BUSINESS AS USUAL?
CONFLICT-SENSITIVE AID IN SRI LANKA

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines factors shaping conflict-sensitive aid programming in Sri Lanka. These factors include theory, geopolitics, and institutional structures of aid agencies. Two case studies illustrate forces shaping programming. The first study demonstrates that authoritarian control by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in the Wanni has undermined standard development approaches without a corresponding re-evaluation of strategies. The second study investigates peace and conflict impact assessments. Current methodologies have difficulty demonstrating program impacts. Holistic definitions of conflict-sensitive aid, lack of conceptual clarity behind projects, and weak assessment mean that forces external to peace-building concerns readily shape conflict-sensitive aid strategies. In addition, different approaches to conflict-sensitive aid are informed by competing theories of both causation of conflict and how to instigate change. Support for the peace dividend, a primary peace-building strategy of major donors in Sri Lanka, exemplifies how peace-building strategies informed by competing ideologies and interests undermine conflict-sensitive objectives.

DEDICATION

The hearth that I've always carried with me

Gran

Those who hear not the music,

think the dancers mad

Guy

John

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CECI	Centre Canadien d'Études et de Coopération Internationale
CHA	Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies
CIA	Conflict Impact Assessment
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPCC	Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Community
CPN	Conflict Prevention Network
CRE	Conflict Resolution Evaluation
DFID	Department for International Development
DME	Design, Monitoring and Evaluation
EPDP	Eelam People's Democratic Party
EWS	Early Warning Systems
FEWER	Forum for Early Warning and Response
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
IFI	International Financial Institution
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ISGA	Interim Self-Governing Authority
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front)
JBIC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
LNGO	Local NGO
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PCIA	Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict theory
PTK	Puthukkudiyiruppu
SIHRIN	Subcommittee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs
SLFP	Sri Lankan Freedom Party
TRO	Tamil Rehabilitation Organization
UN	United Nations
UNF	United National Front
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPFA	United People's Freedom Alliance
WB	World Bank
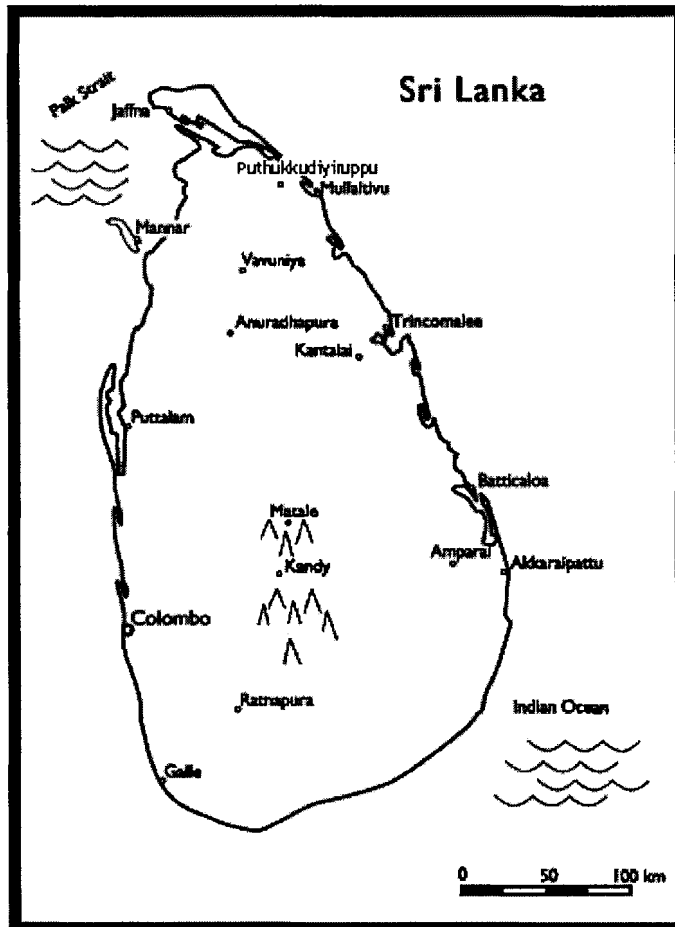
Figure 1 Sri Lanka

(Based on Schuurman, 2004)

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

In *The Anti-Politics Machine*, Ferguson (1990) analyses the development industry in Lesotho in the early 1980s. In the introduction to the book, he condemns international development aid in Lesotho as a failure. He does not mince his words, and claims that there is universal agreement with Murray's statement that "the history of development projects in Lesotho is one of almost unremitting failure to achieve their objectives" (Murray 1981: 19 cited in Ferguson, 1990: 8). Ferguson then calls for an examination of development institutions outside of their own development problematic in order to capture the political ramifications of their discourses.

It is tempting to start a study of conflict-sensitive aid programming in Sri Lanka with a parallel dismissal. Conflict-sensitive aid programming, for the purposes of this thesis, is defined as an approach to humanitarian and development aid that seeks to understand, mitigate, and proactively shape the impact of interventions upon conflict situations in which aid organizations work. Hundreds of aid programs aimed at alleviating the conflict in Sri Lanka have not seen a decisive end to the war which the country has undergone since 1983. There is much debate over how successful conflict-sensitive programs have been at achieving more modest objectives. Several commentators observe that the conflict resolution mandates adopted by international aid agencies make the conflict worse (Wickramasinghe, 2001; Rajasingham-Senanayake, 2003a; Bastian, 2003). Nonetheless, the number of programs designed as 'peace-building' or 'conflict-sensitive' in Sri Lanka rapidly increases (Mayer et al. 2003).

Attempting to judge the success of conflict-sensitive aid programming raises several questions for aid agencies. How does one define conflict-sensitivity in a practical manner, and how does one know when it has been achieved? Does peace imply merely lack of military confrontation, or does it include elements of social justice? What are the trade-offs between latent and active conflict? How do organizations engage conflict while maintaining a position of political neutrality?

Different conflict-sensitive strategies, be they rights-based, aimed at reconciliation, or focused on the economy of war, offer competing and at times mutually exclusive answers to these questions. These answers shape and are shaped by concepts of conflict itself, and in turn shape programs implemented. The parallel with Ferguson's critique of development discourse is now direct. He states that:

> ...'development' institutions generate their own form of discourse, and this discourse simultaneously constructs Lesotho as a particular kind of object of knowledge, and creates a structure of knowledge around that object. Interventions are then organized on the basis of this structure of knowledge (1990: xiv).

In the context of international aid, conflict-sensitivity is a younger term than development. It has fewer established meanings and politics attached to its usage. Conflict-sensitivity is frequently referred to in broad, inexact ways to cover a variety of contradictory ideas and approaches. The fluidity and breadth of the concept leave it open to abuse. The concept's malleability gives geo-political forces and organizational structures great latitude in shaping programming choices. It is easy for organizations to describe work in which they are already engaged as having positive impacts on the conflict.

The use of selective definitions of conflict-sensitivity to describe current programming is common practice in Sri Lanka. This is the case amongst agencies ranging from the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to locally focused international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). An example is found in those parts of the Wanni region controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), where the description of aid initiatives as conflict-sensitive facilitates the continuation and creation of development projects in a political context which precludes substantive participatory development models.

Aims of the thesis

This thesis examines the interplay between concepts and practices of conflict-sensitive aid work in Sri Lanka. 'Aid' is used here to refer jointly to the fields of humanitarian relief and development. The thesis initially surveys ideologies and theories informing differing strategies of conflict-sensitive aid, including perceptions both of conflict and of appropriate and effective ways to bring about change. It then investigates the types of programming pursued by donors and aid agencies in Sri Lanka, seeking to uncover reasons why agencies choose certain strategies over others. To this end, the thesis examines both geopolitical pressures as well as organizational structures which shape programming decisions. The thesis further focuses on how ongoing practice is given meaning within a conflict-sensitivity framework, and how practitioners seek to identify and discriminate between good and bad practices. Examining conflict-sensitive aid in Sri Lanka offers a case study of current practice in the field. It also provides insight into the impacts of conflict sensitive aid, both intended and unintended.

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Importance of examining conflict-sensitivity

Mitigating the ways by which aid programs aggravate violent conflict is of pressing concern. In several recent conflicts humanitarian actors have played important roles in contributing to combatants' capacity for war. A notorious example of this was in the refugee camps in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo between 1994 and 1996. Support of the camps by international aid agencies facilitated the reorganization of génocidaire militia at the end of the Rwanda genocide. Interventions such as these have led to strong criticism of blind adherence to technical, codified humanitarian mandates at the expense of overall impact (Terry, 2002). Conflict-sensitivity addresses these issues.

Debates over conflict-sensitive programming involve more than simply comparing strategies for intended or ongoing activities. Frameworks of interpreting conflict and forms of engagement with conflict emerge from conflict-sensitivity and peace-building theory, as well as underlying ideologies. Heywood calls ideologies "ideas, doctrines and theories that have been adopted by various ideological traditions" (1992: 5). The term 'ideologies' is used in this thesis to refer to categories which are relatively static and less open to negotiation than the theories and ideas which comprise them. Frameworks of interpretation both shape and are shaped by the fields in which aid agencies work. For example, by linking underdevelopment with conflict IFIs are able to describe national economic reform programs as peace-building activities. These initiatives in turn create positive and negative incentives in Sri Lanka's war economy.

Conflict-sensitive approaches are part of a struggle between conflicting ideologies, from realist to radical, in the larger context of foreign interventions. As Said

(1979) has convincingly demonstrated, frameworks of understanding are instruments of power in and of themselves, and need to be understood as such. The voices of realist security, apolitical humanitarianism, liberal multilateralism, and radical change can be found in debates over the appropriate role of aid. These voices should be recognized in analyses and in proposed aid interventions in conflict situations.

A pertinent example is the use of aid to justify international military interventions. Humanitarian considerations are increasingly being used as a basis from which to challenge state sovereignty in international conflicts. Events in the current Iraq crisis, as well as the wars in Kosovo/a and Bosnia-Herzegovina, have led to political re-evaluations of the international state system, of international codes of human rights, and of the humanitarian ethic (Hubert and Bonser, 2001; International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001). Realist strategies of achieving peace through military victory stand in contrast with peace-building strategies which describe the basis for peace in personal and community relationships (Lederach, 1997). Constructions of conflict-sensitivity position themselves within, reflect, and affect this evolving struggle over peace-building strategies.
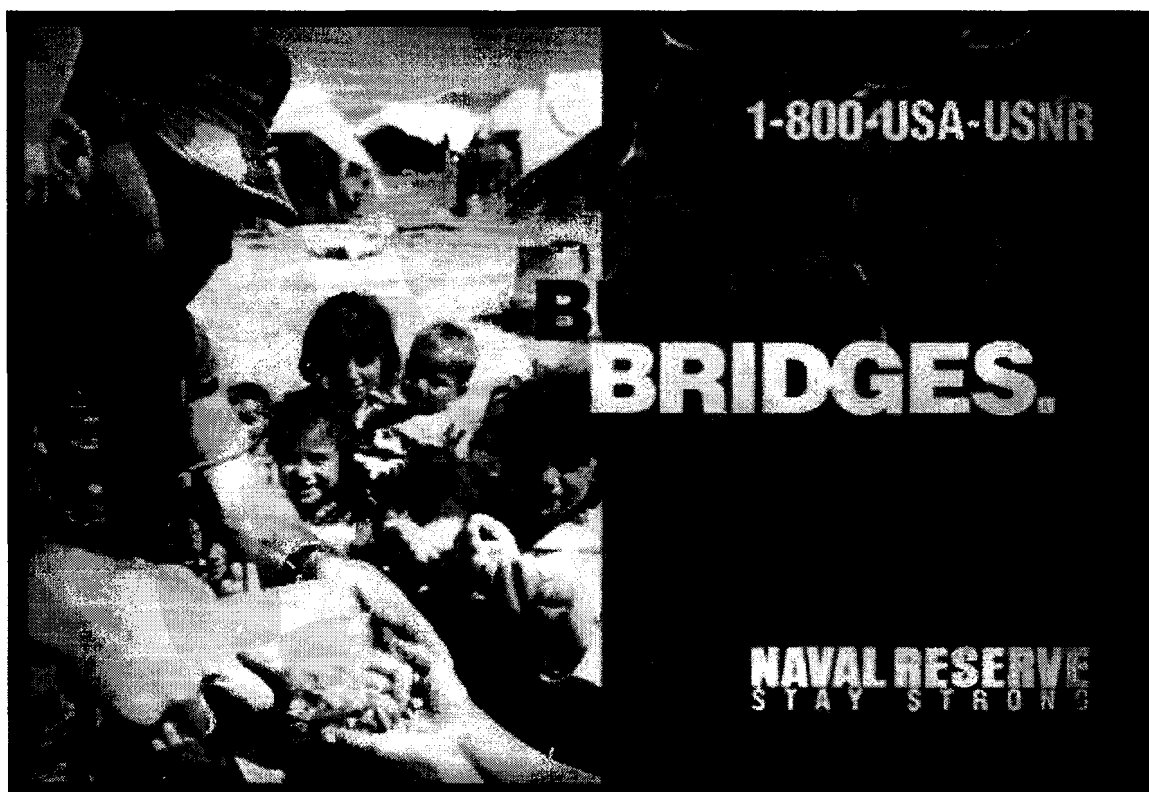
Figure 2 United States Navy Advertisement

Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (December 27, 2003)

Sri Lanka centre stage

Peace-building and conflict-sensitive aid practices vary across space. This is true

both internationally and within Sri Lanka. In the summer of 2003, conflict-sensitive

programming was of greater importance to international aid discourse in Sri Lanka than

in many other countries in conflict or 'post-conflict' scenarios. In another South Asian

example, Nepal, conflict-sensitive approaches were became common much later, and

then only in a context of large downscaling of aid due to the escalating conflict. A foreign

aid worker noted that in Nepal in 2002 only two organizations, the UK Department for

International Development (DFID) and the INGO Centre Canadien d'Etude et de

Coopération Internationale (CECI), were seriously developing conflict-sensitive approaches (interview 1).

Donor and practitioner discourse on conflict-sensitivity is central to aid programming in Sri Lanka today. The majority of new program proposals in Sri Lanka address project impacts on conflict, responding to new donor sensibilities. International agencies see Sri Lanka as a relatively stable country in which to develop new types of programming. Improved safety in areas held by the secessionist LTTE since the cease-fire in February 2002 was cited by several organizations as being a precondition to their new organizational directions (interviews 2 and 3).

A parallel situation exists within academia. Peace-building and conflict resolution are central themes of current academic inquiry in Sri Lanka. Several institutions in Colombo, including the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies and the Centre for Policy Alternatives, study evolving conflict-sensitive aid practices. Two UK universities, Bradford and Oxford, carry out annual study visits to Sri Lanka for MA students in the field of peace-building. Research has tended to focus on dynamic policy shifts proposed or undertaken by the non-governmental sector, at the expense of research on IFIs. While the IFIs have proven less innovative, they continue to command the large majority of aid flows.

This thesis examines different strategies of conflict-sensitive programming both across Sri Lanka and between different types of aid agencies. These agencies differ in the degree of access which they have to those parts of the country controlled by the LTTE. This regional variation offers insight into both political and institutional processes behind specific, valued strategies.

Strategy

The field-based research for this thesis took place during a three-month period in Sri Lanka from May to July of 2003. The research made use of several methods. The most important of these was interviews, both informal and formal. More than 100 structured and informal interviews were conducted. Interviews were selected via three strategies. One was intentional sampling. This entailed a specific targeting of organizations and individuals whom I considered would provide pertinent insight. The majority of these interviews were with academics and officials of governmental, multinational, and non-governmental development agencies. The second strategy was a 'snowball effect'. This entailed asking people during or after interviews to recommend other individuals or organizations who they felt might be useful. The final strategy was less structured, and involved interviewing individuals met informally throughout my stay in and travels around Sri Lanka. This final strategy provided the most abundant material from perspectives outside of those immediately engaged in either practice or analysis of relief and development work in Sri Lanka.

My research also involved direct participation with aid organizations. I briefly worked as a consultant for an international non-governmental development organization in the Wanni, doing a donor assessment of a project with a conflict-sensitive mandate. This placement facilitated my access to the central LTTE-controlled areas around Mullaitivu, an area difficult to access for solely academic reasons. I also participated in academic conferences and meetings in Colombo, Negombo and Vavuniya. The Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) Conference, held in Negombo June 13-15, 2003, was a valuable opportunity to see a wide range of government officials, aid practitioners, donors and academics debate the theory and practicality of the emerging PCIA field.

Analysis of primary documentation was a further method of research. This occurred both in Sri Lanka and upon return to Vancouver. As understandings of conflict-sensitive aid practice are of central interest to this paper, the ways in which agencies formulate and eventually publish these understandings have proven a useful source of insight. As such, organizational articulations of strategies, institutional conflict analyses (or lack thereof), and debate over assessment techniques offered plentiful resources for analysis. The sources examined for this thesis included both publicly available documents as well as documents which were offered to me during interviews. A list of these documents has been included in Appendix One.

Situating myself

Accepting Brun's (2003) comment that it may be impossible to fully reveal perspective, it is nonetheless useful to reflect on how my personal experience and approach affected the way in which the research for this thesis was directed and interpreted. Before returning to academia to study conflict-sensitive aid programming, I had spent the better part of two years working for humanitarian organizations in conflict zones in Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. I arrived at university personally concerned with many of the critiques of relief and development programming which are laid out in the literature review in chapter 2. While these concerns led to in-depth study of systemic critiques of the aid industry, my personal direction was tempered by a continued strong commitment to future practice in the field. Despite the profundity and breadth of ways in which aid initiatives have been shown to be a fraught enterprise, I do not believe that these critiques invalidate the project as a whole.

This concern with practice can be seen in the focus of my research. The majority of my interviews were with people working in or analyzing the field of conflict-sensitive aid. My analysis has tried to take a step back from immediate project concerns to look at the larger ideological, geopolitical and institutional factors shaping the emergence of conflict-sensitive practice in Sri Lanka. I have borrowed from Ferguson (2000) the idea that the aid industry can be shaped and driven by forces disconnected from the intended goals and mandates of organizations and individuals involved. I retain, however, the intention of displaying these forces in a way which may allow practitioners to more thoughtfully and effectively minimize the negative impacts of their programming on the conflict in which they operate.

Evolution of strategy and a reflection on research ideals

The initial research focus and methods described in my project proposal changed substantially during my work in Sri Lanka. This was not entirely unexpected. My proposal laid out a variety of possible methods designed to give me the greatest flexibility in dealing with what I anticipated would be a dynamic research environment.

My thesis proposal discussed my concerns with issues of access, particularly to internally displaced people (IDPs). In the end, negotiating access to internally displaced people proved sufficiently difficult that no formal interviews were carried out. Barriers were encountered at two levels. The SFU ethics committee presented a structural barrier. Concerned with the potential negative psychological impacts of my research on displaced people, the committee took four months to grant me permission to carry out interviews. Permission was granted on the condition that I have a guarantee from the NGO with

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which I was collaborating that they would provide psycho-social care for those negatively impacted by my intervention. As this was not a practical commitment for an NGO to undertake, this stipulation effectively barred any formal interview process.

A further barrier was presented by academics. As relatively disempowered people, as people categorized by their very disempowerment, IDPs find themselves and their status the focus of both political pressures and struggles between ideologies within the aid industry and within academia. Concerns over representation, cooption of voice, and exploitation of IDPs' stories for personal academic advancement all complicate the research process. Researchers must answer to criticisms of 'mining' subjects for information, taking what is useful for their projects and offering nothing in return, or for simply engaging in "theoretical tourism on the part of the first world critic, where the margin becomes a linguistic or critical vacation, a new poetics of the exotic" (Kaplan cited in Hyndman 2001: 263). Concerns such as these were frequently voiced by Sri Lankan academics I interviewed during the early period of my research in Sri Lanka. My status as a young Canadian academic with little local experience on a relatively short-term research project without local institutional affiliation was not in my favour. These factors also discouraged me from formal research with IDPs. This problematization of interaction to the point of the exclusion of interaction altogether is not a process with which I was comfortable.

The critique of academic research being a process of 'mining' is broader than the context of working with IDPs, however. All fieldwork should have positive benefits for those who are being studied. This is reflected in the guidelines of the SFU ethics committee. Section 7.5 states that benefits of the research should include "specific

advantages to subjects, to third parties, or to society or a segment thereof, and any general increase in human knowledge" (University Research Ethics Review (20.01), 2001). On the academic side, this research addresses this concern in a couple of ways. The information and analysis documented in this research will be disseminated both through the distribution of the thesis to some of those who participated, and through the publication of articles for public consumption. A further positive impact of my research was to bring conflict-sensitive programming issues to the attention of people engaged in the aid field in Sri Lanka. Interviews which were initially allocated short periods of time were frequently prolonged as people became engaged with the subject. People interviewed also frequently asked for information and suggestions on conflict-sensitive programming. I provided feedback after interviews on several occasions.

The SFU ethics committee's directive 7.5 addresses more than dissemination of research findings. It also touches on the idea of active engagement with the issues being researched. Schrijvers (1995) presents a study of the difficulties associated with assuring a proper fusion between research and activism. When authorities once again displaced displaced people with whom Schrijvers worked in Colombo, she tried to assist her research subjects, with some success, by intervening with authorities, NGOs, and charities.

From the perspective of aid practice, what stands out in this example is that activism occupies an area overlapping academia and aid work. While Schrijvers is critical of top-down NGO relief structures, her fusion of aid and activism also lends support to research with the objective of improving aid practice. This research has the aim to improve practice in conflict-sensitive relief and development programs in Sri Lanka.

Organization of the thesis

This first chapter has introduced the aims of the thesis. It also outlines the significance of the research, both in Sri Lanka and in the broader context of aid programming. It concludes with a discussion of the methods used, and how these methods shaped the research process. Chapter two is a literature review. It starts by briefly describing the fields of humanitarian relief and development. The chapter then situates conflict-sensitive aid in relation to these two fields. After defining conflict-sensitivity the chapter surveys underlying ideologies informing different approaches to conflict-sensitive practice. Chapter three provides background and context to the conflict in Sri Lanka. It surveys some conflict analyses of the Sri Lankan conflict. It also gives background on the role of the international community in the conflict.

Chapter four, the first empirically-based chapter, examines conflict-sensitive programming in the LTTE-occupied Wanni region of Sri Lanka. Due to strict, authoritarian control by this local authority, aid organizations face obstacles to standard approaches such as community empowerment, capacity building, and civil society strengthening. This detailed study illustrates how NGO mandates are influenced by external pressures. It also describes how the strategy of support for the peace dividend, a primary strategy of major donors in Sri Lanka, shapes local programming choices.

Examining assessment tools and processes offers insight into the interplay between the theories, values, and practice of conflict-sensitive aid work. Chapter five analyzes documents, projects, and practices in the emerging field of PCIA. The chapter then examines the peace-building strategy of supporting the peace dividend as a case

study of current PCIA practice. The strategy of support for the peace both highlights

problems currently facing PCIAs in Sri Lanka, and outlines political and institutional

forces shaping both PCIA and conflict-sensitive aid practice.

CHAPTER 2
PLACING TERMS

This chapter first briefly outlines the fields of relief and development aid, referred to by Ferguson (2000) as an industry. Both 'humanitarian' and 'development' are terms used with great familiarity, as if they appeal to commonly understood practices. Upon closer examination, contradictions can be found in the breadth of uses of these concepts. With this grounding, the chapter moves on to examine conflict sensitivity. Conflict sensitivity is placed in a context of a broad spectrum of related terms, whose meanings are often used interchangeably. Conflict sensitivity is a proactive concept, based on established conceptual frameworks of conflict and conflict resolution. These frameworks and the ideologies behind them are discussed here.

Humanitarianism

Humanitarianism has broad and contrasting uses. In political science literature, 'humanitarian intervention' is frequently synonymous with military adventurism (Garrett, 1999). The term is also used in reference to 'just wars'. As an example, the Kosovo/a war of 1999 is widely referred to as a 'humanitarian war' (McRae, 2001). This thesis uses a much more circumscribed definition of humanitarianism, applying it only those organizations which operate within the framework of the Humanitarian Charter (SPHERE, 2004). The charter states that organizations must be impartial, work within the bounds of international humanitarian law, and provide for the basic needs of civilians regardless of their political affiliation. It applies to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), non-governmental agencies (such as the International Committee of the Red

Cross (ICRC)), and inter-governmental agencies (such as UN agencies). The charter also advocates the right to humanitarian assistance over all other political considerations.

Humanitarian practitioners have long claimed to be both neutral and impartial (Macrae, 1998; Anderson, 1999). These claims have a distinct history. Modern relief agencies trace their conceptual origins to the foundation of the ICRC following the Battle of Solferino in 1859. The principals of the ICRC informed the Geneva Conventions in 1949 (Macrae, 1998). The creation of MSF out of the ICRC following the Biafra war set a principle of independence to which INGOs remain fiercely attached (Médecins sans Frontières, 2004b).

The validity of claims to political neutrality and impartiality have been convincingly dismissed (Anderson, 1999). The distribution of substantial economic resources in conflict situations is an impossible task without affecting power balances. Furthermore, humanitarian aid is increasingly being used by donor governments as a strategy to avoid political involvement in regions in which they do not have geopolitical interests (Terry, 2002). Despite high levels of funding, humanitarian relief is undergoing a crisis. This crisis is particularly acute in recipient countries where donor countries have geopolitical interests. Recent increased military involvement by donor countries in humanitarian crises has seen corresponding challenges to the validity of humanitarian neutrality. An example is offered by recent experience in Afghanistan. In the late 1990s, the United Nations (UN) was engaged in enforcing sanctions against the Taliban government in Afghanistan. The oppressive social policies of the Taliban regime were also a primary target of numerous international human rights NGOs. At the same time UN agencies and INGOs were running humanitarian activities in the country in

cooperation with the Taliban regime. While this relationship was often conflictual, international agencies who focused primarily on service delivery were able to operate throughout the country.

International agencies have greater difficulty today carrying out such dual mandates. Attacks aimed at relief workers in Afghanistan, Chechnya and elsewhere (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2004a) occur at substantially higher frequencies than in other conflicts taking place since records were initially compiled in 1997 (King, 2002). The bombings of the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) compounds in Baghdad on August 19 and October 27th 2003 respectively clearly demonstrated the political importance of aid, whether from the UN or by INGOs (Lederer, 2003). These events demonstrate that while humanitarian work is a response to conflict, it is also part of and frequently central to the conflict context. This assertion is one which the humanitarian community has had difficult accepting, and continues to deny (Macrae, 1998).

Claiming that relief and development aid are central to the context of conflict is not new. Both academics and practitioners have long stressed the impacts of aid on conflict (Anderson, 1999; Duffield, 2001; Helton, 2002, Stemlau, 1977, Uvin, 1998). Nor do conceptual formulations of humanitarianism transcend practice. Conflicts in which humanitarian programs operate are the stage of contests over interpretations of practice, and choices of valued and appropriate means of response. This struggle can be seen in the debate which followed the killing of five humanitarian workers with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Afghanistan on June 2, 2004. The agency responded by denouncing the manner by which "our own governments try to co-opt humanitarian actions for their

own political and military ends" (Morley, 2004: 2). Morley pointed as an example to the

distribution of leaflets by coalition forces that urged Afghans to "pass on any information

related to [the] Taliban, al-Qaeda and Gulbaddin to the coalition forces ... in order to have

a continuation of the provision of humanitarian aid" (ibid: 1). In direct contradiction to

Morley's claim to humanitarian neutrality, USAID administrator Andrew Nastios stated

that relief agencies receiving US funding were "an arm of the US government" (cited in

Burnett, 2004: 3). In a similar vein US Secretary of State Colin Powell claimed that

NGOs were "a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team" (ibid:

2). Benard, an academic at the RAND corporation who is married to the US ambassador

to Afghanistan, wrote that "the principle championed by Doctors Without Borders – that

civilian professionals providing medical help to the suffering will be granted safe passage

– is now part of our nostalgic past" (2004: 2). This view is the current trend in

Afghanistan. While MSF withdrew from Afghanistan in July of 2004, during the same

summer coalition forces in Afghanistan expanded a program of joint military/civilian

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT). According to Colonel Branhagen, director of the

US-led coalition civil military coordination centre in Kabul, these teams provide an ideal

mix between humanitarian and security operations (irrinnews, 2004).

Development

Development is a word whose diversity of uses is even broader than that of

humanitarianism. Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal call development "that slippery word

whose meanings proliferate in blanket disregard to all attempts to fix and stabilize its

referents" (2003: 1). While it lacks a precise definition, development is a powerful force

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of change. Sivaramakrishanan and Agrawal further describe development as "the most powerful influence structuring social and economic transformations in the non-Western world in the century" (2003: 1). Development is based on a progressive social and economic worldview. It refers both to movement towards a 'modern' society, and movement towards a better life (Ferguson, 2000). It is described as a Western paradigm, exported in the dialogues and institutions of colonialism (Said, 1979; Escobar, 1995). The mandates of development organizations today have their origins in the colonial era, as well as in the political contexts of the newly independent developing countries during the Cold War (de Alwis and Hyndman, 2002). The development concept evolved in the era of the withdrawal of overt European colonialism. Development can be seen as integral to the entire project of modernity. Sivaramakrishanan and Agrawal (2003) describe development as having legitimized both colonialism and independence movements, and having established the visions of newly independent states.

Critiques of development address issues of power and domination. Arturo Escobar states that development is a mechanism that "links forms of knowledge about the Third World with the deployment of forms of power and intervention, resulting in the mapping and production of Third World (non-Western) societies, (where) individuals, governments and communities are seen as "underdeveloped" and treated as such" (cited in Lui, 2001: 111). Ferguson (1990) sees the principal result of development processes as the articulation of state power. Sceptical of analyses which reduce development to processes of control, Sinha states that in these critiques "the totality of domination produced by development projects seems to constitute an imperium, within which lie no

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possibilities of liberation" (2003: 287). He finds critiques of domination linked to a political project which places intrinsic value in the local and the indigenous.

Two development models are of interest to this thesis. The first model is referred to as 'good governance, 'liberal global governance' or 'new humanitarianism' (Duffield, 2001; Fox, 2001). Central tenants of this model are liberal democracy and capitalism. The model focuses on the national political level, promoting institutions of liberal democratic governance and capitalist economic systems. These policies are most apparent in international interventions in 'failed states' and entail a process of 'nation-building'. Principal agents of change at the national financial level are the International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

The second development model pertinent to this thesis is the model of community level social transformation. Participation and empowerment are principal objectives of this model. It developed largely through recognition of the patriarchal aspects of many established development models. Wickramasinghe (2001) notes that, over the last twenty years in Sri Lanka, the term 'partnership' has replaced aid. This form of aid is seen as egalitarian and responsible. One of its main tools is 'capacity-building', which de Alwis and Hyndman describe as "a means of engaging and strengthening existing knowledge and skills" (2002: 8). While they refer to capacity-building as "an important departure from the development project" (ibid), this distinction is one of definition of development. Capacity-building and other participatory techniques are central to the approaches and mandates of many international development agencies (FORUT, 2001 and CARE, 2003a).

Participatory techniques have only partially addressed the critique that development continues to be complicit in a project of global liberal governance (Duffield, 2001). Wickramasinghe (2001) sees the value of participation as an imported Western construct, and goes so far as to trace its origins to eighteenth century Protestant requirements for participation in the liturgy. Some development agencies place participatory processes as of greater intrinsic importance than quantitative outcomes, a tendency which Bastian refers to as the "tyranny of participation in development work in Sri Lanka" (interview 4).

Development models which identify the state as a focal point of domination and power place civil society as independent from, and in opposition to, the state. Sinha describes this construction as "...the state and community as strictly separate domains, one the center of a network of domination, the other the domain from which other ways of seeing, doing, and being may emerge" (2003: 288). Foucault finds origins of this distinction in the development of liberalism in Europe. He notes that since liberalism developed partially as a response to highly interventionist eighteenth century German states, the state has since been caste as a necessary evil (cited in Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2000). There are dissenters to the claim that community empowerment and local capacity building is a stabilizing process. Critics note that development is inherently destabilizing and conflictual. Prendergast writes that "conflict pervades development, causing massive disruption and suffering, rather than appearing occasionally or as an exception" (1996: 112).

Development and humanitarianism are often presented in contrast to one another, or as representing poles of a continuum. Various agencies limit their mandate to one

sector or the other. Médecins sans Frontières (2004c) withdrew from Sri Lanka on March

1, 2004, stating that the country was no longer in a conflict situation, and no longer

required humanitarian assistance. This dichotomous categorization of context into either

conflict or non-conflict is a very blunt tool by which to decipher and respond to evolving

forms of violence and needs. Busumtwi-Sam (2002) argues that the humanitarian-

development continuum fails during periods of transition from conflict to peace and

proposes a third, post-conflict approach for these situations. One of Busumtwi-Sam's

suggestions is the creation of a new funding framework specifically tailored to the

requirements of operating in a post-conflict environment. Some donors have recently

started using this approach. Examples include Norway's Transitional Funding mechanism

(Smith, 2004).

The relationship between different forms of aid is frequently inimical.

Practitioners with organizations pursuing development-orientated models often express

enmity towards humanitarian organizations, feeling that these organizations embody neo-

colonial forms of intervention antithetical to their own mandates. (MacRae, 1998). MSF's

entry into Nepal in a humanitarian capacity in 2003 was met with dismay by development

organizations long-established in the country who felt that decades of community level

empowerment work could be undermined by hierarchical, short-term approaches

(interview 1). By the summer of 2004, many of the largest development donors had

withdrawn from the country due to the continuing violence.

There are however no clear boundaries between these organizations. While

organizational structures may differ, relief organizations such as MSF and development

organizations such as CARE are involved in both relief and long-term development

activities. Much of the funding for both relief and development organizations comes from the same institutional donors, and there is constant cross-over of staff. With these considerations in mind, the term 'aid' will be used in this thesis to include both relief and development approaches, except where distinctions are necessary to the subject at hand.

Defining conflict sensitivity

Conflict-sensitivity is a more recent term than development, and as such it is less established. A consortium of six agencies involved in developing Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA) define conflict sensitivity as:

> ...the need for organisations, in particular national governments, donors and civil society, to be sensitive to the (conflict) environments in which they operate, in order to reduce the negative impacts of their activities - and to increase their positive impacts - on the situation and its dynamics (FEWER et al. 2003a: 2).

This holistic definition prioritizes inclusiveness over descriptive precision and operational usefulness. This is a parallel situation to broad definitions of the concept of "health" by aid agencies.

Conflict sensitivity is situated in a field of related terms. The term conflict transformation was developed to move beyond concepts of conflict resolution as referring strictly to direct violence. Conflict transformation recognizes that conflict is intrinsic to human interactions and is not inherently negative. The goal of conflict transformation therefore is to transform conflict from violent to non-violent forms (Rupesinghe and Anderlini, 1998). This meaning has been adopted into other terms as well. The Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee (CPCC) states that "The overarching goal of

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peacebuilding is to strengthen the capacity of societies to manage conflict without violence, as a means to achieve sustainable human security" (CPCC, 2004).

Amongst aid practitioners, definitional clarity of conflict-sensitive programming does not exist. There is both contest and confusion as to the meaning of conflict sensitivity, appropriate and effective goals and approaches, and how to balance conflict sensitivity goals against other organizational objectives. These contests are not simply theoretical, but are enmeshed in the structures of the relief and development fields. Geopolitical pressures, organizational structures, donor trends, and individual relations all play a role in articulations of the concept.

While some organizations continue to see a conflict-sensitive approach as outside of their operational mandate. Conflict-sensitive programming does not imply a change of core mandate, however. Kenneth Bush notes as an example that "…an education project may fail to produce students able to pass state-wide exams, but may succeed in reducing tensions between particular social groups by creating and institutionalizing a non-threatening and constructive environment that increases neutral contact…" (1998: 7).

Most working definitions of conflict-sensitivity imply a pro-active role by the implementing agency. Anderson (1999) stresses that conflict-sensitive programming includes actively strengthening local capacities for peace. The PCIA definition states organizations should "increase their positive impacts" (FEWER, 2004). The line between conflict sensitivity and peace-building becomes blurred as programs are designed to have the maximum positive impact on conflict context. Rehabilitation of the Wanni gains greater priority amongst donors if it is felt that it contributes to political stabilization. In strategizing 'positive impact', conflict-sensitive programming models work within

conceptual frameworks of what conflict is, what are its causes, and how it can be resolved.

Peace-building and ideologies

Conflict-sensitive aid programming is intrinsically linked to schools of conflict analysis. Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse point out how polemology, the study of war, "has from the start been seen as the essential prerequisite for normative conflict resolution" (1999: 65). Non-western conceptual frameworks of conflict are of undoubted import to the conflict in Sri Lanka. The role of the Hindu warrior laid out by the *Bhagavad Gita* (1897) differs starkly from that in western militaries. This epic affirms that the dharmic duty of the Hindu warrior is to fulfill his caste role. Successful attention to this duty will result in favourable rebirth. At the battle of Kuruksetra, Krishna informs the wavering Arjuna that as a warrior, killing his own relatives in battle is not dishonourable. The extent to which Hindu beliefs shape perceptions of war amongst the Tamil Tigers is beyond the scope of this thesis, however. The thesis investigates concepts of and responses to conflict by international aid agencies, which are largely informed by western models.

Texts on conflict resolution generally stress the importance of addressing several levels of causation at the same time (Anderson, 1999; Rupesinghe, 1998). Goodhand's (2001) conflict analysis of Sri Lanka runs the gauntlet of causes from the militarization of society to unequal access to educational opportunities. Theories of causation of conflict also compete, however. Lederach compared the quarrels between international relations and conflict resolution as a "spat between two siblings, ...who situate themselves along a

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rather odd continuum that runs from "realism" to "emotionalism"" (1997: 24). This thesis does not attempt to discern one model of conflict analysis as more successful or more appropriate in Sri Lanka. Instead, it traces the effects of competition between differing values, ideologies, theories, and strategies on the policy and practice of aid agencies. The following section briefly outlines different ideologies informing peace-building models.

Realism

The realist model of conflict is based on the need for physical security, which is provided by the state. The model sees state actors as rational, self-interested, and trapped in the international state system in which every other actor is also self-interested. This model is referred to as the security dilemma. Natural opportunism and the search for security are therefore causes of war (Uyangoda, 2003a). Taken to its logical extreme, this view eliminates a distinction between just and unjust wars, but rather posits them as intrinsic to the system within which they are situated (Garrett, 1999). The state system also defines possible and impossible solutions to conflict. This logic can be seen in the LTTE's historical claim that the security of Tamils can only be assured in an independent state. The realist model sees conflict as two dimensional. Uyangoda refers to this dichotomy as "peace is the absence of war" (2003b). This war/no war definition limits the number of possible responses by aid organizations. O'Hanlon (2003) claims that intervening countries have only three options: to help overthrow one side in the conflict, to physically separate antagonists, or to set up humanitarian safe havens.

Critiques of realist theories claim that statist ideas of self-determination have been surpassed (O'Duffy, 2003). There exists today a range of polities with differing degrees

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of autonomy. There is also greater transnational involvement in national conflicts, including support from diasporas, the growth of globalized networks dealing in illicit resource and arms markets, and support for terrorist movements (Helton, 2002; Hyndman, 2003; Terry, 2002). In Sri Lanka, there is ongoing struggle over the definition of the state. Attempts to institutionalize a non-statist power-sharing mechanism between the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) has proven a major obstacle to the continuation of peace talks.

More recent realist analysis extends beyond the state model. Theoretical links have been drawn between poverty/underdevelopment and the security concerns of those in the North. Overpopulation, disease, and political instability in failed states are seen as threats from the underdeveloped South. These concerns are reflected in the mandates of aid agencies (Shaw, 2002; Collier et al. 2003).

Both individual and state security remain dominant discourses in Sri Lanka. Gunaratna opines that:

> ...addressing the traditional Tamil grievances... cannot end the Sri
> Lankan conflict. ...the paramount grievance of the affected Tamils is the
> inability of the Sri Lankan state to provide security to Sri Lanka and to
> meet the challenge of their aspiration to statehood (2001: 1).

This claim reverses the realist argument in support of Tamil statehood and finds lack of security for Tamils as a justification for a stronger military response by the GoSL against the LTTE.

Liberalism

The individual is the cornerstone of the liberal tradition. To protect individual freedoms, liberalism dictates that the role of the state should be minimized in all domains,

including economic. This concern with freedom from state coercion has become

institutionalized as civil rights (Eccleshall, 2001). The concept of freedom is interpreted

in different ways. Libertarianism values the minimal possible amount of state coercion

upon the individual. In contrast, the welfare model values equality of opportunity and

outcome. The terms negative and positive liberties, used respectively for these

approaches, are a direct parallel to Galtung's negative and positive peace, described in

the conflict resolution section below (ibid). As with realist models, liberal models of

governance tend to be based in the sovereign-state system. States face similar security

dilemmas, but are motivated not only by self-interest but also by underlying values of

life, liberty and property. Richmond (2002) claims that liberalism differs from realism

mainly in that it chooses cooperative institutions to achieve statist ends within a universal

normative system.

Liberals frequently stress the fact that historically, liberal democratic societies

have not gone to war with each other (Doyle, 1997). Combined with the Enlightenment

belief that democracy, being based on individual liberty and rationality, produces the

most *effective* political system, liberalization is assumed to lead to political stabilization.

Goodhand (2001) observes that major aid donors in Sri Lanka hold these assumptions.

This liberal approach posits liberal governance institutions and multilateralism as

intrinsic to peaceful and prosperous societies.

Liberal views inform many international conflict resolution initiatives. The

creation of democratic institutions during processes of nation-building by the United

Nations appeal to these ideas of stability and prosperity. Rights-based approaches trace

similar origins, expressing both rights of freedom from coercion and freedom of

opportunity. Liberal economic systems are also seen as essential to political stability. These beliefs are a rationale for institutional support for liberal and neo-liberal economic policies. A form of neo-liberal economic policy which has had strong influence on IFIs is referred to as the Washington Consensus. It is based on the three pillars of fiscal austerity, privatization, and market liberalization (Stiglitz, 2002).

Critics of multinational nation-building models point to their neo-imperialistic character. These critiques are equally aimed at humanitarian initiatives based on liberal concepts (Fox, 2001). Liberalism is a millenarian, universalizing discourse with European origins. Its prescriptions for development and peace-building in developing countries are uniform, regardless of history, geography, resources and demography. In Sri Lanka, the linkages between liberal societies, democracy, good governance, and neo-liberal economic growth are far from certain (Stokke, 1997). While acts of violence accompanying processes of liberal state-building in the country are often described as externalities, Rajasingham-Senanayake (2001) points out that, on the contrary, they are inherent within state-building processes.

Radicalism

The term radicalism is used here to refer to those political theories that have as their central value egalitarianism, and as their primary lens of analysis the examination of power relations (Clark, 1998). Radicalism can be found at the roots of fields as disparate as Marxism, socialism and feminism. Radicalism sees conflict as a constant, natural part of human interaction. Drawing on its social activist roots, radicalism seeks to actively destabilize dominant and exploitative relations and institutions (Sinha, 2003).

Recognizing conflict as constant, radicalism looks foremost to the interests of the dis-empowered. It finds in systemic conflict opportunity for positive change. Prendergast (1996) notes the empowering potential of changing gender roles. Radicalism also recognizes that it is the dis-empowered who are the most likely to suffer from violent conflict. Miall et al. (1999) note that violence, not conflict is the antithesis of peace.

Radical views of conflict eschew categories and focus on internal power struggles within certain groups. They note the power inherent in the process of defining conflict (Bush, 2001a; Slim and Thompson, 1995). This observation can be seen in the construction of community identities. Constructed identities both contain internal violence, and necessitate exclusion. In his discussion of Muslim identities in Sri Lanka, Ismail states that "We know now that racial and ethnic identities are distinctly modern constructs, not ancient phenomenon" (1995: 66).

Critics of the radical model note its inherently conflictual precepts. Destabilizing existing power structures can undermine local institutions in times of conflict. Radical approaches attribute less importance to local traditions than to allegiances with groups identified as oppressed. In northern Africa, Prendergast (1996) argues that priority should be given to local institutions who serve roles of conflict resolution, such as Woreda councils in Ethiopia, Chief's courts in Sudan, or elder's councils in Somalia. The radical model would respond that supporting traditional structures effectively takes sides during periods of shifting power, supporting what may well be parochial institutions against those who have recently found new liberties. Critics contend that these allegiances based on values of solidarity and empowerment necessarily demote the primacy of conflict resolution.

Conflict Resolution

In popular usage, the term conflict resolution refers to attempts to end conflict. The expression also refers to a particular school of conflict management. This field largely coalesced in the 1970s. It was inspired by the pacifist movements of the Mennonites and Quakers, and Gandhian Ahimsa, a philosophy of non-violence. Conflict resolution also draws from the fields of social psychology and social anthropology. Miall et al. attribute to these fields understandings of how "individual needs come to be mediated and articulated through processes of socialization and group identity, themselves culturally conditioned" (1999: 73). Conflict resolution is a bottom up approach, originating in personal interactions. At root are subjective perceptions, emotions and relationships. The field sees reconciliation as its main objective (Lederach, 1997).

Conflict resolution theory developed in the 1970s and 1980s has strongly influenced current understandings of conflict. Galtung developed the conflict triangle which defines three types of violence: direct; structural; and cultural. (Miall et al. 1999). He used this to differentiate negative peace (lack of direct violence) from positive peace (which includes aspects of social justice). Azar's protracted social conflict theory (PSC) examined domestic social roots of conflict and failures of governance (ibid). Of principal importance to this theory are questions of identity, individual interests and needs mediated through membership in social groups. Needs include security, identity, and recognition.

Critics of conflict resolution question the extent to which the transformation of local actors affects large-scale conflict. They suggest that the social theory origins of conflict resolution have led to too strong of an emphasis on personal interactions to the detriment of structural, political and economic issues. In his study on conflict in Sri Lanka, Goodhand notes that "civil society is not a panacea. Pro-war groups such as the National Movement against Terrorism, (a Sinhala nationalist organization) are much more effective at selling their message than are pro-peace groups" (2001: 40). Critics also decry the central role which reconciliation practices accord to outside mediators, when "the whole tenor of recent thinking in the field has been towards empowering indigenous actors to find the solution that they want and to help them to build capacity to manage continuing conflict peacefully in ways of their own devising" (Miall et al. 1999: 223).

The voices of realist security, neutral humanitarianism, liberal multilateralism, and radical change are found in current debates over the appropriate role of aid. The consequences of this competition can be severe. One notorious instance of conflict between the mandates of neutral humanitarian relief and realist peace-keeping occurred during the war in Liberia, when MSF relief trucks were bombed by the regional military force ECOMOG. ECOMOG's comment on the incident was that "certain organizations have the task of bringing relief to those in need. We have a more important task: bringing peace. If relief gets in the way of peacemaking then there will be no relief" (Jean cited in Terry 2002: 24).

Economy of war

Economic analysis can be made within all the above models of conflict. Three areas are of particular concern to this thesis; structural analysis, economic consequences

and the creation of economies based on war. Structural analysis examines the violence

produced by economic systems and political structures (Richmond, 2002). Through

deprivation and exclusion, structural violence frequently causes as much damage as direct

violence. Structural violence also frequently underlies other forms of conflict (Uvin,

1998). To address this, substantial systemic reform may be necessary precursors to the

resolution of established conflicts. As an example, Duffield (2001) argues that continued

development aid to the Dinka people of Sudan will never be effective as long as they are

trapped in an exploitative political system. Structural analysis implicates aid agencies in

the propagation of processes of exclusion and privilege (Uvin, 1998). In a similar vein,

Le Billon (2000) suggests that agencies should move beyond needs-based solutions

which address symptoms towards solutions geared to comprehensive economic

protection. These would include steps to reduce vulnerability and to protect rights.

The economic consequences of violent conflict are a preoccupation of war

studies. A Carnegie Commission report claims that a conflict-prevention approach by an

interventionist international community would have saved the world US$ 130 billion in

the 1990s (cited in Annan, 2002). Conflict is understood from this perspective as a

negative disruption of normal economic development (Goodhand, 2001). IFIs often see

their role as maintaining growth despite conflict, minimizing harm to national economies

(Stewart and Fitzgerald, 2001). One means of addressing conflict is to convince

participants that the economic consequences are too great to continue. Periods of détente

can be consolidated if the economic benefits provide a sufficient peace dividend to

preclude return to combat.

Conflict transforms economic systems, bringing devastation to some and new sources of power to others. Le Billon notes that all wars have both economic winners and losers (2000). Maintenance of economic systems can become integral to political and social processes maintaining the conflict. Perpetuation of war can become an end in and of itself. Greed is often argued to be more important than inequality as a determinant of conflict (Stewart and Fitzgerald, 2001; Busumtwi-Sam, 2002). While some analysts debate the importance of greed as a motivator in conflict (Collier et al. 2003), a recent Humanitarian Policy Group (2003) makes the observation that relations between economic agendas and political power are more subtle than motivations described in debates over the relative importance of greed or grievance.

Critiques note that economy of war models overemphasize economic motivators and underemphasize other ways by which people become dedicated to military causes, such as nationalism. Several motivators are apparent amongst the LTTE's leadership. The LTTE's effectiveness as a military force has increased their support amongst parts of the Tamil diaspora, leading to strong international financial support. Although the scale of international funding from the Tamil diaspora is difficult to measure with certainty, a WB report ventures that during the 1990s this support amounted to around $US 450 million annually (Collier et al. 2003). LTTE motivations are more profound than this, however. Prabakharan has spent his entire life at war, personally assassinating the mayor of Jaffna in 1975. He has great personal investment in the creation of an autonomous Tamil government in the north and east. In his analysis of the conflict in Sri Lanka, Goodhand makes a useful distinction between the "interests" of a political economy and an "emotive economy of violence" (2001: 37).

Theories and strategies

Table One outlines some of the peace-building strategies pursued in Sri Lanka, relating them to the political ideologies outlined above. The table highlights that certain strategies span several ideologies. Two of these strategies, support for the peace dividend and attempts at strengthening civil society organizations, are principal peace-building approaches of international aid agencies in Sri Lanka. With the exception of efforts to curtail international funding to the LTTE from the Tamil diaspora, measures to decrease economic war incentives have received less attention.

Table 1   Peace-Building Strategies Categorized by Ideology

	Realist	Liberal	Radical	Conflict Resolution
Goal	No war	Liberal democracy	Increased equality	Conflict transformation
Economic Strategies	☐Peace dividend: 'buying' antagonists ☐Decrease war incentives ☐Conditional loans	☐Peace dividend: stabilizing force ☐Decreased war incentives ☐Conditional loans ☐Integration of antagonists ☐Free markets	☐Peace dividend: destabilization of power structures ☐Shifting control of resources ☐Livelihoods	☐Peace dividend: opportunity for reduced conflict ☐Decreased war incentives
Social and Political Strategies	☐ Peace keeping ☐Track-1 Negotiations ☐Military victory	☐Civil society strengthening ☐ Peace keeping ☐Strategic Peace-Building ☐Good governance institutions ☐Human rights ☐Federalist solutions	☐Civil society strengthening ☐Local empowerment ☐ Challenge oppressive institutions	☐Civil society strengthening ☐Strategic Peace-Building ☐Interpersonal relations ☐Joint problem solving

Theories of how to pursue the same strategies often differ between ideologies. Support for the peace dividend offers an example. Liberal theory sees economic prosperity as an intrinsically stabilizing force; balanced economic growth is therefore a good in and of itself. Realist theory, in contrast, sees the peace dividend as relative to other motivations. Protagonists of conflict must be convinced that the economic benefits of peace outweigh both security concerns and potential profits from war rents. This theory supports arguments that corruption can be a stabilizing political force, to the extent that it mollifies protagonists (Le Billon, 2003).

Different theories of how the peace dividend leads to political stability advocate different strategies of wealth distribution. Those who argue that a peace dividend must be realized by the larger population, and not just elites, advocate community level initiatives. Radical approaches target mothers as program beneficiaries, arguing that this tactic decreases the resources diverted to the priorities of male heads of households. Such programs can lead to substantial shifting in gender relations both within families and within communities.

These differences in implementation are frequently lost in blanket advocacy of the strategy of support for the peace dividend. Instead, disparate and at times mutually exclusive initiatives are grouped under a common heading. Similar problems exist for other strategies listed in Table One. This lack of conceptual clarity weakens the effectiveness of peace-building and conflict–sensitive programming.

CHAPTER 3
CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA

This chapter provides background to the conflict in Sri Lanka and the peace process up until the summer of 2004. The chapter starts with an overview of Sri Lanka and the origins of conflict at the national level. It then focuses on Sri Lanka's Wanni region which is controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This region is central to chapter five. Following the conflict overview, the chapter surveys differing conflict analyses of the conflict, analyses which play a role in informing conflict-sensitive practice. The chapter then examines current peace-building in Sri Lanka, paying particular attention to the central role played by International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

Background

Sri Lanka is a teardrop-shaped tropical island state of sixty-six thousand square kilometres located southeast of the southern tip of India. Its topography ranges from a mountainous interior, with a few peaks rising above two thousand metres, to flatlands in the north. The country's famous beaches, especially those of the south and of the east, are a key attraction for the country's large international tourism industry. Two distinct monsoon seasons on either side of the island are offset by four months.

Sri Lanka's long and colourful history blends seamlessly with mythological accounts of historical origins and battles. The Sri Lanka Tourist Board (2004) has numerous tales from which it picks in projecting the image of the island abroad. In the Hindu epic Ramayana, Lanka was the battleground between Ram and the demon Ravana.

The remains of the bridge of islands built by the faithful monkey god Hanuman are still in evidence linking Sri Lanka with India. Buddha is said to have visited the island three times, and there is contest over which deity left his footprint on the summit of Adam's peak. Marco Polo is said to have described the island as the most perfect island of its size in the world.

These and other myths tie directly into the conflict in Sri Lanka today, as they inform nationalist identities, and infuse space with feelings of historical primacy. Modern written histories depict the ancient capitals of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa as Sinhalese bastions against foreign invasion, and find in King Dutugemunu an early champion of Sri Lankan nationalism (Uyangoda, 1998; Jeganathan, 1995). The power of such myths to shape perceptions can be seen in Lonely Planet's popular Sri Lanka guide. The history section of this guide omits mentioning Tamils until the period of Sri Lanka's independence from Britain. Tamils are defined in the guide's glossary as "A people of South Indian origins comprising the largest minority population in Sri Lanka" (Lonely Planet, 2003: 295).

Sri Lanka's history was influenced by trade, migration, and numerous invasions between the island and the Indian subcontinent (Seneviratne and Stavropoulou, 1998). Both Buddhism and Hinduism have been well established in Sri Lanka for over two thousand years. Despite distinct religious communities, Brun notes that before the arrival of Portuguese colonists in 1505, language and ethnicity were not primary determinants of inclusion or exclusion in existing kingdoms (2003). Throughout its history and despite partial occupation by Portuguese, Dutch and British colonists, Sri Lanka's first

manifestation as a single unified state only occurred after the British conquest of the Kandyan kingdom in 1815.

Colonialism transformed the demographics of the island. Plantation agriculture in the nineteenth century shifted population and political centres to the south away from the northern, Tamil majority lowlands. Christian missionary schools remained centred in the northern city of Jaffna, contributing to a proportionately higher percentage of Tamil civil servants and academics at the time of independence from Britain in 1948 (ibid). The population of Sri Lanka has nearly tripled since independence from Britain in 1948, exceeding twenty million people in early 2004. The current population growth rate is close to one percent (Universiteit Utrecht, 2003), giving Sri Lanka a more balanced demographic pyramid than its neighbours. Beyond statistics such as these, descriptions of the demography of Sri Lanka quickly become entangled in the politics of the national conflict. The conflict in Sri Lanka is frequently, if not predominantly, described as an ethnic conflict (Jayaweera, 2001; O'Sullivan, 2001 and Cohen and Deng, 1998). Rajasingham-Senanayake makes the more refined observation that:

> The origins of the armed conflict are complex and an effect of modern national-state building, democratization, and uneven development in the context of the failure of succeeding governments to recognize the multicultural nature of the island's polity and to take adequate measure to reflect and protect cultural diversity and cultural minorities (2003a: 110).

In LTTE-controlled areas, the caste system has undergone rapid change following its official banishment. The legal suppression of the caste system has not led to its complete abandonment, however. It has in many ways gone underground. In an attempt to avoid the LTTE ban, dowries for Sri Lankan Tamils are occasionally arranged in India.

Forced displacement has created further social divisions. Of an estimated eight hundred thousand internally displaced people (IDPs) at the time of the ceasefire in February 2002, close to half have since returned to their areas of origin (Global IDP Project, 2004). Return has slowed since the national elections in April 2004. IDP concerns such as personal safety, protection of minority rights, and repossession of land remain to be addressed (ibid). Very few displaced Muslims are amongst those who have returned. In communities such as Puttalam, which have hosted large numbers of Muslim IDPs for over a decade, strong divisions have developed between host and IDP communities. These divisions are occasionally catalysts of antagonism and violence (Brun, 2003).

Despite twenty years of conflict, large numbers of displaced people, and significant destruction of infrastructure in the north, Sri Lanka's GDP continued to grow at an average annual rate of over five percent between 1990 and 2000. This continued growth during conflict in the north is a reflection of the profound centre-periphery division in Sri Lanka, with most infrastructure and services in the country located in and around the capital Colombo in the South. Visually striking differences in standards of living and infrastructure are apparent when passing from the South into the erstwhile conflict zones in the North and East of the country. The main highway from Jaffna in the North to Colombo in the South, a distance of four hundred kilometres, took fourteen hours by bus in June 2003 despite substantial recent road improvements. The isolation of Colombo from the worst effects of the conflict has been pointed to as one reason why the Sri Lankan government has lacked commitment in finding a lasting solution to the war.

Inter-party fighting between political parties in Colombo is often seen as of greater importance to national politicians than is the conflict with the LTTE (Mayer et al. 2003).

The Sri Lankan economy was managed along a central-command model following independence. The year 1977 marked a major shift in policy and Sri Lanka swung towards the west both politically and economically (Bastian, 2003). Free market reforms came in intermittent bursts over the succeeding years. The United National Front (UNF) government in power until 2004 pursued an increasingly aggressive platform of economic liberalization.

Situation in the Wanni
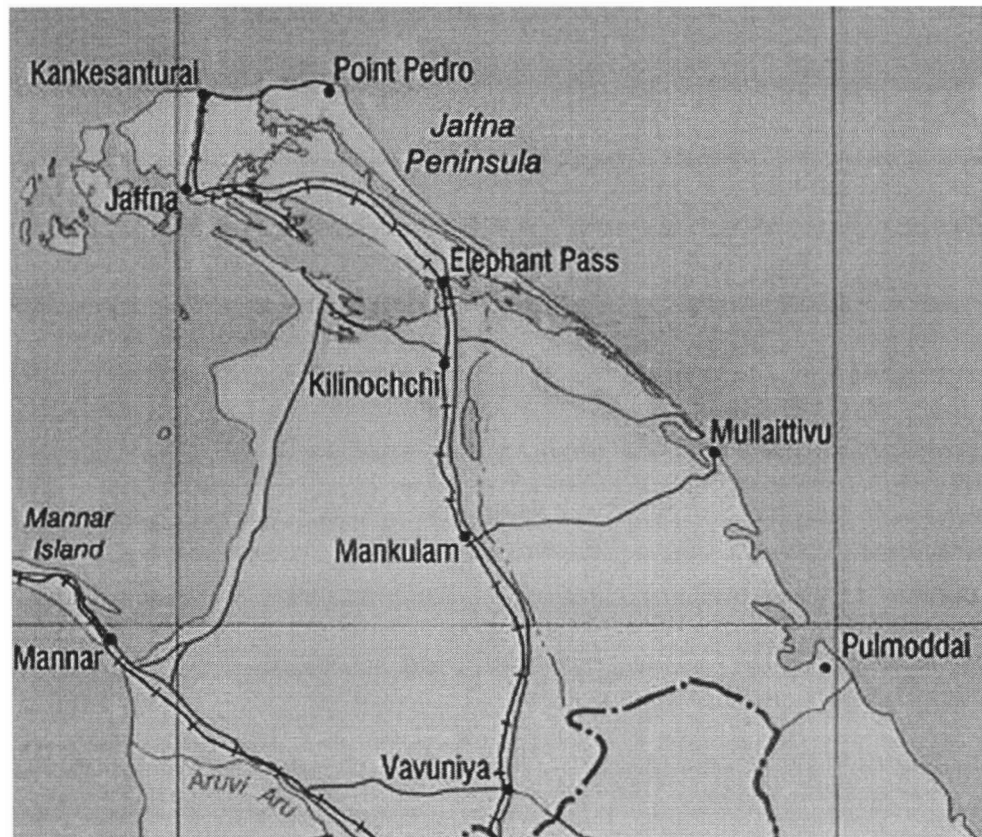
Figure 3 Northern Sri Lanka

(Based on University of Texas, 2004)

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The Wanni region encompasses Mullaittivu, Killinochchi, and parts of Mannar and Vavuniya districts on the northern mainland of Sri Lanka. It is bounded to its north by Elephant Pass, which divides the mainland from Jaffna Peninsula. The city of Vavuniya sits just to its south. The territory encompasses over one thousand two hundred square kilometres (Jansz, F). Most of the Wanni is under the direct control of the LTTE, and is the largest area which they control. This area includes the cities of Killinochchi and Mullaittivu. Driving north along the A-9 highway, the line of military control between the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) is located at Omantai, just north of Vavuniya. This spatial demarcation of control is deceptive, however. Competing forms of governance with a myriad of allegiances exist on either side of the frontier. While the GoSL maintains government services in Killinochchi, the LTTE has active political offices in cities under government control such as Mannar.

Recent history has been tumultuous for the people of the Wanni. The Wanni was a central battleground during the period of Eelam War III, from 1995-2002. Upon the collapse of the 1995 peace process, the GoSL under President Chandrika Kumaratunga launched military operation Riveresa (Gunaratna, 2001). Political rhetoric at the time asserted that only military victory could ensure success at peace negotiations. The military offensive succeeded in capturing Jaffna city on December 5, 1995, and the rest of the Jaffna peninsula early the next year (Brun, 2003). This shifted the centre of fighting to the Wanni. In July of 1996, the LTTE launched their counter-offensive Ceaseless Waves I (Gunaratna, 2001). Large-scale warfare continued for several years. The government captured the town of Killinochchi in 1996, which was recaptured by the

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LTTE in September 1998. The LTTE recaptured Elephant Pass in April 2000, nineteen months later. Casualties since 1995, the period known as Eelam war III, amounted to close to half of the total of 65,000 attributed to the war since 1982. Most of these were in the north (ibid).

The GoSL imposed a comprehensive economic blockade of the LTTE-controlled Wanni for several years up until January 2002. Even small items such as AA batteries and cigarette lighters were confiscated at border crossings due to their potential military value (interview 5). Many goods remained available in the Wanni due to smuggling from Tamil Nadu and through corrupt sections of the Sri Lankan military. These goods were generally available at greatly increased prices, however, and the LTTE military authority often monopolized distribution (Ravano, 2001).

INGOs in the Wanni worked in a significantly different context before the end of the blockade. Access was limited for people as well as relief supplies. Aid workers crossing the line of control regularly had to wait for several hours. According to one foreign aid worker, this meant that he would not leave the Wanni for weeks at a time, as it was a three-day trip each way from Colombo (interview 5). This person now has an apartment in Colombo and commutes home most weekends.

Due to these difficulties, as well as lower donor interest, many fewer aid organizations worked in the Wanni prior to the 2002 cease-fire. In 2000, there were eight international NGOs in the entire region, according to an aid worker who worked there at the time (interview 6). Program objectives were defined as humanitarian relief activities. This has changed significantly since the cease-fire. By May 2003 there were eight INGOs with permanent offices in Killinochchi alone.

The two decades of conflict saw repeated cycles of mass displacement. Eighty percent of the population was displaced during the conflict, many people multiple times (CARE, 2001). The United Nations refugee agency reports that more than 250,000 people remained officially registered as displaced people in Sri Lanka's four northern provinces as of December 2003 (UNHCR, 2003a). Many more displaced people are not able, or choose not, to officially register as such. A significant proportion of the displaced people from the Wanni are Muslims who were displaced en masse from northern areas under LTTE control in 1990. Very few of these Muslims have been amongst recent returnees of displaced people.

The Wanni remains a region destitute from years of conflict. Differences in the standard of living between the Wanni and the rest of the country make a powerful visual impact. Vavuniya, the major city just south of the line of control, remains a busy, industrialized, traffic-filled centre. Killinochchi on the other hand, the largest town in the Wanni, re-opened its first modern style restaurant in the spring of 2003. Killinochchi has undergone rapid change since 2002. Before the 2002 cease-fire, Killinochchi was nearly deserted. By the summer of 2003 Killinochchi was the seat for numerous government and LTTE administrative buildings, as well as for regional offices of INGOs. Yet basic infrastructure, even in this urban centre, remains poor.

The contrast with the rest of the Wanni is even more striking. Immediately upon leaving the main A-9 freeway to the east, vehicle traffic becomes infrequent. In Puthukkudiyiruppu (PTK) and Mullaittivu, the majority of houses are thatch structures fronting on dirt tracks. This includes those houses belonging to high-ranking members of

the military authority. The noise of a passing motorcycle stands out, as the majority of traffic is pedestrians or bicyclists.

In the summer of 2003, the government of Sri Lanka maintained government agent offices in the Wanni through which it ran public services. One of these services was the Unified Assistance Scheme, which provided monetary stipends for internally displaced people returning to their homes. These government services were not run in competition with the LTTE. People interviewed at the Killinochchi government office referred openly to their LTTE connections (interviews 7 and 8). The principal mechanism for GoSL/LTTE coordination of relief and development in the Wanni was the Subcommittee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs (SIHRIN). This body was designed as a short-term structure. This mechanism was never fully functional, and its development was curtailed in the fall of 2004 in the anticipated move to a regional interim administration. One SIHRIN official noted that the body was never given any true authority (discussion 9). The development of SIHRIN was of greater interest in Colombo than in the Wanni, as it became the focus of substantial political and academic debate in the capital (interview 5). A foreign INGO worker noted that those INGOs which had been in the Wanni since before the end of the ceasefire tended to continue meeting at monthly gatherings of the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, while newer agencies were coordinated through the SIHRIN structure (ibid).

SIHRIN was intended to be replaced by an interim governmental authority arranged between the GoSL and the LTTE. The proposal of such a body, however, was a catalyst for the downfall of Prime Minister Wickramasinghe's government. On November 4, 2003, prior to the signing of an interim administration agreement between

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the LTTE and the GoSL, President Kumaratunga dissolved the parliament controlled by the opposition United National Front. President Kumaratunga claimed that the interim administration was unconstitutional, and a threat to the security of the Sri Lankan state.

President Kumaratunga's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) went on to form a new coalition government with the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP, People's Liberation Front) after elections in April 2004. The coalition is called the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA). The change of government has derailed attempts to achieve a cooperative form of administration, as both of these parties were elected on a platform criticizing the UNF for having made too many concession to the LTTE. The LTTE, for its part, maintains that the creation of an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) is a precondition of it reengaging in peace talks. Continued efforts by Norwegian facilitators had not succeeded in restarting peace talks by July of 2004.

This political impasse has led to a reversal of progress in joint coordination of development and relief activities. In response, the LTTE has reasserted its unilateral control over development agencies working in the Wanni. Tamil Planning and Development Secretariat Tamilselvan notified major UN agencies and INGOs at a meeting on June 20, 2004 that in the future he will be in charge of coordinating assistance. While Tamilselvan insists that delays in implementing the ISGA should not cause a delay in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, he promotes the ISGA as the only effective mechanism to address the needs in the LTTE areas (Peace Secretariat, 2004).

Since the Tokyo Conference in 2003, donor terminology has shifted from humanitarian assistance to post-conflict reconstruction and development initiatives. Both

of these activities are presented as being in support of the peace process. While reconstruction initiatives are presented as directly contributing to the peace dividend, development projects focus on strengthening cooperation with local partners (interviews 10 and 11). Rehabilitation and development activities continue in the Wanni despite a deterioration in relations between the GoSL and the LTTE, and constraints on donor funding due to the lack of an interim funding mechanism.

Conflict analysis

Analyses and understandings of root and proximate causes of conflict are of central importance to the formulation of conflict-sensitive aid and peace-building strategies. Analyses delineate the range of possible responses, influence the type of actions considered appropriate, and frame whether or not progress is considered to have been achieved. However, conflict analyses are difficult to carry out in a practical manner. The number of factors examined by conflict analyses is vast. Causes of the Sri Lankan conflict are considered to range from loss of trust in relations between individuals to great power politics, and from economic motivators to quests for group identity.

Few aid organizations, and even fewer individual projects, carry out systematic and comprehensive conflict analyses in Sri Lanka. Many agencies rely instead on individual experience and understanding of context (interview 12). Specialized agencies frequently translate onto the Sri Lankan conflict general theories of conflict with which the organization has experience. Ideological frameworks further shape which factors identified in conflict analyses are prioritized as of greatest import. Experience based interpretation is practiced both by organizations working on community development as

well as international financial institutions (CARE, 2003b; World Bank, 2003). Despite these challenges, conflict analysis remains at the root of conflict-sensitive aid programming. Project proposals draw on both theory and experience in describing positive impacts of prospective activities. A survey of the most commonly perceived roots and origins of Sri Lanka's conflict is therefore necessary.

As described above, the civil war in Sri Lanka is frequently described in terms of competing nationalisms between the Sinhalese and Tamils. Uyangoda (2003a) states that Sri Lanka has a double minority complex, in which the Tamils see themselves as a minority on the island, and the Sinhalese see themselves as a minority through associating Sri Lankan Tamils with the people of Tamil Nadu. This view is supported by popular history, which describes conflict between the Sinhalese and Tamils dating back for centuries (Uyangoda, 1998).

The most commonly enunciated Sinhalese view of the LTTE is that it is a terrorist insurgency against the legitimate Sri Lankan state. Extreme Sinhalese nationalists forward a realist analysis of the conflict, portraying Sri Lanka as an historical Sinhalese homeland subject to repeated foreign invasions. This view is supported by elements of the Buddhist sangha, who see Sri Lanka as the last practitioners of pure Buddhism in the world. This conflation of religious and nationalist identities is found in the belief that monks are both 'bhumiputra', sons of the soil, and 'buddhaputra', sons of Buddha (Silva and Bartholomeusz, 2001).

From an LTTE perspective, the conflict is the direct result of historical and ongoing chauvinistic majoritarian rule by the Sinhalese. This abuse is symbolized by the 1983 pogroms in which several thousand Tamils were killed. The LTTE leadership

has made the realist claim that only an independent state can guarantee the security of Tamils. Grandiose visions of a 'Greater Eelam' encompassing parts of Tamil Nadu in India, are no longer commonly espoused.

Figure 4 Concrete Map of Proposed Tamil Eelam

Located North of Omantai in the Wanni

(June 23, 2003)

Tensions focused along ethnic lines played an important role in the development of the war. In post-independence elections, a series of increasingly nationalistic Sinhalese governments came to power. These governments pursued discriminatory policies such as at the imposition of Sinhala as the only official language (1972-1977), and imposed quotas for Tamil students at universities. Rapid population increase in the period after independence ensured that control of land was a central point of tension. The government also financed settlement campaigns, such as the Mahaweli Project of the late 1970s, on land in predominantly Tamil areas for settlers from the more heavily populated

south. These policies contributed to a rapid deterioration of relations between Tamils and Sinhalese (Thangarajah, 2003; O'Sullivan, 2001; Seneviratne and Stavropoulou, 1998).

Armed opposition to the central government by Tamil groups started in the mid-1970s. The government's response included imposing the harsh Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1979. Violent conflict increased following the 1983 anti-Tamil pogroms, and further escalated during a brief and bloody intervention by the Indian army between 1986 and 1989.

There is strong disagreement over the ethnic lens of analysis. Rajasingham-Senanayake (2001) notes that "Fundamentally modern, organized, institutionalized violence is overlooked in an ethnic-religious-linguistic analysis". Over time, violence has become a normalized political instrument in Sri Lanka (Brun, 2003; Goodhand, 2001). Violent suppression of dissent in Sri Lanka is not limited to the Tamils. Sri Lanka has experienced two uprisings by the JVP, in 1971 and again in 1988. These were brutally suppressed. The number of people killed in two years during the latter of these two uprisings is comparable to the number of casualties over twenty years of conflict between the government and the LTTE (Gunaratna, 2001). A parallel exists between the JVP and LTTE conflicts in sources of alienation caused by Sri Lanka's weak governmental institutions, history of unequal development and wealth distribution, and patterns of poverty. Goodhand states that "the Sinhalisation of the state is a manifestation of a deeper problem of the failure of the state to institutionalize democratic politics" (2001: 32). These analyses suggest peace-building strategies such as liberal governance reform and local empowerment initiatives to resist structural violence.

Violence in Sri Lanka has taken on an internal logic. The conflict has been analysed as both self-perpetuating (Brun, 2003) and institutionalized (Bush, 2002). As such, the factors leading to the start of the conflict may no longer be primary motivators. Goodhand notes that "Sri Lanka has become a highly militarised society... violence has become normalised and routinised..." (2001: 28). Parallel to this is a breakdown of confidence in the police and judicial systems. When faced with community conflict, people will turn to a variety of non-state mediators, depending upon whom they trust the most (Raheem and Gosselin, 2003). Conflict resolution initiatives strive to strengthen these informal mediators (ibid).

A principal manner by which the conflict has become self-perpetuating is through the establishment of economies of war. By 2001, war spending accounted for forty percent of the government budget (Uyangoda, 2003a) In regions of the rural south, the army has become a primary employer. Widespread corruption within the military and the government have led to profitable largesse related to military procurement. Elements of the Sri Lankan military even profited from trading prohibited items with the LTTE during the economic embargo of the north which lasted until January 2002. Corruption leads to increased inter-group tensions in Sri Lanka due to lack of equitable access to resources, as well as further undermining democratic institutions of government.

The LTTE economy is even more strongly linked to the conflict. The scale of international funding from the Tamil diaspora is difficult to know with any certainty, with outside estimates ranging to over ninety percent of the organization's funds (Chalk, 2001), The organization has a well-organized and dedicated following in its diaspora

communities throughout the world. The largest of these communities is in Toronto, Canada (Cheran, forthcoming).

The LTTE also profit through their control over territory. The LTTE maintain power in the areas under their control both through the use of coercion and through the legitimacy they gain in their perceived role as protectors of the Tamil people. The LTTE operates a parallel government structure and taxation system not only in areas which it directly controls, such as the Wanni, but in other areas of the North and East in which it has influence. This legitimacy is dependent upon the continuation of a military threat.

The LTTE has consolidated its position as the dominant insurgent group representing the Tamils by the use of brutal, repressive tactics against both the government and competing Tamil resistance organizations since the 1970s. Absolute control by LTTE leader Velupillai Prabakharan remains characteristic of the organization today (Bush, 2002). The LTTE has repeatedly confronted the much larger Sri Lankan military successfully, and is famous for tactics such as frequent political assassinations, suicide bombings by the 'Black Tiger' brigade, and deploying high numbers of female cadres in combat roles (Gunaratna, 2001).

The Sri Lankan war economy has international dimensions. Sri Lanka has become an important consumer of arms and military services, purchasing from countries such as Israel. The LTTE has established trading relationships with insurgent groups in various countries, including the Abu Sayyaf of the Philippines. The LTTE operates a fleet of merchant ships through which it facilitates its international trade and arms smuggling (Goodhand, 2001).

Peace process or pause in conflict?

The current peace-process mediated by Norwegian negotiators started with a cease-fire between the government and the LTTE in February 2002. Direct talks between the protagonists were suspended in April 2003, and to date have not resumed. No peace treaty has been signed, nor have any constitutional changes which would be part of such a treaty been proposed at the level of the Sri Lankan government. Strong pressure within both the Tamil and Sinhalese political structures and from the international donor and diplomatic community encouraged the start of the peace-process in 2002. Many of these pressures did not exist at the time of the 1995 peace process (Bush, 2002; Perera and MacSwiney, 2002). Prime Minister R. Wickramasinghe's government was faced with an economy that had gone into recession for the first time since the start of the conflict, strongly impacted by the LTTE attack on the international airport in July of 2002. The government benefited from the active support of the Sri Lankan military, unlike the SLFP in 1995. The LTTE faced financial constraints due to diminishing remittances from the Tamil diaspora. They also had to contend with an international political environment dominated by an anti-terrorist agenda. For the first time, the LTTE publicly abandoned its realist stance and suggested that it might accept a reinterpretation of self-determination to mean internal self-determination, not secession (Uyangoda, 2003a).

The peace-process faced serious obstacles, however. There is considerable scepticism as to the sincerity with which the UPFA government is calling for renewed peace talks (Uyangoda, 2004). A central obstacle to the resumption of talks is the form and level of autonomy that might be granted an LTTE administration. President Kumaratunga cited the proposal by the UNF government of the ISGA with the LTTE as the reason she dissolved parliament in the fall of 2003. The SLFP's partners in the

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governing alliance, the JVP, takes an even stronger position against the ceding of any power to the LTTE. The defeat of the UNF government in April 2004 can be seen as an indication that despite years of war, upon stabilization of the economy the Sinhalese majority were not ready to make substantial changes to achieve resolution of the conflict.

A further obstacle to the resumption of peace talks is division within the LTTE. In March 2004, the LTTE Eastern commander Colonel Karuna declared independence from the LTTE claiming that the LTTE's Northern-origin leadership exploited Tamils in the East of the country. While the secession was quickly suppressed, Karuna escaped to Colombo with the assistance of the Sri Lankan government. Karuna's continued presence in Colombo is a central complaint of the LTTE. The GoSL officially denies harbouring Karuna. During the summer of 2004, there were regular assassinations between partisans of the LTTE and Karuna's faction (Perera, 2004a). The LTTE also continued to assassinate non-LTTE Tamils with impunity. More than one hundred twenty members of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EDPD), a Tamil party which opposes the LTTE, were assassinated since the 2002 cease-fire (ibid).

Increased pressure for peace-building

Despite the recent deterioration in the political context, aid donors in Sri Lanka remain under pressure to adopt programming strategies in support of the country's move towards peace. Proactively engaging with the national conflict is a recent development for most of Sri Lanka' major donors. Previously, donors looked at the conflict as a negative impact on the development process, interpreting the effects of the war on Sri Lanka's social and economic development as a negative externality. Goodhand (2001)

described this as working around the conflict. By 2003, donors had accepted this criticism and were making efforts at change (interview 3). The four and a half billion dollars pledged at the Tokyo Donor Conference, an unprecedented level of aid, was declared to be conditional upon progress in the peace process (Relief Web, 2003; interviews 2 and 13). The use of aid conditionalities in support of peace-processes has become an increasingly common tactic of both bilateral donors and IFIs in recent years (Boyce, 2002).

Changing donor priorities in Sri Lanka have led to both a proliferation of peace-building initiatives and to greater stress on conflict-sensitive aspects of relief and development practices. Initiatives described as conflict-sensitive or peace-building cover a spectrum of strategies including community-level reconciliation programs, rehabilitation efforts, and support for medium and long-term national structural adjustment programs. While some agencies have made substantial investments in developing new capacities, both Sri Lankan and foreign aid agencies with little or no previous experience in the field of peace-building and conflict-sensitive aid programming now compete as experts in this new donor market. Peace-building and related terminology have become so widespread that practitioners express considerable scepticism at the sincerity and effectiveness with which many agencies have adopted new practices (Harris, 2002; interview 12).

The peace dividend and international financial institutions as agenda setters

The IFIs have clearly chosen the peace dividend as their primary form of support for the peace process in Sri Lanka. Support for the peace dividend is a strategy which

entails convincing combatants and their supporters that the material benefits of peace outweigh the possible benefits of returning to war. During a visit to Sri Lanka in early 2003 Mr. Chino, president of the ADB, noted that "In the north, people are anxiously awaiting more tangible peace dividends as soon as possible" (Asian Development Bank, 2003: 1). The importance of the peace dividend was stressed by ADB officials as "the main conflict sensitive approach" of the ADB, and as "necessary to increase the appetite for peace" (interviews 14 and 15).

While donors see the promotion of liberal governance as a long-term, structural approach to ameliorating conflict, the peace dividend is understood as a short-term, urgent and context specific strategy linked to the current peace process. Promotion of a peace dividend has become accepted amongst international donors and INGOs as a primary funding strategy in support of the peace process, especially for LTTE-controlled areas such as the Wanni. As with the well-digging program mentioned above, development programs which would not be considered as viable under their own logic are accepted with lower standards when presented in the form of a dividend. The reason for the predominance of this approach has a lot to do with the dominant role of the International Financial Institutions. Together with Japanese foreign assistance, IFIs account for eighty-five percent of all development funding to Sri Lanka (Goodhand, 2001). Their influence is even greater than this proportion would suggest. IFIs work closely with the GoSL in setting its economic and social policy agendas. In tandem with its more direct engagement with conflict starting in the 1990s, the WB has internationally taken on a more central role as a coordinator of aid (Harmer, 2004). While bilateral

agencies do not necessarily accept their lead, IFIs often assume the role of coordinators of overall official development assistance (ODA) to Sri Lanka.

There are three main IFIs in Sri Lanka. These are the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). To these can be added the Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC). The JBIC is a bilateral funding agency with a larger ODA portfolio than any of the IFIs. As a bilateral agency, domestic Japanese political concerns influence its activities (interview 3). In programming, ideology and association, however, it resembles the IFIs. A deputy of the JBIC in Sri Lanka described JBIC's loan structuring as "very similar to other multilateral donors like the World Bank or ADB" (interview 2).

The agenda-setting role of the IFIs in national level aid policy can be seen in the World Bank's poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) created as a framework for ODA (World Bank, 2003). The Sri Lankan PRSP plan is portrayed as having been developed by the Sri Lankan government, and merely coordinated by the WB and IMF. This process integrates the priorities of these IFIs into national policy. A North-South Institute report states that the PRSP scheme "*re-orders the donor consultation process*, assigning United Nation and bilateral donors the role of stake-holders in a country managed consultation, which the WB and IMF oversee. The shift consolidates the WB's and IMF's leadership role, a shift which other donors question and appear to resist" (Nelson, 2002: 2).

As multilateral agencies mandated to promote economic growth through structural reform, IFIs are intrinsically liberal institutions. Their approach to structural reforms have often contributed to centralization of power and strengthening of exclusionary governance institutions (Stiglitz, 2002). This has left them open to radical

critiques. The PRSP framework was developed partially in response to pressure to make the IFIs more transparent and participatory. The IFIs are frequently criticized as applying standardized economic solutions regardless of situations in the countries where they work (ibid).

The degree to which nationally formulated PRSPs reflect standard IFI practice demonstrates the degree of influence that IFIs have. Nelson notes that "The paradoxical concept of "ownership" means that governments use a WB-mandated participatory process to develop a *national* plan that implements *international* anti-poverty objectives" (2002: 2). It is clear that the PRSP process in Sri Lanka did not entail open and meaningful public engagement. The Alliance for the Protection of Natural Resources and Human Rights in Sri Lanka, a civil society umbrella group, stated that "Contrary to the Fund and Bank's stated commitment to principles of country ownership and participation that are supposed to guide the PRSP process, this document was written to mirror the Fund and Bank's policy recommendations for Sri Lanka, without any consultative process with Sri Lankan civil society" (50 years, 2003: 1).

The development of the PRSP framework is an indication of the influence of the IFIs on the peace process at the national political level. Scale offers potential leverage of the type which smaller donors don't have. Scale is also a factor in how the IFIs approach conflict sensitive programming specific to the Wanni. The large number of initiatives which the IFIs fund make it more practical for the organizations to look at institution-wide policies and practices, rather than micro-level impacts. One WB official interviewed stated that it was more important for the bank to craft the conflict impact of its overall portfolio than to study the conflict impacts of specific projects (interview 13).

The strategies of the IFIs in Sri Lanka are also determined by their institutional structures. As multilateral donors, IFI assistance is principally in the form of concessionary loans to the GoSL. These means that IFIs do not directly engage at the project implementation level. As such, they are a blunt tool for local level influence, particularly in the Wanni. IFIs also have less flexibility in their procedural rules than bilateral agencies. This further affects their ability to cooperate with the LTTE. One ADB official noted how the bank has been unable to award contracts in its work with the LTTE, as the bank was required to offer contracts to true public tender, something the LTTE would not allow. As a result, the project was on hold (interview 14). The mandates of IFIs, as well as their responsiveness to international geopolitical pressures (Boyce, 2002), ensure that they will remain engaged in Sri Lanka whether the conflict resumes or not. While the WB has increasingly decentralized over the last decade, its framework for engagement in countries in conflict centres growth and rehabilitation as primary strategies of conflict resolution, and promotes the initiation of reconstruction activities "as soon as field conditions 'allow'" (Harmer, 2004: 33).

Goodhand's description of the IFIs as working 'around' the conflict referred to agencies that "rarely take conflict into account to any significant extent or they treat it as a 'disruptive factor' to be avoided" (2001: 67). This has changed to the extent that IFIs now generally recognize the importance of working on the conflict and have several initiatives in this direction. The profundity of these changes remains untested, however. The changing funding strategies of the IFIs in Sri Lanka are related as much to the different political context as they are to evolving approaches of the institutions. The two can be difficult to differentiate. Organizations often point to expansion of their activities

into the north as examples of profound organizational change. Several officials were unable to answer how things would be different if there were to be a return to the conflict, however. Citing safety of staff, one JBIC official stated that the agency would not be able to continue operating in the north if there was a return to active conflict (interview 2). An official at the WB felt that a return to war was so unlikely that the bank did not need to seriously examine that possibility in its current planning (interview 13).

CHAPTER 4
PRACTICE UNDER PRESSURE
SUPPORTING THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE WANNI

International aid agencies operating in the Wanni in the summer of 2003 primarily interpreted conflict-sensitive programming as local and regional level support for the national peace process. This chapter examines the conflict-sensitive strategies used by donor agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in the Wanni in the summer of 2003. As noted in the introduction, the peace process as used here does not refer exclusively to formal negotiations between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), known as track one negotiations. The process by which Sri Lanka may move away from a period of violent conflict includes broad changes in societal attitudes and social and political institutions. As with other forms of conflict-sensitive programming, support for the peace process is not a formal objective of most aid initiatives. Instead, aid to the Wanni is carried out under the rubric of rehabilitation and development.

This chapter looks at two main strategies for supporting the peace process: civil society capacity building and support for the peace dividend. The chapter will examine the challenges that each of these strategies currently faces. These include both political pressures and institutional structures that shape donor and aid agency decision-making processes.

To catch a fish

The re-opening of the A-9 highway to commercial and private traffic in early 2002 is frequently said to be the north's most important peace dividend from the current

peace process in Sri Lanka (Sunday Leader, 2002). Most goods in the Wanni became cheaper and more available as a result. The price of fish, however, increased substantially on local markets. Previous to the period of blockade, during which a government military cordon blocked the majority of material goods from entering or leaving LTTE-controlled areas, fish were an important export item from the Wanni to Colombo and tourist markets in the south. With the re-opening of the border, shipments have resumed, driving up local prices. Sri Lankan and international agencies such as the Sri Lankan Red Cross and ECHO have taken the initiative to reinvigorate the fishing industry, largely by means of organizing fishing cooperatives and supplying necessary credit and equipment (interview 5).

In June 2003, I attended a meeting in a coastal village near Puthukkudiyiruppu (PTK) between an INGO, its local non-governmental organization (LNGO) partner, and beneficiaries of their joint program. The purpose of the meeting was to decide the composition of fishing kits to be distributed. Also present at the meeting were two cadres of the Sea Tigers, the naval wing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. One of the sea tigers informally chaired the proceedings, opening the event with a minute of silence and closing with a pledge of naval support for all fishing activities.

The meeting clearly demonstrated the central coordinating role of the LTTE over community level development work by international aid agencies in the Wanni. This echoes the findings of other researchers in the Wanni (de Alwis and Hyndman, 2002). It calls into question the success with which INGOs in the Wanni were practicing conflict resolution approaches such as capacity-building and projects involving substantive and genuine community participation. It further raised questions as to the political neutrality

of INGOs, their legitimization of LTTE authority, and the degree of their insertion in the war economy.

In the LTTE-controlled Wanni, international agencies largely interpret conflict-sensitive programming as being support for and consolidation of the peace process at the local level. They have followed two main strategies: support of community capacity-building initiatives/civil society strengthening programs and support for the peace dividend. Support for community capacity-building and civil society development are not just a strategic tactic of donors; local empowerment and participatory management are central to the mandates and organizational cultures of many of the development organizations which implement them. The LTTE's control over community-based organizations undermines the validity and effectiveness of these types of programs. While there has been a substantial increase in community development programs in the Wanni since the February 2002 cease-fire between the GoSL and the LTTE, lack of political freedom for these programs due to intimidation from authoritarian LTTE officials continues to frustrate attempts by international agencies to foster truly independent civil society organizations.

These frustrations challenge the mandates of many international development organizations working in the Wanni. Nonetheless, there has been little substantial shift in programming. Several of the reasons for this are directly related to donor support for Sri Lanka's peace process. Donor focus on the peace process has induced a repackaging of ongoing programs as peace-building activities. The large funds pledged by international donors in support of the peace process have put supply side (as opposed to needs based) pressure on development agencies to run programs in the Wanni. The manner in which

the LTTE has coordinated aid has also facilitated engagement by aid agencies. LTTE control over community-level development programming has been both well coordinated and structured in a way that nominally satisfies successful outcome indicators set by donors. In addition, the rapidly evolving political situation in Sri Lanka has allowed agencies to hope that greater permissiveness of liberal reform may appear in the LTTE political structure in the future, justifying short-term engagements which do not satisfy normal criteria (interview 5).

Civil society and community empowerment

Development agencies' community empowerment initiatives are designed to support independent, participatory local organizations in playing greater roles in community life, strengthening resilience in the face of ambivalent or reactionary authority. The approach envisions civil society as a counterbalance to state power. The lack of a resilient civil society is of particular concern in the Wanni. During the twenty years of conflict, many Tamil civil society structures, particularly those involved in social activism and conflict mediation, have been significantly weakened or destroyed (Raheem and Gosselin, 2003).

The development of functional civil society organizations is also important in the Wanni given Sri Lanka's historical lack of effective local governance institutions (Wanasinghe, 2003). The government of Sri Lanka has undergone a process of centralization since independence. This change has left local governance institutions weak and unable to respond to local conflict situations. Instead, responses to local conflicts tend to come from the national political level. In the Wanni, centralized control

by the GoSL has been replaced by even more centralized control by the LTTE. Through this political structure, local conflicts are given larger meaning within the national political process (ibid).

There are differing models of how civil society capacity building can contribute to peace-building. Conflict resolution models see civil society as a vehicle to address local tensions without requiring redress to government institutions which may be biased, lack legitimacy, or focused on national issues. Radical views of conflict stress that many root causes of conflict cannot be addressed at the national level of politics. This is especially true in LTTE controlled areas. Without dismissing the necessity of macro-level political solutions, cessation of combat may not prove durable if issues such as economic exclusion and exploitative power relations are not addressed. Issues of human rights and social justice can be addressed by a civil society that has sufficient political space and freedom from fear to agitate (Bauer, Bigdon and Korf, 2003).

Many of the INGOs working in the Wanni are committed to radical, community-based approaches. This is clearly underlined in organization documents. A CARE document outlining their activities in Sri Lanka states that:

> Marginalization or exclusion of certain groups has been a factor in much
> of the social unrest... building social cohesion is an underlying goal of all
> of CARE's projects and is fundamental to our entire Country Program
> strategy. At the community level, projects involve as broad a range of
> community members and community-based organizations as possible
> (2003: 1).

FORUT, another INGO working in the Wanni, reports that "The Mission of FORUT Sri Lanka is to strive to improve the living conditions of the people by acting as a catalyst in building up and strengthening local groups/ organizations" (2001: cover).

The degree to which these organizations have managed to successfully pursue these agendas is different in the Wanni from other parts of Sri Lanka.

The LTTE in control

The current focus on peace-building activities by international donors in Sri Lanka has increased attention on the conflict resolution aspects of village-level development work. There has not, however, been substantial change in the conditions necessary for them to flourish. Projects aimed at strengthening civil society as a form of community empowerment lack the degree of political freedom required to operate in a meaningful manner. The LTTE has successfully consolidated most forms of political power in the Wanni. Consolidation of political control by the LTTE in the Wanni extends to the social level as well. The LTTE has actively tried to shape social transformation during the conflict. A central area of engagement is over Tamil identity and history, which are fundamental in creating a popular perception of the war as a struggle for independence from oppression (De Silva, 1995; Wilson, 2000.). The LTTE has, with varying degrees of success, banished the caste system and challenged conventional gender roles through extensive participation of women cadres in combat. One manner by which the LTTE popularizes its versions of historical events is through videos of major LTTE combat victories, made with hand-held cameras and available throughout the Wanni.

The weakness of existing civil society structures in the Wanni complicates the work of development organizations. The challenge is all the more profound due to the highly effective system of control which the LTTE has implemented over international

relief and development organizations themselves. The political office directly assigned to coordinate international NGOs is the Tamil Planning and Development Secretariat. International agencies also frequently implement directly through, or in conjunction with, the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO). UNICEF, for example, runs a large child-soldier rehabilitation program in cooperation with the TRO. The TRO retains nominal independence from the LTTE. This independence allows the TRO to work with international agencies that are banned from working directly with the LTTE due to the latter's status as a terrorist organization in several countries.

Another form of LTTE control over INGOs is through spatial regimentation. The Wanni is divided up by village, and different international agencies are assigned to specific villages. Agencies are frequently responsible for all relief and rehabilitation activities in the villages to which they are assigned, regardless of the mandate of the agency. Not surprisingly, this leads to different types and qualities of programs being run between neighbouring villages. Two programs supplying fishing kits in villages near Mullaittivu illustrate this point. One program offered kits free of charge, whereas the second village was offered material as part of a micro-credit program (interview 5).

International agencies are required to work in cooperation with local village NGOs. As smaller villages typically have only one local NGO, the allocation of a village is also the designation of a partner NGO. Village NGOs are not truly independent, however. A regional representative for an international NGO in the Wanni noted that the main reason most local NGO partners can claim to be 'non-governmental' is that the LTTE is not an official government (interview 10). Employees of these organizations are at times chosen for, or transferred between, local NGOs by the TRO. The TRO pays

salaries in some of these organizations. Through this system, local NGOs represent an extension of LTTE political control.

By requiring that development agencies cooperate with local organizations which are presented as independent, the structure of political control in the Wanni nominally fulfills project requirements for local partner participation. Time pressures from donor agencies further encourage participation in the structure. Donor commitments are commonly based on one-year cycles. To increase pressure on these short cycles, one LTTE tactic has been to introduce a series of delays early in the project cycle, forcing implementation to be completed in a rush to meet deadlines (interview 5).

By co-opting local capacity-building efforts of international agencies, LTTE control over aid programs in the Wanni calls into question the validity of participatory processes. Attempts to follow a community empowerment agenda independent of local authority quickly run into problems in the LTTE-controlled Wanni. De Alwis and Hyndman (2002) note that even standard development practices such as participatory rural appraisals and rehabilitation of schools can lead to negative outcomes, as personal information from such appraisals can fall into the hands of the LTTE, and that "entire classes of students have disappeared to serve as LTTE cadres under the leadership of their teachers" (2002: 9). Development projects aimed at strengthening civil society are not new to the region. The LTTE is well aware of the human rights and social justice agendas that international development agencies support and the techniques which they employ to advance them. They are equally aware of the challenge represented by conflict-resolution structures which they do not control. Attempts by development agencies to form truly independent reconciliation processes are actively frustrated. In one

example in the spring of 2003, after a UN agency conducted independent community mobilization exercises to form peace awareness groups, the sole participant to show up at the subsequent meetings was a representative of the LTTE's political wing (interview 10). The LTTE's ability to control information-gathering in the Wanni is clear.

A question of political space

While the LTTE's structure of controlling aid to the Wanni for its own ends is both effective and well coordinated, the organization is not as monolithic as popular imagery suggests. International development agencies running projects in the Wanni continue to debate how much political freedom exists to run community-level capacity-building programming. While the March 2004 split within the LTTE led by Colonel Karuna was quickly suppressed, it is an indication of regional differences within the LTTE. There is variation between districts both in degree and structure of political control and in approaches practiced by local authorities.

Recognizing the difficulties with establishing new, independent community-based civil society organizations, international agencies pursuing capacity-building strategies find two potential approaches. The first of these is through the existing local NGO structure. While the LTTE may be ultimately in charge, the motivations and impacts of individuals working for local NGOs should not be dismissed. Through personal relationships, cooperation on development projects with international agencies, and cross-over in staff between local and international structures, approaches of local NGOs evolve over time. Personal contact is important; people working for local NGOs often play a variety of leadership roles in the community beyond their official duties.

Opportunity can also be seen in the LTTE's current process of structural transformation. During the current cease-fire the LTTE has been expanding its civil-governance role. This means that people in new positions of authority are establishing new institutions and learning new forms of governance. Programs taking aim at these opportunities include non-confrontational training in rights-based approaches and study tours of LTTE authorities examining liberal forms of governance elsewhere (Perera, 2004b). Perera notes that LTTE administrators are "being provided with educational opportunities within the Wanni that subscribe to the basic norms of academic freedom without censorship." He further sees a role for teachers to "deepen and widen this commitment so that it does not stay at the level of mere tokenism" (ibid: 1).

Such initiatives are attempts to transform the LTTE's rigid authoritarian structure, without challenging the structure itself. These opportunities remain the exception rather than the rule. Autonomy is often lacking at the level of community-based organizations, and even door-to-door needs assessments reveal pre-determined answers. One development agency in the Wanni tried to get around this obstacle by arriving at a pre-arranged assessment with numerous staff who then quickly scattered throughout the village to conduct informal interviews (interview 10). This novel tactic was not sustainable, however, as it relied upon the factor of surprise.

At times local NGOs have antagonistic relations with the communities which they purportedly represent. A 2003 report called *Informal Dispute Resolution in the Northeast and Puttalam* presents the following description:

> ...the villagers that did speak to the field workers ...were apprehensive
> about talking about how the local NGO functioned, what they felt about it
> or the problems and disputes they faced. Any criticism of the local NGO
> was made out of earshot of other villagers. The villagers who did speak to

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the researchers told them that when they left the village, the members of the local NGO and local LTTE leaders would be informed and would visit the village to make an inquiry (Raheem and Gosselin, 2003: 113).

Agencies striving to implement community-level capacity-building initiatives in the Wanni have more than issues of independence from the LTTE to worry about. Agencies must also bear in mind that civil society structures are not always beneficent forces in conflict areas. Strong civil society organizations, including Sinhala nationalist groups in the south of Sri Lanka, seek to actively spoil the peace process. Independent civil society structures fostered through international development programs do not necessarily become agents of peace and stability.

Peace dividend

All projects in the Wanni, including those aimed at community level civil society organizations, have economic spin-offs. As such, they also fall under the second principal funding strategy of large institutional donors in support of the peace process in Sri Lanka, promotion of a peace dividend. Substantial improvement in standards of living and economic opportunities will, it is argued, decrease the likelihood of people returning to war (Krishnan, 2002).As with most types of economic policy, there is disagreement over the best way to achieve this goal. Strategies range from implementing a series of quick impact projects with immediate material benefits to macro-economic policies designed to maximize Sri Lanka's national economic growth rate (interview 13).

As outlined in chapter two, theories on how the peace dividend contributes to peace vary between ideological positions. Resultant strategies have not been adopted equally across the island. The rehabilitation of the Wanni, site of the majority of the

fighting during the war and containing most of the LTTE territory, has entailed rapid, high-visibility infrastructure projects. Aside from the opening of the A-9 and some water tank rehabilitation, these projects have largely included construction of infrastructure indirectly tied to livelihoods, such as wells and school buildings. Large-scale projects funded through the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), however, have remained largely in the south. Due to the IFI's multinational structure, structural adjustment initiatives are targeted at the GoSL.

Despite the stated importance of fostering a peace dividend, this goal is rarely made explicit in formal program objectives. While projects are frequently promoted due to the positive impact that they will have upon the peace dividend, this impact is nonetheless understood as a secondary effect of projects with different explicit objectives. For example, a well-digging program in the Wanni in the summer of 2003 was run with relaxed implementation criteria as a quick impact project. The project's indicators of success remained the number of wells dug. Impacts on community well-being or perceptions were not examined (interview 5).

Effective methodologies for measuring the impacts of peace dividend spending have not been developed (Smith, 2004). This is complicated in LTTE occupied parts of Sri Lanka by the fact that the GoSL has stopped including the region in national economic statistics. These factors leave plenty of room for unsubstantiated claims and counter-claims as to the scale to which the peace dividend has been realized. Supporters of the strategy point to the resumption of trade between the Wanni and the rest of Sri Lanka as having substantial economic benefits for people living in the North. Detractors claim that there has not yet been visible improvement in the lives of the majority of

people living in the Wanni, and furthermore that those advantages which have materialized have been due to the work of the local population, not from foreign-funded projects. In contrast, donor funds pledged in support of the peace dividend offer very clear figures. By defining rehabilitation and development spending as integral to the peace process, a wide range of activities can be, and are, described as peace-building initiatives. The peace dividend concept allows for large scale, politically visible contributions to be described as supporting the peace effort (Asian Development Bank, 2003).

International financial institutions, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB), have funded rehabilitation and assistance initiatives in the Wanni such as the North East Community Restoration Project and the Unified Assistance Scheme (ibid). As institutions designed to support state-centric, liberal models of governance, international financial institutions have been both hesitant and institutionally unable to commit the much larger amounts of money committed at the Tokyo Conference towards promoting a peace dividend in the Wanni. As IFIs must negotiate loans with national governments, they require clear governmental mechanisms to be responsible for funds committed. Such a mechanism has not evolved for the Wanni (interview 14). IFIs also face long funding approval processes from their boards. In Sri Lanka's dynamic political scenario, this has been a factor precluding major commitments. Attempts by international financial institutions to create a mechanism through which to channel funds to the North have not been politically neutral. The attempt by the United National Front government to establish an interim administration during its tenure is one of the reasons

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leading to President Kumaratunga's dissolution of the government in February 2004 and subsequent call for elections.

Political impacts

Aid programs in support of the peace dividend are not neutral. They have significant economic and political impact in the Wanni. Even assuming that increased regional prosperity would lead to a reluctance to return to war, the questions arise as to who benefits the most from peace dividend projects, and how important regional economic considerations are for the LTTE leadership. The LTTE is a major beneficiary of peace dividend initiatives (interview 2). Programs in the Wanni which put large resources into infrastructure rehabilitation projects, such as well and latrine construction, see significant resources diverted to the regional authorities. Whether increased income from aid sources is a significant deterrent to the LTTE from returning to conflict, or if instead these funds sponsor a build-up of military capacity during a temporary pause in conflict, is unclear. The effects of financial gains for the LTTE on the broader war economy is a pressing issue considering the deterioration of relations between the LTTE and the new Sri Lankan government.

Aid agencies do not seem overly concerned with this possibility. As an example, when a new thirty percent tax was imposed on cement imports into the Wanni in the summer of 2003, there was little protest from donors. The per unit cost for latrine and well construction charged to new international NGOs arriving in the Wanni in the summer of 2003 by their local NGO partners escalated rapidly (interview 10). Many agencies accept such fees as the price they pay for working in LTTE territory (interview

5). A Colombo-based World Bank administrator stated simply that "the Wanni is a trade-off between a peace dividend and losing money to the LTTE" (interview 13).

Relief and development work in the Wanni supports the LTTE in other ways as well. The LTTE's expanding civil governance role has entailed a changing relationship with the Tamil population in the Wanni. As a military force, the LTTE's principal source of legitimacy with Tamil people came from the perception that the LTTE was the only successful protector of Tamils from Sinhalese oppression through the Sri Lankan army. By establishing effective governance and claiming ownership of the reconstruction process of the Wanni, the LTTE has sought new sources of legitimacy (Perera, 2004). Through the supply of resources and publicly visible cooperation, international aid is collusive in this process. Tamilselvan's June 2004 coordination meeting of major aid agencies in the Wanni is an example of the LTTE media's efficiency at publicizing meetings between foreign donors and regime officials (Peace Secretariat, 2004).

Recognizing negative impacts of projects does not negate the importance of continued programming in the Wanni. As discussed in chapter three, the level of destruction caused by the war is readily apparent upon crossing the line of control. The Wanni remains the most war-devastated region of Sri Lanka. Needs-based assessments clearly indicate a role for relief and development organizations. Organizations face strong pressures to operate in the Wanni beyond the benefits of their programs, however. One reason is the concern of organizations to maintain the appearance of neutrality by offering programs in both the LTTE and government-controlled areas. Increased funding opportunities in the Wanni are also an important draw factor as organizations follow donor priorities. Even when awarding projects in the south, donors striving for balanced

targeting of aid look more favourably upon organizations with a presence in the LTTE-occupied regions.

Due to the perceived danger of operating in LTTE controlled areas as well as due to the perceived greater needs in the Wanni due to destruction from the war, organizations with a presence in the Wanni receive greater national and international media coverage. Programs in the Wanni offer increased publicity to potential donors in the countries of origin of INGOs. The Wanni has become, according to one INGO staff, a "sexy" place to go (interview 16). A final organizational consideration is tactical. Given the current political uncertainty, some INGOs feel that they should maintain a presence in the Wanni to respond to a possible resumption of conflict.

Conclusions

The current strategy of support for the peace dividend in the Wanni demands the rapid realization of projects with strong material benefits. The pressure created by this strategy plays into some common development traps. Wells and latrines are built at a blistering pace, leaving no time for proper hydrological assessments, or to involve communities in their creation to encourage longer term maintenance. Doing a tour of wells and latrines near PTK constructed two years previously by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), I found less than half in operation. Most had been rendered unusable from garbage that had been thrown into them. Of those that still held water, several housed turtles or fish. Numerous other wells and latrines in various states of disrepair marked the work of past projects by other organizations. Concurrently, an INGO was contracted by ECHO to build ninety more wells on a nine-month timetable

(interview 5). One strategy for site location for this project was a local water divining technique, which uses a leaf split along its stem.
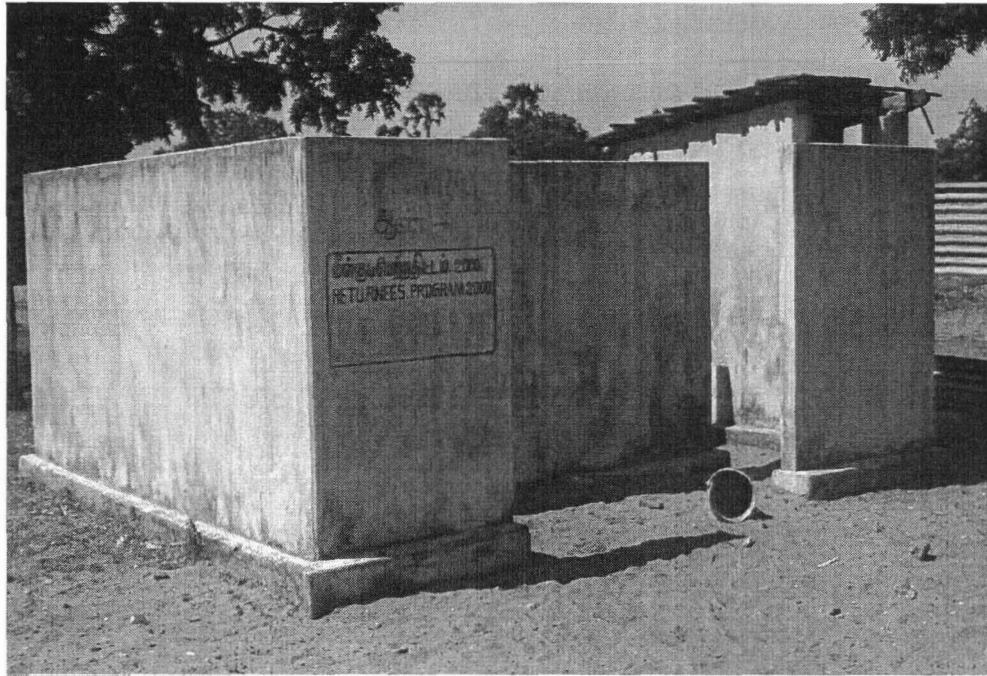
Figure 5 Abandoned Latrines Near PTK

(June 24, 2003)

Humanitarian considerations are an important reason for interventions in the Wanni. This objective is frequently conflated with either a peace dividend or long-term community development work. This confusion is at the heart of many post-conflict aid scenarios, which see an overlap of relief and development activities, often run in a competitive manner between organizations with differing specialties. Busumtwi-Sam (2002) argues that since rehabilitation work does not have the same conceptual clarity of either short-term, top down relief or long-term, bottom up development initiatives, organizations interpret reconstruction activities to fit with one or the other of these fields. Peace-building effects are not necessarily integral to either field.

The experience of development organizations working in the Wanni illustrates both geopolitical and structural forces affecting conflict-sensitive aid work, as well as its theoretical weaknesses. While negative impacts of aid may be minimized, they are nearly impossible to eliminate. Aid agencies need to clearly define their objectives and decide whether the actions that they are engaged in will achieve these goals. This requires an ongoing analysis of their impact upon the changing conflict context. Furthermore, it requires an institutional commitment to follow through on the results of these analyses despite outside pressures. While several international NGOs interviewed in the Wanni in 2003 clearly stated that they were not substantively addressing their community development mandates, only one was seriously debating curtailing their activities (interview 16).

CHAPTER 5
PEACE AND CONFLICT IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This chapter examines assessments of the effects of peace-building and conflict-sensitive aid programs on conflict in Sri Lanka. These assessments are known as Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA). After a survey of the challenges facing the field of PCIA, the chapter examines in detail the initiative to focus PCIAs on national peace-building strategies. The chapter then revisits the strategy of support for the peace dividend, using the strategy as a case study of PCIAs in Sri Lanka. This case study highlights both the lack of robust PCIA methodologies, and the importance of conducting assessments at both the macro and micro levels.

PCIA

At this juncture, consolidating an end to Sri Lanka's war is likely an overly ambitious objective for aid agencies. Analysts of peace-building initiatives often stress the importance of setting achievable objectives and accepting long-term processes of change (Lederach, 1997; Harvey, 1997). The success of peace-building and conflict-sensitive aid programs at achieving modest objectives in Sri Lanka is also a question of debate. Several commentators claim that conflict-resolution mandates adopted by international aid agencies have made Sri Lanka's conflict worse. They advance reasons ranging from exacerbation of socio-economic inequalities to indirect support of the military capacities of the protagonists (Wickramasinghe, 2001; Rajasingham-Senanayake, 2003a; Bastian, 2003).

Aid agencies engaged in peace-building and conflict-sensitive aid programs in Sri

Lanka frequently underline the importance of their work in their literature (CARE, 2000;

World Bank, 2003). Practitioners echo these claims (interviews 2 and 17). The fact that

aid agencies cannot easily demonstrate the impacts of their programs on conflict reflects

problems with assessment. These assessments go by several names, including Conflict

Impact Assessments (CIA), Conflict Resolution Evaluations (CRE) and PCIA. These

terms at times used to refer to specific tools and at times are applied to conflict impact

assessments generally. The term PCIA will be used in this paper to refer to the full array

of assessment practices, which span the project cycle starting from the planning stage to

evaluation. There is great overlap between formal PCIA tools and informal practices

which are part of ongoing project management. In order not to create an artificial

distinction, PCIA will be used in this paper to refer to both formal tools and informal

assessment processes incorporated into all stages of program management.

PCIAs assess and address the positive and negative effects of aid programs on the

conflict environments in which they operate. PCIAs are not limited to programs with

specific peace-building objectives. They also apply to projects designed to be conflict-

sensitive while maintaining focus on different mandates (FEWER, International Alert and

Saferworld, 2004). The field of PCIA is young, rough, and rapidly evolving.

PCIA terminology gained wide currency with the publication of Kenneth Bush's

1998 paper *A measure of peace: Peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA) of*

development projects in conflict zones. Various forms of PCIA predate this (Anderson,

1999; Bush, 1998). An official with CIDA in Colombo stated that while PCIA

terminology is new, the process is not (interview 18). He noted that CIDA has done

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impact assessments since it started peace-building initiatives in Sri Lanka in the mid 1990's.

PCIAs face several serious challenges. The development of effective formal PCIA tools is hindered both by the profusion of types of aid initiatives to be assessed, and the rapid evolution of the peace-building field. Many peace-building projects are postulated to bring about broad political, social, and economic change. Establishing causality between project outputs and these types of change is difficult in conflict environments (Smith, 2004). There is also resistance to assessments at both the organizational and personal levels (Hoffman, 2001). Underlying these factors are differing ideologies and theories regarding the morphology of conflict, the value of conflict and appropriate and effective ways to bring about change. A final challenge to PCIAs stems from their development being driven by donors and aid agencies. Recognizing the power inherent in assessment processes, ownership of PCIAs is contested.

Breadth of field

PCIAs suffer from what Dabelstein refers to as "methodological anarchy" (cited in Hoffman, 2001: 2). One reason for this is the rapid recent development of the field. The government agency German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) notes that their work in Sri Lanka in 2000 was "the first time that 'conflict prevention, conflict transformation and peace building' was agreed upon by Germany and a partner country" (Kievelitz, Kruk and Frieters, 2003: 48). A further challenge to PCIA methodologies is found in the breadth of the field which PCIAs are meant to assess. Definitions of peace-building and

conflict-sensitive programming cover a wide range of possible initiatives. This is

exemplified in the definition of conflict-sensitive programming adopted in the PCIA

resource pack created by FEWER, International Alert, and Saferworld (2004), noted in

Chapter Two. Formal PCIA tools reflect this broad definition. One example is the

Conflict Impact Assessment (CIA) developed by the Conflict Prevention Network (CPN)

for the European Commission. This tool is designed to incorporate a maximum number

of variables into one comprehensive tool. The CIA uses a quantitative methodology to

rank sixteen problem areas which are derived from four root causes of conflict. The

sixteen problem areas are each further divided in sixteen sub-variables which are ranked

for significance by the person doing the assessment on a scale of one to four. The CIA is

designed to be used by "a wide range of desk officers who may not be deeply familiar

with peace-building and conflict prevention matters" (Conflict Prevention Network,

1999: 3).

The CPN tool offers a broad and subjective view on possible courses of action.

Hoffman (2001) states that PCIAs need to maintain a balance between contextual

flexibility and usefulness. The attempt to maintain flexibility has negative consequences.

PCIAs can be shaped to assess desired outcomes. This facilitates the subordination of

peace-building and conflict-sensitive programming to other mandates, allowing aid

agencies to use the new terminology to justify current aid practices and avoid

fundamental changes in approach. The process of relabelling development and

rehabilitation initiatives as peace-building, noted above in the Wanni, is ongoing in the

rest of Sri Lanka as well. National structural adjustment programs and poverty reduction

initiatives of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in Sri Lanka represent broad

organizational mandates (Collier et al. 2003), not a response to the current political

context (interview 5).

Problems with attributing causality

Many peace-building projects are designed to bring about changes in behaviours,

attitudes and relationships. These factors are not easily assessed by standard evaluation

practices. Leonhardt notes that "most recent evaluations of peacebuilding initiatives do

not only conclude that their impact was relatively small; they also stress the hypothetical

nature of this conclusion" (2001: 8). Indictors set by peace-building programs such as

increased sense of security or increased regional inter-communal cooperation are

influenced by a broad range of circumstantial factors. This complicates the task of

attributing causality to project activities.

Of equal difficulty is determining how outcomes of individual projects play into

conflict dynamics at different scales. Positive impacts on conflict at any level, be they

local, regional or national, do not necessarily indicate positive impacts at other levels

(Bauer, Bigdon and Korf, 1998). A classic example of this is when development

programs providing social services free up government resources which are then used to

increase military spending (Anderson, 1999). Problems with establishing causality and

inter-level impacts are primary obstacles to the development of effective PCIA

methodologies.

Disputed ownership

PCIAs have several possible roles in conflict-sensitive and peace-building initiatives. These roles can be contradictory, and as such are contested. For donors and practitioners, they offer tools of analysis, management and improved practice. They offer agencies a means to examine the effectiveness of programming strategies. They can also raise warning flags, highlighting activities that run counter to agencies' mandates. Conversely, PCIAs can be an integral, active part of empowerment-based initiatives aimed at transforming conflict from violent to non-violent forms. Lederach (1997) notes that evaluation is not a neutral, external element to interventions. He feels that it is and should be an intrinsic aspect of peace-building. This approach to PCIAs recognizes the power inherent in evaluation practices. Bush (2001a) criticized donors as having co-opted his initial PCIA model. What he envisioned as a participatory, process-orientated approach meant for use by Southern actors has been turned into a rigid tool of measurement designed to facilitate, not reconsider, the policies and mandates of intervening agencies. He states that "just as EWS (Early Warning Systems) get bracketed by larger political issues of national interest of the major powers, so does PCIA also become 'compartmentalized', so that donors can continue with foreign policies and trade practices which are patently peace-destroying or conflict-creating (ibid: 7)."

Chapter Four described how participatory aid programs, such as civil society capacity building initiatives in the Wanni, require political freedom in which to operate. The same is true for participatory PCIAs. In the North, the LTTE frequently asserts control over local assessment inputs (interview 10). This undermines attempts to use substantive participatory assessment practices. Smith warns against the possibility of cooption of input processes by political actors, stating "beware axiomatic local

ownership" (Smith, 2004: 26). Those implementing participatory PCIAs must be careful that assessments truly reflect the interests of those with whom the aid project intends to work.

Clarity of theory

PCIAs involve mapping meaning onto both conflict and practice. Peace-building and conflict-sensitive aid programs work within theoretical frameworks describing conflict, means of effecting change, and desired results which change should bring about (Church and Shouldice, 2003). While extensive theoretical analysis is frequently done by aid agencies at upper levels of management, the theoretical underpinnings of peace-building programs which advance liberal, realist, and radical ideologies are rarely made explicit in either conflict analyses or in project proposals for interventions in conflict situations. External evaluators may hold different theories than practitioners both about the nature of conflict and about ways to bring about change in conflicts. Lederach notes that "strategic and responsive evaluation... require(s) tools that help us clarify and evaluate the theories of change underlying, and the actions envisaged in, the design for peacebuilding." (1997: 137).

Mayer et al. (2003) stress that making the theories which inform programming clear should be an important part for PCIAs. Evaluating these theories is a further challenge. Theories informing peace-building initiatives are often hard to test in individual projects for the same reasons that broad impacts of individual projects are difficult to assess generally; establishing causal links between project outcomes and wider socio-economic and political change is difficult due to the large number of

circumstantial factors. The difficulty with assessing the effectiveness of peace-building

theories increases the importance of external pressures upon strategic planning, including

both geopolitical pressures and the influence of the internal structural dynamics of

implementing agencies.

The role of geopolitics

PCIAs are shaped by similar geopolitical pressures as effect peace-building

initiatives and conflict-sensitive aid programs. Responding to the call for a greater

articulation of theories behind international aid interventions, Bush (2001a) states that aid

programming is shaped more by donor interests than it is by theories of what makes aid

strategies effective. Aid agencies at all levels, from IFIs to NGOs, are under pressure

from donor countries to take a proactive role in addressing Sri Lanka's conflict. The

changing focus of major donors is due to two factors. Despite Sri Lanka's continued

economic growth at the national level throughout the war until 2001, there is new

recognition that ending Sri Lanka's conflict is essential to achieving development goals

and goals of poverty reduction. Links between poverty and conflict are stressed in

analyses by IFIs (World Bank, 2003).

Donor countries are also increasingly motivated by realist concerns of linkages

between intrastate conflicts in countries with high levels of poverty and the security of

Northern countries (Helton, 2002; Shaw, 2002; Collier et al. 2003). This factor has

gained even greater attention since September 11th. Bush notes that "in an increasingly

globalized world, we see *not only* impact of the international on the local, *but also* the

impact of the local on the international. Thus, local-level struggles and events are

increasingly able to transcend their immediate political geography" (2001b: 262). The

importance in national and regional conflicts of funding from diasporas, support for

terrorist groups and globalized networks involved in the arms trade and in illicit resource

markets have changed previous perceptions that these conflicts are strictly local issues

(Grant, 2002; Hyndman, 2003; Shaw, 2002).

The role of institutional structures

Institutional structures also play a major role in shaping PCIAs. The influences of

these structures are not always recognized, with the result that strategies adopted are

assumed to have been chosen due to their efficacy at achieving objectives. Project time

frames, the international management structure of foreign aid agencies, and competition

amongst practitioners for aid resources all shape the types of initiatives selected. An

example can be found in Puttalam district of western Sri Lanka. An audit of peace-

building activities amongst 70 NGOs in Puttalam district found that

> ...a number of these agencies exist only to attract funding rather than
> address community needs. One could view many existing agency
> objectives and project portfolios more as legacies of recent donor trends
> then reflective of constituency needs (Harris, 2002).

A parallel exists amongst international NGOs (INGOs).

Another structural factor shaping both aid initiatives and PCIAs is one which

Prendergast refers to the 'law of the tool'. This law holds that "The nature of a response

is in a large part dictated by the tools at hand" (1996: 7). This process can be seen in

linkages drawn by the World Bank (WB) between poverty reduction strategies and

increased political stability. Collier et al. describe civil war as a failure of development,

noting that "where development succeeds, countries become progressively safer from

violent conflict" (2003: 1). Setting the stage for the *type* of development advocated, they note that income *inequalities* have no impact on the propensity for conflict. These linkages make the WB's ongoing mandate of poverty reduction synonymous with its newer objective of engagement with conflict. Substantive analysis of the links between poverty reduction and conflict stabilization in Sri Lanka have not been done, however.

PCIA and national strategies

Critics of PCIAs claim that the practice has not been able to overcome the challenges it faces. Hoffman (2001) suggests that effective PCIA methodologies have yet to be developed. Smith goes even further by concluding that "assessing the peacebuilding impact of an individual project is impossible" (2004: 59). One response to these criticisms has been to use PCIAs as tools in support of ongoing consolidation of aid programs under cohesive national strategies. An exhaustive study of peace-building projects by four major donors, the *Utstein Report* (ibid), calls for a shift in focus of assessments from project-level PCIAs to PCIAs for national peace-building strategies. It notes that "Impact assessment... should be removed from the project evaluation level and explored instead at the strategic level, asking whether the intervention strategy as a whole is working" (ibid 2004: 14). This call fits current donor trends towards greater 'policy coherence', integrating security, economic, and aid policy. A summary of Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) peace-building strategy by president Paul Thibault reflects this trend. He states that:

> We need to address peacebuilding multilaterally through our different
> channels – diplomacy, development and defence... CIDA gives
> approximately $100 million per year to other government departments to

work in compatible areas and to create programming and policy coherence
in key geographic areas overseas (2003: 3).

Reinforcing cohesive national peace-building strategies is an important project,

but it is not a substitute for assessing impacts of local-level projects on conflict. Despite

its faults, ongoing PCIA is an intrinsic part of conflict-sensitive aid at all scales. The

daily engagement of local aid projects with political authorities and divided communities

have import in Sri Lanka's highly volatile, regionally distinct conflict. Local conflict

contexts need to be addressed so that they do not disrupt the national peace processes

(Rupesinghe, 2003a). Currently, project-level impact assessments in Sri Lanka are

primarily informal processes, based on personal experience and judgement. Even

practitioners experienced with formal PCIA techniques note that personal understanding

and relationships remain their primary means of interpreting project impacts (interviews

12 and 19). Critiques of current PCIA practice mean that the scope of PCIA tools needs

to be adapted to specific scales of implementation.

PCIA in Sri Lanka

Examination of aid's negative impacts on Sri Lanka's conflict should be informed

by aid's role in Sri Lanka's socio-economic and political evolution since independence.

As instigators of change, including increased social and economic disparities and

physical displacement, development projects are frequently the source of conflict at both

the local and the national level. Negative impacts of specific aid projects can be directly

linked to the evolution of Sri Lanka's conflict. An important instance is the Accelerated

Mahaweli Dam and Irrigation Project mentioned in Chapter Three. This project is

frequently pointed to as an important source of rising tensions between Tamils and Sinhalese during that period (Brun 2003; Seneviratne and Stavropoulou, 1998).

Formal PCIAs have been used in Sri Lanka for over a decade. The 'Do No Harm/Local Capacities for Peace' initiative, developed by Mary Anderson of the Collaborative for Development Action, ran some of its early projects in Sri Lanka in collaboration with CARE in 1997. This approach entails identifying and acting upon positive and negative 'connecting factors' in conflict environments (Anderson, 1999). *Do No Harm* has since become established internationally as one of the most popular approaches to designing and assessing conflict-sensitive programming. In the past few years, PCIAs have gained greater importance amongst Sri Lanka's donors (Mayer et al. 2003). Recent studies and initiatives have been run by the Centre for Policy Alternatives, Swedish International Development Assistance, GTZ, the Berghoff Institute and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in cooperation with the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA).

Despite these initiatives, the large majority of relief and development agencies in Sri Lanka do not use formal PCIA techniques to examine their programming. This is not just a reflection of its methodological difficulties. There is also active resistance to assessment. Hoffman (2001) notes that many organizations resist assessment for fear that their strategies will be shown to be ineffective. Another reason for resistance is that PCIAs are perceived to increase the complexity of project management. One director of a relief agency suggested that adopting a conflict-sensitive approach would require developing a new guide manual, and that the organization was too bureaucratic already (interview 20). An additional concern is that many of the larger international

organizations, especially those which work closely with the government, are wary of offending their partner organizations. Demanding conflict-sensitive approaches from political organizations is highly sensitive. An official at the WB noted that as a young European dealing with government ministries, there was resentment of his calls for greater conflict sensitivity. People interpreted his calls as criticism that government departments had discriminatory hiring practices towards Tamils. The WB official insisted that a more subtle, savvy approach was required (interview 13).

The WB official's comment reflects the importance of personal experience and relationships in conflict-sensitive programming. Most practitioners talked with, including in larger organizations with exposure to PCIA methodologies, described personal experience and judgement as their principal source of knowledge and analysis of the impact of their programs on the conflict (interview 21). A director of a Sri Lankan research group suggested that "our PCIA is accumulated experience in Sri Lanka, with awareness of parallel processes in the world" (ibid). Several organizations further claimed that personal experience was the only realistic way to operate. This opinion was shared by people working both in community reconciliation initiatives and at IFIs (interviews 13 and 17). The director of a UN conflict-resolution program stated that due to the complexity of the Sri Lankan context, a thorough, formal conflict analysis was unrealistic. Even if a proper conflict assessment could be done, because of the dynamic nature of the conflict context it would only be a snapshot. He felt that this approach would be of limited usefulness (interview 12).

PCIA, scope and scale

Smith is very clear in his dismissal of project-level PCIAs. In reference to ongoing attempts to develop PCIAs, he states that "*we should simply admit failure. So far as we know, there is no way to assess the impact of individual projects and we should therefore stop trying to do it*" (2004: 52). Smith's point is overly broad. Ongoing assessment of the impact of aid projects on local conflict context is intrinsic to program management, even if not done as a formal PCIA exercise. PCIA training sessions in Sri Lanka often start by recognizing ways in which aid projects are already conflict-sensitive. These include the personal experience, skills and relationships of practitioners (Fewer et al. 2003b; UNHCR, 2003b). In order to devise PCIA tools to improve upon current practice, the strengths and weaknesses of PCIAs should be differentiated at local and national levels. Some of these factors have been laid out in Table Two.

Table 2   Strengths and Weaknesses of PCIA at Different Scales

	Strengths	Weaknesses

Project Level PCIA	□Contextual knowledge
	
	□Personal skills/relationships
	
	□Awareness of local impacts
	
	□Responsive to local conflict dynamics
	
	□Local ownership/ can be integrated as part of project implementation
		□Lack of national perspective
		
		□Personal bias
		
		□Inability to measure social/ political/ economic impact
		
		□Susceptible to local political influence
		
		□Knowledge difficult to institutionalize
		
		□Institutional structures
		    -responses shaped by tools available
		    -projects shaped by organizational
		       interests

National Strategic PCIA	□Supports a national peace-building strategy
	
	□Greater resources available
	
	□Less susceptible to local political factors
	
	□Greater ability to measure social/ political/ economic impacts
	
	□Institutional structures
	    -can shape overall portfolio
	    -economies of scale increase efficiency
		□Blind to local effects in regionalized conflict
		
		□Lack of local ownership
		
		□Susceptible to national/ international geopolitical factors
		
		□Knowledge transfer to field difficult
		
		□Institutional structures
		    -responses shaped by tools available

Project level PCIAs have several weaknesses. Reliance upon personal experience

as a primary means of assessment presents obvious dangers. People have a natural

tendency to believe in the importance of work that they are doing, and to justify actions

already undertaken. Reliance upon personal experience is open to the critique that people

avoid assessment for fear that it will show that they are not achieving their objectives

(Church and Shouldice, 2003). Local PCIAs are also subject to local political influence,

both through manipulation of the assessment process, and to the extent PCIA

practitioners have greater vested interests in project success than in broader outcomes.

Project level PCIAs also have strengths. Foremost amongst these is simply that

they analyze conflict from local and regional perspectives. Maintaining both national and

local level analysis is crucial in Sri Lanka's highly regionalized conflict, where tensions

over local issues can lead to national destabilization. A CARE strategy report notes that:

> Because of this potential discrepancy in issues between the various
> conflict affected regions, a regular and thorough situation analysis is
> important to ensure that CARE's work in the regions are appropriate and
> relevant. Such a situation analysis will not only highlight the issues that
> afflict each of the conflict affected regions but also provide a broader
> picture of the regions as a whole, so that a more comprehensive picture of
> the process towards peace and the overall changes and implications of
> such changes that one region may have on another can be determined
> (Care, 2003b).

The difference between project and national level PCIAs is not just in the quality

and quantity of information which can be gathered. If well designed and implemented,

project-level PCIAs allow for participant ownership of assessment practices. Local

PCIAs can also be designed as integral parts of peace-building and conflict-sensitive

development projects. CARE's participatory Design, Monitoring and Evaluation (DME)

process is an attempt at this (ibid). PCIAs of national peace-building strategies are

definitively orientated towards donors and aid agencies.

Developing cohesive national peace-building strategies is an important objective.

Macrae (2001) notes that rehabilitation activities are often highly 'projectised', and that

the advancement of individual projects can replace national rehabilitation strategy. Smith

states that "with a strategic deficit, however good each individual activity is, there is a

deficiency of control, therefore of responsibility and accountability, and it is less likely

that the goals of policy will be achieved" (2004: 44). PCIAs conducted at the level of national coordination have greater time and monetary resources available for in-depth analysis. These assessments can also be a useful resource for smaller agencies with less capacity to sustain ongoing assessments.

PCIA and the peace dividend

The strengths and weaknesses of PCIAs can be seen in attempts at assessing the strategy of support for the peace dividend as adopted by international agencies in Sri Lanka. Supporting the peace dividend is a strategy which appeals to imprecise, difficult-to-measure theories. Despite support for the peace dividend being a central peace-building strategy for donors, the peace dividend's impact is more a matter of public debate than it is of systematic assessment. There is frequent discussion in academia and in the media about whether or not a peace dividend has materialized, and if so, whether or not it has benefited those with a stake in the conflict (Adiga, 2003). This is particularly true in the North and East. While there is substantial construction activity in Killinochichi, donor agency and NGO staff have differing opinions about whether or not there have been widespread improvements in people's standards of living in LTTE-occupied areas. Opinions over the degree of improvement in livelihoods ranged from substantial (interview 11) to none (interview 12). While several INGOs have carried out livelihood surveys (interview 10), during interviews most officials' responses were made based on personal judgement without reference to substantial analysis at the organizational level. The measurement of improvements in livelihoods is complicated by a paucity of baseline information from before the cease-fire (ibid).

The difficulty of assessing the impacts of the strategy of support for the peace dividend means that practice easily accommodates geopolitical considerations. It allows for the uninterrupted continuation of previous initiatives, and the pursuit of mandates not related to the peace process. Bastian states that the linkage of national economic mandates with the peace process has allowed the UNF government to carry out financial reforms which the IFIs had been pushing for several years (interview 22). Promotion of the WB's international poverty reduction goals are further facilitated by perceived linkages between economic prosperity and peace, which allows for a re-packaging of these programs as peace-building initiatives. The flexibility offered by the strategy of support for the peace dividend also reduces the need for constant analysis and institutional dynamism. Short of a return to major combat or a complete disengagement of the LTTE from the donor community, evolution of context does not require a change in basic strategy. Increased and increasing prosperity are seen as foundations of the current détente.

The debate over the scale of the peace dividend does not get at the deeper question of how changing prosperity influences the propensity for Sri Lankans to return to war. It is clear that not all investments in Sri Lanka contribute to a furthering of the peace process. A primary concern today is the manner in which foreign funds contribute to building capacities for future war. This is true in both the government and the LTTE-controlled areas. This task is complicated by the fact that the economic structure and war incentives within the LTTE are not well known. Goodhand and Atkinson note that without better empirical understanding, "it is unlikely that outsiders will be able to affect

incentive systems to transform the war economy into a peace economy..." (2001: 30).

This statement underlines the need for project level PCIAs.

Conclusions

A central difficulty facing PCIAs is achieving operational usefulness while remaining sufficiently comprehensive to examine the breadth of potential impacts on conflict. This difficulty is particularly acute for organizations adopting conflict-sensitive approaches to programming, as opposed to those engaged in explicit peace-building activities. Most PCIAs are sufficiently broad and subjective to allow for conflict-sensitive factors to be easily subordinated to organizational and political considerations. Despite this subordination, conflict-sensitive aspects of programs are often used as a justification for programming. Lacking clear assessments of its positive and negative impacts on conflict at both national and regional levels, support for the peace dividend is a clear example of this process.

The argument for tailoring PCIAs to specific scales recognizes that certain objectives originally envisioned for project PCIAs must be abandoned. The ability to discern broad impacts of local projects must be accepted to be outside of the ability of current tools to detect. Limiting the scope of project PCIAs is not a loss to project level assessment, as these objectives are not currently being achieved. Limiting the scope of project PCIAs focuses them on their areas of strength, recognizing where current assessments are weakest. Likewise, the development of national PCIAs needs to be informed by the weaknesses of practice at the macro level. Foremost amongst these is the influence of geopolitical pressures external to the peace-building mandate.

The manner in which the strategy of support for the peace dividend has developed in Sri Lanka demonstrates the importance of project PCIAs. National strategies of IFIs focusing on poverty and livelihoods are less concerned about the transfer of resources from individual projects to the LTTE than are the practitioners who manage the projects from which resources are being taken. It is at the project level that contradictory outcomes produced by competing theories informing strategies are often most apparent. These results need to be more systematically integrated into national strategies. Project PCIAs are also important for addressing political issues relating to minority groups sidelined in the main peace process. Tensions around the continued displacement of Muslims from LTTE-controlled areas of Sri Lanka, whose right to return has consistently been underemphasized in the peace process, offers an example (Hasbullah, 2001).

Measuring causal linkages between aid interventions and broad social, political, and economic change remains a challenge. In an attempt to address this difficulty, Lederach (1997) commends theory-based evaluation. This tool, originally developed by Carol Weiss for social programs, examines the implicit and explicit theories of change behind practice. Theory-based evaluation has not yet proven itself to be a robust methodology. Having conducted an extensive review of literature, Church and Shouldice claim that "to date there is not a dominant application of the theory-based approach; nor is there one single method for uncovering the theory of change underpinning an intervention" (2003: 41).

There are various proposals to address the problem of establishing causality. Leonhardt (2001) surveys four current techniques: 'Sequential analysis is a longitudinal study of relationships between interventions and desired change; 'matching methods'

derives best practices from conflict analyses; 'meanings and perceptions' underlines the

fact that perceptions of project impacts are as important in shaping political events as

impacts themselves; 'logical plausibility', which includes problem trees, is a strategy for

designing hypotheses of possible impacts. Smith (2004) states that better methods for

establishing causality may yet be developed. He suggests that game theory and chaos

theory offer promising ways to study social change.

These approaches hold promise. A necessary component of Sequential Analysis is

a dataset of social change over time. One example of this in Sri Lanka is the Peace

Confidence Index produced by the Centre for Policy Alternatives (2004) of Colombo.

This longitudinal survey measures changing attitudes towards the conflict, standards of

living and recent political events, categorizing the findings by Sri Lanka's main ethnic

groups. This type of information could be usefully incorporated into national PCIAs.

The current donor pressure in Sri Lanka for peace-building and conflict-sensitive

aid strategies is an opportunity to further develop PCIA practice. Current practice in Sri

Lanka, however, highlights the danger of aid organizations claiming to be supporting the

peace process as a justification for different organizational interests. While there is

abundant academic discussion of the historical negative impacts of aid work on Sri

Lanka's conflict (Bastian, 2003; Rajasingham-Senanayake, 2003a), little formal

retrospective analysis has been done within aid agencies. A parallel can be drawn with

the current situation. If there is a resumption of conflict in Sri Lanka, it is unlikely that

PCIAs will be done to assess the role of current aid strategies in the collapse of the peace

process, or of how aid organizations may have increased capacities for war. For agencies

recognizing their potential negative impacts on the conflict, PCIAs are a necessary

component of engaging in responsible aid practice. Support for the peace dividend offers advantages to larger aid organizations who have little accountability for their strategies if conflict were to resume. If Sri Lanka does return to war, it is unlikely that a retroactive analysis by an IFI or other major donor would determine that the strategy of support for the peace dividend had been a mistake, and try to document ways in which the policy contributed to a worsening of future conflict. For obvious reasons, these assessments need to be made now.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the differences and contrasts between peace-building and conflict-sensitive aid strategies in Sri Lanka. The lack of clarity between competing ideologies, theories, and resultant strategies is stressed as an important hindrance to the effectiveness of many agencies. Suggestions for improving practice are laid out in the policy section of this chapter. The chapter then relates the thesis' findings to the broader framework of international aid.

Ideas before strategies

This thesis has examined several challenges facing conflict-sensitive aid and peace-building programs in Sri Lanka. Among these, emphasis has been placed on the lack of conceptual clarity informing conflict-sensitive and peace-building initiatives. As Smith notes in his study of Utsein countries, "no U4 country has what any of the research teams was prepared to characterise without reservation as "a policy" on peacebuilding" (2004: 42). A minority of aid agencies invest substantial resources into either conflict analysis or into developing cohesive plans of action based on theory. As a result, factors not related to peace-building objectives have substantial influence on programming.

Agencies engaging in conflict-sensitive aid and peace-building programming must address core issues concerning values and mandates. Agencies need to develop functional definitions of conflict, articulate desired and possible objectives, and decide what are effective and appropriate means to bring about change. Recognizing both the constructive and destructive aspects of conflict, agencies must also distinguish between

appropriate and inappropriate forms of conflict. Fundamentally different approaches are indicated depending upon whether agencies simply attempt to mitigate negative impacts of their activities, proactively embark upon projects of conflict resolution, or adopt a mandate of allegiance with disadvantaged actors.

Strategies in conflict

Canadem (2004), a Canadian peace-building recruitment agency, divides peace-building into fourteen separate fields. It presents these fields as complementary activities. In contrast, Table One in Chapter Two of this thesis showed peace-building strategies categorized by ideology, associated with distinct goals. Conflict exists not only between ideologies; strategies also encompass differing and competing goals. This thesis has examined in depth two peace-building strategies used by aid organizations in Sri Lanka: civil society strengthening in the Wanni and support for the peace dividend. Table One found these strategies to be broadly based across ideological categories. Table Three lists the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies, in relation to the four ideologies that this thesis has engaged.

**Table 3   Strengths and Weaknesses of
Sri Lankan Peace-Building Strategies**

	Civil Society Strengthening in the Wanni	Support for the Peace Dividend
Realist	Not Applicable	**Strengths** + Flexible + Rapid **Weaknesses** - Different strategies required at different scales - Requires specific targeting
Liberal	**Strengths** + Contributes to peace dividend + Possible influence on LTTE structure **Weaknesses** - Ignores negative conflict impacts - In conflict with LTTE - Currently weak civil society - Universalized approach	**Strengths** + Flexible + Rapid + Positive spins-offs (such as economic benefits) **Weaknesses** - Different strategies required at different scales - Negative spin-offs (such as corruption) - Overly broad range of strategies
Radical	**Strengths** + Contributes to focused peace dividend + Addresses inequities **Weaknesses** - Ignores negative conflict impacts - In conflict with LTTE - Lack of basic freedoms - Potential back-lash	**Strengths** + Destabilization of power structures + Increased equality **Weaknesses** - Different strategies required at different scales - Entrenched power structures
Conflict Resolution	**Strengths** + Contributes to peace dividend + Possible influence on LTTE structure **Weaknesses** - Ignores negative conflict impacts - In conflict with LTTE - Currently weak civil society	**Strengths** + Positive spins-offs (such as economic benefits) + Opportunity for reduced conflict over resources **Weaknesses** - Different strategies required at different scales - New potentials for competition over resources

While congruency of strengths exists between categories, such as the contribution of civil society strengthening to the peace dividend, Table Three shows clear differences between ideological categories for both civil society strengthening in the Wanni and support for the peace dividend. Liberal theories of civil society strengthening initiatives envision civil society as a stabilizing force within an eventual democratic political structure. Radical theories of civil society strengthening describe community empowerment as an inherently conflictual mechanism for obtaining increased equality.

Both of these potential goals for civil society strengthening were described by practitioners in the Wanni (interviews 10 and 17). Negative impacts of these approaches, including, respectively, strengthening of established exploitative power structures and increased local conflict, can be mutually counterproductive.

Table Three also notes that strategies can encompass several approaches within ideological categories. These approaches are often informed by competing theories. Scale of implementation and appropriate targeting are frequent sources of division within strategies. For example, strategies of support for the peace dividend differ depending on whether the target is the general population or key decision-makers within the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Corrupt implementation of rehabilitation programs can be seen as undermining a popular peace dividend, or can been seen as stabilizing insofar as personal profit of corrupt officials is a deterrent to the resumption of hostilities.

A result of the lack of clarity between diverse and competing theories informing peace-building strategies is that aid agencies and individuals apply several theories simultaneously. An example of this can be seen in debates over the meaning of the peace dividend. While the majority of aid agencies define the peace dividend in economic terms, an official with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) stressed that a meaningful and effective peace dividend entailed improvements in human rights (interview 18). In the following sentence he called the peace dividend a carrot, with the implication that it was an economic process.

Conflict between strategies can therefore be traced to differing ideologies, theories, and to lack of clarity as to which goals and theories inform programming.

Difficulties with assessment further complicate practice. Weak assessments make it difficult for agencies to measure the relative effectiveness of different approaches, either within or between ideological frameworks.

Theories and assessments informing programming attempt to portray peace-building as an empirical process. As such, parallels can be drawn with critiques of science made in the field of philosophy of science. Hoberg (2004) notes that science can be a resource for strategic actors. It both lends credibility to chosen courses of action, and acts as a shield to deflect criticism of ineffective programming (Clark et al. 1998). Due to the difficulties of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA) in producing quantifiable results as to the effectiveness of various strategies, organizations fall back upon theory to justify action. Theory takes on a strategic role.

Conflict and confusion over peace-building strategies help explain the strong influence that pressures external to peace-building mandates have on programming in Sri Lanka. Pressures on the strategies of civil society strengthening in the Wanni and support for the peace dividend, as well as pressures on PCIA, are laid out in Table Four.

Table 4   Pressures on Peace-Building Strategies and PCIA

	Civil Society Strengthening in the Wanni	Peace Dividend	Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments
Political Pressures	□ 'Developmental' relief □ Participatory culture	□ Pressure for neo-liberal economic reforms □ Greater funds for peace-building activities	□ Ownership □ Debate over scale □ Donor need to demonstrate funds are effective
Pressures from Institutional Structures	□ Universalized approach □ Pressure for programs in LTTE- controlled areas □ Donor attempts to 'balance' aid	□ Agenda setting by IFIs □ Use of familiar tools □ ISGA necessary for implementation □ Ease of coordination of large funds	□ Lack of conflict analysis □ Agency need to justify activities □ Difficult to transmit results throughout organization

Peace-building programming differs across Sri Lanka. Theories and ideologies interact with political and institutional considerations to create regionally specific programming. Political pressures have produced different approaches to support for the peace dividend in the North and South of the country. In the South, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) play a more direct role in setting aid agency agendas. Rajasingham-Senanayake (2003b), claiming that the reconstruction of Sri Lanka is shaped by the agendas of international finance and corporate capital, questions the relative importance of the World Bank (WB) over the United Nations (UN) in managing Sri Lanka's reconstruction. She states that "post-conflict reconstruction, a growth industry in world development industry led by World Bank Institutions, is about information asymmetries, global-local hierarchies of knowledge and power and the marketing of myths and models of development" (ibid: 2). In contrast, attempts at using the peace-dividend to advance donor mandates in LTTE controlled areas of the North have been strongly resisted. The failure of the LTTE to appear at the 2003 Tokyo

Conference saw a decrease in attempts by donors to link aid to improvements in human-rights. The IFIs do not have a mandate to put forms of pressure on LTTE fiscal practices such as those that they exert on the GoSL.

Policy suggestions

Conflict-sensitive aid and peace-building programming in Sri Lanka in the fall of 2004 took place in a context of political instability. While there has not been a return to large-scale combat, re-escalation of the conflict remains a strong possibility. Le Billon (2000) notes that contemporary conflicts are often situations of neither total war nor peace, but rather of chronic instability, vulnerability, widespread violence, and recurrent crises. This description is applicable to Sri Lanka. Recognizing the potential for a return to major combat in Sri Lanka does not negate the value of the peace process. Simply in terms of casualties, Rupesinghe (2003b) suggests that in the first year of the cease-fire ten thousand lives were saved and fifteen thousand less people were injured. Aid agencies need to shape programming in accordance with Sri Lanka's protracted conflict by reframing goals. This includes setting achievable objectives.

This thesis has frequently highlighted the lack of clarity informing current programming in Sri Lanka. Both clarity of mandate and clarity of theory informing strategies are necessary for successful interventions. Smith (2004) warns of the danger of slipping into a development 'default mode' in situations where concepts of peace-building are unclear. Conflict resolution requires relevant conflict analysis both prior to and during interventions, as well as meaningful assessment of program impacts. Conflict analyses are difficult and time consuming. They are difficult to translate into policy, and difficult to disseminate throughout large organizations. Due to the dynamism of Sri

Lanka's conflict, conflict analyses quickly become dated. A Humanitarian Policy Group (2003) report states that "detailed conflict analysis remains largely at the margins of most programming in complex emergencies." These difficulties do not negate their importance. Several practices can improve the relevance and accessibility of conflict analyses. Smaller organizations can refer to conflict analyses carried out by larger organizations which have greater resources. Comprehensive analyses which explore the spectrum of root causes of Sri Lanka's conflict currently exist, such as Goodhand's *Aid, conflict, and peace building in Sri Lanka* (2001). Another useful approach is to focus analysis to scales relevant to planned interventions. This is of particular importance in Sri Lanka where there is great regional variation in sources of tension. Aid agencies can also focus on developing tools which supplement ongoing informal analysis at the project level. The formalization of the process could be one of the greatest advantages of adopting tools such as the brainstorming techniques described in Anderson's (1999) book "Do No Harm".

These suggestions, pooling of resources, scale specificity, and building on current practices, are equally relevant for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIAs). PCIAs can be improved upon at both the national strategic level and the project level. Organizations can focus on developing tools which supplement the contextual knowledge which practitioners currently have and use. The structural introduction of explicit tools can ensure that these processes become more systematic, explicit, and collaborative. They can also ensure that assessments refer to mandates, theories of change, and selected strategies.

A further priority for international aid agencies in Sri Lanka is to explicitly recognize and address pressures on programming external to peace-building goals. Some of these pressures may be important and have value in their own right. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) need to look after their strategic interests in order to maintain organizational capacity and effectiveness. These pressures and interests should not be confused with those aspects of programs which make them conflict-sensitive, however. The peace dividend should not become a default peace-building strategy due to its practical advantages for agencies scaling up programming to meet new funding opportunities.

Broader issues

While Sri Lanka has experienced an increase in programs described as peace-building and conflict-sensitive, there has been only a moderate shift in programming strategies. A parallel can be drawn between this process and development programming in Rwanda previous to the 1994 genocide. Uvin (1998) describes how, despite escalating violence in the years before the genocide in Rwanda, international aid agencies continued with entrenched development practices which contributed to structures of violence and exclusion. He states that "At no point did the aid community sit down and try to fundamentally redefine its missions, goals and functioning" (ibid:237). Uvin further notes that only one percent of foreign aid in Rwanda prior to 1994 was directed to intervene "in favour of forces of moderation and compromise" (ibid:237). This is an example of the path dependency of international aid.

Peace-building nomenclature has since evolved more than practice. If definitions of peace-building currently used in Sri Lanka were applied to the Rwandan context

before 1994, a majority of aid would now qualify as peace-building. The equation of development with political stability greatly broadens the definition of peace-building. Support for the peace dividend as currently pursued in Sri Lanka further dilutes the concept. While Rwanda is an extreme example of failure by aid agencies to engage with conflict, agencies need to remain aware of the aid industry's historical resistance to change due to local factors. One means of addressing resistance to change is to incorporate strategic conflict analysis into evaluation.

Entrenched approaches to aid programming are often closely linked to the entrenched nature of the conflicts in which they operate. Uyangoda (2003a) suggests that separatist wars never really end. As important to the evolution of aid programming in Sri Lanka are international trends in the changing relationship between humanitarian relief and development. The scenario of protracted violence and recurrent crises undermines the dichotomy of relief during times of war and development during times of peace. Donor use of aid to avoid political involvement in protracted crises, as well as increased focus on developmental values of participation, have diminished the importance of achieving political stability and legitimacy prior to movement from relief to development modalities. The distinction between relief and development has been blurred, with developmental approaches such as local ownership and capacity building being implemented even in contexts of acute crisis. Initiatives such as these are referred to as 'developmental humanitarianism' (Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2003). Macrae (2001) considers developmental humanitarianism to have become orthodoxy amongst aid agencies. She notes that there is a consensus that "developmental approaches can and should be adopted during conflict. Developmental approaches are

now seen to have a role not simply in peace-building, but also in peace-making (ibid: 157)."

Programs such as civil society strengthening in the Wanni are examples of developmental humanitarianism in Sri Lanka. The lack of clarity as to strategies of implementation means that programming is as much as reflection of international trends as it is a proactive engagement with Sri Lankan peace-building opportunities. The end result is a serious undermining of peace-building and conflict-sensitive practice in Sri Lanka.

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APPENDIX 2
CANADEM PEACE-BUILDING CATEGORIES

(Canadem 2004)

□ Conflict Resolution

□ Civil participation in Peace-Keeping operations

□ Physical Security

□ Personal Security

□ Institutional/Civil Capacity Building

□ Humanitarian Relief and Emergency Assistance

□ Social Reconstruction

□ Early Warning

□ Environmental Security

□ Economic Reconstruction

□ Human Rights

□ Governance and Democratic Development

□ Training

□ Policy Development, Assessment and Monitoring

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INTERVIEWS

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2. Interview with an official of the Japan Bank of International Cooperation. Colombo, July 16, 2003.
3. Interview with an employee of Japan Centre for Conflict Prevention. Colombo, July 21, 2003.
4. Telephone interview with Sunil Bastian. Colombo, May 7, 2003.
5. Interview with an INGO official. Puthukkudiyiruppu, June 30, 2003.
6. Interview with an INGO official. Puthukkudiyiruppu, June 30, 2003.
7. Interview with a government agent. Killinochchi, July 2, 2003.
8. Interview with a government agent Killinochchi, July 2, 2003.
9. Discussion at Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment Conference. Negombo, June 14, 2003.
10. Interview with an INGO official. Killinochchi, July 1, 2003.
11. Interview with an INGO official. Puthukkudiyiruppu, June 24, 2003.
12. Interview with an official of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Colombo, July 17, 2003.
13. Interview with a World Bank official. July 25, 2003.
14 Interview with an Asian Development Bank official. July 16, 2003.
15. Interview with an Asian Development Bank official. July 18, 2003.
16. Interview with an INGO official in Puthukkudiyiruppu. June 24 2003.
17. Interview with an INGO official in Mannar. May 16, 2003.
18. Interview with a CIDA official. July 23, 2003.
19. Interview with an INGO official. Killinochchi. June 20, 2003.
20. Interview with an INGO country manager. Colombo, May 9, 2003.
21. Interview with a social science research institute director. Colombo, June 4, 2003
22. Interview with Sunil Bastion May 20, 2003.