tamil Eelam, although Minister Devananda opposed the LTTE. As a result the LTTE unsuccessfully tried to assassinate him over 10 times. Minister Devananda is a proclaimed offender in India and is wanted on charges of murder, attempt to murder, rioting, unlawful assembly and kidnapping.

[42] A significant amount of ceasefire violations include attacks by the LTTE against Tamils that worked for the security forces, Tamil political parties and so forth. After the signing of the ceasefire agreement the LTTE could travel into government controlled areas and open political offices there. The LTTE used this space to attack rival political offices and threaten journalists and academics that criticised the group. Although the ceasefire did lead to an abatement of fighting between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan forces, as well as a significant fall in human rights abuses, it also shifted the way in which the conflict lines could be maintained (Höglund 2005: 163-166).

peace and, in the case of the LTTE, democracy (Höglund 2005: 162, 166-168).[43] Finally, in 2008, the government abrogated the ceasefire agreement and full-out war ensued until the government declared victory in May 2009.

• 2002	Government and Tamil Tiger rebels sign a Norwegian-mediated ceasefire. De-commissioning of weapons begins; the road linking the Jaffna peninsula with the rest of Sri Lanka reopens after 12 years; passenger flights to Jaffna resume. Government lifts ban on Tamil Tigers. Rebels drop demand for separate state.
• 2003	Tigers pull out of talks. Ceasefire holds.
• 2004	March - Renegade Tamil Tiger commander, Karuna, leads split in rebel movement and goes underground with his supporters. Tiger offensive regains control of the East. July - Suicide bomb blast in Colombo - the first such incident since 2001. December - More than 30,000 people are killed when the tsunami devastates coastal communities.
• 2005	June - Row over deal reached with Tamil Tiger rebels to share nearly $3bn in tsunami aid among Sinhalas, Tamils and Muslims. August - State of Emergency after foreign minister is killed by a suspected Tiger assassin. November - Mahinda Rajapaksa, prime minister at the time, wins presidential elections. Most Tamils in areas controlled by the Tamil Tigers do not vote.
• 2006	April - Attacks begin to escalate again. August - Tamil Tiger rebels and government forces resume fighting in the North-East in worst clashes since the 2002 ceasefire. Government steadily drives Tamil Tigers out of eastern strongholds over following year. October - Peace talks fail in Geneva.
• 2007	Police force hundreds of Tamils out of the capital, citing security concerns. A court orders an end to the expulsions.
• 2008	January - Government pulls out of 2002 ceasefire agreement, launches massive offensive. March - International panel, invited by the government to monitor investigations into alleged human rights abuses, announces that it is leaving the country. Panel member Sir Nigel Rodley says the authorities were hindering its work. Government rejects the criticism.
• 2009	January - Government troops capture the northern town of Kilinochchi, held for ten years by the Tamil Tigers as their administrative headquarters. President Mahinda Rajapaksa calls it an unparalleled victory and urges the rebels to surrender. February - International concern over the humanitarian situation of thousands of civilians trapped in the battle zone prompts calls for a temporary cease-fire. This is rejected by the

[43] Jayadeva Uyangoda (2007:45) argues that one of the reasons cited for the difficulty for peace negotiations to succeed in Sri Lanka is that, despite both parties to the conflict competing intensely for state power, the 'ethnic war' has acquired relative autonomy from the political process of the 'ethnic conflict.' This is to say that both war machines have become relatively autonomous from the political process and this is spurred on by the mutually exclusive and essentially non-negotiable stances of both parties. All negotiations have therefore served as a redefinition of the problem rather than a solution.

	government, which says it is on the verge of destroying the Tamil Tigers, but it offers an amnesty to rebels if they surrender. Tamil Tiger planes conduct suicide raids against Colombo. March - Former rebel leader Karuna is sworn in as Minister of National Integration and Reconciliation. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay accuses both sides of war crimes. The government rejects conditions attached to an IMF emergency loan worth $1.9 billion, denies US pressure causing delay to agreement. May - Government declares Tamil Tigers defeated after army forces overrun last patch of rebel-held territory in the northeast. Military says rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran was killed in the fighting. Tamil Tiger statement says the group will lay down its arms.

Image 4. Sri Lanka timeline – the Ceasefire Agreement 2002 – 2008 and Eelam War IV
Adapted from: www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/1166237.stm, ipsnews.net/srilanka/timeline.shtml and Richardson (2005)

Although in many respects an archetypal ethnic conflict, it is clear that there were also other factors than ethnicity at play in the conflict between the separatist LTTE and the Sri Lankan state. Sirimal Abeyratne has emphasised the part of economic development and argues that too much emphasis on the ethnic factor often obscures other often equally important elements, such as political violence or economy. Abeyratne points out that although ethnicity can play a role, it can also be mobilised during a conflict by the use of ethnic categories, rather than ethnicity itself necessarily being the root cause of the conflict (Abeyratne 2004: 1296). If we consider the Tamil militant groups and the JVP insurgencies there are some common characteristics despite differing ideologies. Both movements drew on the growing number of frustrated, unemployed youths with rural backgrounds. This was a generation that had been brought up with a social welfare system, they were educated, but the economy had not kept up with rising expectations and so these youths faced a future of extremely limited opportunity (Abeyratne 2004: 1299-1300). Furthermore, both Tamil and Sinhala youths were protesting against the established political parties within their own ethnic community (Sarvananthan 2009: 17). Both ethnic communities had representatives in national politics, but the youth leaders took a stance against these representatives. The politicians, based in Colombo and Jaffna, had limited understanding or knowledge about the concerns of the increasingly excluded youths. Although class struggle made a good topic for political debate, there

were at the time few signs of action directed at change and so the youth were drawn to leaders that promised just that (Richardson 2005: 248).

In development literature there are a few conditions that have been recognised as making conflict likely to erupt; a state that is unable, or unwilling, to provide security to its people, that fails to provide basic infrastructure and services and finally fails to mediate and respond to different needs of different groups within its borders is likely to fall into conflict (UNDP 2005; DFID Emerging Policy Paper 2009). Following this logic the ethnic question was activated in order to mobilise people that felt increasingly marginalised politically, economically and culturally, and in turn ethnicity became a political issue for both communities. However, the state also had to battle two insurgencies from what it had argued was its own majority community. Although the ethnic question is an important one, when looking at Sri Lanka's history it is clear that conflict does not stem from this one issue. It is rather a combination of varying factors.

4.3 From conflict to post-war – strategies for peace

Although the war was over there was considerable work to be done before the country could return to a state of normalcy. Three hundred thousand people had fled the fighting and were detained in 'welfare camps' as suspected LTTE sympathisers were weeded out. Large tracts of the North were covered in landmines and people's homes had in many cases been destroyed.

A comprehensive development plan had been announced following the Sri Lankan state pushing back all LTTE forces in the East in 2007. This plan was called 'Eastern Revival' (*Nagenahira Navodaya*).[44] It addresses the improvement of the economic infrastructure and revitalising the productive sector. Funds are allocated for social infrastructure and social services and the resettlement of war returnees, as well as human settlement development and public institution capacity building. Fifty-two percent of the costs are to be borne from foreign funds, thirty percent by the Treasury and the remaining eighteen percent by private investment. The Asian Development Bank, the International Development Association (IDA), the European Union, the

[44] A total of 198.5 billion SL rupees are to be allocated for the project, equivalent to just under 1.8 billion US dollars (exchange rate November 2010).

World Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation supply the foreign funds for the development projects planned. An area of Trincomalee, with its famous harbour, constitutes a Special Economic Zone (SEZ)[45] within the development plans, which mainly centres around port related development as well as tourism (Bulatsinghala & Parakrama 2009: 76-77).

After the conclusion of the war a similar plan was announced for the North of the island, named 'Flourishing North' (*Vadakkin Wasantham*). In 'Flourishing North' the immediate concern is the resettlement and rehabilitation of the war affected people that had to flee their homes, emphasis being placed on demining of territories in the North. Otherwise emphasis is on infrastructure and economic development (Bulatsinghala & Parakrama 2009: 75-76). In President Rajapaksa's election manifesto he refers to his plan for the North as 'Northern Spring' (*Uthuru Wasanthaya*), in which the emphasis is again on the resettlement and rehabilitation of the people that had to flee their homes, as well as infrastructure development (Mahinda Chintana 2010: 61-64.)

Rebuilding and improvement of roads, the construction of schools, hospitals and government offices, as well as regular housing, these are all important steps in order to support the post-conflict recovery. Bulatsinghala and Parakrama (2009: 76-78) note, however, that although these plans are laudable they are met with trepidation. They attribute this response to the lack of consultation with the local population as well as an apparent reluctance to share information about the process. As a result people are not sure how these projects might affect their lives and misunderstandings arise. They mention as an example the confusion between the Trincomalee Special Economic Zone and what that entails, as opposed to its former designation as a high security zone (HSZ).

It can be argued that the North and the East of Sri Lanka are experiencing a type of imposed settlement, in which one group has won a victory over the other and enforces a settlement through high security capabilities. The emphasis drawn in *Eastern Revival* and *Flourishing North* is one on infrastructure and economic development. Although infrastructure and economic development is important the question of accountability and justice, an issue that came up repeatedly during interviews, is not addressed. Nor was there, during the fieldwork, any sign of the state

[45] Trincomalee Special Economic Zone was declared a Licensed Zone under section 22A of the BOI Act No 4 of 1978, on October 16 2006, by Extraordinary Gazette notification No. 1467/03.

addressing the 'softer' sides of peacebuilding such as reconciliation, which was left to local organisations. The *Mahinda Chintana* does propose a system of local representation parallel to the one that is in operation now from the village level up, as well as the full functioning of the provincial councils[46] (Mahinda Chintana 2010: 52-55). Apart from a chapter title: "A Unitary State, not to be divided," and the subtitle: "A United Motherland – A Nation with One Vision," any reference to the rift that the civil war caused is absent (Mahinda Chintana 2010: 52).[47]

The question of justice and accountability was an issue that divided my interlocutors into opposing camps more than any other. I had assumed at the outset that I would find a distinction between the understanding and experience of peace, perhaps along an ethnic, or at least a geographic, line (the Eastern province versus the Western province). This proved not to be the case. My interlocutors could on the one hand be divided into a group that had been directly affected by the war and individuals that worked with those people (to a large extent, although not exclusively, located in the East) and on the other hand, those that, although living with the fear of terrorist attacks, had not been directly affected. The former group, although recognising the importance of infrastructure and economic development, missed any effort to address government accountability as well as steps toward some kind of reconciliation. By focusing on development it can be said that the government is attempting to depoliticise the process (Satkunanathan & Rainford 2009).

Jonathan Goodhand (2010: 360) points out that peacebuilding has been 'economised,' and that this is true of efforts outside Sri Lanka as well, as can be seen in the quick-impact projects in Afghanistan for example. Former Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe (1993-1994 and 2001-2004), present head of the opposition, believed economic development would undermine and corrupt the LTTE. President Mahinda Rajapaksa seems to believe that economic development will make political devolution unnecessary; in effect that it represents a short cut to security.

[46] Although the 13th amendment to the Constitution, through which powers are devolved to the provincial councils, has yet to be implemented in full.

[47] Dr. Muttukrishna Sarvananthan of Point Pedro Institute criticises the government's economic revival plans, in that in his view the government is not encouraging local entrepreneurs to step forward. People are too dependent on foreign as well as government aid. Dr. Sarvananthan has written and spoken publicly in favour of fiscal devolution. He has argued that only through fiscal devolution can the 13th amendment to the constitution take effect, which he argues will further encourage each province to look to its own in order for development to take place (Sarvananthan 2010). Dr. Sarvananthan has therefore argued for a policy of economic freedom, rather than a narrow focus on ethnic, political and linguistic rights (Sarvananthan 2009).

Seven out of ten of my interlocutors, however, questioned whether development alone could replace needed state reform.

Rather than approach the people of the North and the East and address these issues the government puts its energies into infrastructure developments. In March 2010 an article appeared on www.dailymirror.lk in which it was stated that the government is removing former LTTE landmarks in the North. It explains that the government does not want the LTTE landmarks to form highlights for tourists and wants the landmarks erased so that not only the LTTE can be forgotten, but also the suffering and the violence experienced by the general population (Senanayake 2010). When writing of the JVP insurgency Sasanka Perera refers to a similar approach, which he terms 'structural amnesia.' During the JVP insurgency and the ensuing crack-down many acts of violence were committed by both the insurgents as well as state forces, but neither the JVP or the UNP, which was the main government party at the time, were willing to accept responsibility for that violence, each party accusing the other (Perera 2008: 229). This was a repercussion of the ties that existed between political actors and perpetrators of violence, in which case, aside from the question of proof, addressing violent elements within a political party would mean the end of the political career of the individuals involved (Perera 2008: 231-234).[48]

It was therefore positive news when the president appointed a *Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission* (LLRC) on 15 May 2010, to look into the events that took place following the ceasefire agreement in February 2002. This can be seen as a response to the UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon's advisory panel of war crimes in Sri Lanka.[49] The Commission held open hearings throughout the country. Human rights groups, a few of which have refused to testify for the Commission, criticise the Commission for not having a mandate to hold those found responsible accountable, as well as the emphasis being on the failure of the ceasefire 2002-2008 rather than possible war crimes toward the end of the war.[50] Furthermore

[48] The influence of patronage networks between elected officials and perpetrators of violence on democracy in Sri Lanka will be addressed further in chapter 5.3.

[49] The UN advisory panel was set up upon failing to persuade President Rajapaksa to order an independent inquiry into the final stages of the war. Pressure for such an inquiry mounted after video footage was aired on BBC´s Channel 4 that claimed to show the liquidation of captured Tamil Tigers. The government maintains that the footage is falsified. The Panel's report is due on April 12th 2011.

[50] In a recent interview Louise Arbour, president of the International Crisis Group, argues that one of the problems with the way that the Sri Lankan government conducted the war, aside from the number of civilian casualties, was by shutting its borders and limiting access of international organisations, among them the UN. She argues that this can set an example for other countries that are dealing with

the government has blocked foreign reporters from attending the hearings in the North of the country (Haviland 2010b). Despite these criticisms the hearings represented a rare chance for people throughout the country to voice their experiences and concerns in a public setting. Whether the Commission's report will lead to any concrete actions remains to be seen.

• 2009	August - New Tamil Tiger leader Selvarasa Pathmanathan captured overseas by Sri Lankan authorities. First post-war local elections in north. Governing coalition wins in Jaffna but in Vavuniya voters back candidates who supported Tamil Tigers. November - Opposition parties form alliance to fight elections. The new alliance includes Muslim and Tamil parties and is led by former prime minister Ranil Wickremasinghe. Government says 100,000 refugees released from camps. December - European Union says will suspend Sri Lanka's preferential trade status (GSP+) over alleged human rights concerns.
• 2010	January - Incumbent Mahinda Rajapaksa wins presidential election by a big margin. February - Gen Fonseka is arrested. The government says he will be court-martialled on conspiracy charges. President Rajapaksa dissolves parliament, clearing way for elections in April. April - President Rajapaksa's ruling coalition wins landslide victory in parliamentary elections. May - Government says it plans to ease emergency laws in place for most of past 27 years, in response to its 2009 defeat of the Tamil Tiger rebels. August - Military court finds former army chief Sarath Fonseka guilty of involvement in politics while in uniform and sentences him to a dishonourable discharge.

Image 5. Sri Lanka timeline – Post-war – elections 2010
Adapted from: www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/1166237.stm, ipsnews.net/srilanka/timeline.shtml and Richardson (2005)

International funds stand for a large section of the intended development throughout the island. UN agencies are active in the country, the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO), international governmental and non-governmental organisations, along with a myriad of local

internal conflict; that anything goes as long as humanitarian officials and human rights people are kept out (Funabashi 2010).

NGOs, many of whom receive funding from foreign donors. These organisations assist in the reconstruction and rehabilitation process, mainly through instigating and funding relief and aid projects, as well as contributing with technical assistance and cooperation. IDA is for example supporting a solar panel project for renewable energy, a micro-loan project and a project that aims to provide clean water to rural communities, among many others.[51] IOM focuses on bringing relief to the people that were displaced by the conflict as well as the tsunami in 2004. They also assist the government in resettling the IDPs, as well as reintegrating former combatants.[52] The UNDP's work is organised into four clusters: Poverty reduction and the millennium development goals (MDGs); governance; energy, environment and disaster risk reduction; and, peace and recovery. Working with the government the UNDP is among other things engaged in formulating a national policy for the resettlement of IDPs. They are looking into initiatives that could strengthen bilingual capacities of public officials and well as key government institutions.[53]

It has been noted, however, that despite (I)NGO emphasis on accountability and responsive state institutions when it comes to peacebuilding and development, that the effect donors and (I)NGOs can have on the political climate or security are circumscribed. Sri Lanka, unlike many countries experiencing conflict, has a strong state. A state that has chosen a militarily imposed political settlement and is in a position to push for aid that supports its own agenda. The International Crisis Group notes the often difficult situation in which donors find themselves in Sri Lanka when it comes to matters of state accountability or freedom of the press. Conditioning aid on improved governance or human right protection risks a narrowing of their scope for manoeuvre in the country and often any conditions that might be made with regard to aid are not made public (Crisis Group 2009a: 10-11). Of course not all donors are rights conscious in their work, preferring to show a greater respect for sovereignty and working 'around' the conflict (Goodhand 2010: 345- 346).[54] With increased

[51] For further information on IDA projects in Sri Lanka, go to: http://www.worldbank.lk/external/default/main?menuPK=287062&pagePK=141155&piPK=141124&theSitePK=233047

[52] For further information on the IOM in Sri Lanka, go to: http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/sri-lanka

[53] For descriptions of UNDP projects in Sri Lanka, go to: http://www.undp.lk/default.aspx

[54] In an Emerging Policy Paper (2009: 3) the DFID notes that working 'around' conflict in scenarios where the state is not accountable or unwilling to cooperate is a problem within development that needs to be addressed. The DFID has recently scaled down its activities in Sri Lanka (Goodhand 2010: 345, see endnote 7). See also: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/where-we-work/asia-south/sri-lanka/

financial support from China, Iran and other friendly countries the leverage that international donors who endorse human rights and good governance could otherwise have had when organising developmental work with the Sri Lankan government is severely diminished (Crisis Group 2009a: 11, note 65).

Jonathan Goodhand (2010: 352-354) argues that the Sri Lankan government has effectively rejected the liberal peace-building model and this affects the way in which development and peacebuilding in particular can take place in the country. By intimidating donors or agencies that have a more rights based approach, either by denying them access to affected areas, revoking visas or through direct physical threats, the government has effectively divided the donor community. The more service or technically oriented donors or agencies, rather than stand united with the other agencies, keep a distance in fear of themselves losing access. This leads to a shying away of 'taboo' issues by donors and a leaning toward a more technical approach. The International Crisis Group suggests that donors and agencies need to coordinate their efforts in order to have some level of influence (Crisis Group 2009a: 10-11). However, while large donors like China sidestep local coordination efforts and other donors choose to adjust to the government's demands, such coordination is unlikely to happen, which affects the type of peacebuilding taking place directly (Crisis Group 2009a: 8).

Another element that constricts space for certain donors and agencies is a mistrust of foreign influence that has throughout been used by nationalist groups in order to create political capital. This could for example be seen when the EU, Sri Lanka's main trading partner, reacted to human right concerns by withdrawing the trade concessions that Sri Lanka had enjoyed since 2005 (GSP+).[55] In reader

[55] The European Commission granted the GSP+ status to Sri Lanka in July 2005. The GSP+ is a unilateral trade concession that allows Sri Lanka to export more than 7200 product categories duty-free to the EU. The GSP+ is granted to developing countries that ratify and implement 27 international conventions on core human rights, labour rights and conventions on environment and good governance principals. Sri Lanka was the only country in Asia and one of only 15 countries in the world that enjoyed this special status with the EU. The Commission decided to withdraw the tariff benefits in February 2010 based on the findings of a Commission investigation launched in October 2008 and completed in October 2009. This investigation relied heavily on reports and statements by UN Special Rapporteurs and Representatives, other UN bodies and reputable human rights NGOs and identified significant shortcomings in respect of Sri Lanka's implementation of three UN human rights conventions – the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention against Torture (CAT) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – effective implementation of which forms part of the substantive qualifying criteria for GSP+. In June 2010 the Commission offered to delay the withdrawal by another 6 months if the Sri Lankan government could

commentaries to local news articles on the Web, writers criticised the EU's move as an attempt to punish Sri Lanka for not playing to the EU's tune. Some mentioned a lack of understanding of Sri Lanka's circumstances, while still others referred to a new brand of colonialism. Such comments could be seen on most of the daily news threads if foreign criticism of local policy came up, as some claimed that the foreign powers were jealous of the Sri Lankan forces' success against terrorism and yet others feared that the Tamil diaspora was still funding LTTE elements in the country with the help of foreign powers. The fact that foreign powers and international organisations were involved in formulating and negotiating the failed ceasefire agreement, and that foreign donors also worked in LTTE controlled areas during the conflict, has also been used by the government in order to encourage mistrust. They are displayed as traitors, and their presence makes them convenient scapegoats. In the eyes of the present government, their close cooperation with the former UNF government, gives rise to further mistrust (Goodhand 2010: 353).[56]

Mistrust of (I)NGOs however is also tied in with the role of patron-client relationships in Sri Lanka. Refslund Sørensen (2008) points out that politics in Sri Lanka are characterised by a patron-client relationship, in which citizens support a candidate in return for access to goods, employment or other favours. In the latter part of the 1970's local non-governmental organisations started appearing in considerable numbers. Along with religious organisations and other local initiatives they signalled a change in the local politico-economic landscape, in that the majority of the NGOs were receiving foreign funds. They could therefore offer resources that had hereto only been available through the state and thus effectively compromised state monopoly in terms of welfare.[57] The recent emphasis of the state to have increased

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show tangible progress on 15 identified issues. The European Commission received no reply from Colombo and the withdrawal was made effective 15 August 2010,

[56] A recent example of this rhetoric can be seen in an interview with External Affairs Minister Prof. G. L. Peiris, in which he accuses extremist Tamils of now waging war against Sri Lanka through the undermining of its economy. He claims that allegations of human rights abuses were deliberately timed so as to threaten the GSP+ concession, conveniently disregarding the reports upon which the decision was based. He further criticises International Crisis Group and Amnesty International for refusing to take part in the LLRC hearings, an attitude he terms: "smacks of an attitude that is almost colonial, patronising and condescending, the assumption being that other people must step in because Sri Lankans are unable to chart a course for their own future." He also states in this interview that Sri Lanka enjoys an amicable relationship with India, China, Japan and Western countries, however the themes of foreign conspiracy, neo-colonialism and the threat of attack (albeit now economical) are an old constant ("Rights Groups" 2010).

[57] Jonathan Spencer (1999:213-215), an anthropologist who studied Sinhala villages, points out through various examples that political support leads to material riches, through government positions,

say in the activities of (I)NGOs can be seen as an attempt at regaining influence in the region.[58]

Although influence wielded by foreign or international organisations is limited in the present economic and political context, this should not be interpreted to mean that they are ever completely sidelined. Development and humanitarian work is considered by the Sri Lankan government a powerful tool, both to gain influence as well as stabilise the country. Those whose programs are valuable to the government have greater space for manoeuvre, however such relationships are never a constant as political alliances and influences change (Goodhand 2010: 361-362). As has been said Sri Lankan politics are characterized by a patron-client relationship between the politician or state official and his electorate and with access to outside funds, NGOs can be seen to effectively threaten state monopoly of welfare in the areas in which they work, and in extension the patron-client relationship between the citizen and the local politician (Refslund Sörensen 2008). Seen in that light the state's attempts at control are comprehensible, especially in a region in which state control has only recently been secured. Development and aid is integrally bound to the political landscape as agents bolster their own standing by promoting some projects and ignoring others. Some interlocutors suggested to me that cutting out 'outside interference' altogether could lead to an increased sense of accountability toward the people as government officials created new networks with the local electorate. People could in turn demand more from their elected officials as they alone would then be responsible for delivering upon promises. However, others that I spoke to, while recognising this possibility, feared that in an environment characterised by mistrust, spurred on by political violence and corruption, such a move could also spell increased suffering by the regions' poor. The situation is unlikely to become such a black and white scenario, as foreign aid is still too valuable. This does shed light

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and thereby influence, or political support establishing tenancy relations, among other things. These things, Spencer shows, took place also before independence and is therefore not a newly established practice.

[58] Activities of NGOs can cause friction also in areas without a strong state. It is not only in the case of Sri Lanka that those delivering what would otherwise be seen as the state's purview are considered a threat to those in power. Bernhard Helander (2005: 201-202) argued that in Somalia where local NGOs organised to deliver basic social services found themselves in increasingly difficult territory, although decidedly un-political. In order to delivers basic social services there is a need for political stability. When civil society takes part in delivering social services they in turn need control over military or other security in the area to ensure stability. This in turn threatens those in power and could lead to further instability, rather than the opposite. Helander argues that it is pivotal for the international community to understand this balancing act in order to avoid instigating further conflict.

though on the unavoidably political nature of development and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka, a political culture in which (I)NGOs are part.

Following the military victory against the LTTE, the military presence in the East and the North has been consolidated. Rather than lessen the number of troops the Sri Lankan state seems intent on building and maintaining a visible presence in former LTTE territories.[59] Considering the length and tenacity of the conflict, continued military presence at this point should not, in my view, be surprising. However, the military presence does not translate into a sense of security for the local population in those areas (Goodhand 2010: 351).[60] Although the army is involved in rebuilding and assisting the IDPs, these positive contributions are marred by a lack of political will to restore law and order as well as accountability. This can be seen in the tacit approval of illegal operations of pro-government armed groups, such as the EDPD in the North, or the response of the armed forces in cases where soldiers have broken the law (DeSilva Ranasinghe 2010).[61] The way that the war was won is affecting the way in which peace is to be achieved, namely as seen through a security and military prism, with an emphasis on deterrence rather than political engagement (Goodhand 2010: 350-351).[62]

[59] Dr. Sarvananthan has also pointed to the problem of soldiers stepping into the service sector in the North and the East, opening up coffee stands and barber shops, catering to tourists from the South. This is something that should be left to the local people that are now returning to the area. If there are no jobs for the military at the moment, the army should be downsized and the money spent elsewhere (Gunasekera 2010; Sarvananthan 2010). Security sector reform could be expected to follow the cessation of war, especially as the country tries to work on its image with regards to human rights. There seems however to be a resistance to reform (Cave & Manoharan 2009).

[60] It was stated in several interviews that the discourse had morphed from battling the LTTE enemy to battling the 'traitors' in our midst. The discourse has morphed from one that is based on the ethnic categories to one that is more about pro- or anti-government sentiment.

[61] In the interview here referred to Dr. Sarvananthan gives as an example the case of a gang rape of two young married IDPs by uniformed army personnel in Visvamadu, Mullaitivu district. The local police apprehended the culprits but the army police is working to get the suspects released on bail.

[62] This was, as I experienced it during my fieldwork, true of government policy in all areas of the island that I visited, not only the East and the North.

5. Peacebuilding policy and practices

Upon inquiring into peacebuilding policies during fieldwork in Sri Lanka the majority of informants expressed problems with implementation, and in many cases awareness and availability. Upon coming upon a fully formulated but not adopted policy, the *National Policy Framework for the Reintegration of Ex-combatants into Civilian Life in Sri Lanka* (2009), the failing of this policy sparked questions as to the role of policy in Sri Lanka as well as to its limitations. It was clear from the data that policy was not thought to affect actual practice, rather the role of informal networks surfaced as pivotal in this respect. The continued formulation of policies, adopted or not, however signalled that policies were not completely without value.

This chapter starts with an introduction into the context in which the fieldwork took place. The continued use of violence influences how links between informal and formal structures are created as well as cut. I shall then address the workings of policy, its role as well as its limitations. Finally I shall address the part played by networks in order to clarify how networks can both instigate action as well as perpetuate existing power structures.

5.1 Violence and distrust in a post-war setting

As was discussed in the previous chapter the Sri Lankan government has chosen a peacebuilding strategy that places great emphasis on economic as well as infrastructure development. However, this development is taking place in an illiberal atmosphere. Fear and violence were still present during the time of fieldwork, and the government was continuing in a direction of increased state control and state-centred security. This emphasis caused clashes with many NGOs as well as international donors. However, increased support from China and other friendly countries has lessened these, often Western, actors' influence to a degree that allows the Sri Lankan government to act more in line with it's ambitions and force out those that don't toe

its line (Crisis Group 2009a: 10-11; Goodhand 2010: 345). This chapter will introduce the context in which I was asking about peacebuilding and introduce some of the concerns and experiences of my informants. This introduces the ground in which policy is lived out, Sri Lanka in September 2009 – March 2010 serving as an example.

The fieldwork coincided with the first presidential elections since the end of the war, as well as the lead-up to parliamentary elections. Although the election day itself was relatively peaceful and the majority of people were able to cast their vote in a fair and free way, the weeks leading up to the elections and the weeks following them were not without incident (PAFFREL Final Report 2010). An excerpt, translated from my field diary gives a picture of the atmosphere in which peacebuilding was to take place.

After a fairly quiet election the votes of the presidential election were in the process of being counted. This Wednesday in January was remarkable for the fact that it was even more quiet than the election day itself, the usual sounds of traffic and people's chatter as they walked by was oddly absent:

> *It is as if the whole city of Colombo is holding its breath, no one is moving. All that could be heard from my balcony today was the sound of birds singing. SF* [Sarath Fonseka, the opposition candidate] *took up residence at the Cinnamon Lakeside* [Hotel in Colombo] *as he awaited the results, a rather unremarkable fact if it hadn't been for the sudden presence of troops surrounding the hotel. I had the TV on all day, trying to keep up with the latest election news, people messaged and twittered information back and forth like crazy as developments from around the country trickled in. Very quickly the news of the army presence surrounding the hotel reached all ears, conflicting stories as to the reason for their presence abounded. Some reports stated that the troops were there for the opposition candidate's protection, while a text message claiming to originate from the daughter of SF circulated stating that their lives were in danger. Stories of an impending coup and counter-coup were spun, unspun and respun, the blame shifting from the opposition, to the former general and the armed forces to the government itself, depending on who told it. As these developments were taking place rumours that Sirasa* [a privately owned Sinhala TV station] *had been surrounded by troops circulated and tension*

escalated. Such rumours were though soon enough countered, although when asked why Sirasa didn't report on the vigil held outside Cinnamon Lakeside, apparently the answer was: "Because we aren't allowed to."

(Field notes Wednesday 27th January 2010)

Later that afternoon the heads of the main opposition parties appeared on *Sirasa* to appeal to the government and grant the opposition candidate freedom of movement. In statements made to the papers the following day two government ministers stated that Sarath Fonseka had been free to go as he pleased, but that nine of his security guards had been army deserters and that they had been duly arrested. "Anyone who breaks the law will be taken to task according to law of the land…" (Bandara 2010). Reports had though been made that video footage of the troops had been confiscated off reporters in the area. It also appeared that people found the explanation of army deserters hiding out at the hotel highly doubtful. So was the claim that the opposition candidate's presence at the hotel had been a surprise for the government. This was further made doubtful as during the siege a military spokesman at first claimed not to be aware of any added military presence near the hotel, but then the secretary of defence stated that the troops were part of an effort to prevent post-election violence. As said, the story about the army deserters appeared the next day although, in a letter addressed to the election commissioner, Sarath Fonseka points out that the men in question had been appointed to him for his safety during the election campaign and that they had been called to report back to the army police unit, at which point they had been arrested ("Sarath Fonseka Letter" 2010). That same day a more serious statement was issued from the Defence Ministry asserting that the former general had planned to assassinate the President and his family and that he had been planning this assassination from two Colombo hotels (Dias 2010). Sarath Fonseka retorted that he himself was the intended victim of an assassination plot ("Sri Lankan President" 2010). These events were followed by a raid on Sarath Fonseka's campaign office, following accusations by the opposition of foul play during the election, reportedly in search of further army deserters and hidden weapons (Dias & Silva 2010). Those issues were soon forgotten as the government arrested the opposition candidate ten days later, accused of plotting to overthrow the government. He now also stood accused of taking part in politics while still in uniform and hiring army deserters, among other charges (Haviland 2010).

Sarath Fonseka had stated during the election campaign that human rights abuses had been committed in the final stages of the war, as he had been ordered to shoot Tamil Tigers that came forward with white flags. These accusations have been vehemently denied by the government. In light of the accusations of violations of human rights, made by the former general, Sarath Fonseka's position is a rather curious one as he was the head of the army at the time of the alleged violations and so he would have been the one that issued those orders, if they are in fact true. He has furthermore on previous occasions stated that he dealt with the Tigers without mercy and hence they were vanquished. Never the less, arresting him could be seen by some as a ruse to prevent him from testifying and as a threat to others that dare speak against the government (Jayatilleke 2010; Natarajan 2010).

Disregarding whether any of the accusations from either party are true, there seemed at the time of his arrest to be a wide consensus among the people that I spoke to that the government's swift actions were aimed at ridding the opposition parties of a figurehead prior to the general election scheduled a couple of months later. This apparent insecurity on the part of the government in turn led to a new bout of speculation as the president had won the election by a strikingly wide margin, despite losing to the former General in Tamil dominated areas. There was speculation about the legitimacy of the elections, seeing that throughout the country there had been incidents of election related violence and intimidation. In light of the displayed insecurity of the government, people wondered how far the ruling party had gone in order to ensure their continued seat in power.

The action against Sarath Fonseka was taken as the newly re-elected president issued a statement in which he said: "The people of Sri Lanka, democratically and very clearly, have shown that they are now free of threats, free of fear, free of terrorism - and they have shown they support the measures which have freed them" ("Sri Lankan President" 2010). Although true up to a certain point, the contrast between the president's words and the state's actions presented yet another example of the duplicity of official statements.

After a couple of decades of battling an internal adversary the government is highly sensitive to criticism and through the use of Emergency Regulations can sidestep laws and regulations that would otherwise require following due process. Although violence has receded it did not end entirely with the victory of the armed

forces against the Tigers, rather it exists uneasily enmeshed in the formal structure, becoming especially noticeable prior to elections as it is mobilised in favour of various political aspirants, enshrouded in a discourse of patriots versus traitors. As a result faith in the electoral process is compromised, although that is but one factor contributing to an over all lack of faith in the political process. As one interlocutor told me: "The idea is personal betterment for the politicians" (Interview February 2010).

This is not an uncommon problem in post-conflict situations as weak institutions can both exacerbate conditions that will lead to conflict, but they can also be the result of a protracted violent conflict (Human Development Report 2005: 162-163).

Election related intimidation and violence came up frequently during interviews, informal conversation and in the local media. There had been reports of armed men still operating in the East and the North as well as occasional acts of police brutality that caught the nation's attention,[63] however as the elections inched closer the threat of violence became more palpable. There were two types of organised violence that took place during this time, the first involved groups of people, sometimes including police officers and party commissioners, clashing at rallies or attacking political offices (PAFFREL Final Report 2010: 14-16, 22). The other, perhaps more pernicious sort, was the violence that was threatened, as men in either white vans (incidentally also a euphemism for being picked up and 'disappeared') or black jeeps with tinted windows appeared in streets at night. According to one interlocutor five of his neighbours had been picked up and kept somewhere over the election as their households were known to support the opposition party, UNP (Interview February 2010). Sometimes the men simply stood by their vehicle in full view of the residents not brandishing anything more than sticks. In light of the violence that had taken place during the war these appearances were enough to terrify the neighbourhood and reminded people that their actions were being watched (Interviews January & February 2010). The stories of these happenings seemed to have almost as much effect as the incidents themselves. Fear also surfaced

[63] The incident that caused most public outrage involved the drowning of a young man. Police officers were caught on camera chasing down and drowning a youth that had been throwing rocks at passing trains. It turned out that the youth had been mentally unstable. The release of the footage caused an uproar, not only with regard to the brutality of the officers, but also raised questions as to the normality of violence as none of the numerous onlookers stepped in to save the youth from drowning.

as people that I spoke to on both sides of the island, the East and the capital, were uneasy about receiving political text messages or emails containing overt political support for the opposition candidate as it might 'invite trouble.'

After the presidential elections I had expected the violence perpetrated by the groups affiliated with the government to subside, however, to my surprise the president's victory had done nothing to diminish intimidation or threats, but rather the opposite, though this was especially true of areas in which he had not received a resounding vote.[64] It seemed the men involved were intent on ensuring an even more resounding victory in the upcoming parliamentary elections, as well as using the opportunity to punish 'errant' voters (Interviews February 2010). These concerns also appeared in public media (see for example Sunil 2010).

Election violence was often, both by media and local interlocutors, treated as a separate kind of violence or 'trouble' to the ethnic conflict. It was even in some cases accepted as part and parcel of the Sri Lankan democratic tradition, although of course not by all (Interviews December 2009 – February 2010; see also examples of discourse in media "Here Come the Anarchists" 2010, and "Restore Respect for the Law" 2010). During the fieldwork election related incidents were also classified in my data under 'context' or simply 'background noise,' but after studying the data accumulated during the fieldwork it became clear that election related violence should in fact not be aggregated a place outside the post-war discourse on peacebuilding. Fear of standing for political office, direct intimidation of voters suspected of supporting the 'wrong' candidate and the inability of the police to enforce the law impartially, all these instances supported the lack of trust many I spoke to, especially in the Eastern Province, displayed toward the government. People described little faith in the electoral process and political repression was cited as a reason for people taking to arms in the first place. It has been noted that: "localised violence can serve as a 'training ground' for more large-scale violence campaigns, including civil war" (Höglund & Jarstad 2010: 2). Election violence displayed during the run up to the elections thus must be seen in the context of the recently concluded war, and one would expect it to figure in any plan to support the newfound peace.

[64] As was stated above (chapter 2.4) violence has to be legitimated at some level to be accepted. Violence is performative, as without an audience it is socially meaningless (Schmidt & Schröder 2001: 5-6). Furthermore, violence is not idiosyncratic nor is it meaningless to the actor. Violence is a historically situated practice, influenced by material constraints as well as material incentives. These are in turn influenced by cultural representations of the same (Schmidt & Schröder 2001: 3-4).

Aside from election related violence disappearances were still going on in the Eastern province during my stay in Sri Lanka, although in much smaller numbers than during the war. Disappearances were now traced by my informants to the security forces in the majority of cases, who were rooting out any possible remnants of the LTTE, or so it was said. The question then arose, why not go through the proper channels? Two informants stated:

> "Disappearances are the real curse of the conflict and they continue, before by the LTTE or Karuna's forces, now by the security forces mainly. This creates real despair, where do you go when the people responsible deny it?"
>
> (Interview November 2009)

> "There are procedures to follow, you detain me, you question me, you put me into court custody, and there is some accountability, no? Although, then there is the question of the disappearances that take place because of money… [kidnapping for ransom]."
>
> (Interview October 2009)

Another interlocutor said:

> "Armed groups are still active, mainly Karuna's men, Pillayan's men have disarmed. The police is sometimes apprehensive about dealing with them if they are involved in something, so that creates some impunity and that in turn makes people afraid. But that is changing little by little, now they have to arrest the most obvious offenders, but they say that sometimes when they do, they get a phone call and then the guy is out just like that!"
>
> (Interview January 2010)

Political or personal ties affecting police work in Sri Lanka is not a recent invention, Jonathan Spencer wrote in an ethnography based on fieldwork undertaken 1982 – 1984 in the northern Ratnapura district about an incident that took place during a religious procession (*perahara*):

> *As Babanis went out of the compound to the road to extinguish his bundles of flaming rags, he had been set upon by Uberatna (notorious, as I later learnt,*

> *for his temper), still angry at the incident in the village street. When Mr Ariyaratna and the* gramasevaka [village headman] *tried to intervene, Uberatna treated them with contempt. He turned to the* gramasevaka *and said, 'If you are the big man here, why don't you go and tell the police?' The answer was painfully obvious to all present: the* gramasevaka, *for all of his official standing, had little or no political pull as long as the current government stayed in power; and without political backing there was no point in complaining to the police about someone with Uberatna's political connections. Uberatna continued his harangue: 'All you government servants,' and here he turned to include Mr Ariyaratna and, by implication, the priest waiting over by the vihara, 'just wait until the twentieth of next month [election day] – we'll see you transferred to Batticaloa and Jaffna.' The places mentioned are towns in the Tamil-speaking part of the island, where, local folklore had it, any Sinhala person walked in constant fear of attack from vicious and unmerciful terrorists.*
>
> (Spencer 1999: 76-77)

The politicisation of the police force had happened little by little, but after President J. R. Jaywardene's term in power in 1978 – 1989, the UNP's political influence over the police had become more organised than had been experienced with previous governments. Combined with an inflation-eroded salary and alienation from the communities in which the police officers were serving, the temptation to play according to political will and even with government sanctioned thugs increased. In fact it became accepted that acting against the government or its supporters did not pay, it could easily result in career set-backs (Richardson 2005: 505-506). It is important to note that interference in police work generally has little to do with issues on a national scale, it is rather characterised by local political bosses and the need to maintain influence networks with them. Although not directly orchestrated by top government officials, this is done with the tacit approval of cabinet ministers and the president in power (Richardson 2005: 505-508).

Not all violence is politically motivated, however, or the result of counterinsurgency. As the informant referred to above there were some abductions for ransom also taking place, but the state's apparent inability to deal with it exacerbated the issue and turned attention once again to the often politically dependent nature of

police response. The perceived lack of government interest in addressing the activities of illegal, but pro-government, armed groups in the East and the North further undermined local support for the government as well as trust in the state. In fact several interlocutors in the Eastern Province told me that their vote had not so much been for former General Fonseka or against President Rajapaksa, but against Karuna, Pillayan and Douglas Devananda (Interviews January & February 2010).[65] In fact one of Sarath Fonseka's campaign pledges was that he would stop all activities of illegal armed groups ("SF Will Disarm" 2010). Although kidnapping for ransom was seen as a serious problem, on two occasions interlocutors told me that in case of a disappearance they hoped for a phone call demanding money for then there was hope that the person in question would be released. Also, in those cases they could act and retrieve their relative. When people disappeared without a word that was the hardest thing to bear (Interviews October & November 2009).

Despite these threats of violence, now that the war had ended, day-to-day life was peaceful. These remaining incidents of violence and intimidation though protracted the expressed lack of trust and forestalled a real sense of relief. Two statements made following the arrest of Sarath Fonseka address the remaining trepidation:

> "Did you hear the firecracker's yesterday? I was shocked, I mean I voted for him [Fonseka] and I didn't dare go out [to protest], I mean, I want my job and my life. 'We are not going to tolerate any dissent,' it is a clear message… The government is very sensitive about dissent, so there is fear of voicing things, there is little space for people to mobilize…It seems they want to choke it [the people's voice] completely, ever more control."
>
> (Interview February 2010)

> "I think it will affect it, peacebuilding number one, people feel very insecure that democracy is sort of being undermined by this government and they are sort of taking the people for granted [-] So people are being vigilant and careful."
>
> (Interview February 2010)

[65] See footnote 41, page 49.

The still recent memory of the conflict and the way that politics often play a role in violence made people afraid to act. There remained a deep mistrust and fear of higher authorities (Bulatsinghala & Parakrama 2009: 81). However, sometimes when trying people found unexpected space to manoeuvre. As an interlocutor in the Eastern Province stated:

> "Although the laws and rights are already in place, there is no space to exercise them much less freedom to express thoughts and dissent. Because of the fear of remains of the LTTE, the government is especially sensitive about dissent, and so there is little space for people to express their concerns… There was no space to speak or act against the LTTE for the people that lived under them, they lost their right of speech. Now the government is here, but freedom of expression has not been managed yet […] But we need to keep trying, sometimes you think there is no space, but then you try and you could do it, and just like that you have created space for something. And then you keep on trying to see if you can, if you had just assumed there wasn't space, when in fact there is."
>
> (Interview October 2009)

Although it can at times be tempting when faced with oppression to stamp one party to the conflict as the bad guy and the victims of violence as people needing to be rescued, this approach is simplistic and denies insight into the productive workings of power through which people define themselves and others, and thereby also insight into the rationale behind the violence (Nelson 2005: 222-223). A state or government is not a monolith that presents a single point of view or a single front (Mosse 2004: 645, footnote 9). Although there is violence and intimidation there are also laws and regulations. There are people within the official structure that work to counteract the same forces that aim to subvert it. Power and influence are not static and the official structure is not without authority. Apart from the agents that act in accordance with the law and the constitution and thereby avoid a complete breakdown, the state must also be seen to present a legitimate front or else it will lose the right to rule. Agents within the government work to uphold its legitimacy, namely through performing the functions expected of the state and its institutions (Foucault

2010: 260). It is here that people found space. As Foucault pointed out, power is never possessed by one figure or one structure, rather power is exercised. Wherever power is exercised there is room for resistance, as power is not merely coercive, it is also productive (Sawicki 1991: 21, 24). Although violence is an action chosen as a means to an end, power can sometimes seem to rest on the ability or willingness to exert violence, but while violence is instrumental in nature power rests on something else, namely the support of people (Arendt 2004: 237-241). The use of violence and intimidation throughout the conflict resulted in mistrust toward the state, the government and the policies which they are implementing, as well as a wider mistrust between individuals. It thus spells true that when power evolves into force, then in fact power is lost (Sawicki 1991: 25).

The arrest of Sarath Fonseka was one instance that encouraged mistrust, as one informant explained:

> "…for example the Tamils say, 'OK, this is the way that they are treating their own, something happens to us,' you are sending a wrong message to the minorities but also to the majority. Even the prelates of the *Maha Sangha*, they were very unhappy about this, and they were asked not to speak, so these are not healthy I think, in a democracy especially, yeah… A lot of trust building has to be done [to prevent a resumption of hostilities]."
>
> (Interview February 2010)

Although violent conflict had come to an end there were accounts of extreme vulnerability and a "brokenness," a deep sense of loss. One informant put it so:

> "But how can you have peace without justice? Is it just a matter of an absence of war, but there is no justice? I have lost, my family have lost, my husband, my son, my daughter... while the state you don't account for it yet it was done, where is justice? Actual human acknowledgement of the fact that this has happened to me, and you as a partner in humanity are responsible, you can not just assume that I .. just because there is no *war* war.... I don't even think if you go to the South, certain areas in the South where they had the JVP problem, you know about the JVP insurrection and all that, how many civilians were killed, no one has an answer for those, no? [-] If you go down south and talk to them, I don't think that people think, 'OK getting rid of the

> LTTE in the south, everything is fine.' It is not so. If you talk to people eventually you will hear, if you talk to them, one to one... I mean Colombo is Colombo, there might be a different feeling. But again in Colombo there are people with stories to tell."
>
> (Interview October 2009)

In the East there was regret that development and democracy are not linked in the state's development plans. There were also calls for signs of reconciliation. The government remained mistrustful, and the media was compromised, so people didn't trust everything they heard there either.

The lack of trust referred to is an effect not only of the war, but of a culture of decoupling and of violence that has been espoused over a period of a few decades in Sri Lanka (see: Tambiah 1986; Uyangoda 2008). Its rationale affects both the workings of the state as well as the way in which peacebuilding initiatives and policies are conceived, as well as perceived and implemented. This becomes apparent when addressing which issues are, and which aren't, considered important in terms of peacebuilding both for the local population as well as those in power.

5.2 Chasing after policies – the implementation conundrum

Aside from studying the emphasis within development and peacebuilding policy, policy itself became a subject of study in a different way than anticipated. As I pointed to earlier in this paper (chapter 2.2) the function of policy is often different than intended, in which case the presentation of a project, through the action of composition, often obscures what actually drives the outcome (Mosse 2004). My data suggests a strong sense of decoupling, that is between the presentation of policy and the legitimacy it grants on the one hand, and what actually takes place 'on the ground' on the other.

Aside from an expressed lack of transparency, a common reaction to my inquiries about peacebuilding policy was ambiguity, expression of ignorance and statements which claimed that 'policy might dictate so and so,' but that the individual involved was more concerned with 'things that really went on, the real world,' thus

alluding to the limited influence of policy. Throughout informants expressed a problem with the implementation of policy, as some pointed out that policies existed in abundance, but there was no way of knowing if, when or how those policies would be implemented. This was of course not true of all policies, as many, especially it seemed outside the sphere of peacebuilding, were implemented in what was considered a satisfactory manner.[66] This discrepancy added rather than detracted from my interest in the ambiguous place of policy in the governance process in Sri Lanka.

The policy I shall partly build on in the following chapter and often used as an example in interviews was the *National Policy Framework for the Reintegration of Ex-combatants into Civilian Life in Sri Lanka* (2009). Other documents that were used as 'launch pads' for discussion were the constitution (*The Constitution* (1978) and amendments), the president's election manifestoes (*Mahinda Chintana* 2005 & 2010) as well as other local developmental policies in combination with international policy emphasis.

Including documents such as the constitution assumes a definition of policy that is broader than an instrumentalist view in which policy is strictly a plan for action and a tool through which to affect change. The constitution of Sri Lanka and the election manifestoes identify broader policy ambitions, such as that of a unified state and fundamental rights, to name but a few, from which public discourse drew material and on which other policies were based and in turn measured. The president's vision gave a clue as to how the government interpreted the electorate's concerns, also in terms of peacebuilding. It furthermore points to how they intend to juggle the perceptions and expectations of the international community in tandem with delivering on the expectations of the public. Other instances were also drawn on, for example the use of Emergency Regulations (ER) and Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), the place of infrastructure development or how the independence of the courts was secured. Likewise difficulties and opportunities present in local government came up.

I admit that my first choice of policy, that of the reintegration and the rehabilitation of ex-combatants, often caused an annoyed response from my informants. This policy, much like election manifestoes, was an example of things only half done. This was at times interpreted as a foreign focus on things that have not

[66] In interviews this was expressed as especially true of the health sector and to a certain degree of the economic sector.

gone according to plan. The question was unavoidably raised as to why these policies in particular, and not others?

This question results in a twofold answer. First, when looking for peacebuilding policies there were few that were accessible to an outsider and fewer still that matched my original emphasis within peacebuilding, namely security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR). The policies I chose to discuss were often in the media, easily accessible and known, although sometimes in a cursory fashion, to my correspondents. This was done in an attempt to ensure that confidentiality could be maintained when writing the paper, as focusing on too specific a policy could risk giving away the identity of an informant. Thus, although many interlocutors presented concrete examples regarding specific policies to describe their experience, I have chosen to omit any reference that could present such a risk. Second, as the often equivocal stance of policy came up repeatedly focus shifted from the implementation of a particular policy to a more general meaning and practice of policy. Sticking to the *National Framework for Reintegration of Ex-combatants* and supplementing with other peacebuilding policies thus was used to introduce a certain consistency in my line of questioning rather than constitute a boundary within which discussion could take place.

Therefore, although many of the statements on which I draw in the following chapter centre around the *National Framework for Reintegration of Ex-combatants* they are supported by explanations and descriptions of a variety of national and local policy initiatives as experienced by my interlocutors.

5.2.1 The decoupling

First when inquiring about policies the majority of responses I got were dismissive. As one interlocutor remarked: “There might be policies, but they won’t tell you what the true state of affairs is, what is really going on” (Interview September 2009). Another noted: “There are so many policy frameworks like that, that for some reason the government doesn’t endorse” (Interview January 2010). Such remarks also came forth indirectly when discussing related topics:

> "Under the *Mahinda Chintana* [2010] the president had a real opportunity to address the post-war issues, he could have added a chapter under all these fantasy policies for post-conflict reconstruction, or for reconciliation, but he didn't."
>
> (Interview January 2010)

The wording here, '*fantasy* policies,' indicated that these policies were not expected to be implemented. The question then arose, if policies are nothing to go by and not even meant for implementation, why then go to the trouble of formulating them?

The response was indicative of a sense of decoupling (Meyer & Rowan 1977). Decoupling between the plans and aims drawn up in policy documents and what is actually practised. Meyer & Rowan argue that following, or pretending to follow, institutionalised myths lends an organisation legitimacy. Institutionalised myths refer here to conceptions of the way in which things ought to take place that have become so commonplace and accepted that they are no longer questioned. The assumption that policy dictates behaviour in a desired way is one such myth (Mosse 2004). However, myths that circulate about formal structures often disregard the social behaviour and the networks that exist and operate within an organisation, as well as that of which the organisation is part. Sometimes organisations do not work according to the blueprint, decisions are left unimplemented, rules are broken or policies lead to unforeseen results. The outcome might not necessarily fall short of expectation, it might in fact be more than satisfactory, however the uncertainty of the outcome negatively affects the organisation's position. In response to this problem Meyer & Rowan found that organisations effectively decoupled their actual activities from the formal structure, thus safeguarding their ability to keep up appearances while still operating as suited the informal organisational structure (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 340-344).

When discussing the sense of decoupling that was expressed in terms of policies and practice in Sri Lanka a few interlocutors argued that policies were first and foremost put together in order to access funds otherwise inaccessible. Without a formal policy framework many international donors or INGOs were reluctant to fund a project. Policies that adhere to accepted norms in terms of formulation as well as content give a stamp of legitimacy to a project (Apthorpe 1997: 43-45). Although the emphasis of such policies can change over time, what has remained a constant is the

need for policy formulation in addressing the problem as well as policy-driven solutions (Mosse 2004: 642). One informant stated: "I think it is also to a certain extent that we have far too many policies, to the extent that I don't think that officials are aware of the existing policies that are in existence in order to be able to implement" (Interview November 2009). This suggested that the formulation and presentation of policy served a purpose other than intended implementation, as the people responsible weren't necessarily aware of their existence once they had been approved. A couple of interlocutors also suggested that the pressure for policy-driven projects did not arise from local actors but in order to meet international requirements:

> "We come with our international policies and bump them on the head with it, but we should formulate policies together. Somehow that doesn't seem to happen, and if we don't do it then nothing gets done. So usually we put something down that we feel sounds right and try and get the government to agree to it. But then things on the ground are different. We have to break protocol to get things done a lot of the time."
>
> (Interview November 2009)

Such statements further emphasised the apparent decoupling between policy and practice and bolstered the apparent status of policy as an institutionalised myth.

The theory of decoupling did not explain a few things however. First of all, not all policies remained unimplemented, some were implemented in part. It was also pointed out on various occasions that the lack of implementation often led to expected funding to be held back, despite policy formulation. Talking of decoupling and institutionalised myths in this context thus only managed to explain how and why policy often seemed apart from practice. It did not address what it was that actually drove practice and how policy could influence such practice. Following David Mosse (2004) and Foucault (2010) I therefore focused on the workings of policy, rather than expected outcomes, and asked: What power structures are being maintained?

5.2.2 Policies are 'failed'

David Mosse (2004: 645) argues in his article that the question of policy and implementation is not as interesting as the relationship between accepted policy ideas and the various practices that exist 'below.' I didn't realise it then but I followed Mosse's argument in my research, switching my attention from the actual implementation of a policy and its effects to looking for the practices that existed 'below.'

At the outset of the fieldwork I set out to find official peacebuilding policy with focus on the reintegration of ex-combatants. There was a policy formulated on this topic, however it has not been adopted, nor had it been implemented. As the data suggested decoupling early on in the fieldwork, this soon became an example of a policy 'failed.' That is, despite adhering to what we would define as best principles, it failed to garner political support and thereby financing.

The *National Framework for the Reintegration of Ex-combatants to Civilian Life in Sri Lanka* (2009) presents and example in which a number of conflicting interests resulted in a 'failed' policy. Although elements within this policy are some partially implemented, the policy itself failed to produce the political support and coordinated action hoped for, as well as attracting needed donor funds, in order for the process to be carried forward in full.[67] The framework was developed by the Ministry of Disaster Manager and Human Rights.[68] The formal process began in March 2009, but it was based on a concept paper presented by the ILO in 2003 to the Ministry of Employment and Labour and built on a proposed reintegration project for ex-combatants presented by the Ministry of Disaster Manager and Human Rights in the spring of 2006. The framework was based on an inclusive process, addressing the

[67] Rehabilitation of ex-combatants was already underway in Sri Lanka in the Protective Accommodation and Rehabilitation Centres (PARC) in Ambepussa, Welikanda, and Tellippalai. The authority overlooking the rehabilitation process is the Commissioner General of Rehabilitation, a position that was created on 12 September 2006 by H.E. President Mahinda Rajapaksa by way of Gazette Notification (Extraordinary) Number 1462/8 of 2006. The bureau of the Commissioner General originally belonged to the Ministry of Justice and Law Reforms, but now falls under the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Prison Reforms. Despite rehabilitation at PARC, there was no comprehensive policy framework to guide the entire process.

[68] The framework was presented on the Ministry's website (DMHR Media Release 2009), although interestingly, in order to view the document itself one needed to 'Google' it. I found it on the ILO website: http://www.ilo.org/colombo/whatwedo/publications/lang--en/docName--WCMS_114015/index.htm

main stakeholders, relevant ministries, non-governmental organisations, labour organisations, the ex-combatants themselves as well as affected civilians. Representatives of stakeholders were invited for a sensitising workshop and were organised into working groups that each prepared an Issue Paper, based on issues that came up during independent as well as joint meetings over a period of three months (*National Framework* 2009: 2-3).

Care was taken that the Framework should complement state policy in areas of social and economic development as well as post-conflict reconstruction. The emphasis was at first meant to be on targeted programs and then later to be supplanted by an area-based approach in order to ensure a higher level of sustainability. The framework identifies two parts to successful reintegration. First, former combatants should receive proper counselling and be supplied with the social skills needed to be able to successfully re-enter civilian life. Second, there is a need for suitable vocational training, preferably in connection to the reconstruction efforts and income generating projects undertaken in the war-affected areas. Intervention efforts are set down in the following order in the framework: disarmament and demobilisation; rehabilitation and reinsertion; social reintegration and economic reintegration, and finally: cross-cutting issues, such as education, vulnerable groups and gender. [69] It is recognised that these efforts might overlap and suit different individuals in a different order, depending on their background. It is also noted that care should be taken to avoid instigating further hostility by targeting the ex-combatants exclusively without responding to the needs of civilians that were affected by the conflict. An inclusive process is called for (*National Framework* 2009: 4-5, 15). The framework addresses the institutional aspect of reintegration through the strengthening of Bureau of the Commissioner General of Rehabilitation. It suggests the establishment of a multi-

[69] The Framework describes these efforts in the following manner: "Firstly, the process will begin with the disarmament and demobilization component, whereby ex-combatants will be formally disarmed and discharged from armed groups. Secondly, following their period of rehabilitation, ex-combatants and their families will be given reinsertion assistance to help them cover their basic needs, such as transitional safety allowances, food, clothing, and health services. Thirdly, the reintegration process will commence once the reinsertion stage is complete and this will comprise of social reintegration and economic reintegration. Social reintegration includes the enhancement of social skills for civilian life, strengthening community services, ceremonies of reconciliation, providing psychosocial support, and information and sensitisation campaigns. The economic reintegration component has been based on both the short and long-term development plans for the war-affected provinces of the island and thus feeds into the overall plans for economic revitalization of these areas. Finally, there are several important cross-cutting issues that will be addressed throughout the entire duration of the process. These comprise of psychosocial well-being, transitional justice, education, information and counselling services, and issues related to gender, children, and the disabled" (*National Framework* 2009: 5).

donor trust fund to ensure the transparent and efficient use of funds. It addresses the legal status of the rehabilitees, to be determined by the Attorney General,[70] and the long-term problem posed by the easy access and proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW). It furthermore calls for a national awareness campaign so that former combatants and their families are aware of their rights as well as the process itself. This is also important to ensure continued popular support (*National Framework* 2009: 8-13).

As can be seen in this short summary the *National Framework for the Reintegration of Ex-combatants* is a comprehensive policy framework. A lot of work has gone into its preparation and formulation; it is based on a consultative process addressing all stakeholders. The policy has not been endorsed by the government, however, nor consequently has it been implemented. That is not to say that reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants has been left unaddressed. Rehabilitation continued at the Protective Accommodation and Rehabilitation Centres (PARC), under the purview of the Commissioner General of Rehabilitation.[71] In the spring of 2009 IOM started a pilot project in Batticaloa aimed at assisting a thousand former TMVP cadres. The project is based on the IOM's Information, Counselling and Referral Service (ICRS). The Ministry of Defence refers former combatants that have turned themselves in to the program. The ICRS includes a detailed profiling of each former combatant's individual needs, referrals to appropriate training bodies or employers, financial assistance, tools and equipment, and advice on how to set up a small business (Gunasekera, P. 2010).[72] Former child combatants fall under a

[70] The framework would have been stronger if the ex-combatant's legal status had been clear. This is especially important upon the conclusion of the rehabilitation program, upon which the ex-combatant re-enters civilian life. At the time of publication of the framework however, the Attorney General's Office had not set it down. In terms of reconciliation and amnesty the framework suggests looking to Transitional Justice, international best practices as well as local standards (*National Framework* 2009: 10).

[71] A post-rehabilitation program on Reinsertion and Reintegration of Ex- Combatants proposed by Minister DEW Gunasekara, estimated to cost USD 14 million over a period of two years, has recently received Cabinet approval for implementation (November 4, 2010). PARCs have been established in the Northern and Eastern Provinces under this programme. The Ministry of Rehabilitation and Prison Reforms estimates that about 12,000 ex-combatants have been provided with rehabilitation programmes, consisting of education, catch-up education, vocational skills, information technology training etc. The UNDP has expressed its willingness to find the required financial resources for this post–rehabilitation program. The programme is to be implemented under the Medium Term Budgetary Framework in 2011 – 2013 ("Post Rehabilitation Program" 2010).

[72] The project is funded by USAID and the Netherlands, and is in essence based on a similar pilot project (Reclaim) that the organisation launched in Sri Lanka in 2003, aimed at 600 ex-combatants. The first group of ex-combatants formally completed the new program in the spring of 2010.

different action plan, supported by UNICEF and implemented by the Ministry of Justice and Law Reform.

The IOM pilot project had not been launched during the time of my fieldwork, although the PARC project was underway. Foreign agencies, apart from the IOM, were not allowed to visit the centres and there often seemed to be an uncertainty as to what exactly went on there. As a result donors were hesitant to support the program as they were uncertain what their money was going into. A few sources explained that once in the rehabilitation program things seemed to progress according to plan, although there was sometimes a lack of adequate funding.[73] The ex-combatants received job training or prepared for sitting exams. It was the process of turning themselves in that was described as the most risky, as once in the police station, they could easily 'disappear' or have an 'accident.' It wasn't until they were standing in front of the judge, who in turn instigates the rehabilitation process, that they were again secure. Considering these problems it remained puzzling as to why the *National Framework for Rehabilitation* had not been adopted, despite offering a guideline for a collective effort addressing many of these issues.

In informal interviews and conversations informants cited several reasons for this. First of all, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights formulated the framework but the mandate to implement it was with the Ministry of Justice.[74] Thus when the framework was brought before the cabinet it refused to recognise it.[75] The framework has been presented to the president directly and he presented it to the secretary, but that doesn't constitute an official stamp of approval and thus donors were reluctant to finance it. It was also suggested several times that a change in ministers caused the policy to be bumped off the list of priorities and as a result political pressure for its successful implementation ceased. It was suggested that personal ambition is a motivation for formulating and pushing for implementation of

[73] For example, a couple of local NGOs I spoke to said that they had been approached to work with the ex-combatants as counsellors, but there hadn't been any funds to cover their work. Independent organisations needed to come in with their own funding.

[74] The mandate to implement reintegration lay with the Ministry of Justice, however the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights is responsible for policy formulation and response, in cooperation with other government institutions, to natural as well as man-made disasters. The conflict is termed in the *National Framework* (2009: 1) as a man-made disaster of which the presence of ex-combatants is a direct result. At present the mandate is with the Ministry of Prison Reforms and Rehabilitation.

[75] Apparently the Ministry of Justice and Law Reform had not seen reason to adopt and present the framework.

policies. Implementing another minister's policy would effectively be earning another credit; time that could be better spent furthering one's own projects. This explanation tied in to other descriptions of policy as being the project of an individual and not an institutionalised process. The Minister of DMHR, Mahinda Samarasinghe, was in place from 2006 until the reshuffling of the cabinet in November 2010. If one looks at Minister Samarasinghe's career one sees that he has worked with the ILO, which assisted in the formulation of the framework, as well as the issue of rehabilitation itself.[76] Meanwhile the ministers of the ministries that needed to be involved changed, some several times over the same period.[77] It can be assumed that mustering support for such a framework would need the support and enthusiasm of representatives of all the ministries involved. A factor that is difficult to muster if one is constantly dealing with new people, perhaps especially for a project so closely associated with one individual.

The reasons stated here for the failure to adopt the *National Framework for Rehabilitation* were also mentioned when discussing other policies, or even when discussing policy in general. When analysing the data there were five interconnected points that came up repeatedly.

First of all interlocutors generally mentioned a lack of institutionalisation of policies. Policies were said to often be a project of a single person. If that person left or changed jobs, then the policy and all the work gone into the project went with them. Secondly, there were expressions of lack of information, between the government and the public for one, but also a lack of information flow and coordination between the different ministries responsible. Thirdly, an unclear division of labour was also cited as a reason for the failure of implementation, along with a

[76] Hon. Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe was minister of DMHR from 2006-2010. He had previously represented Sri Lanka in Geneva, among others at the ILO and at the International Labour Congress 1985-87. He was Minister of Employment and Labour in 2004-2006 and has served as co-chair of the Permanent Standing Committee on Human Rights in Sri Lanka, where Minister Samarasinghe worked in close cooperation with several UN Organisations. He furthermore set up an Inter-ministerial Committee on Human Rights that addressed issues pertaining to the rehabilitation of ex-combatants. As was stated in the framework it is based on work that began with a concept paper presented by the ILO in 2003 to the Ministry of Employment and Labour and built on a proposed reintegration project for ex-combatants presented by the Ministry of DMHR in the spring of 2006. It is therefore safe to assume that he was familiar with the ILO's work and aware of the concept paper, on a subject which he appears to have personal interest. He then carried that forward during his tenure as Minister of DMHR. Minister Samarasinghe is now Minister of Plantation.

[77] This would be the Ministry of Justice and Law Reforms and the Ministry of Prison Reforms and Rehabilitation in particular. The Ministry of Justice has seen four ministers between the years 2008-2010.

lacking control mechanism within the state structure. This can be seen in the following quotes:

> "There is so much overlap and so many ministries, so people feel insecure, there are no boundaries, and they don't want to step on anyone's toes, so the policies aren't carried forward. There is a lack of coordination, people don't believe that this kind of work can be done in a coordinated effect."
>
> (Interview November 2009)

> "The 13th amendment won't change this, as there is still such a duplication of structures. The central government goes from the top, which would be the president, all the way down to the *grama sevaka* [village headman]. The provincial council goes from the provincial level all the way down as well, there is a duplication of structures. And this also accounts for the lack of control mechanisms."
>
> (Interview December 2009)

> "The lack of implementation is in part due to the lack of a control mechanism […] Now it seems nothing happens without the direct order of the top person. The top person asks for something and all of a sudden the whole office will become like a post office with people running this way and that, but there are very few plans or projects carried out."
>
> (Interview December 2009)

Fourthly, the matter of bottom-up work, or a dialogue with the recipients of a project, was also, according to the majority of my interlocutors, lacking. Hence local ownership was not established and this supported a feeling of unease and suspicion, especially in Tamil dominated areas. As a few interlocutors explained:

> "Now there is this post-war scenario where people think, 'Oh, they are so devastated anything is a good thing', there is this beggars can't be choosers mentality. There is a huge disconnect, not only in the way that the people in Colombo experience things right now as opposed to the East and the North, but also because some people in Colombo sit and say 'Ah, there is no bridge

there, let's go build a bridge there', but perhaps the people there don't need a bridge, they need a well. How can you trust a person that tells you: 'You are getting this', there is no: 'Do you need this? What is it that you need?' [And then they say:] 'Now forget the past'? I don't think this is a good thing, telling people what they want, we are going the wrong way about it, this approach is the same as they have experienced before. In the south it is different because people feel that they are part of this government, but in the East we are trying to build a bridge. This will bite us in the ass in the end."

(Interview January 2010)

The fear of questioning the authorities also affected the dialogue:

"Policies are formulated and then there are the people. There is no one to mediate so the one that implements it can do as he likes, the people don't know if it is legitimate or not and are afraid to ask, in case their questioning might be interpreted as dissent and lead to prosecution."

(Interview November 2009)

Others described that if a decision was made at the political level to make a village plan, for example, it was expected to take place quickly and so not enough time was allotted to starting a dialogue or determining ownership. Although this sometimes led to "strange decisions," as one interlocutor put it, it was noted that this left considerable room for spontaneity and flexibility.

Finally, it was often pointed out that policies got stifled because of political 'power games.' A few interlocutors pointed out that this could also be because politicians, whether parliamentarians or local council members, might be unfamiliar with the policy process and its benefits, but added that political games could not be counted out. As one informant pointed out:

"We, for example, put together a policy about [-] and presented this to a couple of ministries. They both feel this falls under their scope and while they are both bickering about it the policy has been shelved. We presented it over a year ago. This is an issue they would never have been aware of if we hadn't formulated that policy, and now it is deadlocked because it is in a policy that has not been given due process. We have also experienced this. Sometimes

there is also a policy in place, and then they say 'Well, there is a policy in place about this, so there is nothing to do' even though that policy is faulty and incomplete. Sometimes policies just makes things more difficult."

(Interview December 2009)

Despite the limitations of policy in terms of implementation, the importance of having policies was never questioned. Policies were considered necessary in order to separate general goals from individual agency, in other words to institutionalise practice. It was also noted that policies were first and foremost put together in order to access funds otherwise inaccessible.

Once again, turning to Foucault's emphasis of power structures, it became important to ask what structures can/do policies support? And what do they threaten? Including people or even demanding participation requires a change in power relations, both in the community, at a state level, as well as within an organisation itself (Nelson & Wright 1995). Furthermore, political currency did not seem to be tied to the successful implementation of policies. Support is mustered in other ways, there is a different relationship in play. Whereas economic policies tend to give quick results and a tangible benefit; some policies don't give tangible benefits (to the implementer or his immediate surroundings) in which case there isn't much push to implement it.[78] Those policies are effectively failed.[79]

One informant pointed out, using Fundamental Rights cases as an example, how existing laws or policies can become useful, even at a later date as people use them to define themselves, their situation and their rights:

[78] One correspondent mentioned that the political disadvantage of Tamils, as a minority, has economic repercussions because jobs are not as open to Tamils as they are to Sinhalese (Interview SL November 2009). It is interesting to note that political power is directly associated with access to work. As I described in chapter 4.3, others have pointed to the tradition of patronage in which a political patron supplies supporters with favours, work or even housing, although in this instance the informant also refers to the general channelling of revenue to areas that have a Tamil majority. It is important to keep this connection in mind when talking of informal structures and networks. If completely separate, revenue and goodwill would be found outside of the official system, but that is not so, one has to enter the system for access to the goods. They are intertwined.

[79] Failure of a policy need not solely lie with the politician. One informant pointed to the role of bureaucrats as implementers. He argued that often politicians did want change, but that issues were stifled by bureaucrats who had links to other stakeholders (Interview November 2009). There are also power struggles within a state structure, and it should not be treated as a unified source of intention (Mosse 2004: 645, footnote 9).

> "An example is the Fundamental Rights cases, when it was first introduced we had our doubts that it would make any difference. And it didn't at first but then all of a sudden people were aware of it and used it in order to curve the impunity of the security forces. They were able to question the PTA, detainment for so long without the family knowing where they are or whether they've been detained at all."
>
> (Interview December 2009)

Although policies might have limited or sometimes unintended effects, they are not without influence when it comes to defining "subjects as political objects" (Shore & Wright 1997: 3). [80]

Despite the described lack of ownership and dialogue, three interlocutors in different places mentioned that when unpopular decisions were being put into action (such as forced relocation or lack of response by police to complaints), the reason cited was that it was an order from above, or an order from Colombo. Whether this was an excuse used by the people in question to avoid responsibility, this goes against the otherwise troubled relationship described between the central decision-making apparatus (government based in Colombo). When necessary the institutional hierarchy is used to fall back on – or, if in some cases the orders did in fact come from Colombo, it suggests a much more direct access of influence than the vague descriptions of policy would suggest. The system can therefore in some cases be described as decoupled, but I would argue that in the case of Sri Lanka, we are dealing with a decoupling that non-the-less intersects. So although gaps are created, they are not always used. The official system is used as well. There are cross-sections.

In the following chapter I will take a closer look at the informal structures that to a great extent drive actual outcomes, namely networks.

[80] Another comprehensive policy framework, also based on an inclusive process, that did not manage to get endorsed by the Cabinet was that of national integration. After the parliamentary elections the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs and National Integration was dismantled and the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration formed. There is now a policy for social integration underway.

5.3 Networking for action

The previous two chapters described the often tricky circumstances in which peacebuilding must take place and addressed the sense of decoupling that my informants described when it came to policy and action. This decoupling can be seen in both local strategies as well as international policies. So far the picture painted has been that of disintegration, the system didn't seem to be delivering. That is not entirely true, as I found out when I shifted my focus from the haphazard implementation of policies and started asking what it was that caused some policies to be implemented, others not at all and still others only partially. It follows that this must work for someone or in some respect, otherwise people would act differently and utilise policies differently. It is here that I wish to introduce the relevance of the network as a structure that aids, or even instigates, action. When looking for actual practice, I found networks. Networks presented avenues through which agents approached information, goods or influenced action.

I shall address networks from two angles in this chapter. First, as an example of the importance of networks, I shall introduce examples that came up in interviews and were noted during the fieldwork period. In the latter part of this chapter I shall then discuss more specifically the relevance to peacebuilding and development policy in particular.

5.3.1 Information, silences and safe spaces – creating and breaking the network

During the fieldwork direct references to networks came up in two out of three interviews. Networks can be made up of friendships or family ties, however, when using the term network here the focus is on the actual connections and the things that further them or break them, as well as the purpose they serve. Networks are furthered, strengthened and lengthened by objects, ideas and knowledge, as well as relationships between people. Institutions, objects and ideologies can just as well

be utilised to cut networks or weaken them.[81] Besides giving access to physical goods, there were references to networks when discussing trust, the question of space to act or speak, as well as access to information. These references were made with regard to networks outside as well as within the state structure.

Comments such as the following were not uncommon: "If I am not entirely sure about the person, I refrain from speaking at all" (Interview January 2010). Indicating that networks were especially important in an environment in which trust has been eroded. Others emphasised the importance of actively creating informal networks in an attempt both to create safe spaces for people to express themselves as well as connecting people to individuals that might be in a position to argue more effectively on their behalf when looking for missing relatives, for example. In such instances networks allowed people to quietly make inquiries without drawing unwanted attention to themselves. This was on several occasions recognised as a strategy for empowerment, for example in the following quotes:

> "We connect people, create space for people to get together, that is what we do. It is informal."
>
> (Interview November 2009)

> "In time, slowly, we can empower one another, low profile, we can connect people, then this will be OK in the end. They managed it in Argentina."
>
> (Interview October 2009)

Networks were also referred to in terms of security. That is to say, by utilising as well as creating links to as many people as possible, and preferably in different positions, was on occasion mentioned as a form of security in case one were for some reason apprehended. Then the likelihood of being found quickly was perceived to be greater, as the ear of a person with influence could perhaps be reached

[81] Although networks in general as well as patronage networks are presented as a rule for the analyzing anthropologist, they themselves encompass a level of uncertainty for the people involved. Just as Pierre Bourdieu (1977) pointed out when referring to the gift: If the law of reciprocity were to become mechanical, it would lose its value. One can not return a gift immediately for that would be taken as an insult, it would take on the form of swapping. Until the recipient repays in the form of a gift of similar value, a relationship is maintained between the two agents, as the recipient is expected at some point to return the gift. Similarly, although gift-swapping can be set forth as a rule by the social scientist, the temporal aspect leaves this as an irreversible act for those participating. There is in fact always a chance that the exchange fails (Bourdieu 1977: 6-10). This, in my view, also applies to the creation of networks.

faster. One informant signalled the importance of networks when asked about the role of policy:

> "In [-] we follow the policies, there is no problem there [-]. I had no trouble [working with both the Sri Lankan government as well as the Tamil militants], they knew me, I knew them and so they knew I'm not up to any trouble, so I had no problems."
>
> (Interview November 2009)

This informant, although dismissing my questions about decoupling, pointed out the importance of relationships in terms of space and security to work in what was at times a tense situation. One can argue that during the war networks were effectively cut by both the government, as a strategy of counter insurgency, as well as by the LTTE. The LTTE, apart from attacking Sri Lankan civilians through terrorist acts, actively targeted and assassinated influential Tamils that they felt posed a threat to their power (Höglund 2005: 163-165). The government used a variety of measures, among others utilising the Prevention of Terrorism Act that allows them to apprehend and hold a suspect without charges for up to 18 months, which effectively means that a person deemed influential in the wrong way can be isolated from a particular network. Disrupting the channelling of funds was another way to weaken the network. Threatening human rights advocates as well as the lives of journalists is yet another way of weakening some networks and strengthening others, as information is itself an object that can empower individuals within a certain network, while threatening another's monopoly of the "truth." As one informant remarked when asked about a case in which regulations seemed to have been sidestepped:

> "They [the government] are the only ones with the information and they use that information selectively. I'm sure that lawyers could get at the bottom of things, but no lawyer is going to step forward, they fear for their life, so the government has been very successful in that way, silencing."
>
> (Interview February 2010)

The lack of availability of information to the general public was also cited in an article published by *Transparency International Sri Lanka*. The reaction of government officials when asked by the authors for information on development programs in the East was apparently 'Why do you want to know?' In tandem with a

fear of superiors when addressing controversial issues this response added to a sense of secrecy and suspicion in the region (Bulatsinghala & Parakrama 2009: 72, 80-81). In Peru anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes described that the internal conflict experienced there since 1980 among other things led to a lack of trust and a lack of knowledge of what was really going on. Information in newspapers or television was questioned and things reported amongst people were seen as an interpretation, or simply what was convenient to believe at the time. This blurring of fiction and reality created a kind of hysteria, or paranoia, that functioned as a new form of social control, what she termed a type of human panopticon (Scheper-Hughes 2004: 182). Although distrust of published news and the authorities was expressed often during my fieldwork in Sri Lanka, and on a couple of occasions I was warned that certain individuals were reporting on people's activities back to the government, the activation of networks countered the sense of uncertainty.

The lack of access to information, especially when it comes to development projects, undermines accountability and increases the chance of corruption (Bulatsinghala & Parakrama 2009: 79). Staying focused here on the role of networks, corruption comes up when supporting informal networks through access to state or other resources surmounts the need to fulfil responsibilities toward constituents outside the network. While the patronage system in Sri Lanka, in which politicians through access to state resources are expected to deliver a level of welfare to their supporters by their supporters, has supported social development beyond what can be seen elsewhere in the region, it comes with a high susceptibility to corruption and opportunistic politics (Refslund Sørensen 2008: 103). Although the patronage system leaves considerable influence with the voter, it also affects the way in which politics and democracy itself is practised.

> "Non of these politicians ever start a dialogue, it is never about what we want for this country or the policies that he stands for. It is always what he is and what I'm not, and what the other guy is or isn't, so people think 'OK, he's OK, but I am more associated with that guy because he is a friend of so and so', so it is more based on these personal relationships than policies."
>
> (Interview December 2009)

In a context of uncertainty, and this has been found to be the case in various countries in Africa, in China and in Russia, having a personal relationship with public officials

or politicians provides a back-up through which, if the person in question finds him- or herself in need, they can use that connection to ensure funds that might otherwise be inaccessible to them (Kolstad et al. 2008: 25-26). The politician's power thus doesn't so much rest on implementing official policy as such, but on delivering to his supporters the level of welfare that they anticipated. As Jayadeva Uyangoda writes: "'Power', at least in this country [Sri Lanka], does not fall from the sky; it emanates from the State" (Uyangoda 2008: 113).

Uyangoda (2008: 113-115) addresses the effects of the patronage system on the functioning of the state when the element of violence has been introduced into the equation. He points out that thugs and gangsters were active during the religious riots at Kotahena in 1884, during the Sinhala-Muslim riots of 1915, as well as the riots of 1983. Although gangsters had been used throughout Sri Lanka's history to break up strikes and class protests, as well as intimidate political rivals and scare away voters, the summoning of such elements by the state is a more recent development. The link between politicians and such underworld figures represents a new patron-client type of network. As gangsters have gained access to modern weapons and on account of political ties were, especially during the war, able to act with a level of impunity, this arrangement constituted an underground network of quasi-state power whose actions run parallel to formal structures. Although these networks have ties with certain elements of the state their actions are independent of formal structures. The question then arises, when electing an official, what people are really being brought into a position of power? Furthermore, as political power means access to capital resources, losing an election would result in a dismantling of the patronage network between the politician in question and 'his' underworld figures. This entanglement of politics and underground networks means that the struggle to stay in power and protect this particular power structure is all the more fierce and violent, and could effectively make political settlements and bargaining peripheral as coercion and violence take centre stage.

What Uyangoda describes here is indicative of the mechanisms Strathern (2006) describes in which networks are lengthened or cut. Networks are in this case maintained through, and on account of, access to state resources. Peacebuilding policies that require accountability, for example, could if implemented be seen to threaten said networks and the decoupling that has effectively been created between the formal and informal structure. Not unless the individuals involved see a need to

cut the network, would it be in their interest to activate such policies. Policies can therefore be seen to be secondary to the informal structure of networks.

5.3.2 Networks in action

I am not the first to point out the importance of networks. In a recent article based on fieldwork in Sri Lanka in 2007 – 2009 Jonathan Goodhand (2010: 362) points out that long-standing relationships at an institutional as well as a personal level allow NGOs more room for manoeuvre, particularly at the local level, than an official situated elsewhere would expect. He argues that the aid community needs to find a middle ground between what he terms 'unprincipled engagement' and 'principled disengagement.' He is referring here to the apprehensions of a rights-based organisation that aims to practice impartiality, especially when dealing with a system that operates through informal networks. This dichotomy could however clarify the apparent hesitancy in the development literature in addressing the importance of informal networks for their work, although recognising their role in the local context. Although peacebuilding and developmental policy has been adapted to try and include those elements through a focus on locally owned initiatives or support for local power structures, the working of policy remains the same. Although it might give rise to new subjects and as a consequence lengthen some networks and cut others, it would become part of a localised social environment.

This is not only the case in post-war environments. Jens Steffek (2010: 45-46) argues that within international policy making, decisions are often made within close-knit networks. These networks commonly include public officials, but often they also include representatives of private bodies, and so the boundaries between public and private are blurred. Furthermore, these networks are based on peer relationships that are flexible and informal. However, they also invite exclusion and thereby make monitoring and participation of people outside of this network difficult. This makes the reasoning behind political decisions difficult to assess by people outside the actual process and raises questions of public accountability (Steffek 2010: 46).

When discussing policy issues several informants noted that in order for a politician to "really listen and take notice" there had to be a personal relationship there. This however was also noted to be true of implementation – actual practice:

> "There is a lot of networking and that is how a lot of good things get done, things happen because of networking, the same in government institutions. Good things happen because two guys create a good bond and decide that it will be beneficial for their offices to share information on certain things, for example, and that way they get certain things done."
>
> (Interview December 2009)

In fact it was noted that in policy formulation it is important to keep them flexible, so as not to negatively affect the informal structure, because: "…the informal sector works" (Interview December 2009).

Such statements made the emphasis of state-building within peacebuilding and development seem more relevant. It could be assumed that supporting state institutions to deliver on the services expected of them would mean that strong networks would be less likely to monopolize state resources. This point is supported in an article by Neil DeVotta (2000), in which he argues that the source of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka lies in institutional decay. DeVotta asks how Tamil groups went from trying to fight for equal rights within the Sri Lankan state, to begin looking for self-determination on what they termed their own soil, outside of the Sri Lankan polity? He argues that institutional decay was a major factor in that change. It is especially important in poly-ethnic societies that state institutions act, and are known to be, impartial in order to maintain legitimacy (DeVotta 2000: 57). This, he argues, has not been the case in Sri Lanka. As an example he points to the fact that the police force was admired as an impartial and disciplined force, even among Tamils in the North until the 1960s. In the 1977 riots they had to be encouraged to act, they were slow to intervene in the 1981 riots, but in the 1983 riots policemen were seen to take an active part in the violence or looking on as mere observers (DeVotta 2000: 66). DeVotta's account corresponds here to Richardson's observation of the evolvement of police networks with local political bosses in the late 1970s (Richardson 2005: 505-508). DeVotta furthermore suggests that the lack of patron-client networks between politicians and Tamils has in effect made the exclusion of Tamil concerns not only possible but often viable (DeVotta 2000: 60).

Efforts to encourage impartial state institutions is however not simple. In a DFID policy paper concerns of a similar nature are raised but in terms of Cambodia (DFID Emerging Policy Paper 2009: 9). Cambodia is mentioned as an example where, although the imposed political settlement is relatively stable, as there are no parties that can threaten the governing Cambodian People's Party, the uneven performance of expected functions of the state can undermine this peace. What is meant here is that expected functions, that are security, revenue and rule of law, are not equal over all because of an informal patronage system. Although the patronage system delivers certain things, it fails in others. The report mentions areas such as human rights as well as corruption. Furthermore, it mentions that disputes are solved through personal channels rather than through institutionalised mechanisms. Competition to capture anticipated rents from oil and gas may produce further problems. The policy paper points out that aid going to the state has not worked to solve this problem, rather it has strengthened the position of certain groups of elites. It also points out that aid for civil rights groups has been ineffectual or perhaps in insignificant amounts to make a difference. The paper suggests a cross-cutting approach that addresses democracy, accountability, political parties, media and so forth to address this problem.

Although these efforts could lead to changes, it is interesting to note that although informal networks are acknowledged they are not directly addressed. How do these networks operate, in what circumstances and when are they cut? These are pertinent questions when it is deduced that the workings of those same networks can be a threat to peace. The policy of supporting the state did not prevent aid from ending in the wrong pockets. When it came to it, policy influenced action but it got caught up in the workings of local social structures. Understanding the workings of informal networks in Sri Lanka becomes even more relevant considering that the government is using state resources, through the police and the armed forces, to create ties of patronage in the war affected areas (Goodhand 2010: 351). Rather than undertake state-building, the Sri Lankan government strengthens its position in the war affected areas by utilising informal avenues of influence.

Determining where links and disruptions occur between people and the 'system' gives clues as to the 'how and where' of hidden power structures and spheres of influence. Networks can also give clues as to spheres of resistance, as it was through networks that informants circumvented, and in some cases closed, the

‘gaps’ in the system. Networks are dynamic and, admittedly, often hard to draw up. Becoming enough of an ‘insider’ to see where and how they work will take time. Informal networks often appear in the unsaid, the implicit. Decoupling furthermore makes the task of ‘seeing’ practice more difficult, as it purposefully veils actual activity. Informal networks can however be tied into the official structure, through access to state resources for example. The network is therefore affected and even interspersed by a legal and administrative system. It is in the intersections of the official and unofficial that the workings of the network becomes more tangible.

Creating policy might affect some networks, lengthen or cut them, however policy will not dictate practice. To determine practice it is necessary to incorporate informal networks.

6. Conclusion

Upon looking into peacebuilding policy in Sri Lanka I was struck by the frequent dismissal of policy among my interlocutors. This resulted in further questions as it became apparent that some policies were being implemented, some only partially and others not at all. It was clear also that there was activity taking place, just not necessarily in the way in which policy dictated. There appeared to be a decoupling between the official structure and an informal 'shadow' structure (Meyer & Rowan 1977). Using a failed policy, *National Framework Proposal for the Reintegration of Ex-combatants into Civilian Life in Sri Lanka* (2009), reasons for what was described as a haphazard approach to policy implementation were approached. Despite the common statement heard in interviews that policy was irrelevant in terms of practice, the continued formulation of policies suggested that they served a purpose non-the-less.

Accepted policies, locally as well as internationally, can supply legitimacy and a coherent plan for action (Mosse 2004). They also inform the way in which subjects of policy articulate and think themselves; as internally displaced, as victim of violence, as ex-combatant. Policies can however also function as institutionalised myths and work to support the creation of gaps between the official structure and actual practice. This is not true only in cases in which state structures are weak. Policy works to create a comprehensive whole out of varying practices. Through the translation and composition of the different interests and practices that determine outcomes, into action that fits into the accepted policy framework, policy hides the actual mechanisms that take place but fall outside its scope.

Within peacebuilding there has recently been emphasis on the role of state-building, or improving the relationship between the state and society (Roland & Sisk 2007). There is emphasis on supporting a state structure that is responsive and supports the people and their needs, rather than bolster its own power. There has also been a call for an awareness of the local context and the context specific nature of each conflict and post-conflict situation. It has been denoted that development and peace have to be driven locally ("Principles for Good" 2007). Notwithstanding

changes within peacebuilding policy to address such issues, complaints about the lack of efficacy remain (Kolstad, Fritz & O'Neil 2008: 1-2). Despite emphasis on local drives, policy itself is not conducive to revealing the drives that fall outside its frameworks. In fact, it is the role which policy, as a phenomenon, plays in local social structures that needs attention.

Data collected through fieldwork in Sri Lanka suggests that the Sri Lankan state avoids the issue of state-building, choosing rather to focus on economic and infrastructure development and security capabilities. The policies implemented mirrored this emphasis. However, which policies were adopted and to what extent they were implemented also seemed to rest to a great extent on the workings of informal networks. Patron-client relationships, peer relationships and kinship informed action. As some networks were lengthened by access to resources, others were cut through the activation of laws or regulations. Networks were not only used in an effort of decoupling. In an atmosphere still marked by fear and distrust, networks were described as a route through which to influence action with minimum risk to oneself. Although violence was still used to maintain 'gaps' in the system, the activation of informal networks allowed people to circumvent such gaps and in some cases close them. It was in cases where such gaps were closed, if only momentarily, that the fluid nature of power was evident. This could for example be seen in the use of fundamental rights cases. Although the state had in effect decoupled its activities from official practices through the use of emergency regulations and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, when attempting to get relatives released, the activation of Fundamental Rights effectively offered a way in which to, at the very least, threaten that gap.

By looking at networks it was possible to trace the often obscure locus of actual practices. There are difficulties in approaching informal networks. In order to get a good understanding of how a particular set of networks operate will take time, especially if the agent is not part of them. Informal structures also appear in things implicit and coupled with their dynamic nature, the task of making them explicit can be tricky. Likewise, for an aid agency that wants to maintain impartiality, finding the balance between 'unprincipled engagement' and 'principled disengagement' can be a delicate venture (Goodhand 2010: 362). Non-the-less it is in the intersections of informal and formal structures that policies play out. Recognising the workings of policy and the role of informal structures can therefore inform much of the work that

is done in peacebuilding, as well as development in general.

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CFA	Ceasefire agreement
CPA	Centre for Policy Alternatives
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DMHR	(Ministry of) Disaster Management and Human Rights
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department
EPDP	Eelam People's Democratic Party
GA	Government Agent
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GSP+	Generalised System of Preferences (EU trade concessions)
HRC	Human Rights Commission
IC	international community
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICISS	International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
ICRS	Information, Counselling and Referral Services (IOM)
IDA	International Development Association (World Bank)
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front)
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NPC	National Peace Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAFFREL	People's Action for Free and Fair Elections
PARC	Protective Accommodation and Rehabilitation Centre

PTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SCOPP	Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLMM	Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission
TMVP	Tamileela Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (Tamil People's Liberation Tigers)
UN	United Nations
UNP	United National Party