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The '2002 Peace Process' In the Sri Lankan Media: Comparing Sinhalese, Tamil and English Editorial Discourse In the National Newspapers.

Being a dissertation submitted for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy at the University of Dublin.

Theodore Fernando

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Summary of Dissertation

This case study analyses how three widely read national daily newspapers in Sri Lanka presented and framed the origins and ongoing development of the Norwegian-sponsored 2002 "Peace process" between the Sri Lankan government and LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) during the sixteen-month time period of December 2001 to March 2003.

Chapter 1 provides a brief historical outline of the Sri Lankan conflict. It then highlights the research questions and objectives guiding this case study. One of the primary objectives of this case study was to undertake a combined quantitative content analysis (QCA) and ethnographic content analysis (ECA) of editorial coverage of the 2002 "peace process" by the *Daily News, Divaina,* and *Virakesari* from December 2001 to March 2003. Secondly, this research aimed to explain key features characterising this coverage in terms of the politico-cultural and media contexts within which it emerged. Thirdly, the research findings generated by this case study's analysis provide the theoretical framework for explorations of the extent to which the Sri Lankan media acted as a primary actor or stakeholder in the country's politico-military conflict and/or as a potential promoter of a culture of peace and reconciliation.

Chapter 2 and chapter 3 provide general overviews of the geo-political, economic and ethno-religious features characterising Sri Lankan history and present-day society. It also generates conclusions regarding the political, social and economic origins of the conflict In particular, it outlines how this ethno-nationalist conflict between the majority Sinhalese community and the minority Tamil community has manifested itself, both historically and contemporaneously, as a structurally-embedded and highly intractable conflict, which has been ongoing for almost twenty-five years, with considerable loss of life. Thus, these chapters are intended to provide the background information required to understand the historical and present-day politico-cultural environment within which the Sri Lankan media operate.

Chapter 4 undertakes a review of key examples of some of the more frequently employed theoretical perspectives that specifically assess the role of the media in covering politico-military conflicts. These perspectives include the media bias, propaganda and political-economy perspectives, on the one hand, and news organisation/production, social construction and frame perspectives, on the other hand. This literature review then concluded that a social construction perspective that accords centrality to the concept of news "frame", is crucial for understanding the processes and outcomes of newswork and, consequently, the roles adopted by different media within different national settings. Thus, this chapter concludes that the social construction perspective developed by William A. Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld supplies an appropriate methodological and theoretical framework for this case-study.

As part of a background analysis that contextualises the findings of this case study's newspaper frame analysis, chapter 6 analyses the historical and present-day ethno-nationalist and/or political orientations of the three newspapers analysed within this case-study. It was concluded that *Divaina* (Sinhalese newspaper) has historically

given more prominence to Sinhalese Buddhist views. Similarly, the *Daily News* (English language newspaper) also tends to favour majority Sinhalese perspectives and/or those promoted by the Sri Lankan state. In contrast, however, *Virakesari* (Tamil newspaper) has tended to promote "pan Tamilian" views. Moreover, because these ideological divisions are built upon divisive ethno-religious identities, creating a dual partisan-based media environment in Sri Lanka, this impacts upon political constructions and public perceptions of the conflict and its protagonists.

Chapter 5 outlines the methodological approach adopted by this case-study. At the outset, it was decided to undertake two types of newspaper content analysis – namely, quantitative content analysis and ethnographic content analysis. This combination of two different data analytic approaches is considered to be more comprehensive than relying on just one approach. It was also concluded that while quantitative forms of content analysis provide useful descriptions of the layout and topical features of editorials, a degree of ethnographic content analysis, such as frame analysis, is required to uncover the thematic and semantic features of editorials. It was also decided to confine this analysis to the editorial pages of the three selected newspapers, primarily because editorials are regarded as singularly important forums for the display of newspaper positions and discourses, as well as public constructions.

The application of Gamson's frame analytic model to this case study focused on generating findings from the following three questions: Firstly, could evidence of framing be found in the sampled newspaper editorials? If yes, what specific frames and media packages could be readily identified? Secondly, were the sampled editorial frames sponsored and packaged by identifiable competing interest groups/political actors? Thirdly, what differences, or similarities emerged in the framing trends displayed by these three newspapers' editorial discourses?

Chapter 7 presents the findings of this analysis, while Chapter 8 assesses the implications of these findings for future research. It was found that the sampled editorial discourses displayed considerable evidence of the presence of identifiable frames. However, there was no hard evidence to support the finding that these editorial frames were sponsored and packaged by competing interests, despite the fact that each newspaper displayed similar patterns of relying on official sources for quoted or mentioned viewpoints. Finally, each of the three newspapers adopted different patterns of displaying *peace and conflict resolution* frames, *law and order* frames, and/or *injustice and defiance* frames.

In fact, one of the key findings to have emerged from this analysis was that, although the editorial discourses of the *Daily News* and *Virakesari* tended to present a dovish attitude towards the 2002 "Peace Process", the Sinhalese newspaper *Divaina* tended to present a hawkish attitude. This finding then led to the conclusion that it is because the *Daily News* is the official news organ of the government in power that it ordinarily tends to support governmental or official viewpoints regarding the "peace process." On the other hand, *Virakesari* seemed to represent the viewpoints and interests of the minority Tamils, while *Divaina* accorded higher levels of representations of the hegemonic viewpoint that LTTE is not a genuine partner for peace and it should be crushed militarily.

The second key finding of this research was that the newspaper editorial discourses analyzed by this case-study were not interested in promoting Peace Process 2002, due to inherent news values of immediacy, drama, simplicity and ethnocentrism. For this reason, it is recommended that peace activists and others in Sri Lanka should pay greater attention to influencing the media, particularly since media frequently frame important issues and events in 'slanted' ways that are destructive for peace initiatives. This media "slanting" also tends to promote a status quo vision of society, by marginalizing and/or silencing alternative and contrary opinions. In particular, based on this thesis' findings, it is possible to surmise that mainstream media in Sri Lanka generally tend to commit structural violence against the minority Tamils, by portraying the conflict as purely ethnic.

These are significant findings as previous research concurs with the viewpoint that, if properly used, media can be key players in promoting peace, especially by encouraging the public to believe that a negotiated political solution, based on a peaceful and just end to the conflict, is a more preferable and viable alternative to military policies that resulted in costly conflict intensifications. With particular reference to the situation facing Sri Lanka, it is argued that a solution to the protracted ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has been delayed because the national press in Sri Lanka, more specifically the majority-oriented Sinhalese press, has not persuaded the general public that this conflict is an urgent political problem requiring immediate pro-active initiatives, that would aim to find a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict because of the crucial issue-construction roles performed by the media, they have a vital role to play in strengthening the response of civil society-based organizations to the conflict, particularly since many of these organizations have already been seriously diminished by intimidations and harassments from ultra nationalist groups.

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As I write this page, my thoughts go back to the Open University of Sri Lanka, where five years ago I started as a probationary lecturer in the Department of Social science. It was Mr. Mahim Mendis, the head of the Department, who suggested that I should do my doctoral studies if possible in the area of conflict and peace. The university system in Sri Lanka, he said, requires academics trained in such studies, in view of the need for a resolution of the protracted and bitter conflict in my country. To find funding, however, seemed a distant prospect. Moreover, I needed to find the right place for my research and, more importantly, to find a good supervisor who would instill confidence and at the same time challenge one to work hard. I feel gratitude to Divine Providence, because of the way things fall into place so opportunely.

I was fortunate to find an able supervisor in the person of Dr. Iain Atack. I have learned many things from him. More specifically I thank him for demonstrating non-verbally how to be a good supervisor of students. We had many fruitful meetings. Every time we met he urged me to write down a few more pages and bring them to him for our next meeting. By the end of the second year of my PhD candidacy, I was heartened to find myself with several draft chapters in my hands. I owe him a debt of gratitude. I thank him very much for his time and his valuable insights.

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Abbreviations

ANCL	Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited.
APC	All Party Conference.
BC	Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact.
CBM	Confidence Building Measures.
CFA	Ceasefire Agreement.
CP	Communist Party.
CWC	Ceylon Workers Congress.
ECA	Ethnographic Content Analysis.
EPDP	Eelam People's Democratic Party.
EPRLF	Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front.
EROS	Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students.
FP	Federal Party.
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka.
HSZ	High Security Zone.
ISGA	Interim Self-Governing Authority.
ITN	Independent Television Network.
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peremuna (People's Liberation Front).
JHU	Jathika Hela Urumaya (National Sinhala Heritage).
KAPS	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Survey.
LSSP	Lanka Sama Samaja Party.
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers).
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding.
MIRJE	Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality.
MSSV	Maubima Surakima Vyaparaya (Movement for the Protection of Motherland).
NMAT	National Movement Against Terrorism.
NGO	Non Government Organization.
PA	People's Alliance.
PLOTE	People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam.
PNM	Patriotic National Movement.
P-TOMS	Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure.
PR	Proportional Representation.
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.
QC	Quantitative Content Analysis.
RSF	Reporters Sans Frontiers.
S.C.	Senanayake-Chelvanayagam Pact.
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party.
SLMM	Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission.
SLMC	Sri Lanka Muslim Congress.
SLA	Sri Lankan Army.
SU	Sinhala Urumaya (Sinhala Heritage).
SVV	Sinhala Veera Vidhana (Sinhala Heroes Forum).
TNA	Tamil National Alliance.
TELO	Tamil Eelam Peoples Liberation Front.
TRO	Tamil Rehabilitation Organization.
TRRO	Tamil Refugees Rehabilitation Organization.

TUF	Tamil United Front.
TULF	Tamil United Liberation Front.
UNF	United National Front.
UNP	United National Party.
UPFA	United People's Freedom Alliance.
UPF	Upcountry People's Front.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

How can the conflict in Sri Lanka be brought to an end? This question seems to baffle not only the general public, but also students of conflict and peace. Sri Lanka's conflict, even after twenty-five years of civil war and unending humanitarian disasters, is not yet ripe for settlement. Why did previous peace efforts and, in particular, why did the more promising Sri Lankan 2002 Peace Process fail?

As stated by Uyangoda[1], Sinhalese nationalists as well as critics of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam give useful insights into how the LTTE was never interested in a negotiated settlement that they were only trying to gain unilateral advantage through the cease-fire and peace negotiations. On the other hand, the LTTE turns this argument around to accuse the government in Sri Lanka of not being seriously interested in a political settlement. According to Uyangoda, those who view Sri Lanka's world of conflict from a non-partisan perspective see another lost opportunity for peace through compromise. As will be further explained in chapter 3 of this thesis, a compromise has been a most difficult outcome in all the negotiations held in Sri Lanka so far in efforts to resolve the conflict with its camouflaged ethnic face.

[1] Jayadeva Uyangoda, "Sri Lanka: A 'Pragmatic' Peace Agenda, " in *Sri Lanka's Peace Process 2002* , eds. Jayadeva Uyangoda and Morina Perera, 1-12 (Colombo: Social Scientists' Association, 2003).

Assessing it from the perspective of a potential compromise, Rupesinghe[2] as well as Uyangoda[3] are of the opinion that the 2002 Peace Process, which is the main focus of this research, had a truly promising beginning. According to them, the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA), facilitated by the Norwegians, was a major compromise that froze military operations on the ground between the two sides.

Moreover, according to Uyangoda[4], one of the main reasons for non-compromise is the enduring incompatibility of the Sinhalese nationalist projects. He states that the dominant Sinhalese nationalist argument, which has regained ascendancy during the past few years, refuses to acknowledge the presence of an ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. It views the entire conflict as a mere terrorist problem, or even a minority conspiracy, a law- and-order problem that requires a military solution. As stated by Uyangoda this limited vision of Sinhalese nationalism is further matched by the secessionist objectives of Tamil nationalism as spearheaded by the LTTE.

1.2 A Brief History of the Conflict

As this thesis articulates, from Sri Lankan independence in 1948 to the ceasefire agreement of February 2002 the roots of the Sri Lankan conflict lay in the failure to realize the demands of the overwhelming Tamil minority in the north. They were marginalized and discriminated against in the post-independence situation which began with the official language policy of the government in power in 1956. In

---

[2] Kumar Rupesinghe, "Introduction: Evaluating the Peace Process," in *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures & Lessons* vol. 2, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, xiii-lxvii (Colombo: The Foundation for Co-Existence, 2006).
[3] Uyangoda, "Sri Lanka: A 'Pragmatic' Peace Agenda," 1-12.
[4] Jayedeva Uyangoda, ed., *Beyond the Talks: Towards Transformative Peace in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Marga Institute, 2001), 1-29.

addition, attempts made by Sri Lankan politicians to bring about a settlement of the conflict through constitutional means, that is by giving some form of devolution of power to the north, did not materialize due to public resistance and the pressure brought to bear on successive Sri Lankan governments. Terrorism was the indirect result of failed attempts to address the Tamil grievances by peaceful means.

Norway had not just emerged as a mediator from nowhere: the Scandinavian countries in general had been monitoring the conflict as well as promoting low-key peace initiatives from the very beginning, including establishing contacts with the LTTE. Norway had offered its services to bring the two parties together much earlier. Although the early contacts that Norway had established with the LTTE later led to the Sinhala nationalists accusing it of being on the side of the Tamils, it is correct to say that these contacts certainly contributed to the country being identified as an acceptable mediator. Along with The Netherlands and Canada, Norway had further dispatched representatives to serve on the proposed monitoring committees that were to be set up following the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, reached between President Kumaratunga and LTTE in 1995. It could be further said that Norway's formal role as a mediator emerged after several years of grass-roots level peace-building efforts by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups, but with limited success.

Once the mandate to facilitate the peace talks was given, Erik Solheim, the special envoy of the Norwegian government, engaged in exploratory visits comparable to pre-negotiations. These early efforts gathered momentum towards the end of 2001, when Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, who belonged to the

opposition United National Party, came into office. He had won the election on the platform of Peace. He wrote to the Prime Minister of Norway requesting him to continue his country's facilitation of the peace process. This was soon followed by a similar request from the chief of the LTTE. This led to talks between the two sides and the signing of a ceasefire document on 22 February 2002 which generated the most controversial media debate between the two groups who were for and against the peace process.

Frame analysis employed in this research traces both Sinhalese nationalism and Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism to the historical, cultural, religious discourse of the Island's past, adhered to by both ethnic groups and supported and upheld by the national media in Sri Lanka.

1.3 Research Objectives

As will be explained later in chapter 4, the Literature Review, and Chapter Five on Methodology, the objectives of this research are, firstly, to undertake a combined quantitative content (QCA) and Ethnographic content (ECA) analysis of editorial coverage of the Peace Process of February 2002 between the government and the LTTE, as conveyed editorially in the three most read national newspapers, *Daily News*, *Divaina*, and *Virakesari* during the period December 2001 to March 2003; secondly, to explain key features characterizing this coverage in terms of the contemporary politico-cultural context from which it emerged.

1.4 Research Methods

For the analysis of the editorials two types of analysis are used. As detailed in the chapter on methodology the first method is quantitative content analysis which is enumerative, involving the analysis of specific aspects of a large volume of media texts. The second is qualitative, which is a frame analysis that is more interpretative in orientation. As Devereux[5] explains, these two complimentary approaches to analysing media content are more suitable for discovering both their manifest (obvious) and latent (hidden) meanings in the written texts. As envisaged by Altheide[6] more importantly in the second method popularly known as frame analysis, the meaning of a message (an editorial) is assumed to be reflected in various models of information exchange, format, rhythm, and style.

1.5 Research Questions

To examine the role of media framing in the Norwegian initiated MoU and the Peace Process, this study will focus on three key research questions:

1. Can evidence of framing be found in newspaper editorials of the Norwegian initiated Peace Process 2002, based upon the presence of Gamson's framing devices?
2. What specific frames and media packages can be identified? Are the editorials sponsored and packaged by competing interest groups or political actors? Is

[5] Eoin Devereux, *Understanding the Media* (London: Sage, 2003), 120-123.
[6] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative Media Analysis, Qualitative Research Methods,* vol. 38 (London: Sage, 1996), 14-16.

the use of sources about the peace process in the three newspapers the same or different?

3. Do the "frames" vary between the same three newspapers?

1.6 Thesis Plan

In total, this thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter 2 which is entitled, "Sri Lanka's geography, historical context and background to the conflict", aims to provide, even to a first time reader who is not familiar with Sri Lanka, the background information, he/she needs to understand the geographical, cultural, political factors that make the conflict in Sri Lanka protracted. In addition it also gives the media landscape, the adult literacy rate and readership and viewership in Sri Lanka.

Under the title of Sri Lanka, Conflict and previous peace attempts, the purpose of chapter 3 is to provide insights into the previous peace efforts that have been tried out in different times of history in order to find an amicable solution to the country's national problem. This chapter further discusses how the LTTE came to represent the grievances of Sri Lanka Tamils living in the North and East of Sri Lanka.

Taking a social constructivist perspective, chapter 4, which is also under the literature review of this thesis, discusses the tremendous power the present day media has to construct the social reality for different audiences. After discussing the theoretical perspective of this thesis, chapter 4 also reviews some of the key works that are currently available about the conflict and media in Sri Lanka.

Chapter 5 outlines the methodology used in this research. In other words, it justifies the research topic chosen, the research period, research objectives, selection of editorials, research questions and the two types of content analysis, which are defined as quantitative content analysis (QCA) and ethnographic content analysis (ECA) which is also known as qualitative or frame analysis in this thesis. The signature matrix based on a coding protocol which consists of two rows indicates the condensational symbolic devices expressed in metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, which also reveals the protracted nature of the conflict.

Since the scrutiny of this thesis is media's role in conflict as well as peace, chapter 6 provides an extensive overview of the print media in Sri Lanka, making use of up-to-date literature currently available on the subject. It also traces the three main frames found in this research to the early history of Sri Lanka especially after the time of independence.

After a brief explanation of the research procedure, chapter 7 of this thesis discusses the findings. They are discussed under two parts. The first part discusses the lay out of the three newspapers, the length of the editorials, frequency of editorials, the main focus of editorial headings and editorial topics and the sources that are cited in the editorials of the three newspapers. In part two, which focuses on the frame analysis, attention is paid to discussing the meanings, emphasis, and themes of messages. The purpose is to understand the organization and process of how the meanings of the frames are presented.

With the title, case study findings and implications for future research, chapter 8 winds up this thesis. After presenting the key findings and their implications some down to earth positive suggestions are made to improve the negative media culture in Sri Lanka. Further it also speaks about the main contribution made in this thesis to the scientific knowledge.

Therefore, under the social constructivist umbrella, more specifically frame analysis, theories of the organizational structure of media, and using the "political contest model" of Wolfsfeld[7], this thesis explores the media as a major stakeholder not only in conflict, but also in promoting peace. This thesis further states that because of the media's strong influence on public opinion it can affect the management, resolution and transformation of domestic and international conflicts. In the preceding chapters, this thesis shows how the national media in Sri Lanka, all during the course of the conflict, has hindered and continues to undermine the efforts of policy makers to control and end the domestic crisis. The media in Sri Lanka has functioned as an autonomous, independent key player, and has readily allowed itself to be used as a tool in the hands of protagonists, negotiators and mediators not only to resolve, but to aggravate as well.

[7] Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and the Path to Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3-4.

CHAPTER 2

Sri Lanka's Geography, Historical Context and Background to the Conflict

2.1 Introduction

As previously stated, this thesis covers the 2002 Peace Process in Sri Lanka and how the three most popular national newspapers in Sri Lanka represented it editorially. This second chapter is intended to give the geographical and historical set up of Sri Lanka, along with the ethnic composition, the political system, the media landscape and the other relevant factors that may help one to understand Sri Lanka's protracted and 'ethnicized' conflict. In order to understand the historical and other factors that had driven Sri Lanka to be at odds with its two major ethnic groups: Sinhalese and Tamil, it is relevant to highlight 'indicators' or 'symptoms' cited by the Carnegie Commission[1] as 'states' or countries at risk. Accordingly, the Carnegie Commission gives the following indicators or conflict matrix as warning signs of countries with impending conflict or risks.

Demographic pressures: high infant mortality, rapid changes in population, including massive refugee movements, high population density, youth bulge, insufficient food or access to safe water, complications resulting from two or more ethnic groups sharing; being emotionally attached to the same land (territory) and needing to draw sustenance from the same physical ecosystem.

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[1] Alexander E. George and Jane E. Holt, *Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict* (New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1997), 1 - 151.

1. A lack of democratic practices: criminalisation or delegitimisation of the state, or human right violations.
2. Regimes of short duration.
3. Ethnic composition of the ruling elite differing from the population at large.
4. Deterioration or elimination of public services.
5. Sharp and severe economic distress: uneven economic development along ethnic lines and a lack of trade openness.
6. A legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievance.
7. Massive, chronic or sustained flight.

With these indicators as a background, let us turn to the geographical set up, ethnic composition and other relevant factors in Sri Lanka to find out whether some of these indicators, or symptoms, enumerated and identified in the above conflict matrix are found in Sri Lanka.

2.2 The Present Situation in Sri Lanka

The Democratic Social Republic of Sri Lanka, known formerly as Ceylon, especially before 1972, is a tropical island or 'paradise' in the Indian sub continent. Marco Polo called it 'undoubtedly the finest island of its size in the world'.[2] In recent years, however, Sri Lanka has undergone a drastic change especially in the eyes of the international community. To cite Watson and Gamage[3], in recent times, the romantic

[2] Edward Aves, *Footprint* (London: Bath, 2003), 43.
[3] I. B. Watson and Sri Gamage, "Introduction," in *Conflict and Community in Contemporary Sri Lanka " Pearl of the East" Or The "Island of Tears,"* vol. 3, *Studies on Contemporary South Asia*, ed. Sri Gamage and I. B. Watson, 1-5 (New Delhi: Sage, 1999).

image of the island, the "Pearl of the East' has been sullied: the jewel in the Indian Ocean has become a teardrop.

It has been almost twenty-five years since Sri Lanka first experienced an armed separatist challenge from the north and east of the country. To cite the scholars, the cost of the war has been enormous for both sides. It has been interpreted as one of the most paradigmatic social conflicts in recent times (Rupesinghe[4]). Over 60,000 people have been killed, thousands have disappeared, over 50,000 have been injured in battle and over 500 billion rupees have been spent on armaments in the last ten years. Furthermore, over a million refugees have been displaced. The cost to the economy has been incalculable resulting in the country reaching bankruptcy in 2001.

Scholars further hold that it was the crippling economic situation and several military setbacks which induced ruling elites to start negotiations. The present situation in which Sri Lanka finds itself can be explained by Goodhand[5] et al. who aptly state that, in spite of the (2002) ceasefire agreement and peace negotiations, the structural dimensions of the conflict within Sri Lanka remains relatively stable. Also though Sri Lanka lost approximately 30,000 lives, due to the Tsunami of 2004, as Goodhand[6] et al. state there has been no "seismic shift" in the "tectonic plates" underpinning conflict in Sri Lanka. As also stated by Fernando[7] the nature of the state which is unitary and heavily centralized, its political culture, the institutional

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[4] Kumar Rupesinghe, "Introduction, Evaluating the Peace Process," in *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures & Lessons* vol. 2, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, xiii-lxvii (Colombo: The Foundation for Co-Existence, 2006).

[5] Jonathan Goodhand, Bart Klem, Dilrukshi Fonseka, S.I. Keethaponcalan, and Shonali Sardesai, "Aid, Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka, 2000-2005, August 2005," http:// www.asiafoundation.org/ Locations/srilanka_publications.html.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Laksiri Fernando, "Ethnic Conflict and the State in Sri Lanka :A Possible Solution?," in *Conflict and Community in Contemporary Sri Lanka,* ed. Sri Gamage and I.B. Watson, 77-78 (London: Sage, 1999).

framework of policy, uneven development patterns and competing nationalisms - all remain largely unaffected by the Peace Process.

In many respects the "peace" that followed the signing of the Cease Fire Agreement has had the effect of freezing the structural impediments to conflict resolution. Further, according to Goodhand[8] et al. Sri Lanka's current situation may best be characterized as a "pause in the conflict" rather than "post conflict." They further state that in Sri Lanka there has been a shift from a "hurting stalemate" to a "plain stalemate." Therefore, a negative equilibrium has developed which is about managing the ceasefire rather than advancing the Peace Process.

With this short introduction of the present situation of Sri Lanka, we move into the next section, which deals with its economy, and its location, the necessary background which helps us to understand the present conflict in Sri Lanka.

2.3 Sri Lanka's Economy at the Time of Independence

Though at present Sri Lanka is considered one of the developing countries in South Asia, according to scholars, the economy of the newly independent Sri Lanka in 1948 was much more prosperous than most of its Asian neighbours. As Abeyratne[9] and Burton[10] note, a good regional comparison for assessing Sri Lanka's post-independence economic performance is Malaysia: a country that has been

[8] Goodhand *et al*, "Aid, Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka, 2000-2005, August 2005."
[9] Sirimal Abeyratne, "Economic Roots of Political Conflict: The Case of Sri Lanka," *The World Economy* 27 (2004):1295-1314.
[10] H. B. Bruton and Associates, *The Political Economy of Poverty, Equity and Growth: Sri Lanka and Malaysia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 232-298.

independent since 1957, and has much in common with Sri Lanka in terms of its economic social and cultural factors, ethnic composition and the inequalities between ethnic groups. What is interesting to note is, as Abeyratne documents, on gaining independence Malaysia also exhibited the symptoms of potential political conflict; particularly between the majority Malay and the minority Chinese communities, by the end of the 1960s. The affirmative actions of the Malay government in the 1970s were also based on economic disparities between ethnic groups and were aimed at upgrading the economic capabilities of the majority Malay community. Yet, as Abeyratne[11] points out, Malaysia was able to avoid the possibility of its potential ethnic conflict and achieved a sustainable growth momentum along with promoting employment and equity while Sri Lanka has failed to lessen its potential for political conflict.

2.4 Sri Lanka's Location, Population, Ethnic Origin, Ethnic Composition and the 'Ethnicization' of the Sinhalese

Sri Lanka is strategically located about 28 kilometres off the south eastern coast of India. As will be explained in later chapters, this close proximity to India has advantages as well as disadvantages for Sri Lanka. More precisely, Sri Lanka is located 7 degrees north of the equator, off the southern tip of India. Population density is highest in the south west in Colombo, where the island's main port and industrial centre is located. The net population growth is about 1.2% and its people are diverse ethnically, linguistically and religiously. The island is 272 miles long (438 kilometres) 140 miles (225 kilometres) wide at its broadest point. Sri Lanka is relatively smaller

[11] Abeyratne, "Economic Roots of Political Conflict: The Case of Sri Lanka," 1295-1314.

than Ireland, and from the American or the western point of view, slightly larger than the American state of West Virginia. The Climate is tropical with perspiring humidity and year round temperatures averaging 80F to 83F.

The island had an estimated population of 19.5 million in 2002. With regard to its population, Sri Lanka owes its early origin to successive waves of immigrants, probably from two different regions of India. The fact that the Sinhalese make up 74 percent of the population makes them the majority ethnic group on the island, and most probably they arrived from Northern India near Bengal, late in the 6th century BC. The Ceylon Tamils (as they are known in order to distinguish them from Indian Tamils) make up the other 13 percent, which makes them the second major ethnic group on the island. Their South Indian ancestors have lived in the island for centuries; they live mostly in the north and east coastal regions, particularly in the main cities, like Jaffna and Batticoloa.

According to Jayawardena[12], in the 12th and 13th centuries certain special developments in Sri Lanka determined its ethnic demography in a decisive way with effects that have continued to the present. She further holds that when the hydraulic economy and civilization that had flourished in the north-central plains came to an end; the Sinhala people migrated to the rain fed areas in the central and south-western regions of the island. The north-central plains reverted to jungle with a few scattered villages. With little control from the Sinhala kingdom, the Tamil people became concentrated in the northern and eastern coastal regions that were closest to that part

[12] Kumari Jayawardena, "Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka and Regional Security : The Beginning of the Ethnic Conflict, " tamilnation,org/conflictresolution/tamileelam/87kumari.htm-71k.

of the Indian mainland also populated by Tamil-speaking people. Eventually Tamils of the northern region established the Jaffna Kingdom at the end of the 13th century.

According to De Silva[13] there is always a potential base for secessionist movements where an ethnic minority is concentrated in a particular region of a country and constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population in that region. However, Kohobanwickrema[14] says that population estimates indicate that the Sri Lanka Tamil population has dropped to a little under 11 percent of the population at present. This is based on the census of 2001 carried out after an interval of 20 years. However, it should be mentioned that the census was not conducted in most of the northeast province due to the unstable situation there. One of the salient points brought out by the 2001 census, according to Kohobanwickrame,[15] is the intermingling of the Sri Lankan population in Colombo the capital, located in the southwest of the country, which registers a Sinhalese population of only 41 percent, the majority being from Tamil speaking communities. Further, citing the 2001 Census, he says 52.38% of Tamils live outside the North and East Provinces of Sri Lanka. What is important to note is that this new development might challenge one of the beliefs held by Tamil nationalists from the beginning of the peace talks that the northeast was a traditional homeland of the Tamils. Indian Tamils form 6 percent of the population and 7.1 percent are Muslim. History, language, culture and religion have combined to provide each of these groups with a separate identity and a distinct role in the island's political life.

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[13] Kingsley M. De Silva, *Sri Lanka: Problems of Governance* (Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1993a), 3-41.
[14] S. Kohobanwickrama, "A Lost Referendum: As 52.38% of Tamils Live Outside the N and E Provinces," *The Island*, December 15, 2001.
[15] *Ibid.*

Whether Sinhalese or Tamils first arrived from India or when they arrived is a bone of contention today, mainly due to the rivalry between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Scholars are of the opinion, that by the 13th century, a substantial Tamil community lived on the island, especially in the North, and also that many Tamil-speaking fishing communities lived elsewhere along the coastline of the island. "From archaeological and historical records, it is evident that both Sinhalese and Tamil peoples have ancient roots in the island, and it is difficult to say which group came first"[16]. However, if a person were to interpret or reconstruct recorded history written by monks in *Mahavanse* or *Depavanse*, they would get a completely different picture. Sri Lankan historian K.M. de Silva, notes that the "historical mythology of the Sinhalese is the basis of their conception of themselves as the chosen guardian of Buddhism."[17] Mahavanse is a basic Pali chronicle of the Sinhalese, where the Island's history has been orally passed on by successive generations of Buddhist monks. '*Mahavanse*' literally means 'great dynasty' or 'lineage'. According to Silva it probably goes back to the sixth century, but could also be much more recent. "Deepavanse" literally means the 'history of the island'. Both texts are verse compositions in Pali, the Buddhist scriptural language, written by a monk named Mahanama (literally 'great name'), and are not according to an historical tradition, but to "evoke a sense of joy and an emotion of piety." Moreover, these texts were written from the perspective of a Sinhala Buddhist praising and glorifying especially the Sinhalese kings over the Tamil kings. Sinhalese kings are portrayed as protectors and saviours of the Sinhalese, while Tamil Kings are portrayed as invaders, vandals, marauders, and heathens.

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[16] Partha S. Ghosh, *Ethnicity Versus Nationalism, the Devolution Discourse in Sri Lanka* (London: Sage, 2003), 34-35.
[17] De Silva, *Sri Lanka: Problems of Governance*, 3-41.

According to Fernando[18] it is clear that the Sinhalese ethnic and cultural integration took place with a degree of coercion and suppression of the Tamils' religion and culture. He cites Kiribamune[19] when relating the fable of king Duthgamunu's military campaign to unite the country; the *Mahavamse,* written in the sixth century, states that the Tamils were slain in large numbers and they were likened to beasts. Therefore, Fernando[20] states, racism in Sri Lanka cannot be of completely modern origin. The roots of racism were present in the early history of the island in the attitudes adopted towards the indigenous inhabitants and the Tamils. It is equally possible, according to Fernando that similar attitudes prevailed among the Tamils towards the Sinhalese and others.

As will be explained in the chapter on the print media in Sri Lanka, the danger is that these chronicles and their narratives have been relied upon by some historians, as if they were scientific history. The early history of the island has been reconstructed according to this mythology; and has been retold, reshaped, reinforced and instilled by Sri Lanka's electronic and print media; especially in historical and literary works. It has also been repeated and reinforced in Buddhist rituals and festivals, and in political meetings, in order to awaken a nationalistic consciousness that favours the Sinhalese Buddhists. To cite Walter Schwarz[21] "the most important effect of the early history on the minority problem of today is not in the facts, but in the myths that surround them, particularly on the Sinhalese side." Accordingly, Mahavamse holds that the Sinhala race originated in the island with the arrival of Vijaya, the legendary founder of Sri Lanka and of the Sinhala race, and his 700

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[18] Fernando, *Ethnic Conflict and the State in Sri Lanka: A Possible Solution?*, 77-78.
[19] S. Kiribamune, "Tamils in Ancient and Medieval Sri Lanka," *Ethnic Studies Report* 4, 1 (1986):6.
[20] Fernando, *Ethnic Conflict and the State in Sri Lanka: A Possible Solution?*,77-78.
[21] Walter Schwarz, *The Tamils of Sri Lanka: Minority Rights Group Report No 25* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1983), 16.

companions sometime in the 5th century BC. The Mahavamse continues its narration of history up to the king Mahasena who died in the year 303 AD. History is continued in Chulavamse, a literally small dynasty or lineage, which gives a full account of the medieval history of the island. What is important to note is that Buddhist monks made all these compilations, and inevitably have left on them the marks of their sectarian shade. K.M. de Silva, who was Professor of History at the University of Sri Lanka, says:

> Both legend and linguistic evidence indicate that the Sinhalese were a people of Aryan origin who came to the island from North India about 500 BC. The exact location of their original home in India cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. The founding of the Sinhalese is treated in elaborate detail in the Mahavamse with great emphasis on the arrival of Vijaya (the legendary founding father of the Sinhalese) and his band in the island.[22]

Inspired and rejuvenated by this and similar types of legend, the Sinhalese claim that they themselves are the first settlers in Sri Lanka born of Aryan origin. It was also not uncommon, therefore, immediately after independence and especially in 1950s to pick up many newspapers and journals published in Sri Lanka and to read articles written by politicians or other leading Buddhists that used catchphrases, or certain metaphors, referring to Sri Lanka as the "Dwipa", island of the "Dharma", religion "Dharmadwipiya", religious island, and a slogan based on the ideology of Mahavamse.

Buddhism came to the island in the third century B.C and became an integral part of Sinhalese culture. As De Silva[23] writes, Sri Lanka became 'the island of the Dhamma' (Dhammadeepa), a place of special sanctity for Buddhism. This

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[22] K. M. De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in a Multiethnic Society* (Lanham, University Press of America,1986), 9.
[23] De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in a Multiethnic Society,* 9.

observation, further affirmed by Sabaratnam[24] who says that the tradition of Dhammadeepa, comprises the central thread running through the centuries of Sinhalese Buddhism. Sabaratnam also calls it a nuclear metaphor because of its centrality to ethnic sensibilities in pre-modern times and this word also further images the island as the locus of Buddhist doctrine. According to Richardson[25], the Sinhalese identity, Buddhism and 'the island of the Sinhalese people' which later became (Sinhadipa) remain inextricably linked in Sinhalese traditions, even though some Sinhalese are Christians.

Richardson further observes that for many Sinhalese, Sri Lankan 'national identity' is part of this mix as well. Therefore, this new aspect makes defining a national identity that embraces non-Sinhalese Sri Lankan citizens more difficult. The most prominent view of the national past in modern Sri Lanka is that held by the majority Sinhalese population, who have exercised an ever-tighter control over national government since Independence.

According to this view, the Buddha himself entrusted the island's destiny to the Sinhala people as guardians of his teaching. Spencer[26] states that this view is insistently proclaimed in the press, in the speeches of politicians, and in schoolbooks and also history lessons. To cite Jayawardhana,[27] it is the Sinhalese-Buddhist consciousness that has given rise to a denial of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious

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[24] Laksmanan Sabaratnan, *Ethnic Attachment in Sri Lanka: Social Change and Cultural Continuity* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 15.
[25] John Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned: Learning About Conflict, Terrorism and Development from Sri Lanka's Civil Wars* (Kandy: The International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 2005), 24-26.
[26] Jonathan Spencer, "Introduction: the power of the past," in *Sri Lanka: History and Roots of Conflict*, ed. Jonathan Spencer,1-16 (London: Routledge, 1990).
[27] Kumari Jayawardena, *The Rise of the Labor Movement in Ceylon* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1972), 382.

character of Sri Lankan society and to a refusal to accept the collective rights of other minority groups. In addition to its revered status in Theravada Buddhist beliefs, the island is also the only home of the Sinhalese race. Therefore, as the Sinhalese are a majority on their island, they are also, as De Silva[28] notes, a majority with a minority complex.

After explaining the origin of the early descendents of Sri Lanka and the hallmarks of Sinhalese who call themselves Buddhists, it is correct to say at this point, that Ceylon Tamils are in some ways distinctly different, culturally and politically, from the Sinhalese. In the remote past, the relations between these ethnic groups have been some times both tense and complex, and at other times peaceful and warlike, as evidenced by intrusions into each other's territory. In the past, there were times when Sinhalese rulers governed the North and times when Tamil rulers governed the South where the Sinhalese normally lived.

Also at an ideological level, the response to previously indicated Sinhala chauvinism was the emergence of Tamil chauvinism and extreme forms of nationalist myth making. Jayawardhana, (citing Coomaraswamy[29]) says that these myths include the myth that the Tamils are pure Dravidian by race, that they are heirs to the Mohenjadaro and Harappa civilizations of India, that they are the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka, and that the Tamil language in its purest forms is spoken only in Sri Lanka and that the "Saiva Siddhanta" form of Hinduism has 'a special homeland' in Sri Lanka.

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[28] De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in a Multiethnic Society*, 361-368.

[29] Radhika Coomaraswamy, " Myths without Conscience: Tamil and Sinhalese Nationalistic Writings of 1980," in *Facets of Ethnicity in Sri Lanka*, ed. Charles Abeysekara and Newton Gunasinghe, 272-297 (Colombo: The Social Scientists Association, 1987).

Sinhalese and the Tamils share many parallel features of "tradition, caste, kingship, popular culture, religious cults and customs and so on. But they have come to be divided by their mythic charters and tendentious historical understandings of the past. Quoting Gananath Obeyesekere, Professor Tambiah[30] says that, if it were possible to trace the present day Sinhalese population's ancestry far enough, all lines in major part lead to South India. Obeyesekere further says that biologically those whom we call Sinhala are in fact racially inter-mixed with South Indian peoples and with aboriginal groups like Vedda and the Tamils who live in the north and the east are also similarly biologically mixed.

2.5 The Indian Tamils

As already indicated, Indian Tamils are an ethnic group distinct from the Ceylon Tamils, who constitute about 6 percent of the population. However, citing the 2001 Census, Kohobanwickrame[31] says that at present they form only 4.65% of the total population. They were brought to Sri Lanka by the British in the 19th century to work as labourers in the tea and rubber plantations, because the British could not obtain enough native manpower to work in their plantations. Richardson is of the opinion that Indian Tamils began to migrate from South India to Sri Lanka in the second half of the nineteenth century when infestations of leaf fungus and failing markets caused Sri Lanka's coffee plantations to be replanted as tea and to a much lesser extent, as rubber. In contrast to the Ceylon Tamils, who live predominantly in the North and the East coast of the island, the Indian Tamils live in the highlands,

[30] Stanley Jayaraja Tambiah, *Sri Lanka: Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), 6.
[31] Kohobanwickrama, "A Lost Referendum: As 52.38% of Tamils Live Outside the N and E Provinces."

especially in cosmopolitan cities like Kandy, Nuera Eliaya, Badulla and Bandarawela. According to De Silva[32], though formerly marginalised, Indian Tamils appear to have found a more secure place in the Sri Lankan social and political order than the Sri Lankan Tamils.

However, Goodhand[33] et al. state that due to the radicalization in the upcountry Tamils in the past twenty years, there has been a discernable radicalization of hill country politics. The emergence of the Upcountry People's Front (UPF) is the clearest manifestation of this process. Although the UPF has expressed sympathy with the Eelam struggle, the hill country remains largely detached from the Peace Process.

The combination of structural disadvantages, a growing sense of grievance, a political vanguard (educated youth), and a strong set of political demands (through the UPF), may become a combustible cocktail in the future. Although north-eastern and hill country grievances arise from similar background conditions, the political linkage between the two struggles has never been strong. Various Tamil politicians, as well as the LTTE, have acknowledged the hardship of the upcountry Tamils, e.g. the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact and the Thimpu talks. However, this was never a "bottom line" issue, and the Sri Lankan Tamils' relationship to estate workers has more often been characterized by paternalism than by solidarity.

The plantation workers were historically represented by a number of trade unions and one political party, the Ceylon Worker's Congress (CWC). Though the CWC was part of the Tamil United Front and undersigned the (1976) Vaddukoddai

[32] De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in a Multiethnic Society*, 368.
[33] Goodhand *et al*, "Aid, Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka."

Resolution, the party by and large confined itself to citizenship and welfare issues and a pragmatic strategy of allying to either the UNP or the SLFP, the two main political parties in Sri lanka.. Since its departure from the TUF (Tamil United Front), the CWC as a political party has maintained a foot in government for most of the time. As stated by Rampton and WeliKala[34], The party continued to advocate north-eastern autonomy, though it resisted becoming a political proxy for the LTTE, so as not to jeopardize its position in parliament or government. The Colombo establishment was conscious of the potential for the ethnic conflict to spread to the hills, and also in India's interest in the welfare of the upcountry Tamils. This gave the CWC some leverage and helped it improve living conditions in the plantation sector. Although there were improvements in terms of legal status and socio-economic welfare of many upcountry Tamils, educated but unemployed youth in particular, increasingly questioned the pragmatic trade unionist agenda of the CWC. This led to a split in the CWC and the formation of the Upcountry People's Front (UPF) in 1989. After a slow start, the UPF has grown steadily and has managed to retain one seat in parliament over the past decade.

2.6 Other Minorities and Muslims

Other minorities include Muslims (both Moors and Malays), as they comprise about 7 percent of the population. There are also a few Burghers whose ancestors are Portuguese, Dutch or British and who were colonists in the island for 450 years. Like the Indian Tamils, members of Sri Lanka's Muslim community have largely avoided direct confrontation with pro-Sinhalese political agendas. Moors usually speak Tamil

[34] David Rampton and Asanga Welikala, "The Politics of the South: Part of the Sri Lanka Strategic Assessment 2005 " http:// www.asiafoundation.org/Locations/srilanka_publications.html.

but many speak Sinhala as well, and some use it as their primary language. K.M de Silva[35] labels Muslim leaders' political strategy 'pragmatic adaptation'. Characteristics of the Muslim community, that distinguish it sharply from the Sri Lanka Tamils, have made this strategy necessary and contributed to its effectiveness. Unlike the Tamils, Muslims are distributed geographically throughout the island. However, in all but the Eastern Province districts of Trincomalee and Ampara they make up less than 10 per cent of the population. Only in Ampara are they the largest ethnic group, with nearly 42 per cent of the population. However, from the year 2000 onwards, Sri Lankan Muslims have also been included under the groups of the minorities -at-risk study by Deepa Khosal.[36]

Furthermore, according to this study, Sri Lankan Muslims have been politically active since the 1980s. As already indicated, over a third of the country's Muslims reside in the north and east of Sri Lanka, where the Tamil rebel group, the LTTE, has been waging a violent twenty-year campaign for independence. Since the mid-1980s the Muslims, who primarily speak Tamil, have been drawn into the Tamil conflict as targets of violent attacks by the Tamil rebels. Hundreds of Muslims have been killed, and over one hundred thousand have fled from northern areas. Politically the Muslims are seeking a separate regional council in the east to protect their interests and identity.

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[35] De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in a Multiethnic Society*, 115-123.
[36] Deepa Khosal, *Additional Groups for the Minorities at Risk Study in the New Century* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000), Appendix C. 311-320.

2.7 The Languages Spoken in Sri Lanka

Sinhala, also called "Sinhalese," is the language of the Sinhalese. It is an Indo-European language with North Indian affinities which the North Indian migrants have used since the 5th century BC; however, with the passing of time, its development has been deviating from the original Sanskrit. The spoken language has undergone several changes and has absorbed words from the indigenous races, including Tamil. Jayawardhena, quoting Gunawardena,[37] says that the term 'Sinhala' was first used to indicate the royal family of the island, then extended to cover the royal retinue, and then further extended to include the people. This social process, dating from about the 6th century AD is at the same time a process of the ethnic consolidation of the people.

Tamil, the language of the Tamils, is also one of South Asia's oldest languages and belongs to the Dravidian language family, originating in the Indian mainland.

2.8 Religions in Sri Lanka

Regarding religion, most Sinhalese are Buddhist, while most Tamils are Hindus. Most Muslims practice Sunni Islam, while some Tamils, both Ceylonese and Indian, practice Christianity. In terms of percentages, out of the total population, 69.3 per cent are Buddhists, 15.5 per cent are Hindus, 7.5 percent are Muslims and 7.6 per cent are Christians. Others form about 0.1 per cent of the population.

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[37] R. A. L. H. Gunawardena, *The People of the Lion' Sinhala Consciousness in History and Histography* (Colombo: Social Scientist Association, 1985), 55-107.

2.9 The Adult Literacy Rate

The country's total adult literacy rate exceeds 97 per cent. The female adult literacy rate is 95 per cent and male adult rate is 97 per cent. These statistics make Sri Lanka one of the literacy success stories in the whole of South Asia.

2.10 The Political System and Political Parties

Sri Lanka gained Independence from Britain on 4th February 1948 and became a republic on 22nd May 1972. On 16th August of that year the country adopted its present constitution, under which the executive power shifted from the prime minister to a president, who is elected directly by the people. Since independence, Sri Lanka has also practised parliamentary democracy with power shifting periodically between the two major political parties: the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and their allies. The UNP had held power from independence to 1956, from 1965 to 1970, and from 1977 to 1994, while the SLFP- dominated left-wing coalitions had held power at other times.

By the late 1980s, three types of parties could be defined on the basis of ethnicity: the Sinhalese-backed parties including Marxist-based parties such as Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna People's Liberation Front (JVP) and the Communist Party (CP). The Tamil Party system composed of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) an 'umbrella party' formed in the 1970s which included the Federal Party formed in 1949 and other minority–oriented parties such as the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) which enjoys the support of the Indian Tamils,

and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC). It should be also indicated that two Sinhalese youth insurrections: the Maoist Janatha Vimukthi Paramuna (Peoples' Liberation Front) of 1971 and 1987-89- and the continuing LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) are the major conflicts that have marred the country's history.

According to Goodhand[38] et al. there have been some positive trends in recent years, partly due to the restraining influence of the proportional representation (PR) system, on the nationalist politics of the South. It has acted as a brake on the historic processes of ethnic outbidding and contributed to both mainstream parties' greater willingness to explore a negotiated settlement when in power. However, as this latest round of peace talks shows, it has not produced the stability and longevity of government required to move from a cessation of hostilities to a peace settlement. Perversely, PR has produced more moderate mainstream parties, while encouraging more communalist minority parties. A political settlement requires state reform and thus constitutional change, but achieving the necessary two-thirds majority in parliament is less likely under the PR system.

In 2004 the electoral alliance between the People's Alliance (including SLFP and a number of minor parties) and the JVP formed the UPFA (United People's Freedom Alliance) and came to power in the snap elections in April 2004. The Tamil National Alliance (TNA), a coalition of the former TULF politicians under the direction of the LTTE, won 20 seats in the north-east. According to Deshapriya[39] this is a significant new political formation that has emerged from the elections of 2001 to 2004. (Another significant occurrence was the winning of nine electoral seats by

[38] Goodhand *et al*, "Aid, Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka."
[39] Sunanda Deshapriya, "A Study of Media in Sri Lanka (Excluding the North and East)" http://www.i-m-s.dk/Media/PDF/CPA%20South%20Survey%20FINAL%20(May2005).

Buddhist monks who contested under the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU - National Sinhala Heritage). What is important to note is that this is the first time in Sri Lanka's history, that a political party fielded a list of candidates consisting only of Buddhist monks.

Further, as stated by Jonathan Goodhand[40] et al. in recent times a wide range of hybrid organizations have emerged that incorporate non-religious actors as well as individual monks. This includes civil society groups like the Jathika Sangha Sammelanaya, the Jathika Bhikshu Peramuna, and the National Patriotic Movement, which bring together the JVP, Buddhist monks, and other societal leaders. These organizations have taken a political platform alongside the Sangha and may have a major influence on popular thinking and political activism. Like other activist forces in Sri Lanka, these movements have a strong youth component that is critical of the senior Buddhist leadership.

A number of Buddhist political parties have also emerged, but so far have been less influential than the Sinhala political parties that have incorporated Buddhist elements. Although all main parties maintain the demarcation between state and religion, the UNP, the SLFP and the JVP could not afford to ignore the "special" Buddhist dimension of society and politics.

As stated by Jonathan Goodhand[41] et al. Perhaps the most significant change in the recent political landscape of the South has been the emergence of the JVP as a political force. The JVP have picked up the baton of Sinhala nationalism, dropped at

[40] Goodhand *et al*, "Aid, Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka."
[41] *Ibid.*

least temporarily by the SLFP and UNP. Both the JVP and Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) benefited from and mobilized themselves around anxieties in the South generated by Peace Process 2002, and UNF government policies: namely, unpopular macro economic reforms, concerns about LTTE appeasement, and a perception that the Peace Process had become "over internationalized." The fact that the JVP have entered mainstream politics is a positive development, but their role in relation to peace negotiations and Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure has been to check movement toward federalism.

2.11 The Media in Sri Lanka

The state controlled Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited (ANCL or Lake House because of its location by the Beira Lake) is the biggest newspaper establishment in the country with approximately 20 publications in the three main languages. It has the broadest outreach in terms of distribution networks and benefits extensively from state advertising. The state also controls the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (radio), the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (television) and the ITN radio and television network, that is, ten radio channels and three television channels along with five regional radio stations.

As will be explained in a later chapter, the media in Sri Lanka is divided along ethnic lines, identifying with political movements and agendas that promote individual religious identities, a trend that goes back to colonial times.

2.12 Media Owned by the Private Sector

Seven large private establishments print a number of daily newspapers in all three languages. In addition there are a number of private establishments that publish several weekend newspapers. Although radio and television were a government monopoly up to the mid-1980s, several privately owned television and radio stations have now been established. The private sector owns four TV stations with seven channels, and four radio stations with twelve. However, what is important to note is that the transmission capacity and reach of the private stations still remain far more limited than that of the state-owned electronic media. Therefore, according to Deshpriya,[42] the state owned electronic media, both radio and television, remain the electronic media with the widest reach to approximately 95% of the country.

2.13 Readership and Viewership

According to a more recent assessment, the Knowledge Attitude survey[43] (KAPS) conducted by Social Indicator (2003), television is the principal source of news for 57 per cent of the population, followed by newspaper at 18 per cent, radio at 18 per cent and other sources at less than 10 per cent. It is important to note that this survey does not cover the war zone, the north or the east of Sri Lanka, due to inability of access. The survey further says that levels of interest in politics are highest among newspaper readers, with 60.7 per cent showing high interest or some interest, followed by radio listeners 48.2 per cent. Television viewers show the lowest level of interest in politics 44.2 per cent.

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[42] Deshapriya, "A Study of Media in Sri Lanka (Excluding the North and East)."
[43] *Ibid.*

Since the topic of this thesis is the editorial representation of the 2002 Peace Process by three widely circulated newspapers in Sri Lanka: *Daily News*, *Divaina* and *Virakesari* between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the data indicated by KAPS is very relevant, since it gives us an idea of how powerful the newspapers in Sri Lanka are in disseminating political attitudes.

According to the same survey, newspaper readers interviewed also showed the highest level of knowledge (both perceived as well as actual) about peace proposals discussed during the negotiations, with 79.7 per cent saying that they are either very informed or somewhat informed. Amongst television viewers and radio listeners, 61.6 per cent and 58.2 per cent respectively said that they are either very informed or somewhat informed.

The following chart shows the newspaper circulation figures from 1996-2001.

Language	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Sinhala	88	109	119	115	119	122
Tamil	26	33	35	35	39	45
English	19	23	23	24	22	22
Bilingual	4	4	4	-	-	-
Total	137	169	181	174	180	189

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, Statistical Abstract 2002.

2.14 Causes of Conflict

Having explained the geographical background, ethnicity of the population of Sri Lanka and media profile, we must now ask the question: why did Sri Lanka's ethnic, and to a certain extent, political differences, escalate into a protracted and deadly conflict? From what we have seen so far, if one were to discern the causes of conflict in Sri Lanka based on the indicators of conflict identified by the Carnegie Commission, which was outlined in the beginning of this chapter, one can say demographic pressures, sharp and severe economic distress combined with uneven economic development along ethnic lines, and a legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievance, have all contributed greatly to the conflict of Sri Lanka. Using a conflict map, Richardson[44] broadly maps out the multiple reasons for Sri Lanka's conflict in the following way:

1. *Ethnicity*: cultural differences between ethnically distinct communities rooted in history, as explained above, have created a climate in Sri Lanka, favouring the emergence of leaders, or politicians such as D.S. Senanayake (1947-48), depriving Indian Tamils of voting rights, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in 1956, who brought in the Sinhala Only Act and who used ethnic appeals to gain political support. It could be observed that this trend has become an indelible feature in Sri Lanka, that is, the trend of using ethnic appeals to gain political support. One of the latest examples is the coming to power of Mahinda Rajapakse, who became president of Sri Lanka in the presidential elections held on 17th November 2005, on the wings of a resurgent Sinhala nationalism.

[44] Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned,* 39-41.

This has helped all the political leaders who have succeeded in gaining power to implement discriminatory policies, emphasising ethnic differences, which produced a radicalisation of political discourse and the emergence of militant movements on both sides of the ethnic divide.

2. *Un-remedied structural weaknesses in the post-colonial economy*: as experienced in Sri Lanka, early successes in public health, mass education which has given a high literacy rate and provision of basic entitlements, produced rapid population growth and a youthful population with high aspirations. Therefore, based on the Presidential Commission Report,[45] Richardson holds that un-remedied structural weaknesses in the post-colonial economy meant that aspirations of young men and women for good jobs and a better way of life, in many cases could not be fulfilled. Citing the same report, Richardson says, further, that disillusionment with the established order and a climate of hopelessness that attracted youth to militant movements, committed them to violence as a means of achieving a political and radical change.
3. *Ruling class exploitation*: according to Richardson, the post-independence period simply continued a pattern of colonial-era exploitation, but with colonial rulers replaced by an indigenous ruling class. This ruling class, sometimes in league with former colonial masters, maintained a political-economic system that expropriated most of the benefits that the labour of the masses produced. Escalating violent conflict was a historically necessary consequence of such systems (Abeyaratne[46]).

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[45] Sri Lankan Government, "Report of the Presidential Commission on Youth Sessional Paper 1," (Colombo: 1990).
[46] Abeyratne, "Economic Roots of Political Conflict: The Case of Sri Lanka," 1295-1314.

4. *Social disruptions caused by privatisation, deregulation and structural adjustment*: again, according to Richardson, free market economic reforms and structural adjustment were implemented in 1977 to correct un-remedial structural weaknesses in the post–colonial economy, and to eliminate disincentives and inefficiencies caused by years of failed social policies. But scholars hold that these reforms also to a certain extent caused social disruptions, corruption and widening inequities, that alienated the educated Sri Lankan youth, many of whom remained unemployed or underemployed. Therefore it gave rise to a disillusionment with the established order and a climate of hopelessness that lured them to militant movements committed to violent means, as the only way to effect the necessary radical change (Richardson[47], also Gunasinghe[48]).
5. *Too much democracy*: according to some scholars, Sri Lanka's problems were caused by too much democracy. As previously explained, early successes in public health, mass education and provision of basic entitlements further conditioned citizens to view the government, or the state, rather than the market, as the principal source for both employment and benefits. Governments were replaced in successive democratic elections when they failed to deliver or when opposition leaders promised more. For example, there was a time when leaders even promised free rice for everybody. According to Richardson, the result was a succession of inconsistent, even

[47] John Richardson, "Understanding Violent Conflict in Sri Lanka: How Theory Can Help?," *Ethnic Studies Report* 19, 1 (1991): ix - 1.
[48] Newton Gunasinghe, "The Open Economy and Its Impact on Ethnic Relations in Sri Lanka," *Sri Lanka Guardian*, November15, 1998.

contradictory economic policies that produced economic stagnation and failed to implement necessary structural reforms (Athulathmudali[49]).

6. *Democratic governance failures*: some scholars are also of the opinion that Sri Lanka's problems were caused by declining even-handedness and transparency of its democratic process and institutions. Beginning in the 1970s Sri Lanka's security forces have become increasingly politicised and its governments became increasingly repressive. This has helped the main political parties of Sri Lanka, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the United National Party leaders to retain power longer than might otherwise have been possible. However, these long terms of power have not facilitated long-term solutions to economic problems. Government electoral manipulations and repression have helped to create a climate in which growing numbers of people see violence as the only form of political dissent likely to be effective (Moore[50], Hoole[51] et al. and Bush[52]).
7. *Leadership failures*: according to this view, the erosion of democratic processes and institutions was also caused by leadership failures, namely, the shortcomings of the nation's two most influential post-independence leaders, Sirmavo Bandaranaike and J.R. Jayewardene who are cited as examples of this view. Mrs. Bandaranaike's leadership weakened her own party so that it was in no position to resist the authoritarian tendencies of the UNP. Similarly, J.R. Jayewardene used his considerable tactical skills to weaken the credibility of

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[49] Lalith Athulathmudali, "*The Elections of 1982*," in *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis,* ed. James Manor,76-83 (London: Croom Helm, 1984).
[50] Mick P. Moor, "Retreat from Democracy in Sri Lanka," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 30, 1 (1992):64-84.
[51] D. Somasundram Rajan Hoole, K. Sritharan and R. Thirangama, *The Broken Palmyra: The Tamil Crises in Sri Lanka: An inside Account* (Claremont: Sri Lanka Studies Institute, 1990).
[52] Kenneth D. Bush, *The Intra-Group Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Learning to Read between the Lines* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 40-69.

his moderate opponents. The tactics he used to remain in power helped to undermine the moral basis upon which pluralist politics formerly rested (K.M. de Silva and Wriggins[53]). As in some of the above opinions, according to this view, leadership failures are cited for creating disillusionment with the established order, and a climate of hopelessness that lured youth to militant movements.

After looking at all these conjectures, or multiple reasons given by scholars, Richardson states that it is very difficult to pin-point which opinion best explains the reasons for Sri Lanka's deadly conflict. Richardson further holds that though some of them are sometimes contradictory, these are some of the major causes of the protracted conflict in Sri Lanka, as held by the scholars. Richardson has grouped them broadly according to the four schools of thought they exemplify. Accordingly he names them as (1) 'ethnicity, identity and culture; (2) 'political economy;' (3) 'effective governance' and 'democratic governance;' and (4) 'leadership.'

Importantly, Richardson says that proponents of the first school of thought, namely ethnicity, identity and culture, go back for centuries or even millennia. They were influential in the late nineteenth and also in the early twentieth century, but had fallen out of favour due to the emphasis on modernisation that dominated international agenda in the immediate post-World War II decades. The end of the Cold War, followed by the high visibility of 'ethnic' political movements and of violent conflicts between 'ethnic' protagonists, has managed to reawaken this school of thought. Moreover, according to Richardson, scholars continue to debate whether

[53] Kingsley M. De Silva and W. Howard Wriggins, *J.R. Jayawardene of Sri Lanka: A Political Biography. Volume One: The First Fifty Years, and Volume Two: From 1956 to His retirement* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press,1994).

ethnic identities are socially constructed and goal oriented (instrumental) or, more fundamentally, intrinsic (primordial), but agree that they must be included in explanations of many violent conflicts. Richardson cites Glazer and Moynihan,[54] Horowitz,[55] de Vos and Romanucci-Ross[56], as a few among many important works of voluminous literature highlighting this school of thought. Further, Richardson states that Samuel Huntington's[57] widely cited, as well as criticised title, "Clash of Civilisation", has reawakened popular consciousness of the ethnicity, identity and culture school of thought. Unfortunately, 'ethnic conflict' has become a popular shorthand or general label for conflicts such as that in Sri Lanka, though clearly much more than ethnicity is at issue, as will be explored in this thesis.

The causes of the conflict as mentioned in points two, three and four of the above list focus on interrelated economic, political and sociological variables over a shorter time horizon. Richardson gives the common term, 'political economy' to those in general and says some scholars limit use of this label to theories based on Karl Marx's writings. According to Richardson, theory number three fits this narrow definition more precisely and best, but the fourth theory, which emphasises inequalities created by policies of a power-maximising, greedy, exploitative political leadership also can be included in it.

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[54] Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 111-140.
[55] Donald I. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 200-250.
[56] George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross, *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1995), 349-379.
[57] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1999).

Accordingly, this school argues that smashing the power structure via a violent revolution is the only way to effect meaningful change. Richardson further expands less revolutionary theories: namely, the second in the list which emphasizes 'structural weaknesses' such as an over-reliance on plantation and agriculture as a source of foreign exchange into the so called political economy. However, in his analysis, the proponents of all these theories are more hopeful about implementing 'structural reforms' but less concerned about political-social structures that may block or irritate them. Richardson states that Marxist political economists however, hold that structural adjustment reformers, consciously or unconsciously, are also part of the power structures that keep stagnation and inequality in place, or make it worse.

After looking at all these probable causes of the conflict reflecting the theoretical tendencies of various schools, (although there are disagreements about root causes), Richardson is of the opinion that there is considerable agreement among scholars about proximate causes. For him, the most noteworthy among these are the attribution of the conflict to the unmet aspirations of youth: namely, the poor employment prospects, hopelessness and disillusionment with the established political-economic order, the growing strength of militant movements committed to violence and the inability of government security forces to contain them successfully. What is important to note about all the proximate causes is that, as Richardson says, some of these explanations are further influenced by or represent the three schools of thought in the 'conflict theory' literature, which he labels relative deprivation, mobilisation and repression.

Relative deprivation theories of Gurr[58] and Tilly[59] emphasise popular attitudes, en masse, as a cause of violent outbreaks. Accordingly, outbreaks are more probable, according to relative deprivation theory, when the social-political climate has become volatile due to the built-up conflict anger, resentment and aggressions that unmet expectations produce. It is the gap between benefits and the experience of fulfilment that produces collective anger. In this aspect moreover either heightened expectations that are produced by the rhetoric of political campaigns or declining benefits, can further widen the gap. Therefore, citing the relative deprivation theories, Richardson says that explanations of conflict escalation which emphasise disillusionment resulting from economic stagnation, or governance failures reflect the influence of relative deprivation theories.

Mobilisation theories (Kerbo,[60] Snyder and Tilly[61]) according to Richardson emphasise the original activities of a group as a cause of violent outbreaks. Therefore, outbreaks are more probable when social movement leaders with a militant agenda mobilise followers, or organize them into a disciplined, cohesive group and secure sufficient resources to act on that agenda. Ethnic and class ties often provide a basis for group mobilisation, but are no substitute for resources, organisational ability and discipline. Further, understanding the group's dynamics may be critical to understanding how a particular conflict scenario unfolds. Therefore, explanations of conflict escalation that emphasise the pivotal role of militant movements and their leaders reflect the influence of mobilisation theories.

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[58] Ted R.Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), 250-275.

[59] Charles Tilly and David Snyder, "Hardship and Collective Violence in France, 1830 to 1960,"*American Sociological Review* 37 (1972): 520-532.

[60] Harold R. Kerbo, "Movements of 'Crisis' and Movements and Movements of 'Affluence': A Critique of Deprivation and Resource Mobilization Theories," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 26, 4 (1982): 645-663.

[61] Snyder, "Hardship and Collective Violence in France, 1830 to 1960," 520-532.

Finally, Repression theories, Duff[62] et al. Berlin[63], Rummel[64] emphasise the role of state-sanctioned violence employed by the security forces and pro-government paramilitaries in catalysing violence. All scholars agree wholeheartedly that each of the three schools has something to contribute to understanding violent conflicts. In the same way the six main hypothesis of the Sri Lankan conflict summarised by him, also reflect a growing consensus in the conflict theory literature. Points of difference among at least five of the seven, namely those within the political economy and governance school, focus on relationships between the effectiveness of country level development and those proximate causes of conflict escalation. Richardson further states that a deeper analysis of ethnicity and identity literature would reveal that even within this school of thought, most instrumentalists see ethnicity as a flexible construct that is at least partly manipulated by different communities and their leaders in the service of development goals.

2.15 Conclusion

As questioned in the introduction, what has really happened to Sri Lanka, the country which was considered one of the fastest developing countries in south Asia in 1948 immediately after independence? One of the main arguments of this chapter as well as of the whole thesis is that the root causes of conflict have not been brought to the surface by the national media in Sri Lanka. Based on the literature review, it is correct to observe that some of the symptoms identified by the conflict matrix of the

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[62] John F. McCarmant, Waltrand Q. Morales and Earnest A Duff, *Violence and Repression in Latin America: A Quantitative and Historical Analysis* (New York: Free Press, 1976), 230-260.
[63] David Pion Berlin, "Political Repression and Economic Doctrines: The Case of Argentina" *Comparative Political Studies* 16, 1 (1983): 37-66.
[64] Rudolf J. Rummel, "Liberation Propositions on Violence within and between Nations. A Test against Published Research Results," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 29, 2 (1985): 419-455.

Carnegie Commission (1997) are present in Sri Lanka. Moreover most of the points mentioned in Richardson's conflict map seem to be applicable to Sri Lanka.

The relevance of some of these theoretical assumptions to Sri Lanka will be assumed in succeeding chapters of this thesis, titled " The Editorial Representation of the 2002 Peace Process by three widely circulated (Sri Lankan) Newspapers: *Daily News*, *Divaina* and *Virakesari*. This introductory chapter is an attempt to provide background information about Sri Lanka where unresolved conflict has lingered for almost 25 years.

CHAPTER 3

Sri Lanka, Conflict and Previous Peace Attempts

3.1 Introduction

According to Banergee[1] the post-Cold War era is internationally marked by a series of state versus community conflicts, so much so that it has been termed a period of fragmentation. For want of an enemy outside, states seemed to be looking inward and revaluating the "other." Therefore, following world trends, this phase in South Asia is also marked by considerable political violence and ethnic discord. As in other South Asian countries, in Sri Lanka also, the roots of conflict may go way back in history. However, as explained in this chapter, the 1990s in Sri Lanka are distinguishable as a period of escalating violence.

As Banergee[2] further states the 1990s is a decade when efforts are being made to fashion a process which will harness the violence of the rebel states so that they recover their initiatives of control. Banergee also states that the term "peace process" either in Kashmir, Northeast India, or in Sri Lanka, does not present a scenario of sanitized vacuum, but rather of acute contentions – a situation where dialogue for peace continues and at the same time violence also looms over the scene. Though most of the conflicts in South Asia can be termed internal or intra-state conflicts,

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[1] See: "Introduction" by Paula Banergee to Samir Kumar, "Peace Process and Peace Accords," in *South Asian Peace Studies,* vol. 2, ed. Saman Kumar Das, 115-119 (New Delhi: Sage, 2005).
[2] *Ibid.*

Banergree approves also the observation of Rupesinghe[3], "the disappearing boundaries" between internal and external conflicts.

Another important observation by Banergee[4] is that contesting of the so-called expert opinion that the "most striking characteristic of internal conflict is its asymmetry; one party, the (government) is strong and the other the insurgents is weak." Another caution that Barergree gives is that in the study of the peace processes we ought not to consider any of the parties in the peace process a monolith. In other words they all have fault lines within. According to Banergee this can be a source of strength as well as of weakness. It is the opinion of scholars, writing on Sri Lanka, as for example, Gunatilleke,[5] Uyangoda[6], Rupesinghe[7] that it was mainly the fragmentation of opinion among the Sinhalese that made it impossible for the government to negotiate with Tamils for peace. The same point is proven by Bose about Kashmir when he said that Jehadis were but one segment of the rebel group.

Within this general introduction this chapter probes the following: the history of the ethnic conflict, the formation of the LTTE as a separatist movement and various peace-making efforts in the past leading to the Peace Process 2002 in Sri Lanka.

Therefore, as already mentioned, the scope of this chapter is to trace the origins of Tamil separatism, the various solutions that have been proposed over the

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[3] Kumar Rupesinghe, "The Disappearing Boundaries in Internal and External Conflicts," in *Internal Conflicts and Governance,* ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, 1-26 (New York: Macmillan, 1992).
[4] Banerjee, "Introduction," 115-119.
[5] Godfrey Gunatilleke, ed., *Negotiations for the Resolution of the Ethnic Conflict*, (Colombo: Marga Institute, 2001), 1-36.
[6] Jayadeva Uyangoda, ed., *Beyond the Talks: Towards Transformative Peace in Sri Lanka*, (Colombo: Marga Institute, 2001), 1-29.
[7] Kumar Rupesinghe, "Introduction: evaluating the Peace Process," in *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures & Lessons,* Vol. 2, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, xiii-lxvii (Colombo: Foundation for Co-Existence, 2006).

years, and the present state of the conflict and the peace negotiations up to the 2002 peace accord. This is warranted because fifty-six years after independence Sri Lanka has become a case study for its protracted ethnic conflict, unending war and the fact that all peace processes since independence have ended in failure. Though it failed, each peace process has given rise to its own unique insights.

3.2 The Early Negotiations

For purpose of closer scrutiny conflict and peace attempts or negotiations in Sri Lanka could be conveniently divided into five phases as has been done by Dr. Gunatilleke[8]. Accordingly the first phase comprises the pre-1956 period when the prospect of an arrangement with power-sharing at its centre appeared to be acceptable to the Tamil community. The second phase deals with the federal demand and covers the Bandaranaike Chelvanayagam Pact (1957) and the Dudley Senanayake Chelvanayagam Pact (1965). Starting from the 1972 constitution, the third phase moves to the separatist agenda and includes the Vaddukoddai resolution (1976), the election of the UNP government, (1977) the promise of an All-Party conference and the Development Councils of 1981. The fourth phase commences with Indian mediation and covers the discussion in Delhi in 1984 and Annexure C, the All-Party Conference, the Thimpu Conference, The Thimpu Declaration, the Indu-Lanka Accord and the 13th Amendment. The fifth phase deals with the Government-LTTE negotiations and the Select Committee of Parliament under President Premadasa, the Government-LTTE negotiations under President Chandrika Bandaranaike

[8] Gunatilleke, *Negotiations for the Resolution of the Ethnic Conflict*, 1-36.

Kumaratunge and the LTTE negotiations with the new government of Ranil Wikremesinghe who came to power in the general elections December 2001.

3.3 The First Phase of the Conflict: 1956

According to Gunatillike, the first pre-1956 phase starts in 1948, the year of independence in Sri Lanka. In 1947 the United National Party, which was elected to power, became the largest single party. Even at this early stage the new constitution that was adopted wholeheartedly in Sri Lanka was not supported by the Tamil Leaders of that time. They had argued for equal representation as a stronger safeguard for minorities. Gunatilleke[9] and Richardson[10] state that right from the beginning Sinhala-Tamil relations were strained due to this demand for equal representation by the Tamils, although the Sinhalese had the majority. However in the end a fragile accord was achieved during this first phase (K. M. De Silva[11]). Gunatilleke states that the accord achieved during the 1948-53 period was able to provide a temporary resolution of two major issues which bore the seeds of conflict, namely power sharing at the centre and the place of Tamil as an official language. Two Tamil politicians were also given ministerial portfolios in the National Cabinets formed in 1948, 1952 and 1953.

One of the significant land marks of the first phase was the formation of the Federal party as a protest against the depriving of Indian plantation workers of voting

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[9] *Ibid.*

[10] John Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned: Learning About Conflict, Terrorism and Development from Sri Lanka's Civil Wars* (Sri Lanka: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 2005), 40-75.

[11] K. M. De Silva, "Sri Lanka's Prolonged Ethnic Conflict: Negotiating a Settlement," *International Negotiation* 6 (2001): 437-469.

rights in 1949 by the ruling United National Party. The name and the formation of the Federal Party is significant because it marked the beginning of the shifting of the political agenda away from the centre to the predominantly Tamil regions. However the Federal party agenda was defeated at the 1952 elections. Chelvanayagam, the new Federal party leader, who had won by a large majority in 1947 as a Tamil Congress candidate, was defeated in 1952 by a substantial margin by another Tamil congress candidate. According to Gunatilleka the message that came from the Tamil electorate in the north at this time was that the agenda for political negotiation still continued to focus on sharing power at the centre and equality of citizenship in a united Sri Lanka.

The formation of the Federal party along ethnic lines was also followed by the formation of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party by a group of politicians who broke away from the ruling United National Party and also as an alternative to the United National Party. The result was competition between two Sinhala parties to position themselves in relation to the Sinhala-Buddhist electorates in order to come to power, as the majority of votes always came from Sinhala Buddhist electorates.

In Gunatilleke's observation, this showed that even from the earliest times the Tamil votes did not matter very much to the Sinhala politicians because they were a minority living in the North and East far away from the Centre. Another important development at this juncture was the decision taken by Sinhalese political leaders to give official status to the Sinhala language alone, thereby revoking an earlier agreement on equal status to both Sinhala and Tamil languages. These decisions were taken just before the 1956 elections. However this was also a tactical attempt used by Sinhalase politicians to win the majority vote in the South in order to come to power.

De Silva[12] states that all the major Sri Lankan political parties of the day were baffled by this novel political phenomenon of linguistic nationalism. However, according to De Silva, most of them eventually succumbed to the blandishments of linguistic nationalism without understanding the perils involved.

More importantly, according to De Silva, the linguistic nationalism not only exalted the state, transforming it from a secular state to a Buddhist state (with constitutional changes in 1972, and 1978) but also contributed powerfully to state control over the dominant sectors of the economy and acted as a brake on all attempts to deviate from the excessively centralized structure inherited from the British. As noted by De Silva, and will be further explained in this chapter, at the same time linguistic nationalism in its Tamil version also provided the most potent threat to the integrity of the Sri Lankan polity and this persistent tension between two conflicting forms of linguistic nationalism therefore became the root cause of Sri Lanka's political crisis.

Therefore by affirming De Silva's observation, Richardson[13] states that Sinhalese political mobilization under the banners of "Sinhala only" and the Sinhala-Buddhist cultural revitalization inevitably evoked also a counter-mobilisation in Sri Lanka's North and East. The moderate Tamil Congress and Tamil politicians, who had favoured accommodation with the UNP, were discredited as "Sinhala only" became the pledge of both major parties and Tamil bashing became a campaign staple

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[12] K. M. De Silva, "Nationalism and the State in Sri Lanka," in *Ethnic Conflict in Buddhist Societies Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Burma,* eds. Pensri Duke, K. M. De Silva, Ellen S. Goldberg, Nathan Katz, 30-42 (London: Printer Publishers, 1988).
[13] Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, 41.

of many politicians. Citing De Silva[14] Richardson further says that significantly at this juncture S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's triumph and the passage of the Official Language Act discredited the accommodationist policies of G.G. Ponnambalam's old Tamil Congress party and virtually ensured that S.J.V. Chelvanayagam's new Federal Party would become the focal point for Tamil opposition to government policies.

Therefore according to Gunatilleke and Richardson the 1956 elections were contested on a regional political agenda and the leadership of the Sri Lankan Tamils passed from the Tamil Congress to the Federal party. More significantly according to Gunatilleke this was also the beginning of the process of taking unilateral decisions by the Sinhala leaders with little or no consultation with the Tamils and Muslims. He cites the Citizenship Bill 1949 and the language policy as examples of this.

3.4 The Second Phase: SLEP-FP Negotiations: 1956-1965

De Silva[15] states that S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike's landmark election victory of 1956 also represented the rejection of the concept of a Sri Lankan nationalism based on a commitment to pluralism which D.S. Senanayake, the first Prime Minster of Sri Lanka, had striven to nurture and the substitution for it of a more democratic and populist nationalism which was at the same time dangerously divisive in its impact on the country because it was resolutely Sinhalese and Buddhist in content.

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[14] Kingsley M. De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in a Multiethnic Society* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), 14.
[15] De Silva, "Nationalism and the State in Sri Lanka," 24.

Another key event of the second phase was the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam negotiations that took place before the outbreak of mob violence in 1958 (Gunathilleke[16]). The issues discussed at the second phase were language and access to land. The purpose of the negotiations was these two issues which were leading to conflict and on which the Federal party was going for a Satyagraha campaign. However the Satyagraha campaign was attacked by the mobs and eventually violence also spread to other parts of the country. Richardson[17] further states that in 1956 and 1957 communal conflict was sparked by Tamil demonstrations against the government language policy. In 1958, Sinhalese also demonstrated against Bandaranaike's compromise on Tamil minority rights and in turn Sri Lanka Tamils also demonstrated against Bandaranaike's decision to back away from his compromise.

According to Gunathilleke the police who were present did not prevent the violence and failed to protect the non-violent and peaceful Tamil demonstrators. Significantly, as Gunathilleke states, this incident eventually led to the creation of a pervasive fear and insecurity in the Tamil community living outside the North and East. A significant feature of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam (B.C.) pact was that it also became a frame of reference for both Sinhalese and Tamil leaders in their pursuit of a resolution of the ethnic conflict. It is also said that this 1956 B.C. pact also defined the positions of both sides as non-negotiable with regard to the language issue.

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[16] Gunatilleke, *Negotiations for the Resolution of the Ethnic Conflict*, 1-36.
[17] Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, 25-26.

According to Gunatilleke another significant aspect one should note about the B.C. pact is the shifting of the focus of the Tamil agenda from the sharing of power at the centre to the sharing of power at the regional level. Therefore abandonment of the agenda for sharing power at the centre reflected a significantly deep dilemma for Tamils after 1956. The Tamil congress, which was part of the national government, had been already discredited as a development that led to 1956 and the change in the official language policy (Gunatilleke[18]). The effect was the increasing powerlessness of the Tamil political constituency outside the North and East to define itself and also to find a voice in the Tamil political agenda. As explained above the uncontrolled mob violence against this segment of Tamils at this stage in a way accelerated the drift into separatist politics.

3.5 The UNP-FP Negotiations and the Senanayake-Chelvanayagam Pact: 1965

According to Gunatilleke Satyagraha campaigns, which were already mentioned, were continued by Tamils in the North and East as protest actions for the abrogation of the B.C. pact. The response of the government at that time was to strengthen the military presence in the North in order to curb Tamil agitation. However no serious efforts were made to address the grievances expressed by the Tamils or to resume meaningful negotiations with the Tamil party. The negative reaction to the B.C. pact and the total rejection of the regional council concept was a setback for the whole process of decentralization and devolution which was sought by the Federal Party.

[18] Gunatilleke, *Negotiations for the Resolution of the Ethnic Conflict*, 1-36.

Therefore Richardson says that the B.C. pact marked the beginning of a 'poisonous' cycle in Sri Lanka politics that polarized the society on communal lines. Moreover Richardson says that when in power leaders of both parties see the need for reasonable concessions to Sri Lankan Tamils in order to maintain national unity, but when in opposition these same leaders become uncompromising and advocate Sinhalese nationalism in order to gain political support. One of the aims of the proposed regional council bill of Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam was to strengthen and enlarge the responsibilities of local government. According to Gunatilleke this concept was taken from the recommendations of the Donoughmore Constitution and embodied in a resolution of the State council in 1940. Bandaranaike, being the Minister of Local Government, had espoused the idea and advocated a strong system of local government as an important element of democracy. However an unfortunate development was the linking of the concept of regional councils with the Federal Party's demand for a federal system.

This shows that by this time in Sri Lanka's history the concepts and metaphors of "unitary state" and "island of the Sinhala Buddhists" were subtly framed and embedded in the culture in such a way that by the socialization process, mainly by the media, any system envisaging devolution was not allowed to see the light of the day because it was seen as a threat to the country's territorial integrity. In addition, no attempt was made by the Sinhalese political leaders and their propaganda outlets, which happened to be the media, to educate the general public about the pros and cons of devolution.

According to Gunatilleke another significant event at this juncture was the change in the political configuration where the two major Sinhalese parties, UNP and the SLFP, did not have an absolute majority in parliament to form a government. The Tamil parties were able to gain some bargaining power at the centre because of this reality which had ironically also been the case even under the new constitution of 1978. This aspect of gaining an absolute majority was visible in the outcome of the 1965 elections. One result was the Federal Party's willingness to join the government with an understanding that Dudley Senanayake of the UNP, the new Prime Minister, would commence fresh negotiations with the Federal party to find an amicable political solution.

Like the previous B.C. pact the Senanayake-Chelvanayagam (S.C.) pact was also opposed by several political parties representing the Sinhala majority. The opposition was mainly to the District Development Councils. Though the bill had been drafted and was ready for enactment by Parliament, the opposition to Senanayake prevented the government from going ahead with the proposal. The result was the resignation of one of the Federal party Ministers who had joined the newly formed coalition cabinet and the withdrawal of the Federal party's support from the government. Eventually this led to the dissolution of parliament and to the 1970 general elections. However the UNP government of Dudley Senanayake was defeated in the 1970 general elections.

Though Richardson says that communal issues in the 1970 elections received less emphasis than in 1956, he believes that communal issues do play a big role in general elections in Sri Lanka. According to Richardson's observations, the United

Front coalition candidates, who contested the 1970 elections under Mrs. Bandaranaike's leadership, reminded Sinhalse audiences that Tamils had held the balance of power in the 1965 Parliament. Tamil support had also tipped the balance in favor of Dudley Senanayake and kept his government in office for the full term. Further Richardson says that as the election approached, a number of leading Buddhist priests also issued a warning to both leading candidates that 'the Sinhala race is also facing a severe national calamity' and urged them to exclude Tamils from power by forming a national unity government in the event of a close election. Richardson further states that even at this stage increasingly vociferous demands for autonomy over the "Traditional Homelands of the Tamils," coupled with parallel developments in the South Indian province of Tamil Nadu, magnified Sinhalese fears of Tamil irredentism more than the Federal Party's loose organization and relatively peaceful tactics.

According to some of the main Tamil politicians 'Traditional Homelands' included not only the Northern Province, which had indisputably been the home of an independent Tamil kingdom for several hundred years, but also the Eastern Province with its substantial Muslim and Sinhalese populations over which Tamil rule had been extended only for brief periods of time. It was also during this period that in South India's Tamil Nadu State, the *Dravida Munetra Kazhagam* (Dravidian Progressive Front) replaced the Indian National Congress as the dominant party. De Silva[19] observes that leaders of this overtly communal party preached the politics of ethnicity and made 'Tamil rights,' including the citizenship rights of the Indian Tamil plantation workers, a major theme of inflammatory speeches in political campaigns

[19]De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in a Multiethnic Society*, 156-157.

and in the Tamil Nadu legislative assembly. Given the close proximity of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, the 'Tamil Nadu factor' opened even modest proposals for regional autonomy and decentralisation to sinister interpretations in Sinhalese eyes.

Significantly De Silva's observation of the 'Tamil Nadu factor' also in a way confirms the media's strong influence on the national conflict of Sri Lanka. The chapter entitled, "The Print Media in Sri Lanka", of this thesis cites Muthulingam[20] and Thillainathan[21], who have highlighted the influence of the South Indian newspapers in the North of Sri Lanka given the close proximity between Tamil Nadu and the north of Sri Lanka as already mentioned in the previous chapter of this thesis. Given the close proximity of the two countries, it could be argued that even the media in Tamil Nadu has also contributed to the polarization of Sri Lanka.

3.6 The Third Phase: The 1972 Constitution and its Effects on the Ethnic Problem

In 1972 another attempt was made to resolve the ethnic crisis by the new government of Mrs. Bandaranaike, who won the 1970 general elections, by amending the constitution. Empowered by the then government in 1956 to propose the revision of the Constitution and the establishment of Sri Lanka as a republic, a Joint Select Committee was appointed in 1957 to recommend the course of action to be taken. According to the recommendation of this committee, the proposed new Constitution would include provisions for the protection of fundamental rights covering political

[20] P. Muthlingam, "Evolution of the Tamil Press of Sri Lanka," in *Studies on the Press in Sri Lanka and South Asia,* ed. G. H. Peiris, 181-192 (Kandy: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997).
[21] S. Thillainathan. "Contemporary Tamil Media Scene in Sri Lanka," in *Studies on the Press in Sri Lanka and South Asia*, ed. G. H. Peiris, 193-204 (Kandy, Sri Lanka International Centre for Ethnic Studies 1997).

rights, economic rights of equality of opportunity in matters of public employment, and cultural and educational rights of minorities. Many of these provisions, however, dealt with some of the grievances of the Tamils. According to Gunatilleke these proposed fundamental rights should have enabled the Sinahla and Tamil leaders to agree on constitutional guarantees for equality of citizenship with an acceptable form of devolution. However the envisaged bi-partisan approach did not take place because of the abrogation of the B.C. pact and the whole process of constitution making was temporarily held up by the assassination of Bandaranaike and a change of government.

Though the background was less favorable for any kind of joint cooperation for a suitable constitution, the new government formed by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in 1970 decided to go ahead and adopt a new constitution in 1972. According to Gunatilleke, and this has also been observed by other scholars (Richardson[22]), in the first two articles of this constitution itself it was made clear that they were totally rejecting the political and linguistic demands of the Tamils while asserting the supremacy of the Sinhalese language and the indivisible nature of the state. Naturally the Federal party was opposed to Article 2 of the constitution which declared the republic of Sri Lanka a unitary state. According to Richardson 'Unitary State' was the legal form used to express Sinhalese attachment to 'our land' (ape rata), which one Sinhalese scholar has translated this way:

[22] Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, 289.

Ours is a Sinhalese country.
Ours is a land of Buddhists.
This is the only place where the Sinhalese race exists.
Foreigners have come and exploited our country.
And we Sinhalese have become poorer and poorer.
We will not allow anyone to divide the country.
Why can't these Tamils go back where they came from?[23]

Richardson[24] further says that the Constitution stated the National State Assembly may not abdicate, delegate or in any manner alienate its legislative power, nor may it set up an authority with any legislative power other than the power to make subordinate laws. Richardson further states that symbolically this language had the effect of precluding power-sharing between regions and the central government, which the Federal Party had long demanded, giving credibility to more extremist Tamil leaders who regarded an independent nation, Tamil Eelam, as the sole remaining option for protecting Tamil political and economic rights.

In turn the Federal party proposed its own draft constitution for a federal union of five states: three Sinhalese, one Tamil, and one Muslim. After a long debate this amendment was defeated and neither the Federal party proposals for a federal constitution nor any alternative received any attention from the assembly which was dominated by the majority Sinhalese. To cite Gunatilleke[25], the frustration of the Federal party is expressed in these words of the Vaddukoddai resolution (1976) "total rejection of the Tamil proposals without even the courtesy of a consideration of its merits."[26]

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[23] Jayadeva Uyangoda, "The State and the Process of Devolution, " in *Devolution and Development in Sri Lanka,* ed. S. Bastian, 83-120 (Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1994).
[24] Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned,* 290-291.
[25] Gunatilleke, *Negotiations for the Resolution of the Ethnic Conflict,* 1-36.
[26] *Vaddukoddai Resolution,* http://www.eelam.com/introduction/vaddukoddai.html.14.k. (Vaddukoddai Resolution) unanimously adopted at the 1st National Convention of the Tamil United Liberation Front.

The result was that the 1972 constitution itself became an obstacle to any process of meaningful devolution and constitutional reform, as referred to above, by foreclosing the main option advocated by the Tamil parties. Another critical issue was the exclusion of article 29 (2) of the 1948 Constitution, which prohibited legislation that discriminated on grounds of community or religion. By dropping article 29(2), the 1972 constitution removed all restrictions on Parliament's legislative supremacy. Though article 29 was replaced with a chapter on fundamental rights, there was no provision to make these rights justifiable and enforceable. In this 1972 constitution the dominant position of the Sinhalese language and the secondary place of the Tamil language in relation to Sinhalese were entrenched in a separate chapter on language. The bill on the reasonable use of language became part of the constitution. However, there was a qualifying provision which made it explicit that the regulations of the bill would not be interpreted as being a provision under the constitution. There should be subordinate legislation subject to repeal and amendment by a simple parliamentary majority.

As Gunatilleke and other scholars have further observed these qualifications have denied the Tamil language the constitutional status and place of honour which the Tamil people were demanding. Further, it said that all laws should be enacted in Sinhalese and that there should be a Tamil translation of every such law. The amendment proposed by the Federal party was that Sinhalese and Tamil should be the official languages of Sri Lanka, the language of the courts, and the languages of all laws to be enacted and published. However this amendment was rejected and as a result the decision was taken by the Federal party to leave the parliament. The

Language Chapter was later drafted to provide for the use of Tamil in court proceedings in the North and East with translations in Sinhalese.

To cite Gunatilleke, another significant factor at this stage was the government's introduction of a "scheme of standardization" and district quotas for university administration. These had the effect of denying equality of opportunity to the Tamils and rendering the constitutional provisions on fundamental rights a stratagem.

As already explained, until 1972 the negotiating position of the Federal party was for a federal solution within a united Sri Lanka. They were also opposed to any idea of a separate state. In 1971, the Tamil parties joined to form the Tamil United Front. In May 1973 the action committee of the TULF in Velvettithurai, under the chairmanship of Chelvanayagam resolved to work for a separate state of Eelam. This period was also marked by signs of rising militancy among the Tamil youth in the North especially in Jaffna. Richardson says that the new constitution also eliminated minority protections, prohibited federalism explicitly and mandated privileged status for Buddhism. 'Ceylon' became 'Sri Lanka,' a name that evoked ancient Sinhalese traditions. What is important to note is, as Richardson says, that the changes convinced many Tamils that no Sinhalese government would treat them fairly. Pro-Sinhalese university admission procedures introduced by the government angered Tamil youth, who began to throw their support behind militant separatist movements.

Tamil United Liberation Front was the new name chosen for a coalition of leading Tamil parties in 1976. To cite Richardson, the choice was intended to

symbolise Tamil's growing belief that fair treatment, political rights and economic opportunity were now only attainable in a separate state which they called Tamil Eelam. The first political assassination also took place at this time with the killing of Durayappah, a Tamil supporter of the Sri Lanka Freedom party who was also the Mayor of Jaffna. As Gunatillike observes, this killing was a message to the Tamil politicians that the militant youth movement was not going to tolerate any deviation from their political agenda by other Tamil politicians. This also meant that there could be no Tamil presence and participation in other major southern political parties such as the UNP or the SLFP.

3.7 The Vaddukoddai Resolution and the General Election of 1977

In 1976 the party name TUF was replaced with the name Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). At its first national convention at Vaddukoddai in 1976 it resolved: "that the restoration and reconstitution of the free sovereign secular socialist state of Tamil Eelam based on the right of self determination inherent to every nation has become inevitable in order to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil nation in this country."[27] According to the Vaddukoddai resolution (1976) the decision to restore and reconstitute the state of Tamil Eelam was taken because all previous efforts to achieve the bare minimum of political rights consistent with the self-respect of the Tamil people proved to be futile. Therefore the strategy of the TULF was to receive a mandate from the Tamils in the North and East in the general elections which were going to be held in 1977. The ideology of the TULF manifesto further linked the contemporary Sinhalese–Tamil situation with the past history of Tamil

[27] *Ibid.*

domination and the disruption of the Sinhalese state. For many Sinhalese the Vaddu1oddai resolution was proof of TULF's hidden agenda for the division of the state.

According to political analysts, this psychological perception, popularized also by national media in Sri Lanka, has become among the Sinhalese one of the biggest obstacles to peace and reconciliation. The UNP headed by J.R. Jayawardena was given an overwhelming majority in the 1977 elections. However, by coincidence, TULF also became the largest opposition party with its leader becoming the leader of the opposition. One of the priorities of the UNP was a new Constitution and the Presidential system and a promise of an All Party Conference to solve the ethnic problem.

Richardson observes that UNP's new 1978 constitution, drafted and ratified in less than nine months, has further changed fundamentally the balance of power between executive and legislative branches of government as well as how Sri Lanka's top leaders and legislative representatives would be chosen. Another significant change in the 1978 constitution was the replacement of Sri Lanka's single member district with a complex proportional representation scheme which was designed to provide minority views with a significant voice.

However the 1978 constitution also re-affirmed the unitary character of the state and left no space for any form of devolution, but it also strengthened the provisions on fundamental rights making them enforceable and redefined the status of the Tamil language as one of the two national languages with enhanced language

rights for Tamils living outside the North and East. In 1978, the Government also brought forward another proposal for the appointment of District Ministers and the formation of Development Councils for each District with ex-officio members comprising the parliamentarians in the District and representatives of local authorities and nominees of the President. This proposal contained several features of the District Council system that had been agreed to in the FP-UNP pact of 1965.

There was election related violence immediately after the (1977) General Election which included assault, arson, and damage to the property of the political parties. There was also anti-Tamil violence outside the North and East, and there was no effort at official level to curb this violence and bring it under control. As Richardson states, though Jaffna was geographically remote from Colombo, the political and economic power centre, events in mid-August 1977 sharply reminded the newly elected government that events in the north could generate island wide reverberations. Confrontations between Tamil youths and police resulting in the destruction of a police vehicle were followed by clashes in which Jaffna central market was set on fire and more than 140 shops burned. Moreover, according to Richardson, reports of these events in the Sinhalese press, amplified by Sri Lanka's always-active rumor mill, reached the South at a time when pro-secessionist statements by Tamil parliamentarians were fanning Sinhalese resentments. Richardson further cites Ponnambalam[28] saying that to some Sinhalese community leaders the riots were 'a lesson' that Tamils needed to be 'taught' for demanding a separate state. According to Gunatilleke, this lawless situation, which was experienced by them even in 1956 and 1958, made Tamils live with a pervasive sense

[28] Satchi Ponnambalam, *Sri Lanka: The National conflict and the Tamil Liberation Struggle* (London: Tamil Information Centre 1983), 194-195.

of insecurity and a deep distrust of the law-enforcing agents of the State. Though the All-Party conference promised by the UNP did not materialize immediately, the concept itself was a sign that for the first time in Sri Lanka the need for national consensus in order to reach a lasting solution of the ethnic problem was recognized.

Confirming the main argument of this thesis which is also affirmed by other scholars (Kandaiah[29] 2001, Saravanamuttu[30], 2000) which will be explained in detail in the chapter on print media in Sri Lanka, events traced so far in the history of the previous peace attempts show that the national media, especially the newspapers in Sri Lanka, have played a negative role all along, dividing the two main ethnic communities on communal lines. Richardson at this juncture of Sri Lanka's history, makes the following important observation:

> While news spread quickly, the 'news' reported to Sinhala and Tamil readers could be quite different. Newspapers, especially Sinhala and Tamil newspapers, often sensationalized accounts to appeal to their respective audiences. Stories about security forces' indiscipline, ethnic rioting or a new Mahaweli settlement would have very different communal slants, depending on where they appeared. Since Tamils and Sinhalese read different newspapers, their perception of events touching on communal relations could be quite different. This increased mutual distrust between the two communities.[31]

The proposed Development Council elections were held in 1981. They were also contested by TULF, with a message to the Sinhalese leaders that they were not all out for a separate state. However Development Council elections in Jaffna were marked by several acts of violence. Large numbers of Sinhalese policemen were taken to the North to supervise the local government elections. After the killing of two policemen, the police went on the rampage setting fire to the town, killing and

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[29] Thiru Kandiah, ed., *The Media and the Ethnic Conflict*, (Colombo: Marga Institute, 2001), 1-43.
[30] P. Saravanamuttu, "Sri Lanka-the Intractability of Ethnic Conflict," in *The Management of Peace Process,* eds. John Darby and Roger MacGinty, 195-227 (London: Palgrave, 2000).
[31] Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, 402.

looting. The most tragic happening was the burning down of Jaffna library by Government-sponsored thugs. Tamils interpreted the destruction of the second largest library as a deliberate attack on Tamil learning, culture, and history (Tambiah[32]).

This violence spread also to the tea estates and surrounding areas and to Colombo and suburbs. Though all of these incidents damaged the trust between the Sinhalese and Tamil leadership, the TULF was willing to test the worth of the new institutions. However this experiment was also a failure. The institution of the District Minister ensured that all decisions of the Council were controlled by the central government and that there was no real devolution of power. TULF was disappointed again. Another outburst of violence against Tamils started in 1983 as retaliation for the killing of 13 Sinhalese soldiers in Jaffna. After comparing the violence of the 1950s with that of the 1970s, Indian Tamils both in the estate areas and in towns were also attacked in 1983, for the first time. What is significant was that some of the Sinhalese people were identifying Tamils in general as threats to the state.

Another important landmark at this stage, namely after the 1983 riots, was the passing of the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution by J.R. Jayawardene's government imposing a ban on all political parties that advocated separatism or separatist politics. As De Silva[33] states, individuals who advocated separatism faced criminal penalties. Richardson further states that this passing of the Sixth Amendment had the effect of proscribing virtually all Tamil political parties and expelling their representatives from Parliament.

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[32] Stanley Jayaraja Tambiah, *Sri Lanka: Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), 15-16.
[33] De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in a Multiethnic Society*, 340.

After analyzing the political climate of Sri Lanka, Richardson says that in a political climate characterized by real political differences and escalating violence, speechmaking by political leaders both Sinhalese and Tamil has made things worse. For example, if a Sinhalese or Tamil politician, facing a sympathetic audience or perhaps addressing Parliament, delivered a speech with intransigent stands on sensitive issues, appeals to chauvinist values and demeaning ethnic stereotypes of the rival group including especially the most inflammatory phrases, would be quickly reported in the indigenous-language press of the rival group, along with critical editorial comments and, possibly a cartoon caricature of the offending speaker. Such accounts were regular fare in Sinhalese and Tamil language newspapers (Richardson[34]). For example a political speech given in the North by the wife of late minister of parliament and then opposition leader Mr. Amirthalingam was reported in one of the leading Sinhalese newspapers as follows:

> Mrs. Amirthaligam had said in a political meeting in the north that she will make sure that when a Tamil government is installed or established in the north they will be able to make sandals out of the skins of Sinhalese in the south. This type of speeches confirm that Tamils in the north have a secret plan against the Sinhalese in the South (*Lankadeepa*, March 12, 1974).

The following declaration by former President Jayawardena, weeks before the events of July 1983, was also reported with critical comments both Sinhala and Tamil Papers.

> I am not worried about the opinion of the Tamil people...now we cannot think of them, not about their lives or their opinion...the more you put pressure in the north, the happier the Sinhala people will be here...Really if I starve the Tamils out, the Sinhala people will be happy (*Daily Telegraph*, July 18, 1983).

3.8 The Fourth Phase: The Indian Intervention and the All Party Conference

[34] Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, 364-366.

According to Gunatilleke[35] the bomb blast that had killed thirteen soldiers in July 1983 in Point Pedro in the Jaffna District set in motion a chain of events which fundamentally altered the previous negotiating conditions. With the Tamil diaspora the Sri Lankan conflict had become internationalized. The Tamils appealed to the world community for assistance and went directly to the Indian government for help. From early 1970 Tamil militant groups of Sri Lanka had developed links with Tamil society and Tamil political movements in Tamil Nadu. As De Silva[36] observes all along India has had three roles in Sri Lanka's conflict: participant, mediator and combatant. According to Dixith[37] the anti-Tamil riots of 1983 and the insensitivity of the Sri Lankan Government to the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka resulted in a large number of refugees going to India especially to the state of Tamil Nadu. Given the close geographical proximity to Tamil Nadu and also because of its 50 million Tamils, the Tamil Nadu state was politically obliged to support the Tamil militants and their cause.

As stated by Dixith, the Central Government of India was also not happy about Sri Lanka's President J.R.Jayawardena's interest in military and intelligence cooperation with the United States, Israel and Pakistan. India's general elections were also due in 1984 and the then Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi had lost support in several parts of India, including the South. Therefore it was important for her to retain the support of Tamil Nadu in order to maintain the success of her

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[35] Gunatilleke, *Negotiations for the Resolution of the Ethnic Conflict*, 1-36.

[36] K. M. De Silva, "Indu-Sri Lankan Relations, 1975-89: A Study in the Internationalization of Ethnic Conflict," in *Internationalization of ethnic conflict,* eds. K. M. De Silva and R. J. May, 76-106 (London: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1991).

[37] J. N. Dixith, "Indian Involvement on Sri Lanka and the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987: A Retrospective Evaluation in Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka," in *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures and Lessons* ,vol.1, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, 56-60 (London: International Alert, 1998).

Congress party. Immediately after the riots there was a visit by G. Parathasarathy, a veteran diplomat. His role was to bring about a settlement between the Sri Lankan Government and the various Tamil parties, militants and also the TULF which was closer to India.

However, the mediation of G. Parathasarathy was resented in Sri Lanka because he was first perceived as a Tamil and a partisan to the Tamil cause. A meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government was held in Delhi in November 1983, and the Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayawardena was persuaded by India to accept, even if tentatively, a proposal which came to be known as 'Annexure C.'

In January 1984 an All Party Conference was convened to discuss the proposals of Annexure C. Though the All-Party conference was in agreement with the issue of devolution of power to regional bodies, it was rejected by the TULF partly because the proposed devolution was based on the district and not on the province. There was also opposition by the Buddhist clergy and by December 1984 the talks had broken down and Annexure C was dropped. However Gunatilleke sees this Indian move as a first formal attempt sponsored by India to find some solution to the ethnic conflict.

It failed because there was no majority support for it in the country. There was also a gap between perceptions and interests on key issues between the Sri Lankan government and the TULF which was the main negotiator for the Tamils. After the failure of the first mediation, another round of talks between the Sri Lanka Government and the Tamil parties was initiated by India at Thimpu, Capital of Bhutan. However in Thimphu there was no serious attempt to reduce hostilities

between both parties to the conflict. The Thimpu talks also collapsed because both parties were holding to their rigid positions.

3.9 Indu-Lanka Accord and The 13TH Amendment

As many scholars observe (De Silva[38], Kodikara[39], Muni[40], De Silva[41], 1993, Samarasinghe and Liyanage[42], 1993) the Sri Lankan government was pressured by India to sign the accord in 1987. The Sri Lankan government agreed to receive Indian troops in order to maintain peace in the North. The 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution 1987 enabled the devolution provisions and the establishment of the Provincial Councils in Sri Lanka. The Provincial Council Bill gave special significance to the North East Province by recognizing the merger, subject to a referendum to follow within a year. According to Monogram[43] the conflict would have ended had its signatories adhered to some basic norms and procedures of political dialogue and negotiations essential for concluding a peace settlement. The accord in addition to ensuring the sovereignty, unitary character and territorial integrity of the island, recognized the country's multi ethnic make-up. The accord also satisfied LTTE demands that the Northern and Eastern Provinces, which are regarded as the traditional homes of Sri Lankan Tamils, should be administered by a single

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[38] De Silva, "Indu-Sri Lankan Relations, 1975-89: A Study in the Internationalization of Ethnic Conflict," 76-106.

[39] Shelton U. Kodikara, "Internationalization of Ethnic Conflict: The Tamil Nadu Factor," in *Internationalization of Ethnic Conflict,* eds. K.M. De Silva and R. J. May, 107-114 (London: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1991).

[40] S. D. Muni, "Indo-Sri Lanka Relations and Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict," in *Internationalization of Ethnic Conflict,* eds. K. M. De Silva and R. J. May, 115-124 (London: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1991).

[41] K. M. De Silva, "The making of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord: The final phase-June-July 1987," in *Peace Accords and Ethnic conflict*, eds. K. M. De Silva and S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe, 112-155 (New York: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Sri Lanka1993).

[42] S.W.R. De A. Samarasinge and Kamala Liyanage. "Friends and foes of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord." In *Peace Accords and Ethnic Conflict*, eds. K. M. de Silva and S.W.R. De A. Samarasinghe, 156-172 (New York : International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Sri Lanka 1993).

[43] C. Monogram, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 19-20.

unit. But it diluted the concept of a Tamil homeland by establishing Sinhalese settlements in the exclusively Tamil districts of Vavuniya_and Mullative by gazette notification. In addition it was not specific about the powers devolved to the Provincial Councils and the Chief Minister and it also lacked constitutional guarantees. Its subjects and functions were to be determined by Parliament. Eventually the Tamil political parties also rejected the 13th Amendment and demanded more substantive devolution of power.

3.10 President Premadasa-LTTE Peace Talks of 1990

As Weerakoon[44] states there were three rounds of talks in May 1989 and November 1989 between the LTTE and President Premadasa in search of an amicable solution to the ethnic problem. One of the significant outcomes of these talks was LTTE registering itself as a legitimate political organization committed to the use of democratic methods so as to contest elections to the North-East Provincial Council. Though the talks failed, significant progress towards establishing a permanent peace was made, since no preconditions were placed on participating in the peace process. According to Bradman Weerakoon[45] there were two reasons for the breakdown of the relationship: the repeal of the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution and the dissolution of the North East Provincial Council to be followed by the holding of new elections which the LTTE's political party PELT would contest.

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[44] Bradman Weerakoon, "Government of Sri Lanka (President Premadasa) LTTE Peace Negotiations, 1989/1990," in *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures and Lessons,*vol.1, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, 41-49 (London: International Alert, 1988).
[45] *Ibid.*

The 6th Amendment to the 1978 Constitution which was passed during the tenure of President J.R. Jayawardena in 1983, to appease the majority Sinhalese, stated that the unitary state would always be safeguarded and separatism eradicated. Extreme disabilities were prescribed for anyone or any group who contravened this provision, such as loss of civic rights, forfeiture of property, and loss of membership of Parliament. Ironically, however, Premadasa's government did not have the two-thirds majority necessary for a Constitutional change. Also, according to the Provincial Councils Acts of 1987, the Central Government could not dissolve a Provincial Council without a reason. According to Weerakoon[46], President Premadasa's sudden decision to initiate talks with the LTTE's rival EPRLF and his insistence that LTTE should lay down their arms may also have led to the collapse of the Peace Talks.

Bradman Weerakoon states that many lessons were to be learned from its failure. One is the importance of fulfilling undertakings, especially those given by a Government. There was also a need for an agreed plan for future security and law enforcement after the fighting stopped. There was also need to have time frames for fulfilling promises and mechanisms to salvage failed agreements. In addition there was also need for a mediator who could guarantee to either party the fulfillment of undertakings and the making of contacts between the parties. More importantly, there was a need to create mass support and the use and convincing of the media was also crucial. Favorable opportunities for negotiations should be seized upon and all attempts should be made to preserve the momentum.

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[46] *Ibid.*

On the whole, as Samarasinghe and Liyanage[47] state, the Indo-Sri Lanka accord (1987) was a 'failed' attempt on the part of Sri Lanka's President J.R. Jayawardene and India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to resolve Sri Lanka's internationalized and protracted Sinhalese-Tamil ethnicized conflict. According to Samarasinge and Liyanage, it failed largely because it focused too much attention on the 'international' aspects of the conflict and too little attention on the domestic aspects which were far more complex and intractable than the former. However, according to them, although the Accord failed to settle the conflict and restore peace in Sri Lanka, it has contributed to the long-term settlement process of the conflict and eventual peace in several ways. More importantly, first it provided a basic framework for a settlement by recognizing the legitimacy of the Tamil concerns. It made provision for language rights and devolution and also formally established the principle that Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic society.

Secondly, the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord clearly identified the constraints that have to be overcome to achieve lasting political solutions. The opposition to the Accord from the Muslims and the Sinhalese in the Eastern province was a clear indication that the complex demography of Sri Lanka as mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis should be taken into account in any future settlement.

Thirdly, the problems that India faced as a mediator also highlight the constraints that any future third party mediator in Sri Lanka might have to face.

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[47] S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe and Kamala Liyanage. "Friends and foes of the Indo-Lanka Accord," 156-172.

3.11 The Mangala Moonesinghe Parliamentary Select Committee

After the collapse of the Premadasa-LTTE talks, a Mangala Moonasinghe parliamentary select committee was established to explore ways of finding peace and achieving stability in Sri Lanka. Minority parties, individual Members of Parliament and civic groups, who submitted 253 memoranda for consideration, supported the 45-member committee which met 49 times. In the 'Option Paper' submitted by Moonesinghe, a proposal was made to create a North-East Regional Council with specified powers and a single governor. Though the Tamil parties rejected the proposal, by Sri Lankan standards it was a creative attempt to bridge the gap between the various parliamentary parties.

3.12 The Fifth Phase: President Kumarana-Prabhakaran Dialogue of 1995

The general election of 16 August 1994 was narrowly won by the People's Alliance, a coalition of centre-left, left and minority based parties dominated by the main opposition party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. Coming to power on a peace platform, the new government took steps to initiate dialogue with the LTTE. Four rounds of talks were conducted from October 1994 to January 1995. On 9th of November, Prime Minister Kumaranathunge also won an impressive victory in the presidential election with record turnouts in Tamil districts and unprecedented support throughout the South of the country. The first three rounds of talks resulted in the cessation of hostilities and an easing of the economic embargoes imposed by the government, especially in the North. Soon a difference arose between the agendas of the two parties. LTTE was willing to discuss confidence building measures such as

the lifting of embargoes, the rehabilitation of the north and the restoration of electricity supplies, while the government was moving towards a framework for a political solution. The LTTE was insisting on a step-by-step process, with a formal ceasefire, and the normalization of civilian life in the north and east, before political negotiations could commence.

However relations between the government and the LTTE started to deteriorate and war was resumed again by 19th April 1995. Many explanations are given for the breakdown of negotiations. Among them are that the Sri Lankan government was not serious about restoring normality to the North, and that both parties used the cessation period to rearm and regroup and LTTE was unwilling to join the democratic process. The government was trying to create a favorable impression among the international community to secure economic assistance. Having failed in its attempts to negotiate, a new strategy was tried by the government to resolve the armed conflict. While launching a full scale military assault to liberate the North and East from the LTTE, the PA government also devised a devolution package. The first of three versions of its devolution proposals was published on 3 August 1995. Seeking to redefine the constitutional foundation of a pluralist society within a united and sovereign Sri Lanka, the proposals set out a basic framework for the structure of devolution, for finance, for law and order, land, education, the administration of justice and the civil service. A specific government commission on devolution and a division of powers based on just two lists of functions, one regional, and one reserved, were also proposed.

Though many persons and groups welcomed the new 1995 proposals, they were also opposed by sections of the Sinhalese majority community. Because it had a parliamentary majority of only one vote, the PA government was nervous of the opposition. When the proposals were spelled out in greater detail, various changes were included to appease majority opinion. The legal draft was prepared on January 1996 and there were several positive dimensions in it. While various clauses included averting fears of secession, the deletion of Articles 2 and 76 of the constitution, which entrenched the unitary character of Sri Lanka, removed an unnecessary obstacle to substantial devolution. The abolition of the Concurrent List was another positive feature. The role of provincial governors was clarified and greater revenue raising powers were envisaged for the regional councils.

According to Edirisinha,[48] one drawback was the omission of a second chamber, which could represent regional interests at the centre. Moreover there were no safeguards to prevent provincial councils from arbitrary dissolution. The most regressive feature of the legal draft, according to Edirisingha, was that it tried to fortify Sinhalese Buddhist majoritarianism by proposing a specific institution, to represent the interests of the Buddhist clergy, which could not be abolished without a two-thirds parliamentary majority and a public referendum. If this were passed, all governments would be obliged to consult this council on an ill defined and potentially broad range of issues.

The legal draft was discussed in parliamentary committee for nearly two years with little prospect of consensus. In 1997 a unilateral decision was taken by the

[48] Rohan Edrisingha, "Trying Times: Constitutional Attempts to Resolve Armed Conflict in Sri Lanka," in *Demanding Sacrifice: War and Negotiation,* eds. Jeremy Armon and Liz Philipson, 26-36 (London: *Accord* issue 4, 1998).

government to republish its provisions, and to amend and incorporate a new revised draft constitution. The 'foremost place' accorded to Buddhism was retained, but the privileged status of the unelected Supreme Council was reduced but not eliminated. Though there are negative changes, such as the deletion of several paragraphs on the plural character of the Sri Lankan polity, others were positive or well intentioned. In the last months of 1997, the draft constitution stirred heated debate in southern political circles. In January 1998 these proposals were shelved when the UNP, the largest opposition group, rejected the proposed draft constitution and published the first part of its own constitutional proposals. This further wrecked the slim chance it may have had of leading to an amicable settlement. The proposal was also rejected by the LTTE.

Up to this point, the main concern of this chapter was to trace the main events and issues, and various attempts by leaders of the both Sinhalese and Tamils to find a solution to the national conflict in Sri Lanka. However all these attempts show that they did not lead to durable settlements, but they were definitely, as Richardson and Wang[49] state, pioneering attempts with certain drawbacks that tried to settle one of the most protracted political conflicts in the world. Before proceeding to discuss the 2002 Peace Process, the main focus of this thesis, it is appropriate to discuss also the emergence of the Liberation of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as the dominant Tamil group in Jaffna or Tamil politics in Sri Lanka.

[49] John M. Richardson, Jr. and Jianxin Wang, "Peace Accords: Seeking Conflict Resolution in Deeply Divided Societies, "in *Peace Accords and Ethnic Conflict,* eds. K. M. De Silva and S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe, 173-198 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

3.13 The Emergence of the LTTE as the sole Representative of Tamil People

The history of post-independence Sri Lanka from a Sri Lankan Tamil point of view, is a history of lost privileges, intensifying discrimination, failure of democratic institutions to protect their rights and, finally, coercion by an overwhelming Sinhalese security establishment. As explained above, though elected Tamil politicians continued to work within the political process, and parliamentary representation, negotiation and compromise, repeated failures to advance their demands discredited them and also their tactics. As Richardson[50] observes the initiative was passed or taken by a more militant group of youth. Inspired by Marxist revolutionary ideologies, these young men formed different groups, and came to be known as the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO); the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and as Richardson calls them, the most militant, disciplined and ferocious of them all, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Their goal was an independent Tamil nation of Eelam and the means were terrorism and increased guerrilla warfare directed at both Sinhalese and moderate Tamils who opposed them. To cite Richardson, as also was explained in the second chapter of this thesis, given the close proximity of Tamil Nadu and the cultural revolution that took place there, namely a flowering of literature, poetry and films also continued to influence further the youth in the north.

Richardson observes that economic hardship, cultural revitalization, government policies which were oppressive and dissatisfaction with mainstream Tamil parties and the vision of an economically viable Eelam mainly contributed to

[50] Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, 350-352.

the formation of the above mentioned Tamil militant groups. Further, their lineal ancestor was the Tamil Students' League (*Tamil Manavar Peravai*), founded in 1970, which became the Tamil Youth League (*Tamil Eelaingyar Peravai*) in 1973. Citing Swamy,[51] Richardson says that though the league had no formal links with the Tamil United Front, which became the Federal Party under the direction of the Fronts' second in command, Appapillai Amirthalingam (leader of the opposition after the landside victory of United National Party in 1977 elections) its youthful members sometimes served as TUF foot soldiers of 'armed struggle.'

Moreover, Richardson says that these Tamil militant groups would not become a serious threat to the Sri Lanka's government until the 1983 ethnic riots drove thousands of youths into their ranks. However the parallel growth of TELO, LTTE, EROS and PLOTE, along with less well-known groups, established a pattern that continued into the 1980s.

According to Richardson that competition between groups for support also tended to push all of them toward more extreme positions. According to him more vicious factional fighting took place between the Tamil militants themselves in the 1980s. This was precipitated largely by Prabakaran's implacable drive to establish LTTE dominance and to exterminate those who opposed him. Further, groups proposing compromise or opposing violence risked being branded as 'traitors to the Tamil nation.' Richardson further states that militant groups became increasingly militaristic and, coupled with police repression this gave Tamil political life a more

[51] Narayan Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka* (Delhi: Konark, 1994), 24-25.

authentic cast. Moreover loyalty 'to the leader' was paramount and dissenting views were not tolerated.

Due to the above developments, Richardson says that by 1977 many Sinhalese viewed "Tamils" as collectively threatening the idea of a unified Sinhalese-Buddhist dominated Sri Lanka. Mainstream Tamil politicians of the TUF labeled their party as the Tamil United Liberation Front, called for an independent Tamil Eelam, and spoke also of 'secret plans' reinforcing the fears of the majority Sinhalese. More importantly, according to Richardson, racist political oratory by Sinhalese politicians and articles in the Sinhala language media further contributed to these fears. Growing numbers of Sinhalese, including security force cadres, began to view all Tamils through a prism of negative racial stereotypes.

Richardson goes on to say that government polices also further weakened another potential counterweight in the Tamil community, namely non-government organisations and movements that, in the 1970s, comprised an emerging civil society. Like the TULF and militants, these groups rejected government policies and favoured greater Tamil autonomy. Importantly they also opposed both Colombo politics and political violence.

However, police and army frustration over rising numbers of terrorist attacks and their inability to capture perpetrators motivated a campaign against all spokespersons for human rights and Tamil autonomy. As Richardson states, armed with emergency powers freeing them from legal accountability for their actions, soldiers and police constables targeted leaders and heads of non-government

organisations. In the chapter on the press in Sri Lanka of this thesis, it will be pointed out how, by this time, some of the national newspapers were openly supporting the actions of the armed forces as patriotic.

It is also important to note that as Sivaram[52] explains, Tigers or the LTTE see their military power, not as an end in itself, but also as a means to achieve the fundamental political objectives espoused by the Tamil national movement in Sri Lanka since 1948. According to Sivaram, the LTTE concept of the balance of force or 'strategic parity' as the basis of the cease-fire agreement and as the stabilizing factor of the Peace Process, stems from its perception of its military power as a deterrent to make the Sri Lankan state stay focused on the essentially political nature of the conflict.

More importantly, Sivaram states that when Tigers say that the balance of forces between the Sri Lankan military and their armed forces sustains the ceasefire, they mean that it is their military power that deters the Sri Lankan state from considering war as the chief method of dealing with the conflict, despite the overwhelming Sinhala sentiment in favour of doing so. Furthermore Sivaram states that Colombo or the government of Sri Lanka is deterred from unleashing its armed forces to crush the Tigers and make them accept the unitary state, as the majority of the Sinhalese would prefer, not merely because it feels that the LTTE's military power equals its own in the battlefield, but also because the LTTE has the well demonstrated power to carry out unconventional attacks where it could hurt the Sri Lankan state most- in the heartland of its economic and political power, on the West

[52] Dharmaratnam Sivaram, "The Tamil Perspective," in *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures and Lessons,* vol. 2, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, 159-192 (Colombo: The Foundation for Co-Existence, 2006).

coast. After explaining the events that led the LTTE to be the main representatives of the Sri Lankan Tamils, the following section deals with the Peace Process 2002 between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE which is also the main focus of this thesis.

3.14 The 2002 Peace Process

It was in the context of an enduring military stalemate, especially in late 1999 and early 2000, President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and LTTE leader Vellupillai Prabakharan requested Norwegian government assistance in facilitating peace talks. However, there was no let up in the fighting. On 21 December 2000 the LTTE announced a one-month unilateral ceasefire that was extended month by month until April 24, 2001, after which fighting resumed. LTTE's attack on Sri Lanka's only international airport in June 2001 also had significant military, economic and political impact (Sivaram[53]).

The LTTE having gained military parity was under the impression that it was in a strong position to enter political negotiations. Furthermore the People's Alliance (PA) government was also realising that the "war for peace" strategy was no longer sustainable, having to contend with a shrinking economy, rising desertion rates and growing domestic and international dissatisfaction with the government's strategy. As stated by Goodhand et al.[54], Norwegian special envoy Erik Solheim visited Sri Lanka

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[53] *Ibid.*

[54] Jonathan Goodhand, Bart Klem, Dilrukshi Fonseka, S.I. Keethaponcalan and Shonali Sardesai, "Aid, Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka, 2000-2005, August 2005," http:/ /www.asiafoundation.org/ Locations/srilanka_publications.html.

twice to discuss the possibilities of a truce that failed to materialize due to disagreement over the issues of LTTE de-proscription.

Meanwhile, six crossovers of Muslim members of parliament (MPs), followed by the President's decision to sack Rauff Hakeem, Minister of Trade, Commerce and Muslim Affairs, triggered a motion of no confidence from the opposition. The President was able to retaliate by declaring a state of emergency, proroguing the parliament, and scheduling a referendum for a redrafting of the constitution that in the end was never held. At this stage, a new government was formed through an alliance between the PA and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), but another crossover of eight PA MPs led again to a 'No Confidence' motion from which the government lost power. All these rapid turns of political events led to general elections which were scheduled for 5 December 2001.

Despite the imposed curfew and attempts to annul the elections on the allegation of violent intimidation, Ranil Wickremesinghe's United National Front (UNF) triumphed on an agenda of peace and economic prosperity. Within a month after Ranil Wickremesinghe came to power, the government and the LTTE agreed on a one month ceasefire, starting on 24 December 2001. On 2 February 2002 the Norwegian facilitators brokered a ceasefire agreement (CFA) between the two parties; namely, the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, representing the Tamil Tigers. The agreement mainly constituted a cessation of offensive military operations, restoration of normalcy, and the creation of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), made up of staff from the five Nordic countries, reporting to the Norwegian

government. The mission also was given the dual task of monitoring ceasefire violations and resolving truce related disputes at the lowest possible level.

To cite Weerakoon,[55] it was the first time in the history of the conflict that the parties themselves agreed in writing on the details of the ceasefire and on the course of future actions. More significantly, according to Weerakoon, it was only possible to have come so far because of the external facilitation. Without the 'middle man,' the neutral intermediary, the actions of the "spoilers" of whom there were many on both sides, would have been certain to have upset the process.

Consequently, six rounds of peace talks were held from September 2002 to March 2003. These constitute the fifth set of peace talks to have occurred between the GoSL and the LTTE since the outbreak of conflict in 1983. The new United National government also lifted the ban on the LTTE, enabling direct negotiations with the rebel movement to take place. With the "Oslo Communiqué," the outcome of the third round of talks, held in the Norwegian capital, the parties also agreed to explore a federal solution to the conflict.

The restoration of normalcy, agreed upon in the CFA, included the cessation of harassment, intimidation, extortion or abduction of civilians, lifting of checkpoints, vacation of public buildings by armed forces, re-opening of roads and railways, lifting of economic restrictions, and (to a large extent) fishing bans. Some further headway was made on these issues in the months after the signing of the CFA. These included the reopening to the public of the A9 road from Vavuniya to Jaffna that crosses

[55] Bradman Weerakoon, "Initiating and Sustaining the Peace: Origins and Challenges," in *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures and Lessons,* vol. 2, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, 1-39 (Colombo: Foundation for Co-existence, 2006).

through the LTTE-controlled Vanni, and the train to Batticaloa from Colombo was resumed for the first time in years. Furthermore checkpoints in Colombo and the North-East were also dismantled.

Reconstruction activities, supported by the international community, were scaled up. However, CFA clauses on the restoration of normalcy continued to be breached including harassment, abduction, child recruitment, extortion and political killings by the LTTE in the North-East. Meanwhile, dissatisfaction also grew about the slow pace of reconstruction in the North-East, the persistence of army-occupied high security zones and continued restrictions on fishing and agriculture.

On April 21 2003 the LTTE decided to "suspend its participation in the negotiations." In a letter to the Prime Minister, the movement spelled out three basic reasons for its decision.[56] The first was the decision of the government to "marginalize" the LTTE in approaching the international community for economic assistance. A particular grievance was the donor meeting in preparation for the Tokyo conference to be held in Washington, D.C., a place the LTTE could not go given the movement's proscription as a terrorist organization in the United States. The second reason was the failure of the government forces to vacate civilian premises, and the High Security Zone (HSZ) north of Jaffna in particular. Finally, the LTTE argued that the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) "Regaining Sri Lanka," failed to acknowledge and address the "unique conditions of devastation prevailing in the North-East" (*Tamilnet* 2003).

[56] Anton Balasingham's *Letter* to Ranil Wickremasinghe, (21 April 2003): www.satp.org/ satporgtp/ countries/ shrilanka/document/papers/letterpm2003.htm-32k.

Despite its suspension from the talks, the LTTE, however, reaffirmed its commitment to a political resolution of the conflict and on 31 October 2003 presented its own plans for an interim administration. The proposed Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) respected Sri Lanka's sovereignty and unity, but implied autonomy for the North-East in almost all aspects of life. It had no provisions for the military dimensions and suggested an LTTE-dominated administration to govern the North-East for a period of five years after which elections would be held.

However, the ISGA triggered a strong reaction in the South. President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga once again moved to declare a state of emergency, took over the three key ministries of Defence, Finance, and State Media, effectively paralysing Wickremesinghe's administration. On 7 February, she dissolved parliament and a snap election was scheduled for April 2004.

The president's party, the PA, also aligned itself with the JVP to form the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA). On 8 April 2004 Wickremesinghe's United National Front (UNF) government lost the snap elections, winning only 82 out of 225 parliamentary seats. However the UPFA also failed to gain an outright majority, but its 105 seats together with the support of smaller parties enabled the President to form a fragile coalition government. The new government, and the JVP in particular and also the JHU, the political party formed by the Buddhist monks, had taken a more critical stance toward the peace talks.

However, in comparison with all previous peace efforts, Rupesinghe[57] contends that the Peace Process (2002) was partially successful. This view is also endorsed by Fernando[58] who says that the fact that the CFA solidly withstood every calamity for four years and resumed social and economic development logically concluded the success of the implementation of the security-related CFA provision on the part of the government.

3.15 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear from this chapter's discussion, that the media have often played a negative role from the beginning of the conflict. This argument is also the focus of this thesis. It will be argued in this thesis that as a key player, the media has played a crucial role between two major communities in Sri Lanka. All the peace efforts in Sri Lanka's history of Tamil separatism traced in this chapter failed to transform the conflict into a durable settlement. However, as noted by Richardson Jr. and Wang[59], they are in a way pioneering attempts to settle one of the most intractable forms of political conflict that exists. In fact the protracted conflict between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE has lasted more than 25 years.

As Rupesinghe[60] notes, the conflict of Sri Lanka has gone beyond issues relating to equitable power-sharing, minority rights and discrimination over language,

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[57] Rupesinghe, "Introduction," xiii-lxvii.
[58] Austin Fernando, "The Peace Process and Security Issues," in *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts ,Failures & Lessons,* ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, 41-92 (Colombo: The Foundation for Co-existence, 2006).
[59] John M. Richardson Jr. and Jianxin Wang, "Peace accords: Seeking conflict resolution in deeply divided societies," 173-198.
[60] Rupesinghe, "Introduction," xiii-lxvii.

colonization and employment. The Sri Lankan conflict has also been transformed into a situation where power sharing or division of the country has come to centre stage. By looking at the conflict matrix developed in the first chapter and also by looking at problems articulated in the previous peace attempts it is correct to say the main cause or roots for the conflict are political, social and economic grievances.

CHAPTER 4

Literature Review

4.1 Introduction

As part of communication research, the actual news and how this news is presented or not presented to the local and global audience is of special significance in understanding the dynamics of the construction of reality by the media. Since the title of this thesis is how the 2002 Peace Process between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Government of Sri Lanka was represented editorially in the most read daily newspapers in Sri Lanka, the purpose of this chapter is to review current literature and to explore in what way the role of the press could be understood and to explore what type of methodological framework is needed to understand the role of the national press in Sri Lanka.

As Rupesinghe[1] states, the ethnocized conflict in Sri Lanka has been interpreted as one of the most paradigmatic social conflicts in recent times. Further, according to him, its incremental development over a long period following the independence of the country and its escalation into military conflict in 1983, demonstrates the fateful dynamics of competing ethno-national demands in a post-colonial environment and the difficulty of creating inclusive political and societal structures to accommodate them. Moreover many scholars have rightly characterized

[1] Kumar Rupesinghe, "Introduction: Evaluating the Peace Process," in *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka efforts, Failures & Lessons*, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, xiii-lxvii (Colombo: Foundation for Co-Existence, 2006).

one of the root causes of the conflict as the failure to build a multi-ethnic state after Sri Lanka had attained independence in 1948.

In order to discuss the editorial representation of the 2002 Peace Process, one must understand the various theories of how news is produced. Ciaran McCullagh[2] holds that the mass media can be thought of as the means through which content, whether fact or fiction, is produced by organizations, and transmitted to and received by an audience. He argues that the process of mass communication involves three fundamental factors: Content, organization and audience. First it is necessary to look at how stories are put together and how they are selected and framed. Since the media are the means through which information and entertainment are diffused in society, it is important to know what exactly is being communicated to audiences and it is also important to ask whether it meets certain socially acknowledged criteria such as informativeness and representativeness.

Secondly, it is necessary to analyse how messages are produced and translated. Media content is best viewed as a product of complex bureaucracies and large commercial organizations. Therefore it is important to look at the institutional contexts in which media messages are produced. One should also ask how factors such as media ownership and control, level of media control and regulation by the state, and the kinds of assumptions the media make about audiences influence the nature and shape of media content.

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[2] Ciaran McCullagh, *Media Power* (London: Palgrave, 2002), 6.

The third factor in an analysis of the media is audience reaction; namely, how messages are received by different groups. The separation of message production and reception means that though audiences may have little or no control over the production of media messages, they do have a lot of control over their reception.

Having presented a broader view of the characteristics of the mass media in general, using as sources journals and books which document the role of the national press, this chapter proceeds now to review some of the more notable theoretical perspectives that have been applied to media coverage of war and peace. Particular attention is paid to assessing the theoretical implications of these perspectives for the research objectives of this thesis.

These objectives are, firstly, to undertake a combined Quantitative Content Analysis (QCA) and Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA) of sample coverage of the 2002 Peace Process between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE by the three national dailies, *The Daily News, Divaina, and Virakesari* during the period from December 2001 to March 2003; secondly to explain key features characterizing this coverage in terms of the surrounding politico-cultural and media context from which it emerges. Since the scope of this thesis is the role of the national media in the Sri Lankan ethnicized conflict, special attention will be paid to books and journals regarding the conflict that have appeared between the years 2000 and 2006.

The chapter begins by discussing the social construction model. This model seeks to understand how media messages are constructed as well as to understand who constructs these messages for the media. This chapter also reviews some of the

more relevant theoretical perspectives of the production process as well as theories of media organization and media work. As explained by media scholars, news work necessarily involves selection and abstraction; journalists and news organizations construct news and frame issues/events according to demands of routines. Therefore the central premise of this chapter as well as the entire thesis is that the framing perspective is central to understanding newswork.

This chapter will have three main sections. Firstly, it takes the theory of the social construction of reality to explain how media content is selected and produced. Secondly, the chapter looks at theories of media ownership and control as well as theories of media organization and media work. Thirdly, the chapter looks also at previous studies of the media in Sri Lanka. In the following discussion, special attention will be paid to the theory of the social construction of reality, the propaganda hypothesis, framing theories and the political contest model of Gadi Wolfsfeld[3].

Since Gadi Wolfsfeld's work and constructivist approach popularized by Gamson[4] overcomes some of the limitations of the propaganda model, his main studies of the media's role in conflict as well as in peace will be discussed at length in this chapter. The concept of framing is crucial to explain how news discourse is constructed and structured to produce desired meanings. It will be concluded that Wolfsfeld's work demonstrates the theoretical value of historically situating and contextualizing media coverage in terms of the political and media environments

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[3] Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and political conflict: News from the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3-4.

[4] William A. Gamson and Andre, Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach," *American Journal of Sociology* 95, 1 (1989): 1-37.

surrounding conflicts as well as the maintenance of peace. Therefore the work of Gamson and his colleagues and Wolfsfeld's social constructive perspective can be modified to analyze the role of the Sri Lanka media in the 2002 Peace Process which is the main topic of this research.

4.2 Media Bias

One role of the media is to represent, construct or portray key divisions or issues of society such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation and ethnicity. In other words the media are an important source of information that people use to learn about other people and events (Katz, Haas and Gurevitch[5]; Giltin[6], Carragee[7]). It is generally held that media coverage, especially of international topics such as war and peace, is particularly influential because the public cannot rely on other sources of information such as personal experience and interpersonal communication. Therefore, how particular groups in society and disputes between these groups are represented or constructed by the media is an important area of scrutiny today. The media are being increasingly criticized for their biased portrayals of many of these groups.

More specifically media are seen as being biased or reproducing stereotypes, or being organized around formats that construct a particular view of the world. Most media theorists agree that the content of the media is neither neutral nor natural, but manufactured or constructed, as opposed to those who argue for the media as the

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[5] Elihu Katz, Hadassah Haas and Michael Gurevitch, "On the Use of the Mass Media for Important Things" *American Sociological Review* 38, 2 (1973):164-181.
[6] Todd Giltin. *The Whole World is Watching* (Berkeley: University of California Press:1980), 45-55.
[7] Kevin M. Carragee and Wim Roefs, "The Neglect of Power in Recent Framing Research," *The Journal of Communication* 54, 2 (2004): 214-233.

'window on the world.' Moreover scholars such as Schramm[8] and Schudson[9] are of the opinion that the news media supply a construction-cum-interpretive representation of the news within a particular matrix of historical circumstances, cultural traditions, institutional imperatives and relationships and professional practices. The processes by which news is constructed were revealed in the 1970s in a series of famous studies (Altheide[10], Epstein[11], Fishman[12]; Gans[13], Roscho[14], Tuchman[15]) and they continue to be explored in more recent work (Hachten,[16]Kanis[17]).

As further explained by scholars, the media serve messages to their audiences with a view to conveying realities to them using specific frames of reference. Beneath the media messages and the associated meanings deciphered by the receiving audiences reside the underlying roles of the reporter's frames through selection or omission of some aspects of reality. Moreover journalists carry their individual biases and are further burdened by journalistic norms and deadlines, search for scoops and other contingent factors that limit the scope of understanding of the message. Paletz and Entman[18] state that the view about what is excluded from a story or a text is equally important as what was said.

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[8] Wilbur Schramm, "The Nature of News," *Journalism Quarterly* 26 (1949): 259-269.
[9] Michael Schudson, "The objectivity norm in American Journalism" *Journalism* 2, 2 (2001): 149-170.
[10] David L. Altheide, *Creating Reality: How TV News Distorts Events* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1977), 55-58.
[11] Epstein E. Epstein, *News from Nowhere; Television and the News* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 222-223.
[12] Mark Fishman, *Manufacturing the News* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), 102-110.
[13] Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time* (London: Constable, 1980), 12.
[14] Bernard Roscho, *Newsmaking* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975). 45-65
[15] Gaye Tuchman, *Making News; A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978). 46-54.
[16] William A. Hachten, *The Troubles of Journalism: A Critical Look at What's Right and Wrong with the Press* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2001), 1-9..
[17] Phyllis C. Kaniss, *Making Local News* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 32-45.
[18] David L. Paletz and Robert M. Entman, *Media, Power, Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1981), 9-47.

Therefore the reproduction of ideology and various biases by the media have to be seen within the context of the means of production of media organizations. On the other hand, political economy theorists have stressed the role of ownership and control of the media and its ties to the established power structures of society and the related issues of the role of the market in determining the nature of media production. As will be explained later in this chapter, such research, rooted in organizational theory, represents the traditional approach to understanding media production.

4.3 Social Construction of Reality Approach and Media Framing Theories

Many media sociologists argue that the source of media power lies in its ability to be selective in what it tells us about the world. It tells us about some issues and events and not about others. Therefore it controls the information that is available to media audiences and so has the potential to shape or to set limits to their social knowledge and to the images that they can construct of the world in which they live.

Adoni and Mane[19] state that the role of the mass media in the process of the social construction of reality holds a central place in communication research. According to Adoni and Mane, despite the diversity of conceptualizations and methodologies in studies dealing with this topic, two basic approaches can be discerned. The first focuses on the social construction of reality as an important aspect of the relationship between culture and society. The second approach concentrates on the social construction of reality as one type of media effect. In general social constructionist epistemologies aim to "overcome" representationalist epistemologies

[19] Hanna Adoni and Sherril Mane, "Media and the Social Construction of Reality: Toward an Integration of Theory and Research," *Communication Research* 11 (1984): 323-40.

in a variety of ways. According to Adoni and Mane neither of the two communication research methods alone can offer a full picture of the role of the mass media in the dialectical process of the social construction of reality; according to them the dialectical process of the social construction of reality includes interactions among individuals, society and culture.

Since both approaches share an interest in essential cognitive processes of social life, a common theoretical framework can be derived from the theories on the process of the social construction of reality as developed by Schutz[20] and Berger and Luckmann.[21] The term social construction of reality was first coined by theorists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in the mid-twentieth century. Seeking to redefine the ambiguity of the sociology of knowledge, Berger and Luckmann brought to the forefront the discussion of subjective reality versus objective reality. They hold that all knowledge is developed, transmitted, and maintained in social situations... and that it seeks to understand the process by which this is done in such a way that a taken for granted reality congeals for the man on the street. Scholars further hold that the focus of the social construction of reality theories is now centered on how groups produce and disseminate knowledge. One of the basic building blocks of constructed reality is language. McCarthy[22] states that language is perhaps the most fundamental aspect of social construction in that it is vital in the transfer of information among the members of a society; it helps to perpetuate and further the formation of subjective truths. The mass media rely heavily on language to transmit information clearly and quickly. Therefore without language as a semi-universal social construct, the task

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[20] Alfred Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1972).
[21] Peter Berger and Thomas, Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City, NJ: Anchor, 1967), 28.
[22] Doyle E. McCarthy, *Knowledge as Culture; the New Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1996), 25-26.

would be nearly impossible. Gerard[23] has stated that the mass media are responsible for legitimizing or repudiating other social constructs by defining and distributing knowledge on a wider societal scale. According to McCarthy[24], mass communication through social constructs also affects people on a broader level by helping to shape our world-wide relationships and influence their social and political destinies.

Taking this social construction perspective further, Lederach[25] says that even conflict is a socially constructed cultural event. Conflicts do not "just happen" to people. People are active participants in creating situations and interactions they experience as conflict. Lederach also argues that conflict emerges through an interactive process based on the creation of shared meaning. The interactive process is accomplished through and rooted in people's perceptions, interpretations, expressions and intentions, which all grow from and cycle back, to their common sense of knowledge. Therefore meaning occurs as people locate themselves and social "things" such as situations, events and actions in their accumulated knowledge.

While affirming the social constructionist perspective, an important further point that Lederach makes is that since meaning is created through shared and accumulated knowledge, people from different cultural settings have developed many ways of creating and expressing as well as interpreting and handling conflict. Therefore understanding conflict and developing appropriate models of handling it will necessarily be rooted in the people involved and will respect and draw from their cultural knowledge.

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[23] Gerard Namer, "The Triple Legitimation: A Model for the Sociology of Knowledge," *Society and Knowledge,* eds. Nico Stehr and Volker Meja, 50-60 (London: Transaction Books, 1984).
[24] McCarthy, *Knowledge as Culture; the New Sociology of Knowledge*, 25-26.
[25] John Paul Lederach, *Mediating Across Cultures Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press,1965), 37-39.

Therefore, as stated before, the focus of this research is how the three most circulated national papers in Sri Lanka editorially framed the 2002 Peace Process. The social construction of reality approach is the most appropriate for the frame analysis.

Frame analysis or theories of framing argue that the media do not simply provide us with information on certain issues and events, but they also provide us with perspectives on them. The media place the events and issues within particular contexts and encourage audiences to understand them in particular ways. This means that the media do not simply select events to cover; they also offer interpretative frameworks through which these events are to be understood. For instance McCombs, et al.[26] argue that the media are certainly telling us how to think about issues and events. It is in this sense that Pan and Kosicki[27] argue that frame analysis "expands beyond agenda-setting research into what people talk or think about by examining how they think and talk about issues in the news."

Considerable research on media "framing" has emerged over the past twenty five years. The concept of framing was explained in Goffman's seminal work when he defined frames as "the principles of organization which govern events, at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them."[28] Moreover, he found that framing involves the organization and packaging of information. From that beginning scholars have examined various aspects of news frames and framing, but so far have

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[26] Maxwell E. McCombs, Juan Pablo, Liamas Esteban Lopez-Escobar and Federico Ray, "Candidate Images in Spanish Elections: Second-Level Agenda Setting Effects," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 74 (1997): 703-717.

[27] Z. Pan and M.G. Kosicki, "Frame Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse," *Political Communication* 10 (1993): 55-75.

[28] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974):10-11.

been unable to agree on one universally accepted definition. These scholars include Edelman,[29] Entman,[30] Semetko and Valkenburg,[31] Goffman,[32] Iyenger and Simon,[33] Powers, Tewksbury and Price[34] Tuchman,[35] Zaller.[36] Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, and Ghanem[37] define framing as "the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration." Entman[38] writes that: "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described."

Gamson and Modigliani[39] also state that, "a frame is a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue." Further, Gamson and Modigliani[40] offer the following operational definition of a frame: "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about,

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[29] M. Edelman, "Contestable categories and public opinion," *Political Communication* 10 (1993): 231-232.
[30] R. M. Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives the Kal and Iran Air Incidents," *Journal of Communication* 41, 4 (1991): 6-27.
[31] Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News," *Journal of Communication* 50, 2 (2000): 93-109.
[32] Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience,* 10-11.
[33] Shanto Iyengar and Adam Simon, "News Coverage of the Gulf Crises and Public Opinion: A Study of Agenda-Setting, Priming and Framing," *Communication Research* 20, 3 (1993): 365-383.
[34] Vincent Price, David Tewksbury and E. Powers and, "Switching Trains of Thought: The Impact of News Frames on Readers Cognitive Responses," *Communication Research* 34 (1997): 481-506.
[35] Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, 46-54.
[36] John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (New York: Cambridge Press 1992), 40-53.
[37] James Tankard, Laura Handerson, Jackie Silberman, Kriss Bliss and Salma Ghanem, "Media Frames: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement," Paper presented at the *Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication*, August 7-10, (1991): 1-25.
[38] Paletz and Entman, *Media, Power, Politics*, 9-47.
[39] William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion,": 1-37.
[40] William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, "The Changing Culture of Affirmative Action," in *Research in Political Sociology*, 3 (1987): 137-77.

the essence of the issue." According to Giltin frames are the 'persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual."[41] .In other words, in an attempt to present the news and to make sense of our world, journalists select, organize and emphasize some aspects of the world reality while ignoring some others.

Drawing on the work of sociologist Erving Goffman, who showed how people frame reality in order to negotiate, manage and comprehend the complexities of everyday life, Giltin argues that media frames "organize the world for both journalists who report on it and... for us who rely on their reports."[42] They make information understandable by assisting journalists to process quickly large quantities of information and numerous details and facts by enabling them to be packaged in a particular way.

Thus, while the idea of framing may not at first appear to be significantly different from that of media selectivity, it does cover a wider approach towards media analysis, whereas in the selectivity model the media have the power to select the events and issues that are given coverage; in the framing argument the media are also seen not only to have the power to be selective about what is covered but also the power to interpret events and issues for us. Media frames do not simply include some issues and events rather than others but they also, as Entman[43] puts it, "define problems... diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies."

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[41] Todd Giltin, *The Whole World is Watching,* 49-50.
[42] Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience,* 10-11.
[43] Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News," 6-27.

Media sociologists further argue that the notion of framing brings us to the heart of the problem of media power. It provides the study of media with a concept that Gamson and Stuart[44] say is 'indispensable'. It also suggests the central questions in the study of media power. If media power is the capacity to present issues and events within particular frames and so potentially limit and control how these are understood, then the following are important questions: What frames do the media bring to bear on events and how can we identify them? Is there a consistent pattern to the frames that are used to represent the world to us? Do some groups and institutions have a greater capacity than others to influence and shape the frames used by the media? Do audiences accept the frames used and the meanings they are intended to convey? These are some of the key questions raised by frame analysts.

4.4 The Organizational Structure of Media

Previous studies have focused on the individual media worker and his or her preferences, the social background and experience that shape these preferences, the professional ideologies under which he or she works and the practices that are adopted in daily work. Shoemaker and Reese's[45] study identified three different kinds of factors influencing the performance of the individual media worker: personal attitudes, values and beliefs; social background and experience; and professional orientations and practices.

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[44] William A. Gamson and David Stuart, "Media Discourse as a Symbolic Contest: The Bomb in Political Cartoons," *Sociological Forum* 7, 1 (1992): 55-86.

[45] Pamela J. Shoemaker and S. D. Resse, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content* (New York: Longman, 1996), 40.

Other studies focus on the organizational structures and routines and their influence on media practitioners and their work. Media organizations are viewed as complex entities whose goals, structures and rhythms determine the production process. Media content is shaped less by individual actions, enterprise and creativity than it is by the outcome of the routines and policies adopted by media organizations to inform and entertain (Manning[46]). Like other large organizations media organizations, are 'characterized by hierarchy, division of labour and routinisation of working operations through relatively standardized rules and procedures.' Organizational analysis also argues that the interaction between media organizations and the wider social, political and cultural environment also influences media outcomes. The focus is on forces external to the media that shape media organizations and work and hence what is produced. Shoemaker and Reese[47] identify factors such as the media's sources of information, revenue sources, technology, political/legal environment and perceptions of what audiences want. Examining the power other social institutions can exert over the media is seen as countering the limitations of the 'media-centric' focus of the previous factors (Schlesinger et al.[48]). Since the broader 'cultural' context is also seen as an important extra-media influence, media workers and organizations are part of a culture that determines how they interact and what they produce. In the same way Schudson[49] in his 'The Sociology of News Production' confirms that news is the outcome of work accomplished in a social environment.

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[46] Paul Manning, *News and News Sources* (London: Sage, 2001), 1-18.
[47] Shoemaker and Resse, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content,* 50-51.
[48] Philip Schlesinger, Graham Murdock and Philip Elliott, *Televising 'Terrorism': Political Violence in Popular Culture* (London: Comedia, 1983).
[49] Michael Schudson, "The Sociology of News Production," in *Social Meanings of News:A Text-Reader,* ed. D. Berkowitz, 7-22 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997).

Galtung and Ruge[50] in their study of "The Structure of Foreign News" address the general problem of identifying various factors that have a bearing on the flow of foreign news by asking the question, 'how do events become news?' Based on their idea that consideration of an event is culturally determined, they describe the factors affecting the selection process and the degree of importance of various factors in relation to each other. The set of criteria identified by this study are: news should be recent, intense or splashy, unambiguous of interpretation, directly related to national interests, predictable but slightly unexpected, involving elite persons or countries, individualized or personalized, negative or conflictual.

In one classic production study, Herbert Gans[51] viewed news as information transmitted from sources to audiences. However, the role of the journalist is to refine and change material made available from these sources and turn it into a product suitable and familiar for their audiences. By elaborating on the themes of objectivity and ideology, Hallin[52] in his study, provides a critique of the thesis of an opposition media during the period of the Vietnam War- the myth that it was the media which caused the Americans to lose the war in Vietnam. More precisely, three spheres of construction of social reality were identified by Hallin in his study of the Vietnam War. The spheres identified by him were "consensus, legitimate controversy and deviance." Hallin, however, observed that often stories could be situated in overlapping regions of the three spheres. He asserted that mostly the news during war times falls either in the sphere of consensus or in the sphere of legitimate controversy

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[50] Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge, "The Structure of Foreign News: The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers," *Journal of Peace Research* 2 (1965):64-91.

[51] Gans, *Deciding What's News,* 149.

[52] Daniel C. Hallin and T. Giltin, "Agony and Ritual: The Gulf War as Popular Culture and as Television Drama," *Political Communication* 10 (1993): 411-424.

or in the overlapping region of the three spheres. He argued that during war it is rare for the news to fall into the sphere of deviance.

As we see from the news related practices described above, modern news is seen as the cultural product of a specific institution: the news media. According to Mcquail,[53] "news cannot exist without media institutions. Unlike all other forms of authorship and cultural creation, news making cannot be done privately or individually. Therefore the machinery for distribution and the guarantee of credibility and authority is provided by the institution itself. In conclusion, most of these assumptions about journalistic practices are under scrutiny today. The routines or professional practices adhered to by journalists, such as beat systems (collecting information from certain key locations, such as the courts and police stations) mean that journalists are overly dependent on official and elite voices, often ignoring the views of the poor and disenfranchised. According to Gans,[54] and Tuchman[55], the groups with most resources are better able to access the media and therefore have the loudest voices. Though news media are supposed to be the fourth estate or watchdog over the government, in practice the relationship of the media and government has become one of dependence (Bennett[56], Cook[57]).

After having explained the concept of framing and news selection practices by media institutions, the following section, subtitled political economy looks at Marx's

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[53] Dennis McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1994), 249.
[54] Gans, *Deciding What's News,* 149.
[55] Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, 110.
[56] W. L. Bennett, *News: The Politics of Illusion* (New York: Longman, 1996), 10-20.
[57] Timothy E. Cook, *Governing with the News; News Media as a Political Institution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 109.

political economy approach in order to understand how the news is framed according to the ideology of the media owners.

4.5 Political Economy Approach

Literature on media ownership and control has been to a large extent shaped by the theories of Karl Marx and the political economy approach. One of Marx's beliefs was that powerful interests in society exercise control over the circulation of ideas. This they do by having a tight grip on the economic levers that operate the mass media. The result is that through ownership of media organizations and by exercising the owners' will through the chains of command within media organizations, their views of society come to dominate the content of the media. Owners also could directly intervene to make sure their views prevailed, and media practitioners, regardless of direct intervention, are even constrained by what they can report or represent by the economic parameters laid down by capitalist production.

Therefore based on Marx's critical perspective, the 'political economy' approach is 'associated with macro-questions of media ownership and control, interlocking directorships and other factors that bring together media industries and political and social elites.' The consequence for media practice and content as stated by Boyd Barrett and Newbold,[58] is the 'working of the profit motive in the hunt for audiences and for advertising.'

[58] Boyd O. Barrett, "The Political Economy Approach," in *Approaches to Media: A Reader,* eds. Chris Newbold and Boyd O. Barrett (London: Arnold, 1995), 186-192.

However, there is also disagreement within Marxist political economy over the relationship between ownership and control. Classical Marxists argue that there is a direct relationship between the ownership of the mass media and control over what one sees, hears, and reads in the media. Neo-Marxists argue that owners do not have direct control over the content of the media. According to them it is almost physically impossible for any media owners to exercise day-to-day control over the vast amount of material that is disseminated by media organizations. Rather, control is exercised through the structures and pressures within which media organizations have to operate. These structures are determined by the capitalist system and capitalist ideology.

Moreover the political economy approach lays stress on economics as a necessary and sufficient determinant of what the media produce and of what appears in the media. According to the second approach, while economic factors are not totally unimportant, there are also other ways of understanding media production. Based on organizational sociology, these other theories of media organization and media work explore the processes that occur within media organization and examine the occupational culture of the media in terms of the recruitment, career paths and values of media workers. Therefore, this chapter uses these two approaches to understand the ownership and the content of the media. Political economists have been documenting an inevitable trend in the media industries throughout the world towards monopoly and increased concentration of ownership.

4.6 Propaganda Model Within the Political Economy Approach

Ben Bagdikian[59] has documented the consolidation of media ownership in the United States which has some relevance to the research methods undertaken in this thesis. Bagdikian argues that men and women who run these corporations constitute 'a Private Ministry of Information and Culture' which can determine what Americans think about. This point is further developed by Chomsky[60]. He identifies the content, the concentration and nature of media ownership as one of the essential ingredients of their 'propaganda model.' He argues that there are five classes of 'filters' in society which determine what is 'news: - a range of political, economic and organizational filters which constrain the reporting of international news in the United States.

The essential ingredients of the 'propaganda model', or set of news "filters," fall under the following main headings: (1) the character and imperatives of the media as capitalist industries; (2) the impact of advertising economics; (3) government and corporate sourcing of news; (4) reactive, negative controls on media activity by powerful interest groups, and (5) a strong ideology of anti-communism (replaced more recently by updated variants on the 'bad other'). These elements, which are identified as "filters" by them, interact with and reinforce one another. The raw material of news must pass through successive filters, leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print. Further according to Chomsky, these five filter elements continuously 'interact with and reinforce one another' and have multilevel effects on media performance. These filters or gate-keepers fix the premises of discourse/

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[59] Ben H. Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 1-26.
[60] Noam Chomsky, "International Terrorism: Image and Reality," in *Western State Terrorism,* ed. Alexander George, 296-298 (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

interpretation and the definition of what is newsworthy in the first place. Furthermore, they explain the basis and operations of what amount to propaganda campaigns. Therefore Chomsky[61] and Tuchman[62] have described news as a manufactured product, and by implication each news product is bound to bear a unique and specific stamp of identity and quality depending on who is rendering it.

Due to its relevance, the propaganda model has been used by several studies to explain the role of the media in covering foreign conflicts. The first theoretical argument of the model is especially that there are military and political controls on media organisations. Some of these include movement restrictions during the war such as those personified by the "embeds" or pool systems for regulating access of journalists and information controls, especially during war, such as censorship legislation and/or public relations, propaganda or disinformation campaigns. All these factors, therefore, have strong effects on the media coverage of conflict (Boyd-Barrett,[63] Curtis,[64]). According to scholars such as Hallin,[65] Bennett et al.[66] Tuchman,[67] Giltin;[68] media frames support elite consensus within the established order to the exclusion of more radical and weaker views.

Another argument of the propaganda model is that due to the number of filters or constraints, the media are forced to depend on political sources. In other words, the

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[61] *Ibid.*
[62] Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, 110.
[63] Boyd O. Barret, "The Globalization of News," in *The Globalization of News,* ed. Boyd O. Barret and T. Rantanen, 19-34 (London: Sage, 1998).
[64] Liz Curtis, *Ireland: The Propaganda War, the British Media and the Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Belfast: Sasta, 1998), 110-112.
[65] Daniel C. Hallin, *The "Uncensored" War: The Media and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 117.
[66] W. L. Bennett, L .A. Gressett and W. Halton, "Repairing the News: A Case Study of the News Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 35, 2 (1985): 50-68.
[67] Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, 110.
[68] Giltin, "Agony and Ritual: The Gulf War as Popular Culture and as Television Drama," 411-424.

media generally function in accordance with the propaganda needs of the state, especially during periods of war, conflict escalation and state mobilisation against internal insurgencies (Boyd-Barrett;[69] Carruthers;[70]).

However, Edward S. Herman believes that the propaganda model is not liked by many liberals as well as a number of academic media analysts of the left. More specifically the model is being dismissed with a few superficial clichés as conspiratorial and simplistic. Defending the propaganda model, and dealing with some of the criticisms levelled against it, Chomsky[71] argues that the propaganda model has to cope with an extraordinarily complex set of events and claims only to offer a broad framework of analysis that may be allowable, but require modification in view of many local and special factors and may be entirely inapplicable by some other cases.

In general, propaganda analysis has been almost exclusively confined to the analysis of the American and British media contexts. However, as stated by Lang and Lang[72], the main concept underlying the model is a one-way flow of content filtered by gate-keepers in control of what ultimately gets through. As further stated by Lang and Lang, the propaganda model does not admit that the modern media and the American parties and various interests compete over whose version of reality is to prevail. There is a multiplicity of such conflicts within the elite, among powerful interests, and between any of these and the public in general. Due to these interests,

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[69] Barret, *The Globalization of News*, 19-34.
[70] Susan L. Carruthers, *The Media at War: Communication and Conflict in the Twentieth Century* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000).
[71] Chomsky, "International Terrorism", 296-298.
[72] Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang, "Noam Chomsky and the Manufacture of Consent for American Foreign Policy," *Political Communication* 21 (2004): 93-101.

the media itself have often been a major player in these conflicts, some of which involve criticisms of media performance.

Since Sri Lanka's national media are owned and controlled by the state as well as by private owners, some of the theoretical implications of the propaganda model are highly applicable to Sri Lanka. However, the constructive approach of frame analysis of Gamson and Wolfsfeld, which will be explained in this chapter, overcomes the above limitations of the propaganda model. Understanding ownership of media production becomes of vital importance since it can be used to influence the consumer or voter. In other words, accepting that the produced texts have an effect on the consumer or voter leads to a view of power as concentrated in the hands of the owners of media industries. How this has happened in Sri Lanka since its independence will be discussed in detail in a chapter on the history of the press in Sri Lanka.

The following section reviews Gadi Wolfsfeld's work,[73] which is of particular relevance to the research topic of this thesis, as it especially addresses the question of the media's role in covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. More specifically, Wolfsfeld's research is interpreted here as broadening key features of the indexing model, especially in terms of its advancing a series of hypotheses regarding the impact of media influence and news frame variables on media roles.

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[73] Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Collective Political Action and Media Strategy: The Case of Yamit," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 28, 3 (1984):363-382; Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Media, Protest, and Political Violence: A Transactional Analysis," in *Media Power in Politics*, ed. Doris Graber, 281-95 (Washington, DC: CD Press, 1994); Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Fair Weather Friends: The Varying Role of the News Media in the Arab-Israeli Peace Process," *Political Communication* 14 (1997): 29-48; Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Promoting Peace through the News Media: Some Initial Lessons from the Peace Process," *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 2 (1997): 52-70; Gadi, Wolfsfeld, "The news media and the second *Intifada*: some initial lessons," *The Harvard Journal of Press/Politics* 6 (2001): 113-118.

Therefore, Wolfsfeld's work regarding the influence of news frames on media conflict coverage, based on the frame research undertaken by Gamson and colleagues, could be regarded as the most theoretically appropriate for the objective of this thesis.

4.7 The Political Contest Model of Wolfsfeld

Based on the political economy approach, Gadi Wolfsfeld, an Associate Professor of Political Science and communication at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, bases his reasoning on his experience of the Israel-Palestine conflict and presents a theoretical model, namely the political contest model, to explain the role the media play in conflict. Moreover, Wolfsfeld utilizes a structural and a cultural perspective to explain the political contest between the antagonists, namely the "authorities," the stronger group, and the "challengers," the weaker group, to receive media coverage and gain political advantage. The structural perspective of Wolfsfeld explains how antagonists gain access to the news media. The antagonists' value to the media and their dependence on the news media for political influence are decisive in explaining how the conflicting parties gain access to the media. Similarly, the cultural perspective focuses on the contest over meaning and how frames of the media are constructed as culturally specific or universal. The main argument of Wolfsfeld is that the best way to understand the role of the news media in politics is to view the rivalry over the news media as part of a larger and more significant contest among political antagonists for political control.

On the whole, Wolfsfeld's model rests on five major arguments. First, the political process is more likely to have an influence on the news media than the news media are on the political process. Accordingly, the political process has a major impact on the press. Political power can usually be translated into power over the news media, firstly, because the political culture of a society has a major influence on how the news media cover conflicts. Secondly, the news media are more likely to react to political events than to initiate them. Thirdly, political realities often determine how antagonists use the news media to achieve political goals. Fourthly, political decisions have a major influence on who own the media and how they operate.

Wolfsfeld's second argument is that the authorities' level of control over the political environment is one of the key variables that determine the role of the news media in political conflicts. Political conflicts are characterized by moves and counter moves as each antagonist tries to initiate and control political events, to dominate political discourse about the conflict and to mobilize as many supporters as possible on their side. Those who have success in these areas also enjoy a good deal of success in the news media. The news media's role in these conflicts is directly affected by the outcomes of such struggles. When authorities succeed in dominating the political environment, the news media find it difficult to play an independent role. On the other hand, when the authorities lack or lose control, this provides the news media with a much greater array of sources and perspectives from which to choose. This in turn offers important opportunities for challengers to promote their own frames in the press.

The third major argument is that the role of the news media in political conflict varies with time and circumstance. This contention emphasizes the need to develop a dynamic approach to the study of the issue. According to Wolfsfeld, those who attempt to find a single unified role for the news media in political conflicts will be disappointed. The role of the news media in conflicts varies along with such factors as the political contest of the conflict, the resources, skills, and political power of the players involved, the relationship between the press and antagonists, the state of public opinion, the ability of the journalists to gain access to the conflict events and lastly, but certainly not least—what is happening in the field. Therefore, not only does the role of the news media vary across the conflicts, it can also change within the course of a single conflict.

The fourth argument is that those who hope to understand variations in the role of the news media must look at the competition between antagonists from two perspectives; one structural and the other cultural. Antagonists compete over the news media from these two major positions; they compete over access to the news media and they compete over media frames.

The fifth argument of Wolfsfeld's model is that while authorities have a tremendous advantage over challengers in the quantity and quality of media coverage they receive, many challengers can overcome these obstacles and use the news media as a tool for political influence.

The news media construct frames for conflicts by attempting to fit the information they are receiving into a package that is professionally useful and

culturally familiar (Gamson et al.[74] Gans,[75] Giltin,[76] Tuchman[77]). The process is best understood as one in which journalists attempt to find a narrative to fit between incoming information and existing media frames.

Once the news media have their attention drawn to a particular conflict they begin a directed search for information. They then attempt to use the information and images they have collected to create news stories. They do so by trying to find an existing media frame that fits their data. The process is an interactive one in which the initial impressions about the nature of the conflict engage standard routines for the collection of information and the construction of media frames. The creation of news is neither information driven nor frame driven, but rather a combination of the two. Wolfsfeld, therefore, further states that there are three major elements which contribute to the construction of media frames of conflict: the nature of the information and events that are being processed, the need to create a good news story, and the need to create a story that resonates politically within a particular culture.

In summary, the "political contest" model of Wolfsfeld attempts to explain the role of the news media in the struggle over meaning which characterizes every political conflict. The media serve as public interpreters of events and as symbolic arenas for ideological struggle between antagonists. News stories about political conflicts are a form of social construction in which some frames are more likely than others to serve as the underlying theme of news stories. Through his "political

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[74] William A. Gamson, "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory,* eds. Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller, 53-76 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
[75] Gans, *Deciding What's News,* 150.
[76] Todd Giltin, *The Whole World Is Watching,* 8-12.
[77] Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity," *American Journal of Sociology* 77, 4 (1972): 660-679.

contest" model one of the contributions Wolfsfeld makes to understanding the role of news media in conflict situations is to propose that media should be thought of as one contestant among many seeking political control.

On the whole, in terms of theoretical development, Wolfsfeld contributes and expands several useful research techniques in his work. In order to explain the competing frames active in the Palestinian intifada, the Oslo Peace accord and the cultural struggle of the Gulf war, he adapts Gamson's signature matrix[78], a framing outline, to depict competing frames of political issues. This outline presents each frame, beginning at the broadest level as thematic "packages" and progresses through "core frames," "metaphors," "catchphrases," "visual images" and "consequences," among various other stages. What results from this matrix is a script that political agents employ in the rhetorical space created by a political struggle. One of the weaknesses of the model is that Wolfsfeld tries to compare and to generalize about the roles of national media and international media based on his analysis particularly of Israeli and American news media. On the whole Wolfsfeld's study is one of the few studies so far to seriously engage Gamson's signature matrix, using it as a tool to reach his own conclusions in his political contest model.

[78] William Gamson's signature matrix is a framing outline, to depict competing frames of political issues. This outline presents each frame beginning at the broadest level as thematic "packages," and progressing through "core frames," "metaphors," "catchphrases," "visual images" and "consequences," among various other stages. What results from this matrix is a script that political agents employ in the rhetorical space created by a political struggle.

4.8 The Media in Times of Peace

Having discussed the role that media play, in conflicts, the following section looks at the role of media in times of peace. Since the scope of this thesis covers the 2002 Peace Process of Sri Lanka, more attention will be paid to discussing the theoretical framework suggested by Wolfsfeld in order to understand the role media play in times of peace. It should be mentioned first, that though there are many studies about the role of the news media in conflict and war, there are only a few about the media's role in peacetime. There is a large body of literature documenting governmental influence on the work of journalists in conflicts (Carruthers,[79] Hiebert,[80]) who studied British coverage of the 1991 and 1998 crises, suggested that the media serve a crucial propaganda function, not only through an elite conspiracy, but also as an ideology of reporting by adhering to a set of routines, constraints, expectations, and myths. There are also those who deal with such topics as the role of the media in foreign policy and diplomacy (Cohen,[81]Gilboa,[82]) and several who relate the problems peace movements face in attempting to mobilize the news media (Glasgow University Media Group,[83] Hackett,[84] Ryan,[85] Small[86]).

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[79] Carruthers, *The Media at War: Communication and Conflict in the Twentieth Century,* 23-54.
[80] Ray Eldon Hiebert, "Public Relations and Propaganda in Framing the Iraq War: A Preliminary Review," *Public Relations Review* 29 (2003): 243-255.
[81] Yoel Cohen, *Media Diplomacy: The Foreign Office in the Mass Communications Age* (London: Frank Cass, 1986), 23-35.
[82] Eytan Gilboa, "Introduction: World Perspectives on Media and Conflict," in *Media and Conflict Framing Issues, Making Policy, Shaping Opinions,* ed. Eytan Gilboa, 1-8 (New York: Transnational Publishers, 2002).
[83] Glasgow University Media Group, *War and Peace News* (Philadelphia, P.A.: Open University, 1985),67-78.
[84] Robert Hackett, *News and Dissent:The Press and Politics of Peace in Canada* (Norwood, N.J: Ablex, 1991), 49.
[85] Charlotte Ryan, *Prime Time Activism; Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing* (Boston: South End Press, 1991).
[86] Melvin Small, "Influencing the Decision-Makers: The Vietnam Experience," *Journal of Peace Research* 24, 2 (1987): 185-198.

According to Wolfsfeld, as well as Spencer,[87] the reasons or the cause for the large gap between the roles of the media in conflict as well as in peace could also provide some important insights into the subject of the media in times of peace. Conflict and violence are major ingredients of the news industry, while stories about peace are not. The media also play a significant role in reporting protests and terrorism, because the need for publicity is a central component of these strategies. There is an enormous amount of publicity associated with war and such coverage is full of striking and dramatic images. In addition, Wolfsfeld states that when democratic nations go to war, the role the media should play has become an issue of public debate, while the role of the news media in a peace process has become subtle and more hidden.

Elaborating on his previous research, Wolfsfeld[88] holds that in any conflict-driven country, there are two major actors that compete for news coverage; namely, those who are opposed to the peace process and those who want to promote peace. This means that a better understanding of the rules of competition between these various actors helps to understand the actual role the media will play in a country in any peace process. Progress towards peace requires at least a basic understanding of the needs of the other side, but news media tend to reinforce ethnocentrism and hostility towards adversaries.

However it is important to make a distinction between achieving public standing and attaining public legitimacy. In times of war, the press is an important agent of vilification, a tool that enables leaders to mobilize public support for their

[87] Graham Spencer, *The Media and Peace: From Vietnam to the 'War on Terror'* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
[88] Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and the Path to Peace* (Cambridge: University Press, 2004).

policies. Leaders pursuing a peace process usually have the opposite goal. They have to lower the level of suspicion and hate in order to convince the public that there is a trustworthy partner on the other side. By modifying images of the enemy, or the opposite side, the news media can play just as an important a role in mobilizing the public for peace as it does for war.

In the promotion of peace, the media can also emphasize the benefits that peace can bring, raise the legitimacy of group leaders working for peace and help transform images of the enemy. In the same way, the news media can also play the role of a destructive agent against peace; media can emphasize the risks and dangers associated with compromise, raise the legitimacy of those opposed to concessions, and reinforce negative stereotypes of the enemy.

Given the nature of the news criteria, it is much easier to promote conflict in the media, than to promote peace. A successful peace process requires patience and the nature of the news media demands immediacy. Peace is most likely to develop within a calm environment and usually the news media have an obsession with threats and violence. Peace building is a complex process and the news media deal with simple events.

According to Wolfsfeld, just like his five major arguments of his political contest model, there are also four major types of influence that the news media in a country could have on a peace process. Firstly the news media can play a major role in defining the political atmosphere where a peace process takes place. A peace process is very likely to succeed when it is carried out within an environment that is

amenable to compromise and reconciliation. This is because it is the news media that provide citizens with important clues about the political climate surrounding a peace process. The ways in which the news media report on the peace process are also connected directly with external events. If negotiations have been halted and violence has broken out, the media cannot be expected to provide positive stories about peace. The second type of influence media have on the peace process is connected with the nature of the debate about such process. In many countries today news media have become the central space for political debate. Thirdly, a country's media can have an impact on an antagonist's strategy and behaviour. Wolfsfeld uses the term antagonist to refer to all individuals, groups, or institutions that are attempting to have an influence on a particular peace process. Therefore, since most antagonists attribute so much importance to the news media, they often find themselves adapting their plans and actions in accordance with media needs. Fourthly, the media can raise and lower the public standing and legitimacy of antagonists involved in the peace process and their positions.

Stating that normally media have a negative influence on a peace process, Wolfsfeld further holds that the media in peacetime can also influence the strategies and behaviour of those in power. For example when violence breaks out, leaders come under tremendous pressure to "do something," and the media, especially the press, are important agents for creating a sense of urgency to do something. According to Wolfsfeld, on the international level this dynamic is referred to as the "CNN effect" but media pressure can also have an impact on domestic policy.

Similarly, another negative effect the media will have on a peace process is termed the "strategy and behaviour" category by Wolfsfeld. According to this, giving negotiators too much access to the news media reduces the chances for success. Secrecy is considered an essential element in any negotiating process. When the negotiations become too public, leaders and negotiators are constantly defending themselves against charges of "giving in" to the enemy. In other words, leaks about concessions provide valuable ammunition to opposition forces in their attempt to discredit the government. The validity of this observation of Wolfsfeld's applicable to the 2002 Peace Process is also pointed out by Weerakoon[89], as well as by Solheim[90], two of the key architects of the Sri Lankan peace process.

On the positive side, however, the news media can also play an important role in modifying public perceptions about various antagonists, that is, there are many political activists who want to have an influence on a given peace process, but few are considered important enough to warrant media attention. In opposition to the role of vilification, which enables leaders to mobilize public support for their policies (Dorman and Livingston,[91] Manheim,[92] Wolfsfeld[93]), leaders pursuing a peace process need the support of the press to mobilize support for peace. In other words, the media can lower the level of suspicion and hate in order to convince the public that there is a viable partner on the other side. Therefore, by modifying images of the enemy, the

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[89] Bradman Weerakoon, "Initiating and Sustaining the Peace: Origins and Challenges," in *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures & Lessons,*vol.2, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, 1-40 (Colombo: Foundation for Co-Existence, 2006).

[90] Rupesinghe, "Introduction" xiii-lxvii.

[91] Dorman A. William and S. Livingston, "News and Historical Content: The Establishing Phase of the Persian Gulf Policy Debate," in *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy in Gulf War,* eds. W.L. Bennett and D.L. Paletz, 149-163 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[92] Jarol B. Manheim, *Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy: The Evolution of Influence* (New York: Oxford Press, 1994), 28

[93] Wolfsfeld, "Promoting Peace through the News Media: Some Initial Lessons from the Peace Process," 52-70.

media can play just as important a role in mobilizing the public for peace as it does for war.

Moreover, as already explained, the media can positively raise and lower the perceived legitimacy of political activists involved in the internal debate over peace. Applying this principle to Sri Lanka, Rupesinghe[94] has rightly observed that daily news briefings by the chief negotiators and the LTTE spokesperson, Anton Balasingham, had diminishing returns for an ever-sceptic public about the 2002 Peace Process. The success of any political position depends, at least, on public support for the sponsors themselves. Hence media portrayals of proponents and opponents to a peace process are important factors in the overall struggle for political support.

4.9 Static Model

Like his previous model entitled the "political contest" model, Wolfsfeld also proposes a static model to explain the role of media in peace and holds that due to fundamental contradictions between the nature of a peace process and news values, the news media often play a destructive role in attempts at making peace. He supports his argument by detailing the incongruence rooted in the professional norms and routines used by the journalists. To decide what is news, journalists use four types of values, namely, news production based on immediacy, drama, simplicity and ethnocentrism. Though all media establishments make use of these criteria, there are also some important differences in the amount of emphasis each news organ places on

[94] Rupesinghe, "Introduction," xiii-lxvii.

these values. In a more sensationalist media environment, however, there can be greater emphasis on all four of these values.

Thus, it has been shown that news media are especially likely to play a destructive role in a peace process. The emphasis on drama means that the political atmosphere surrounding the peace process is likely to be negative, pessimistic and heated. The obsessive search for the dramatic can also have an inflammatory influence on the peace activists' political strategies and on the nature of the political debate. This observation of Wolfsfeld was proved once again in the following example cited by Weerakoon, who was personal secretary to the former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinge, who initiated the 2002 Peace Process with the LTTE:

> However, considerable fear began to be expressed in the media, fuelled by elements opposed to the peace process and the political opposition to the Government that the ISGA represented the opening towards the creation of Eelam. [95]

Weerakoon goes on to argue that the public debate and agitation put the United National Party on the defensive when it was already reeling from a sustained campaign carried out by the media. During the period of the 2002 Peace Process, the media had a ready-made portfolio which included LTTE's shipments of arms, the granting of a license to import and use an FM radio station at Kilinochchi, illegal taxation, the setting up of unauthorized police stations and law courts, the recruitment of child soldiers, abductions, and many other cease fire violations of apparent concessions made by the government to the LTTE through its 'so-called' peace process.

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[95] Weerakoon, "Initiating and Sustaining the Peace: Origins and Challenges," 29.

There was also the supposed imminent danger to national security, especially to the sea base at Trincomalee where the LTTE has established 13 camps encircling the town. Further, daily dispatches from field based news reporters filled the papers and the names of the LTTE camps, particularly Manirasakulam, were in everybody's head. According to Weerakoon however, Manirasakulam turned out to be a damp squib. It was 22 kilometers from Trincomalee and on inspection was found to have a small number of LTTE cadres armed with sub-machine guns. Despite expectations, no long-distance artillery was to be seen. Photographs taken later showed the existence of a few LTTE graves and a long abandoned shrine of a Muslim saint.

Finally, an improbable dramatic attempt at taking over the camp by a force of volunteers led by the leader of the Hela Urumaya (literally translated as Sinhala heritage), another antagonist of the peace process was foiled 'in the nick of time' according to the propaganda, the army turning the force back before they could get within firing range. To cite Rupesinghe,[96] the government response to this barrage of criticism was unconvincing to the majority of the public. Further, according to him, the media had also succeeded in preparing the ground for the final denouement. The President intervened to take over the 3 important Ministries of Defense, Media and Internal Security on 3 November 2003.

Therefore, the media's search for simple messages and their focus on immediate events tend to lower the level of public debate and deliberation concerning the process. Most importantly, the complete ethnocentric orientation of the news media serves to reinforce suspicion and hatred towards the enemy, severely inhibiting attempts to modify such attitudes. Journalists belong to particular socio-economic

[96] Rupesinghe, "Introduction," xiii-lxvii.

classes and ethnic groups: they are male or female; they have certain predispositions and views, and they breathe a particular 'cultural air', which as Richard Hoggart put it, infuses 'the whole ideological atmosphere' of any given society, telling its members 'that some things can be said and others had best not be said' (cited by: Schudson[97]).

Another major reason why the media can make peace more difficult is due to the fostering of an ethnocentric view of the world. As Wolfsfeld[98] puts it, every newspaper operates from a certain political and cultural base that defines its language, beliefs, values, attitudes, and prejudices (Liebes,[99] Shudson,[100] Wolfsfeld[101]). Furthermore, news media play a critical role in the reproduction of shared myths, symbols, and traditions that mostly increase loyalty to the state (see: Edelman[102]). News stories are almost always about "us": about what is happening or could happen to us.

When reporting about enemies, most news editors assume that the public in general has very little interest in learning about the perspectives of the so called "enemy". Enemies are newsworthy because of their threat; therefore, in general, news stories focus almost exclusively on the level of danger posed by the other side. Even journalists who support a peace process will avoid writing stories that offend "local

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[97] Michael Shudson, "The Sociology of News Production Revisited,", in *Mass Media and Society, eds.* James Curran and Michael Guveritch, 175-200 (London: Arnold, 1996).
[98] Wolfsfeld, "Promoting Peace through the News Media: Some Initial Lessons from the Peace Process," 52-70.
[99] Tamar Liebes, *Reporting the Arab Israeli Conflict :How hegemony works* (London: Routledge, 1997).
[100] Shudson, "The Sociology of News Production Revisited," 175-200.
[101] Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and the Path to Peace,* 16-27.
[102] Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Use of Politics* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 56.

sensitivities." According to Wolfsfeld self- censorship can be an extremely effective means of filtering out unpopular viewpoints.

Ethnocentrism is very apparent in times of crisis. When a peace process breaks down, the news media of both sides tend to emphasize their own righteousness and the others' malice. Such breakdowns are usually accompanied by violence and the news media are easily mobilized to vilify the enemy. News stories provide graphic descriptions of the other side's brutality, and the sufferings of "our" people. The tragic stories of the dead and the wounded leave collective scars that remain for years to come. Further claims about our own acts of aggression and the other's suffering are ignored, underplayed, or discounted. As Wolfsfeld puts it, we are always the victims, they are always the aggressors.

More of the significant influences of the media on the prospects for peace usually have taken effect long before the negotiations begin. This means the public has been exposed to years of tragic images and stories about "evil" enemies who have killed "our" people. Therefore the news media are extremely powerful and they have omnipresent mechanisms for intensifying and solidifying hate between peoples.

Although, as explained, the role of the media in promoting peace has been negative due to various factors, according to Wolfsfeld, there are also further situations in which the media can play a more constructive role in a peace process. According to him, there are two sets of variables that are likely to have such an influence, namely, those associated with the political environment surrounding the peace process and those that have to do with the media environment in which the

journalists operate. The political and professional context for news stories about peace has a major impact on how they are written. Usually all media tend to work from a particular cultural and professional base that helps define the construction of news (Gamson,[103] Gamson,[104] Ryan[105]).

One of the most important goals of the political environment is to gain the consensus of the elite in support of a peace process. In other words, the greater the level of elite consensus in support of a peace process, the more likely the news media will play a positive role in such a peace process; when leaders are able to generate a high level of political support in favour of peace, the press has little problem supporting it. Similarly, when the elite are divided, the internal conflict itself becomes a major part of the story (Paletz and Entman[106]). Hallin[107] also makes a similar point in his work about the behaviour of the American news media in the Vietnam War. The most important indicators for the news media in these situations are the positions taken by the major political parties. Journalists depend on party leaders as their dominant sources for assessing the state of the political environment. The major opposition parties define which issues are contentious and worthy of public debate. The level of political consensus among the general public can also have an impact on media coverage, but it is less direct and less significant. The indirect influence comes from the fact that political leaders are also taking into consideration the climate of opinion when forming their own positions (Paletz and Entman[108]).

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[103] William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 24.
[104] Gamson, "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," 53-76.
[105] Ryan, *Prime Time Activism; Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing*, 42-61.
[106] Paletz and Entman, *Media, Power, Politics*, 9-47.
[107] D. Hallin, *The "Uncensored" War,* 117.
[108] Paletz and Entman, *Media, Power, Politics*, 9-47.

Therefore, it is important to evaluate the level of elite consensus concerning the peace process. The lower the level of controversy among elites concerning the process itself, the more likely Pro-Peace frames will dominate media discourse. Peace frames will be used also to organize information about both successes and setbacks: success will lead to more optimistic coverage and setbacks will be seen as problems that must be solved. Additionally, those who oppose peace will be treated as troublemakers, especially if they resort to violence. The news media in such cases become active agents in the promotion of the peace process, constantly amplifying the existing consensus; and also when there is serious competition between frames about the peace process, the news media will reasonably give expression to both perspectives. In cases like that, a good deal of the news coverage will focus on the internal debate over the process and journalists will actively seek opinions from both camps. Moreover the news media will also achieve balance when consensus is low by alternating between frames in accordance with changing events.

However, editors do not simply invent interpretative frames. They absorb them from the society in which they operate. As was explained in this chapter, the construction of news is a reactive process, and journalists attempt to create stories that are politically acceptable to their readers. This means that the greater the number and severity of crises associated with a peace process, the more likely the news media are to play a negative role in the process. This factor is connected with the media's need for drama. Their lack of a long-term perspective leads them to exaggerate the intensity and significance of such crises. When political leaders are targeted with huge headlines and angry questioning, they may feel compelled to over-react to the sense of crisis and the cycle begins again. But the role of the news media in a relatively calm

peace process will be quite different. The tone of the reporting will be generally low-key and many stories will be relegated to a less prominent position in the line up. If the peace process is not producing anything interesting, journalists will look elsewhere for drama. The more stable and trouble-free a peace process is, the less likely that the news media will play a destructive role.

It is also important to remember that in general news media will play a role in the construction of political waves associated with a peace process. A major breakthrough in negotiations, when accompanied by massive amounts of international support, provides important political and media advantages to the government. Officials find it much easier in this type of atmosphere to promote optimistic frames for the media and the public. Peace frames make sense within this context. Those who are opposed to peace are put on the defensive and find they are unable to promote their frames. When disasters strike, pro-peace governments are on the defensive. Such disasters could include a complete breakdown in talks, aggressive statements or actions from the other side, leaks about major concessions by the government, or a terrorist attack. According to Wolfsfeld, it is the opposition frames that make sense, because unfolding events provide graphic demonstrations of the risks and dangers associated with the process.

According to Wolfsfeld, when discussing the role of media in promoting peace, there are two other important dimensions of the media environment to be borne in mind. One, the degree to which sensationalism has a major foothold among journalists, and two, the extent to which antagonists in a conflict share the same news media. These two factors however, push in opposite directions. A greater level of

sensationalism will increase the likelihood of the media playing a destructive role in a peace process, while an increase in the amount of shared media will increase the chances that the press will make a positive contribution to a process.

At present, there is growing concern in the field of political communication about the influence of sensationalism on public discourse (Blumler and Kavanagh,[109] Brants,[110] Brants and Neijens,[111] Newton,[112] Owen,[113] Sparks[114]). According to Wolfsfeld, most of these scholars argue that the greater the influence of commercialism on news content, the less likely it is that the media can serve as serious and responsible forums for public debate.

The notion of shared media refers to the extent to which antagonists engaged in a peace process receive their news from the news organisations. Therefore the greater the extent of shared media, the more likely it is that the news media will play a constructive role in a peace process. Wolfsfeld notes that there are cultural, commercial, and political reasons for this dynamic. Journalists tend to write stories within a particular cultural framework. Presumptions about collective identity are an especially important element in the construction of news and they provide a basis for dialogue. In an environment dominated by shared media, the underlying theme concerns what can be done to resolve conflict within "our" community. When there

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[109] Jay Blumler and D. Kavanagh, "The Third Age of Political Communication: Influences and Features," *Political Communication,* 16, 3 (1999): 209-230.
[110] Kess Brants, "Who's Afraid of Infotainment?" *European Journal of Communication* 13, 3 (1998): 315-335.
[111] Kess Brants and P. Neijens, "The Infotainment of Politics.," *Political Communication* 15, 2 (1998): 149-164.
[112] Kenneth Newton, "Mass Media Effects: Mobilization or Media Malaise?" *British Journal of Political Science* 29 (1999): 577-99.
[113] Diana Owen, "Popular Politics and the Clinton/Lewinsky Affair: The Implications for Leadership," *Political Psychology* 21 (2000):161-177.
[114] Colin Sparks, "Goodbye, Hildy Johnson: the vanishing 'serious' press," in *Journalism and the Public Sphere,* eds. Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks, 58-74 (Routledge: New York, 1992).

are few or no shared media the perspective tends to be ethnocentric. Routine coverage of a peace process focuses on the threat that "they" pose to "us". As mentioned before, the news media in each culture reinforce existing myths and stereotypes about the other.

As Wolfsfeld further notes, there are also commercial motivations that point in the same direction. Media owners working in an environment with shared media will be extremely reluctant to offend major segments of the audience. They are forced to find a modified tone and language that speaks to the largest possible population. Further, the existence of a shared news media will also have an important influence on how political leaders and groups shape their messages. Leaders employ a less extremist form of rhetoric when they find themselves talking to multiple audiences. In turn this process may even have an influence on the ideologies of the rival groups in opposition to peace, as more moderate messages become familiar and acceptable. Those who have to communicate only with their own people, tend to emphasise sectarian loyalties in order to maintain their power base.

It should be noted that one is more likely to find a shared media in domestic conflicts than in international disputes. This is another example, according to Wolfsfeld, of how the role of the media is influenced by the political context in which they operate. More specifically, when a conflict breaks out between different groups within the same country, journalists will be more likely to construct news stories that will bridge the cultural gap between the two sides. This does not necessarily mean that such stories will be completely "objective," but at least they tend to reflect more the majority views.

Therefore Wolfsfeld's *Media and the Path to Peace* is one of the few books that is highly applicable to Sri Lanka in discovering the role of the media in the 2002 Peace Process, since it details the different roles that newspapers play in an ongoing peace process. His main contribution is to point out how the press's role keeps changing with time and according to a country's political atmosphere. Most important is his examination of the three major peace processes, namely the Oslo peace process, the peace process between Israel and Jordan, and the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, all of which serve as a model for studying the role of the press during times of peace in different countries.

This concludes the discussion on the principal theories found within the political economy that throw some light on the role of the print media in Sri Lanka, a country afflicted by the Sinhalese-Tamil ethnic conflict. All the major theories, starting with the propaganda model and the political contest model and the static model, are relevant in understanding the role of the media in the Peace Process of 2002 in Sri Lanka.

4.10 Previous Studies on the Media and the Conflict in Sri Lanka

Though the nature of the national press in Sri Lanka will be fully outlined in another chapter, this section of the thesis will briefly introduce some of major works published to date on the media in Sri Lanka. For instance, in a scholarly compilation

of essays entitled, "Studies on the Press in Sri Lanka and South Asia," Peiris[115] scrutinizes the key issues concerning the mass communication media of Sri Lanka against the backdrop of the changing media scene in South Asia. The information provided in the volume is useful for understanding the various organizational structures and routines and their influence on the relationship between media and ethnicity in that it gives valuable insights into the history of the Sinhalese and Tamil press in Sri Lanka.

Kandiah's[116] work, on the other hand, bases itself on an examination of instances of media treatment of the conflict in all three languages and also tries to present the historical development of modern media and politics. According to his opinion of the media in Sri Lanka, "...the examination reveals a very negative picture which accounts for the skepticism which people generally entertain about the media." By analyzing the English and Sinhala newspapers together as a whole, he concludes that their role cannot be defined as "conflict specialist" or as mediators between the hostile parties helping to reconcile their differences.

Another reason for the dysfunctional behaviour of the print media in Sri Lanka, according to Kandiah, is government media policies, which were implemented by the government to control the flow of information about the war. Especially at the height of the war, the only means of access to the war zones, from which the situation could be reported at first hand, were in the control of the military, and it was very difficult for independent journalists to obtain permission to enter them. In this respect,

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[115] G. H. Peiris, "The Press in South Asia: Intra-Regional Comparisons," in *Studies on the Press in Sri Lanka and South Asia,* ed. G. H. Peiris, 1-51 (Kandy, Sri Lanka: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997).

[116] Thiru Kandiah, ed., *The Media and the Ethnic Conflict*, (Colombo: Marga Institute, 2001), 1-45.

however, Tamil newspapers seem to have had some advantage, because their reporters had access both to official releases and to those procured through informal information networks within comparatively inaccessible areas in the north and east. In these areas they were able to have immediate access to the Voice of Tiger broadcasts.

Dissanayake,[117] who studied the roles played by the national and international press in reporting the Sri Lankan insurrection of 1971, writes that there was an obvious attempt to withhold information and disseminate the bare minimum. Further, according to Dissanayake, another interesting point that should be noted about the reporting, as well as the commentaries and editorials that appeared in the Sri Lankan papers, was the total absence of any attempt to present different viewpoints and interpretations regarding the Insurrection of 1971.

Though Dissanayake's work gives fresh insights into the national press in Sri Lanka, it has limited applicability to the topic undertaken in this research, since the Insurrection was not ethnic in nature, unlike the present protracted conflict between Tamils and Sinhalese.

According to most of the previous research, the media in Sri Lanka exacerbate existing communal and ethnic tensions by continually playing on the nationalist and religious emotions of the people. By commenting on the ownership of media houses, he says that newspaper establishments owned by Sinhalese show a majoritarian bias regardless of their language medium, which was also a point raised by Kandiah.

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[117] Wimal Dissanayake, "The Roles Played by the National and International Press in the Management of the Sri Lankan Insurrection of 1971," in *The News Media in National and International Conflict,* eds. A. Arno and W. Dissanayake, 167-88 (Essex, U.K.: Bowker Publishing Company/Erasmus House, 1984).

Hattototuwa says that three establishments publish newspapers in English and all of them have a pro-Sinhala bias in varying degrees. He concludes by noting that though English literacy is around 7% in Sri Lanka, and a sizeable number of Tamils is included in this percentage, no effort is made to examine the news from the perspectives of the Tamils or any other minority community. Furthermore none of the Sinhalese who own private mainstream media establishments publish newspapers in Tamil.

In their study "War or Peace Journalism? Asian Newspaper Coverage of Conflicts," Ting Lee and Maslog[118] examine the extent to which five Asian regional conflicts involving India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines are framed as war journalism or peace journalism based on Johan Galtung's[119] classification. Their main findings in the form of a content analysis of 1,338 stories from 10 newspapers suggested that, overall the news coverage of these conflicts is dominated by a war journalism frame. The Indian and Pakistani coverage of the Kashmir issue showed the strongest war journalism frame but, according to their analysis, the coverage of the Tamil Tiger movement by the Sri Lankan newspapers, and coverage of the Mindanao conflict by the Philippine newspapers reveal a more promising peace journalism framing. The three most salient indicators of peace journalism, according to them, are the avoidance of demonizing language, a nonpartisan approach, and a multiparty orientation. However the war journalism frame is supported by a focus on the here and now, an elite orientation and a dichotomy of good and bad.

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[118] Seow Ting Lee and Crispin C. Maslog, "War or Peace Journalism? Asian Newspaper Coverage of Conflicts," *Journal of Communication* 55, 2 (2005): 311-329.
[119] Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: Sage, 1996), 1-60.

Their unit of analysis was the individual story, a definition that included "hard" news stories, feature stories, opinion pieces and letters to the editor. Six mass communication graduate students between 1 August 2001 and 28 February 2002 analyzed coverage of the Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers. According to their study, the time chosen for this study represented the most recent peak periods of these conflicts. In the case of Sri Lanka, the LTTE had stormed Colombo's International Airport in July 2001; the period of 1 August to 28 February 2002 covered the timeframe before and after the December 2001 ceasefire between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government.

The stories analyzed were taken from three newspapers, the Sri Lankan *Daily News, Sunday Observer* and *Daily Mirror*, all published locally. They obtained stories from the respective papers' online archives. A significantly higher proportion of peace journalism frame was found in the privately owned *Daily Mirror* than in the *Daily News* and *Sunday Observer* which were owned by the government in power.

Their findings that a significant number of stories were framed as peace journalism may be surprising for a country that had faced two decades of violence. Ting Lee and Maslog conclude, however, from their research that the pattern of salient indicators supporting the peace journalism frame, falls short of Galtung's characterization of peace journalism as an advocacy and interpretive approach. Although there is some demonstration of journalists' understanding of the conflict by mapping it out as consisting of many parties, there is little in terms of a solution-seeking approach and more disappointingly not many peace journalism stories enjoy popular support.

Furthermore, with little focus on ordinary people, and without finding out whether their position as stated by the elites is reflective of the true feeling on the ground, there is little that journalists can do to empower the ordinary people. Ting Lee and Maslog's study also confirms that the work of journalists follows predictable rituals and reliance on elites is one such ritual. Their study confirms the scholars' view that reporters depend heavily on official sources that they perceive to be authoritative, credible, knowledgeable and powerful and always within official definitions (McLeod and Hertog,[120] Paletz and Entman,[121] Sigal[122]).

One of the drawbacks of the study, mentioned by Ting Lee and Maslog themselves, is that their study is limited by its exclusive use of English language Asian daily newspapers. In Sri Lanka, only 7% of the population can understand English. Therefore this research, while throwing some light on the nature of the press in Sri Lanka, must challenge researchers to scrutinize those papers that are published in Sinhala and Tamil, the main languages of Sri Lanka. Ting Lee and Maslog also feel that since the news stories were downloaded from online archives, the relative prominence given to them could not be ascertained. They go on to state that many of the coding categories used for assessing narrative content were conceived by Galtung (1986) as a form of prepublication criteria, thus posing a challenge to their content analysis of actually published stories.

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[120] D. M. McLeod and J. K. Hertog, "Social Control and the Mass Media's Role in the Regulation of Protest Group: The Communicative Acts Perspective," in *Mass Media, Social Control and Social Change,* eds. D. Demers and K. Viswanath, 305-330 (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1998).
[121] Paletz and Entman, *Media, Power, Politics*, 9-47.
[122] L. V. Sigal, *Reporters and Officials* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1973).

Nadarajah,[123] who analyzed Sri Lanka's vernacular press and the peace process, has also come to the following main conclusions, a fact which is confirmed by major studies already mentioned in this section by other Sri Lankan scholars. According to Nadarajah, an examination of the vernacular press reveals a multi-faceted and gradually deepening ethnic divide, particularly on issues related to the peace process—despite common ground on some other issues such as crime and corruption. More importantly vernacular press coverage since February 2002 has been noticeably shaped by nationalistic ideologies and, in come cases, by racist sentiments. Almost all leading Sinhala papers have adopted strong Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist positions.

Looking at all these previous major studies on the peace process and the media in Sri Lanka, one could say that most of them are quantitative research studies which try to measure only the major trends in the media in Sri Lanka. However the methodology of this thesis is unique because it uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches to study how the three most read newspapers in Sri Lanka have portrayed the 2002 Peace Process. Moreover frame theory is a useful heuristic device that can be qualitative, quantitative and also connotative. It is hoped that frame analysis will be a better method to understand not only how news is presented but also who constructs the news and why it is so. In other words, frame analysis applied to date on the newspapers read most frequently in Sri Lanka gives valuable insights into personal attitudes, professional roles of media workers, media routines, media organizations, sources, advertisers and audiences, government controls and other media organizations. Unlike the previous studies done on the media in Sri Lanka,

[123] Suthaharan Nadarajah, "Sri Lanka's Vernacular Press and the Peace Process: Part of the Sri Lanka Strategic Conflict Assessment (2005)," www.asiafoundation.org.

which are limited to looking only at what is published in the papers regularly, frame analysis employed by this thesis looks at how news is also coated, presented or packaged in accordance with the beliefs, myths, stories, folk tales and imagery that coincide with the dominant culture of a society. In short, frame analysis tries to go beyond the content or the appearance of the news, by also looking at the cultural and historical context of news.

As Entman[124] says "the frames of a news portrait can be enlarged so that media reports may penetrate the consciousness of a mass public that is minimally aware of most specific issues and events. Or the frame can be shrunk to miniaturize an event, diminishing the amount, prominence, and duration, and thus mass awareness."

Before concluding this chapter on reviewing the literature, it is relevant also to discuss a few key works about the ethnicised conflict in Sri Lanka. One of the insights of this review has been that Sri Lanka's conflict is multi-faceted, erroneously portrayed as simply 'ethnic.' The solutions that have been proposed to end the conflict over the last twenty-five years, within the country and internationally, have not produced any lasting results. With this background, Professor John Richardson's work[125] is very thought-provoking, because he analyses the causes and solutions that have been put forward so far by various schools of thought on the conflict in Sri Lanka. More importantly, he connects them with the three schools of thought in the 'conflict theory' known as *relative deprivation, mobilization* and *repression.* One of his most important insights is his conclusion that all these approaches have something to say about the probable causes of the conflict. After a detailed discussion of the

[124] R. M. Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News," 6-27.
[125] John Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned,*

various causes of the conflict in Sri Lanka, Richardson in his book gives a strategy for preventing deadly conflict and terrorism by way of ten imperatives.

Kenneth Bush's[126] study of Sri Lanka is somewhat complementary to Richardson's work in the sense that Bush tries to name various critical junctures or benchmarks in post colonial Sri Lanka that gave rise to Tamil separatism. Furthermore Bush's study refines and advances the understanding of the dynamics underpinning violent and non-violent "ethnicized" conflict. In other words, Bush's work enables us to understand how the ebb and flow of relations within ethnic groups affects relations between these groups, for better or worse. According to Bush, current approaches to the study of ethnicized conflicts have an overwhelming focus on inter-communal relations, or what he regards as 'billiard ball' models of communal conflict. Therefore the need of the hour is to go beyond 'Billiard Ball analysis'. By looking at the situation in Sri Lanka, he says it appears that under certain conditions intra-ethnic group relations exercise an overriding influence on inter-ethnic group relations, often in quite unexpected ways. However, in Sri Lanka the reverse can also be true. Under certain conditions inter-ethnic relations exercise an overriding influence on intra-ethnic relations. Among other major works that give valuable insights about the conflict in Sri Lanka include, Anton Balasingham[127], Balasingham[128], Nesiah[129], Rotberg[130], Uyangoda[131], Uyangoda and Perera[132],

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[126] Kenneth Bush, *The Intra-Group Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Learning to Read between the Lines* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

[127] Anton Balasingham, *War and Peace: Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers* (London: Fairmax Publishing, 2004).

[128] Adele Balasingham, *The Will to Freedom: An inside View of Tamil Resistance* (London: Fairmax Publishing, 2001).

[129] Nesiah Devenesan, "The Claim to self-determination: A Sri Lankan Tamil perspective" *Contemporary South Asia* 10, 1 (2001): 55-71.

[130] Robert Rotberg, ed., *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka: Civil War and Reconciliation* (Cambridge, MA: Brookings Institution Press, 1999).

Seevaratnam[133], Nadarajah Sriskandarajah[134], Ferdinands, et al.[135] and Arudpragasam.[136] Based on the frame work mostly supplied by Richardson, this thesis strongly argues that the media in Sri Lanka can play a very positive role in the reduction of conflict by changing prejudiced and stereotyped attitudes.

Since the title of this thesis is 'The editorial representation of the 2002 Peace Process', mention must be made of two volumes edited by Rupesinghe[137] entitled, *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka, Efforts, Failures and Lessons*. Both volumes analyse the peace initiatives that have been undertaken recently in Sri Lanka from the perspectives of different people who were actually involved in the negotiations. What makes the volumes most interesting is the fact that they cover the government perspective as well as the LTTE's perspective, along with that of third-party mediators. Similarly, Crocker[138] et al. in *Turbulent Peace* have published fifty comprehensive essays under five main themes. This volume deals with many important aspects of maintaining peace in conflict-driven countries and it also takes

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[131] Jayadeva Uyangoda, "Transition from Civil War to peace: Challenges of Peace building in Sri Lanka," http: //72.14.221.104/search?q=catch: KIRwrP2h1QEJ:www.nsi-ins.ca/English/pdf/sri.

[132] Jayadeva Uyangoda and Morina Perera. *Sri Lanka's Peace Process 2002 Critical Perspectives* (Colombo: Social Scientists' Association, 2003).

[133] N. Seevaratnam, ed., *The National Question and the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord* (New Delhi: Konark, 1989).

[134] Suthaharan Nadarajah and Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, "Liberation struggle or terrorism? The politics of naming the LTTE" *Third World Quarterly* 26, 1 (2005): 87-100.

[135] Tyrol Ferdinands, K. Rupesinghe, P. Saravanamutthu, J. Uyangoda and N. Ropers, *The Sri Lankan Peace Process at Crossroads, Lessons, Opportunities, and Ideas for Principled Negotiations and Conflict Transformation* Colombo: Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies, 2004).

[136] A. R. Arudpragasam, *The Traditional Homeland of the Tamils: The Missing Pages of Sri Lankan History* (Colombo: Kanal Publications, 1996).

[137] Kumar Rupesinghe, ed., *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures and Lessons Learnt*, vol.1, (London: International Alert, 1998), Rupesinghe, ed. *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures & Lessons* vol.2, (Colombo: Foundation for Co-Existence, 2006).

[138] Crocker A. Hampson. Osler Fen Chester and Pamela Aall, eds. *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2001).

into account the three levels of peace building approaches proposed by John Paul Lederach.[139]

4.11 Conclusion

As already noted, this chapter has reviewed some of the more prominent theoretical models that have been applied to analysis of liberal democratic media coverage of foreign and national conflicts. The aim of this review of literature has been to relate the theoretical framework adopted within the thesis to already-existing research. The chapter began by outlining and discussing some of the key elements of the social construction of reality and frame analysis of Gamson and Wolfsfeld along with a discussion on the propaganda model of media analysis.

It was also pointed out that since the propaganda model is based on the American system and more specifically it is being widely used for studying the role of the news media in international conflict and war and therefore it cannot be applied *per se*, as it stands, to the study of the role of the media in the Sri Lanka' national conflict. Therefore a more generalized model of empirical media analysis is required to analyze adequately the different roles potentially adopted by differently-positioned media systems, state owned and privately owned, reporting on national conflicts, such as the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic conflict.

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[139] John Paul Lederach, "Structure: Lenses for the Big Picture," in *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies,* ed. John Paul Lederach (Herndon: USIP Press, 1997): 11-12.

Since Gadi Wolfsfeld's work, particularly the political contest model, the applying of frame theory, and his static model overcome some of the limitations of the propaganda, indexing and hegemonic models, his main studies of the media's role in conflict as well as in peace have been discussed at length in this chapter. It was concluded that Wolfsfeld's work demonstrates the theoretical value of historically situating and contextualizing media coverage in terms of the political and media environments surrounding conflicts as well as the maintenance of peace. Therefore the work of Gamson and his colleagues and Wolfsfeld's social constructive perspective can be modified to analyzing the role of the Sri Lanka media in the 2002 Peace Process. It was pointed out that the concept of framing is crucial to explorations of how news discourse is constructed, producing desired meanings

Due to the complex nature of the national media in Sri Lanka, which are owned by the government and the private sector, frame analysis widely used by Gamson and Wolfsfeld, along with some of the main theories of organizational and occupational factors or other media theories, seems to fully explain the media behavior in Sri- Lanka. Another special feature of the frame analysis which was the main method used in this research is that it can also absorb other media theories that were discussed in this chapter, so that it gives a complete picture of the media behaviour. As was stated earlier, this ethnographic qualitative approach explains not only what is presented as news, but also probable reasons for such presentation. Some of these factors will be further developed in the chapter on the national press in Sri Lanka. The last part of this chapter was also devoted to previous studies of the media in Sri Lanka and also the currently available literature on the ethnicized conflict in that country.

All the studies cited in this chapter show beyond any doubt that an understanding of the role of the media in national and foreign conflicts is important, since the media play a key role in societies torn by conflict as well as in those recovering from conflict. To quote the Preamble to the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted in November 1945:

> The Governments of the States, Parties to this constitution on behalf of their peoples declare: That since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed.[140]

Understanding news events, news values and editorial judgments is more relevant to developing countries like Sri Lanka because from the perspective of development journalism, news is not only a commodity but also a social good which can be harnessed as a resource for national development. If impartially used, news can be a valuable tool to educate the public on national integration and peace. In the same line, MacBride's [141] *Many Voices, One World* states that journalists should not contribute to fears which are 'heightened by intolerance, chauvinism and a failure to understand other points of view. Those with responsibility in the media should remember that beyond national interests there is the supreme interest of humanity in peace. The next chapter looks at the methodology that will guide this investigation entitled, "The '2002 Peace Process' in the Sri Lankan Media: Comparing Sinhalese, Tamil and English Editorial Discourse in the National Newspapers *Daily News*, *Divaina* and *Virakesari.*"

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[140] Preamble and Article 1, *UNESCO Constitution* (1945): http:// www.ppu.org.uk/ century/ century5.html.

[141] Sean Macbride, *Many Voices One World: Critical Media Studies* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003).

CHAPTER 5

Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Based on the literature review, it can be stated that there is strong evidence to prove that media or news content is not an objective entity, neutral and independent of political, social, ideological or socio-psychological influences (Shoemaker and Resse,[1] Graber,[2] Herman and Chomsky,[3] Gans[4]). Gerbner[5] states that there is "no fundamentally non-ideological, apolitical, non-partisan news gathering and reporting system." Therefore, understanding how the media portrays events is important because research has shown that people's attitudes and judgments can be affected by the media's framing of issues (Wackman et al.[6] Gamson,[7] Iyenger,[8] McLeod,[9] Price, Tewksbury and Powers,[10] Shoemaker,[11] Terkildsen and Schnell[12]), especially when

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[1] Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen .D.Resse, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content* (New York: Longman, 1996).
[2] Dorris A. Graber, *Mass Media and American Politics* (Washington, D.C: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1980).
[3] Noam Chomsky, "International Terrorism: Image and Reality," in *Western State Terrorism,* ed. Alexander George, 12-38 (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).
[4] Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).
[5] George Gerbner, "Ideological Perspective and Political Tendencies in News Reporting," *Journalism Quarterly* 41 (1964): 495-508.
[6] Dhavan V. Shah, David Domke and Daniel B. Wackman, "Framing, Priming, and Decision Making: Evangelical Christians' Processing of Electoral Issue Information" (paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, Chicago, 1996 May), 1-26.
[7] William A. Gamson, "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, eds. Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller, 53-76 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
[8] Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible?: How Television Frames Political Issues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 45-60.
[9] Douglas M. McLeod, "Communicating Deviance: The Effects of Television News Coverage of Social Protest," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 39, 1 (1995): 4-19.
[10] Vincent Price, David Tewksbury and E. Powers, "Switching Trains of Thought: The Impact of News Frames on Readers Cognitive Responses," *Communication Research* 34 (1997): 481-506.
[11] Pamela J. Shoemaker, "The Perceived Legitimacy of Deviant Political Groups: Two Experiments on Media Effects," *Communication Research* 9 (1982): 249-286.

people lack first hand knowledge and experience of the issue in question (Giltin[13]). Beyond the basic social function of providing the information from which we draw our "cognitive maps" of reality, the media (especially journalism) is said to perform an important political role in liberal pluralist societies (McNair[14]). Therefore, a scrutiny of the media coverage of important issues is important, because the media is a key player in shaping public opinion. The topic of this thesis, namely the 2002 Peace Process, is selected in order to find out not only what was presented, but how it was presented in the national newspapers in Sri Lanka. The 2002 Peace Process became the most polarizing and at the same time one of the most controversial and talked about issues in Sri Lanka.

The 2002 Peace Process was controversial because it could be said that since 1987, all negotiations with the LTTE have been viewed with much scepticism. In the past LTTE had been seen as an entity that could not be trusted at the negotiation table, because on two occasions (in 1989 and 1994-95), LTTE had utilized the negotiation option to gain unilateral military advantage. According to Sinhalese nationalists as well as ardent critics of the LTTE, the UNF government under Prime Minister Wickramasinghe has made a grave mistake by halting military operations against the LTTE. For most of the critics of the Peace Process, MoU (memorandum of understanding) gives parity to LTTE, as well as an unequal share of military benefits in favour of the LTTE.

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[12] Nayada Terkildsen and Frauke Schnell, "How Media Frames Public Opinion: An Analysis of the Women's Movement," *Political Research Quarterly* 50, 4 (1997): 879-900.
[13] Todd Giltin, *The Whole World is Watching* (Berkeley: University of California Press:1980), 55.
[14] Brian Mcnair, *News and Journalism in the UK* (London: Routledge, 1999), 4.

The polarization and the controversy became more acute because of the parliamentary election held on 5 December 2001, the first in the history of the Second Republic Constitution, which led to two different political parties controlling the major institutions of government - the Presidency and the Cabinet of Ministers. It should also be said that these two major political parties in Sri Lanka differ immensely in their outlook as well as in their policies. The 2002 Peace Process was negotiated by a government that was also different from the executive President's own political party.

Therefore, as stated before, this thesis is an attempt to analyze how the 2002 Peace Process was editorially represented in the three national newspapers in Sri Lanka. In other words, this research is an attempt to find out whether media as a key player of forming public opinion had any transformational effect on the conflict in Sri Lanka. Kahneman and Tversky[15] showed how the prioritisation or marginalizaton of certain aspects of issues over others could drastically change the popular interpretation of reality. They used an unusual Asian epidemic, an imaginary case study in which the study subjects were offered four alternative programs to combat the imaginary disease. The popular choice of the programme to combat the epidemic shifted drastically depending on how the possible consequences of the outbreak of the disease were framed.

Entman[16] analysed the media coverage of the downing of a Korean Airlines plane by Soviet fighter planes in 1983 and the downing of an Iran Air plane by a US

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[15] Daniel Kahneman and A. Tversky, "Choices, Values and Frames," *American Psychologist* 39, 4 (1984): 341-350.

[16] Robert Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives the Kal and Iran Air Incidents."41, 4 (1991): 6-27.

Navy ship in 1988. This analysis found that by de-emphasising of the responsible party, as well as careful choice of graphics and adjectives, the US media framed the Iran Air incident as a technical problem, while the Korean Airlines incident was portrayed as a moral outrage. At the most basic level, news frames are cognitive schemata. As Norris[17] states, journalists commonly work with news frames to 'simplify, prioritize and structure the narrative flow of events'. Further, according to Entman,[18] it is also a state at which journalists define problems, diagnose causes and make moral judgments. News frames, however, are embodied not in overt evaluative statements, but rather in "key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images emphasized in a news narrative."

This research study mainly uses the frame analysis model developed by Gamson and Lasch[19] and subsequently deployed by Wolfsfeld.[20] This study investigates how the three most circulated newspapers in Sri Lanka covered one of the most disputed landmarks of the Sinhalese-Tamil ethnic conflict - namely, the Norwegian-initiated Peace Process of Sri Lanka and other related news. This chapter on methodology firstly justifies the selection criteria of the newspapers and their editorials and also a brief discussion on the concept of media framing. It then outlines the methodology of this research and the four main questions that will be the main focus of this research. This research as a whole aims to contribute to a relatively scarce body of empirical research that investigates the contribution of three leading

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[17] Pippa Norris, "The Restless Search: Network News Framing of the Post-Cold War World," *Political Communication* 12 (1995): 357-70.

[18] Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives the Kal and Iran Air Incidents," 6-27.

[19] William A. Gamson and Kathryn E. Lasch, "The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy," in *Evaluating the Welfare State: Social and Politcal Perspectives,* eds. S. E.Sapiro and E. Yuchtman-Yaar, 397-415 (New York: Academic Press, 1983).

[20] Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

newspapers in Sri Lanka to political communication in terms of agenda setting and opinion formation by their editorials.

5.2 Research Objectives

As it was outlined in the literature review, the first objective of this research was to undertake a combined quantitative content (QCA) and Ethnographic content (ECA) analysis of the 2002 Peace Process of February 2002, between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, by the three most read national dailies, *Daily News*, *Divaina*, and *Virakesari* during the period of December 2001 to March 2003. The second objective was to explain key features characterizing this coverage in terms of the contemporary politico-cultural and media context from which it emerges.

5.3 The Present Study and the Selection of the Newspapers

This exploratory study will focus on editorial coverage of the three selected national newspapers during the sixteen month period starting from the general election of December 2001 to March 2003. These three particular newspapers are selected, because according to the available circulation figures (Table 1[21]), they are the most widely read. *Daily News*, which is an English language newspaper, is selected because it is the most popular English newspaper with circulation figures of 157,000 copies. Similarly, *Divaina* is selected because out of three Sinhala language daily newspapers it is the most popular, with circulation figures of 176,000. Out of two Tamil newspapers, *Virakesari* is selected because it has circulation figures of

[21] (see. Appendix 1).

64,000. *Daily News* is owned and controlled by the State, while the other two newspapers are owned and controlled by two private sector news groups.

5.4 The Importance of Editorials

As Hynds[22] and Mohn and McCombs[23] cite, research into newspaper editorials has established the importance of editorial pages for informing citizens. Further, according to Hodgson[24] a newspaper's opinion on what it considers to be the important issues on the day of publication can be found in the leader, or editorial opinion column. Regular reading of the editorials in newspapers gives vivid insight into where it stands on the main current issues. Reading newspaper editorials may also encourage the reading of other sections of the newspaper, as well as civic participation and a deeper understanding of local issues. More specifically, newspaper editorials provide clues about the importance of the information contained in the editorial, which is based on that material's selection as an editorial topic. Editorials also provide visual clues about important issues because of their placement on the opinion page. In addition, editorials provide arguments that can help readers refine and rethink their own opinions about important issues. Because of their importance, the editorials are the unit of analysis in this research.

The study's focus is to examine, using editorials as the unit of analysis, how the coverage of the MoU and the Peace Process was portrayed in the three most widely circulated Sri Lankan newspapers. Editorials in general are public mass

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[22] Earnest C. Hynds, "Editors, Opinion Pages Still Have Vital Roles at Most Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly* 61, 2 (1984): 634-639.
[23] Elsa Mohn and Maxwell McCombs, "Who Reads Us and Why," *The Masthead* 40, 2 (1988): 18-23.
[24] F. W. Hodgson, *Modern Newspaper Practice* (London: Focal Press, 1992).

communicated types of opinion discourses that normally appear in an important position in a newspaper and are the "official voice of a media outlet on matters of public importance." Further, according to Greenberg[25] they assume an important communicative function by offering readers a distinctive and authoritative voice that speaks to them directly, in the face of troubling or problematic circumstances. These opinions are also expressed in op-ed articles and guest columns. They also "address readers embraced in a consensual ('us') relationship by taking a particular stance in relation to the persons ('them') and topics referred to."[26]

This research hopes to contribute a theoretical understanding of the importance of "opinion" discourse. Opinions expressed by newspapers are often perceived by readers to be consistent with the viewpoints of the newspaper as an organizational entity equipped with the facts and information required for informed opinion formation, which are generally unavailable to the average newsreader. Further, van Dijk[27] holds that after prime time television talk shows, newspaper editorials are probably the widest circulating forms of opinion discourse. Their influence upon political opinion-formation is pervasive, extending not just to the ordinary everyday reader but are also important to institutional and elite actors, such as members of parliament, corporate executives, and the police.

Opinion discourses not only take sides by evaluating events, but they also explain these events in ways that have first and foremost to do with the attribution of responsibility. They are also primarily, but not exclusively, blame-oriented and, as

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[25] Joshua Greenberg, "Opinion Discourse and Canadian Newspapers: The Case of the Chinese "Boat People," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 25 (2000): 517-537.
[26] Roger Fowler, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* (London: Routledge., 1991), 221.
[27] Teun A. van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (London: Erlbaum 1988), 22-26.

such, they attempt to mobilize and enrol newsreaders around particular ideological positions by reasoning in ways that will connect with their ethics and emotions.

In editorials and commentary the media legitimately express their views on relevant issues, their position on particular policy options, their opinions about certain events or actors and arguments in support of these. Moreover, through interpretative, evaluative and potentially persuasive content, the media provide orientation to the process of opinion formation by making judgements regarding policy, political actors and political decisions. Therefore, newspapers function as agenda setters, media analysts and opinion leaders in several ways. It is important to distinguish between the two differing contributions that newspapers make to public debate.

In reporting the news, newspapers select information from a range of alternatives and 'package' news content with meaning, thereby setting the agenda and by means of these choices articulate an opinion on what is important. More overtly, editorial comment represents a newspaper's decision to select a specific issue on which the newspaper wishes to contribute an opinion. Moreover, the treatment of these contributions as separate is necessary because newspapers intentionally use editorials as an outlet in which to identify issues as key concerns and to make direct calls for action on political actors in a way that is intentionally distinct from day-to-day 'objective' news coverage in the rest of the newspaper. In this way editorials are used to set out the political identity of a newspaper. Of course this particular task is not restricted to the opinion section of media. Through certain presentation characteristics in a paper, such as headline size, article length and the position of the article, the media always communicate their assessment of issue salience. Editorials

or commentaries, however, give them an additional chance to emphasize a certain issue. By selecting one issue out of the continuous stream of events they signal that it is important enough to comment upon and give it extra space.

In addition to the argument that newspapers seek to contribute to the political agenda through editorial content, it should be noted that editorials could be deliberately constructed in order to represent an issue in a particular way. In short, this is the framing process which has been defined as "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommended for the issue described."[28] In terms of news editorials, the selection or exclusion of an issue as the focus of an article is as much a part of the framing process as is the construction of meaning through the definition of problems and recommendations and the ways to address them in the article. Research on the link between framing and public opinion suggests that where the public is not well informed nor cognitively active on matters of social or political interest, framing can heavily influence their responses to media coverage of issues in such cases (Iyengar,[29] Kahnemann and Tversky,[30] and Zaller [31]). The way in which editorials frame an issue such as the 2002 Peace Process in the background of a protracted conflict as in Sri Lanka may therefore be of particular significance to public opinion formation on the matter.

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[28] Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News," 6-27.
[29] S. Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible?*, 58-65.
[30] Tversky, "Choices, Values and Frames," 341-350.
[31] John Zaller and Dennis Chiu, "Government's Little Helper: Us Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crises, 1945-1991," *Political Communication* 13, (1996): 385-406.

While abundant research suggests that journalists do not intentionally bias their news stories towards specific interpretations, newspaper editorials are inherently subjective and are intended to adopt a particular interpretation of events and to persuade readers (Mcquail,[32] Itule & Anderson[33]). Yet, the structural, professional, and organizational pressures that incline the media toward certain news frames also affect editorials (Libes,[34] Ghanem,[35] Shoemaker & Resse,[36] Giltin,[37] Hofstetter[38]). Shared values and practices throughout a nation's media lead to common frames (Shoemaker & Resse,[39] Ghanem,[40] Gamson,[41] Hofstetter[42]). In addition, dependency on government sources encourages media to privilege the government's construction of key issues and events (Wolfsfeld,[43] Paletz and Entman,[44] Gans,[45] Shoemaker & Reese[46]). It is also held that the need to condense and simplify voluminous material and the strong orientation toward crisis coverage draw the press away from complex historical context or abstract frames (Wolfsfeld[47]).

Scholars have well-documented the media's tendency to legitimise some groups and perspectives and to de-legitimise others is condoned in editorial opinion

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[32] Denis McQuail, ed. *Mcquail's Mass Communication Theory* (London: Sage, 2005).
[33] Laura Handerson, James W.Tankard, Jackie Sillberman, Kriss Bliss and Salma Ghanem, "Media Frames: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement" (paper presented at the Association for education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Boston, August 7-10 1991).
[34] Tamar Liebes, *Reporting the Arab Israeli Conflict: How hegemony works*, (London: Routledge, 1997), 58-68.
[35] Laura Handerson, "Media Frames: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement."
[36] P. J. Shoemaker and S.D.Reese, *Mediating the Message,* 50-51.
[37] Giltin, *The Whole World Is Watching,* 40-49.
[38] C. R. Hofstetter, "News bias in the 1972 campaign: a cross-media comparison," *Journalism Monographs* 58 (1978): 1-30.
[39] Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message*, 50-51.
[40] Tankard, "Media Frames: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement,"
[41] Gamson, *The Social Psychology of Collective Action*, 53-76.
[42] Hofstetter, "News bias in the 1972 campaign," 1-30.
[43] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East*, 1-36.
[44] Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News," 6-27.
[45] Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time*, 40-60.
[46] Shoemaker and Resse, *Mediating the Message,* 30-35.
[47] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East*, 20-31.

(Wolfsfeld,[48] Steuter[49] Tilly[50]). Further, editorials to a greater degree than putatively objective news coverage are likely to reflect the media's propensity to embrace the official national government perspective and to favour those with political and economic power (Schlesinger, Elliot & Murdock[51]). Weare, Levi and Raphael[52] found newspaper editorial opinions were tied to newspaper corporate interests. Strengthening these largely socio-cognitive assumptions about opinion discourse is an understanding of the ways in which news media construct mental representations, or frames, of everyday life in order to comprehend and respond to social situations.

As principles of partiality and selectivity, made of codes of emphasis, interpretation, and presentation-media frames are routinely used by newsmakers to organize verbal and visual discourses into forms that will be accessible to the everyday reader, viewer, or listener. In rendering opinions, laying blame, and presenting solutions about problematic issues, actors, and events, opinion writers inevitably accentuate some points of view while downplaying others, thus limiting the range of interpretable meanings available to the public (Entman,[53] Gamson & Modigliani[54] Giltin,[55] Pan and Kosicki[56]). It is in this sense that the concept of framing can be said to capture the numerous ways in which the media set the discursive context within which individuals may come to locate, perceive, identify

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[48] *Ibid.*
[49] E. Steuter, "Understanding the Media/Terrorism Relationship: An Analysis of Ideology and the News in Time Magazine," *Political Communication and Persuasion* 7, 4 (1990): 257-278.
[50] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978).
[51] Philip Elliott, Graham Murdock and Philip Schlesinger, "Terrorism and the State: A Case Study of the Discourses of Television," *Media, Culture and Society* 5, 2 (1983): 155-177.
[52] Titus Levi, Jordan Raphael and Christopher, Weare, "Media Convergence and the Chilling Effect of Broadcast Licensing," *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 6, 3 (2001): 47-70.
[53] Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News," 6-27.
[54] William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach," *American Journal of Sociology* 95 (1989): 1-37.
[55] Giltin, *The Whole World Is Watching*, 40-49.
[56] Z. Pan and M.G. Kosicki, "Frame Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse." 10(1993):55-75.

and label the events and happenings around them (Goffman[57]). Regarded in this way, the role of news media is to organize the "field of social intelligibility" within which news comes to "make sense," not by telling people what to think, but telling them what to think about and how to think about it.

Understanding the opinion discourse presented by media is furthermore important because of the implications 'spiral of silence' theory proposed by German communication scholar, Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann.[58] According to the 'spiral of silence' theory, people who believe their opinion to be in the minority because they do not see it expressed in the media are less likely to speak up due to fear of isolation or rejection. Applying this theory to the context of Sri Lanka, the argument will be that if the peace proposals are not supported or given salience prominently by the media, the public who tend to support the peace initiative will keep silence for fear of being labelled unpatriotic.

Research by Noelle-Neumann[59] and Brasted[60] supports the scholars who maintain that mass media exercise a powerful role in influencing people positively or negatively. In other words the spiral of silence theory posits that the media accelerate the muting of the minority in the spiral of silence. The findings of this theory has important implications for the forming of public opinion because direct observation can give us only a small proportion of the information we use; print and electronic media provide most of our knowledge about the world around us.

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[57] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper and Row 1974), 21.
[58] Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "*Public Opinion and the Classical Tradition: A Re-evaluation*," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 43,2 (1979):143-156.
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] Monica Brasted, "Framing Protest: The Chicago Tribune and the New York Times During the 1968 Democratic Convention," *Atlantic Journal of Communication,* 13, 1 (2005): 1-25.

The present study of editorials, is further justified because according to Deshapreya,[61] the 2002 KAPS (The Knowledge Attitude Survey) conducted by the survey research arm of the Centre for Policy Alternatives- television is the principal source of news for 57 per cent of the population followed by newspapers at 18 per cent. However, levels of interest in politics are highest among newspapers, at 60.7%. Furthermore, according to the same survey, newspaper readers also showed the highest level of knowledge, about the peace proposals discussed during the Government of Sri Lanka and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam negotiations. Accordingly, 79 per cent had said that they are either very informed or somewhat informed about the peace proposals. Given the higher adult literacy rate which was explained in the first chapter findings of the 2002 KAPS survey, this is not very surprising.

5. 5 Media Framing: Theoretical Foundations

As explained in the chapter on literature review, Wolfsfeld[62] states that the concept of media frames is best understood within the context of the social construction of reality approach by the news media (Adoni and Mane[63], Berger and Luckman,[64] Gamson,[65] Gamson[66]). Further framing theory could be explained also as an extension of constructionist thinking. Kinder and Sanders[67] describe frames as

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[61] Sunanda Deshapriya, "A Study of Media in Sri Lanka (Excluding the North and East)" http://www.i-m-s.dk/Media/PDF/CPA%20South%20Survey%20FINAL%20 (May2005).
[62] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 26.
[63] H. Adoni and S. Mane, "Media and the Social Construction of Reality: Toward an Integration of Theory and Research," *Communication Research* 11 (1984): 323-40.
[64] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City, NJ: Anchor, 1967).
[65] William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press).
[66] Gamson, "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," 53-76.
[67] Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders, *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 163-195.

"devices embedded in political discourse, invented and employed by political elites, often with an eye toward advancing their own interests or ideologies and intended to make favourable interpretations" As Entman explains:

> Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in the communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Frames, then define problems; determine what a causal agent is doing and works out the costs and benefits which are usually measured in terms of cultural values; diagnose causes; identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgments; evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies; offer and justify treatments for the problem and predict their likely effects (original emphasis).[68]

Among the many approaches to framing, is the theory of media framing put forward by sociologist William Gamson and colleagues.[69] Gamson and Lasch hold that the ideas that appear in news are best understood as *media packages* that feature a central organizing idea for events and employ various framing or symbolic devices that support the main idea of the story (Gamson and Lasch[70]). According to Gamson, journalists engage in arranging random events into a meaningful, organized interpretive package. Gamson elaborates:

> News frames are almost entirely implicit and taken for granted. They do not appear to either journalists or audiences as social constructions but as primary attributes of events that reporters are merely reflecting. News frames make the world look natural. They define what is selected, what is excluded, what is emphasized. In short, news presents a packaged world, and not all of the recesses of the package are visible.[71]

Gamson and Modigliani[72] believe that several major factors shape how the media frame the news. 'Theme' represents the main idea in a package and connects different elements of a story (e.g. descriptors of an action or actor, quotes, sources,

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[68] Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News," 6-27.
[69] William A. Gamson, David Croteau, William Hoynes and Theodore Sasson, "Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality," *Annual Review of Sociology* 18 (1992): 373-93.
[70] Gamson and Lasch, *The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy*, 397-415.
[71] William A. Gamson and Hanna Herzog, "Living with Contradictions: The Taken for Granted in Israeli Political Discourse," *Political Psychology* 20, 2 (1999): 157-61.
[72] Gamson and Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power," 1-37.

and background information) into a coherent whole. The same idea is maintained by Pan & Kosicki.[73] 'Cultural resonance' refers to the degree that news is packaged in accordance with the beliefs, myths, stories, folk tales and imagery that coincide with the dominant culture of a society. Cultural resonance relies upon generally recognized, symbol-laden plots, e.g. rags-to-riches, David-versus-goliath, and 'power corrupts'. Media packages also make use of the easily recognized, culturally rooted stereotypes, such as evil villains, honourable victims, and noble heroes and heroines (Ryan[74]). This present study will be based on Gamson's media packages model to examine framing devices according to his notion that framing effects are influenced by the work of frame sponsors.

Therefore, based on the above definition of frames, any communication text such as feature articles, news columns, or editorials, can be deliberately arranged in order to represent an issue in a particular way. Therefore, one of the research aims will be to find out how the 2002 Peace Process is represented qualitatively in the three languages, in the three selected papers, and to find out what types of frame are highlighted or not highlighted in the editorial texts of the three papers in the selected period.

The first quantitative measure used in the qualitative reading is the prominence and visibility of a central argument. As Gamson[75] followed in his research, central arguments were coded so as to be visible if they reach a threshold of

[73] Pan and Kosicki, "Frame Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse," 55-75.
[74] Charlotte Ryan, *Prime Time Activism; Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing* (Boston: South End Press, 1991).
[75] Gamson, *Talking Politics*, 196-197.

at least 10 percent prominence in any editorial in the sampling period of sixteen months.

For the purpose of this study, first, a set of working frames will be identified based on the frame analysis research undertaken by Gamson,[76] on nine "discourse moments" discourses that characterised American media coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict and Wolfsfeld's[77] analysis of Israeli and American media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Gamson[78] identified four frames used in the framing of the Arab-Israeli conflict as strategic interests, feuding neighbours, Arab intransigence, and Israeli expansionism. Wolfsfeld[79] found that the media's pursuit of dramatic frames in the Middle East conflict accorded the extremists from both sides more than their due share of air time, while drowning out voices calling for peace.

Therefore, in this study, the frames of the 2002 Peace Process by the UNF government and the frames of the opposition for the peace accord are summarized in tables adapting the signature matrix developed by Gamson and Lasch[80] and adapted for this purpose based research using Wolfsfeld's[81] and Gamson's frame analytical tool. However, the adaptation is emphasized because both Gamson and Wolfsfeld respectively deal with the American media coverage of the Arab-Israel conflict, Israel and American media coverage of the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

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[76] *Ibid.*
[77] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 146-157.
[78] Gamson, *Talking Politics*. 31-107.
[79] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 146-157.
[80] Gamson and Lasch, *The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy*, 397-415
[81] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 146-157.

The concept of framing may be tracked back to Goffman,[82] who defined frames as embodiments of 'the principles of organization which govern [social] events.' Based on this definition, all forms of human experience and their 'documentation' (as in news production) is subject to framing (Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad[83]). Further, Berger and Luckmann[84] made a major contribution to the development of the concept by pointing out the ways in which groups sort their collective experiences of reality into categories and then continue to evoke those categories to process and give meaning to new information and experience.

Scholars hold that the applicability of the framing process to network was first established by Tuchman.[85] Tuchman shows that far from comprising a series of spontaneous decisions by journalists about what to cover and how to cover it, newswork is governed by a series of reified organizational routines, among which is the use of pre-existing 'frames' to cover new events. Further, Tuchman's use of the term 'framing' emphasized the role of the routine 'procedures' of newswork in the creation of news frames. What is important to note is that according to Tuchman, these procedures continually help to showcase certain places and ideas, while also consistently closing off and blocking inquiry into others. Framing is understood as a mechanism, a way of giving some overall interpretation to isolated items of fact (Denis McQuail[86]).

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[82] Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, 10-11.
[83] Jyotika Ramapras and Roya Akhavan-Majid, "Framing Beijing Dominant Ideological Influences on the American Press Coverage of the Fourth U.N. Conference on Women and the NGO Forum," *Gazette* 62, 1 (2000): 45-59.
[84] Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 41-48.
[85] Gaye Touchman, "Making news by doing work: Routinizing the unexpected" *American Journal of Sociology* 79 (1973): 110-131.
[86] McQuail, *Mcquail's Mass Communication Theory*, 65-80.

Further, Gamson[87] suggests that people make sense of issues using media fragments, their own experiential knowledge, and popular wisdom. Gamson and Lasch[88] have suggested that within a given political culture, a repertoire of idea elements surround a given political issue, ultimately producing an issue culture. These idea elements are symbolic devices, which are "grouped into more or less harmonious clusters or interpretive packages."

Gamson's[89] 'constructionist model' contends that both the media and the public are the parts of the same cultural system. In other words, both parties possess the same cultural frames. Therefore, 'media agents use frames that are familiar and resonate with both themselves and the public' (Baylor[90]). As part of the same cultural system, both parties possess the same cultural scripts, schemata or frames. Frames represent a set of ideas that interpret, define and give meaning to social and cultural phenomena. Therefore in general, media agents will use the frames that are familiar and resonate with both themselves and the public.

According to Wolfsfeld,[91] 'framing takes place within a larger social and political context that has an important influence on the construction of frames by society, media, and audiences'. This view is supported by Shoemaker and Resse[92] who examined the influences that affect media contents in terms of personal attitudes and professional roles of media workers, media routines, media organizations,

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[87] Gamson, *Talking Politics*, 1-24.
[88] Gamson and Lasch, *The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy*, 397-415.
[89] William A. Gamson, "A Constructionist Approach to Mass Media and Public Opinion," *Symbolic Interaction* 2 (1988): 161-74.
[90] Tim Baylor, "Social Control of an Insurgent Social Movement: A Case Study of the American Indian Movement" (masters's thesis, The University of North Carolina, 1989), 45-47.
[91] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East,* 41-49.
[92] S. D. Reese, "The news paradigm and the ideology of objectivity: A socialist at the Wall Street Journal" *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 7 (1990): 390-409.

sources, advertisers and audiences, government controls, other media organizations. Scheufele[93] proposed that at least five factors potentially influence how journalists frame given issues: social norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, pressure of interest groups, journalistic routines, and the ideological or political orientations of journalists. However, the framing or imposition of meaning by mass media on issues and events is limited by and relative to the social and political context in which meaning is generated (Davis[94]).

Framing for Gamson and Lasch deals "with the gestalt or pattern-organizing nature of the political culture" (Gamson and Lasch[95]). Therefore, in any given issue culture, numerous interpretive packages may emerge. Each interpretive package also has its own symbolic devices associated with its use within the political arena. Symbolic devices can be identified from the words, actions, body movements, and visual cues that stand for ideas and objects and to which members of a culture attach similar meanings (Perucci and Knudsen[96]). Gamson and Lasch[97] further suggest that drafting of a signature matrix, which consists of rows representing the interpretive packages and columns representing the condensational symbolic devices to undercover the full realm of an issue culture. Gamson and Lasch further point out that every political discourse exists within a certain "issue culture" in which groups and individuals use a "catalogue of available idea elements" and make use of a variety of symbolic devices to express their ideas" These idea elements are symbolic devices, which are "grouped into more or less harmonious clusters or interpretive packages."

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[93] Dietram A. Scheufele, "Framing as a Theory of Media Effects," *Journal of Communication* 49, 1 (1999):103-122.
[94] Aeron Davis, "Public Relations, News Production and Changing Patterns of Source Access in the British National Media," *Media, Culture and Society* 22, 1 (2000): 39-59.
[95] Gamson and Lasch, *The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy*, 397-415.
[96] Robert Perucci and Dean D. Knudsen, *Sociology* (New York: St. Paul, 1983).
[97] Gamson and Lasch, *The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy*, 397-415

What is important to note is that the extent to which a particular frame will resonate within the professional and political culture of the news media will vary over time and place because the political and cultural base of the news media varies. The words of political leaders, activists, and journalists serve as the raw materials from which to draw representative expressions of the condensation symbols. Gamson and Lasch[98] also recommend a content analysis of news content taking into account the national prominence and the popularity of the media outlet. According to them, measuring of the quantity of competing interpretive packages provides an individual with a means of assessing how successful a particular frame has become.

According to Gamson,[99] constructionist analysis differs from traditional content analysis in the following way: while content analysis typically focus on the manifest informational content of texts, those who use the constructionist approach place more emphasis on the interpretive commentary that surrounds this manifest content. As Gamson and Modigliani[100] state, constructionists do not ponder the meaning of aggregations of words or phrases; instead, they probe news articles and other texts for the presence of packages. Moreover, these packages are schemes that people use to construct meanings in messages they send, and to interpret meanings in messages they receive. Packages contain core frames, or central organizing ideas that help the speaker to convey, what is at issue, and the idea of elements of which they are made. Packages also contain condensing symbols—linguistic and rhetorical devices that tie discrete bits of content together and situate them within an emerging context.

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[98] *Ibid.*
[99] Gamson and Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power," 1-37.
[100] *Ibid.*

According to Karen S. Johnson-Cartee,[101] a condensational symbol "is a highly condensed form of substitutive behaviour for direct expression, allowing for the ready release of emotional tension in conscious or unconscious form." These condensational symbols make a kind of shorthand means by which a large number of beliefs, feelings, values, and perhaps worldviews are telegraphed to others sharing a similar culture. Further, according to Johnson-Cartee,[102] it is perhaps more appropriate to say that condensational symbols evoke meanings already stored within the minds of individuals sharing a given political culture. When such condensational symbols are said to be salient across large numbers of members of a given culture, they are also said to be significant symbols (Mead[103]).

The condensational symbols used in the construction of these interpretive packages may be categorized as frames or frame elements or, more specifically, framing devices. Gamson and Lasch[104] enumerated five framing devices that they suggest serve as indicators of framing processes at work. Metaphors are figures of speech using words that are applied to a particular event or situation but are drawn from other situations and therefore invite comparisons. Catch phrases are attempts to capture meaning in a single word or phrase designed to suggest a frame. Exemplars are allusions providing historic examples of situations or actions being discussed. Depictions characterize the subject using a "colourful strings of modifiers," and can also involve metaphors, similes or examples. Visual images involve representations in the form of pictures or graphics that accompany news stories.

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[101] Karen Johnson-Cartee, *News Narratives And News Framing* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 169-171.
[102] *Ibid.*
[103] G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviourist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), 56-89.
[104] Gamson and Lasch, *The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy*, 397-415.

Taking the above interpretations of framing devices for this analysis, a metaphor is defined as "the application of a name or descriptive term or phrase to an object or action to which it is imaginatively but not literally applicable"[105]. Exemplars are defined as the 'dramatized accounts of real events, whether produced by witnesses, politicians, political activists, or journalists, who are then used to represent abstract forces, issues, or entities.'[106] Catchphrases are 'attempted summary statements about the principal subjects'[107], whether in the form of taglines, slogans, or catch themes. Depictions are routine characterizations of the principal subject.[108] Consequences are the 'condensational symbols that project various outcomes associated with different policy decisions.'[109]. Sometimes both short term and long-term consequences are presented. Appeals to principle are 'condensational symbols evoking moral values, sometimes religious values, and general societal and cultural self-images to generate enthusiasm for particular policy choices.'[110]

The construction of the *signature matrix* was developed in this way as a "guideline"[111], or a set of working frames that guide the researcher's data analysis. Frames identified by Gamson's[112] study of American media coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict and Wolfsfeld's[113] analysis of Israeli and American media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be modified and can be used as a general guide and also as an analytical tools for identifying the range of thematic positions and symbolic or other devices likely to appear in Sri Lankan newspaper coverage of the Peace

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[105] *Ibid.*
[106] *Ibid.*
[107] *Ibid.*
[108] *Ibid.*
[109] *Ibid.*
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] *Ibid.*
[112] Gamson, *Talking Politics*, 31-107.
[113] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East*, 134-168.

Process. Further, these devices could also be useful for measuring the frequency of appearance of different frames within sampled news content.

5.6 Frame Sponsorship

Gamson and Modigliani[114] suggest that news framing is greatly influenced by sponsor enterprise, or the deliberate efforts of newsmakers to be portrayed within particular frames that are favourable to their causes. In the parlance of constructivism, frame sponsorship is similar to claim-making (Schneider).[115] Social groups, corporations and politicians bring their own preferred framing to social problems and actively exert influence upon media to be portrayed in a desired fashion by featuring the group's actions and words. Moreover, when two parties are engaged in two opposing viewpoints, Gamson says they become engaged in a frame contest. This can involve challenging the way in which opponents have framed themselves favourably or by reframing opponents unfavourably (Gamson,[116] Ryan[117]). In such contests, success or failure depends upon how one's preferred interpretations gain prominence in media and acceptance by audiences. Therefore, complaints about bias and lack of objectivity in reporting can be attributed to the media engaging in a framing of stories that is inconsistent with a frame sponsor's desires.

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[114] Gamson and Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power,"` 1-37.
[115] W. Joseph Schneider, "Social Problems Theory; The Constructionist View," *American Review of Sociology* 11 (1985): 209-229.
[116] Gamson, "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," 53-76.
[117] Ryan, *Prime Time Activism; Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing*, 30-46.

5.7 The Research Method

The following explains the research method used, the sample size, and the criterion used for this research. This research on the editorials of the three newspapers has two main parts. The first part is a content analysis of the three selected national newspapers. This is a quantitative analysis while the second part of this research will be a frame analysis, which is qualitative. Devereux,[118] explains that these two complimentary approaches to analysing media content are more suitable for discovering both their manifest (obvious) and latent (hidden) meanings in the written texts. The first method is quantitative content analysis— that is, enumerative involving the analysis of specific aspects of a large volume of media texts. The second is ethnographic content analysis which is qualitative and more interpretative in orientation.

Altheide states that ethnographic content analysis is also oriented to documenting and understanding the communicating meaning, as well as verifying theoretical relationships. A major difference, according to him, however is the reflexive and highly interactive nature of the investigator, concepts, data collection, and analysis. Unlike quantitative content analysis in which the protocol is the instrument, the investigator or the researcher is continually central in ethnographic content analysis, although protocols may be used in later phases of the research. As with all ethnographic research, the meaning of a message is assumed to be reflected in various modes of information exchange, format, rhythm, and style. In other words the research method of this thesis is to blend the traditional notion of objective content

[118] Eoin Devereux, *Understanding the Media* (London: Sage, 2003), 120-123.

analysis with participant observation to form ethnographic content analysis, or as envisaged by Altheide[119] how a researcher can interact with documentary materials so that specific statements can be placed in the proper context for analysis. As Altheide[120] further says, documents are studied to understand (media) culture or the process and array of objects, symbols, and meanings that make up social reality shared by members of a society.

In 1989, Gamson[121] stated that in analyzing news content to uncover the frames, it is also essential to consider both manifest and latent content. He held that by analyzing news content in terms of the frames presented, the manifest-latent distinction is partially bridged. In this context, Gamson held that facts have no intrinsic meaning. They take on their meaning by being embedded in a frame or story line that organizes them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasize while ignoring others. Freud[122] has drawn two distinctions when considering significant symbols (Mead[123]) or condensational symbols that are "commonly salient across individuals" (Cobb and Elder[124]). For Freud, manifest content is that which is obvious, readily perceived, or on the surface of the content (Johnson-Cartee[125]). Latent or hidden content was the underlying meaning, present but not obvious, or hidden. Accordingly, Johnson-Cartee,[126] Leymore,[127] and

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[119] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative Media Analysis, Qualitative Research Methods,* vol. 38 (London: Sage, 1996), 4-6.
[120] *Ibid.*
[121] Gamson and Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power,"` 1-37.
[122] S. Freud, *On Dreams* (New York: Norton, 1952), 47.
[123] Mead, *Mind, Self and Society.*
[124] Roger W. Cobb and Charles, D. Elder, "The Politics of Agenda-building: An Alternative Perspective for Modern Democratic Theory," *Journal of Politics* 33 (1971): 892-915.
[125] Karen Johnson-Cartee, *News Narratives And News Framing,* 169-171.
[126] *Ibid.*
[127] Varda Langholz Leymore, *Hidden Myth: Structure and Symbolism in Advertising* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

Graber[128] hold that to ensure a full accounting of both the manifest and latent content of news frames, it is important to consider the "social and linguistic context in which they exist".

The editorials are chosen as the unit of analysis in this research because of the importance of the editorials as moulders of public opinion as explained in this chapter. To understand the nature of the coverage and the editorial framing of the 2002 Peace Process, the researcher will do a close reading of all editorials that appeared in the three popular national papers in Sri Lanka. These are, an English language newspaper, *The Daily News,* a Sinhalese newspaper, *Divaina,* and a Tamil paper, *Virakesari.* The selected period for the research will be a sixteen-month period starting from 1 December 2001 to 31 March 2003. Every editorial of these three broadsheet newspapers from December 2001 through to March 2003 referring to ethnic conflict or to the Norwegian Peace Process or the LTTE and all editorials relating to the Peace Process will be included in the analysis.

The researcher will further focus only on editorial headings and comments found in the editorial column on the peace accord in the three already mentioned most circulated newspapers of Sri Lanka. The sampling interval will be sixteen months, which consisted of 486 weekdays, and the total sample size would be of 1251 editorials. The sixteen-month period is between 1 December 2001 to 31 March 2003, and is chosen because significant events within this timeline. For example, December 2001 saw a general election and a one-month ceasefire; 22 February saw another ceasefire agreement and six rounds of talks between the LTTE and the newly elected

[128] Dorris A. Graber, *Mass Media and American Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1980), 24-67.

UNF government between September 2002 and March 2003. These were 16 - 18 September at the Sattahip Naval Base, Chonburi, Thailand; 31 October – 3 November at the Rose Garden Hotel, Nakhorn Pathom, Thailand; 2-5 December 2002 at the Radisson SAS Plaza Hotel, Oslo, Norway;6-9 January 2003 at the Rose Garden Hotel, Nakhorn Pathom, Thailand; 7-8 February 2003 at the Norwegian Embassy, Nordic Embassy Complex and Berlin, Germany;18-21 March 2003 at the Prince Hotel, Hakone, Japan.

All editorials will first be coded as "displaying" or "not displaying" frames or frame components. The relevant newspapers will be selected manually going through an archive of newspapers, which are stored at the national archives of the National Library of Sri Lanka.

For the content analysis, which is the first part of this research, first the heading and the content of the editorials will be coded after repeated scrutiny. The purpose will be to identify the most cited topics from a list of 20 possible pre-coded topics (see Appendix 2). In order for a topic code to be assigned, at least one full paragraph will have to deal exclusively with the topic from the outset.

The coding protocol for the second part of this research method will be developed with the help of another researcher undertaking related doctoral research with the Department of film and media, University of Sterling Scotland. The researcher will identify Gamson's framing devices such as metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, visual images, roots, consequences, and will then code the editorials from the *Daily News* and *Divaina* while a Tamil undergraduate fluent in

Tamil and English will be employed to translate the editorials from the *Virakesari.* After having it translated into English, the researcher will personally code the editorials under various headings.

In each selected editorial, one of the first tasks will be to note the identity of the newspaper, the date, the location of the editorial and its length. A standardized protocol, namely a coding sheet (see: Appendix 3.), will be used for the identification of the type of editorial as well as its content and dominant frame(s). In other words, to identify the dominant frames of the Peace Process 2002, a "constructionist" approach to framing analysis (Gamson and Modigliani,[129] Pan and Kosicki[130]), which deconstructs and reconstructs the news accounts into elements of frames, will be used. Moreover, Gamson and Modegliani use the following operational definition of a frame: "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. Moreover, a frame suggests what the controversy is all about, the essence of the issue.[131]" Further, Giltin[132] writes that "Media frames, largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for reporting journalists and to some important degree, for us who rely on their reports." In the process of framing, as Tuchman[133] points out, a happening is "transformed into an event, and an event is transformed into a news story."

After identifying the main frame of each editorial based on the above definitions, the frame(s) will be numbered chronologically, summarized, classified

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[129] Gamson and Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power," 1-37.
[130] Pan and Kosicki, "Frame Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse," 55-75.
[131] Gamson and Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power," 1-37
[132] Giltin, *The Whole World Is Watching,* 48-50.
[133] Gaya Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity" *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (1972): 660-679.

and then content analysed based upon both manifest and latent content. Particular attention will be paid to locating every example of a framing device and each example will be noted and documented in detail, which will be based on the definitions given by Johnson-Cartee.[134]

The first stage will involve mainly the cataloguing of the various metaphors, catch phrases, visual images, moral appeals, and other symbolic devices that characterise Sri Lanka's Peace Process of 2002. Secondly, a signature matrix, which consists of two rows representing the interpretive packages and columns indicating the condensational symbolic devices such as metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, visual images, roots, consequences, and appeals to principle are constructed on the basis of the findings derived from this discourse analysis. According to Gamson and Lasch,[135] a "signature matrix" is a device that lists the key frames and links them to salient signifying devices. Further, according to them, it is possible to identify the particular signature elements for a given frame - the metaphors, catchphrases, or other symbolic devices used typically to convey or to find phenotypic expressions that can be reliably coded.

After several close readings of the editorials, thus gaining an overall impression of their slant, they will be grouped according to two categories. The criterion used will be whether the said editorials were generally supportive or non-supportive of the Peace Process. Editorials will be interpreted as supportive whenever they argue for a compromise, praise the government, the LTTE or the Norwegians for their mediation or speak supportively about various peace dividends.

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[134] Karen Johnson-Cartee, *News Narratives And News Framing,* 163-164.
[135]Gamson and Lasch, "The Political Culture of Social Welfare Poiicy," 397-415.

Editorials will be interpreted as non-supportive whenever they display and argue against compromise and highlight only the violations of the peace accord by the LTTE, or speak in favour of the unitary nature of the constitution and identify Sri Lanka as a country belonging to the Buddhist majority, insisting that LTTE is a terrorist organization and advocate law and order in the country.

Those displaying editorials that are supportive of the Peace Process also will include positive comments about the negotiations with the LTTE; or of the ceremonies associated with the Peace Process or economic benefits or peace dividends, or the many positive aspects that came or could arise from the agreements, editorials commenting on optimistic statements made in other countries relating to the signing of the Peace Process or other benefits that could result from the agreement.

Moreover, alternative or non-supportive editorials on the Peace Process will include stories only of LTTE violations, difficulties in the negotiations with the LTTE, dangers related to the signed Peace Process, and the major concerns of those who opposed the agreement and the various rights of the people affected in the ethnic conflict.

5.8 Questions for Research

To examine the role of media framing in the Norwegian initiated MOU and the Peace process, this study will focus on three key research questions:

1. Can evidence of framing be found in newspaper editorials of the Norwegian initiated Peace Process 2002, based upon the presence of Gamson's framing devices? What specific frames and media packages can be identified?
2. Are the editorials sponsored and packaged by competing interest groups or political actors? Is the use of sources about the Peace Process in the three newspapers the same or different?
3. Do the frames vary between the same three newspapers?

This concludes the chapter on the methodology. Some of the major topics which form the nucleus of this research in Sri Lanka, will be covered in depth in separate chapters of this thesis. Numerous other studies such as that of Bush,[136] De Silva,[137] Tambiah,[138] Richardson,[139] Rupesinghe,[140] Balasingham,[141] and Uyangoda[142] have examined the underlying structural basis of ethnicized conflict of Sri Lanka in some depth. It is hoped that this study will provide a glimpse into the state of the national press in Sri Lanka by comparing three leading newspapers within the country

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[136] Kenneth Bush, *The Intra-Group Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Learning to Read between the Lines* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).
[137] Kingsley M. De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in a Multiethnic Society* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986).
[138] Stanley Jayaraja Tambiah, *Sri Lanka: Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986).
[139] John Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned: Learning About Conflict, Terrorism and Development from Sri Lanka's Civil Wars*, (Kandy: International Center for Ethnic Studies, 2005).
[140] Kumar Rupesinghe, *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures and Lessons Learnt*;
[141] Anton Balasingham, *War and Peace: Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers* (London: Fairmax Publishing, 2004).
[142] Jayadeva Uyangoda, *Sri Lanka: Modernity, Social Change and Claims of Justice* (Colombo: Social Science Association, forthcoming).

over a sixteen month period. In other words, the purpose of this study is to discover what the media were reporting, with regard to the 2002 Peace Process and the conflict in Sri Lanka, and how they were reporting it. As Wolfsfeld aptly put it:

> Today's conflicts are fought within a magnificent arena. This imaginative arena is built with the latest technology and has allowed millions to hear, to see and to watch stories about the various battles that have taken place throughout the day without even being present at the event. However, the crowd that actually views and reports on the battle is surprisingly small. It is composed of professional storytellers (sometimes called journalists) who are responsible for turning even the most monotonous of contests into exciting drama.[143]

As Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad[144] have put it, six decades of research in mass communication has given rise to the dictum of Shoemaker and Resse,[145] that 'news is a socially created product, not a reflection of an objective reality.' The framing methodology of this thesis is based on the premise that as explained in the chapter on the literature review, news work necessarily involves selection and abstraction, journalists and news organizations construct news and frame issues/events according to the demands of routines. Therefore, the concept of framing is crucial to explore how the editorial discourse of the 2002 Peace Process was constructed and structured to produce desired meanings. As Kumar[146] states, news cannot produce social meanings without adopting certain frames but in the process it establishes some meanings as dominant, and weeds out other competing meanings, and therefore leads to the hegemonic and marginalizing minority voices.

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[143] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict,* 1-2.
[144] Ramapras and Akhavan-Majid, "Framing Beijing Dominant Ideological Influences on the American Press Coverage," 45-59.
[145] Shoemaker and Resse, *Mediating the Message,* 21.
[146] Anup Kumar, "Abu Ghraib Abuse Story: Routinizing the 'deviance,'" http:// www.uiowa.edu/ jmc/graduate/conventions/2006spring/Kumar_abu-ghraib.pdf.

CHAPTER 6

The Print Media in Sri Lanka

6.1 Introduction

This chapter entitled 'the print media in Sri Lanka' is organised into three sections. Firstly, it explores the history of Sri Lanka in order to show that historical and cultural metaphors were being used by journalists since the beginning of the history of the Sinhala and Tamil press. It should be noted, however, that although journalists in Sri Lanka who belong to either the Sinhalese or Tamil ethnic groups, work for the English newspapers, the following discussion does not deal with the historical and cultural frames of the English press in Sri Lanka. As already indicated in the chapter on the literature review, in Sri Lanka there are only three establishments that publish newspapers in English and since all three are owned by Sinhalese, all of them have a pro-Sinhala bias in various degrees.

Therefore, the first part of this chapter pays special attention to some of the salient features of the early history or culture relevant to the national press in keeping with the frame analysis discussed in the chapter on the methodology of this thesis. Gamson's[1] 'constructionist model' discussed in the chapter on the literature review contended that both the media and the public are part of the same cultural system. In other words, both parties possess the same cultural frames. The same opinion was

[1] William A. Gamson, "A Constructionist Approach to Mass Media and Public Opinion," *Symbolic Interaction* (1988): 161-174.

stated by Baylor who stated that 'media agents use frames that are familiar and resonate with both themselves and the public' (Baylor[2]). As part of the same cultural system both parties are said to possess the same cultural "scripts," "schemata" or frames." "Frames" represent a set of ideas that interpret, define and give meaning to social and cultural phenomenon.

Gamson and Lasch[3] further pointed out that every political discourse also exists within a certain "issue culture" in which groups and individuals use a "catalogue of available idea elements" and "make use of a variety of symbolic devices to express their ideas." The extent to which a given frame will resonate within the professional and political culture of the media will vary over time and place because the political culture base of the news media varies. Therefore, although the news media can play an independent role in the creation of these issue cultures, they are much more likely to serve as cultural time-capsules, which offer a brief glimpse of the political symbols, myths, metaphors and stories that are popular at a particular time and place. Gamson and Lasch[4] further point out that, cultural frames exist at a variety of levels and as a rule one would consider that deeper frames would be less contested and thus more resilient to change. The depth of a given frame can be judged by considering its level of specificity and its age, while the deepest cultural frames about conflict may go back thousands of years, and those with less depth may be as recent as yesterday's news.

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[2] Tim Baylor, "Social Control of an Insurgent Social Movement: A Case Study of the American Indian Movement" (masters's thesis, The University of North Carolina, 1989), 45-47.
[3] William A. Gamson and Kathryn Lasch, "The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy" in *Evaluating the Welfare State: Social and Political Perspectives,* eds. S. E. Spiro and E.Yuchtman-Yaar, 397-415 (New York: Academic Press, 1983).
[4] *Ibid.*

The second part of this chapter deals with the history of the Sinhala and Tamil press. An attempt is made to identify the influence of news politics, news economy (propaganda function) and news culture, in print media in Sri Lanka, such that the behaviour of the media in Sri Lanka could be explained from these three perspectives along with the frame analysis discussed in detail in the chapter on the methodology.

In the third part of this chapter, we look into the media behaviour of the Sri Lanka press especially with regards to the present ethnic conflict and to show that the frame analysis of Gamson and Wolfsfeld affords a better approach to analyse the media in Sri Lanka and furthermore, it can complement previous studies undertaken by other scholars to analyse the behaviour of Sri Lanka's print media.

Keeping frame analysis, which is the overall methodology of this thesis in mind, we move into the first part of this chapter, where we look into some of the historical documents in Sri Lanka to find out what type of frame elements are present in these documents. This is also in keeping with qualitative media analysis proposed by Altheide[5]. According to him documents are studied to understand culture—or the process and the array of objects, symbols, and meanings that make up social reality shared by members of a society.

[5] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative Media Analysis*, *Qualitative Research Methods,* vol. 38 (London: Sage, 1996), 4-6.

6.2 Part 1: Early Beginnings of the National Press in Sri Lanka

Scholars hold that the so called recorded history of Sri Lanka is one of the oldest in South Asia and it was a history designed with ulterior motives by monks, since it was written both for the pious, so that they might perceive the working of the Buddha's teachings, and for the subjects of the kingdoms that they would accept the authority of the Buddhist rulers.[6] Therefore, right from the beginning of the history of Sri Lanka, one also finds cultural metaphors and motifs as Gamson's prototypes, to indicate the notion of "ethnic identity" and "ethnic others" (Sabaratnan[7]).

Some of the frame elements (metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, depictions) used by present-day journalists in Sri Lanka could be traced back to their origin in the early history of Sri Lanka. However, Sabaratnam says that before paying attention to some of these metaphors and motifs, it is important to note that Sinhala identity began originally as that of a ruling lineage and its noble adherents who claimed they were attributed the label Sihala (fore-runner of the term Sinhala). Sabaratnam states further that although there is epigraphic evidence that ethnic categories were used at village sites, one must also be cautious in interpreting these as indicators of politicized or even continuously present ethnic categories in the popular consciousness. However, what is important to note is that such evidence indicates the intermittent presence of ethnic categories among the people from the earliest times. It is important to look at some of these metaphors because according to Sanaratnam, ethnic loyalties are often

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[6] Bardwell L. Smith, *Religion and Legitimating of Power in South Asia* (Chambersburg: Anima Books, 1978), 48.

[7] Laksmanan Sabaratnan, *Ethnic Attachment in Sri Lanka: Social Change and Cultural Continuity* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 15.

evoked in everyday conversation through resonant metaphors borrowed from medieval interpretations of cultural differences.

According to Sabaratnam, one of the earliest metaphors introduced by the monks who composed the early history of Sri Lanka is the word *Dhammadeepa*. He further holds that, it is an important metaphor occurring repeatedly from the early medieval period (about C.E. 300), which is also a nuclear metaphor because of its centrality to ethnic sensibilities in pre-modern times. Smith[8] citing Regina Clifford says that the notion of *dhammadeepa* which creates an image of the island as the focus of the Buddhist doctrine. In other words, the tradition of *dhammadeepa* comprises the central thread running through the centuries of Sinhalese Buddhism." So important was this word, according to Perera[9], the development of a medieval ethno-religious consciousness in Sri Lanka was centered "on the emergence of the concept of the *dhammadeepa*, which by wedding the history of Buddhism and its destiny to that of the island provided a theme, a purpose, and a framework" for the medieval scribes, and their readers and listeners.

In the analysis of Sabaratnam, *dhammadeepa* implies a number of things. First, it refers to the physical island (deepa) of Sri Lanka and marks that as a territory. Secondly, it transforms this territory into a cultural field by investing it with religious significance. This is done by claiming it as the worldly repository of the Buddha's teachings (dhamma). Further, this metaphor unites this historically important idea of sacred repository with that of human agency by treating the Buddhist residents of the island as the chosen, in contrast to other residents in the island. In doing so, this

[8] Smith, *Religion and Legitimating of Power in South Asia*, 49.
[9] L. S. Perera, "The Pali Chronicles of Ceylon," in *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon,* ed. C. H. Philips, 29-43 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

concept also marks the cultural boundary of a moral community, a community that occasionally had to take action to protect the island.

Elaborating his analysis Sabaratnam, further says that there was also an important characteristic, which gave these metaphors added power. The boundaries of land-bound empires and kingdoms can fluctuate over time, but the boundaries of an island are more permanent and clearly defined. This natural feature adds force to these metaphors while the permanence of a natural boundary provides a sense of spatial unity for the ideology.

Therefore, Sabaratnam, points out that gradually *Dhammadeepa* became linked, connotatively in the literature with the term Sinhala and gave rise also to a second associated notion and becomes *Sinhaladeepa*, meaning that it is the island of the Sinhala speakers. Therefore, religion and language were joined as ethnic markers. There were two reasons for this emergence. Firstly, the island's dominant population gradually came to be identified as Sinhala, with a broadening of the word Sinhala from reference to a lineage and its kindred to other strata as well. Secondly, the fact that a large corpus of the Buddhist scriptures were written and preserved in Sinhala and were used by other Buddhist communities (Burmese, Thai, Cambodian) scattered in Asia, gave the language, and the place where it was found, an objective association with the religion. What is significant is that as a metaphor, as Sabaratnam asserts, *dhammadeepa* and its co-reference to the Sinhala speakers produced and developed a vertical ethnic, which suggested that the island of Sri Lanka was the island of the Sinhala Buddhists.

Using the vocabulary of Gamson[10] one can say that some of these nuclear metaphors found in the historical and cultural discourses of Sinhala and Tamils can be broadly defined as collective action frames. These symbolic words found in the above mentioned historical and cultural documents also could be further categorised as collective action frames, because citing Snow and Benford[11] (1992), Gamson says that collective action frames are "action oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate social movement activities and campaigns..

Therefore, the purpose of the above analysis was to show that most of the frame elements that are used by some of the present journalists have their roots in the past. The history of the Sri Lanka's press explained as above shows that the word or the central idea "multiethnic" or the "devolution frame" does not resonate with the Sinhala culture. To cite K. M. de Silva on this point: "The emphasis on Sri Lanka as the land of the Sinhala Buddhists carried an emotional popular appeal, compared with which the concept of a multiethnic polity was a meaningless abstraction."[12]

6.3 Part 2: History of the National Press

Considering the above explanation of cultural metaphors or symbolic devices, especially their ability to invoke patriotism and nationalism in people's mind let us look into the history of the press in Sri Lanka. According to many scholars[13] who have analysed the history of the press in Sri Lanka, right from the beginning, as it was

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[10] William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992):31-109.
[11] David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, "Ideology, Frame Resonance and Participant Mobilization" *International Social Movement Research* 1 (1988): 197-217.
[12] K. M. De Silva, "Religion and the State" in *Sri Lanka :Problem of Governance,* ed. K. M. De Silva, 306-344 (Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1993).
[13] K. M. De Silva, "The Origin of Sri Lanka's Press, 1802-1850" in *Studies on the Press in Sri Lanka,* ed. G. H. Peiris, 107-147 (Kandy: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997).

founded by Robert Wilmot-Horton, the Sinhala, Tamil, and English press was engaged in patrician politics.

According to Peiris[14], in 1950s there were two major newspaper groups in Sri Lanka, the *Lake House* and *Times*. Due to their constant engagement in politics there was an attempt by the government to curtail the press, especially the 'Lake House.' However, the consequences of this attempt to nationalise Lake House, one of the most popular press outlets in Sri Lanka at that time were many fold. Firstly, according to Peiris, this nationalization attempt drove 'Lake House' into closer alliance with the United National Party. The Lake House Group of papers vehemently supported the UNP at the general elections 1965 and general elections 1970. The former was won by the UNP while the latter was won by the Opposition, namely the United Front, led by Mrs. Bandaranaike the widow of Mr. Bandaranaike, who was assassinated in 1959.

Secondly, it demonstrated that selective nationalisation of newspaper firms is a distinct possibility, though averted in 1964 by unexpected circumstances rather than by the political influence of 'Lake House" or a public outcry against its takeover by the government. Thirdly, and in part at least as consequence, it brought about a substantial diversification of the ownership of the press, more pronounced in its Sinhalese segment than in the others, which among other things had the effect of curtailing further the 'Lake House' share of the market.

The most significant aspect of this diversification, according to Peiris, in terms of overall impact was the emergence of a third newspaper firm, in 1961 namely

[14] G. H. Peiris, "Media in Sri Lanka: Recent Trends of Change," in *Studies on the Press in Sri Lanka and South Asia,* ed. G. H. Peiris, 81-105 (Kandy: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997).

'Independent Newspapers', a subsidiary of the largest book publisher of Sri Lanka, M D Gunasena & Sons.

The victory of the 'United Front" or political parties led by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party at the parliamentary elections of July 1970 ushered in a period during which the ownership and control of the Sri Lankan press experienced a series of fundamental changes. These changes or laws also show, in a way, the importance of the media as well as the close relationship of media and politics, and also why governments want to get the ownership of the press or why they want to control the press in order for it to be their propaganda outlet.

The expected control over the press was delayed for a period by the government's preoccupation with more urgent business - the introduction of a new constitution and the suppression of the insurrection of 1971. The following changes were especially made to control the press. First, there was the Sri Lanka Press Council Law No, 5 of 1973, which was intended to serve as an instrument for the curtailment of press freedom through semi-judicial and administrative devices. The second was the enactment of legislation, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited, (Special Provisions) Law No. 28 of 1973, which had the effect of bringing the assets of 'Lake House' press and its newspapers under the control of the government. The third was the enforced closure of the 'Gunasena' press with recourse to 'emergency powers' of the government under the public security act, which had been in force since the insurrection of 1971. With these tasks successfully accomplished and with the Times group on the brink of financial insolvency by the mid 1970s, almost the total control

over the Sinhala and English segments of the press in Sri Lanka by the government in power was complete.

According to Peiris, the new pattern of ownership explained above had a profound impact on the political content of the main newspapers in all three languages. The Lake House paved the way as expected, in political reporting and commentary. Its publications gave ample coverage to matters such as the supremacy of the people vested [with an interest] in the new constitution, the wisdom displayed by the government in financial management; the liquidation of capitalism through land reform, and the achievements in foreign policy. Coverage was also given to the extraordinary popularity of Sri Lanka's leader at home and abroad and the continuing loyalty of the masses to the government and also the abysmal performances of the previous regime and the prevailing personality conflicts within the main opposition party, namely the UNP at that time. Taking the cue from the 'Lake House', the other newspapers in Sri Lanka were cautious, neutral and somewhat subdued for a while, but according to Peiris, with the passage of time, they also became increasingly critical of the government. The self- confidence displayed by the 'Gunasena' Group up to the time of its closure was also due both to the endorsement it has given the UF on the eve of the parliamentary elections of 1970 as well as to the popularity of its newspapers in the market.

Another important event that happened in this juncture, namely 1981 was the arrival of *Divaina,* (in Sinhala) and The *Island*, (in English) as weeklies and a year later as dailies. These papers were started by the Upali Group of companies, a private firm highly successful in several fields.

What is important to notice is that as stated by Peiris, as the intensity of the ethnic conflict heightened, in these years, these two papers gradually acquired distinctiveness in serving the views of the Sinhalese-Buddhist intellectuals. Further, according to Peiris, *Divaina* in particular, has given more prominence to the Sinhalese Buddhist views in a way most other national newspapers have been hesitant to do.

Peiris's observation is also confirmed by Disanayake and Coperahewa[15], who hold that among the private sector Sinhala dailies, *Divaina* and also *Lankadeepa*, controlled by the Times group have been ever mindful that they depend on a Sinhalese (predominantly Buddhist) readership, and have shown sensitivity to the attitudes, responses and interests of that segment of the population, especially with regard to the ethnic conflict. While affirming the partisan or the "manufacturing consent" approach as explained in chapter four of this thesis, Tennekoon[16] observes rightly, that the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983 marked a critical juncture in the ethnic relations between Sinhala and Tamil. From this point onwards, the guerrilla war between Tamil militants and the largely Sinhala government forces escalated into a 'National Security" issue and each community's perceptions of the other as enemy hardened with each ambush, bomb explosion and massacre.

According to Tennekoon, the July riots also became a reason to rationalise and reassert nationalism in Sri Lanka; this process was done in political platforms, seminar rooms and the mass media. What is significant in the riots according to Tennekoon is that the July riots were interpreted as righteous violence and Tamils

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[15] J. B. Disanayaka and Sandagomi Coperahewa, "Changing Trends of the Sinhala Media Scene," in *Studies on the Press in Sri Lanka,* ed. G.H. Peiris, 167-179 (Kandy: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997).

[16] Sarena Tennakoon, "Newspaper Nationalism: Sinhala Identity as Historical Discourse," in *History and Roots of Conflict*, ed. Jonathan Spencer, 86-102 (London: Routledge, 1990).

(both militant and civilian) were cast as agent provocateurs. The victims became the victimizers. Moreover, the severity of the violence (which became apparent initially through exposure in the foreign media) was minimized and adverse publicity was attributed to Tamil propagandists.

According to the study done by Peiris[17], the mainstream press of Sri Lanka, remains more market oriented than ever before, consisting of the newspapers published by the state-owned and government-controlled 'Lake House', and others published by the private sector. The intense competition, which prevailed among these firms, also made an impact on the form and content of the newspaper they produce. Further, due to the intensity of the competition most papers are preoccupied with generating readership appeal through 'sensation' of one form or another-'scoops' in political and business affairs, provocative commentary, and lavishly illustrated 'human interest' stories of disasters and crime.

Writing under the title, 'Tamil press and Religious revivalism", P. Muthulingam[18] says that, given the low level of literacy, the Christian churches of various denominations had begun their converting activities in the early 19th century using the press as an instrument. Therefore, according to him, the initial impulses for dissemination of 'religious knowledge' in Tamil through the print medium in Sri Lanka were generated by the Christian missionaries namely by Wesleyans, Presbyterians and Congregationalists who had established a few schools and printing presses soon after their arrival in Jaffna during the second decade of the 19th century.

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[17] G. H. Peiris, "Media in Sri Lanka: Recent Trends of Change," 81-105.
[18] P. Muthlingam, "Evolution of the Tamil Press of Sri Lanka," in *Studies on the Press in Sri Lanka*, ed. G. H. Peiris, 181-192 (Kandy: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997).

Certain similarities of the pattern of change in the Tamil press of Sri Lanka, during the second half of the 19th century, and those of the contemporary Sinhala press have been also noted by the scholars (Muthulingam[19], Thillainathan[20]). First, it included a steady proliferation of publications up to and beyond the turn of the century in the form of small enterprises catering invariably to a readership in their respective areas of origin, the majority of which espoused sectarian interests rather than reporting current news. The second similarity was the emergence of an assertive form of religious consciousness among the adherents of the indigenous religions- Hinduism and Islam in the case of the Tamil press, and Buddhism in the Sinhala press.

Another, distinct feature of the Tamil press which was not obviously evident in the Sinhala press of this time was the special attention which the more popular Tamil newspapers tended to devote to the political affairs of the Indian sub- continent. Muthulingam, especially notes that while events associated with India's freedom movement usually received detailed coverage in a host of local Tamil publications, such as *India*, *Navajothi*, *Gandhi*, *Congress* and *Janashakthi*, these were ignored by the local newspapers in Sinhala and English.

Looking at the major newspapers that were functioning, at this time Muthulingam[21] and Thillanathan[22] say that *Virakesari's* outlook was a 'pan-Tamilian' outlook. While also giving ample space to news from South India, in the coverage of local politics its stance was critical, but it showed no persistent bias towards any

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[19] *Ibid.*
[20] S. Thillainathan, "Contemporary Tamil Media Scene in Sri Lanka," in *Studies on the Press in Sri Lanka,* ed. G.H. Peiris, 193-204 (Kandy: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997).
[21] P. Muthlingam, "Evolution of the Tamil Press of Sri Lanka," 181-192.
[22] S. Thillainathan, "Contemporary Tamil Media Scene in Sri Lanka," 193-204.

particular individual or group. Similarly, according to them *Tinakaran*, which was started in 1931 by D R Wijewardena's publishing firm, Lake House, was a Tamil version of other newspapers published by the same firm, particularly, the *Daily News* (in English) and *Dinamina* (in Sinhala). Moreover, *Tinakaran* remained well within the shadow of the larger journalistic, political and commercial objectives of the 'Lake House.' One of the advantages of this according to Muthulingam was that *Tinakaran* was able to acquire a numerically large clientele of writers, readers and advertisers among the Tamil newspapers of the country within a short period of its inception. At the same time, the disadvantage was that it also failed to acquire a personality of its own, except perhaps over a brief spell during the 1950s when a measure of autonomy was granted to its editors.

In addition, according to Thillainathan, *Tinakaran* being the product of the largest newspaper firm in the country, had a greater orientation towards national political affairs, namely to those of the 'center' and, by implication, performed a role of drawing the Tamils into the national mainstreams. Further, its principle source of strength which was the formidable backing of 'Lake House' helped the *Thinakaran* to access sources of news, including the international news agencies, and reached areas and communities in Sri Lanka that were inaccessible in a commercial sense to its principal rival, *Virakesari*.

Another important observation made by Thillaninathan about the Tamil press is the growing disenchantment among the Tamil readership with the main national Tamil papers. He says that this is felt especially after the first major wave of communal riots in post independence Sri Lanka in 1958 among the Tamils living in

the predominantly Sinhalese areas of the country who were subjected to widespread mob violence. According to him, an increasingly large section of the Tamil community, living especially in the north and the east, had begun to perceive that Colombo-based newspapers did not seem to serve their interest and aspirations. He cites the launching of the Jaffna based Tamil newspaper, *Eelanadu* in 1959 as an outcome of this feeling of dissatisfaction. Further, to the credibility of this publication, a comprehensive and balanced coverage of the day–to-day affairs of the main Tamil population concentrated in the North was given by this paper, without inciting any of the communal passions or prejudices. In the early 1960s, *Eelanadu* was able to provide a detailed coverage of the Sathyagraha campaign launched by the Federal Party.

The intensification of the Sinhala-Tamil conflict from about the mid-1970s has had the effect of the emergence of other regional newspapers and obviously their focus of interest is sectarian interests. Papers like *Uthyan*, *Eelmurasu*, *Murasoli,* and *Eelanatham* are published from Jaffna, while Tamil *Murasu* from Vavunia, and *Ceithi* from Kandy are some that are serving the above purpose. Some of these papers were established in 1984. What should be noted is that due to the turbulent conditions that have persisted in the Tamil areas of the north and east since about the mid-1980s, most of these papers have ceased to exist or appear only intermittently under conditions of uncertainty

Commenting in general, on the role of the Tamil Press, Thillainathan says that especially in the past few decades, the Tamil press has to carry the additional burden of various specific constraints. These constraints, in one way or another, relate to the

basic fact of the Sri LankanTamils' increasing marginalisation from the democratic political process of the country. Even prior to the total disruption of civil government in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka in the mid-1980s, for many decades, the Tamil community has continued to remain on the periphery of national level electoral politics and political power arrangements. In the more recent past, those living in the main Tamil population concentrations of the north and east have been excluded even from this periphery. Significantly, this means, that the almost total denial of press freedom and free access to information to an estimated 40 percent or more of the Sri Lankan Tamil community and about 15 to 20 percent of all Tamil speaking people in the country.

The main newspapers such as *Virakesari* and *Tinakaran* along with various other regional newspapers and periodicals have continued to be published, mostly from Colombo, the capital, and distributed in areas outside the war-affected north and east. The extent to which these publications are free to disseminate news and views is restricted by the fact that the affairs that concern the Tamils, especially about the ethnic conflict are politically sensitive to a degree that those who venture to report or comment freely on such affairs expose themselves to the risk of hostile retaliatory action from one or the other of the forces that are at conflict. Moreover, given the prevailing ethos of prejudice and suspicion, there are the restrictions on access to sources of information which adversely affect the Tamil journalist much more than their counterparts in the Sinhala and English Press.

The above observation on the evolution of the Tamil press concludes the second part of this chapter, where especial attention was made to tracing the historical

background of the Sinhala and Tamil press. Although there are some similarities, it is correct to say there are also vast differences, and indeed the evolution of the Tamil press in Sri Lanka, shows that even in the past there has been a dual media environment in Sri Lanka. It is also correct to say that the *injustice and defiance* frame, or the *victim* frame have been popular frames, even in the past, in both the Sinhala and Tamil press.

The reasons for the emergence of some of these particular frames will be explained in the third part of this chapter, and it is important to keep in mind that they are popular frames used by journalists working in conflict areas in other parts of the world. Another difference is that more space is being given to happenings in the neighbouring India in the Tamil press compared to their counter part in the Sinhala press. Negatively, because of the close proximity between the North of Sri Lanka and South India, and the Indian culture, popularized by the Tamil media outlets, further alienates Sri Lankan Tamils from identifying themselves first as citizens of Sri Lanka. In addition to these factors, a high level of political consciousness, even in the early period, and a large readership with bilingualism are also noticeable differences in the Tamil media environment.

However, one also notices the growing disenchantment and frustration among the Tamil readership in the main, capital, or Colombo-centered, national Tamil papers as well as Sinhala and English newspapers published by Sinhala ownership. As stated earlier, the above analysis also shows that there is lack of shared media in the country even at the early stage. Shared media here refers to common newspapers read by both communities, namely by the Sinhala and Tamil readers, i.e. two hostile parties

engaged in a conflict receiving their news from the same organization. Wolfsfeld,[23] believes that shared media has more potency to bring two hostile communities together.

Using the terminology deployed by Wolfsfeld[24] and Wolfsfeld et al.[25] in identifying key frames used by journalists in conflict areas at the early stage of Sinhala and Tamil press as explained above, one can also say that in the history of the Sinhala press as well as in the Tamil press two types of frames are visible. According to Wolfsfeld two main frames used by protagonists in conflict and rebellions are the *law and order* frame and the *injustice and defiance* frame. *The law and order* frame portrays conflict as a threat to "law and order", while the *injustice and defiance* frame focuses on constructing one party as being the victim of injustice which is determined to stand up for its rights. However, even acts of non-violence by the Tamils against State-sanctioned injustices are being framed as law and order problems in the Sinhalese press.

As explained in the literature review (Gamson and Wolfsfeld,[26] Ryan[27]), mobilizing media is an essential element of every collective action. Wolfsfeld et al.[28] state that challengers attempt to use the press not only for disseminating their messages but also as a means of achieving public standing and of mobilising third

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[23] Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and the Path to Peace* (London, Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[24] Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 143-149.
[25] Eli Avraham, Issam Aburaiya and Gadi Wolfsfeld, "When Prophecy Always Fails: Israeli Press Coverage of the Arab Minority 's Land Day Protests," *Political Communication* 17 (2000): 115-131.
[26] William A. Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Movements and Media as Interacting Systems," in *Citizens, Protest and Democracy,* ed. Russel Dalton, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 528 (1993): 114-125.
[27] Charlotte Ryan, *Prime Time Activism; Media Stratagies for Grassroots Organizing* (Boston: South End Press, 1991.)
[28] Avraham Aburaiya and Wolfsfeld, "When Prophecy Always fails: Israeli Press Coverage of the Arab Minority's Land Day Protests," 115-131.

parties to their cause. Therefore, based on the above findings one can say that challengers using the Tamil press attempted to promote an *injustice frame*, claming that Sri Lanka Tamils are victims seeking some form of redress. In such situations, Wolfsfeld says that the authorities often respond by promoting a law and order frame that centres on their responsibility for maintaining social order. The challengers demand a change in the status quo, and the authorities have a vested interest in maintaining it. However, in the Sinhala press, especially after 1983, one also finds usage of an injustice frame, often portraying the Sinhalese as victims seeking some form of redress and presenting Tamils as the cause of injustice.

Wolfsfeld et al., basing their findings on the Israeli press coverage of the Arab Minority's Land Day Protests, document that the news media are much more likely to adopt a *law and order* frame in covering collective actions. Further, according to them, while part of the reason for this has to do with journalists' traditional dependence on official sources, another important explanation is rooted in the media's need for drama. News is above all about action. Moreover this is evident when journalists are asked to construct news stories about protests, terrorism, and wars. Further, the greater the level of political and social enmity toward the challenger, the more likely the press will employ a *law and order* attitude for covering collective actions. In general, media coverage of such groups serves to both reflect and reinforce social attitudes about the legitimacy of different antagonists. As stated by Wolfsfeld at al. the notion of enmity refers to the amount of social distance between the group and the rest of the society in question.

This concludes the second part of this chapter. The purpose of the above discussion on the early years of the Sinhala and Tamil press was warranted in order to explain the routines and practices of newsgathering, which was explained in detail in the literature review chapter of this thesis. The early history of the Sinhalese press and Tamil press shows that the early period of press in Sri Lanka is heavily guided by news culture, news economy and news politics and use of "victim" frames and "injustice" frames. What is important to note is that one sees the early stages of collective action frames getting crystallised in the Sinhala and Tamil press with three components mentioned by Gamson. More specifically the words found in early Sinhalese and Tamil documents can be categorised as symbolic words or action frames using the terminology given by Gamson.

Gamson[29] noted that there are three components of collective action frames: (1) injustice, (2) agency and (3) identity. In Gamson's words the injustice component refers to the moral indignation expressed in this form of political consciousness. Additionally, an injustice frame requires a consciousness of motivated human actors who carry some of the onus for bringing about harm and suffering. The agency component refers to the consciousness that it is possible to alter conditions or policies through action. Moreover, collective action frames also imply some sense of collective efficacy and deny the immutability of some undesirable situation. They empower people by defining them as potential agents of their own history. They suggest not merely that something can be done but that "we" can do something. According to Gamson the identity component refers to the process of defining this "we," typically in opposition to some "they" who have different interests or values.

[29] Gamson, *Talking Politics*, 29-107.

The significance of these action words are evident from Roberts[30] who states that the concepts *Dhammadepa* and also *Sihaladepa* are deeply entrenched in some segments of the Sinhala population and form attitudinal blockages or allow the inducing of hardline positions to devolutionary accommodations demanded by the Tamil minority.

From the above analysis one notices the traces of some of the "filters" mentioned by the propaganda model as well as some of the news routines getting established in the media environment in Sri Lanka. More specifically, one sees the Sinhala press focusing on profitability by catering for the Buddhist majority; and propagating Buddhist nationalism and establishing closer ties with the government which overwhelms dissenting voices or minority voices.

6.4 Part 3: The Print Media and the Present Ethnic Conflict

Up to this point this chapter has tried to look at the history of national press, more specifically, the Sinhala and Tamil press in Sri Lanka, in order to understand the context of the various frames that it has disseminated over the number of years. This background helps us to understand the journalistic routines based on news culture, news economy and news politics that have guided the main newspapers in Sri Lanka. In other words, as it was discussed in the literature review, certain organisational and certain pre-established routine structures continue to impose or guide journalists in their news production.

[30] Michael Roberts, ed., *Sinhalanass and Sinhala Nationalism* (Colombo: Marga, 2001), 1-36.

As already mentioned in the chapter on methodology, the print media in Sri Lanka can be broadly placed in two main categories; namely, those that are owned and controlled by the state and those which are privately owned and controlled. As scholars have documented (Peiris[31], Gunaratne and Wattegama[32]), the State owns the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd, (Lake House) which had been taken over in the 1973-1974 period, and it is also a fact that papers published by 'Lake House' enjoy the widest outreach in terms of distribution networks, in addition to benefits from extensive State advertising. It has approximately 20 publications in the three main languages.

In Sri Lanka there are seven large private establishments that print a number of daily newspapers in all three languages. In addition, there are also a number of private establishments that publish several weekend newspapers.

In one of their seminal studies, Wolfsfeld et al.[33] have attempted to explain the ways in which journalistic routines for covering violent conflict lead to the construction of ethnocentric news. Based on their study after covering two events covered by Israeli, Palestinian, and *Al-Jazeera* television, they have argued that there are two major set of devices employed by the media for the construction of patriotic news. The first set consists of a number of permanent routings that ensure a steady flow of ethnocentric information about the conflict. This is also diagrammed by them in a flow chart.

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[31] G. H. Peiris, *Media in Sri Lanka: Recent Trends of Change*, 85-105.
[32] Shelton A. Gunaratne and Lalind Chanaka Wattegama, *Sri Lanka*, in *Handbook of the Media in Asia,* ed. Shelton A. Gunaratne, 182-216 (London: Sage, 2000).
[33] Gadi Wolfsfeld, Paul Frosh and Maurice T. Awabdy, "Journalistic Mechanisms for Covering Death in Violent Conflcts:Israeli, Palestinian and Al-Jazeera Television" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the international communication Association, Sheraton New York city, NY), http:// www.allacademic.com/ meta/p12178_index.html.

Table 2

Journalistic Mechanisms for Constructing Just War/Just Struggle News Stories

Ethnocentric Management of Flow of Information

- Dominant Use of Domestic Journalists
- Dominant Use of Domestic and Official Sources
- Dominant Use of Domestic Language

Victim's Mode of Reporting

- Dramatization/Personalization in Coverage of One's own victims
- Demonization of Enemy
- Construction of Ethnic Solidarity stories

Defensive Mode of Reporting

- Adoption of analytical/military perspective on Events (Intellectualization)
- Contextualization/Justification of One's own Actions (Rationalization)
- Marginalization of Other's Victims (Denial)

According to their study, the first set of mechanisms has to do with the ethnocentric management of the flow of information. These routines are mostly constant and employed in almost all forms of news. To make sure that virtually everyone involved in collecting and distributing information comes from the local population, or from allies. This includes reporters, photographers, cameramen/women, graphics artists and editors. Most sources for news about a war also originate in the local population, especially from military and political leaders.

Moreover, according to them, it is not a matter of information passing through a cultural filter: the information comes almost entirely from ethnocentric sources. Though made in a far away country, this important study is quite relevant to the state of the media in Sri Lanka, explained so far in this chapter. Relying on "ethnocentric" sources in Sri Lanka, as Thillainathan states[34], has resulted in the constraints and fear driving most of the educated Tamil journalists out of the publication houses run and owned by mostly Sinhalese management, except in the 'Lake House,' which is owned by the state. Indeed, Sri Lanka has lost many experienced Tamil journalists as a result of the exodus created by the state violence. Media institutions themselves should partly take the blame for creating an atmosphere of fear and distrust.

The study by Wolfsfeld et al.[35] about Israeli and Palestinian media is also very significant, because, according to the study, the use of one's own language also ensures a good deal of ethnocentric control over the flow of information. Authors here refer especially to the notion of language in its broadest sense. A native language always includes concepts, myths, symbols and cultural assumptions many of which transmit a sense of national pride. Such elements become especially important when people tell any tale and this according to them includes news stories about conflicts. This observation is true when one analyses any news item in the Sinhalese or Tamil newspapers.

The second set of mechanisms, according to their study, is more dynamic. Journalists adopt very different modes of reporting when they are covering civilians' deaths among their own people when compared to civilian deaths on the other side. In

[34] S. Thillainathan, *Contemporary Tamil Media Scene in Sri Lanka*, 193-204.
[35] Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Journalistic Mechanisms for Covering Death in Violent Conflicts."

other words, the second set of mechanism can be further broken down into what are called a "Victim" mode and a "Defensive" mode of reporting. A victim mode is used when one's own people have suffered an especially tragic loss of life while the Defensive mode is employed when one has carried out an attack that has led to similar losses by the enemy. In other words, the "Victim" mode of reporting is likely to be applied to those situations in which the major event concerns one's own victims, especially civilian casualties.

This mode of reporting can also come into play when military losses are especially severe or when soldiers are killed or taken prisoner. The Defensive mode of reporting will also be used in situations in which the leadership in question is forced to rationalize its own actions, usually because of civilian casualties on the other side. Studies on Sri Lanka media by Hyndman[36] and Bastian[37] are based on their study of the 1983 riots in Sri Lanka which proved that this defensive mode is very active in Sri Lanka. Additionally, an example of the above observation is given by Bush[38] where his says that an excessive, indiscriminate and often brutal armed forces' reaction to the Tamil paramilitary assassinations was promoted by both Sri Lankan government actors and the Sinhalese media. Bush citing Hoole et al.[39] states:

> In early June (1983), The Sun, An English daily published by M. D. Gunasena group, reported: 'Under such circumstances soldiers were compelled to react as during a war particularly in their role of fighting armed terrorists who had no compunction about killing servicemen or members of the public. In view of this, it has been felt that police and service-men in the North should be given the freedom of the battlefield rather than have their morals sapped through conflicts with

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[36] Patricia Hyndman, *Serendipity under Siege* (Nottingham,UK: Spokesman, 1988), 10.
[37] Sunil Bastian, "The Economic Agenda and the Peace Process: Part of the Sri Lanka Strategic Conflict Assessment 2000-2005," www.asiafoundation.org.
[38] Bush, *The Intra-Group Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Learning to Read between the Lines,* 67-87.
[39] Rajan Hoole, D. Somasundaram, K. Sritharan and R. Thiranagama *The Broken Palmyra: The Tamil Crises in Sri Lanka: An inside Account* (Claremont: Sri Lanka Studies Institute, 1990), 58.

legal niceties. This is not a peacetime situation and the police and services must be provided with adequate safe-guards when attempting to control the problem.

When the enemy kills one's own people the event is perfectly consistent with existing frames of the enemy (Gamson and Herzog[40]). As can be seen in the flow chart, routines employed in the Victim's Mode of reporting usually tell stories of grief, of anger and of a sense of community. Collective grief is likely to become especially intense when there are dramatic stories about the victims. The drama is usually enhanced in the first stage of coverage by the frightening images and sounds emanating from the scene- examples which include pictures of bodies or body bags, the wounded being transferred to ambulances and the screams and sobbing of hysterical bystanders. In the second stage the news media often become the major forum for collective mourning. People see pictures of the dead staring out from the front page of the newspapers and learn about victims' lives and families. In some countries the news media also take the public to the heart-breaking funerals that include an entirely fresh set of emotional jolts. Knowingly or unknowingly the media in Sri Lanka also continue to make use of this type of reporting when covering the death of the armed force members killed by the paramilitary groups.

Further, the news stories for such events also reflect the country's anger and serve to demonize the enemy. The images and sounds (in the case of radio and Television) are in and of themselves graphic proof of the enemy's evil. In addition, one will also find stories that deal with the enemy more directly. The most prominent source for such messages comes from the political leadership who employ dramatic terminology (e.g. cold-blooded murder) to describe the attack and the perpetrators.

[40] William A. Gamson and Hanna Herzog, "Living With Contradictions: The Taken-for-Granted in Israeli Political Discourse" *Political Psychology* 20, 2 (1999): 247-266.

However, the other side, which has been victimized, will talk about "massacres" and "war crimes" and this theme will be amplified in their own communication channels.

In addition, the victim mode of coverage often includes what is known as "ethnic solidarity stories". These stories center on narratives that have to do with the leaders and the public demonstrating their sympathy and solidarity with the dead and wounded. Liebes[41] argued that such news stories are rooted in a desire for "emotional togetherness." This can include stories of leaders visiting the hospitals, citizens' initiatives that express support (e.g. flying flags, writing letters), and special ceremonies designed to express and enhance ethnic/national pride. Patriotism is often an underlying theme for many of these stories and such feelings are critical to maintaining public support during protracted conflicts.

In addition, in Sri Lanka one can also observe blood donation campaigns to the fighting soldiers, school children visiting the wounded soldiers in the hospitals, religious ceremonies to bless the soldiers; popular songs with messages broadcast and telecast to encourage the soldiers. According to some observers the July 1983 riot in Sri Lanka was also sparked by dramatic reporting by *Divaina* newspaper, and also other national newspapers, of the event of blowing up of the 13 soldiers by the LTTE in Tinnevely, a village in the north of Sri Lanka. Although there was also a whole range of other factors, forces and initiatives responsible for the major riots in 1983, one can say that the media also contributed to it by building anger towards patriotism.

[41] Tamar Liebes, *Reporting the Arab Israeli Conflict* (London: Rouledge, 1997), 58-68.

The "victim's" mode explained above finds lots of resonance in Sri Lanka, and it is a popular frame in many papers there because the majority Sinhalese always believed that they were the victims of injustice during the colonization. Scholars state that the Sinhalese nationalism which emerged and was supported by the press in Sri Lanka was a kind of response to the injustices they experienced during the colonial period (C.R. de Silva[42],). Gunatilleke[43] states that in the former colonial times, the Tamil community with its high presence in the government services and the professions had an almost equal weight in the English-educated elite. It was the English-educated elite, which was the most influential and vocal part of the population during the period preceding independence. It is recorded by Gunatilleke that the Soulbury Commission (Soulbury[44]) which was appointed by the British Government in 1945 had acknowledged the underprivileged status of the majority Sinhalese in their report. As Bullion[45] puts it, the Sinhalese regard themselves as a numerical majority in Sri Lanka itself, but an embattled minority within the wider Indian sub-continent, as the keepers of the Theravada Buddhist tradition. In contrast, the Tamils are regarded as a minority within Sri Lanka, but as a majority with respect to the largely Hindu sub-continent.

Another important aspect of the media in Sri Lanka which has been continued from the beginning of the early years of print media in Sri Lanka is the strong relationship between the market and Sinhala-Buddhist ideology with regard to media

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[42] Chandra Richard de Silva, "The Politics of University Admissions: A Review of Some Aspects of the Admissions Policy in Sri Lanka:1971-1978," *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences* 1, 2 (1978): 85-123.

[43] Gunatilleke, "Negotiations for the Resolution of the Ethnic Conflict" in *Marga Monograph Series on Ethnic Reconciliation,* 1 ed. Godfrey Gunatilleke, 1-65 (Colombo: Marga Institute, 2001).

[44] J. F. Rees Soulbury and F.J. Burrows, *Ceylon: Report of the Commission on Constitutional Reforms*, (London: His Majesty's Stationary office, 1945), 47.

[45] Allan Bullion, "Civil Society and the Peace Process in Sri Lanka," *Civil Wars* 7, 2 (2005): 117-119.

institutions. In other words, in keeping with the news economy, pre-established news culture most newspapers in Sri Lanka try to cater for a readership that is predominantly Buddhist. These strong relationships can be noticed in both Sinhala and English language newspapers, as well as in state-owned and private sector media. Very broadly, this aspect of media in Sri Lanka falls into the second filter identified as the propaganda model, witness the following statement: "The dependence of media organizations on funding through advertising, leading them to favour content likely to appeal to the affluent and making concessions to commercial sponsors."[46]

Kandiah,[47] in trying to explain the media behaviour and its role in the conflict of Sri Lanka, states that in the minds of people, all journalists are some kind of "conflict specialists." For instance, it is taken for granted that journalists will provide accurate, properly contextualised, non-partisan information about reports and analyses of the conflict situations about which they write. This involves the journalists writing reports that would enable people to find out what actually is going on for themselves, or even challenge them to re-examine stereotypes and re-frame issues on the basis of better understandings of the conflict-generating factors and of the reasons that account for them.

In other words, people expect journalists to be mediators among the conflicting parties by helping to reconcile their differences. However, Kandiah citing the following example states that is not really the way in which the media work within the ethnic conflict. The example chosen relates to the events surrounding the LTTE offensive in the Wanni a village in North of Sri Lanka, which was started around

[46] E. Herman, "The Propaganda Model: A Retrospective," *Journalism Studies* 1 (2000): 101-111.
[47] Thiru Kandiah, *The Media and the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Marga Institute, 2001), 1-45.

Monday, 1 November '99 and its consequences. The first suggestion that something of significance was happening in the Wanni came in the lead report of the Sinhala newspaper *Divaina*, on Monday, 1 November, headlined "Lives of soldiers in danger". The next few days saw this same newspaper prominently reporting news about the battle through lead reports, headlined respectively- " (The) Tigers capture Oddusdan" (Tuesday, 2/11), "Tigers capture also Nedunkerni" (Thursday, 4/11) and "Attack on (the) Tigers from a defensive front" (Friday, 5/11). Interestingly, according to Kandiah, the first mention of any news associated with these events in the main state newspaper in English, *The Ceylon Daily News*, was in a report headlined, "Terrorist attack on Ampakaman repulsed", which appeared on page 12 of the issue on Saturday, 6 November. While mentioning that 87 soldiers had been killed and 645 injured, the report also mentioned that the army was inflicting "heavy damage" on the attackers and that those "missing in action" were gradually 'coming back." These examples of behaviour, especially by the state-owned papers, also confirm the prediction of the propaganda model, that sometimes the media are forced to depend on political sources.

However, it should be noted that some other examples given by Kandiah deals mainly with the English and Sinhala newspapers. In a separate analysis of the mainstream Tamil newspapers, while agreeing that the state controlled *Thinakaran*, and the independent *Thinakkural* and *Virakesari* give space as expected to the concerns and viewpoints of the Tamil-speaking people; however, he says when it comes to the handling of the ethnic conflict, they too tend to play a certain kind of two-sidedness, similar to the two-sidedness noted in the southern newspapers and yet somewhat different from it.

On the one hand, in their content and coverage their reporting seems to conform largely to that of the mainstream non-Tamil newspapers. As noted previously also by others, conformity is great in the case of the state-controlled *Thinakaran,* particularly, because their staff have to depend on the government for their jobs. But there are also other reasons for such conformity. One is that these newspapers, including all the main newspapers published in three languages, need to draw on communications and bulletins from the government, and the statements and speeches of politicians along with other such prominent national personalities.

Another aspect of Tamil papers is their effort to conform to other papers and according to Kandiah all of them publish out of the south, (especially in Colombo) and this, to certain extent determines what is deemed newsworthy, apart from governing the manner of their practice. In other words, their behaviour reflects the reality that their readers are one with the readers of the non-Tamil newspapers within one country, within which, moreover, the regions occupied by the latter have assumed dominant significance. Hence, the researcher believes that this "centralized" aspect of the press also imposes certain constraints on the minds of most of the journalists who lack any understanding, or support for decentralization which was demanded by the Tamils in the early stage of the conflict.

With these negative examples of the print media in Sri Lanka, Kandiah comes to a conclusion that so-called media behaviour from the conflict resolution perspective is a dysfunctional one. The immediate consequences of some of these dysfunctions, is that it allows the media to manipulate their readers. In other words, the media takes away from their ethnic audiences their inalienable right to participate

actively in the affairs of their society through informed judgements and considered decisions, which they make for themselves in their own best interests on the basis of adequate, accurate, non-partisan information and discussion. Instead of mirroring the reality, the media confuse the audience, or mislead them on what really is going on or at stake, and make them passive recipients of perspectives and understandings constructed for them by others.

According to Kandiah[48], some of the practical reasons given by the media practitioners themselves is that their reports are due at least to some extent to constraints and pressures which are imposed on their activities and behaviour by both private sector owned media organisations and their generally ethnically defined managements, who implicitly or explicitly lay down guidelines and policies which restrict the freedom of their employees to observe verisimilitude in their reporting or which even lead them away from it. In a way these constraints affirm the workings of the propaganda model and news routines explained in the literature in detail.

Apart from these, government media policies implemented before the Peace Process also controlled the flow of information and are responsible for the some of the dysfunctions of the media. During the height of the war, all means of access to the war zones from which the situation may be reported at first hand are in the control of the military, and it is very difficult for independent journalists to obtain permission to enter them. Generally, clearance to visit these zones is obtained only for selected journalists, and moreover, such visits are far too brief to allow reporters to gauge what really is going on. What the media disseminates tends, therefore, to be based

[48] *Ibid.*

considerably on handouts provided by the Ministry of Defence or on other government press releases, both of which give only the official viewpoint. Therefore, by taking into account all these constraints placed on the local press by the government during wartime confirms also some of the theoretical argument predicted by the propaganda model.

As it was explained in the literature review of this thesis, scholars have argued that the media generally function in accordance with the propaganda needs of the state, especially during the periods of war, conflict escalation and state mobilisation against internal insurgencies (Barrett[49], Carruthers[50], Knightly[51]). Wolfsfeld[52] and Wolfsfeld et al.[53] state that there are also cultural reasons for journalists to support a war. Despite the official stand of objectivity, journalists are also citizens, who have similar attitudes to those around them. It is quite impossible to be "even-handed" when your own people are being killed. The "ethnocentricity of death" portrayed in the national newspapers, especially government-owned and private sector owned newspapers in Sri Lanka, observed by Kandiah and also by other scholars as referred to above is also been documented by Liebes[54] in connection with the Palestinian Israeli war. Liebes found that framing mechanisms such as *excising, sanitizing, equalizing, personalizing, demonizing*, and *contextualizing* were reflected in the broadcast journalism of Israeli Television during the Gulf War. The same framing mechanisms could be found in the most of the national media in Sri Lanka.

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[49] Oliver Boyd-Barrett, "National and International News Agencies: Issues of Crisis and Realignment," *International Communication Gazzette* 62 (2000): 5-18.
[50] S. Carruthers, *The Media at War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).
[51] Philip Knightley, *The First Casualty* (London: Prion Books, 2000).
[52] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 142.
[53] Wolfsfeld *et al*, "Journalistic Mechanisms for Covering Death in Violent Conflicts."
[54] Liebes, *Reporting the Arab Israeli Conflict*, 55-68.

Accordingly, one side's deaths are tragedies while the enemy's deaths are statistics. Our casualties have names, faces, families and lives; theirs do not. This type of reportage was very visible in the national newspapers especially in Sinhala and English. The danger of the above type of reporting according to Liebes is that, in a situation like that the media provide an extremely one-sided view of the conflict. Thus, there can be no doubt that continual exposure to such coverage by the media serves to demonize the enemy and sanction the use of force as a means of self-defence.

After analysing the Sri Lanka's vernacular press and the Peace Process, Nadarajah[55] has come to the following important conclusions. An examination of Sri Lanka's vernacular press reveals a multi-faceted and gradually deepening ethnic divide, particularly on issues related to the Peace Process, despite common ground on some issues (such as crime and corruption). Few areas of cross-ethnic commonality are highlighted and a zero-sum approach is adopted in dealing with issues connected to the Peace Process, particularly when it comes to other communities' political goals and especially in relation to territory and power-sharing. Communal polarization is underlined most strongly in the papers' occasional characterizations of the island's communities: there is a clear "essentializing of ethnicity", where Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims are spoken of as monolithic wholes.

Whereas there was broad support for the Peace Process among all three sectors in the wake of the February 2002 ceasefire, waning optimism and emerging anxieties have since produced opposition and resistance. Among the minority papers there was

[55] Suthaharan Nadarajah, "Sri Lanka's Vernacular Press and the Peace Process: Part of the Sri Lanka Strategic Conflict Assessment," www.asiafoundation.org.

strong support for autonomy based on minority identities, though on occasion there were pluralist arguments. Vernacular press coverage has, since February 2002, been noticeably shaped by nationalist ideologies and, in some cases, racist sentiments. Almost all leading Sinhala papers have adopted strong Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist positions.

Significantly, previous studies of Sri Lankan print media, which are mostly quantitative studies in Sri Lanka, have highlighted the roles played by media in the political process in Sri Lanka. One notices that even in the early years of the press this was very visible and it was also one of the reasons for the nationalisation of the 'Lake House' and for the birth of several other newspapers. It also shows the relevance of the political contest model of Wolfsfeld, which explains the relatively destructive or negative role media plays in conflict and peace. His first argument, which was already referred to in the chapter on literature review says that first, the political process is more likely to have an influence on the news media than the news media are on the political process.

In other words, according to him the political culture of a society has a major influence on how the news media cover conflicts, because the news media are more likely to react to political events than to initiate them. However, media also influence the political process, by helping to set the political agenda, and accelerating and magnifying political successes and failures. The history of the print media, both in Sinhala and Tamil shows that the relationship between the political process and the media is very close in Sri Lanka.

Further, the above analysis also shows that, in general, print media in Sri Lanka have played partisan roles that were not that helpful in bringing reconciliation between two major ethnic groups. According to scholars this type of news coverage is grounded in the notion of conflict as a news value. The language used by the media in Sri Lanka can be categorised as war journalism. War journalism is typified by its use of language that identifies strongly with one side, or with the home side of the war, its use of militarily triumphant language; its adoption of action oriented story-lines and/or superficial narratives that display little context, background, or historical perspectives.

On the other hand, a recent content analysis of newspapers by Ting Lee and Maslog[56] outlines that, comparatively speaking coverage of the Tamil Tiger conflict by the Sri Lankan newspapers revealed the presence of strong peace journalism framing. Thus, their analysis of 224 stories from the *Daily News* and *Sunday Observer* and *Daily Mirror* found a higher proportion of peace journalism stories.

Furthermore, a new approach has been advocated by some scholars, asking journalists to discard war journalism in favour of peace journalism, to promote a culture of peace. Peace journalism was first proposed by Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung in 1970s as a self- conscious, working concept for journalists covering wars and conflicts. In other words, by taking an advocacy, interpretative approach, the peace journalist concentrates on stories that highlight peace initiatives; tone down ethnic and religious differences, prevent further conflict, focus on the structure of

[56] Seow Ting Lee and Crispin C. Maslog, "War or Peace Journalism? Asian Newspaper Coverage of Conflicts" *The Journal of Communication* 55 2 (2005): 311-329.

society; and promote conflict resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation (Galtung[57]).

According to the findings of Seow Ting Lee and Crispin C. Maslog, the strongest peace journalism was in Sri Lanka, followed by the Philippines, Indonesia, India, and Pakistan. Their analysis was done after the 2002 Peace Process and it included only the English newspapers. Certainly it shows a silver lining in the dark sky of the media in Sri Lanka. However, one cannot be happy about the present state of the media in Sri Lanka because content analysis made by Lee and Maslog does not reflect the content of the Sinhala or the Tamil language papers. As they themselves have rightly observed, one of the limitations of the study was its use of English-language Asian daily newspapers. As explained before only 7% of Sri Lankans can read and understand English in Sri Lanka.

As explained in the political contest model of Wolfsfeld, as discussed also in the chapter on literature review, a political process of a country is more likely to have an influence on the news media that the news media are on a political process. As stated by Wolfsfeld, the political process has a major impact on the press because political power can usually be translated into power over the news media, because the political culture of a society has a major influence on how the news media cover conflicts, because the news media are much more likely to react to political events than to initiate them, because political realities often determine how "antagonists" (a term used by Wolfsfeld to refer to any group, institution, or state involved in an on going conflict with another group, institution or state over a political state) use the

[57] Johan Galtung, "High Road, low Road: Charting the course for peace journalism" *Track Two* 7 (1998): 7-10.

news media to achieve political goals, and also because political decisions have a major influence on who owns the media and how they operate. By applying this theory to Sri Lanka, the examples cited above have demonstrated how close the political process and the news media are in the country. This chapter has shown that the connection has been there right from the beginning of independence.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter generated a number of conclusions regarding the media in Sri Lanka. It demonstrated how the Sinhala and Tamil media in Sri Lanka have become increasingly ethnicised, as well as the English media, since this media is also run and owned by the government or the private sector that belongs to the majority Sinhalese ethnic group. As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the media in Sri Lanka has historically been divided into ethnic and religious identities; a trend which comes from the colonial times. According to most scholars the narrow focus by the media on ethnic lines, often conceptualised as an ethnic conflict alone undermines the root cause of the conflict, which is mainly economic, political and social (Abeyratne[58]). Media framing of the conflict as an ethnic conflict, and routinely reporting the LTTE as the only cause of the conflict unfortunately also distracts the people paying attention and finding amicable solutions to the other roots of the conflict.

Another important finding in this chapter is that there is also an increasing and alarming isolation and marginalisation of the Sri Lankan Tamil minority from the main-stream national media, and therefore from the democratic political process of

[58] Sirimal Abeyratne, "Economic Roots of Political Conflict: The Case of Sri Lanka" *The World Economy* 27 (2004): 1295-1314.

the country suggesting that the press in Sri Lanka has to go a long way to offer the prospect of an equitable relationship to the Tamils and Muslims who are minorities in the country. Explaining the phenomenon of violence Galtung [59] states violence is "any avoidable impediment to self-realization." Therefore, the above findings indicate the national press in Sri Lanka is also consciously or unconsciously part of the apparatus that commits structural violence against the minorities.

In addition, another disturbing recent feature of media culture of Sri Lanka is the increasing incidents of abduction, attacking, threatening and murdering of Tamil and Sinhala journalists with the connivance of the state and the other interested parties, and also by paramilitary groups. It is been documented by Deshapriya[60] that over 50 members of the media and artistic community have lost their lives as a direct consequence of their work during the past two decades, while many others have suffered physical attacks, harassment and loss of property resulting in a considerable number of media personnel leaving the country. The emphasis (or the main frame) of the print media in Sri Lanka has always been that Sri Lanka is the land of the Sinhala Buddhists. In the eyes of the national media, especially in the Sinhala papers, the victims (Tamil minority) have become the victimisers.

The "victim's" mode of reporting and "defensive" mode of reporting combined with strong Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist positions taken perpetuated by the national media shows especially that the Sinhala press has marginalised and alienated the minority Tamils from becoming equal citizens of this country and framing every Tamil as a potential "terrorist" has blinded the public from recognizing genuine

[59] Johan Galtung, "High Road, low Road," 7-10.
[60] Sunanda Deshapriya, "A Study of Media in Sri Lanka (Excluding the North and East)" http://www.i-m-s.dk/Media/PDF/CPA%20South%20Survey%20FINAL%20(May2005).

grievances and roots of the conflict in Sri Lanka. Karim[61] aptly states that dominant discourses on terrorism try to avert their eyes from what Chomsky[62] calls "wholesale violence," committed by hegemonic states and their clients, and focus instead on the "retail violence" of non-complaint states and groups. Galtung's[63] concept of "structural violence" calls for a broader understanding of the larger historical and social contexts of violence. "Structural violence" is manifested in the denial of the basic material needs (poverty), human rights (repression) and "higher needs" (alienation) and is distinct from direct or "classical" violence.

The third chapter of this thesis on the 2002 Peace Process and causes for the Tamil separatism has traced how various types of structural violence were committed by the armed forces and the majority Sinhala State of Sri Lanka. Based on the findings of this chapter about the print media in Sri Lanka it is possible to assume that even the national media is also continuing structural violence against the minority especially against the Tamils. As Karim further states the consequences of systematic institutional behaviour that does not involve direct, physical force but that, nevertheless, leads to alienation, deprivation, disability, or death, as under poor working conditions, is also not usually described as violent in dominant discourses. However, direct, forceful reactions to such structural violence are invariably called violence.

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[61] Karim H. Karim, "Making Sense of The "Islamic Peril": Journalism as Cultural Practice," in *Journalism after September 11,* ed. Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, 101-216 (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[62] Noam Chomsky, "International Terrorism: Image and Reality," in *Western State Terrorism,* ed. Alexander George, 12-38 (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

[63] Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research" *Journal of Peace Research* 6, 3 (1969): 176-191.

As indicated in this chapter, all major newspapers are produced in Colombo, the capital and most of the time they represent the views from Colombo perspective and Sri Lanka has very little regional or provincial media and shared media. The status of the national media traced in this chapter, further shows that some of the journalism mechanisms practiced in Israeli and Palestine are also applicable in Sri Lanka.

The final question then is what is ideal role of the media? Though there are no straight answers, the MacBride Report, *Many Voices, One World* (1984), says that although disturbing or unpleasant events and facts must be made known by the media, so should positions which offer the 'reminder that peaceful solutions exist. As stated by Spencer[64], the thrust of the report is not just towards public knowledge, which provides awareness, but knowledge which translates into actions against governments who aim to exaggerate dangers in order to try to legitimize war and conflict. Journalism, it suggests, should not contribute to fears which are 'heightened by intolerance, chauvinism and a failure to understand other points of view. Those with responsibility in the media should remember that, beyond national interests, there is the supreme interest of humanity in peace.'

The background of this chapter serves to help one understand how the 2002 Peace Process is portrayed in the three most read Sinhala, Tamil and English papers in Sri Lanka. It is also interesting to see how many of myths, metaphors, catch phrases and stories coming from the ancient past and popularised by the print media are still carried and found in the news frames of the three selected newspaper editorials under

[64] Graham Spencer, *The Media and Peace :From Vietnam to the 'War on Terror* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 172.

the scrutiny. More specifically this research leads us to understand not only what was reported, but also how it was reported. As Sunanda Deshapriya[65] rightly says the Sri Lankan crisis cannot be understood without bringing media into the focus. In any resolution of a protracted conflict, as in the case of Sri Lanka, the mass media plays a vital if not decisive role.

This chapter has adequately demonstrated that a partisan media culture is deeply entrenched from the beginning in almost all Sri Lankan mainstream media, making the media part of the problem during a time of conflict or peace, by creating confusion and suspicion among the public and further undermining the peace attempts.

[65] Sunanda Deshapriya, "A Study of Media in Sri Lanka (Excluding the North and East)."

CHAPTER 7

Research Findings

7.1 Introduction

When people lack first hand knowledge of and experience with the issue at hand, understanding how the media portray social reality depicting either peace or conflict is important because according to Domke et al.,[1] Gamson,[2] Iyengar,[3] McLeod,[4] Price, Tewksbury and Powers[5] and Shoemaker[6], people's attitudes and judgments can be affected by the media's framing of issues. Beyond the basic social function of providing the information from which we draw our "cognitive maps" of reality, journalism is said to perform an important political role in liberal pluralist societies (McNair[7]). The aim of this chapter is to discuss the findings of this research, namely the editorial representation of the 2002 Peace Process in Sri Lanka by three widely circulated Sri Lankan daily newspapers: *Daily News, Divaina* and *Virakesari.* As it was also pointed out earlier in the chapter on methodology to cite Peiris[8], it should be noted, however, that estimates obtainable from various sources on the

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[1] D. V. Shah, D. Domke, and D. Wackman "Framing, Priming, and Decision Making: Evangelical Christians' Processing of Electoral Issue Information," (paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, Chicago, 1996 May), 1-2.

[2] William A. Gamson, "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, eds. Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller, 53-76 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[3] Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible?: How Television Frames Political Issues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[4] Douglas M. McLeod, "Communicating Deviance: The Effects of Television News Coverage of Social Protest," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 39, 1 (1995): 4-19.

[5] V. Price, E. Powers and D.Tewksbury, "Switching Trains of Thought: The Impact of News Frames of Readers Cognitive Responses," *Communication Research* 24 (1997): 481-506

[6] Pamela Shoemaker, "The Perceived Legitimacy of Deviant Political Groups: Two Experiments on Media Effects," *Communication Research* 9, (1982): 249-286.

[7] Brian McNair, *News and Journalism in the U.K.* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[8] G. H. Peiris, "Media in Sri Lanka: Recent Trends of Change," in *Studies on The Press in Sri Lanka and South Asia*, ed. G. H. Peiris, 81-105 (Kandy: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997).

'circulation' of newspapers refer only to the number of copies sold and not to the number of readers among which the newspapers are actually circulated.

As previously explained in chapter three, research on newspaper editorials has pointed to the importance of editorial pages for informing citizens (Hynds[9], Elsa Mohn and Maxwell[10]). According to Hodgson[11] a newspaper's opinion on what it considers to be the important issues on the day of publication can be found in the leader or editorial opinion column. Regular reading of the editorials in newspapers gives vivid insight into where it stands on the main current issues. Further, reading newspaper editorials may encourage readership of other sections of the newspaper as well as civic participation and a deeper understanding of local issues. More specifically newspaper editorials provide clues about the importance of the information contained in the editorial, which is based on that material's selection as an editorial topic. Editorials also provide visual clues about important issues because of their placement on the opinion page. In addition, editorials provide arguments that can help readers refine and also rethink their own opinions about important issues.

Therefore, this chapter starts with a short description of the research method used, the sample size and in two parts discusses the findings. The first part discusses the findings of the content analysis of the three newspapers which form the primary documents for this research. This is quantitative, while the second part is descriptive and qualitative.

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[9] Earnest C. Hynds, "Editors, Opinion Pages Still Have Vital Roles at Most Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly* 61, 2 (1984): 634-639.
[10] Elsa Mohn and Maxwell McCombs, "Who Reads Us and Why," *The Masthead* 40, 2 (1988): 18-23.
[11] F. W. Hodgson, *Modern Newspaper Practice* (London: Focal Press, 1992).

7. 2 The Research Method

Devereux[12] explains that these above two competing approaches to analysing media content are more suitable to discover both their manifest (obvious) and latent (hidden) meanings in the written texts. The first method is quantitative which is enumerative, involving the analysis of specific aspects of a large volume of media texts. The second is qualitative, which is a frame analysis that is more interpretative in orientation. The overall methodology of this thesis as discussed in the chapter on methodology is based on the qualitative media analysis recommended by Altheide[13], which is to blend the traditional notion of objective content analysis with participant observation to form ethnographic content analysis or how a researcher interacts with documentary materials so that specific statements can be placed in the proper context for analysis.

As further stated by Altheide, documenting refers to an integrated and conceptually informed method, procedure, and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving and analysing documents for their relevance, significance and meaning. Berelson[14] cited by Altheide states that originating in positivistic assumptions about objectivity, quantitative content analysis (QCA) provides a way of obtaining data to measure the frequency and extent, if not the meaning of messages. In contrast, Altheide[15] says that ethnographic content analysis (ECA) is also oriented to document and understand the communication of meaning, as well as verifying theoretical

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[12] Eoin Devereux, *Understanding the Media* (London Sage, 2003),120-123.
[13] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative Media Analysis, Qualitative Research Methods*, vol.38 (London: Sage, 1996), 14-16.
[14] Bernard R. Berelson, "Content Analysis in Communication Research," in *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication,* ed. B.Berelson & M. Janowitz, 260-266 (New York: Free Press, 1996).
[15] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative Media Analysis*, 14-16.

relationships. A major difference, however, as stated by Altheide is the reflexive and highly interactive nature of the investigator, concepts, data collection and analysis. Further, unlike in QCA, in which the protocol is the instrument, the investigator is continually central in ECA, although protocols may be used in later phases of the research. As with all ethnographic research, the meaning of a message is assumed to be reflected in various modes of information exchange, format, rhythm and style.

In 1989 Gamson and Modigliani[16] stated that in analyzing news content to uncover the frames, it is also essential to consider both manifest and latent content. He says that by analyzing news content in terms of the frames presented, the manifest-latent distinction is partially bridged. In this context, Gamson also holds that facts have no intrinsic meaning. They take on their meaning by being embedded in a frame or story line that organizes them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasize while ignoring others.

7. 3 Selection of Newspapers and the Sample Size

As stated in the chapter on methodology, the three papers analysed in this study are *Daily News, Divaina, and Virakesari.* All three newspapers are broadsheet papers and represent the three main languages that are spoken mostly in Sri Lanka, English, Sinhalese and Tamil. Furthermore, they are all published six days weekly, but not on Sundays. (Appendix 1) gives some characteristics of the newspapers selected for the study. All three newspapers are published in Colombo and distributed

[16] William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach." *American Journal of Sociology* 95 (1989)1-37.

throughout the country, however daily distribution in the North and East is frequently interrupted due to the ongoing war. All three papers publish sixteen pages daily with additional pages on Sunday and other special occasions. The English newspaper, Daily News, has the largest circulation: 157,000 among the English dailies in Sri Lanka. Daily *Divaina* has the largest circulation: 176,000 among the Sinhalese dailies in Sri Lanka and the *Virakesari* has the largest circulation: 64,000 among the Tamil dailies in Sri Lanka.

7. 4 The Various Stages of the Research Method

As previously explained, because of their importance, the editorials are the unit of analysis in this research. To understand the nature of the coverage and the editorial framing of the 2002 Peace Process, the researcher employed a close reading of all editorials that appeared in the popular national papers in Sri Lanka. These are, an English language newspaper: *Daily News,* a Sinhalese newspaper: *Divaina* and a Tamil paper: *Virakesari*. The selected period for the research is a sixteen-month period starting from 1st December 2001 to 31st March 2003. Every editorial of these three broadsheet newspapers from December 2001 through to March 2003 referring to ethnic conflict or to the Norwegian Peace Process or the LTTE and all editorials relating to the Peace Process are included in the analysis.

The researcher focused only on editorial headings and comments found in the editorial column on the peace accord in the three most circulated newspapers of Sri Lanka. The sampling interval was 16 months which consisted of 486 week days and the total sample size consisted of 1251 editorials. As previously explained in the

chapter on methodology, the sixteen month period was chosen, starting from 1st December 2001 and continuing to 31st March 2003 because significant events, such as the general election held on the 5th December 2001, the 2002 Peace Process and six rounds of talks held in different parts of the world between the LTTE and the newly elected UNF government are directly related to the Peace Process 2002 which is the focus of this study. All editorials were firstly coded as "displaying" or "not displaying" frames or frame components. The newspapers were selected manually going through an archive of newspapers which was stored at the national archives belonging to the National Library of Sri Lanka.

The coding protocol (see: Appendix 3) for the main study was developed with the help of a fellow post graduate undertaking related doctoral research with the Department of film and media, university of Sterling Scotland. A Tamil undergraduate student studying with the Department of social studies, Open University of Sri Lanka was employed to translate all the Tamil editorials into English. The researcher exclusively read and coded the editorials from the *Daily News* and *Divaina*, and the translated editorials from *Virakesari*. Therefore, the researcher undertook and completed all stages of the content analysis and frame analysis of the sampled editorials from *Daily News*, *Divaina* and *Virakesari*. In each selected editorial, the researcher first noted the identity of the newspaper, the date and the location of the editorial and its length. A standardized protocol, namely a coding sheet, was used for the identification of a type of editorial, as well as its content and dominant frame(s). In other words to distil the frames of the 2002 Peace Process a "constructionist" approach to frame analysis (Gamson and Modigliani,[17]Pan and

[17] William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, 1-37.

Kosicki[18]), which deconstructs and reconstructs the news accounts into elements of frames, is used. Altheide[19] states that frame, theme, and discourse are related to communication formats, which, in the case of mass media, refer to the selection, organization and presentation of information. Giltin[20] writes, "[M]edia frames, largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for reporting journalists and, to some important degree, for us who rely on their reports."

In the process of framing, as Tuchman[21] points out, a happening is "transformed into an event and an event is transformed into a news story". Therefore, taking all these into account, each editorial was numbered chronologically, summarized, classified and then content analysed based upon both manifest and latent content. Particular attention was paid to locating every example of a framing device and each example was noted and documented in detail.

The first stage also involved the cataloguing of the various metaphors, catch phrases, visual images, moral appeals and other symbolic devices that characterise Sri Lanka's 2002 Peace Process. For the purpose of content analysis, the heading and the content of the editorials were coded after repeated close readings. The purpose was conducted to identify from a list of 20 possible pre- coded topics (see: Appendix 2). In order for a topic code to be assigned, at least one entire editorial paragraph had to deal exclusively with the topic from the outset.

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[18] Z. Pan and M.G. Kosicki, "Frame Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse." 10 (1993): 55-75.
[19] David L.Altheide, *Qualitative Media Analysis*, 14-16.
[20] Todd Giltin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980),49-50.
[21] Gaya Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notion of Objectivity," *American Journal of Sociology* 77, no. 4 (1972).660-679.

Secondly, a signature matrix[22], which consists of two rows representing the interpretive packages and columns indicating the condensational symbolic devices such as metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, visual images, roots, consequences and appeals to principle is constructed on the basis of the findings derived from this discourse analysis. According to Gamson and Lasch[23] a "signature matrix" is a device that lists the key frames and links them to salient signifying devices. Gamson and Modigliani[24] further hold that by identifying the particular signature elements for a given frame, the metaphors, catchphrases, or other symbolic devices used typically to convey it, it is possible, according to them, to find phenotypic expressions that can be reliably coded.

Therefore, after reading the editorials several times to gain an overall impression of their slant, they were grouped according to two main types of categories. The criterion used was whether the said editorials were generally supportive of the Peace Process or non-supportive or ambivalent or ambiguous, towards the Peace Process. Editorials were interpreted as supportive of the Peace Process when they argued a compromise, praised the government, the LTTE or the Norwegians or their mediation or spoke about various peace dividends.

Editorials were interpreted as non-supportive of the 2002 Peace Process when they displayed and argued against compromise and highlighted only the violations of

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[22] Gamson's Signature matrix is a framing outline to depict competing frames of political issues. This outline presents each frame beginning at the broadest level as thematic "packages" and progressing through "core frames," "metaphors," "catchphrases," "visual images or head lines" and "consequences," among various other stages. What results from this matrix is a script that political agents employ in the rhetorical space created by a political struggle.

[23] William A. Gamson and Kathryn Lasch, "The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy" in Evaluaitng the Welfare State: Social and Political Perspectives, ed. S. E. Spiro and E. Yuchtman-Yaar, 397-415 (New York: Academic Press,1983).

[24] William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, 1-37.

the peace accord committed by the LTTE and questioned the wisdom of the government in signing a peace accord with the LTTE and insisted that LTTE was a terrorist organization and advocated law and order in the country.

Editorials that were supportive of the Peace Process also included editorials that displayed positive comments about the negotiations with the LTTE; editorials that discussed the ceremonies associated with the Peace Process or editorials that discussed economic benefits or peace dividends, editorials that discussed many positive aspects that came or could come from the agreements, editorials that commented on optimistic statements made in other countries relating to the signing of the Peace Process or other benefits that could result from the agreement.

Alternative, or non-supportive editorials of the Peace Process were governed by stories of LTTE violations; difficulties in the negotiations with the LTTE; dangers related to the signed Peace Process and the major concerns of those who opposed the agreement and the various rights of the people affected in the ethnic conflict.

7. 5 Research Questions

As explained in the methodology chapter, the research questions that guided this thesis were:

1. Can evidence of framing be found in newspaper editorials of the Norwegian initiated 2002 Peace Process, based upon the presence of Gamson's framing devices?

2. What specific frames and media packages can be identified? Are the editorials sponsored and packaged by competing interest groups/political actors? Is the use of sources about the 2002 Peace Process in the three newspapers the same or different?
3. Do the "frames" vary between the same three newspapers?

Among the key findings it was found that the two national dailies, namely the *Daily News* and *Virakesari* editorials seem to present a dovish attitude compelled by their own needs to survive in the market economy, and also to toe the line with the government, regarding the 2002 Peace Process while the Sinhalese newspaper *Divaina* seems to present a hawkish attitude. However, the over all representation of the 2002 Peace Process seems to indicate or confirm that one of the research findings of Wolfsfeld, that in general, even in Sri Lanka, peace is not a major news event for the news media. This conclusion was arrived at because out of 1,251 editorials only 534 was allocated to the Peace Process 2002 (see Appendix 4).

When the whole country and the international community were focusing attention on the 2002 Peace Process signed by the government of Sri Lanka, the allocation of only 42% of editorials to cover or comment on the need for peace in Sri Lanka seems to support Wolfsfeld's findings. Though interpreted statistically, this figure may sound a reasonable space given to the 2002 Peace Process, but when one looks beyond the statistics and reads into the meanings implied in the entire editorials, and why they were presented in that way it is correct to say that peace is not the bread and butter of news media in general. In addition, the content of the editorials of

Divaina also showed or suggested more ethnocentrism and hostility towards the LTTE which was one of the major partners of the 2002 Peace Process.

The frame analysis undertaken by this research in the second part further revealed that though one of the causes for the conflict in Sri Lanka was injustice and grievances perceived by a large proportion of the minority in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan Tamils, as discussed particularly in the chapter two and three of this thesis, it was not reflected dominantly in the three papers during the period of this research. Another major discovery was that three main frames found in this research, the peace and conflict resolution frame, the law and order frame and the injustice/defiance frame, were not entirely new in Sri Lanka and the roots of some of the versions of these three frames seem to go back even before the independence of Sri Lanka. In other words, they go back to the cultural and historical frames found in the public discourse of Sri Lanka as discussed in chapter six of this thesis. These findings are also in line with Gamson's research[25] in 1982 about the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In general what is unique about this research is that, looking at all the previous major studies on the Peace Process and the media in Sri Lanka, one could say that most of them are quantitative research studies which try to measure only the major trends in the media in Sri Lanka. However, the methodology of this thesis is unique because it uses both a quantitative and qualitative approach to study how the three most read newspapers in Sri Lanka portrayed the 2002 Peace Process. Moreover, the frame analysis used in this research is a useful heuristic device that can be qualitative, quantitative and also connotative. The researcher believes that frame analysis will be

[25] William Gamson, *Talking Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1-24.

a better method to understand not only how news is presented but also who constructs the news and why it is so.

In other words, frame analysis applied to date, on the most read newspapers in Sri Lanka gives valuable insights into personal attitudes, professional roles of media workers, media routines, media organizations, sources, advertisers and audiences, government controls and other media organizations. Unlike the previous studies done on the media in Sri Lanka, which limit themselves to looking at only what is published in the papers regularly, frame analysis employed by this thesis looks at how news is also coated, presented or packaged in accordance with the beliefs, myths, stories, folk tales and imagery that coincide with the dominant culture of a society. In short, frame analysis tries to go beyond the content or the appearance of the news by also looking at the cultural and historical context of news.

As Paletz and Entman[26] say, "the frames of a news portrait can be enlarged so that media reports may penetrate the consciousness of a mass public that is minimally aware of most specific issues and events or the frame can be shrunk to miniaturize an event, diminishing the amount, prominence and duration and thus mass awareness."

Having explained the sample size and the various stages of the research method used for this analysis, the research questions that guided this research the importance of the research method used in this research and some of the major findings, the following section deals with the first part of this chapter, namely a quantitative content analysis. This part will discuss the lay out of the three

[26] David L. Paletz and Robert M. Entman, *Media, Power, Politics* (London: Free Press, 1981), 9-47.

newspapers, the length of the editorials, frequency of editorials, the main focus of editorial headings and editorial topics and the sources that are cited in the editorials of the three newspapers.

7. 6 Part 1: Content Analysis

(a) Lay out of the Three Newspapers

One of the first findings was that the placement of the Tamil daily editorial in the *Virakesari* was very constant, namely on page 4 of the paper while in the other two dailies, namely the *Divaina* and *Daily News*, the editorial placement was not constant. In *Divaina* the editorials were on either page 10, 8 or 4. In *Daily News*, editorials were placed on page 6, 4, 8, or sometimes on page 10. All the editorials in the three papers, appeared on an inside page under a reduced banner of the paper's 'masthead.'

(b) The Length of the Editorials

The maximum length of an editorial in the *Virakesari was* 18 paragraphs, while the minimum length was 7 paragraphs. The maximum length of a paragraph in *Daily News* was 20 while the minimum length was 4 paragraphs. The maximum length of an editorial in *Divaina* was 15 paragraphs while the minimum was 10.

The editorials that appeared in all three papers were displayed in the left hand column of the paper and placed in a box, and the editorial title was in bold in the

English daily, *The Daily News,* and the Sinhalese daily, *Divaina.* However, in the Tamil daily *Virakesari,* the heading of the editorial was not in bold.

(c) Frequency of Editorials

After reading 1251 editorials of all the three papers, which spread over the selected period of 16 months, a total of 534 editorials were identified by the researcher and his assistant as displaying the 2002 Peace Process or having connection to it (see: Appendix 4).

Totally there were only 534 editorials, in the three papers, that gave editorial space to comment positively or negatively about the 2002 Peace Process. Out of 138 *Virakesari* editorials, 123 focused positively on the Peace Process, which was 89%. Similarily out of 197*Daily News* editorials, 176 focused positively on the Peace Process. Out of 199 *Divaina* editorials only 35 editorials focused positively on the 2002 Peace Process (see: Appendix 5).

The monthly average of editorials for the each newspaper was 8 for the *Virakesari*, 12 for *Divaina* and 12 for *The Daily News*.

7.7 The Main Focus of Editorial Headings and Topics

The focus of editorial headings in the English newspaper *Daily News* and the Tamil newspaper *Virakesari* ranged from the benefits of the signed Peace Process and its related activities to the six rounds of peace talks held in other countries the focus on peace dividends, the focus on the need for unity among political parties in the

South and good rapport between the President and the Prime Minister. Moreover, some of the headings also focused on the rights of Muslims and Sinhalese living in the North and East, the need to educate public opinion about the Peace Process, ceasefires and the need to safeguard and maintain law and order so as to secure the support of the public. However the focus of the Sinhalese paper *Divaina* was more on cease fire violations of the LTTE and the negative consequences arising from them.

More than two thirds of *Daily News* editorial titles focused on the Peace Process and peace dividends, drawing the readers' attention to the need to maintain the Peace Process without any hindrance. 176 out of total of 197 editorials in *Daily News* discussed the theme of peace or need for peace and conflict resolution prominently (see: Appendix 6). In other words, 89% of the editorials in the period of scrutiny hailed the Peace Process positively. Most of these editorial comments implicitly or explicitly praised the UNF government for the peace treaty signed with the LTTE. These editorials focused readers' attention further by the headings such as **"Grass Roots Support Essential"**[27], **"Equality, the cornerstone of the peace"**[28], **"Power Sharing and peace"**[29], **"Hope for the Future"**[30], **"Plight of the Displaced"**[31], **"Economic Revitalization and Peace**[32], **"Act now to promote peace"**[33], **"The need for cooperation"**[34] and **"Need to take timely action."**[35] Significantly, 2002 Peace Accord was portrayed as the only option available for Sri

[27] Editorial, "Grass Roots Support Essential," *Daily News*, 7th January 2002.
[28] Editorial, "Equality the Cornerstone of Peace," *Daily News*, 26th April 2002.
[29] Editorial, "Power Sharing and Peace," *Daily News*, 5th May 2002.
[30] Editorial, "Hope for the Future," *Daily News*, 9thMay 2002.
[31] Editorial, "Plight of the Displaced," *Daily News*, 15th July 2002.
[32] Editorial, "Economic Revitalization and Peace," *Daily News*, 18th September 2002.
[33] Editorial, "Act Now to Promote Peace," *Daily News*, 30th November 2002.
[34] Editorial, "The Need for Cooperation," *Daily News*, 7th January 2002.
[35] Editorial, "Need to Take Timely Action," *Daily News*, 25th March 2002.

Lanka in editorials discussing the peace and conflict resolution topic in the *Daily News.*

There were only 13 editorials in *Daily News* which spoke about the rapid deterioration of the law and order situation in the country even after the 2002 Peace Process. In other words only 6.1% of the editorials spoke about the law and order situation in the country stating that LTTE was violating the agreement. Editorials in this group appeared under headings such as "**Ceasefire and Human Rights.**[36]" Some of the editorials under this topic appealed to both parties, namely government and the LTTE, to take stock of previous negotiations and to learn from previous mistakes. In a heading entitled, "**Boost to Peace Effort,**"[37] LTTE was directly labelled as human rights violators. Most of the editorials discussing ceasefire violations by the LTTE found in *Daily News* argued that the LTTE or the Tigers should adhere to the ceasefire. Moreover, there were only eight titles in *Daily News* which could be termed editorial titles focusing on the topic of various injustices that affect the minorities. In one editorial titled, "**Hope filled-Anniversary**"[38] it was stated that:

> While the republican constitution of 1972 was an advancement in that it restored sovereignty to the people by ending allegiance to the British Crown, it had certain negative features such as the denial of safeguards for national minorities and Gaullist structures that had resulted in a constitutional crisis over the years. It is high time that constitutional changes are implemented to accommodate the rights of the minorities.

89.1% of the *Virakesari* editorials also spoke positively about the Peace Process (see: Appendix 7). For instance, 123 editorials hailed the UNF government and the LTTE for signing the Peace Process. For example, in an editorial titled,

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[36] Editorial, "Ceasefire and Human Rights," *Daily News*, 30th March 2002.
[37] Editorial, "Boost to Peace Efforts,"*Daily News*, 28th May 2002.
[38] Editorial, "Hope-Filled Anniversary," *Daily News*, 2nd February 2003.

"**Understanding Should Grow,**"[39] both parties were urged to adhere to the agreement, and to engage in dialogue and have patience. In another editorial titled "**Peace Blooming,**"[40] it was stated that "If war could be stopped most of the prices that are escalating could be brought to a level where all people could earn a living. Under the heading, "**Prime Minister's visit to Jaffna**"[41] the editorial stated that:

> ... after 20 years of war, for the first time a Sri Lankan prime minister had visited Jaffna. He should be congratulated for taking bold steps to enter into a peace agreement with the LTTE. Peace initiatives undertaken by the government go a long way, and we are sure that the people of Jaffna are happy to welcome the Prime Minister to see the problems first hand.

In another editorial entitled, "**Fear of Discrepancy**", it said: "Fear of discrepancy in the peace talks due to political parties the country needs the support of the President and the People's Alliance Party for a political solution."[42] Every political party should come together to solve the national question that has ruined this country.

More importantly, some of the editorials in favour of the Peace Process in *Virakesri* also commented on India's support for peace, international support for it and the aid given to the country for development, commented positively on the peace dividend and on the need for the southern consensus to carry forward the 2002 Peace Process.

Only 5 editorial titles (3.1%) in the Tamil daily *Virakesari* spoke about the deterioration of law and order in the country. Some editorials further commented on

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[39] Editorial, "Understanding Should Grow," *Virakesari*, 3rd March 2003.
[40] Editorial, "Peace Blooming," *Virakesari*, 8th February 2002.
[41] Editorial, "Prime Minister's Visit to Jaffna," *Virakesari*, 15th March 2002.
[42] Editorial, "Fear of Discrepancy in the Peace Talks Due to Political Parties," *Virakesari*, 4th April 2002.

injustice and human rights violations affecting the minorities. These editorials exclusively spoke about the rights of Tamils and Muslims in the North and East. For example, one such editorial titled "**World Tamils Unite**"[43] introduced the argument that the Tamils of the world should unite in order to protect their culture, language and rights. In an editorial titled, "**Prime Minister's meeting with the Muslim members of parliament,**"[44] the problems faced by the Muslim community in the East are enumerated.

However, as already indicated most of the editorials in the Sinhalese daily *Divaina* were on the cease-fire violations and anti-LTTE rather than on the positive side of the 2002 Peace Process. Moreover, most of these editorials were very critical of the continuous atrocities of the LTTE (see: Appendix 8). It had only 35 editorials that focused on the need for peace and conflict resolution with the LTTE, while 138 editorial titles questioned the cease-fire violations of the LTTE and other crimes committed by the LTTE. In other words 69% of the editorials questioned the legitimacy of the Peace Process with the LTTE and 17% of editorials were supportive of the Peace Process. Though they supported the 2002 Peace Process, few editorials also took a strong stand on the unitary nature of the constitution. Some of the editorials for the peace and conflict resolution argued for the 2002 Peace Process, as "**Final solution should be presented to the people**"[45], "**This war of barbarians for whom**?"[46], "**The Bells of peace**"[47], and "**Peace is valuable irrespective of whom it**

[43] Editorial, "World Tamils Unite," *Virakesari*, 22nd July 2002.
[44] Editorial, "Prime Minister's Meeting with the Muslim Members of Parliament," *Virakesari*, 3rd January 2003.
[45] Editorial, "Final Solution Should Be Presented to the People," *Divaina*, 4th January 2002.
[46] Editorial, "This War of Barbarians for Whom?," *Divaina,* 11November 2002.
[47] Editorial, "The Bells of Peace," *Divaina*, 26th October 2003.

came from."[48] The headings which were critical of the 2002 Peace Process displayed topics and headings such as, **"Is the Law still in the hands of Tigers?"**[49] **"Diffusing human bombs"**[50] and **"A country without discipline is a zoo with opened doors."**[51].

7.8 The Space Allocated to Peace and Conflict Resolution in the Three National Newspapers

On average, 12 editorials on the 2002 Peace Process and related activities appeared monthly in the English paper The *Daily News* for each month of the 16 month period under study. The apex of the commentary was during November 2002 with 19 editorials on the topic and the Nadir was August 2002, in which there were only 7 editorials (see: Appendix 6).

On average, 2 editorials on the 2002 Peace Process appeared monthly in the Sinhalese daily *Divaina.* The apex of commentary was during March 2003 with 18 editorials related to the peace accord. There were only eight in August 2002 (see: Appendix 8).

On average, 8 editorials on the 2002 Peace Process and related activities appeared monthly in the Tamil daily, *Virakesari.* The apex of commentary was in March 2003, while the lowest was in October 2002 with only 4 editorials. In March it had 15 editorials related to the 2002 Peace Process (See: Appendix 7).

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[48] Editorial, "Peace Is Valuable Irrespective of Whom It Came From," *Divaina*, 06th September 2002.
[49] Editorial, "Is the Law Still in the Hands of Tigers?," *Divaina*, 28th October 2002.
[50] Editorial, "Diffusing Human Bombs," *Divaina*, 29th October 2002.
[51] Editorial, "A Country without Discipline is a Zoo with opened doors," *Divaina,* 31st August 2002.

Looking at the editorial focus or the content of the editorials of the three selected papers: the English daily, *The Daily News* and the Tamil daily, *Virakesari*, at first glance, the mere fact they were both devoted to the topic of peace and peace dividends seem to show that they succumb to the "rally round the flag" (Wolfsfeld[52], Zaller and Chiu[53]) phenomenon namely supporting the policy of the government. Most editorial titles and the focus in both of these papers alternated between the immediate and direct benefits of the 2002 Peace Process and the long and indirect benefits. It is important to note that these findings are in line with the previous research by scholars which were discussed in the chapter on the literature review where they commented that the dependency on government sources encourages the media to privilege the governments on construction of key issues and events (Wolfsfeld[54], Paletz and Entman[55] Gans[56], Shoemaker and Resse[57]).

Further, according to researchers, editorials to a greater degree than putatively objective news coverage are likely to reflect the media propensity to embrace the official national government perspective and to favour those with political and economic power (Schlesinger, Elliot and Murdock[58]).

The scant attention given to the other topics by these two newspapers that were competing about the 2002 Peace Process, namely ceasefire violations and

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[52] Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and political conflict: News from the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 69-70.
[53] John Zaller and Dennis Chiu, "Government's Little Helper: Us Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crises, 1945-1991," *Political Communication* 13(1996): 385-406.
[54] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 62-65.
[55] Paletz and Entman, 9-47.
[56] H. J. Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).
[57] P. J. Shoemaker and S. D.Resse, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content* (New York: Longman, 1996).
[58] Philip Schlesinger, Philip Eliott and Graham Murdock , *Televising 'Terrorism': political violence in popular culture* (London: Comedia, 1983).

various human right violations by the LTTE during the period seem also to confirm the previous findings of these scholars about the media's tendency to go along with the government in power whatever is the cause. However, these findings about the national media in Sri Lanka indicate that *Daily News* being a government owned newspaper seem to support the view of the government in power, it supports peace if it is initiated by the government, while the *Virakesari* being a private owned Tamil paper, seems to indicate the view of the Tamils that the need of the hour is peace.

Numerically only (6 percent) of *Daily News* editorial topics were on ceasefire violations, (4 percent) editorials were on various injustices. Only (3.1percent) of *Virakesari* editorials spoke on ceasefire violations by the LTTE, and (7.1 percent) of editorials focused on various injustices. In contrast, however, only a few editorials in *Divaina* supported the peace initiative of the government. *Divaina* always called for caution and vigilance instead of optimism advocated by *Daily News* and *Virakesari*.

7. 9 Sources Cited in the Editorials of Three Newspapers

Editorials analysed in the three newspapers also cited many sources in their opinion column. These sources included comments about the ongoing 2002 Peace Process from the prime minister and other ministers and only a few officials representing LTTE. They often commented about the improved situation prevailing in the country after the 2002 Peace Process. These newspaper editorials also commented on the on-going Peace Process, using sources from their own columnists as well as comments about the 2002 Peace Process from the foreign ministers and others from

other countries. Most editorials cited foreign leaders as a source when they made a positive statement about the ongoing Peace Process.

In order to highlight the positive effects of the Peace Process, *Daily News*[59], quoting its own columnists said: "As our columnists in recent days stated there is growing euphoria at the prospect of peace in the near future." Another editorial[60] praising the peace accord used the same tone and style saying:

> The news reports and pictures from the North East show that there is a visible sense of relief over the cessation of hostilities among the people and this is adequate proof of the wide acceptance of the MoU signed by the Government and the LTTE. As the saying goes one picture is worth more than a hundred words, and these photographs reveal the improved situation in the North and East.

Another *Daily News*[61] editorial pro peace, quoted one of the government ministers thus,

> Professor and Minister G.L. Peris said that no final document has been brought out as yet on an agreement between the Government and the LTTE. Professor Peris's assurance shows that the Government of Sri Lanka is willing to consult all the political parties regarding a viable solution.

The Tamil daily *Virakesari* editorial, supporting the 2002 Peace Process, for example used the Prime Minister Wickramasinghe as one of its sources (mainly his comments about the ongoing Peace Process),in one of its editorials[62] saying that:

> Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe had said that 40 countries will be participating in Oslo today in order to consider giving aid to Sri Lanka for having signed a peace treaty between the Government and the LTTE. International community's willingness to support the peace process in Sri Lanka is very encouraging.

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[59] Editorial, "The Prospects of Peace," *Daily News*, 21st January 2002.
[60] Editorial, "Wide Acceptance of the M.O.U," *Daily News*, 26th February 2002.
[61] Editorial, "No Need to Worry," *Daily News*, 21st February 2002.
[62] Editorial, "Prime Minister Wickramasinghe," *Virakesari*, 25th November 2002.

In another editorial[63] supporting the 2002 Peace Process, the *Virakesari* paper used the statement, published in one of their news columns about J.V.P, a nationalistic political party, J.V.P,(People's liberation Party) in Sri Lanka, saying:

> J.V.P. claims that the country is being pawned to the rebels under the present peace talks. But is that really true? One cannot be happy about the attitude of the JVP. By making unfair statements the JVP is trying to confuse the minds of the people at large. The southern consensus is very important at this juncture of the political history.

In support of peace, in another *Virakesari* editorial[64] the paper also cited the President of America, saying that:

> George W. Bush conveys his best wishes for the current peace Process and promises to help the country. This endorsement by the President George W. Bush no doubts gives the needed boost that government of Sri Lanka, needs to carry forward the 2002 Peace Process. It is an indication that the international community is behind Sri Lanka in its peace efforts.

Keeping the above trend, the Sinhalese Daily, *Divaina* editorials also followed the similar style of sources in their editorials citing government ministers and other leaders about the 2002 Peace Process. For example, in an editorial.l[65] *Divaina* quoted one of the chief monks of Malwatte, Kandy, Sri Lanka, expressing his approval and best wishes about the Peace Process to the Prime Minister, Ranil Wickramasinghe. It also said that the government had said that the lifting of the ban on LTTE is temporary. In another editorial[66] it quoted the discussion of the deputy-secretary of the United Sates, Donald Com having a discussion with the Tamil members of the parliament. In another editorial[67] *Divaina* cited the Prime Minister's statement saying that:

> ... at the end of the peace talks the final solution for the North and East will be presented to the people of Sri Lanka. The promise given by Prime Minister Wickramasinghe shows that

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[63] Editorial, "Challenge for the JVP," *Virakesari*, 5th March 2002.
[64] Editorial, "America Is Happy About Sri Lanka," *Virakesari*, 8th November 2002.
[65] Editorial, "Religious Leaders Are Happy About the Peace Process," *Divaina*, 6th September 2002.
[66] Editorial, "Donald Com Supports the Peace Process," *Divaina*, 29th October 2002.
[67] Editorial, "Prime Minister Says Not to Worry," *Divaina*, 29th February 2002.

> nothing is finalised about the Peace Process by the government of Sri Lanka. Therefore people should give the new government a chance to solve the conflict that has lasted more that three decades causing much misery.

Looking at these sources cited by various editorials in the three selected papers it can be said that almost all the papers had a similar trend in citing sources. Most parts of the editorials in *Daily News* and *Virakesari* were from the sources connected with the government in power, which also represented a dovish approach in support of the 2002 Peace Process. All of the newspapers gave more attention to citing the government sources about the positive side of the Peace Process. As already indicated, some of these findings indicate the tendency of the media to give preference to the government sources, which has been documented by the scholars. According to Wolfsfeld,[68] normally governments enjoy a natural advantage over challengers when it comes to promoting their own official view to the news media. These advantages can be termed production assets, namely those properties that facilitate the creation of newsworthy information and events. Accordingly, there are two major types of production assets, which can be named as political standing and resources.

The Prime Minister and the other senior ministers have an extremely high level of political status and almost anything they do or say is newsworthy. In addition they also enjoy a high level of organization and resources that are devoted specifically to dealing with the news media. By looking at the highest number of editorial quotations cited in favour of peace one can say that the answer to the third research question raised at the beginning of this study is affirmative.

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[68] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 44-46.

However, the other party to the 2002 Peace Process namely the LTTE was not given an equal parity in the quotations. This tendency of the media can have a negative impact in the long run. As Wolfsfeld says, by modifying images of the enemy the press can also play an important role in mobilizing the public for peace. In other words by quoting more leaders from the LTTE and give more space to articulate their views. Editorials in three newspapers could have played a more active role in changing the stereotypical images of the LTTE in the minds of the public regarding peace. Unfortunately this did not happen.

Instead of being too general in editorial contents, space could have been given also to emphasizing the invisible effects of conflict and violence, emotional trauma and damage to social structure. In addition to the reasons explained here, one could also say as mentioned in the previous chapter, the fact that all the newspapers are published in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, and also that editors as journalists receiving the information from the same sources or officials could contribute to the similarity of the sources. Moreover editors as journalists construct the social reality not based on the actual reality and hardship of the people in the north and east, but as perceived in Colombo and so depending very much on the official sources. Further as discussed by Touchman, habit, newsroom schedules, accessibility, and other internalized aspects of reporting result in the reality that some sources are more likely to be sought and quoted than others.

After reading all the editorials in the selected period, the main editorial arguments and positions of the editorials can be grouped under two main headings. The first major set of editorials, especially in the English and Tamil newspapers as

previously mentioned, focused and commented on the 2002 Peace Process in a positive way. In general these editorials tended to be dovish and seem to rally round the flag. The second set of editorials was critical of the behaviour the LTTE, especially the Sinhalese daily *Divaina's* 138 editorials questioned the sincerity and the genuineness of the LTTE as a partner in the peace accord.

As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, especially in chapter two and three, though there were many likely causes for the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict in Sri Lanka, none of these likely causes, were mentioned in the editorials. Hardly any were editorials on the true causes of the conflict. In a way this proves, what media scholars have been saying that the ingredients of war are patriotism, national interest, anger, censorship and propaganda which often conspire to prevent objective reporting (Carruthers[69] Iggers[70], Knightly[71]). There was also a small percentage of editorials in two papers, namely in *Daily News* and *Virakesari* about the various injustices and human right violations. However most of the editorials in *Divaina* paper commented about the war-related injustices and human rights violations of the LTTE. For example in an editorial[72,] titled, "are these right acts?" it questioned vehemently recruitment of the child combatants and the stealing of welfare money from the soldiers. In another editorial[75] the responsibility of the under-development of Sri Lanka was attributed to the various politicians of Sri Lanka, labelled as opportunists. The proportion of the stories and the space given to these three main headings by three papers are presented in (Appendix 5).

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[69] Susan L.Carruthers, *The Media at War* (London, Palgrave, 1999).
[70] Jeremy Iggers, *Good News, Bad News: Journalism Ethics and the Public Interest* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1998).
[71] Philip Knightley, *The First Casualty: The war correspondent as Hero and myth-maker from the Crimea to Kosovo* (London, Prion, 2000).
[72] Editorial, "Are These Right Acts?," *Divaina*, 5th December 2002.

This concludes the first part of this chapter. As was explained, a quantitative content analysis (QCA) of the editorials of the Peace Process 2002. The various headings used in the editorials, their percentages and the various quotations used in the editorials of these three news papers indicate how they, by catering to three language groups have, represented the Peace Process in the selected period. The significance of the first part of the research findings is that, as Wolfsfeld says, they help us to understand the nature of the political conflict. As explained in the chapter on literature review, political conflict is more specifically better understood as a contest over the media among antagonists. Most of the editorials in the two newspapers *Daily News*, and *Virakesari* were supportive of the 2002 Peace Process in a way.

In discussing the significance of these findings it is also appropriate to indicate here that compared with the two dailies, Sinhala and Tamil, the English daily, *Daily News,* is read by a public belonging to both ethnic groups. According to Wolfsfeld more importantly there can be cultural, commercial, and political reasons for this dynamic. Usually journalists write stories within a particular cultural background. Presumptions about collective identity are an important element in the construction of news and they usually provide a basis for dialogue. As stated by him, in an environment dominated by shared media, the underlying theme concerns what can be done to resolve conflict within "our' community.

On the other hand, when there are little or no shared media the perspective is inherently ethnocentric. This hypothesis was partially proved in the findings. The

results of these findings showed that the Tamil paper *Virakesari* and the Sinhalese daily were more ethnocentric in their editorial content. When news media works within a shared media environment it will also be extremely reluctant to offend major segments of the readership, which belong to both ethnic groups. It will struggle to find a tone and language that speaks to the largest possible population. In order to be commercially viable editors of shared media will find a middle ground which appeals to a broad range of consumers. Though owned by the government, that *Daily News* represents the highest support for the Peace Process could also be due to the fact that editors were aware that it was read and subscribed to by the public belonging to both ethnic groups. In a way the findings of this research indicate that Sri Lanka needs more shared media outlets in order to heal the ethnic division and hatred bred over the years.

It could be noted, therefore, looking at the overall content of the editorials supportive of the peace, that there were hardly any significant editorial comments or quotations cited representing the real situation and the context of the other side. The content of the editorials of the Sinhalese daily further showed most ethnocentrism and hostility towards the LTTE, which was in keeping with the findings of Wolfsfeld[73] about the media in Israel and Palestine. The content of the 138 *Divaina* editorials that commented on the ceasefire violations of the LTTE also seem to indicate that for *Divaina* the Sinhalse/Tamil conflict is more or less their war and our war.

Finally, the editorial analysis of the 2002 Peace Process further revealed that the Sinhala papers' suspicion and hostility toward the LTTE have remained

[73] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 138-182.

undiminished and have deeply coloured coverage and analysis of the 2002 Peace Process. However the findings of this research also seem to indicate that the Tamil paper *Virakesari* was for some reason cautious, and in general did not question and sometimes defended, the LTTE's bona fides. Compared with negotiating positions adopted by the LTTE and the government, the Tamil paper seems to echo LTTE positions while the Sinhala and the English paper have broadly reflected the government's and the military's stances on issues of contention.

7.10 Part 2: Frame Analysis

As was stated in the beginning of this chapter, this second phase is an ethnographic content analysis, (ECA) namely identifying the various frames found in all three newspaper editorials in the selected period. Altheide[74] Glaser & Strauss[75] further state that the major emphasis of qualitative document analysis is to capture the meanings, emphasis and themes of messages and to understand the organization and process of how they are presented. As already explained in the chapter on methodology, frame, theme, and discourse are related to communication formats, which, in the case of mass media refer to the selection, organization, and presentation of information. Altheide further states that frames are the focus, a parameter or boundary, for discussing a particular event. Frames focus on what will be discussed, how it will be discussed, and above all, how it will not be discussed. Tankard,

[74] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative Media Analysis*, 14-16.
[75] Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies, for Qualitative Research* (Chicago: Aldine, 1967), 161-184.

Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, and Ghanem[76], hold that: "A frame is a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration." Gamson and Modigliani[77] define a media frame as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue." Giltin[78] further state that "Media frames organize the world for the journalists who report it and for those who rely on their reports."

Based on the above definition of frames, any communication text such as feature articles, news columns, or editorials, can be deliberately arranged in order to represent an issue in a particular way. Therefore, one of the aims of the present research is to find out how the 2002 Peace Process is presented in the three languages in the selected three papers and to find out what types of dominant frame(s) are highlighted or not highlighted in the editorial texts of the three papers in the selected period.

The first measure used in the ethnographic content analysis of the 2002 Peace Process is the prominence and visibility of a central argument. As suggested by Gamson[79], central arguments were coded so as to be visible if they reach a threshold

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[76] Laura Handerson, James W.Tankard, Jackie Sillberman, Kriss Bliss and Salma Ghanem, "Media Frames: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement." (paper presented at the Association for education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Boston, August 7-10, 1991).

[77] William A Gamson and Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach." 1-37.

[78] Giltin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*, 49-50.

[79] W .A. Gamson, *Talking Politics*. 197.

of at least 10 percent prominence in any editorial in the sampling period of sixteen months.

For the purpose of this study, first, a set of working frames were identified, based on the frame analysis research undertaken by Gamson,[80] on "discourse moments," namely discourses that characterised American media coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict and Wolfsfeld's[81] analysis of Israeli and American media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Gamson[82] identified four frames used in the framing of the Arab-Israeli conflict such as strategic interests, feuding neighbours, Arab intransigence and Israeli expansionism. Wolfsfeld[83] further in his analysis of the role of Israeli and American media found that the media's pursuit of "drama" frames in the Middle East conflict accorded the extremists from both sides more than their due share of air time while drowning voices calling for peace.

Further according to Gamson and Lasch[84], the ideas that appear in news are best understood as media packages that feature a central organizing idea for events and employ various framing or symbolic devices that support the main idea of the story. Gamson further says that the task of media workers is therefore, to arrange random events into a meaningful, organized interpretive package. Gamson and Modigliani[85] suggest that several major factors shape how the media frame the news. Theme represents the main idea in a package and connects different elements of a story (e.g. descriptions of an action or actor, quotes, sources and background

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[80] *Ibid*, 243-246.
[81] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*,138-182.
[82] W. A. Gamson, *Talking Politics*, 243-246.
[83] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 138-182.
[84] Gamson and Lasch, "The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy," 397-415.
[85] Gamson and Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach," 1-37.

information) into a coherent whole (Pan and Koscki[86]). Cultrual resonance refers to the degree that news is packaged in accordance with the beliefs, myths, stories, folk tales and imagery that coincide with the dominant culture of a society. Therefore this study relies upon the Gamson and Lasch[87] model of media packages to examine framing devices which is also used by Wolfsfeld to analyse the frames that were available in the Israeli-Palestine conflict discourse.

Therefore in this study, as indicated already in the chapter on methodology the key frames of the 2002 Peace Process initiated by the UNF government of 2001, summarized in the following tables, adapt the signature matrix developed by Gamson and Lasch[88]. As explained above, in order to identify the dominant frames in the 2002 Peace Process, the researcher also made use of Gadi Wolfsfeld's[89] frame analytical tool. Both Gamson and Wolfsfeld deal with the American media coverage of the Arab-Israel conflict and Wolfsfeld's[90] analysis deals with Israel and American media coverage of the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Tuchman[91] cites Goffman as the originator of the idea that a frame is needed to organize otherwise fragmentary items of experience or information. Altheide[92] further states that communication and media formats enable us to recognize various frames that give a general definition of what is before us. Citing Goffman[93], he says that for Goffman frames are "schematic of interpretations which enable people to

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[86] Pan and Kosicki, "Frame Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse," 55-75.
[87] Gamson and Lasch, "The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy," 397-425.
[88] *Ibid.*
[89] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 149-151.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Gaya Tuchman, "Making news by doing work: Routinizing the unexpected" *American Journal of Sociology* 79 (1973):110-131.
[92] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative Media Analysis*, 24-28.
[93] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 55.

locate, perceive, identify and label 'occurrences of information". Furthermore, according to Altheide one perspective on framing analysis is that it focuses more on the structure of reports than on the content. Framing is understood as a mechanism, a way of giving some overall interpretation to isolated items of fact (Denis McQuail[94]). To add to that Gamson[95] et al. suggest that people make sense of issues using media fragments, their own experiential knowledge and popular wisdom. Gamson and Lasch[96] have suggested that within a given political culture, a repertoire of idea elements surrounding a given political issue ultimately resulting in an issue culture. These idea elements are symbolic devices which are "grouped into more or less harmonious clusters or interpretive packages."

Framing for Gamson and Lasch deals "with the gestalt or pattern-organizing nature of the political culture" (Gamson and Lasch[97]). Therefore, in any given issue culture numerous interpretive packages may emerge. Each interpretive package also has its own symbolic devices associated with its use within the political arena. Symbolic devices can be identified from the words, actions, body movements and visual cues that stand for ideas and objects and to which members of a culture attach similar meanings. For the purpose of analysing media documents, Gamson and Lasch[98] further suggest that drafting of a signature matrix, which consists of rows representing the interpretive packages and columns representing the condensational, symbolic devices to undercover the full realm of an issue culture.

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[94] Denis McQuail, ed. *Mcquail's Mass Communication Theory* (London-Sage, 2005), 379.
[95] William A. Gamson, David Croteau, William Hoynes and Theodore Sasson "Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality" *Annual Review of Sociology* (1992): 373-393.
[96] Gamson and Lasch, "The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy," 397-425.
[97] *Ibid*, 397-425.
[98] Gamson and Lasch, "The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy," 397-425.

The words of political leaders, activists, and journalists serve as the raw materials from which to draw representative expressions of the condensation symbols. Gamson and Lasch[99] recommend a content analysis of news content also taking into account the national prominence and the popularity of the media outlet. According to them, measuring the quantity of competing interpretive packages provides an individual with a means of assessing how successful a particular frame has become. Before presenting the *signature matrix* the following paragraphs explain the meaning of various terms that are used in the *signature matrix*.

For Karen S. Johnson-Cartee[100], a condensational symbol "is a highly condensed form of substitutive behaviour for direct expression, allowing for the ready release of emotional tension in conscious or unconscious form." These condensational symbols make a kind of shorthand means by which large number of beliefs, feelings, values and perhaps world views are telegraphed to others sharing a similar culture. Furthermore according to Johnson-Cartee, perhaps it is more appropriate to say that condensational symbols evoke stored meanings already stored within the minds of individuals sharing a given political culture. When such condensational symbols are said to be salient across large numbers of members of a given culture, they are also said to be significant symbols.

Therefore the condensational symbols that are used in the construction of these interpretive packages may be categorized as frame(s) or as frame element(s), or

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[99] *Ibid.*

[100] K. Johnson-Cartee, *News Narratives and News Framing: Constructing Political Reality*, ed. Robert Denton, *A Selection in the Political Communication Series* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005),169-171.

more specifically framing devices. Gamson and Lasch[101] enumerated five framing devices that they suggest serve as indicators of framing processes at work. Metaphors are figures of speech using words that are applied to a particular event or situation but are drawn from other situations and, therefore, invite comparisons. Catch phrases are attempts to capture meaning in a single word or phrase designed to suggest a frame. Exemplars are allusions that provide historic examples of situations or actions being discussed. Depictions characterize the subject using a "colourful string of modifiers," or can involve metaphors, similes or examples. Visual images involve representations in the form of pictures or graphics that accompany news stories.

For this analysis, a metaphor[102] is defined as "the application of a name or descriptive term or phrase to an object or action to which it is imaginatively but not literally applicable". Exemplars[103] are defined as the 'dramatized accounts of real events, whether produced by witnesses, politicians, political activists, or journalists, which are then used to represent abstract forces, issues, or entities'. Catchphrases[104] are 'attempted summary statements about the principal subjects' whether in the form of taglines, slogans, or catch themes. Depictions[105] are routine characterizations of the principal subject. Consequences[106] are the 'condensational symbols that project various outcomes associated with different policy decisions'. Sometimes both short term and long term consequences are presented. Appeals to principle[107] are 'condensational symbols evoking moral values, sometimes religious values, and

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[101] Gamson and Lasch, "The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy," 397-425.
[102] *Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, American ed. Edition.
[103] K. Johnson-Cartee, *News Narratives and News Framing: Constructing Political Reality*, 169.
[104] *Ibid.*169.
[105] *Ibid.*169.
[106] *Ibid.*170.
[107] Ibid.171.

general societal and cultural self-images to generate enthusiasm for particular policy choices.'

It should be noted however that the construction of the *signature matrix* was developed in this way as a "guideline[108]", or a set of working frames that guide the researcher's data analysis, rather than a template that the researcher seeks to fit the data.

Frames identified by Gamson's[109] study of the American media coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict and Wolfsfeld's[110] analysis of Israeli and American media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be modified and can be used as a general guide and also as an analytical tool for identifying the range of thematic positions and symbolic or other devices likely to appear in Sri Lankan newspaper coverage of the Peace Process. Further, these devices could also be useful for measuring the frequency of appearance of different frames within a sampled news content.

As explained above, various indicators of the frames are defined in the *signature matrix* and the following shows the construction of the *signature matrix*, and the three dominant frames found in the three most read newspapers in Sri Lanka. These three frames are Peace and Conflict resolution frame, Law and order frame, Injustice and defiance frame. These three main frames were identified by the researcher as competing for space in the three national newspapers in Sri Lanka.

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[108] W. A. Gamson, *Talking Politics*, 243-257.
[109] *Ibid.*
[110] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 138-182.

7.11 Signature Matrix[111]

Table 1.1: Peace and Conflict Resolution Frame

Meta Frame	Territorial Compromise
Core Frame	The issue is whether we can achieve peace with LTTE through compromise so that violence will be stopped
Core Positions	The widespread hope and desire for peace and reconciliation that national policy planners alone could realise. This is also a task for the people of this country-the ultimate decision makers whose voice no politician or decision makers could afford to ignore. It is the cessation of hostilities and its continuity which has established a conducive climate for the launching of negotiations between the parties. Every civic-conscious citizen is duty bound to rally round the Government in its efforts to perpetuate and consolidate the peace process The solution has to be found at the negotiating table
Metaphors	These strands of opinion are two extremes which have been stoking the flames of war in this country. It was a long night of suffering which claimed tens of thousands of lives. Turning swords into ploughshares. There are those who are blinded by a mindless rage on hearing the term power sharing Peace Tree.
Historical Exemplars	"After all, it must be remembered that Great Britain, from whom we have acquired some notable features of our system of governance, has put in a unified effort to bring to an end the Northern Ireland rebellion". "...the continuity of the ceasefire cannot be shrugged off as insignificant when our terrible 20 year history of war and destruction is taken into consideration..." "...we are reminded at this juncture of how the epoch-making post apartheid state in South Africa was established..." "...as far back as the early nineteen thirties, the up- country Sinhalese broached the subject of a federal state..." "...it was also mooted on and off by late Premier S.W.R.D Bandaranaike and was envisaged in the Bandaranaike Chelvanayagam and Dudley-Chelvanayagam pacts..."
Catchphrases	"...what is left to be done is to soldier on until the final objective of a just and durable peace is achieved...". "...Hope, perseverance and resourcefulness would emerge as three essential requirements of those caring for the future course of the country...." "..to make the required progress on our peace journey...." "...if some progress is made in this direction, every Lankan is bound to emerge a winner...." "..All that these long years of war have achieved, of course is, bloodshed and destruction..." "..an entire generation of Lankans has been born and bred amid conflict and bloody discord...." "...every man, woman and child need to take it on themselves to light a candle rather than curse the darkness.
Depictions	"..some critics of the peace process are certain to have seen red on hearing the Tiger leader reiterating the principal demands of the LTTE for the working out of an acceptable solution: the granting of a Tamil homeland and the recognition of Tamil nationhood and Tamil rights...." "..this change in the conceptualization of a solution on the part of the LTTE lays the

[111] All cited quotations in the signature matrix are taken from the three newspapers: *Daily News*, *Divaina*, and *Virakesari,* within the 16 month period.

	basis for the working out of a mutually acceptable political solution to the conflict...."
Visual Images	This time round could it be truly said that the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year dawns on a hopeful note, this year this threadbare cliché which is ritualistically repeated at the dawn of Avurudu rings true. For there is a prolonged and welcome lull in the North-East theatre of war.
Consequences	"..Hundreds of young men and women have disappeared without a trace and have left behind silently...."
Appeals to Principle	"...Until then lets take care that no small incident is allowed to disrupt the progress towards peace...." "..the peace constituency should wake from its slumber and take the initiative in the streets lest the anti-peace groups that have taken a beating at the elections regroup and mobilize to scuttle any accord as they have successfully done in the past...". "...let no power hungry politicians stand in the way of the price of peace and the people, for the people are moulders of a country's destiny...."

Table 1.2: Sinhalese Partisan Law and Order Frame (Tamil Terrorism)

Meta Frame	Sinhalese-Majority Rights-Law and order/Tamil Terrorism
Core Frame	The flaws of the Ceasefire Agreement were apparent from the very beginning with the LTTE treating it as a document that gave them authority to go ahead with the establishment of an infrastructure for a separate state, while the government appeared to be impotent to cry a halt, apparently because it would have threatened the 'peace process' itself...."
Core Positions	We should not negotiate with the LTTE
Metaphors	"Though we are partners in the drama that is staged before us, Anton Balasingham and the LTTE should know that we are not goats." "..When people in the south are celebrating "wedding feasts", the LTTE tigers are having funerals in the north.." "LTTE is taking fire under water.." "Homeland is a boomerang and two edged weapon.." "For the local peace industry, it is their rice and curry as well as bread and butter.."
Historical Exemplars	The LTTE is no respecter of ceasefire agreements. In 1990 it violated the ceasefire by killing 700 policemen, who surrendered to them on the orders of the then Premadasa government and in 1995, it blew sky high two naval ships when it scuttled its truce with the Kumaratunga government. ".. The Ceasefire Agreement had all the hallmarks of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement sprung upon the people by President J.R. Jayawardena where only minister Gamini Dissanayake and probably one or two other ministers and a few officials were privy to it...". "..Except the Sinhalese and Muslims chased away from the north by the Tiger organization sometime back, all other people belonging to three ethnic communities are living peacefully in the country. "..Does Prabakaran provide such freedom to his members? Doesn't Balasingam know that there is absolute dictatorship in his LTTE? How many rising deputies to Prabakaran have been annihilated? What happened to Mahattaya who was the deputy leader? Where is Dilip Yogi and Raheem? Who killed democratic leaders like Amithalingam, Yogeswaran, Sarojini Yogeswaran, Sivapalan and Neelan Thiruchelvam to name a few?.
Catchphrases	"..peace is the period between two wars." "...pick the flowers, and do not cut the tree...." "..forcible recruiting of child soldiers.." "...It is the LTTE that has violated the peace accord...."
Depictions	...'the "terrorist" government of the north.." "....LTTE's legal system of Kangaroo courts...." "...these jokers who try to teach us the meaning of peace...."
Visual Images	North is a place like hell.
Consequences	"..dividing the country is like breaking one's hand and legs.." "...the abductions of children, the importing of arms shipments and extortion are some of the consequences of the peace process.
Appeal to Principle	"..The monitoring committee should take all these illegalities into consideration-that is our hope..."

Table 1.3: Tamil Partisan Frame of Injustice and Defiance Frame[112]

Meta Frame	Injustice and Defiance
Core Frame	"..The main aim of the Tamil festival is to show their thirst for a Tamil home land. There are signs of peace being ushered. Then why not release these prisoners who are jailed for no reason.
Core Positions	"..to protect Tamil culture, human rights and to speak their language freely.." "..people in the North voice out against various injustices.." "..if peace has been ushered in- why are people still in refugee camps.." "..Tamil cultural heritage should be protected..." "..We need to have equal rights as the Sinhalese do....." "...The Sri Lankan Army should be removed from our territory...".
Metaphors	Although winds of peace have blown through the country, it is not so in the North and East. "..Prabakaran star of hope.." "..The ball in the government's court..."
Historical Exemplars	" ..LTTE claims that from 1956, the rights of Tamils have been removed. They were not given the right to live and practice the language. They were not given their birthrights. Governments in the past have never considered the Tamils and their needs" "...in the history of struggle..." The history of the struggle of the Tamil people is that it didn't begin with an armed struggle. The reality is that it has evolved through stages of making appeals and demands performing Sathyagraha and gradually manifested into an armed struggle" and the root cause of the [national] problem is the suppression of the minorities."
Catchphrases	"..fast unto death..... World Tamils unite.. "...learning from the past..." "...Tamils have to undergo many hardships...."
Depictions	The Tamils are not able to practice their culture freely. They are afraid to use their own language. Tamils are considered by others as traitors and they are looked down upon as an inferior social class. "..Tamils should get their due or war could be result..."
Visual Images	
Consequences	Although peace is ushered in, because it is a high security region due to the camp being situated there. The army fears that LTTE may take the camp. So they feel it is better for the public to avoid the region. For the safety of the army, the public are not allowed in the area. This causes problems to the public. Boosa prisoners should be released. If not the hunger strike will be continued to the death by Kaluthra prisoners
Appeals to Principle	Justice should prevail and issue should be resolved without further delay. To find a lasting peace in the country, society should change its ways. Many issues should be dealt with promptly. One of these is the release of prisoners. The Tigers have decided to release 10 soldiers and are asking the government to do the same.

[112] Paraphrased from Wolfsfeld: 1997, 146.

In the following section, the three dominant frames based on the above *signature matrix* are thematically organized and discussed adopting an ethnographic and qualitative focus. This approach explores the social constructivist and thematic implications of each of the frames identified and discussed in this study.

Peace and Conflict Resolution Frame

To begin with the ethnographic content analysis of all the editorials examined in the selected period of the most read newspapers in each language group showed the above mentioned dominant frames. *Daily News* had 176 editorials out of a total of 197(almost 89%) where the central argument was for peace and therefore could be termed a peace and conflict resolution frame (see: Appendix 12). All of them had favourable editorial comments on the benefits of territorial compromise. Although more pro-peace frames were found in the English daily, *Daily News,* however, it should be noted, is an elite newspaper and read by only a fraction of the population island-wide who can read English. The high circulation figures are partly due to the fact that being the government-owned newspaper it also carries more advertisements about employment opportunities available in the private and public sectors. One of the *Daily News* editorials depicting the *peace and conflict resolution* frame used the following arguments for its thematic position:

> The government has taken a series of goodwill or confidence building measures. The next step will be the evolution of a truce mechanism by way of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties to the conflict. President Kumaratunga in her address to the SAARC summit opening pledged her support for the government's peace initiative. This augurs well. It opens the opportunity for a much needed bipartisan approach and cooperation. Much could be done by the civil society to keep the momentum going. The government's peace initiative needs to be backed by civil society's initiative... The peace constituency should wake from its slumber and take the initiative in the streets lest the anti-peace groups that have taken a beating at the elections regroup and mobilize to scuttle any accord as they have successfully done in the past (*Daily News,* January 7, 2002).

Another *Daily News* editorial arguing for the peace and conflict resolution frame argued:

> The Prime Minister has set the correct tone and parameters of governance by emphasizing the importance of peace and national harmony. All factors, therefore, seem to be in place to re-launch the peace process. For the first time in years we have a broad national consensus on the need for a negotiated political settlement. This unique opportunity should be seized to establish a durable and just peace (*Daily News,* December 13, 2001).

Keeping to the central theme of peace and conflict resolution, another *Daily News* editorial said,

> A year free of armed hostilities and bloodshed through a stable ceasefire since February last year has ended. ....We have arrived at an epochal juncture in the peace effort. The peace process was made possible through the United National Front administration's change in approach to resolving the ethnic conflict. The Court of public opinion has given a high water mark in Sri Lanka's effort to resolve its decade long ethnic conflict. ..Peace is in the hearts of the people and it is their dominant yearning. Let no power hungry politicians stand in the way of the price of peace and the people, for the people are moulders of a country's destiny (*Daily News,* December 31, 2002).

In another editorial readers were also reminded that,

> The aborted Bandaranayake-Chelvanayagam pact of the Dudley-Chelvanayagam pact of the late fifties and the early sixties respectively should warn political parties against engaging in oppositional politics. The opportunity to contain the ethnic conflict was lost through such short-sightedness. Such blunders should not be allowed to happen again...The current political equation forces on the major parties the need to unite for the sake of peace (*Daily News,* January 8, 2002).

Therefore, like the above excerpts of frames, namely the samples of the frames, arguing conflict resolution and compromise found in all the editorials in the three papers in the selected period can be named as peace and conflict resolution frames. These peace and conflict resolution editorials positively and vehemently promoted or argued some form of a compromise or a federal system arguing for the peace accord signed by the UNF government, taking the position that the 2002 Peace Process was the only viable option for the country. In the same way, arguing for the pro peace and conflict resolution frame, a *Divaina* editorial went with the headline:

> The last solution should be presented to the people. They also reminded people that, "at present we are very fortunate that we do not hear anymore the sounds of bombs." It further said, "....as a nation we have gone backwards due to the insincere politics and the war. We are so happy even to hear that a political solution is possible (*Divaina,* February 1, 2003).

Though the peace and conflict resolution frame appeared in all the three papers, the researcher especially noted that it was more dominantly present in the government's own English daily and also in the Tamil Daily *Virakesari* (see: Appendix 11).

Another notable fact that the researcher discovered in his analysis was the variation of the *peace and conflict resolution* frame which argued that unity among the southern political parties is a pre-condition for any sort of agreement with the LTTE. Some of these frames reminded the readers that all the previous peace accords or agreements giving some sort of compromise were doomed because of the disunity among the Sinhalese politicians. In an editorial *Virakesari* said,

> Most people in the North and South want peace...but not the political parties. It appears that the main opposition party the People's alliance is against the peace accord signed by the UNF. The President stated at the May Day rally her heartfelt wishes and support for the peace talks. But again in another rally she has expressed negative thoughts about the current peace process. This is very unfortunate. There should be a consensus among the southern political parties about the type of compromise that should be given to the Tamils in Sri Lanka (*Virakesari,* May 5, 2002).

In the same vein under the title, "the sound of bells of peace"[115], the Sinhala daily *Divaina* editorial said:

> President Kumaranathunga's speech which stated that she is ready to forget the political differences and work for peace is very commendable because, if this truth had been understood twenty years ago, Sri Lanka would have been different (*Divaina,* October, 26 2002).

The unity among the two main parties was further reiterated in a *Divaina* paper with the headline, **"This is the time to forget all divisions and differences."** It ended by appealing to reason, saying that,

> ...the need of the hour is the unity among the main political parties. This should be done without any conditions. We should save our country and our people from war. We should dedicate ourselves to it without any national, religious, or political biases (*Divaina,* January, 25, 2002).

There were a few frames that advocated peace, but within the unity, integrity and sovereignty of the Sri Lankan state. One such editorial in *Divaina* was titled, **"Integrity, sovereignty, and its value**." This editorial displayed a historical exemplar; namely, a saying by one of the pioneers of struggle of Indian Independence, Vallabai Pattel, who seems to have said about 40 years ago, "all provinces in India are tied by one string. If the string breaks down, and if one province falls down, soon even the other provinces would follow suit." It also quoted the saying "United we Stand, Divided we fall." It ended by appealing to reason:

> Though the majority are Sinhalese, who are Buddhists, this country belongs to all those people who live here. Everyone should enjoy equal rights. There is no future, for those countries who are forced to break, due to armed conflicts. The best example is Cyprus which was divided between Greece and Turkey. The little Cyprus has many economic and social problems due to its division. Therefore we need to safeguard our integrity and sovereignty, and if the world community can help us to protect it, it will be fine (*Divaina,* April 2, 2002).

With the heading, "Dividing the country is like breaking one's hands and legs," *Divaina* started its editorial with the catch phrase that compared the breaking of a country, to a "bestial act which is a greater sin than breaking one's mind and heart or one's hands and legs." It also had historical exemplars from the other countries, reminding the readers of the fate of The Soviet Union; Cyprus and also Ethiopia and Eritrea. It appealed to reason, arguing that since separate administrations for the North

and East still are being discussed, we should not be frightened about it (*Divaina,* May 10, 2002).

The Law and Order Frame

The second category of frames found in the editorials of the three newspapers, is the *Law and order* frame, which considers the 2002 Peace Process as a national disaster. However, as it was also discussed in the findings of the content analysis in the first stage, the presence of this frame is relatively low in the government owned newspaper *The Daily News* and the private sector owned Tamil daily *Virakesari.*

As already stated in the first part of this paper, more than the peace and conflict resolution frame its adversarial frame, *law and order/ terrorism,* was given a prominent space in the Sinhalese Daily *Divaina* either singularly or in combined forms (see appendix 13). It could be said that according to Wolfsfeld et al.[113] the authorities usually respond to collective actions by protest parties by promoting a law and order frame that centres on their responsibility to maintain social order. It could be said therefore that the Sinhalese partisan frame belonged also to those who opposed the 2002 Peace Accord more especially taking the side of those who opposed the 2002 Peace Process with the LTTE. For them signing the peace accord with the LTTE was a national disaster.

[113] Gadi Wolfsfeld, Eli Avraham, and Issam Aburaiya, "When Prophecy Always Fails: Israeli Press Coverage of the Arab Minority 's Land Day Protests." *Political Communication* 17, 2 (2000)115-131. 131.

Significantly, the highest number of *law and order/Terrorism* frames - 138 frames - were found in the Sinhalese daily *Divaina*. As explained by scholars, law and order/terrorism frames are normally defensive state-sponsored frames, always intended to rationalise and justify suppression and the actions of security forces within official "anti-terrorist" and "national security" discourse. The frame has always been present in Sri Lanka in different forms. This frame generally pointed out violations of the ceasefire and the 2002 Peace process by the LTTE and called for restoring law and order. One such editorial[114] was titled as "The cessation of hostilities and its meaning?" It accused the LTTE saying that it always gave the impression that only the government should abide by the cessation of hostilities by violating all the provisions of the ceasefire agreement (*Divaina*, February 15, 2003). Another editorial argued,

> ... if they are sincere about abiding by the ceasefire agreement, Can they celebrate Pongu Tamil festival" Can they open the Tiger banks? Can they tax people who go to the North by Omanthe entrance? (*Diviina,* February 24, 2003)

In another editorial titled "Explain to us again, what according to Tamil Chelvam is meant by implementing the "according to the letter," [115] *Divaina* commented on the anniversary of the ceasefire agreement which fell on the 22nd of February. The editorial began with a catch phrase,

> ... all though the first anniversary of the ceasefire agreement was celebrated as an important and significant feast, it is reported that in the north it was marked by violence and lawlessness. Just a week before the anniversary of the signing of the ceasefire agreement, tigers have started giving instructions to the people in the north about how to commemorate it. When the official government of the south requested that everybody should light a lamp to commemorate it, the "terrorist" government of the north telling the people in the north that they should organize protest marches. In general , except the promises they made about peace, the tiger organization is capable of implementing everything they want to get done. Therefore

[114] Editorial, "The Cessation of Hostilities and Its Meaning," *Divaina*, 15th February 2003.
[115] Editorial, "Explain to Us Again, What Is Meant by Implementing the Letter According to Tamil Chelvam," *Divaina*, 24th February 2003.

> on the 22nd of February, they had a protest day. Because of the protests by the "tigers" the lives of the ordinary people were disturbed completely in the north and east on that day. At the end people there must have thought that it should have been better , not to have signed this agreement. Tigers have ordered to hoist black flags in order to commemorate this day in Ampara and Batticaloa. According to some papers yesterday (23 February) the Batticaloa town was deserted completely. The meaning of these events is that when we in the south celebrate and enjoy the wedding of peace, the tigers in the north are acting like they have a funeral in the north (*Divaina,* February 24, 2002).

Another editorial entitled "**A short summary of the situation in the country**" [116] commented on the statement made on all the Television channels in Sri Lanka by Prime Minister Ranil Wickramsinghe that he is going to bring one law to the whole country. It first commended Mr. Wickramsinghe for praising President Kumaranathunga for her own contribution in ushering peace in Sri Lanka and said:

> We have one legal system in Sri Lanka, namely the Roman and Dutch law and the law of humaneness. It is found in the south. However both of this are not found in the north. If these two types of laws are not found in a place, the residents lead a hellish existence. What about the massacre of Mahattaya, Prabakaran's deputy and one time confidante, who was killed by the LTTE itself? (*Divaina*, February 15, 2003).

Another editorial[117] started with a catchphrase "Pick the flowers and do not cut the tree" and then argued that,

> ... there was no year like last year which gave us new hopes and destroyed also half of the hopes of the year that ended at 12 o'clock midnight. Last year gave us lots of hopes about peace. After 20 years of war we got a new government that had a new plan for peace. Later the agreement to end hostilities was signed. We were full of hopes. The "peace tree" was planted. Therefore the treaty signed by the government of Sri Lanka and the tiger organization was important for us. For the first time in our ethnic war history, the Tiger leader Prabahakaran personally gave his assurance the cessation of violence. Leaving aside it for a while about separatism in Northern Ireland, the separatism in the provinces of Russia: the separatism in China and the separatism in Quebec, Canada- the people of the world paid attention to our agreement for the cessation of violence. In the meanwhile the "peace tree" grew very fast. Did the government of Norway manure it with chemicals? Or did somebody else bud the tree? We do not know. Yet the tree grew. One night we saw it blooming with many flowers. In the mean time the Tigers brought illegal weapons to this country, violated the ceasefire agreement and secretly plucked the first basket of flowers on the peace tree. When they did this one or two flowers fell to the ground. We were able to pick those. We were happy about that too. But we also understood that if all the flowers are plucked, the tree will not bloom again. However the tree continued to bloom. By continuing to celebrate illegal pongu Tamil festivals, by importing arms, by attacking the ceasefire monitors, by entering and

[116] Editorial, "A Short Summary of the Situation in the Country," *Divaina*, 25th February 2003.
[117] Editorial, "Pick the Flowers, and Do Not Cut the Tree," *Divaina*, 1st January 2003.

protesting against the special task force camps in the north, the Tigers have plucked many flower baskets from the "peace tree" (*Divaina*, January 1, 2003).

As we see in the above editorial excerpts of the law and order/terrorism frame, the central argument or the motif of this frame is that the Sri Lankan government has to work with the most illegal and most violent terrorist organisation (LTTE) in the world. Some of the editorials also made use of the historical exemplars to remind people that the LTTE on previous occasions have violated their own accords. The metaphors used in the law and order/terrorist frame used in *Divaina* further displayed strong metaphorical and symbolic potentials. For example, the editorial titled, "These jokers who try to teach us the meaning of peace, do not know that we not only accept peace, but also believe in peace," [118] It then argued that:

> Although people have read and thrown away the primer or the alphabet book of LTTE a long time ago, we are forced to read and learn it again now"[119] "Though a leach does not like to stay on a mattress, it prefers the mattress to the oven near the bed. The problem, however, is that people who are on the mattress do not like to sacrifice their blood.[120] (*Divaina,* July 2, 2002).

Another editorial[121] titled **"Covert peace and honourable peace"** said that:

> We have lost so many things from this war. By being at war for nearly 20 years we have become a miserable nation losing billions of rupees and one lack of our population." It had historical exemplars which evoke previous brutal killings of the innocent civilians by the LTTE... from 1983 so many innocent people have been lost. Have we forgotten that Tiger army which came to the broader villagers and the massacre of innocent sleeping villagers including infants and toddlers, as well as old people? Have we forgotten the killing of Buddhist monks at Aranthalava with swords after they were forced to get down and stand on a line? Have we forgotten the shooting down of pilgrims in the shade of the hallowed tree sacred to the Buddhists and the world over and the bombing of the Temple of the Sacred Tooth and also the killing of their own democratic leaders such as Appapillai Amirthalingam and Neelan Tiruchelvam including innumerable other bestial acts? Can we forget the brutal bomb blast at Maradana and Fort stations and the central banks? Can we forget the assassination of President Premadasa and the bomb attack on President Chandrika Kumarathunga? (*Divaina,* June 4, 2002).

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[118] Editorial, "Jokes of the Year," *Divaina*, 2nd July 2002.
[119] Editorial, "We Are Forced to Learn the History of the LTTE Again," *Divaina*, 16th July 2002.
[120] Editorial, " A True Picture," *Divaina*, 20th July 2002.
[121] Editorial, "Covert Peace and Honourable Peace," *Divaina*, 4th June 2002.

According to Schlesinger et al.[122] this law and order frame relies on "anti-terrorist" and "national security" discourses that highlight the theme of the "highly vulnerable" existence of "liberal democratic" states, whose values and freedom are regularly undermined by "terrorism". Schlesinger et al.[123] further state that such official "terrorism" discourses, therefore, tend to rely on a "definitional sleight of hand in which rational and democratic institutions mutually imply one another", as well as an "ideological closure" through which the "orderly" polity is diametrically opposed to the "chaotic" forces of "terrorism." These discourses, however tend to exclude any criticism of state violence, or sympathetic treatment of the historical causes or political motivation behind militant insurgencies. This type of biased news discourse shows that media constructs the social reality in a partisan way.

Additionally, state violence is euphemistically constructed as an isolated aberration, or a necessary "retaliation" to "exceptional threats to the social order. Schlesinger[124] further quotes Conor Cruise O'Brien,[125] who was the former minister for Posts and Telegraphs in the Irish government, and his advocacy on the subject of terrorism. "The force used by a democratic state is legitimate while the violence of the terrorist is not legitimate"[126] .

Further, it is also important to point out in the contest of this research that Liebes[127] in a similar research on the role of Israeli media on the Israeli- Palestinian

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[122] Philip Schlesinger, Philip Eliott and Graham Murdock , *Televising 'Terrorism' :political violence in popular culture,* 155-177.
[123] *Ibid.*
[124] *Ibid.*
[125] Conor C. O'Brien, "Liberty and Terror: Illusions of Violence, Delusions of Liberation Encounter," *Encounter* 49, 4 (1977):34-37
[126] *Ibid.*
[127] Tamer Liebes, *Reporting the Arab Israeli Conflict*: *How hegemony works,*(London: Routledge, 1997), 58-68.

conflict also identified that official law and order/terrorism frames, or "our war" frames, may also excise, demonise, equalise and/ or exaggerate the military threat of the "other" and de-contextualize the conflict's causes and outcomes. For the observations made on the chapter on the history of print media in Sri Lanka, especially the third section on the media and the present ethnic conflict, it was pointed out that for the Colombo based Sinhala national newspapers the "war" has become "us" against "them" showing partiality to the views held by the state.

Hence, the dominance of the law and order frame in the privately owned Sinhalese daily, *Divaina* shows that it was biased against the LTTE, with which it was a major partner of the 2002 Peace Process. The researcher also happened to cross-check the prevalence of dominant frames in the second most read Sinhalese daily *Lankadeepa* and was surprised to find again a relatively higher presence of law and order frames even *in Lankadeepa* (see: Appendix 9).

The Injustice and Defiance Frame

As explained in the signature matrix, this is the third frame found in all the three newspapers. This frame had a variation that is the Sinhalese partisan human right frame and the Tamil version of the human right frame. The sense of day -to-day injustices against Tamils living in the North and East dominated in the Tamil version of the frame, while injustices against Sinhalese and Muslims living in the North and East dominated in the pro-Sinhalese version which was found especially in the Sinhalese daily *Divaina*.

In an editorial entitled "**Promises are not enough**", the Tamil Daily *Virakesari* said,

> Although winds of peace have blown to the country it is not so felt in the North and East... So far only 35% of the North and East is being rehabilitated. Most of the fishermen in the north are not allowed to go fishing. Fishermen in the North need the sea to make a living day and night. The Sri Lankan Army and Navy is not allowing the poor fishermen to go to sea. This is a violation of their basic human right (*Virakesari,* August 12, 2002).

Another editorial of *Virakesari* spoke about the rights of the Muslims:

> There are two segments in the North and North east, Muslims and Tamils. Any peace process should include not only the Tamils, but Muslims as well. We believe that talks with the Muslims should be held separately. Muslims future too is in the hands of the negotiators (*Virakesari,* July 9, 2002).

Injustices inflicted on the Sri Lankan Tamils by the state are further pointed out by another *Virakesari* editorial, "Sri Lankan Tamils are not able to practice their language freely. All Tamils in Sri Lanka are viewed as Terrorists. They are further looked down on as inferior to the Sinhalese people..." (*Virakesari,* February 22, 2002). *Virakesari* editorial on the 1st of January further spoke about the re-settlement of the people displaced by the high security zone in the North as a right. It said that:

> These Tamils need housing facilities badly. They have been ill-treated by the security forces. They are undergoing tremendous hardships and sent from pillar to the post. It is the moral duty of the government to help these innocent civilians. Tamils in this country needs to live in dignity (*Virakesari,* January 1, 2002).

In a similar tone another editorial of *Virakesari* said,

> The history of the struggle of the Tamil people is that it did not begin with an armed struggle. The fact is that it has evolved through stages of making appeals and demands that were not recognized at all by the governments in power. The root cause of the [national] problem is the suppression of the minorities (*Virakesari,* February 2, 2002).

Though the Tamil newspaper *Virakesari* highlighted to a certain extent the hardships and suffering of the Tamils, the Sinhalese newspaper *Divaina* editorials rarely spoke about the sufferings of the Tamil people in the North. However few editorials spoke exclusively about the rights of the Sinhalese living in the North and East and questioned the injustice of not talking about the exclusive rights of Sinhalese in the peace talks. The editorial[128] entitled, "Oluwil accord" said,

> ...after commenting on one of the largest rallies held in the Muslim history of the east held by 65000 Muslim students for a separate Muslim administrative unit in the east it questioned the various injustices to the Muslims committed by the Tigers. Mr.Prabhakaran who has popularised the separatism has driven the Muslim students to it. It is a pity that the Oluwil accord did not include the rights of the Sinhalese living there (Divaina, January 31, 2003).

In another editorial in *Divaina*[129] entitled, "things that everybody should know," was about the decision taken at the Norwegian embassy in Berlin. It said,

> ... a decision was taken about making committees in the east solve the landless problem. However, these committees are represented by only the Tamils and Muslims and there were no Sinhalese. In the east, there are 28% Sinhalese and 35% Muslims and 37% Tamils. East is the homeland of 1/3 of Sinhalese and they have been there from ancient times. It is a must that, 150, 000 Sinhalese should be added to these figures, because they are compelled to leave the East due to the ongoing war. East is not the homeland of only Tamils and Muslims, but also the Sinhalese who are there. Honourable Prabahakaran, honourable Balasingham, honourable G.L. Peris and all honourable people in Norway should know this. If this truth is known, it is good for not only the Sinhalese who are living in this country, but also other nations (*Divaina*, February 20, 2003).

In the same vein, another editorial in *Divaina* [130] with a title "the real journey to the north" quoted a statement made by the chief Buddhist monk of Asgiriya Kandy about the resettlement of Sinhalese who fled the East due to the ongoing war.

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[128] Editorial, "Oluwil Accord," *Divaina*, January 31 2003.
[129] Editorial, "Things That Everybody Should Know," *Divaina*, February 20, 2003.
[130] Editorial, "The Real Journey to the North," *Divaina*, November 22, 2002.

Though the Sinhalese daily always accused the leader of the LTTE, Mr. Prabakaran, as a war monger, interestingly, there was also an editorial[131] about India's untimely request to extradite Prabhakaran for the assassination of Rajive Gandhi the former Prime Minister of India. It also had the historical exemplars of how India and its former Prime Minister and mother of Rajeev Gandhi, Mrs Indira Gandhi supported LTTE and other rebels in the past by giving training. It said that though Prabhakaran is guilty of the assassination, if the peace talks are sabotaged because of the Indian pressure it is a injustice and India is not genuinely interested in restoring peace in Sri Lanka.

Besides these, other injustices highlighted by *Divaina* included, LTTE's recruitment of child soldiers, the higher cost of living that was going up day by day due to the economic mismanagement of resources, endless elections wasting public money, travails of farmers and financial scandals involving public money.

Under the title, "Buying eggs from the shop, after killing the house hen that was laying eggs," *Divaina* editorial pointed out that because of the careless policies of the government dairy farmers in Uva, Sri Lanka have become very poor and helpless. It further said metaphorically, that:

> Sri Lanka has become a tailor shop today, although it was famous for agriculture and was self sufficient twenty or thirty years ago. Instead of improving the dairy industry by importing cattle of good breed, horses are imported for the horse races in N'Eliya, Sri Lanka. Dogs worth lacks of rupees are imported for the dog shows. It asked how can one improve the dairy industry by importing these horses and dogs?. It is like improving agriculture by growing orchids (*Divaina,* January 02, 2003).

[131] Editorial, "India's Wrong Move," *Divaina*, April 16, 2002.

Another, *Divaina* editorial entitled, "**Again about the cost of living,**" complained about the soaring prices of essential items, stating that, "Sri Lanka is a destroyed house with a cracked foundation. Responsibility for this ruined state of Sri Lanka should go to former politicians and Prabhakaran (Divaina, June 29, 2002).

Divaina started another editorial with the catch phrase, "leaders of minority political parties, please listen to your conscience", which also stated:

> ... that after independence was the most difficult time economically and socially for Sri Lanka. It said that in Sri Lanka minority parties are using their power to threaten the government in power, referring to the resignation of two ministers belonging to the Lanka congress party of Indian Tamil labourers. It gave the population figures in Sri Lanka as 74% Sinhalese, 18% Tamils, 7% Muslims and 1% all others. It used the historical exemplar that the fall of the previous government was due to the resignation of the minority party that represented 7% of this country. The resignation of the Tamil congress, representing 18% of this country has thrown a challenge to the government. We are told this resignation is due to some misunderstanding of nominations for the local council elections. However, these type of resignations are acts of injustice by the minority political parties (*Divaina,* February 11, 2002).

Though numerically 10 (only 7.1%) injustices against the Tamils, more especially about ongoing day to day injustices affecting the Tamils living in the North, were mostly highlighted in the Tamil daily *Virakesiri* in comparison with the other two dailies, it also spoke occasionally about the Muslims and Sinhalese living in the North and East. The following editorial[132] outlined that:

> We draw the attention of the government to the plight of the Tamil people living near the high security zone, Palali army camp. The mere fact that they are protesting against the government shows that they are undergoing tremendous hardships. They are justly asking that the army camp should be relocated (*Virakesari*, October 4, 2002).

[132] Editorial, "Plight of the Tamils in the High Security Zone," *Virakesari*, 4th October, 2002.

Interestingly, as it was mentioned before, although the *Verakesari* did not speak about the rights of the minority Sinhalese living in the North and East, in an editorial[133] entitled, "Muslim community's participation in peace talks,"

> Muslims must be included in the peace talks, their exclusion is an injustice against them. Peace process cannot be implemented properly without taking into consideration the rights of the Muslims living in the North and east (*Virakesari*, August 10, 2002).

In another editorial[134], it commended the peace talks and pointed out that they were initiated to find a solution to the various injustices committed against the Tamils starting from 1956. *Virakesari*[135] also in its editorial entitled, "Tamils in hunger strike in prison," commented that innocent people who are held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act should be released immediately, saying it was an injustice to imprison them. Further it also had an editorial[136] entitled, "Jaffna fishermen on strike" about hardships endured by the fishermen in Jaffna due to restrictions imposed by the Sri Lankan Navy and said it was an injustice to continue restrictions in the sea where fishermen have a right to their livelihood.

In editorials which can be considered as *injustice and defiance* frame, the English paper, *The Daily News,* took up, though infrequently the cause of the Muslims living in the East. In an editorial[137] entitled "The Third Dimension" it pointed out,

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[133] Editorial, "Muslim Too Have Rights," *Virakesari*, 10 August 10, 2002.
[134] Editorial, "Peace Talks," *Virakesari*, 7 December, 2002.
[135] Editorial, "Tamils in Hunger Strike in Prison," *Virakesari*, 28th January, 2002.
[136] Editorial, "Jaffna Fishermen on Strike," *Virakesari*, 31January 2002.
[137] Editorial, "The Third Dimension," *Daily News*, 1st April 2002.

> ...the ethnic question could not be treated as a question concerning Sinhalese and Tamil people alone.There is also a third dimension or a Muslim factor involved. Ignoring the Muslims in the peace talks amounted to an injustice (*Daily News*, April 1, 2002).

Taking up the cause of the detainees under the Prevention of Terrorism Act an editorial with the title, "Redress the PTA detainees,"[138] another editorial of *Daily News* further argued that:

> Justice delayed is justice denied. A gross violation of a person's fundamental right occurs when she or he is detained indefinitely without being subject to the due process of law. The provision of redress to those needlessly detained under the PTA would prove an immensely valuable confidence building measure at this juncture (*Daily News*, April 18, 2002).

Besides these media frames there was also a variation of the *peace frame,* mostly in the Tamil newspaper *Virakesari,* that commented on the need for unity among the southern political parties. It commented that unity among the southern political parties was a precondition for carrying the 2002 Peace Process forward.

By looking at the content of the injustice and defiance frames, the researcher noticed concerning the Tamil partisan frame that injustice and defiance portrayed in the Tamil Daily, *Virakesari* and the other two newspapers mostly high lighted only the few hardships of the Tamils in the North and East and not the major grievances that prompted them to take arms against the state. Even the Tamil daily, *Virakesari,* most of the time highlighted the PTA detainees and hardships faced by the fishermen in the North and East.

One common factor the researcher noticed was that all the three dailies highlighted, to a certain extent, the problems faced by the Muslims in the North and

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[138] Editorial, "Redress the PTA," *Daily News*, 18th April 2002.

East. In the Sinhalese daily more prominence was, however, given to the cause of resettling the Sinhalese who had been there from the beginning. This confirms, as explained in the chapter on literature review, the media's normal tendency to focus only on the present, not on the past grievances. In practice the LTTE and the minority Tamils become the only cause of the conflict in Sri Lanka and unfortunately historical and real causes which are economic and political and cultural are forgotten.

In general, Wolfsfeld states that normally the partisan injustice/defiance frame can be considered as an another "challenger" frame adopted by weaker protagonists engaged in popular insurgencies against established state powers. Schlesinger also argues that this frame tends to be further rooted in an "oppositional" discourse that justifies political violence as a nationalist response to repression or colonialism. This injustice and defiance frame which was previously identified within Palestinian discourses from the second half of 2000 onwards argues the case for ending Israeli occupation in terms of Palestinian "injustice" and "liberation" claims. Further, according to Wolfsfeld,[139] media goals of clarity and simplicity usually explain the rarity of competing justice claims in news texts. Further, Wolfsfeld had said, "The fact that the news media only allow for one injustice frame at a time is in keeping with its need to tell simple stories. It would after all, be quite confusing to have two sets of victims" (Wolfsfeld[140])

According to previous research done by Liebes[141] this *injustice/defiance* frame shares the important semantic features with "underdog" and "David-Goliath" frames

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[139] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 141-144.
[140] *Ibid,* 38-39.
[141] Tamara Liebes, "Our War/ Their War: Comparing the Intifadah and the Gulf War on U.S and Israeli Television," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication Research* 9 (1992).44-55

often inscribed in foreign news coverage of Israel/Palestine. Moreover Palestine injustice/defiance frames amplified the historical and contextual background to the conflict as well as the "culmination of years of frustration under the occupation... [and] as the continuation of centuries of violent struggle between Arabs and Jews". However this aspect of "underdog" or "David-Goliath" contrast which Liebes spoke of did not appear in the injustice frames found in the above analysis of the three Sri Lankan papers.

As previously stated, the questions that guided this research were: Can evidence of framing be found in newspaper editorials of the Norwegian initiated 2002 Peace Process based upon the presence of Gamson's framing devices? What specific frames and media packages can be identified? Are the editorials sponsored and packaged by competing interest groups/political actors? Is the use of sources about the 2002 Peace Process in the three newspapers the same or different? Do the "frames" vary between the same three newspapers? By looking at these findings it can be safely assumed according to the criteria developed by Gamson and Wolfsfeld that there was evidence of framing. The content analysis and the frame analysis revealed that there were thee dominant frames available in the news discourse disseminated by the three newspapers.

However, to answer the second part of the first question needs more research. Tracing the presence of competing interest groups and political actors competing for the public arena needs a supplementary research questionnaire along with the documentary analysis undertaken by this research. As was mentioned in the findings

of the content analysis, it could be also safely assumed that all the national newspapers seem mostly to get their information from the same sources.

Unfortunately the implicit impact of this tendency is that it allows the media to construct the social reality or the real picture of the conflict based only on official information. In a way it also hinders a speedy solution to the problem because real sufferings and hardships felt by the majority of the people in the North and East are sidelined or not felt by the majority of the people in the South. The social reality is interpreted through a Colombo arm chair perspective. The answer to the third research question is that frames from newspaper to newspaper are similar, though the ownership is different and caters for three language groups.

7.12 General Discussion

One key finding in this research is that the Tamils need for a Justice frame was not that dominant in the three national papers which was the focus of this research. There were only 10 injustice frames in the Tamil daily "*Virakesari*" during the period studied, while there were only 8 such frames in the English language paper *Daily News*. In the Sinhalese daily there were 26 Sinhalese partisan injustice frames. The sense of injustice against minority Sinhalese who were in the North and East was displayed dominantly in the *Divaina* but not the real causes of the conflict perceived by the Tamils or the LTTE.

As the above findings show the three main frames found in this study were not equally distributed in the three papers and were not also entirely new in the public discourse of Sri Lanka as it would be discussed below.

As Gamson mentions in his book, *Talking Politics*, every policy issue has its own public discourse. In other words, a particular set of ideas and symbols that are used in various public forums help construct meaning about it. As Gamson also says this discourse evolves over time providing interpretations and meanings for newly occurring events. As this research method showed, firstly, that the public discourse like the 2002 Peace Accord, consisting of metaphors, catchphrases, visual images, moral appeals and other symbolic devices can be catalogued, and secondly the catalogue can be organized, since the elements are clustered and held together by a central organizing frame. This research further showed that most of the frames employed in the three newspapers can be traced backed to the past.

The strong presence of the peace and conflict resolution frame, 89% in the English daily *Daily News*, 89% in the Tamil daily *Virakesari* and a relatively low 17% in the Sinhalese daily *Divaina*, in a way that seems to suggest that there are readers in both English and Tamil who believe strongly a compromise from both sides is the only just and viable solution because both sides have an historical claim on the land and a right to self-determination and safety and this has been pervasive in Sri Lanka. During the selected period of study the frequency of the peace and conflict resolution for a month in the three newspapers was as follows: In *Daily News* 12.1, percent, in *Virakesari* 7.1 percent, and in *Divaina* 3.1%. However, along with the

other two frames the peace and conflict resolution frame was consistently present throughout the entire period.

The highest percentage of peace and conflict resolution frames in *Daily News* and *Virakesari* also indicates that these papers tended to adopt 'faithful servant' or broker advocate positions in promoting the government-backed peace perspective. However *Virakesar*i as an independent Tamil newspaper seems also to represent the aspirations of the majority of Tamils that favour peace. More specifically it is also clear from the sample editorials of the Sinhalese daily *Divaina* that in comparison with the other two papers, it also represented the public opinion of the majority Sinhalese, because the need for peace is not strongly felt by them because of the geographical distance between the North and the South, which was also discussed in chapter two of this thesis. The strong law and order frame components found in the Sinhalese paper (69 percent) seems to suggest that it framed Sri Lanka's conflict on ethnic lines and demanded honourable peace (see: Appendix 13). In a way, *Divaina* seems to represent the majority public opinion of Sri Lanka that present conflict is a law and order problem. As discussed in chapter three of this thesis this was the belief of most of the Sri Lankan governments in power.

As Gamson and Wolfsfeld[142] and Ryan[143] have further stated mobilizing the news media is an essential element of every collective action. In other words challengers attempt to use the press not only for disseminating their messages but also as a means of achieving public standing and of mobilizing third parties to the cause.

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[142] William A. Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Movements and Media as Interacting Systems," in *The Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science* ,ed. Russell J Dalton, 528 (1993):114-125.
[143] Charlotte Ryan, *Prime Time Activism; Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing* (Boston: South End Press, 1991).

As Wolfsfeld et al. further state, it is never an easy task. Very few challengers are considered important enough to warrant coverage. Further according to Wolfsfeld et al. even for those who do gain access, there is the additional struggle over how they are being covered. Wolfsfeld[144] in his political contest model argued that the frames of collective action often centre around two competing frames. As stated by him challengers usually attempt to promote an injustice frame, claiming that they, or others, are victims seeking some form of redress. The authorities often respond by promoting a law and order frame that centres on their responsibility to maintain social order. The challengers demand a change in the status quo and the authorities have a vested interest in maintaining it. In the chapter on the history of the print media in Sri Lanka, it was stated that these two frames were very visible in the national press in Sri Lanka right from the beginning. It was also pointed out that in the mainstream, especially in the Sinhala press, there was also the Sinhalese partisan injustice frame. As discussed previously in this chapter, one of the major findings of this research is that the frame analysis of the 2002 Peace Process showed that the Tamil partisan injustice frame or the historical grievances of the Tamil minorities are not perceived as problems needing urgent action, at least by the main Sinhala papers.

As De Silva[145] points out, political debate on power sharing with the Tamils, which was started as early as 1940s, has been problematic. The demands of the Tamils at that time which were represented by the Tamil Congress Party were that seats in the national legislature be divided on a 50-50 basis, with the Sinhalese majority (over 70% of the population) entitled to just half the seats, with the minorities (just over 25% of the population) entitled to the other half. According to

[144] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 141-144.
[145] K. M. De Silva, "Sri Lanka's Prolonged Ethnic Conflict: Negotiating a Settlement" *International Negotiation* 6, 3 (2001): 437-469.

De Silva the Sinhalese naturally refused to accept this and they were also supported in their opposition by the British. Therefore, based on De Silva, the roots of the Sinhalese partisan injustice frame found in this analysis seemed to go back to the post independence period and it has always remained so in the minds of the public, supported and maintained by the main stream southern political parties and also the national media.

As was explained in the history of the print media in Sri Lanka, one of the established media routines and also a deep culturally rooted media frame, is the Unitary state frame and its variation that Sri Lanka is an island of the Buddhists frame. In the chapter on print media in Sri Lanka, it was further pointed out that the origin of some of these cultural frames goes back even before independence. Therefore the dominance of the law and order frame as well as the appearance of the Sinhala partisan injustice and defiance frame, mostly in the Sinhala papers, can be explained based on the above historical evidence. According to De Silva, the majority of the Sinhalese fear that schemes of devolution of power to regional units are likely to lead to political fragmentation of the island and are therefore a potent threat to its territorial integrity through the re-emergence of a separate Tami/state (13th century to the early 17th century) and the possible linkage of such a state to Tamilnadu in South India where there are 50 million Tamils. As already mentioned in the previous chapters of this thesis, in Tamil the meaning of the Federal Party itself is nothing less than the Tamil Kingdom Party or Tamil State Party which is anathema to the ears of the majority Sinhalese.

The above historical facts may explain some of the reasons for the salience of the *law and order* frame and the Sinhalese partisan injustice frame to a certain extent. However the Tamil partisan injustice frame displayed in *Virakesari* can be also explained in the following way. As discussed previously in other chapters, especially in the chapter on the history of peace accords and Tamil Separatism, the Sinhalese Language only Act of 1956, some of the policies introduced by the new constitution of 1972 and the short-sighted, unilateral change in the policy on admission of students to the island's universities and colonisation policies favouring the majority Sinhalese, were perceived as major injustices by the minority Tamils and these grievances are the foundation of the Tamil partisan injustice frame.

Unfortunately, due to the vilification of the LTTE by the Sinhalese media and also due to over- emphasizing the ethnic aspect of the conflict by the national media, some of these major grievances and acts of structural violence committed by the majority Sinhalese governments were not reflected in the dominant frames of the 2002 Peace Accord which was the main inquiry of this research.

It is important to point out that the above observation has a deep implication for Sri Lanka. It was pointed out in the chapter on the history of print media in Sri Lanka how the national press makes use of pre-established assumptions and stereotypes to report news about the Tamils. It was also pointed out how the Tamils are marginalized by almost all the media outlets in Sri Lanka. It was further pointed out that except in the 'Lake House' there are no ethnic Sri Lankan Tamil journalists working in the national newspapers mostly read by the Sinhalese majority. Therefore, what is constructed by the Colombo centered media is naturally biased towards the

majority Sinhalese and does not reflect the plight of the major minority in Sri Lanka and their interests.

Further according to Wolfsfeld et al. and other scholars, official sources are always the first choice for most news stories, but this routine is especially damaging in reporting about minorities. The most problematic example of this practice is when one member of the majority population interviews another member of the majority about what is happening within a minority community. As further stated by Wolfsfeld et al. these news routines become so "natural" that no one sees anything unusual or problematic about the stories. This is after all, according to them, one reason why professionals develop routines so that they can quickly respond to new situations based on experience. The audience also becomes accustomed to a certain reporting format and is unaware of the political and social implications of such frames. Judging by the observations made on the history of print media in Sri Lanka, especially "victim" and "defensive" mode of reporting, one can easily say that media representation of the 2002 Peace Process is certainly coloured by prejudices and stereotyped pre-judgements against the LTTE which was the main partner of the 2002 Peace Process.

7. 13 The Media's Role

Gadi Wolfsfeld in his book *Media and Political Conflict* states that the role of the news media in political conflicts could be explained further in terms of a continuum of independence. At the one end of the continuum he places the case in which the news media serve as *faithful servants* of the government in power,

constantly publicizing official frames of the conflict and either ignoring or discrediting challengers. One could see this hypothesis is true when looking at the main frames appearing in the government owned English paper "*Daily News*" and also in the Tamil daily "*Virakesari*". The fact that they displayed the largest number of the frames in support of the 2002 Peace Process during the 16-month period seem to prove the point made by Wolfsfeld.[146] Furthermore the middle of the continuum referred to by Wolfsfeld is occupied by those conflicts in which the news media act as *semi-honest brokers* by offering challengers of the main frame a significant amount of time and space to air their views against the authorities. In the words of Wolfsfeld, the most interesting end of this continuum is occupied by conflicts in which the news media play the role of *advocates of the underdog* by amplifying the claims of challengers against the authorities. These are the conflicts in which the news media play the most independent role and it is the authorities that find themselves in an uphill battle for legitimacy. Ironically since three frames were displayed unevenly, none of the three Sri Lankan papers examined during the 16 month period played the role of *advocates of the underdog*.

7.14 Conclusion

As explained in the introduction of this chapter, the research questions that guided this thesis were:

1. Can evidence of framing be found in newspaper editorials on the Norwegian initiated 2002 Peace Process based upon the presence of Gamson's framing devices? What specific frames and media packages can be identified?

[146] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 69-71.

2. Are the editorials sponsored and packaged by competing interest groups/political actors? Are the use of sources about the 2002 Peace Process in the three newspapers the same or different?
3. Do the "frames" vary between the same three newspapers ?

The three frames, namely *Peace and Conflict resolution* frame, *law and order* frame, *Injustice and defiance* frame identified by this researcher in his analysis of editorials in the three newspapers proved that there was evidence of framing in the media coverage of the 2002 Peace Process. Secondly, within the above three main frames, there were also a minute variations of the same frames which spoke of peace and conflict resolution within a unitary constitution and human rights.

As already indicated, since the English newspaper was catering for both Sinhalese and Tamils who can understand English, editorials were somewhat neutral without showing any bias or partiality. It had 89% of editorials supporting peace and conflict resolution (see: Appendix 12). 89% of editorials of the Tamil daily *Virakesari* were supportive of peace and conflict resolution (see: Appendix 11). This shows that it truly represented the aspirations of the Tamils who were really yearning for peace and conflict resolution, since they were the direct victims of the three decades of the war with the Sinhalese majority.

However in the Sinhalese daily *Divaina*, only 17% of editorials were for peace and conflict resolution and it had a comparatively very high percentage of editorials questioning the legitimacy of the LTTE as a genuine partner for peace. This showed that the 2002 Peace Process was not perhaps supported by the majority Sinhalese and

this was the editorial stand taken by the most circulated newspaper in the Sinhalese language. This was also the stand of the Sinhalese daily *Lankadeepa* which happened to be the second most circulated Sinhalese newspaper in Sri Lanka (see: Appendix 10). Therefore, it is correct to say that editors of Sinhaelse dailies and Tamil dailies were also sensitive to their readerships which was based on ethnic identity.

There was no direct evidence of sponsorship of any editorials of the three papers from this analysis. However, there is a need to do more in-depth research in order to come to conclusions. An open-ended questionnaire directed at the editorials would have been helpful in order to find evidence of sponsorship.

As already explained, the answer to the fourth research question is that Peace and Conflict resolution frames appeared more in the English and Tamil dailies, while the Sinhala daily gave more prominence to the law and order frame. There was a conscious or unconscious move by all three newspapers to dwell on the current situation alone without giving space to point out the cause of the conflict in the context of the 2002 Peace Process.

As already indicated from the overall percentage of the space given to the peace initiative in the three newspapers one can say that relatively peace initiatives are not newsworthy from the media's point of view (see: appendix 4). More importantly also that media frames do not fully represent the real causes of the conflict.

However, it should be stressed, as it was also pointed out in the chapter on the literature review that though these findings have confirmed the evidence of framing, most journalists do not intentionally bias their stories. Instead factors including structural, professional and organizational pressures incline the media toward certain sources, interpretations and perspectives. According to Shoemaker and Resse[147] shared values and practices throughout a nation's media lead to common frames (see Tankard et al.[148] Gamson[149]; Hofstetter [150]).

The three frames found in the editorials in three newspapers also confirmed the findings of Wolfsfeld[151], that the need to condense and simplify voluminous material and the strong news orientation toward events and dramatic images diverts the press from complex or abstract fames.

The citing by the three newspapers of the sources almost in the same way seems also in agreement with the findings of the scholars that dependency on government sources leads media to privilege the government's construction of key issues and events (Wolfsfeld[152];Paletz and Entman[153];Gans[154]; Shoemaker and Resse[155]).

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[147] Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Resse, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*(New York: Longman, 1991).
[148] James W. Tankard, "Media Frames: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement".
[149] W. A. Gamson, *Talking Politics*, 24-25.
[150] C. R. Hofstetter, "News bias in the 1972 campaign: a cross-media comparison," *Journalism Monographs* 58 (1978):1-30.
[151] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 67-69.
[152] *Ibid*, 40-48.
[153] Paletz and Entman, "Media, Power, Politics," 63-64.
[154] Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time* (New York: Pantheon Books).
[155] Shoemaker and S. D. Resse, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content,*42-56

It is also evident from these research findings of the view held by scholars that although media discourse provides a place for various ideologies, institutions and groups struggle over the construction of reality and all ideas and institutions are not treated equally (Wolfsfeld[156]). Therefore media framing in the three newspapers legitimated some views and de-legitimated others. This is expressed in metaphorical language by scholars saying that if today's media constitute an "arena of political conflict," then like the uneven battles between peasants and lions in the Roman coliseum, the rules of engagement in the media arena disfavour certain combatants (Wolfsfeld[157], Steuter[158]). In other words, when media cover conflicts between unequal political opponents or conflicts in which one side is officially sanctioned, Schlesinger, Elliot and Murdock[159] also found that media usually takes the side of those with political and economic power.

On the whole the quantitative and ethnographic content analysis of the editorials in the three most circulated dailies catering to three different language groups confirms the previous research findings of communication scholars that news media tell stories about political issues using only a narrow range of perspectives.

This research also showed that print media in Sri Lanka favours the reporting of conflicts more than peace and this was also proved from the space given to the topic during the study period (see appendix 4). As discussed in the chapter on

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[156] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East*, 67-78.
[157] Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict : News from the Middle East.*
[158] E. Steuter, "Understanding the Media/Terrorism Relationship: An Analysis of Ideology and the News in Time Magazine " *Political Communication* 7, 4 (1990): 257-278.
[159] Philip Schlesinger, Philip Eliott and Graham Murdock, 155-177.

literature review, though Galtung's[160] criteria of peace journalism, namely an advocacy, interpretative approach, which concentrates on stories that highlight peace initiatives, tone down ethnic and religious differences, prevent further conflict, focus on the structure of society, promote conflict resolution, reconstruction and reconciliation, was found to a certain extent in the editorials of the *Daily News* and the *Virakesari*. Certainly it was not found in the most circulated Sinhalese dailies *Divaina* or in *Lankadeepa* (see: Appendix 13 and 9).

On the whole, these research findings seem to confirm the tremendous power media has in constructing the social reality as discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis. As mentioned in chapter four, according to Lederach[161], even conflict is a socially constructed cultural event. The editorial use of the Sinhala language by *Divaina* as well as by *Lankadeepa* further suggests that media can also aggravate a conflict by contributing negatively to the peace efforts.

This concludes this chapter on the research findings, namely on the coverage of the 2002 Peace Process, by the three most circulated daily newspapers in Sri Lanka. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, this study offers a quantitative and qualitative reading of the editorials on the 2002 Peace Process. The question how should the media cover conflict is contested and the debate is still going on, both between media professionals and the conflict resolution practitioners and within the media itself.

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[160] Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research" *Journal of Peace Research* 6, 3 (1969):176-191.

[161] John Paul Laderach, "Mediating Across Cultures," http:// ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/ archive/ two/ 1/ p3 . html.

The findings of this chapter challenge all engaged in peace and conflict to understand the fact that the power of media frames positively or negatively the mindset of the general public for better or worse. The findings of this research confirm that in attempting to present the news and to make sense of our world, journalists select, organize and emphasize some aspects of the world reality while ignoring some others.

Lastly quantitative content analysis and the ethnographic[160] content analysis of the editorials of 2002 Peace Process also confirmed what was observed by two other recent media analysts on the Peace Process. In another Media study by Deshapriya[162], monitoring the editorial column of mainstream newspapers of all three languages, to establish the position held by[162] each regarding some crucial and political issues in Sri Lanka, it is found that following the main newspapers, namely *Divaina, Lakbima, The Daily Mirror, The Island, Sunday Divaina*, *Sunday Lakbima, Lanka, The Sunday Times*, and The *Sunday Island*, had a very critical attitude towards the Oslo Declaration, agreed on 5 December 2002 by the Government and the LTTE to explore a political solution within the framework of a Federal political system within a united Sri Lanka. In a separate study Nadaraja[163] found that almost all leading Sinhala papers have adopted strong Sinhala Buddhist nationalist positions. Nadaraja further states that Sinhalese papers' suspicion and hostility towards LTTE have remained undiminished and that their coverage and analysis of the Peace Process are deeply coloured. Further, according to him Tamil papers in general have not questioned and have sometimes defended the LTTE's *bonafides*. In general the Tamil Press has

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[162] Sunanda Deshapriya, "A Study of Media in Sri Lanka (Excluding the North and East)" http://www.i-m-s.dk/Media/PDF/CPA%20South%20Survey%20FINAL%20(May2005).

[163] Suthaharan Nadarajah, "Sri Lanka's Vernacular Press and the Peace Process: Part of the Sri Lanka Strategic Conflict Assessment 2005," www.asiafoundation.org.

echoed the LTTE's position while the Sinhala press has broadly reflected the stance of the government and military on contentious issues.

The combined approach of this research, namely quantitative content analysis and ethnographic content analysis of the editorials to find out how the 2002 Peace Process was portrayed in the three selected papers shows that due to fundamental contradictions because of news values, such as immediacy, drama, simplicity and ethnocentris (Wolfsfeld)[164] which the media operate, the role of the media in peace appears quite negative. As Gans[165] stated, although there exists an unwritten professional code that the role of journalists is to inform the citizenry in order to advance democracy, that in fact is sorely out of touch with reality. Moreover, the last chapter which was entitled 'history of the print media' also showed that major causes that need immediate attention have not come to the surface because of ethnocization of the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict, which has lasted years, by the news media in Sri Lanka.

[164] Gadi Wolfsfeld, Media and the Path to Peace (London: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 16-20.
[165] Herbert Gans, Deciding what's news (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

CHAPTER 8

Case Study Findings and Implications for Future Research

8.1 Introduction

Several content analyses have been made of different dimensions of the roles adopted by media in reporting the protracted conflict in Sri Lanka (see Chapter four above). This thesis is focused on a case-study analysis consisting of a content analysis as well as a frame analysis, that is a qualitative media analysis of how three Sri Lankan national "opinion leader" newspapers, the *Daily News*, *Divaina* and *Virakesari* covered the 2002 Peace Process of Sri Lanka connected with the same conflicts– during the sixteen month period from December 2001 to March 2003. As cited by Gamson and Wolfsfeld, media communication addresses the mass public sphere and very often uses familiar cultural codes that are understandable to a large and diverse audience. O' Mahony and Schafer[1] state that these cultural codes can be called 'frames'. These are generalized standpoints, contents and styles, which provide the raw materials of mediated communication. Frame analysis has gained popularity especially during the last decade both serving to supply a qualitative orientation and to link quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

The Methodological Frame work applied within this research integrated media frame analysis, with historical, contextual centered analysis of the relationship

[1] Patrick O' Mahony and Mike Steffen Schafer, "The 'Book of Life' in the Press: Comparing German and Irish Media Discourse on Human Genome Research," *Social Studies of Science* 35,1 (2005):99-130.

between media roles in framing issues of conflict and peace and the political environment within which those media operate. This framework therefore provides a very useful set of methods of media analysis and conceptual tools which enhance our ability to understand the role of the media in framing political conflicts. It is also hoped that this framework can be applied within wider and more extensive analysis of Sri Lanka's media.

In keeping with the arguments of peace journalism as propounded by Galtung and also the recommendations advanced by development journalism schools, this thesis recommends that media roles in regulating, constructing or obstructing peace initiatives be corrected by political reforms and public policies. It is because media have such influence over public frames on the conflict in Sri Lanka, that positive changes are required in their roles or reportage in order that a culture of peace and discourses on resolution and compromise gain the desired needs or prominence in Sri Lankan politics. It is also hoped that the media and policy makers would implement the key recommendations that emerged from this analysis.

As mentioned before, it is also the first time a comprehensive media analysis has been done using frame analysis combined with a content analysis on the print media in Sri Lanka. This analysis further covers three national dailies in Sri Lanka, catering for three different main language groups. Further, this analysis looks into the role of national media in peace as well as conflict that effects one of the major ethnic minorities in Sri Lanka. This research emphasises that newspaper editorials can positively or negatively contribute to the opinion formation on an important topic.

The aim of this final chapter, therefore, is to summarize the research findings or conclusion of this thesis, theoretical arguments and major findings and the future challenges of this explorative study. As was outlined in chapter five on methodology, the objectives of this research were first to undertake a combined quantitative content (QCA) and ethnographic content (ECA) analysis of the 2002 Peace Process between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE and to explain key features characterizing this coverage in terms of the surrounding politico-cultural and media context from which it emerges.

This concluding chapter also addresses the implications that this case study's findings have for existing research agenda and possible future research. In particular this research seeks to supplement the deficit that exists in previous media research on the roles played by different media institutions in Sri Lanka in covering the country's ethnic conflict. The implications of the theories of social construction of reality, namely the propaganda hypothesis, the framing theory popularized by Gamson and the political context model of Wolfsfeld were discussed especially in chapter four. It was further pointed out that Wolfsfeld's work and the constructive approach popularized by Gamson within the framework of social construction of reality approach overcomes some of the limitations of the propaganda model alone to explain the media behaviour of Sri Lanka. It was also pointed out that the concept of framing is crucial for explaining how news discourse is structured to produce desired meanings. Frames further help the production of the messages by the journalists as well as reception of the same messages by the audiences. In other words, producers and their audiences achieve resonant communication by means of these cultural codes.

As was indicated in chapter four of the literature review, scholars hold today that the media, especially the 'news media,' supply a construction-cum-interpretive representation of the news, within a particular matrix of historical circumstances, cultural traditions, institutional imperatives and relationships, in addition to professional practices. As explained above, Wolfsfeld's work in particular demonstrates the theoretical value of historically situating and contextualizing media coverage in terms of the political and media environments surrounding conflicts as well as in terms of the maintenance of peace.

Therefore, it was concluded that the work of Gamson and his colleagues and Wolfsfeld's social constructive perspective can be modified and along with other theories discussed in the literature review are most suited to fulfil the objectives of this research. Further this thesis also highlights, especially in the literature review, the importance of language in the dissemination of knowledge. Accordingly, newspaper language is perhaps the most fundamental aspect of social construction and, further, it is also vital in the transfer of information among members of a society. Since mass media such as newspapers rely heavily on language to transmit information clearly and quickly, the thesis argues in chapters three and six that newspapers in Sri Lanka are also responsible for legitimizing or repudiating their social constructs by defining and distributing socially constructed knowledge on a wider societal scale.

The thesis contains eight chapters; the research method included two stages as indicated above: quantitative content analysis (QCA) and ethnographic content analysis (ECA). Some of the key findings of each of these stages in the six main chapters will be highlighted here. Following this discussion and updating of the

previous work of scholars who have analysed the Sri Lanka media, such as Peiris[2], Kandiah[3], Ting Lee and Maslog,[4] and Nadarajah[5] in the chapter on the literature review, it is argued that a combined quantitative and qualitative approach is preferable for understanding, not only the media behaviour, but also the specific reasons for such behaviour. By this means a solution might be found to improve the situation. More specifically, the frame analysis undertaken in this study can give valuable insights into the personal attitudes, professional roles of media workers, media routines, media organizations, sources, advertisers, audiences and government controls. Further, it is also argued that unlike the previous studies done on the media in Sri Lanka, which limited themselves to taking into account only what is published regarding the newspapers, the frame analysis employed here examines how news is also coated, presented and packaged in accordance with the beliefs, myths, stories, folk tales and metaphors that coincide with the dominant culture of Sri Lanka.

8.2 Chapter Summaries

Chapter one details the layout of the thesis plan, and highlights the focus of the whole thesis. Chapter two, entitled "Sri Lanka," presents the background to the conflict, gives the geographical set up, historical context, ethnic composition, political system and the media landscape. It points out that some of the warning signs mentioned by the 'Carnegie Commission' that mark countries at risk, were evident in Sri Lanka especially after independence due it would seem to the short- sighted vision

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[2] G. H. Peiris, "Media in Sri Lanka: Recent Trends of Change," in *Studies On The Press in Sri Lanka and South Asia*, eds. G. H. Priris, 81-105(Kandy: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997).
[3] Thiru Kandiah, ed., *The Media and the Ethnic Conflict* (Colombo: Marga Institute, 2001), 1-45.
[4] Seow Ting Lee, and Crispin C. Maslog, "War or Peace Journalism? Asian Newspaper Coverage of Conflicts" *The Journal of Communication,*55, 2 (2005): 311-329.
[5] Suthaharan, Nadarajah, "Sri Lanka's Vernacular Press and the Peace Process: Part of the Sri Lanka Strategic Conflict Assessment, "www. asiafoundation.org.

of some contemporary politicians. It was also mentioned that it was mainly the crippling economic situation, as well as military setbacks and international pressure, that induced the majority Sinhalese government to negotiate and to sign a treaty with the LTTE which came to be known as the 2002 Peace Process. Perhaps the fact that even after twenty years of civil strife and a huge humanitarian disaster Sri Lanka is not yet ripe for settlement, is a signal that the media has not prepared the mindset of the public for it. Sri Lanka's strategical location and close proximity to South India, as pointed out in this chapter as well as in chapters three and six, creates certain advantages as well as disadvantages for Sri Lanka. Significantly the advantages and disadvantages of being located near India were also reflected in some of the main frames found in the three national papers of Sri Lanka.

As was pointed out in chapter three, it was this dominant influence that caused India to initiate in Sri Lanka what became known as the Indo-Sri Lanka peace process in 1987. Another highlight of the second chapter was the peculiar demographic profile of Sri Lanka, with a concentration of Sri Lankan Tamils in the north and to a lesser extent in the east of the country and the concentration of Sinhalese in the south and other parts of Sri Lanka. It was pointed out that the early Sinhalese settled in the central and south-western regions, while early Sri Lankan Tamils settled and were concentrated in the north-east coastal regions. This demographical fact had a major negative impact on the Sri Lankan conflict. As noted by De Silva, ethnic minorities concentrating in particular geographical regions, can eventually become the overwhelming ethnic majority of that region and this in turn usually results in the creation of potential bases for secessionist movements.

However, given the hostile political climate of Sri Lanka, for better or worse, the findings of the 2001 population census signal that due to the war-torn situation in the North and East a large number of Tamils have moved to the South, especially to the city of Colombo. This new situation calls on the national media to be extra vigilant and sensitive to the information needs of all Sri Lankans, irrespective of their ethnic background. Another important highlight of the second chapter was that the rivalry and competition for the scarce resources by the two main major ethnic groups, Sinhalese and the Tamils, seems to extend back even to before independence and both groups seem to rely on the myths to bond and crystallize each others' ethnicity and use them to their own advantage to get the best possible deal for their ethnic group. As was also pointed out in the chapter on the history of print media in Sri Lanka, some of these legends and metaphors are constantly used by politicians of both sides and are circulated over and over again by the national media.

Another important highlight was that, given the political climate of Sri Lanka, other minorities in Sri Lanka such as ' Indian or up-country Tamils' and Muslims are highly vulnerable. From time to time, Indian Tamils and Muslims have been caught in the crossfire between the two factions in the conflict. Another important finding was that the political party system in itself in Sri Lanka does not have any positive impact or transformational impact on the conflict between the two ethnic groups. Despite a higher adult literacy rate and a higher readership profile due to the important relationship that exists between the media and politics (articulated in this thesis) disunity among the politicians has made the media take sides and divide the population further on ethnic lines.

Chapter two articulated that the major causes of the conflict in Sri Lanka can be explained in terms of the theories of conflict put forward by the three main schools in conflict literature namely, relative deprivation, mobilization, and repression. However, it was argued that no one school provides a complete understanding of the nature and root causes of the conflict, instead each of the three has something to contribute to that understanding.

One of the most important conclusions in the chapter as well as one of the major findings of the entire thesis concerns the intrinsic relationship of politics and media in Sri Lanka. It confirms also Wolfsfeld's findings in his 'Political contest' model which states that usually media does have a major influence on conflicts as well as peace attempts. However, it was also pointed out that the impact of the national media on all the peace processes initiated so far in Sri Lanka has been so negative that, as has been said by Goodhand et al. it is the southern polity with the support of the media that has held the key to peace in Sri Lanka.

In other words, due to the sensationalist media environment of Sri Lanka which was traced in detail in the chapter on print media in Sri Lanka, and the over-emphasis on the ethnicity of the conflict by the national media, this thesis points out that the media in Sri Lanka has not presented the true causes of the conflict to the public and, as a result, there can be no true debate among the rulers and the ruled concerning an acceptable solution to the country's problem.

Chapter three of this thesis, entitled "History of Tamil separatism and the history of peace processes in Sri Lanka," begins by quoting an important observation

made by Banergee who says correctly that in general peace processes in Asia do not present a state of sanitized vacuum, but rather of acute contentions, where dialogue for peace continues while, at the same time, violence also looms over the scene. This observation rightly represents the situation in Sri Lanka. Recent peace processes have been derailed by provoked acts of violence committed by the parties to the peace processes. Another observation made by Banergee is also applicable to Sri Lanka, where she says not to consider any of the parties in the peace process as a monolith since all of them contain fault lines. Most of the previous studies of Sri Lanka's conflict hold that it was mainly the fragmentation of opinion, especially among the majority Sinhalese, that made it possible for the government to negotiate with Sri Lankan Tamils for a viable solution.

A further observation of Banergee is that it is important to take into account the various stakeholders and multiple voices and not to deny space or accommodation to these important actors, intentionally or unintentionally, either by the state or by the rebels, otherwise it will end in jeopardizing the entire peace process. As we see in this chapter, denying space to the Sri Lankan Muslims, who have a significant presence in the east, or to other stakeholders, has resulted in deadlocks and has also jeopardized the 2002 Peace Process. Therefore this chapter especially reveals how neglect of some of these factors has made Sri Lanka a case study for its protracted ethnic conflict, unending war and repeated failures of the peace processes negotiated so far. Up to now five phases of peace negotiations have taken place and one of the highlights in this chapter is the presence of the Sinhala partisan injustice frame right from the beginning, that is from the first phase of the negotiations which began in 1956. This was due to the Tamil demand for equal

representation on a 50-50 basis, even though they made up barely 25% of the total population. Another important observation stated in the chapter is the formation of a Federal party by Tamils, signalling a shift of the political agenda away from the central government in Colombo to the predominantly Tamil regions. This was imitated by some Sinhalese politicians of the time who formed the Sri Lanka Freedom party by breaking away from the ruling United National Party.

This was the beginning of competition between two Sinhalese political parties to position themselves in relation to the Sinhala-Buddhist electorates mainly in the south with a view to coming to power. One of the first short-sighted acts was giving official status to the Sinhalese language, thereby revoking an earlier agreement between Sinhala and Tamil politicians to give equal status to both Sinhalese and Tamils. In the chapter on the print media we discussed how the Tamil language was sacred for the Sri Lankan Tamils. One of the main injustices and instances of structural violence identified by Tamils up to this day is the short-sighted 'Sinhala only' act of 1959; the anger and frustration of the Sri Lankan Tamils should be understood in this context and against this background. Most importantly this was also the beginning of the Tamil partisan injustice frame, which, following Gamson's terminology, is also a collective identity frame.

Another significant event in the early years was the disintegration of the moderate Tamil Congress Party, which was more pro-central than the Federal Party, which in turn had a more pronouncedly regional political agenda and was and still is vehemently opposed by the Sinhalese in the south. As we have seen in chapter six, the majority Sinhalese-biased media had a heyday reporting these events and creating

hostility towards Sri Lankan Tamils in the minds of the majority Sinhalese. Another significant landmark discussed in chapter three was the 1972 constitution. It proclaimed the supremacy of the Sinhalese language and the indivisible nature of the state both of which have had a negative impact on all the peace processes negotiated until now.

According to the constitutional experts, the 1972 Constitution was also responsible for the exclusion of article 29 (2) of the 1948 Constitution, which prohibited legislation that discriminated on grounds of community or religion. By dropping article 29 (2) the 1972 Constitution removed all restrictions on Parliament's legislative supremacy. On giving up their previous negotiation position to work for a federal solution within a united Sri Lanka, Tamil politicians of the time decided to work for a separate state of Eelam and the frustrations of the Sri Lankan Tamils was aptly expressed in 1976 when it was said that "the decision to restore and reconstitute the State of Tamil Elam was taken because all previous efforts to achieve the bare minimum of political rights consistent with the self-respect of the Tamil people had proved futile". Another major landmark in the previous negotiations was the Indian intervention and the 13th Amendment to Sri Lanka's Constitution 1987 which was also introduced at India's insistence. In short, the 13th amendment was an attempt to decentralize and to establish Provincial councils in Sri Lanka.

The direct effect of being located close to India, especially to South India, were discussed in the previous chapters and, as De Silva stated, India had three roles in Sri Lanka's conflict. It played the roles of participant, mediator and combatant. How the LTTE came to represent all the aspirations of the Sri Lankan Tamils and

achieve them militarily were also discussed in this chapter. In chapter three we also gave a detailed account of the five phases of the previous negotiations which could be described as "pioneering attempts with certain drawbacks that tried to settle one of the most protracted conflicts in the world[6]." However due to party politics and abrupt changes of government from time to time, nothing seems have been learned from the previous drawbacks or mistakes or envisaged time frames to solve the conflict in Sri Lanka. As Uyangoda has observed, every failed peace attempt seems to have re-defined the Sri Lankan conflict in new terms. Chapter three concludes by explaining the background that led to the 2002 Peace Process which is the main focus of this research.

Chapter four of this thesis, the literature review, tried to articulate convincingly the remarkable power media has at its disposal for positive or negative outcomes. In the introduction to this chapter we see that the media is an important source of information and that people depend on it to learn about other people and events, particularly about topics such as war and peace; they have no direct access to this information and depend on the media to inform them. Therefore, it is extremely important to understand the nature of media and its power. The content of the media is neither neutral nor natural but manufactured or constructed, as against those who argue for the media as the 'window on the world'. More specifically, the news media supply a construction-cum-interpretive representation of the news within a particular matrix of historical circumstances, cultural traditions, institutional imperatives and relationships, and professional practices. As was further discussed in this thesis, the source of media power lies mainly in its ability to be selective in what it tells us about

[6] John M. Richardson Jr.and Jianxin Wang, "Peace accords: Seeking conflict resolution in deeply divided societies" in *Peace Accords and the Ethnic Conflict*, eds. K. M de Silva and S.W.R.De A. Samarasinghe, 173-198 (London: International Centre For Ethnic Studies, 1993).

the world. It tells us about some issues and events and not about others. Therefore it controls the information that is available to citizens and has the potential to shape or set limits to their social knowledge and to the images that they use to construct the world in which they live.

Moreover, while appearing to be independent, the news media are institutions which are controlled or heavily influenced by government and business interests experienced in the manufacture of consent/consensus. Reporters' sources frequently dominate the flow of information as a way of furthering their own overt and hidden agendas. This is evident especially in the heavy reliance on political officials and other-government related experts which occurs through a preferential sourcing selection process that excludes dissident voices. The results of the content analysis, discussed in the chapter seven on research findings, confirmed the above hypothesis. The main theories of media power introduced in chapter four of the literature review under the umbrella of 'the social construction of reality', namely the 'agenda setting,' 'framing theory,' 'organizational and occupational factors,' 'propaganda model,' and 'political contest' models of Wolfsfeld, amply exemplify the power of the media. One of the major highlights of the chapter was the role of the language used by the media in the social construction of reality.

Since news media rely heavily on language to transmit information clearly and quickly, scholars hold further that media is also responsible for legitimizing or repudiating social constructs by their acts of defining and distributing knowledge. Lederach concludes that by expanding the concept of social construction further, conflict itself is a socially constructed cultural event. Therefore, all the theories

explained in chapter four of the literature review support the main argument of this thesis that the national media in Sri Lanka is one of the main protagonists in the conflict in Sri Lanka. Another significant insight Lederach made within the social constructionist perspective is the importance of using appropriative models to handle conflicts. According to Lederach, these models ought be rooted in the cultural knowledge of people in the country where the conflicts in question are taking place. Perhaps it may be that all the peace processes negotiated so far have failed to bring to an end the various deadlocks of the paradigmatic social conflict of Sri Lanka and this is due to negligence or to failure to take into consideration the local models and conflict resolution resources available in Sri Lanka itself.

One of the most successful and effective ways of handling and pacifying ethnic riots in Sri Lanka is forming local village peace councils represented by all religious leaders in the village or city respected professionals, and respected leaders in the community. The Effectives of this type of local models could be a formidable challenge and a valuable area for future research.

In chapter seven on the research findings, the researcher found that Wolfsfeld's model was highly applicable to the Sri Lankan conflict situation as were also other relevant theories explained in chapter four of the literature review. These help us to understand the role the three selected newspapers played in the 2002 Peace Process. Another insight of this chapter on literature review was that peace is not the bread and butter of the news media, but war and conflict are. This insight was supported by the findings of the content analysis of the editorials undertaken by our research. Previous studies on the role of Sri Lanka media in the ongoing Sinhala-

Tamil conflict also agree with the major conclusion of this research that the media in Sri Lanka has played a negative role in the conflict and, on the whole media, has not helped to build a multi-ethnic state since Sri Lanka attained independence in 1948.

With a view to presenting a holistic picture of what goes on behind the scenes in news production, it was further argued that the quantitative content analysis and ethnographic qualitative content analysis combined with other major media theories, are better suited to understand media behaviour in Sri Lanka. Finally, after discussing the major and most up-to-date literature available on the conflict the main work reviewed in this chapter shows that news cannot produce social meanings without adopting certain frames, but in the process it can also establish some meanings as dominant and can weed out other competent meanings, thereby leading to hegemonic and marginalizing voices.

On the whole, all the theories discussed in the chapter help us to understand the nature of news production, news events, news values, editorial values and, in keeping with the trends of the development journalism, all the theories remind us that the power of the media can be used as a social good to educate and enlighten citizens at large on the values of national integration and peace.

Our fifth chapter begins by introducing framing theory, and comments on its effects on the formation of public opinion. After justifying the scope and the focus of the research it goes on to explain that in editorials and commentaries, the media not only communicates its relevant assignments for complete issues and events, but can also assign relevance to certain aspects of an issue or event by putting special

emphasis on these aspects or highlighting certain factors or particular dimensions of a problem. This accentuation already implicitly indicates the author's opinion on the subject and establishes a certain mode of interpretation. The chapter also describes various stages of this present research on the editorial representation of the 2002 Peace Process and the two types of content analysis that was done with the help of a coding sheet included in the appendix.

Since there are many approaches to framing research, this chapter states that it has selected the frame analysis model popularized by the sociologists Gamson, Lasch and Wolfsfeld and used extensively by Wolfsfeld in his research on the role of the Israeli media in the Israeli-Palestine conflicts. Various definitions in line with Gamson's framing approach and the concept of the Signature matrix introduced by Gamson and Lasch are further introduced in this chapter along with various condensational symbolic devices contained in the signature matrix and their definitions. The research for this study consists of two parts and two complementary methods, namely quantitative content analysis and ethnographic qualitative content analysis. Chapter five on methodology also discusses the advantages of using both methods in order to obtain a comprehensive analysis of the role of Sri Lanka's print media in the 2002 Peace Process.

The methodology detailed in chapter five can be used to support one of the main theories discussed in the previous chapter on literature review, namely that news is a socially created product not a reflection of an objective reality. The three research questions posed in this exploratory study which research methodology and the answers to these questions, show that the media has remarkable power to shape and

reshape public opinion. Understanding how the media portrays events is important because research has shown that people's attitudes and judgments can be affected by the media's framing of issues especially when they lack firsthand knowledge and experience of the issue in question. Finally, chapter five states that by engaging in this particular investigation the researcher hopes to contribute to a relatively sparse body of empirical research that investigates the contribution of national newspapers in Sri Lanka and also in Asia to political communication in terms of agenda setting and opinion formation by their editorials.

A major highlight of chapter six, entitled 'the print media in Sri Lanka,' is that as noted by Gamson in his analysis of the Arab-Israeli conflict, frequently the media uses frames rooted in cultural settings and history, since these frames are familiar and resonate with both themselves and the public. Therefore, in conformity with Gamson's findings, the researcher found that most of the frames disseminated by the print media in both Sinhalese and Tamil newspapers go back even before the independence of Sri Lanka. Along the same line, an important discovery of the first part of the chapter six was that the distrust and hostility towards Sri Lankan Tamils have deep historical and cultural roots. The Sinhala press has been influenced by Buddhist culture while Tamil press has been influenced by Hindu culture, both cultures originate in India. Since both groups, Buddhist and Hindu, consider their own cultures as sacred, deliberate attacks on religious, ethnic and cultural artefacts such as the burning of the most important Tamil library in the north by a group of Sinhalese or the attack on the Sacred Boddhi Tree and Sacred Tooth relic by the LTTE, has further fuelled the conflict between the groups.

Another interesting finding is the importance of their own cultural metaphors for both Sinhalese and Tamils as well as the use of these cultural and historical and religious elements by interested parties to invoke patriotism and nationalism in people's minds. For example, *Divaina* (February, 10 2003) warned that:

> we are extremely patient and are stomaching quite a lot...though many have forgotten, we have a proud history of many thousands of years, 2,500 of it fed and nourished by the philosophy of Buddhism.

On the whole, the editorials in the Sinhala paper *Divaina*, when cross-checked with *Lankadeepa* (the second most read Sinhalese newspaper in Sri Lanka:(see the appendix 9 and 10), showed the relative dominance of the law and order frame in the Sinhalese newspapers where there was considerable coverage of the LTTE's "terrorism," and little, if any, coverage of Tamil grievances. However, a newspaper's idea of "terrorism" is also intrinsically linked to the "division of the country" thus forming the basis for identifying all Tamils as "terrorist supporters."

By looking at the early history of the Sinhala and Tamil press, as well as the English press, managed by Sinhalese owners, one can say that the influence of news politics, news economy and news culture, discussed in detail in chapter four of the literature review, is very much present. One can also see the collective action frames such as the "victim" and "injustice" frames, represented in the Sinhala and Tamil press becoming crystallized right from the early years of the Sri Lanka press.

From its inception, the national press in Sri Lanka was preoccupied with generating readership appeal through 'sensationalism' of one form or another: 'scoops' in political and business affairs, proactive commentary, and lavishly

illustrated 'human interest' stories of disasters and conflicts. Another important highlight of this chapter is that, from the beginning there have been two distinct media environments, Sinhalese and Tamil.

Due to the close proximity of the two countries, India and Sri Lanka, as we stated in chapters two and three of this thesis, Tamil newspapers have been influenced by the journalistic routines of South India. This has affected negatively or alienated Sri Lankan Tamils, who wish to identify themselves, first of all, as citizens of Sri Lanka. The Colombo-centered national press has further alienated Sri Lankan Tamils living in the south by showing majority bias and by presenting news along ethnic lines. Talking about the print media and the present ethnic conflict, which are discussed in depth in chapter six, one can conclude that all previous studies discussed in detail also support one of the major highlights of this research, namely that the national media in Sri Lanka has not fostered ethnic harmony between the two major ethnic groups, Sinhalese and Tamils.

In addition, chapter six also supports one of the major arguments in this entire thesis, that by taking a strong pro-Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist position, the Sinhalese-owned Sinhala and English press have marginalised and alienated the minority Tamils, especially the minority Tamils, thus rendering them unable to become equal citizens of Sri Lanka. Further, as illustrated in chapter six, framing or depicting every Tamil as a potential "terrorist" or a pro-LTTE member has blinded the majority of Sri Lankans from recognizing genuine grievances and core causes of the conflict in Sri Lanka.

It was argued in previous chapters that the media has remarkable power at its disposal and the analysis of the print media shows that, consciously or unconsciously, the national media, an important institution, has engaged in acts of structural violence against Sri Lankan Tamils, one of the major minority groups in Sri Lanka. Media behaviour in Sri Lanka definitely does not foster ethnic harmony or safeguard minority rights.

Another significant finding in chapter six was the increased incidents of abductions, attacks, threats and cold-blooded murder of Tamil and Sinhalese journalists with the connivance of the ruling party as well as the LTTE. It was further pointed out that Tamil journalists in particular face other forms of coercion, including direct threats from the security forces and pro-government Tamil paramilitary groups which have been accused of the killings of prominent Tamil reporters. Indeed, as RSF (Reporters Sans Frontiers) stated in 2002: "Working conditions for Tamil journalists remain very dangerous, especially when they report on human rights violations; they are easily accused of supporting the Tamil Tigers"[7]

Our seventh chapter is entitled 'the research findings' and contains the results of the field research undertaken within a period of three months. After justifying the research focus, as explained in detail in chapter five on methodology, chapter seven describes the findings of the two types of analysis undertaken by the researcher with the help of a Tamil undergraduate student. Briefly, the first part of chapter seven, discusses the content analysis, while the second part discusses the frame analysis, which had a more qualitative focus. One of the major highlights of the chapter,

[7] Reporters Sans Frontiers, (2002).

especially of its second part, is the description of the signature matrix, its applicability to the media analysis of Sri Lanka, and its uncovering of metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases and depictions used by journalists to frame certain topics. In other words these condensational symbols help journalists to include and highlight some information, while excluding information that is not in keeping with the ideology of the owner of their newspaper. It was further stated that understanding the concept of framing is important, because media frames do not simply include some issues and events rather than others, they also, as Entman says, 'define problems... diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies.'

Among the major findings of chapter seven is the media's negative role in the 2002 Peace Process which appears to be linked to sensationalism and a lack of consensus among the main Sinhalese political parties in the south. The analysis of the editorials in the three papers further showed that all the newspapers cited only government and official sources. Lack of shared media to foster communal and ethnic harmony in Sri Lanka, the prevalence of three main frames of "*Peace and Conflict resolution frame*," "*Law and Order frame* " and two versions of the "*Injustice and Defiance frame,"* were among the other major findings. As we explained in chapter seven, the researcher found that the various versions of these three frames had cultural and historical roots and therefore had a resonance among the Sri Lankan public. The willingness, or tendency shown by the media in Sri Lanka, to frame the conflict based on such cultural and historical frames shows what has been observed by Gamson and Lasch: that news is packaged (framed) in accordance with the beliefs, myths, stories, folk tales and imagery that coincide with the dominant culture of a society. The findings showed also that only the Tamil paper *Virakesari* often covered matters like

localized hardships faced by internally displaced Tamil people, difficulties faced by Tamils due to security measures in Colombo and elsewhere, naval attacks on Tamil fishermen, the problems of people living in the high security zone in Jaffna and so on. These concerns of a large part of the Tamil minority were rarely covered in the Sinhala language press and when they were, with less emphasis. On the whole the Sinhala-nationalist discourses saying that the Peace Process of 2002 had weakened national security and undermined sovereignty and rewarded terrorism were prominently reflected in the Sinhala language newspaper *Divaina* and also in *Lankadeepa*, replacing the initial support for the ceasefire and the peace process shown when Peace Process 2002 began.

In conclusion, the above discussion has highlighted the ways in which the historical background coupled with religion and political context surrounding the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict, continue to exert important constructionist impacts on the sampled editorial opinion on that conflict. The following discussion extends this constructivist and contextual focus further highlighting the primary findings that emerged from this exploratory study of the 2002 Peace Process and its editorial coverage.

8.3 Key Findings and their Implications

First of all, this case study of the editorial coverage of the 2002 Peace Process in Sri Lanka's national press suggests that serious challenges confront us in promoting peace in Sri Lanka. One of the major findings of this thesis is that Sri Lanka's public, political and media discourses on the conflict and peace need to be understood within

the wider context supplied by the history of strained Sinhalese/Tamil relations. Applying the frame theory popularized by Gamson and Wolfsfeld, the researcher was intrigued to find that the most commonly used three frames: *Peace* and *Conflict Resolution*; *Law* and *Order* and two versions of *Injustice* and *Defiance* frames, stretch back to 1948, the time of independence, and therefore media seems to understand the conflict in relation to historical, political, cultural and ideological functions and frameworks. The Implications are such that whether a journalist is Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim or Burger they are influenced by their own cultural background, for this reason their perspectives are highly ethnocentric. Therefore this thesis confirms that news is not objective or neutral, but socially constructed and packaged in accordance with the beliefs, myths, stories, folktales and imagery that coincide with the dominant culture of a society.

Among the key finding of the whole thesis is the important but negative role the national media has played in the conflict in Sri Lanka. It further confirms Wolfsfeld's previous research findings that, due to the intrinsic relationship of media and unstable politics, the media has played a negative role in all the peace processes negotiated so far. It will be interesting to undertake a frame analysis on the previous peace attempts and the role of the press including the radio and television. It has deep implications for other developing countries as well as Sri Lanka. As many observers have said, the country's future depends very much on a solution to the conflict being found at a political level; investment, tourism and infrastructure development all depend on a certain level of tranquillity in the country.

As explained in the methodology chapter, the research questions that guided this thesis were:

1. Can evidence of framing be found in newspaper editorials of the Norwegian initiated 2002 Peace Process, based upon the presence of Gamson's framing devices?
2. What specific frames and media packages can be identified? Are the editorials sponsored and packaged by competing interest groups/political actors? Is the use of sources about the 2002 Peace Process in the three newspapers the same or different?
3. Do the "frames" vary between the same three newspapers?

In relation to the first question, this research found that each of the newspapers variously displayed the three frames identified by this research; namely, ***Peace and Conflict Resolution***, ***Law and Order*** **and** ***Injustice and Defiance frames.*** Thus, this finding constitutes clear evidence of the existence and practice of framing, as articulated by Gamson, within each of these newspapers' editorial discourses.

In relation to the second question, it was found that while each of the sampled newspapers variously displayed the three identified frames, there was no hard evidence to support the argument that these frames were sponsored, or packaged by competing interest groups, or political actors. However, Looking at these sources cited by various editorials in the three selected papers it can be said that almost all the papers had a similar trend in citing sources. Most parts of the editorials in *Daily News* and *Virakesari* were from the sources connected with the government in power, which

also represented a dovish approach in support of the 2002 Peace Process. All of the newspapers gave more attention to citing the government sources about the positive side of the Peace Process. As already indicated, some of these findings indicate the tendency of the media to give preference to the government sources, which has been documented by the scholars.

In relation to the third question, this research found that there were important differences in the framing trends displayed by each of the sampled newspapers. As the Sri Lankan conflict is a highly contested and protracted conflict, one would expect to find concrete evidence of contested frames within each of the sampled newspapers. In relation to the Sinhalese language newspaper, *Divaina,* it was concluded that 138 editorials displayed the *Law and Order frame*, 35 editorials displayed the *Peace and Conflict Resolution frame*, while 26 editorials displayed the *Injustice and Defiance frame*. The Tamil language newspaper, *Virakesari,* displayed the following framing trends. Only 5 editorials displayed the *Law and Order frame*, only 10 editorials displayed the *Injustice and Defiance frame*, while 123 editorials displayed the *Peace and Conflict Resolution frame*. Finally, in relation to the English language newspaper, *Daily News*, it was found that 176 of its editorials displayed the *Peace and Conflict Resolution frame*, 13 editorials displayed the *Law and Order frame*, while just 8 editorials displayed the *Injustice and Defiance frame.*

The main conclusion arrived at from this analysis was that, although the editorial discourses of the *Daily News* and *Virakesari* in general tended to present a dovish attitude towards the 2002 Peace Process, the Sinhalese newspaper *Divaina* tended to present a hawkish attitude. Reading further into the meanings of these general attitudes revealed that it is because the *Daily News* is the official news organ

of the government in power that it ordinarily tends to support governmental or official viewpoints regarding the 2002 Peace Process. On the other hand, only *Virakesari* seemed to represent the viewpoints and interests of the minority Tamils. The highest percentage of Law and Order frame in *Divaina* shows that it mainly represents the hegemonic view that LTTE is not a genuine partner for peace and it should be defeated militarily. This was also the attitude of the second mostly read Sinhalese paper *Lankadeepa*.

Taken together, the above findings regarding the framing trends displayed by the sampled newspapers' editorial discourses are reflective of the wider context within which they are generated; namely, the context supplied by the contested conflict that permeates the politico-social structure of Sri Lanka.

The above three frames identified by the researcher clearly brings out the origins, nature and character of the Sri Lankan conflict as contested by the two main protagonists and others. As mentioned in this thesis, the two protagonists' rationale for their actions generally falls within two frame works. As a main protagonist of the conflict the LTTE says it is spearheading an armed struggle for political independence for the Sri Lankan Tamils as a response to institutionalised racism and violence against the Tamil people by a Sinhala-dominated state. On the other hand, describing itself as a democracy, the Sri Lankan state denounces the LTTE's violence as a challenge to its authority, unity and territorial integrity. The three frames found in three newspapers, such as Peace and Conflict Resolution, Law and Order, Injustice and defiance represents in a way the above claims of the two main protagonists the LTTE and the state.

Therefore, the main findings of this research stipulate that the newspaper editorials discourses analyzed by this empirical study, mainly two Sinhalese language newspapers, were not solely interested in promoting Peace Process 2002, due to inherent news values of immediacy, drama, simplicity and ethnocentrism. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that peace activists and others in Sri Lanka should pay greater attention to influencing the media, particularly since media frequently frames important issues and events in 'slanted' ways that are destructive for peace initiatives. If properly used, this thesis argues that due also to the high literacy rate in Sri Lanka the media can be a key player in promoting peace, especially by encouraging the public to believe that a negotiated political solution, based on a peaceful and just end to the conflict is a more preferable and viable alternative to military policies that always results in costly conflict intensifications.

Looking at the major landmarks of the conflict and all the possible causes discussed in this thesis, it is correct to say that one of the root causes of the conflict in Sri Lanka is a failure to build a multi-ethnic State following independence in 1948. In addition to other factors regarding the media's role in the conflict, it seems clear that Sri Lanka's national media has failed in its role of socialization and education of the masses, and in promoting a multi- ethnic and pluralistic society. As mentioned by Richardson and Wang, the rarely cited work of Mao Tse Tung [8] *On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People* states that both the 'chauvinism of the majority' and the 'parochialism of the minority' are potentially divisive problems in multi ethnic-societies.

[8] Tse Tung Mao cited by John M. Richardson Jr. and Jianxin Wang, 173-198.

To remedy this, Mao Tse Tung proposes a multifold strategy that emphasizes equal participation, changing attitudes by promoting communication and mutual trust and economic development. These tasks can be performed easily with the help of the media and therefore they are challenges which the media in Sri Lanka have so far failed to meet. As already articulated in the conclusion of chapter three, from the perspective of development, journalism news is not only a commodity but it is a social good which can be harnessed as a resource for national development. If impartially used, news can be a valuable tool to educate the public on national integration and peace.

Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung had alternatively proposed peace journalism in the 1970s as a self conscious, working concept for journalists covering wars and conflicts (McGoldrick and Lynch[9]). Therefore, according to Galtung[10] by taking an advocacy, interpretive approach, the peace journalists ought to concentrate on stories that highlight peace initiatives and tone down ethnic and religious differences and so prevent further conflicts; focus on the structure of society; and promote conflict resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation.

Galtung[11] has further observed that originally traditional war journalism (which was identified by the researcher in his research-as the use of law and order frame in the Sinhalese newspapers *Divaina* and *Lankadeepa),* is modelled after sports journalism, with a focus on winning in a zero-sum game. Galtung compares his vision

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[9] Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick, eds., *Peace Journalism* (Gloucestershire (UK): Hawthorn Press, 2005).
[10] Johan Galtung, "High Road, low Road:Charting the course for peace journalism" *Track Two* 7 (1998): 7-10.
[11] *Ibid.*

of peace journalism to health journalism. Appropriately he says that a good health reporter describes a patient's battle against cancer and yet informs readers about the cancer's causes as well as the full range of cures and preventive measures. Lynch and McGoldrick[12] have described peace journalism as a "broader, fairer and more accurate way of framing stories, drawing on the insights of conflict analysis and transformation."

Elaborating further on his theme of peace journalism, Galtung says that the media generally follow the 'low road' in reporting conflict and chasing wars. In the low road pattern, the media sees a conflict as a battle, as a sports arena or gladiator circus. The parties, usually reduced to two, are combatants in a struggle to impose their goals. The reporting model is that of a military command which advances and capitulates short of its goals; losses are counted in terms of numbers killed or wounded and total material damage. This zero-sum perspective draws upon sports reporting where "winning is not everything, it is the only thing[13]." The same perspective is applied to negotiations as verbal battles: the person who outsmarts the other comes out closest to his original position. Unfortunately this kind of verbal battle was very much in the law and order theme frames found in the Sinhalese paper *Divaina* as well as in *Lankadeepa*.

However, according to Galtung there is no argument that violence should not be reported. The first victim in a war is not truth—truth is only the second victim. The first victim is, of course, peace. Good reporting low- or high road-should obviously be truthful, but truth journalism alone is not peace journalism. Moreover, truth does not

[12] Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick, *Peace Journalism,* 34-45.
[13] Johan Galtung, "High Road, low Road: Charting the course for peace journalism, 7-10.

come easily, given the tendency to take sides once the 'who wins' perspective has been adopted. If one side is backed by one's own country, nation, class or newspaper/station/channel, the low road invites untruthfulness, as witnessed in the Gulf, Somalian and Bosnian wars.

Therefore this research and previous studies already cited in the literature review speak of the urgent need for all the journalists in print as well as the broadcast media in Sri Lanka, to be better trained in the importance of peace journalism. Galtung's classification of war/peace/ journalism was expanded by McGoldrick and Lynch into 17 good practices in covering war. Their advice to journalists includes: focusing on solutions; reporting on long term effects; orientating the news on ordinary people; reporting on all sides, and using precise language. In the same vein, Maslog published a peace journalism manual based on the Mindanao conflict that clarifies differences between Muslims and Christians and, more importantly, their common grounds. One important piece of advice he gives concerns linguistic accuracy: "Rebels" should be identified as dissidents of a particular political grouping and not simply "Muslim rebels."

Because of the important relationship media has with politics it is strongly recommended that journalists in Sri Lanka should also be trained not only in journalism, but also in the social sciences. A few initiatives of this nature were taken in the past by a few universities in Sri Lanka to induce working journalists to register for the social science courses offered by them, but they were not fully successful due to various constraints. In the year 2003 the College of Journalism in Sri Lanka enrolled its first students (30 students, 10 each from the Sinhala, Tamil and English

language streams) for the one-year Diploma in Journalism. The course covers the basics of journalism, ethical reporting and conflict sensitive journalism training among others. It was established under the Sri Lanka Press Institute formed in 2003 with the broad objective of furthering democracy and independent thinking through the development of journalism and the integration of the newspaper industry. These are a few initiatives taken so far in the right direction.

It was highlighted in chapter six of the history of print media that there is hardly any shared media in Sri Lanka. The finding of this research points out that all Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim newspapers in the country cater only for their communities. As such there is little opportunity—or interest for that matter—to foster cross-ethnic debate or understanding (even in the Tamil-Muslim case). Because of this background, there is plenty of scope for misunderstanding and deliberate manipulation, not least given the surprising shortage of multilingual journalists, especially correspondents familiar with both the vernacular and English.

As was explained in this thesis, given the importance of shared media's potency to bring different ethnic communities together, the international community which has taken a major interest in bringing peace to Sri Lanka so far, could work further through their diplomatic missions and should see ways and means of supporting and encouraging existing media firms in this direction and in establishing further new media institutions to initiate a new culture in Sri Lanka that would foster ethnic harmony and not division. Supporting and strengthening more shared media, as explained by Wolfsfeld in this thesis, is highly necessary, due to the particular demography of the country, where the main ethnic groups are concentrated in two

entirely separated regions. This applies not only to the Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamils, but also to Indian Tamils and Muslims.

As further revealed in the 2001 census, of late a large number of Tamils have moved to the South, especially to Colombo, the capital; it is imperative that all Colombo-based major newspapers become sensitive to the feelings and aspirations of all minority groups in Sri Lanka. As was discussed in chapter six, since the national media continue to alienate minorities, especially from their Colombo-based headquarters, it is imperative for media institutions in Sri Lanka to become aware that they are also part of the system which continues to commit 'acts of structural violence' by excluding the information needs of the minorities and further isolating them from integrating into the country as a whole. The need to strengthen the shared media is further warranted, as was pointed out in the history of the Sinhala and Tamil press, since even in the early years of independence Sri Lankan Tamils were known for their higher rate of bilingual literacy, which enabled them to read newspapers in English. As was further noted in chapter seven on research findings, all the major newspaper publishing outlets are in Colombo and there are hardly any regional newspapers in the country. Therefore the opinions of the general public who live in the regional areas are not adequately represented. The content analysis of the editorials in the three selected newspapers revealed that all three usually cited only the views of government officials and the armed forces.

Another major finding of this thesis is that, since the country's constitution has become an obstacle in recognizing minority rights, an urgent need arises for more radical constitutional reforms and also of other institutions that affect public life. This

thesis also reveals that the highly centralized state is a hindrance to the recognition of minority civil rights and, further, it has increased the competition among ethnic groups to vie for political power at any cost to obtain the best possible bargain and for the national media to support political powers which reward them in various ways. It was noted especially in subsequent chapters that ever since colonial times, the media in Sri Lanka has being divided along ethnic lines, thus identifying with the country's political parties and agendas that promote individual religious identities.

It was pointed out in chapter two that Singapore and Malaysia which were economically far behind Sri Lanka before independence have become highly successful countries today due their ethnic integration. Maybe it is time for Sri Lanka to seek advice from one of these countries instead of relying solely on western countries. This approach is in keeping with Lederach who pointed out, within the social constructionist perspective, the importance of using appropriate local models to manage conflicts. The models ought to be based and rooted in the cultural knowledge of people in the country where the conflicts take place. For this reason, it would seem that South and East Asian models can be more easily integrated with the existing cultural models of conflict handling. All the approaches used so far in Sri Lanka seem to indicate that most of them are top down models and these are much discouraged by the perspectives of development journalism.

There is also a need to evaluate the previous peace process and to learn from the mistakes of the past as Rupesinghe[14] has reiterated again and again in his timely and scholarly writings.

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[14] Kumar Rupesinghe, "Introduction: Evaluating the Peace Process" in *Negotiating Peace in SriLanka :Efforts, Failures & Lessons* vol 2" ed. Kumar Rupesinghe, xiii-lxvii(Colombo: Foundation for Co-Existence, 2006).

This thesis has argued that due to the media's strong link with politics it has exceptional power to bring about peace or dissent among the people. Instead of over-emphasizing the influence of a glorious past on the major ethnic and religious sentiments of the majority, the national media ought to point out, and make people aware of, the real causes of the conflict, which were explicated especially in chapter two as political, social and economic issues which have not been solved.

The editorial analysis of the 2002 Peace Process further revealed that. in general, the Sinhala newspapers' suspicion and hostility toward the LTTE continues undiminished and have deeply coloured coverage and analysis of the peace process. However, it was also observed that the Tamil paper *Virakesari* was for some reason more cautious and, in general, did not question and sometimes seemed to defend the LTTE's bona fides. It could be said, that in comparison with the negotiating positions adopted by the LTTE and the government, the Tamil newspaper *Virakesari* seems to echo the LTTE positions without questioning, while the Sinhala press seems to broadly reflect the government's and the military's stances on issues in contention.

As was further argued in this research, the media frame research tradition, along with propaganda, hegemonic and political control perspectives offer highly useful conceptual tools for this type of social constructivist media analysis to explain the media behaviour in Sri Lanka. Therefore, frame analysis undertaken by this research also showed how some of the uncovered frames and different versions were present in the early stages of the formation of the national press in Sri Lanka and how they were also capable of inspiring both the Sinhalese and Tamils for collective action

against perceived injustices. All the findings of this thesis point to the tremendous power that the media holds in its hands. Therefore this thesis argues that it is imperative for all those who want to end the conflict and usher in peace to consider the country's vernacular media. The power media has at its disposal gives a valuable insight into why journalists are being kidnapped, threatened and murdered.

Another interesting finding is the applicability of media environment that exists in Israel and Palestine. When comparing the research done by Tamara Liebes,[15] and more especially by Wolfsfeld et al.[16] with the media content of national newspapers in Sri Lanka, it is sad to notice that an identical or similar situation exists also in Sri Lanka.

One implication of the power of the media to support war or peace efforts is that Sri Lanka would need an independent press commission to monitor the content of the media that tends to damage trust, peace and harmony and to foster hatred, and suspicion between the majority and the minorities of the country.

Given the negative ole that national media have played in the conflict in Sri Lanka up to now, this research points out that the task and responsibility confronting the media in Sri Lanka is immense. As was stated in the chapter entitled history of print media in Sri Lanka, a highly ethnicized and majoritarian-biased media is also somewhat responsible for the breakdown of trust between Sinhalese and Tamils. In

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[15] Tamar Liebes, *Reporting the Arab Israeli Conflict: How hegemony works* (London :Routledge, 1997).

[16] Gadi Wolfsfeld, Frosh Paul and Maurice Awabdy "Journalistic Mechanisms for Covering Death in Violent Conflcts:News About the Second Intifada on Israeli, Palestinian, and Al-Jazeera Television" (paper presented at the annual meeting of International Communication Association, Sheraton New York City,".http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p12178-index.html.

addition, the population has, over the years, become polarized into relatively clearly defined ethnic groups, who speak two entirely different languages, go to different schools, know little about each other's religions and receive different media reports.

As stated by Orjuela[17], since there is a deep divide in Sri Lanka between the understanding of the present conflict as 'terrorism' and as 'a liberation struggle of a suppressed nation,' the national media in Sri Lanka has a big responsibility to promote awareness campaigns with more objective reporting and without stereotypes and to create space for encouraging people to meet the 'ethnic other.'

Since Sri Lanka does not as yet have a vibrant civil society which acts as a kind of intermediary to point out various human right violations committed by various parties, including the government, the national media is also being called upon to fulfil the work that would normally be performed by civil society. Although establishing a strong civil society without ethnic biases is an immediate need, it is suggested that until it is formed, the national media could undertake some of the work carried out by civil societies in other countries. Given the current state of affairs in Sri Lanka, this necessarily includes promoting a strong peace constituency which could be a voice for a change of public attitudes conducive to peace as well as mobilizing people to influence and persuade politicians to end the war.

In this regard, Orjuela states that peace rallies organized by a network of People's Peace Front, backed by around 60 organizations in December 2002 drew only between 500 and 1000 participants from various parts of the island, while

[17] Camilla Orjuela, "Building Peace in Sri Lanka: A Role for Civil Society," *Journal of Peace Research* 40 2 (2003).195-212.

political rallies during the same period attracted tens of thousands of participants. Therefore the implications are, that given the lack of a vibrant civil society in Sri Lanka which could provide popular support for peace and promote dialogue and reconciliation between polarized groups such as these envisaged by DAC,[18] Lederach[19] Rupasinghe,[20] media need to be the forum of the public sphere for dialogue between the public and the government as a guardian of democracy. As further stated by Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse[21], it is imperative to note that peace cannot be sustained at a top level alone. Multi-track diplomacy makes a Peace Process more likely to succeed and popular involvement renders a final 'peace' more likely to be sustainable. Therefore it is politics and the media that hold the key to a successful Peace Process.

As stated by Goodhand, Lewer and Hulme[22], normally fear and violence in war zones discourage the taking up of leadership roles in civil organizations; it is the responsibility of the media, as indicated above, that news should not only be seen as a commodity but as a social good which can be harnessed as a resource for national development.

After highlighting the media as the key to unlocking peace or war, given the lack of vibrant institutions and especially of a strong civil society that could support a peace initiative as part of the multi-track diplomacy, media in Sri Lanka could create

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[18] DAC, "Dac Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation," (Paris: DAC/OECD, 1997).37

[19] John Paul Lederach, "Building Peace," in *Structure: Lenses for the Big Picture*, ed. John Paul Lederach, 37-61(Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997).

[20] Rupesinghe, " Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures & Lessons" vol.2, xiii-lxii.

[21] Tom Woodhouse, Huge Miall and Oliver Ramsbotham, eds., *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

[22] Nick Lewer, David Hulme and Jonathan Goodhand, *NGOS and Peace Building: Sri Lanka Study* (Bradford Department of Peace Studies, 1999), 21.

space for the following actions, some of which are envisaged by Orjuela as part of a role that should be played by civil society but could be implemented to some extent by the national newspapers in Sri Lanka until a strong civil society is formed. What is significant about these actions is that most are bottom-up activities not top-down.

- Increase the space for dialogue and better conflict resolution mechanisms, and prevent the spread of conflict by avoiding sensational stories.
- Build a peace constituency, which will become aware and support peace initiatives, educating and mobilizing the public to vote for peace at elections, and encouraging them to abstain from supporting or mobilizing for violence.
- Increase awareness of peace among the general public and the importance of compromise and of a give and take attitude.
- Increase pressure on political leaders to work for de-escalation, peace negotiations, and political and constitutional reform.
- Decrease and monitor prejudices between ethnic groups, stop vilifying the enemy, obtain a better understanding of how the other side views the situation.
- Lobby and make the general public aware of the importance of inviting international actors to put pressure on the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to act for peace.
- Make the general public aware of the background, cost and possible solution to the conflict.
- Promote an awareness campaign to highlight the conflict and human rights abuses in Sri Lanka and bring those to the attention of the international community.

- Create space for dialogue between actors with different perspectives, conveying messages and views from the other side and discussing possible future solutions.

All these initiatives could undoubtedly contribute positively to conflict transformation. Instead of playing and ethnicizing the conflict, most importantly the national media in Sri Lanka should really create space for pin-pointing economic, political and cultural deprivations and grievances of the minority that have provoked rebellion against the state. Given the very high rate of adult literacy in South Asia combined with a higher percentage of readership and viewership as explained in the second chapter of this thesis, it is easier to implement some of these conditions and practical suggestions.

As noted in the methodology, editorials from the Sinhalese paper *Divaina* and the Tamil paper *Virakesari* were first translated into English and therefore it is important in future frame research to translate Sinhala and Tamil words or key vernacular phrases in exact connotations to bring out the same original meaning employed by the vernacular writers. As was done in this research, very often word by word translations may not bring out the exact cultural connotations. Though the accuracy of the translations was assumed, this could be easily overcome by doing the frame analysis in vernacular and writing the findings also in the vernacular in future and perhaps also obtaining the help of official translators.

In order to supplement the content and frame analysis, it is recommended by Gamson and Wolfsfeld to conduct interviews also with the journalists and owners of

the various media institutions so that findings can be further compared, and, if necessary, cross-checked, to learn whether there are major disparities. Since this was the first time, according to the researcher's knowledge, an analysis was done on editorials of three entirely different language papers at the same time, extending to a sixteen month period on the same topic. Due to various constraints interviews with journalists were not undertaken in this research. It is recommended that in future research, interviews and focus group discussions, along with administering of questionnaires in three different languages should be undertaken.

A future interesting challenge might be to compare the results from this study to press reporting of the previous peace attempts between 1956 and 2001. This could also be extended to radio and Television. Moreover this study could be expanded into an agenda-setting study of the media where public opinion poll data could be brought in for a more multidimensional frame analysis where one could elaborate not only on what was said by the media about peace, and the national problem, but also how it was interpreted by the public. By bringing the public factor into this analysis one could promote a whole new discussion not only about the power of the media, but also the public's perception of the media messages.

As indicated in the second chapter, based on the Knowledge Attitude survey (KAPS) conducted by Social Indicator[23] in Sri Lanka, television is the principal source of news for 57 per cent of the population, followed by newspapers at 18 per cent, radio at 18 per cent and other sources at less than 10 per cent. This survey revealed that levels of interest in politics are highest among newspaper readers with

[23] Sunanda Deshapriya, "A Study of Media in Sri Lanka (Excluding the North and East)" http://www.i-m-s.dk/Media/PDF/CPA%20South%20Survey%20FINAL%20(May2005).

60.7 per cent showing high interest or some interest, followed by radio listeners at 48.2 per cent. Television viewers show the lowest level of interest in politics. Therefore editorial analysis of the national press may not fully explain to what extent the public attitude is influenced by the editorial framing of the Peace Process 2002. Therefore, studies on the impact on the public by different types of media even in the previous Peace Process should also be undertaken in future.

Since this explorative case study is an in-depth analysis about editorials of selected newspapers, in future frame analysis could also extend to other news items, such as headlines, front page news, photographs, feature articles and letters to the editor pages and also to concentrate on cross-comparative analysis between different societies in the region burdened with different types of conflicts.

It also suggested that, instead of conducting frame analysis manually which is a very tedious and time consuming procedure, for the future research in these directions researchers use appropriate software. It is known that a wide variety of software is available for qualitative and quantitative news analysis today. According to the excellent website put up by the department of social sciences of Loughborough university,[24] at present two main types of programs for textual analyses exist: (1) Software that searches, organizes, and annotates textual and sometimes multimedia data for further (qualitative and/or quantitative) analysis. According to the same website, programs of this type are frequently subsumed under the acronym *CAQDAS* ("Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software"). The said website distinguishes between three types of these programs known as, (a) CAQDAS proper,

[24] Loughborough University "Software for News Analysis," (Department of Social Sciences University of Loughborough, 2006), research/methods/research/software/index-old.html.old>.

(b) Quasi-CAQDAS, (c) Video/Audio code and retrieve programs. (2) Programs that enable quantitative analysis of textual data. According to Hogeenraad, Mckenzie & Peladeau[25] two principal methods for analyses can be distinguished, such as (a) software that computes text statistics and concordances, (b) applications that perform (mainly quantitative) dictionary-based content analyses.

Based on the entire thesis, this chapter has tried to explore how the formidable power of media has often been used to help resolve rather than inflame conflicts as it has done in Sri Lanka. Accepting the frames as indicators of a culture's central belief system, this thesis as a whole argues that the news media do not remain passive carriers of messages and stories; rather they determine what is important through selection, emphasis and presentation. In the present age of instant digital communication, surely there can be a pro-active deployment of all forms of communication, including news media, to help the complex process of conflict management and transformation to peaceful, liberal democracies.

Finally, given the paucity of academic literature on the role of media in peace, especially in Asian countries, it is hoped that this study might challenge other researchers to undertake a similar type of frame analysis in their own settings and to compare them with the role of national media in peace especially when conflicts are fought among the ethnic groups.

[25] Robert Hogenraad, Dean P. McKenzie and Normand Peladeau, "Force and Influence in Content Analysis: The Production of New Social Knowledge," *Quality and Quantity* 37, 3 (2003): 221-238.

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Circulation Details of Local Publications

English Daily Publications

Publication	Circulation	
Daily News	-157,000	ANCL
Daily Mirror	- 45,000	Wijaya News Papers LTd.
Daily Island	- 62,000	Upali Group

English Weekend Publications

Publication	Circulation	
Sunday Observer	-260,000	ANCL
Sunday Times	- 85,000	Wijaya News Papers LTd.
Sunday Island	- 91,000	Upali Group

Sinhala Daily Publications

Publication	Circulation	
Daily Lankadeepa	-120,000	Wijaya News Papers LTd
Daily Divaina	- 176,000	Upali Group
Dinamina	- 90,000	**ANCL**

Sinhala Weekend Publications

Publication	Circulation	
Sunday Lankadeepa	-275,000	Wijaya News Papers LTd
Sunday Silumina	-300,000	ANCL
Sunday Divaina	-308,000	Upali Group

Tamill Daily Publications

Publication	Circulation	
Daily Thinakaran	- 47,000	ANCL
Daily Weerakesary	- 64,000	Express Newspapers

Tamill Weekend Publications

Publication	Circulation	
Sunday Weerekesary	- 102,000	Express Newspapers
Sunday Thinakaran	- 60,000	ANCL
Sunday Thinakural	- 90,000	Thinakural Publications

Senaka Perera
Director
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APPENDIX 2

Thematic Analysis

Following the method used by (Gamson, 1992 on page 196) for sampling media discourses, the following procedure was used. As stated by Gamson[1], media samples represent two different modalities: news accounts and explicit commentary. The accounts tell a story and frame the information presented, particularly in the headings, leads and closings. Numerous interpretive comments are sprinkled throughout the accounts in the form of quotations from sources or excerpts from interviews.

Therefore for the content and frame analysis, first all the editorials in *Daily News*, *Divaina* and *Virekesari* that dealt with the 2002 peace process and key events surrounding the peace process were selected. The following observable themes on the 2002 Process and related events were identified and coded.

The key themes were:

1.Editorials starting from 1st December 2001 that dealt with the General election and the position of the various political parties on the conflict and peace in Sri Lanka.

2.Editorials that commented on the role of India in the conflict and peace in Sri Lanka.

3. Editorials that commented on a so-called secret pact between UNP, the main opposition party and the LTTE leader.

4. Editorials that commented on Norway and its role in Sri Lanka.

5. Editorials that spoke about the conflict and need for peace in Sri Lanka.

6.Editorials that commented on the MoU and the peace process in Sri Lanka.

[1] W.A.Gamson, *Talking Politics*.196.

7.Editorials that commented on the six rounds of talks held in: 1. September 16-18, 2002: Sattahip Naval Base, Chonburi, Thailand; 2. October 31-November 3, 2002: Rose Garden Hotel, Nakhorn Pathom, Thailand; 3. December 2-5, 2002: Radisson SAS Plaza Hotel, Oslo, Norway; 4. January 6-9, 2003: Rose Garden Hotel, Nakhorn Pathom, Thailand 5. February 7-8, 2003: Norwegian Embassy, Nordic Embassy Complex and Berlin, Germany 6. March 18-21, 2003, Prince Hotel, Hakone, Japan between the LTTE and the newly elected UNF government.

8. Editorials that spoke about ceasefire violations of the LTTE such as abductions, child soldiers and Tax collections and suicide bombs believed to be from the LTTE.

9.Editorials that commented on the peace dividends experienced throughout the country.

10. Editorials that spoke on various foreign leaders expressing their views on the peace process or MoU.

11.Editorials that commented on Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's statements about the peace process.

12. Editorials that commented on President Chandrika Kumaratunga's statements about the peace process.

13.Editorials that commented on the position of various government ministers and opposition Parliament members about the peace process.

14. Editorials that spoke on the plight of the displaced people or the human right violations by various parties in the country including the government armed forces.

15. Editorials that spoke on the military high security zones

16. Editorials that spoke on the LTTE's withdrawal from Norwegian brokered negotiations in April 2003.

17. Editorials that spoke on the LTTE's October 2003 proposals for an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA).

18. Editorials that spoke on the Participation of Tamil residents in the north and east in the December elections.

19. Editorials that spoke on the Press releases from the LTTE.

20.Editorials that spoke on the press releases from the peace Secretraight.

Substantial care was taken not to miss any editorials that spoke about the above themes during the 16th month period selected for this research.

Measurement

The first quantitative measurement used for the editorial to be in the sample was the prominence of an issue related to above themes. Frames were identified as visible if they appeared at least 10 times in each of the newspapers.

After identifying the various thematic positions that appeared frequently during the 16th month period, with the help of a trained compiler, the researcher compiled them under various main themes. Once the main themes were identified they were

scrutinized using the coding sheets and summarized under various frame elements based on the definitions used by Johnson-Cartee[2].

[2] K. Johnson-Cartee, *News Narratives and News Framing: Constructing Political Reality*.

APPENDIX 3

1.Newspaper ID. ----------
2.Date ----------
3.Location ----------
4.Format ----------
5.Narrative Structure/Style ----------
6.Length-(Paragraphs) ----------
7.Prominence ----------
8.Unit Source : ----------

9. Topic(s) present in the editorial ----------
1. ----------
2.----------
3----------

10. Sources quoted, (directly or indirectly), or paraphrased:
1.----------
2.----------
3.----------

11.Central argument(s) or thematic position(s) of Source(s)' assertions ?
1.----------
2.----------
3.----------

12. Frame (s) or frame component(s) Displayed ----------
13. Central argument(s) or thematic position (s) displayed prominently
1.----------
2.----------
3.----------

14.Central argument(s) or thematic position(s) displayed secondarily/referentially
1.----------
2.----------
3.----------

15. Framing of Symbolic Devices displayed/suggested;

1. Metaphors:----------
2. Historical Exemplars:----------
   ----
3. Catchphrases:----------
   ----
4. Depictions:----------
5. Visual images/headlines or Icons:----------

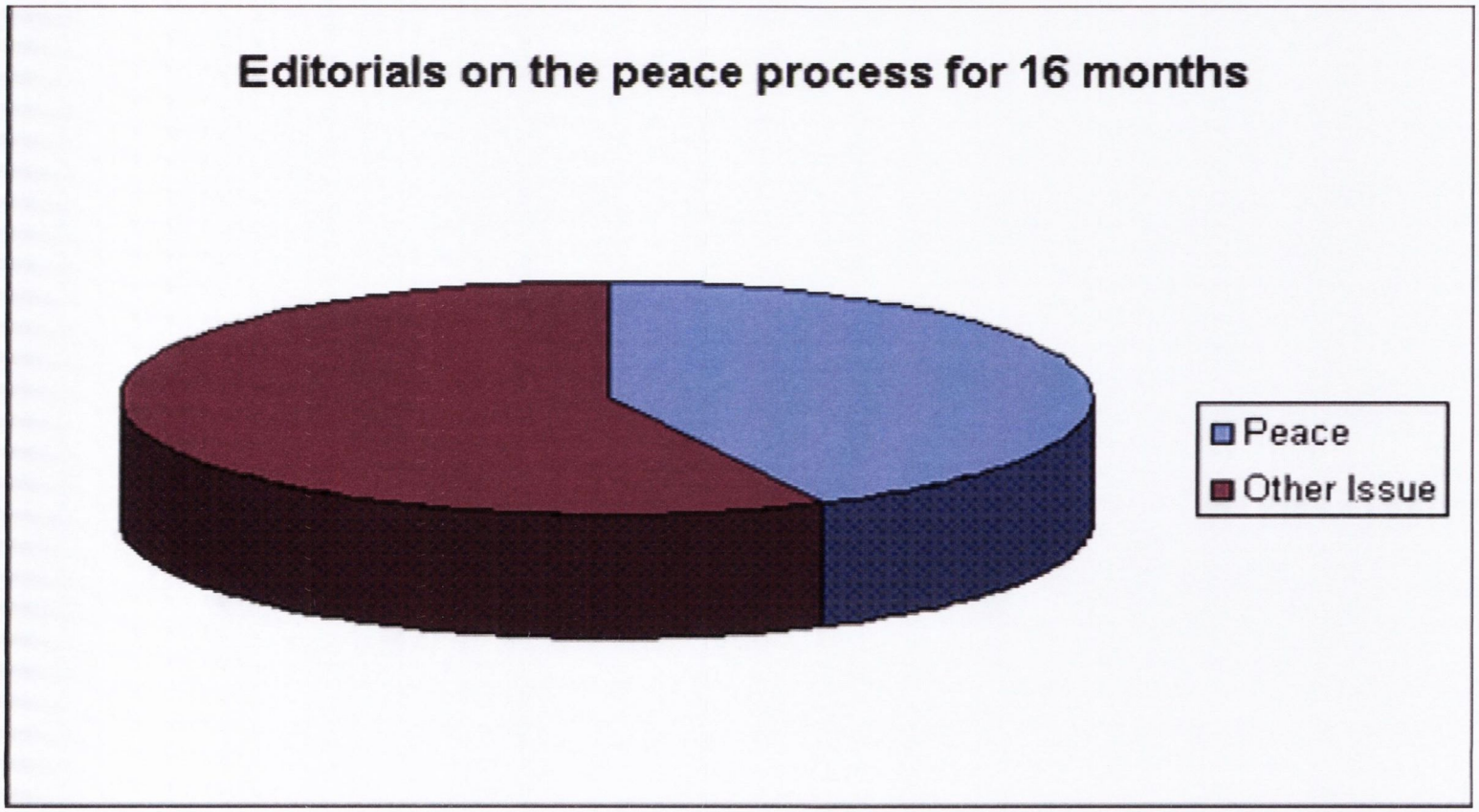
16. Reasoning or Argumentative Devices displayed/suggested

1 Conflict's Roots/origins/causes:----------
   ----
2 Conflict's Consequences/outcomes/solutions:----------
   ----
3 Appeals to principle, or ideological positions:----------

This coding sheet was developed with the help of Mary O' Regan.

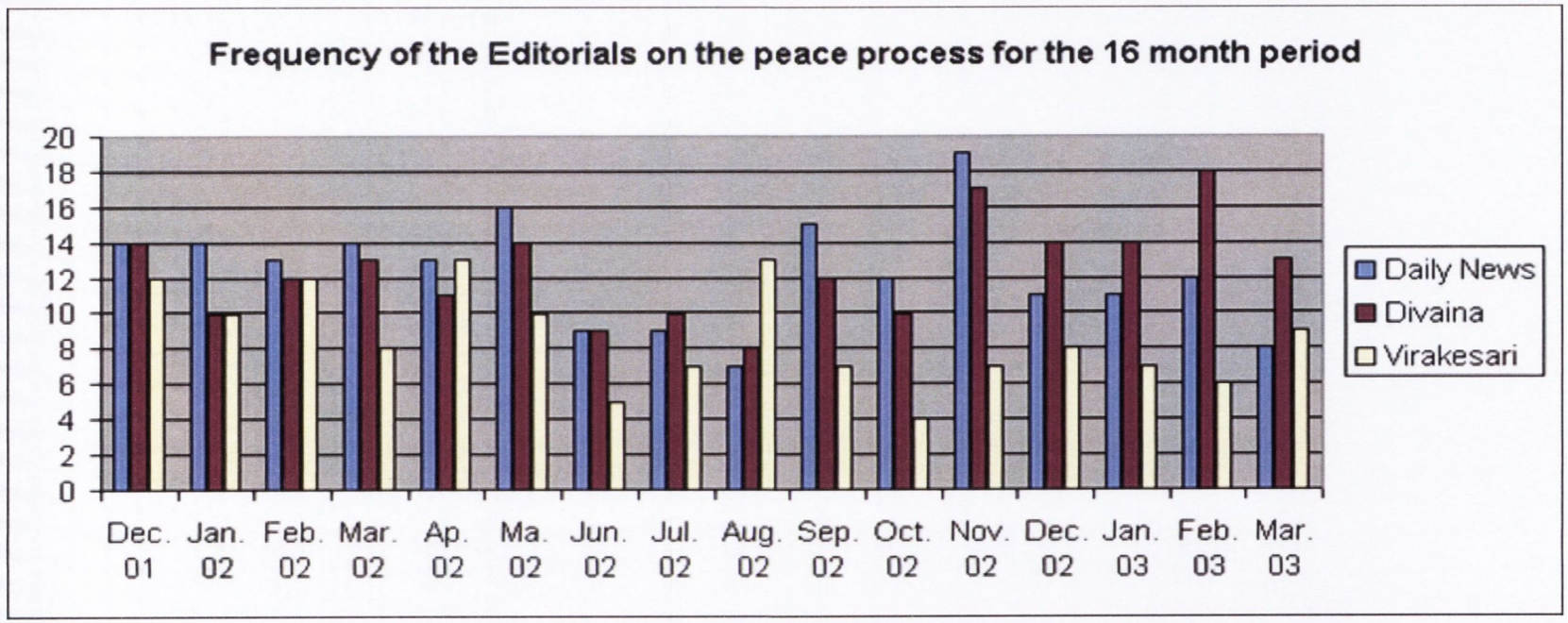
APPENDIX 4
Figure 1

Topics	Editorials
Peace	534
Other Issue	717



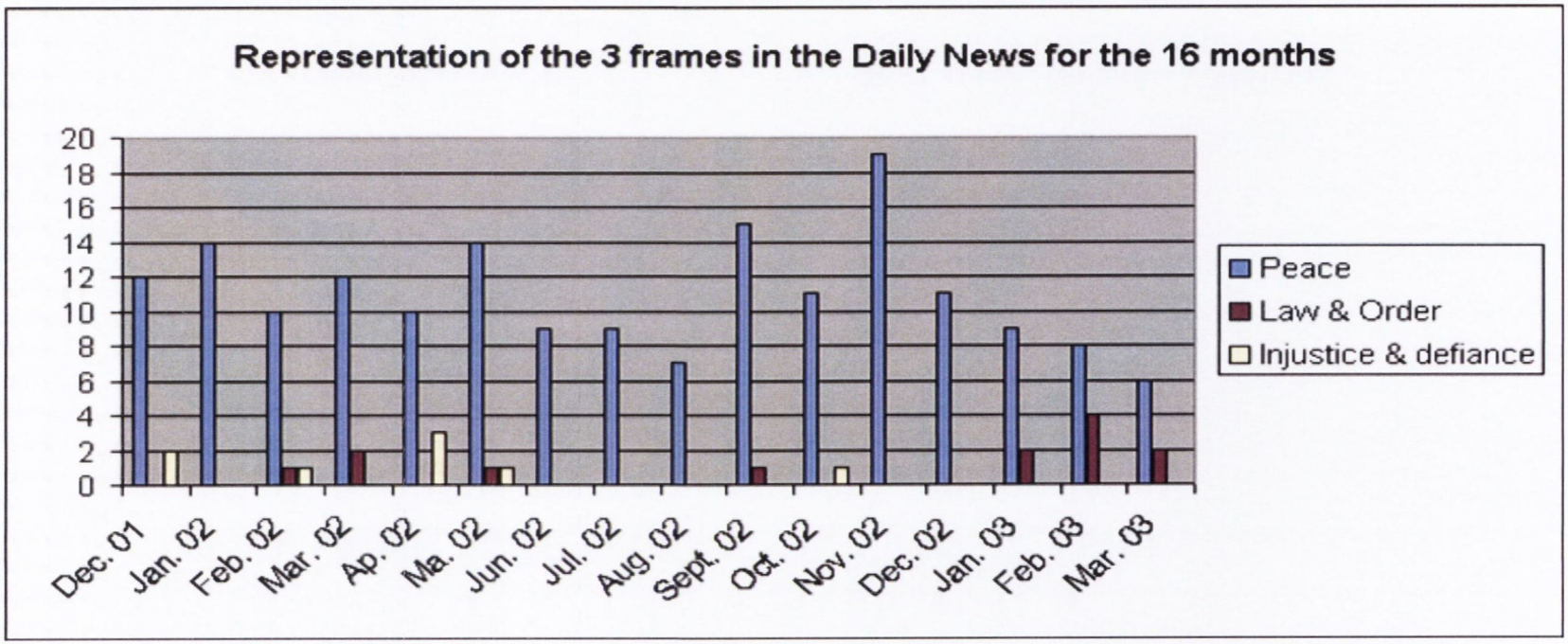
APPENDIX 5
Figure 2

	Dec. 01	Jan. 02	Feb. 02	Mar. 02	Ap. 02	Ma. 02	Jun. 02	Jul. 02	Aug. 02	Sep. 02	Oct. 02	Nov. 02	Dec. 02	Jan. 03	Feb. 03	Mar. 03	Total
Daily News	14	14	13	14	13	16	9	9	7	15	12	19	11	11	12	8	197
Divaina	14	10	12	13	11	14	9	10	8	12	10	17	14	14	18	13	199
Virakesari	12	10	12	8	13	10	5	7	13	7	4	7	8	7	6	9	138



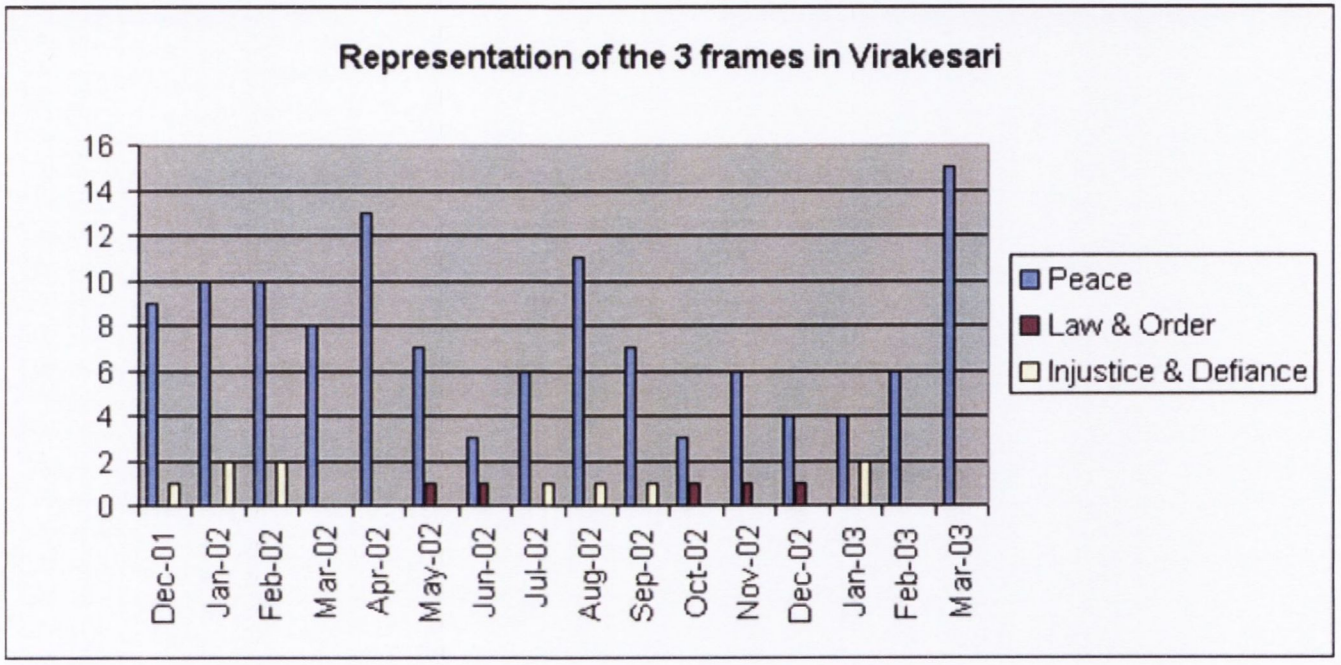
APPENDIX 6
Figure 3

	Dec. 01	Jan. 02	Feb. 02	Mar. 02	Ap. 02	Ma. 02	Jun. 02	Jul. 02	Aug. 02	Sept. 02	Oct. 02	Nov. 02	Dec. 02	Jan. 03	Feb. 03	Mar. 03	Total
Peace	12	14	10	12	10	14	9	9	7	15	11	19	11	9	8	6	176
Law & Order	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4	2	13
Injustice & defiance	2	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8



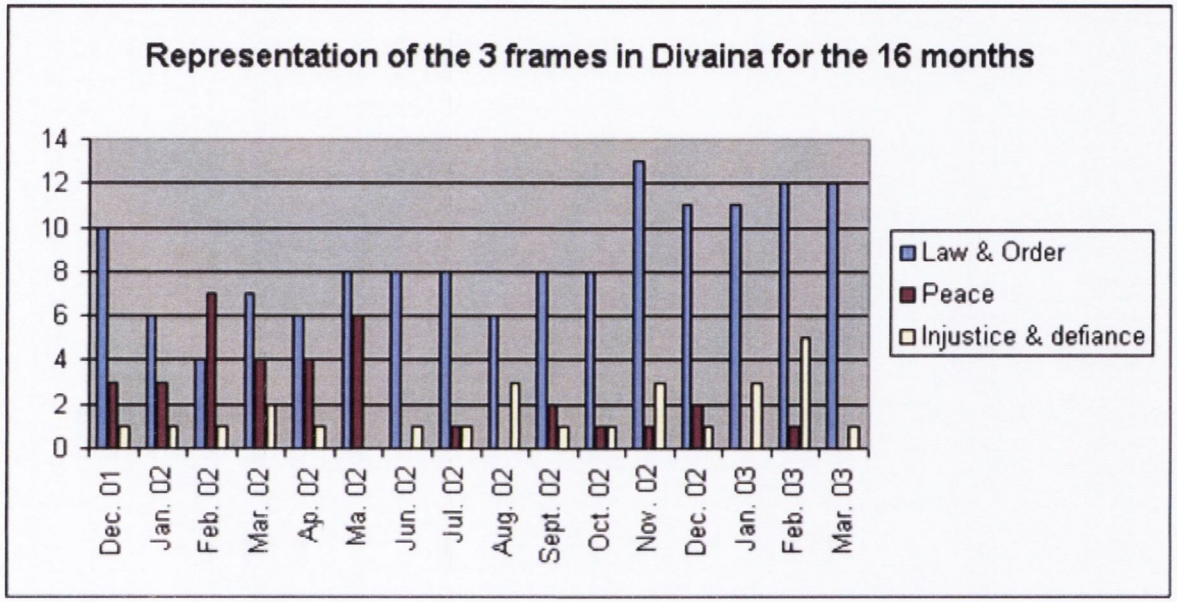
APPENDIX 7
Figure 4

	Dec-01	Jan-02	Feb-02	Mar-02	Apr-02	May-02	Jun-02	Jul-02	Aug-02	Sep-02	Oct-02	Nov-02	Dec-02	Jan-03	Feb-03	Mar-03	Total
Peace	9	10	10	8	13	7	3	6	11	7	3	6	4	4	6	15	123
Law & Order	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	5
Injustice & Defiance	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	10
																	138



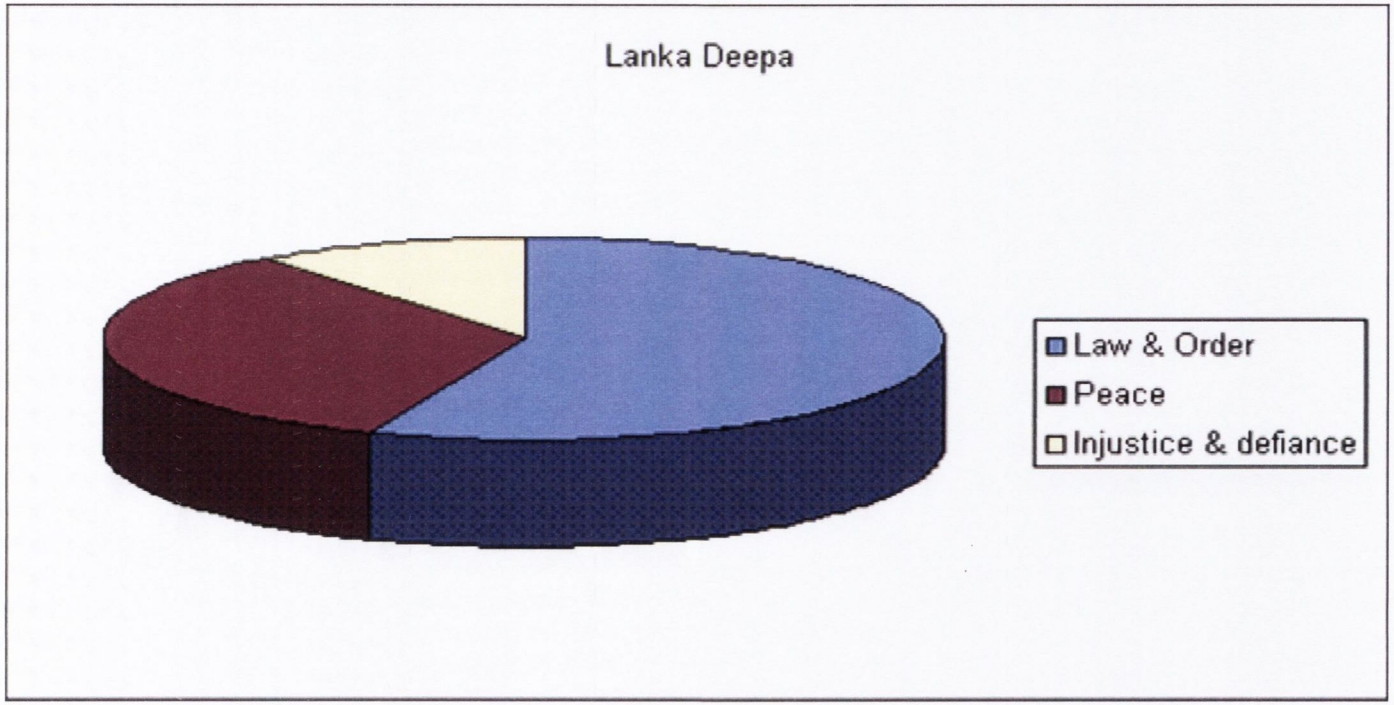
APPENDIX 8
Figure 5

	Dec. 01	Jan. 02	Feb. 02	Mar. 02	Ap. 02	Ma. 02	Jun. 02	Jul. 02	Aug. 02	Sept. 02	Oct. 02	Nov. 02	Dec. 02	Jan. 03	Feb. 03	Mar. 03	Total
Law & Order	10	6	4	7	6	8	8	8	6	8	8	13	11	11	12	12	138
Peace	3	3	7	4	4	6	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	0	1	0	35
Injustice & defiance	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	3	5	1	26



APPENDIX 9
Figure 6

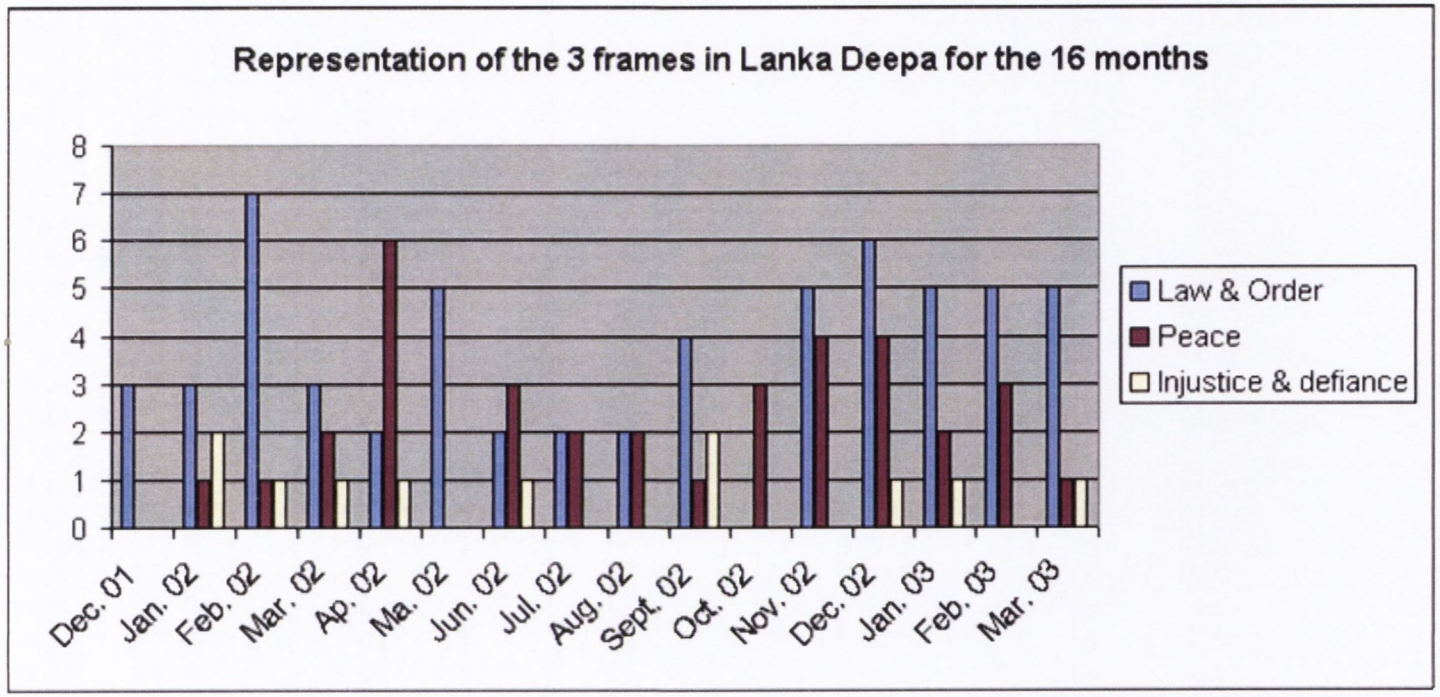
Topics	Lanka Deepa
Law & Order	59
Peace	35
Injustice & defiance	11



APPENDIX 10

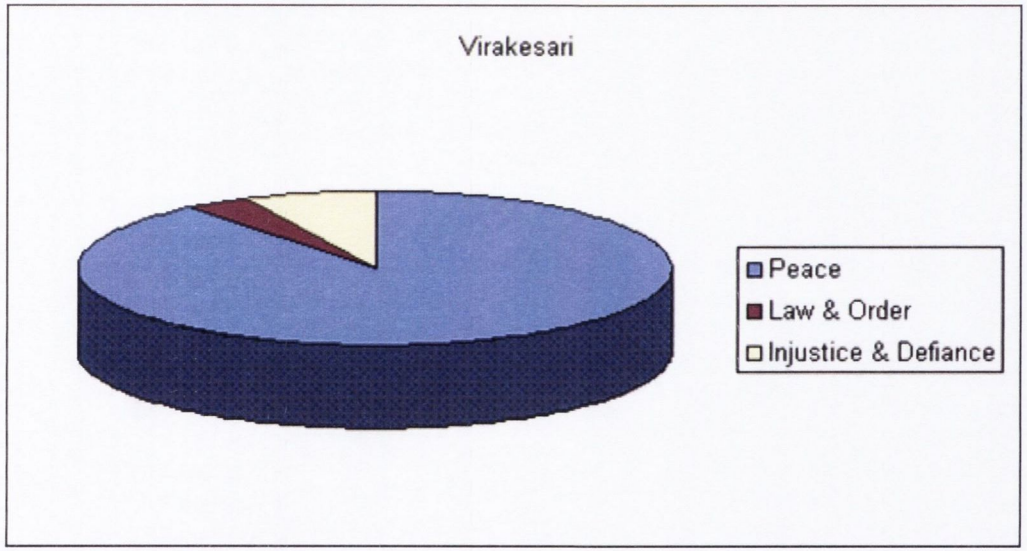
Figure 7

	Dec. 01	Jan. 02	Feb. 02	Mar. 02	Ap. 02	Ma. 02	Jun. 02	Jul. 02	Aug. 02	Sept. 02	Oct. 02	Nov. 02	Dec. 02	Jan. 03	Feb. 03	Mar. 03	Total
Law & Order	3	3	7	3	2	5	2	2	2	4	0	5	6	5	5	5	59
Peace	0	1	1	2	6	0	3	2	2	1	3	4	4	2	3	1	35
Injustice & defiance	0	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	11



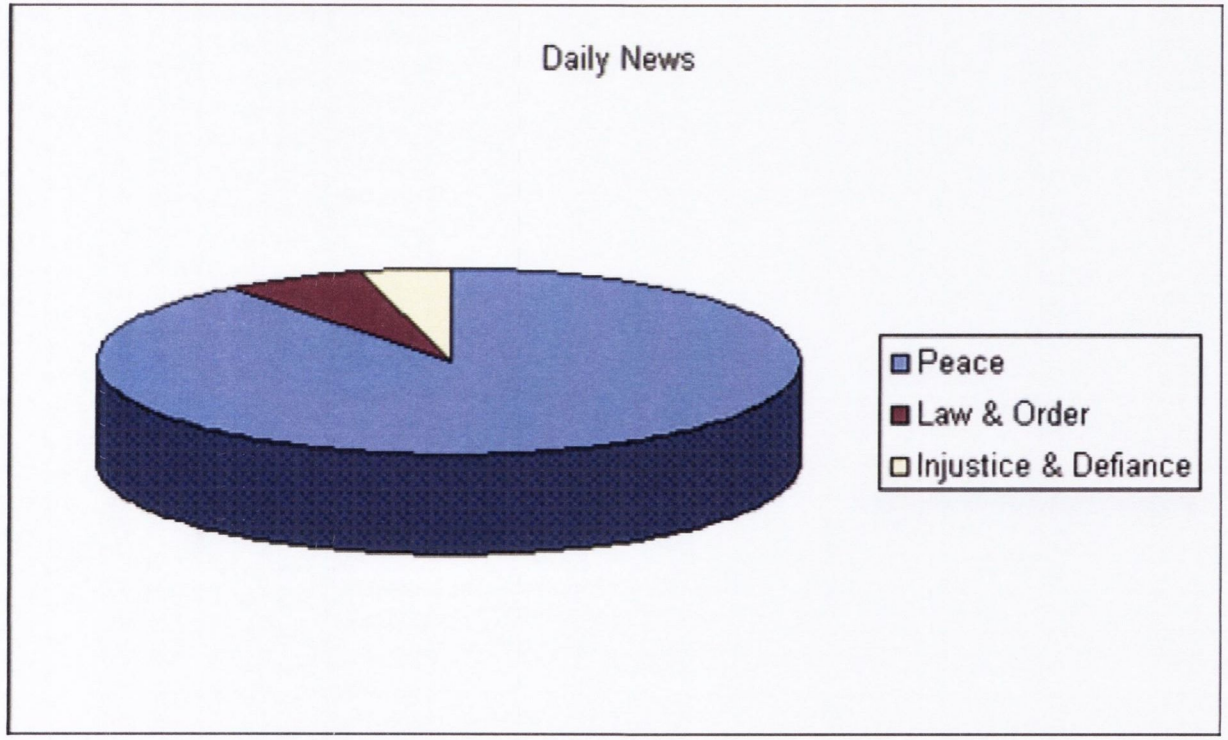
APPENDIX 11
Figure 8

Topics	Virakesari
Peace	123
Law & Order	5
Injustice & Defiance	10



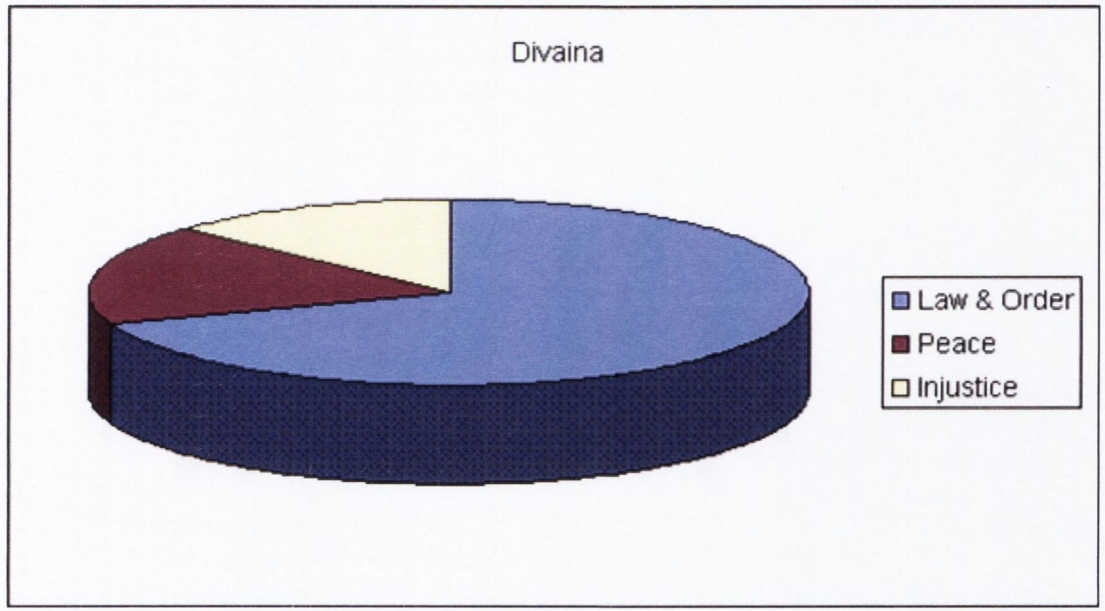
APPENDIX 12
Figure 9

Topics	Daily News
Peace	176
Law & Order	13
Injustice & Defiance	8



APPENDIX 13
Figure 10

Topics	Divaina
Law & Order	138
Peace	35
Injustice	26



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