Healing the Wounds

Rebuilding Sri Lanka after the War

Edited by

Dhammika Herath

Kalinga Tudor Silva

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR ETHNIC STUDIES

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

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International Centre for Ethnic Studies
Colombo and Kandy
ICES

Healing the Wounds: Rebuilding Sri Lanka after the War
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ISBN: 978-955-580-132-4

Printed by: Karunaratne & Sons(Pvt)Ltd
No:67, Industrial Zone,
Katuwana Road,
Homagama,
Sri Lanka.

Printed with VOC free, non toxic vegetable oil-based environmentally-friendly ink.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Adaptation and Development After Persecution and Trauma Model	ADAPT
Beck Depression Inventory	BDI
Cash-for-Work	CFW
Department of Census and Statistics	DCS
Enumeration of Vital Events	EVE
Federation of Social Development Organisations	FOSDO
Focus Group Discussions	FGD
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung	FES
General Certificate of Education	GCE
Government of Sri Lanka	GOSL
Grama Niladhari	GN
Internally Displaced Person	IDP
International Centre for Ethnic Studies	ICES
International Crisis Group	ICG
International Labour Organisation	ILO
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam	LTTE
Ministry of Economic Development Emergency Northern Recovery Project	ENREP
Non-Governmental Organisation	NGO
North Central Province	NCP
Officer in Charge	OIC
Penn/RESIST/Peradeniya Competencies Scale	PPR-CS

Penn/RESIST/Peradeniya War Problems Questionnaire	PRPWPQ
Psychosocial Assessment of Development and Humanitarian Intervention	PADHI
Post-Traumatic Growth	PTG
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	PTSD
Rural Development Society	RSD
Tamil National Alliance	TNA
United National Party	UNP
United Nations	UN
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR
United People's Freedom Alliance	UPFA
United States of America	USA
United States Institute of Peace	USIP
Women Headed Household	WHH

Preface

This edited volume on *Healing the Wounds: Rebuilding Sri Lanka after the War* is the end product of one-and-a-half years' of research and social interventions in the war-affected north of Sri Lanka. The editors of this volume implemented an action research on Social Networking and Psychosocial Reconstruction in two divisional secretary divisions in two districts of the north, Vavuniya and Mannar. This volume presents the research findings of this programme in addition to providing space to three other researchers in and outside of Sri Lanka to look at the prospects and challenges of post-war reconstruction. It is our hope that research presented here will generate a critical dialogue on the current reconstruction process, the need for psychosocial reconciliation and the issues surrounding the reconstruction process as a whole.

The editors wish to express their sincere gratitude to all the informants, respondents, trainees and beneficiaries of this programme in whose name this programme was implemented. Without their active participation and cooperation, this programme would not have been possible.

The editors take this opportunity to thank the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) for providing generous financial support for the action research implemented through the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), Sri Lanka. We also wish to thank the project coordinators, Mr Rasu Mohan, Mr M. M. M. Rishan and Mr W. M. K. B. Wickramasinghe who worked tirelessly for one-and-half years' on this project. The cooperation extended by staff at ICES, Kandy for the successful completion of the programme was indispensable.

The entire action research programme would not have been possible without important contributions made by scholars and practitioners

in different capacities as trainers, contributors to the training manual, consultants, etc. We mention with gratitude the services rendered by Prof Janet Levalley, Ms Udeni Manel, Dr Sivathas Sivasubramanium, Dr Sivagnanam Suthakaran, Dr Suhanthy Kalai, Mr Kanthan Ramachandran and Mr Nadaraja Sukirtharaj. Further, Mr Shanmugaratnam Senthuran and Sister Rita Kurusumutu and many others provided important logistical support and advice. We also note with gratitude the cooperation extended to us by the Government Agents in Vavuniya and Mannar and the Divisional Secretaries of Nedunkeerni and Manthai-west.

The editors would also like to express their gratitude to Mr Lewis Garland for his excellent contribution to copy-editing and proof-reading of this volume at very short notice and his untiring efforts to meet the deadline. We would also like to mention Dr Harshana Rambukwella for his useful comments on some of the chapters in the volume.

This publication is also the result of generous financial support from USIP and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and we thank them for their contribution and commitment towards the furtherance of academic scholarship and policy relevant knowledge generation.

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Introduction

Healing the Wounds: Challenges in Post-war Social Reconstruction in Sri Lanka

Dhammika Herath

This volume on *Healing the Wounds* brings together scholars from six social sciences disciplines to look critically at the post-war rebuilding of Sri Lankan society. In this volume 'healing' is not limited to physiological or psychological healing but also subsumes recovery from social, economic and cultural distortions and ailments the violence has engendered.

It is important to briefly note the background through which this edited volume has emerged.

This volume has been edited by former and present Executive Directors of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies. The editors of this volume were also the programme directors for an action research program in two districts of the north, namely Vavuniya and Mannar, over a period of one and half years.

This programme, called 'Social Networking and Psychosocial Reconstruction in the North', was funded generously by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). The programme directors diverged from the usual academic practice of pure research to what could be called an 'action research' in which a social intervention was made after an initial pre-test of the social and cultural impact of the war in the two divisional secretary divisions; Nedunkeerni and Manthai West in Vavuniya and Mannar. The study was followed up with a multi-faceted social intervention which included:

1. one year training project
2. exposure visits
3. use of drama for healing
4. monthly mental health clinics

The action research programme begun with the directors undertaking close observations in many areas of the north during which they found signs of mental health stress and possible emotional disturbances. The medical practitioners, state officials and civil society organizations of the districts also agreed that, irrespective of the prevalence of mental health issues and emotional problems, the government health system was ill-equipped to handle mental health issues due to a dearth of human resources as well as material resources. However, the study wishes to note that there are dedicated medical practitioners, mainly psychiatrists, who render a yeoman service under trying conditions. Nevertheless, the government medical system is not equipped with professional counsellors to work alongside psychiatrists and to complement each other when the need arises. There does not appear to be any systematic effort in Sri Lanka to train counsellors. None of the recognized universities offer professional full-time courses in counselling. The courses that are available are not equipped with sufficient numbers of trained lecturers resulting in a dearth of professional counsellors in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the authorities have tended to ignore or even sweep under the carpet the psycho-social consequences of the war in an obvious attempt to disown their own responsibility for such consequences. It was beyond the scope and capacity of this programme to train professional counsellors. Such training would require substantial institutional set up with human and material resources beyond the capacity of a research institution. What we have done however is to bring together a set of experienced professionals from the social sciences and medicine to provide 40 'be-frienders' with basic skills in counselling, social networking and

the identification and referral of people requiring professional psychiatric attention.

Figure 1: A Training Session in Nedunkeerni

The training project selected 40 youth comprising of government officials and volunteers from Manthai-west and Nedunkerni, the two divisional secretary divisions in which the studies and the interventions were made. The selections were made with suggestions from key government officials. Be-frienders or trainee counsellors as they are referred to in this volume, were trained for a period of one year with 12 modules. These training modules were not confined to counselling or related subjects. The modules also covered introductions to simple research techniques to study the villages, social networking, and the use of art for healing. Be-frienders were expected to identify people with emotional and other needs and

engage with people constructively. This engagement ranged from active listening and advice to referring them to appropriate agencies and service providers. The government medical practitioners of the districts, who were also on the teaching panel, worked closely with the programme and the trainees often referred people with serious mental health problems to these medical practitioners.

Many trainees themselves went through a process of transformation during this training. The trainees were also victims of violence and many may have had emotional needs equal or greater to the communities within which they were working.

About half of the trainees were grassroots government officials who contributed to the sustainability of the programme whilst serving people using the training imparted by the project.

These officials are village people who are employed at Divisional Secretary offices of the government of Sri Lanka. We cite below several statements made by the trainees to this effect:

> *"I was very aggressive before. But now whenever I get angry I think about why I'm getting angry. My family members tell me that they see a difference in me. This class (training) has helped me in various ways to perform my job as a GS too". Santhiyagu GS –Gramaniladari*
> *"I am a nervous person from birth. I took part in the leadership training in this class and there I fell down from height during an exercise. I can feel courage and self-confidence developing in myself. It is a fortunate thing for my job that I could participate in this class". Sriskantharajah GS – Gramaniladari*
>
> *"I suffered a lot during wartimes and I had lost hope in my life. I consider the opportunity to live as a gift. I learn many things after participating in this training series. I teach my friends what I learn from this class. I teach slow learning students in the evening and the skills from this training help me a lot to teach them efficiently. My*

> *father passed away last week. I am ready to face the life with the skills I learned from this training, although there are no male members in my family". Inbarani – Volunteer Trainee*

The statements from the trainees are in some ways reflective of the potential emotional transformations that occur when people affected deeply by war go through a process of healing facilitated by trained personnel. This programme did not have the scale or the resources to undertake a mass healing process but this project can provide an important insight into the potential for mass healing, especially for government agencies and policy makers.

Although we believe that counselling has an important role to play in post-war Sri Lanka in terms of emotional wellbeing and reconciliation, we must acknowledge certain cultural barriers which make counselling a challenging task in Sri Lanka. Within Sri Lanka mental illness is often equated with madness. This is common across all ethnic groups irrespective of circumstance. Families often try to hide serious mental health issues until it becomes publicly visible. Consequently, the trainee counsellors did not find a welcoming environment to address mental health issues. Although the project introduced and presented the trainees as be-frienders with skills in social networking and to a certain extent disassociated them from mental illness due to perceived cultural inhibitions and social stigma, this did not solve the issue of cultural barriers completely.

Within local communities in Sri Lanka many people take solace in religion, spiritual practices and speaking within their family circle. However, as Herath and Silva (this volume) note, the role of religion and other sources of traditional emotional support have been in decline, bringing up a vacuum which can potentially be filled by trained counsellors. However, acceptance towards counselling as a form of social support may not be created artificially and may emerge gradually as people adopt new life styles in response to global social change. We do not take the view that counselling

should be indiscriminately and aggressively promoted. We believe that further research is required on the synergy between counselling as a profession, cultural acceptance and the actual need. It could also be possible that social institutions such as religion and spiritual practices may reassert their significance and can fill the void created by their relative decline in the immediate aftermath of the war as highlighted by Herath (this volume).

Exposure Visits

Figure 2: Hindu and Christian Youth from the North Planting a Tree in a Buddhist Temple in Kurunegala

One of the types of intervention carried out under the umbrella programme of *Social Networking and Psychosocial Reconstruction* was to support north-south dialogue through exchange visits involving both youth and adults. Youth and adults from the north were

facilitated to visit the south and vice versa. We found that these visits helped to dispel ethnic prejudices and to create friendship and trust across ethnic and cultural boundaries. People from north and south stayed in host families of the 'ethnic other', participated in cultural and religious activities and shared food and food practices, generating understanding and empathy.

One could argue that the impact of the exposure visits is short term and the friendships created through such visits may not last long. However, we found that people did maintain links though the exchange of letters in English and telephone calls and, in some cases, people had visited each other personally without the intervention of the project. This indicates some level of sustainability.

Even if the links are not long lasting, we are of the opinion that the temporal effect of moving beyond ethno-nationalist prejudices and ethno-linguistic barriers is an achievement and may lead to attitudinal changes in the minds of the participants. In turn these participants may speak about this goodwill with their relatives and friends thus widening the impact of the project.

Exposure of individuals from one ethnic background with those from other needs to occur more frequently and at many levels. Such efforts undertaken by civil society organizations may have a greater spatial and temporal impact than originally assumed when we take into account the diffusion effect, that is, when people speak about their positive experiences with others. This is an opinion which will require further research to establish scientifically. However we agree that there must be macro-level exchange if cultural exposure is to have a tangible long term impact on the peace building process. Whilst such a large scale movement has to occur spontaneously, the state must provide the conditions under which this mass exchange of culture can occur. This will involve a political environment in which the grievances of minority groups have been addressed and a culture in which prejudices can be shed.

Use of Art

Figure 3: Be-frienders in a performance of 'Wipe the Tears'

One feature of our programme was to try to test the utility of art for healing. According to our experience and assessment, the most successful component of our exercise has been the use of drama, a model somewhat close to forum theatre in which a local group of trainees performed a play at the village level.

The be-frienders were given training to perform a play entitled *'Wipe the Tears'*. The play involves nine characters led by a mother suffering from the loss of her son and husband. She is deeply troubled by the losses and has lost all hope despite the fact that she has three other children dependent on her. The children suffer from hunger and cannot go to school as the mother takes no interest. The children as well as well-wishing neighbours collectively acknowledge the losses they suffered but come to a resolve that, irrespective of the losses,

the time has come to move forward. The drama is designed to instil courage and hope and attempts to have a therapeutic impact on the viewers. Given below are the opinions of two audience members in the villages who commented on the performance.

> *"Totally 35 of my relatives including my beloved ones were loss (died in violence). Now I am living with 3 children who are all below 12 years. Due to huge human loss I am mentally disturbed and confused. So I am not able to take care of my own children. This drama makes me realize that I left my children into trouble"*

> *"The performers only model our real life. We have lot of worries and stresses because of loss of the beloved ones. This drama makes us realize that we should continue the rest of the life happily with family members"*

A leader of a Rural Development Society in Mannar had the following to say about the drama:

> *"The ethnic conflict which prevailed in the region for last 3 decades and Tsunami very much affected and destroyed the lives of communities. Still many of them are struggling to come out from the sour experience and it increases their trauma and stress. Majority of the audience for drama performance belong to that category. So this drama therapy is very useful for us and I requested to provide the same kind of drama therapy to other people with similar problems"*

This drama was performed at village junctions where people gather in the evening, at grassroots community centres and other places where people frequently gather. The drama was well received and, according to our observations, drama is perhaps the aspect of the programme that people are most likely to remember. After the performance we asked people about any messages they received from the performance. The audience members spoke about hope and courage as previously expected and many people also claimed that the play encouraged them to look to the future.

We believe that use of art should be continued and encouraged since our findings have shown that it can have a therapeutic impact and contribute to healing the emotional wounds of war. One important facet of the use of art is its non-threatening nature. If the same messages were conveyed through other means such as public meetings, it might have attracted undue political attention. The strength of drama is that it carries social messages without directly threatening any stakeholder in the conflict.

Monthly Clinics

This component of the programme was not originally envisioned but was developed on the request of our participants and their families. As aforementioned, the psychiatrists of the government hospitals were part of the teaching panel and they undertook monthly clinics to which the be-frienders brought people with mental health issues. The be-frienders identified people of concern while working in the villages either as volunteers or government officials.

Undertaking Social Interventions in the North

This programme was initiated in 2010 during which time all social interventions in the north were restricted and required the permission of the state. After securing financial support for the programme, we had to wait a full year to begin its implementation due to the difficult and drawn out process of obtaining the necessary permissions. The authorities put an emphasis on 'hardware' programmes such as the construction of housing units, latrines, livelihood projects etc but training, psychosocial support or research was not encouraged. At the national level, the authorities did not share our view that there were psychosocial issues in the north which required social interventions. The government authorities who are based in the districts such as government agents and

other key officials were far more sensitive to these needs but were largely powerless, both in terms of actual authority and finance to initiate any constructive effort. The situation regarding restrictions, permissions and national level policy making had improved as of mid 2012. However, attaining permission for new programmes may still require a difficult process.

We find the undue emphasis on material aspects of reconstruction and scant regard to social and psychological needs of the people to be highly problematic. On the one hand there is no recognition or acknowledgement that psychosocial issues exist among the war affected people and on the other, anything other than material help by non-state actors appears uninteresting to the state authorities overseeing post-war reconstruction in Sri Lanka.

Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that the material benefits of reconstruction have failed to trickle down to the remote villages in the former conflict affected areas. Many people are still without permanent housing three years after the end of the war and there is very little evidence of people receiving compensation for either for their own material losses or on behalf of their relatives who passed away due to violence.

This Volume

This volume, *Healing the Wounds: Rebuilding Sri Lanka after the War,* emerges from the programme described above. In addition to the chapters by Silva, Herath and Usoof who were part of the above programme, this volume brings academic contributions from three others scholars. This approach has been taken for two reasons; to engage in a wider dialogue on the post-war reconstruction process and to provide space for other scholars to contribute to this important dialogue.

The volume begins with a chapter by Uyangoda on *Healing after War::Thinking Beyond the Solitudes* where he delves into the question of conflicting and competing political claims to state power in post-civil war Sri Lanka. This chapter is a reflective essay on the challenges and complexities in the political transformation of Sri Lanka after the civil war ending in May 2009. Uyangoda takes healing as a metaphor, or a heuristic devise, to understand the complexity behind the present political impasse in Sri Lanka with regard to a political solution to the ethnic conflict. As he proposes healing in this sense per-supposes and even calls for 'reconciling the solitudes.' Uyangoda borrows the metaphor from the writings of Charles Taylor (cited in his chapter). He begins the chapter by arguing that ethno-nationalist politics in Sri Lanka has constructed political solitudes that are devoid of a shared framework of political imagination and communication. Uyangoda points out that contrary to expectations, the ending of the war between the Sri Lankan state and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has not so far contributed to either a political healing process or a process of healing at the political level. Nor has it facilitated the possibility of a shared political language to communicate across the ethno-nationalist solitudes. In this chapter Uyangoda examines this politics of 'un-healing' and suggest how such a healing process in its dual sense can possibly be imagined through thinking and talking about normative re-casting of Sri Lanka's nation-state project.

In the second chapter titled *The Demographic Impact of the War, Changes in Sex Ratio and their Possible Effects on Vulnerability and Psychosocial Stress in Civilian Populations in Northeast Sri Lanka* by Silva, the author brings to light the many demographic distortions and imbalances that have occurred in the war-affected populations in Sri Lanka. These demographic imbalances, according to Silva, include a distorted sex ratio, a distorted age structure, a high ratio of military personnel compared to civilian population, a high rate of

women headed families, a high rate of disability in the population, and a high rate of family breakdown. Silva argues that these demographic imbalances can be attributed to direct and indirect consequences of war including injury, deaths and disappearances, repeated population displacement, war-induced human migration, early marriage as a means of escaping forced recruitment and large scale troop mobilization during and after the war. A distorted sex ratio characterized by an excess of females over males is one such demographic imbalance that has serious implications for human insecurity, vulnerability and psychosocial health in the war-affected communities.

This chapter is based on the results of Enumeration of Vital Events (EVE 2011) conducted by the Department of Census and Statistics in 2011 in Northern Province and the findings of a recent study on the underlying causes of poverty in selected conflict-affected populations in Northern and Eastern Provinces. Silva examines the nature and extent of distortion in the sex ratio in the affected civilian populations and its impact on a number of social outcomes, including wage differentials between men and women, the acute feeling of insecurity in the population also reflected in the outburst and moral panic concerning 'grease devils', the difficulties faced by girls in the marriage market, civil-military and related ethnic relations and poverty trends and the feminization of poverty in the war-affected populations.

The chapter by Herath examines the social and cultural consequences of the war. Herath argues that there is a distortion of the social structure amounting to a community breakup in the north of Sri Lanka. The chapter presents research findings from one and half years of field work in two districts in the north, Vavuniya and Mannar. Herath shows that there is no longitudinal data to compare the data which his study generates and hence tries to construct a baseline from social and anthropological literature with which to compare the current social structure. The chapter identifies

certain key aspects of the Tamil and Sinhalese social structure from the literature and argues that the present changes observed in the north represent a drastic distortion of established status and role, leadership structures in the villages, civic life, significance of religion, respect towards life, social institutions such as marriage etc.

Herath asserts that war and violence in the north have demolished all kinds of economic assets without exception. This destruction has brought the wealthier sectors of the communities studied, mostly the farming class, to the same level as the abject poor. In this sense, war and violence have been a 'great leveller'. He sees this change as a cataclysmic reordering of the society and observes dramatic changes in the customary status and role of certain individuals and groups. Herath finds that there is a serious leadership vacuum at the grassroots level and a complete lack of civic actions and organizations. Herath also finds that religious faith in some religious groups seems to have dwindled while other faiths have been revised after the disaster. He brings in the issue of the breakdown of the social institution of marriage and finds that these transformations have led to many other social con:plications and problems. Herath also argues that there appears to be an increase in suicide attempts and alcohol abuse indicating a possible situation of high emotional disturbances and a condition of anomie.

The fourth Chapter by Usoof-Thowfeek, *Putting Back the Pieces Together: The Psychosocial Wellbeing of Resettled Communities in Vavuniya and Mannar,* examines the picture of wellbeing among war affected people using a wellbeing assessment tool. This chapter also results from the same umbrella study as that of Herath. Usoof-Thowfeek argues that the civilian population of the North and East of Sri Lanka, throughout almost 30 years of fighting between Government forces and the LTTE had to endure prolonged and multiple episodes of displacement. She shows that at the end of the war in 2009 several hundreds of thousands of Internally

Displaced Persons (IDPs) remained in temporary camps. While these camps were far from ideal, being resettled meant that these communities had to face the hardships of restarting their lives from scratch. In this chapter, Usoof-Thowfeek explores the psychosocial wellbeing of members of these communities as they prepare for this challenge with the aim of understanding their specific needs. The data for this paper was collected in 2010 from 190 individuals at the initial stages of resettlement from 10 villages in Nedunkerni in the Vavuniya district and Manthai West in the Mannar district. This study used the Psychosocial Assessment of Development and Humanitarian Intervention (PADHI) Wellbeing Assessment Tool. This particular assessment demarcates access to physical, material and intellectual resources, the experience of competence and self worth, the ability to enhance physical and psychological wellbeing, the availability of social connections and the ability to exercise participation in community, as areas of psychosocial wellbeing. This study found that the community members surveyed were primarily concerned with accessing basic physical and material resources, find most support from their immediate families and see some competencies within themselves that they feel will be beneficial as they face the challenges of being resettled. The chapter reiterates that these communities need continued support from government and non-governmental organizations in this process and discusses possible interventions that might benefit them.

The fifth chapter by Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme and Lacasse is an analysis on the *Psychopathology, Psychosocial Problems and Post-traumatic Growth in North-Eastern Sri Lanka.* This chapter results from an analysis of the results of a previous study undertaken by the authors. The chapter discusses future directions in promoting psychological well-being among war-affected populations in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka in light of recent work examining the prevalence of psychopathology (i.e., mood and anxiety symptoms), psychosocial problems (i.e., family problems, economic

problems, social problems, problems relating to lack of basic needs, and physical problems) and post-traumatic growth (the belief that one has experienced positive changes as a result of adversity). The authors of this chapter use a sample of 197 individuals living in war-affected areas in North-Eastern Sri Lanka (Jaffna, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Vavuniya, and Nallur). They assess psychopathology and psychosocial problems using a specific tool, *the Penn/RESIST/ Peradeniya War Problems Questionnaire* (PRPWPQ), a tool developed by a group of scholars including some of the authors of the chapter. One feature of this measure is that, unlike other standards tools, it incorporates local idioms of distress. The authors measure well-being and post-traumatic growth using another tool which they call *the Penn/RESIST/Peradeniya Competencies Scale.* Some of the authors also contributed to the development of this tool. This measure also incorporates local idioms of distress. The results of the study indicate not only high levels of trauma, psychopathology and psychosocial problems but also a considerable degree of post-traumatic growth. The chapter discusses possible psychosocial interventions that can both alleviate psychopathology, psychosocial problems and also harness post-traumatic growth. The chapter further highlights the importance of employing methodologies that carefully consider cultural variations in the manifestation of psychopathology, functioning and positive constructs such as growth.

Chapter six by Azmi, explores how the second generation Muslim IDPs, who are originally from Mannar but have been living in Kalpitiya for more than two decades, construct the meaning of 'home' in the context of post-war reconstruction and resettlement. The article is based mainly on qualitative interviews conducted with IDPs, who were below the age of 10 during the time of expulsion. Drawing from the field work conducted in Al-Manar IDP camp in Kalpitiya, the analysis demonstrates how participants understand 'home' in its various meanings in the context of protracted displacement. Azmi uses the inter-related concepts of home, place

and belonging as the analytical framework. Through her analyses of these narratives the author shows that there are considerable differences among the second generation IDPs in the way they conceptualize home. The chapter concludes by advocating the need to understand how the second generation IDPs construct 'home', arguing that these constructions have serious implications on decisions regarding return and reintegration or integration into the host community.

The editors hope that this edited volume will contribute towards promoting dialogue on post-war reconstruction and reconciliation in Sri Lanka by way of suggesting the ways in which reconstruction and reconciliation can be facilitated in a sustainable manner. We believe that a vibrant discussion is needed to critically examine the current approaches to reconstruction and to highlight the best practices adopted elsewhere in countries which have seen peaceful transformations of conflict. We firmly believe that efforts to heal the wounds in war-torn communities in Sri Lanka must be backed by critical social science research undertaken by competent agencies which can stand above ethnic solitudes, official dogmas and propagandist aspirations of the ruling elites.

Healing after War: Thinking Beyond the Solitudes

Jayadeva Uyangoda

This essay is not a research paper as such. Rather, it is a contemplative exercise which reflects on Sri Lanka's continuing predicament of uninterrupted reproduction of the politics of ethnic solitudes. It is written with the aim of suggesting some possibilities for reconciling the solitudes.

Writing in the context of Canada's political and constitutional crisis, generated by the rise of secessionist nationalism in the French-speaking Quebec in the 1970s, Charles Taylor commented:

> *The "two solitudes" of Hugh MacLennan are still a fundamental reality in Canada; the ways that the two groups envisage their predicament, their problems, and their common country are so different that it is hard to find a common language. They are like two photographs of the same object taken from such different points of view that they cannot be superimposed (Taylor, 1993:24).*

Taylor's essay, 'A Canadian Future', from which the above quote is taken, first appeared in 1970 in a volume entitled *The Pattern of Politics*. Taylor's reference to Hugh MacLennan is the latter's novel *The Two Solitudes*, published in 1945. The novel chronicles the impossibility of communication and solidarity between an English-speaking Canadian and a French-speaking Canadian and their struggle to reconcile their cultural differences.

Sri Lanka after the ending of its long drawn out civil war in May 2009 has some similarities with the Canada which Charles Taylor described in 1970, although the historical and political contexts of the two instances are very different. The two solitudes of the Sinhalese and Tamil appear to be a fundamental reality in the post-war Sri Lanka as well. The ways in which the leaders of the UPFA and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), the main Tamil nationalist

party, "envisage their predicament, their problems ... are so different that it is hard to find a common language" for them to have a meaningful and sensible political communication. Although they have been talking to each other, they have not been having a dialogue. They have been talking through public pronouncements that are designed to re-assert and re-iterate political positions that have once again become non-negotiable. Exactly like what happened in the past during peace negotiations, the two sides have been re-discovering, and re-inventing mutual differences, suspicions, apprehensions and even hostilities.[1] Retreat to solitudes is the preferred path of politics among the ethnic elites. Reconciling is not. This is not a good sign for all people of Sri Lanka.

The essay is structured in the following manner: It begins with some thoughts on the existence of ethnic solitudes as a reality of our political life-world. Then it brings into the discussion the new challenges in nation and state building in Sri Lanka in the context of the end of the protracted civil war. This brief discussion draws the reader's attention to the process of re-producing ethnic solitudes under conditions of relative peace. The next section reflects on the irreconcilability of reconciliation itself, the paradoxical trap in which Sri Lanka seems to be caught up at present. The essay ends with an examination of the challenge of dealing with ethnicity, which profoundly defines our political life world, but disables us from talking to each other for shared goals of political emancipation.

Phenomenology of Ethnic Solitudes

Ethnicity and democracy are the two most important political imaginations which modernity has brought to our society. Ethnicity provides each cultural community – Sinhalese, Tamil,

[1] To understand how negotiations between representatives of the Sri Lankan government and Tamil political groups led to the paradoxical consequence of discovering points of irreconcilability, rather than common ground, three useful texts are Loganathan (1996) and Balasingham (2000) and (2004). Other relevant publications are Rupesinghe (2006) and Goonaratna (2007).

Muslim and a few others – a framework of thinking about itself as a political community, and as a political collectivity. Democracy has enabled each citizen to relate himself/herself to the state as a rights-bearing individual, and with entitlement to be treated by the state with dignity and equality. These are no mean achievements of modernity. The two are sources of the political self of all Sri Lankan citizens. Through ethnicity, our citizens understand themselves first as belonging to cultural-political communities- Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, Burgher etc. The larger nation-state identity – the Sri Lankanness – comes second and that persists despite the promise of democracy to facilitate a trans-ethnic political identity of citizens with equality. Ethnic imagination of group identity has over-powered the democratic imagination of nation-state identity for a range of good reasons. The individual and negative rights discourse of democracy has not provided a language of expression to articulate either group predicaments or visions of emancipation for collectivities. That has been the context in which Sinhalese, Tamil and later Muslim ethno-nationalist ideologies and mobilizations developed as the most powerful political dynamics in modern Sri Lanka. This becomes all the more alarming when we realize that it is ethno-nationalist ideologies, not democratic ideals, that propelled forward the three-decades of protracted civil war. Ethnicity's triumph has been the failure of our democracy.[2] The challenge in the post-civil war Sri Lanka is to reverse this process, to bring democracy back in as a political force with a capacity to tame and temper the sectional, parochial and exclusivist promise of ethnicity and ethno-nationalisms.

However, dealing with ethnicity requires caution and care, because, like religion, ethnicity constitutes a phenomenology of suffering, fears and redemption. Secularism, even in a democracy, cannot deal

[2] Asanga Welikala (2008) has drawn our attention to this dichotomy between national imagination and democratic imagination in relation to Sri Lanka's Tamil nationalism.

with religion, because it denies the phenomenological justification for the very existence of religion. In a world of individual despair and disappointment, religion provides an imagination of solace and fulfilment, which a secularist might find nothing more than mere illusion. Yet, religion defies the rationalism of the secularist, because it provides to the human soul what secularism even fails to recognize as existing – a specific way to understand and deal with this-worldly deprivations. The relationship between ethnicity and democracy is somewhat similar. A good liberal democrat finds it difficult to justify why parochial ethnic imagination has become so attractive, when there is a better promise of Universalist political emancipation in the form of individual freedom, rule of law and equality. In political theory, these two perspectives have also been framed in the debates between communitarianism vs. individualism, and cultural relativism vs. universalism. Without falling into the trap of seeing the political world through antagonistic binaries, one can still see why some form of dialogue between ethnicity and democracy is both necessary and possible.

Before exploring the possibility of such a dialogue, it is necessary to be aware of the limitations of the kind of exchange of ideas that ethnicity, or ethno-nationalisms, often promotes. If we take Sri Lanka's own experience of Sinhalese and Tamil nationalisms, we can see that these two dominant forms of group political imagination have not really facilitated a constructive political dialogue as such between themselves and across the communities they represent. This problem of impossibility of dialogue has been dramatically demonstrated during peace negotiations between representatives of the Sri Lankan government – both UNP and SLFP-led governments and the Tamil community, the Federal Party, the LTTE and now the TNA. Negotiations from the mid -1950s to 2012 meant to find a political common ground for the Sinhalese and Tamil communities, for the majority and minority

communities, to live in the nation-state of Sri Lanka as equals. All such negotiations have led to the discovery of not a common ground, but differences, irreconcilables and hostilities.

By looking at the political history of Sri Lanka since independence, one can find many reasons to explain this failure. Scholarly literature on the escalation of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict is replete with useful explanations. One theme that stands out in the literature is the inherent incapacity of the two dominant ethno-nationalisms in Sri Lanka to understand each other, even though they speak the same language. This is one of the key paradoxes of modern ethno-nationalism. As political phenomena, ethno-nationalisms within nation states, although they are even mutually hostile, have many structural and existential similarities. They give expression to fears, anxieties, hopes and aspirations of each community. They invoke the past to explain the present and map out the futures in more or less similar ways. The way in which they invent heroes and villains, select and invoke historical memories, and appeal to certainties of historical change are amazingly similar. However, no two ethno-nationalisms within a nation-state can have a productive dialogue through the language of nationalism. The reason lies in the peculiarity of nationalism itself. For two nationalisms to enter into a constructive dialogue, they need to find a language outside nationalism. This is where democracy, the other legacy of modernity, comes to our assistance, and to the assistance of ethno-nationalisms to find a framework of solidarity and co-existence.

Nation-Building and Political Integration

After the war ended, the centrality of nation-building and political integration has returned to the country's political agenda in a new context, but with the same old challenges, perhaps with greater intensity. Two questions are at the heart of the debate, although they are not explicitly articulated by our political elites or in the

media. They are: (a) what kind of a nation do we want to build in Sri Lanka after three decades of civil war, and (b) what kind of a state do we want to build in Sri Lanka? Quite understandably, there are many perspectives from which answers to these questions are framed. In the political debate, there are two major perspectives in conflict, one shared by the UPFA government and the other articulated by the TNA. They are different in their key assumptions, analysis and conclusions.

The UPFA government appears to think that economic development in the North and East is the key to post-war national integration and nation-building in Sri Lanka. This position is based on the assumption that the ethnic conflict was more a terrorist problem and a security challenge to the sovereignty of the state than a political problem arising out of minority grievances and therefore calling for political-structural reform. Therefore, as the UPFA government's thinking appears to suggest, what is necessary is to strengthen the national security and defence capabilities to crush any future insurgency threats while integrating the north and east with the rest of the country through rapid infra-structure and economic development. This combining of national security, strong state and economic integration makes the government's vision for post-war political and economic change paralleled with the developmental state experiment in some South-East Asian countries a few years ago, particularly Malaysia.

The TNA, on the other hand, gives primacy to the political root causes of the ethnic conflict. In its approach, the military defeat of the LTTE has not obliterated the Tamil community's political aspirations for power-sharing in an advanced form of devolution. In this analysis, ethnic conflict is a political problem that calls for a political solution. And a political solution presupposes reforming the state.

Now, these two approaches have certain differences and similarities. Differences emanate from ethno-political standpoints on which

each approach is based. The government's approach has a clearly Sinhalese nationalist and ethnic majoritarian framing of Sri Lanka's conflict and solutions it demands. It views the outcome of the war as restoration of state sovereignty, which was earlier threatened by a minority secessionist rebellion. It sees devolution as a potential threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state. Devolving power to a political entity that has had links with the LTTE, the TNA in the present case, is viewed by the government leaders as unacceptable, unwise and even dangerous. Why take steps that will negate the gains of military victory? This rhetorical question in a way summarizes the dilemma of what one may call the 'victor's peace.' This dilemma is further heightened by the fact that the war victory has enabled the UPFA government to claim the veto power over the terms and conditions of any political settlement with the Tamils. Thus, the post-war triumphalism that the government has been invoking is not only a state of mind; it is also an expression of a specific political logic, a new political equilibrium, germinated by the way in which the civil war ended in Sri Lanka.

Then, there is the peace of the 'vanquished,' which the TNA continues to articulate with little positive response from the government. The 'peace of the vanquished' demands devolution, equality and dignity to Tamils. In this perspective, political rights and the right to share state power takes primacy over the material benefits of rapid economic development. It views devolution as the essential pre-condition for post-war state-building and national integration. However, the TNA does not have a bargaining strength to realize any of its political demands. Its strength emanates from its weakness, being the political representative of a vanquished minority. Yet, this is only a moral strength that does not have a material value in the way in which politics is taking shape in post-civil war Sri Lanka.

The similarity shared by these two contending approaches is more symbolic than real. It emanates from the ethnic foundations of the episteme of each. Both are ethno-nationalist projects, one majoritarian and the other minoritarian. The political language through which each expresses itself is not positively responded to by the other, for the simple reason that the two do not share the meanings of key words of each language. For example, devolution for the TNA is a minimum pre-condition for political unification whereas for the UPFA government, it is the stepping-stone to disintegration of the state. Self-determination for the TNA is the concept that frames the Tamil claims to political rights. For the UPFA government, self-determination is a demand for secession. For the TNA, political rights should take precedence over economic and infrastructure development. Fort the government, economic development is the best gift that the state can give to the Tamil people, after years of war and destruction.

Irreconcilable Reconciliation?

Inability of dialogue – this is one phrase which can describe the condition of stalemate into which talks between the UPFA government and the TNA have fallen. The political, ideological and cultural contexts that led to the deadlock in government-TNA talks are worth examining in order to understand why the inability of dialogue seems to persist between the two sides, to the great surprise of Sri Lanka watchers from outside. On this matter too, there can be many explanations. However, one troubling dimension of the way in which political debate in Sri Lanka has unfolded since May 2009 is the polarization of mindsets, or rather worldviews, in terms of victor and the vanquished.

The continuing debate between the Western governments and the UPFA government on reconciliation demonstrates in a dramatic fashion how this incommensurability of worldviews

has constituted a major obstacle to Sri Lanka's post-war political recovery. The Western governments and the UN insist that Sri Lanka's post-war reconciliation should be based on two elements, (a) a political solution to the ethnic conflict, and (b) investigations into allegations of possible war crimes and related excesses during the last stages of the war [3]. From the point of view of the advocates of this particular approach to reconciliation, both are necessary for post-war 'healing.' The UPFA government has been initially uncomfortable with this approach, and became hostile to it when the issue became a part of Western efforts to shape Sri Lanka's post-war political trajectories. The Western concept of post-conflict reconciliation has both liberal and Christian-humanist moral roots, as particularly seen in the South African experience of its Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In both South Africa and Guatemala, the process of reconciliation was made possible by the fact that conflict ended in both instances through a mediated and negotiated peace agreement. These were instances where there were no victors or losers in a moral sense of the term. The end of the conflict and violence through a peace agreement was seen there as a moral triumph for the entire nation. Sri Lanka's situation, as seen by the UPFA government, is totally different. Reconciliation there was thus seen as celebration of the return of humanistic values after years of hatred, violence and war. Here, post-war reconciliation suggests a different moral economy as well. It is about forgetting the past and moving forward, not returning to the past, either for collective therapy or retribution.

The issue of reconciliation in Sri Lanka has then moved away from its normative and value framework. It is caught up in the unending antagonisms between the government and the TNA on the one hand and the government and the global powers on the

[3] The showdown between the Western governments and the Sri Lankan government at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva since 2010 dramatically illustrates the gravity of this 'clash of worldviews.'

other. As a moral practice, reconciliation is a voluntary exercise. If it is practiced reluctantly, or in response to the pressure from powerful outsiders, it cannot be reconciliation and it requires some other word to convey what it is. This is Sri Lanka's dilemma of post-war ethnic reconciliation. It is possible that the government implements some selected recommendations of the LLRC in the face of pressures coming from the UN and its Human Rights Council. There can also be a government gazette notification to pronounce that reconciliation has been achieved in Sri Lanka under the wise and mature leadership of our President.

What to do with Ethnicity?

It appears that ethnicity and ethno-nationalist politics has come to stay in Sri Lanka for quite some time. As the discussion so far in this essay suggests, it has not done much good to Sri Lanka's people, although ethnic politics has been useful to highlight group grievances and aspirations. Ethnicity-based identity politics has provided our citizens modes of political imagination, a language of political expression as well as lenses through which to look at other citizens and their groups, and evaluate who they are and what they do. Ethno-nationalist politics has also made all Sri Lankan citizens acutely political, raising their political consciousness to unprecedented levels. Citizens of all communities – Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, Plantation Tamil, Burgher, and small such ethnic communities as Malayali, Thelingu, Colombo Chetty and the Veddhas – are acutely aware of who they are politically and what their place is in the larger schemes of things in society. They have a good sense of who their friends and enemies are, and the sources of threat as well as solidarity. As many opinion surveys have demonstrated empirically, citizens of all these communities also have firm political opinions about their grievances, rights, and even what kind of a state structure they want to live in. All of

these are not altogether good; nor are they altogether bad. The real task now is to harness these political energies of the ethnically conscious communities to achieve the shared and collective goal of a democratic, pluralist and peaceful Sri Lanka.

What is it that can hold these communities together as members of the political association called Sri Lanka? The present government of Sri Lanka appears to think that economic prosperity, or expectations of prosperity, is the common thread that binds disparate ethnic communities together. Its election slogan of "An Auspicious Future" (*suba anagathayak*) encapsulated this thinking. Some ethnic communities are likely to be attracted to the prospects of a prosperous future, precisely because the three decades of war and violence deprived them of benefits of economic well-being. However, the Tamil people appear to think differently. For them, men, and women, do not live by bread alone; they need collective dignity as well. Their conceptualization of an 'auspicious future' comes from the perspective of the vanquished, the defeated and the victim. In that conceptualization, dignity, equality and justice constitute powerful emotional expectations. Can the Sinhalese political leadership respond to the Tamils with a gesture of healing? This question is central to assessing Sri Lanka's prospects for post-war political unification, nation-building, state-building, peace and democracy, because Sri Lankan Tamils live not by roads, highways, bridges and harbours alone. They clamour for devolution and dignity too.

If we try to understand the logic of the government's position from its point of view, it is perfectly possible that the government wants to de-emphasize the ethnic identity dimension of what it may term as the 'Tamil issue.' That is not a bad thing, if it is paralleled with a similar de-emphasis of the Sinhalese nationalist agenda as well, which to a great extent informs the government's overall policy. What the government should ideally do is to construct

an overarching political identity for all ethnic communities that recognizes and accommodates all ethnic identities, but privileges none. The state thus constructed can be a kind of post-national constellation of many political communities who are moral equals with an equal stake at the state.

Building a new political association within and beyond the nation-state can thus be seen as a post-national project in a specific sense. 'Post-national' is a formulation which Habermas used in support of his notion of 'constitutional patriotism' (Habermas, 1998, 2001a, 2001b). Habermas has been articulating an argument for a 'post-national' Europe, emphasizing that in the context of globalization and the influx of migrant populations, shared identity among citizens and residents can no longer be the old 'national identity' in the uni-cultural sense. Multiculturalism calls for a sense of belonging to the state which is other than cultural. Habermas' proposal for constitutional patriotism is based on the idea that political attachment ought to centre on the norms and values of a liberal democratic constitution, rather than a national culture. Those are secular values too. They transcend cultural specificities. They offer to all a shared framework of civic allegiance to the state; a deeply political sense of belonging. This model of political organization will enable to include 'the other in her otherness,' because it sheds the exclusivist and parochial character of the modern nation-state as well as nationalism.

Has Sri Lanka reached a post-national phase in which cultural belonging can be replaced by political belonging alone? Obviously not. Sri Lanka's story is one of reinforcement and re-stabilization of the nation-state through internal warfare. However, it is also a story that calls for broadening the notion of 'national belonging' that can be equally shared by the victor and the vanquished alike. This is where some form of post-national citizenship can offer a deep sense of political belonging to all – to the Sinhalese, Tamils,

Muslims, Upcountry Tamils and other small minorities who constitute a 'political' nation, rather than a 'cultural' nation. This is also where we need to re-adjust our social and political institutions to reflect and celebrate what Charles Taylor has more recent called "deep diversity" (Taylor, 2002). That sense of political belonging and political togetherness can best be understood as a set of political norms and values. Norms are ideals to be achieved by the polity for the common good of all. They provide the principles and commitments of the state, its institutions and personnel as well as the citizens and their elected representatives. Values are derived from norms and they constitute the yardsticks to evaluate actions of the state, its institutions and personnel as well as the citizens and their elected representatives. Norms and values are intertwined and they together enable political communities to forge unifying ideologies and define, redefine and renew the unity project which Sri Lanka now is desperately in need of.

What are these norms and values? They are actually there in the Sri Lankan society, in the people's political consciousness, in the aspirations that people often invoke in moments of despair. They are peace, democracy, equality, justice and fairness. All of these are there in our political culture, notwithstanding the fact that they have been under attack, in retreat and are sometimes facing the risk of extinction. Nevertheless, they together constitute a powerful epistemic framework that animates people to thinking and action. People very often invoke them as a critique of the state, its institutions and practices. People employ them to critique, accept or reject the behaviour of their rulers and representatives. They are deeply embedded in the collective political consciousness of all ethnic communities, whether Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim or any other. Bringing them back to the centre of the nation and state building projects in the present phase of political transition under post-civil war conditions as the guiding framework of norms and values is the task that requires a great deal of political energy.

Because, this is a project that calls for a minimum value consensus among all communities, and something like a new political covenant among them. Some civil society groups have recently called for a 'new social contract' for Sri Lanka. This metaphor of a new social contract suggests that Sri Lanka needs a new value framework that binds all citizens and communities, the state and its citizens, and the rulers and the ruled to a shared framework of political destiny as well. A new social contract requires a new process of political deliberation at every level of society. Deliberation requires a shared language of communication and dialogue. Ethno-nationalist ideologies do not have such a facility. The shared language of communication and dialogue has to emerge from outside ethno-nationalist projects. Peace, democracy, equality, justice and fairness together can constitute the ontology – a world-view – for shared political dialogue and imagination beyond solitudes.

That perhaps can be a good beginning for a post-war healing process, a useful one, in Sri Lanka.

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Demographic Impact of the War, Changes in Sex Ratio and their Possible Effects on Vulnerability and Psychosocial Stress in Civilian Populations in Northeast Sri Lanka

Kalinga Tudor Silva

The civil war that devastated the country from 1983 to 2009 led to many demographic changes in the war-affected populations in Sri Lanka[1]. So far a systematic exploration into the nature and extent of these demographic shifts has been hampered by the paucity of reliable population data. Hopefully this problem will be overcome with the release of the results of the 2011/12 population census sooner rather than later. The current chapter attempts to explore one aspect of the demographic changes caused by the war, namely changes in the sex ratio in the civilian population, using available population data and results of a qualitative research examining underlying causes of poverty in the war-affected civilian populations in selected areas in Northern and Eastern Provinces in Sri Lanka conducted in 2012.

Possible demographic shifts and distortions caused by the war include changes in size and composition of the population, distorted sex ratio, a distorted age structure, a high ratio of military personnel compared to civilian population in the affected areas in the aftermath of the war, a high rate of women-headed families, a high rate of disability in the population, and a high rate of family breakdown. These demographic imbalances can be attributed

1. The author wishes to thank Dr. Dhammika Herath, Prof. Indralal de Silva, Anusha Fernando and Rishana Haneefa for their valuable comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this paper. The author acknowledges with thanks the utilization of data from a study on "Underlying Causes of Poverty in Conflict-Affected Areas in Sri Lanka" supported by CARE INTERNATIONAL, Sri Lanka" in preparation of this chapter.

to direct and indirect consequences of the long-drawn out war, including deaths and disappearances, injury, repeated population displacement, war-induced human migration, early marriage as a means of escaping forced recruitment and large scale troop mobilization during and after the war (Tambiah 2004). A distorted sex ratio characterized by an excess of females over males is one such demographic imbalance that has serious implications for human insecurity, vulnerability and psychosocial stress in the war-affected communities. Based on the results of the Enumeration of Vital Events (EVE 2011) conducted by the Department of Census and Statistics in 2011 in the Northern Province and findings of a recent study commissioned by CARE Sri Lanka exploring underlying causes of poverty in selected conflict-affected populations in Northern and Eastern Provinces, the present chapter examines the nature and extent of distortion in sex ratio in the affected civilian populations and its impact on a number of social outcomes, including wage differential between men and women, the acute feeling of insecurity in the population also reflected in the post-war outburst and moral panic concerning "grease devils", the difficulties faced by girls in the marriage market, civil-military and related ethnic relations and poverty trends including feminization of poverty in the war-affected populations.

Population has been a contested subject throughout the war in Sri Lanka. While the role of the Sinhala-dominated state in altering population distribution in Northern and Eastern Provinces and in the border districts like Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa through its land settlement policies has been described as an effort to relieve population pressure in the Sinhala predominant areas in central and south-western parts of the country at the expense of minority ethnic groups in the North and the East (e.g. Peebles 1990, Manoharan 1987), deliberate efforts at ethnic cleansing on the part of LTTE sought to push back the Sinhala and Muslim frontiers

so as to establish a pure Tamil homeland in northern and parts of eastern Sri Lanka (Eelam) (Pieris 2006). A complete population census covering the entire island was not possible since the pre-war population census of 1981 until the recently completed post-war population census of 2011/12 due to insecurity prevailing in the war-affected areas, the LTTE policy of non-cooperation with census taking on the part of the Sri Lanka state and logistical difficulties in conducting a population census in a largely displaced unsettled population. On the other hand, from the colonial era onwards politics of ethnicity itself influenced ethnic categories officially employed in the census as well as ethnic identifications claimed by the respondents when interviewed by enumerators employed in censuses (Rajasingham-Senanayake 1999, Brass 2007, Silva 2009). Finally for military purposes as well as for humanitarian and development purposes, the state, security forces, humanitarian agencies and even the LTTE needed reliable population data with each agency trying to establish their own more or less secret and largely unverified data bases of a makeshift character throughout the war (Somasundaram 2010a, 2010b,Venugopal 2009).

The Enumeration of Vital Events (EVE 2011) conducted in June 2011 may be seen as "a mini-population census" in the Northern Province for all intensions and purposes. The Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) followed all the standard census procedures in conducting this enumeration. In presenting the justification for this enumeration, DCS noted:

> *Due to unsettled conditions that prevailed in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka for 3 decades, reliable information on population and vital events in the province had not been collected since 1981. However, since the return to normalcy in 2009, the Government, in its quest to bring economic and social dividends of peace to the province have (sic) been constrained by the absence of information on vital statistics of the*

province to plan and implement many development activities designed for the province. The Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), as the apex body of collecting, processing and disseminating reliable statistical data and information, was therefore called upon, with a sense of urgency the situation warrants, to embark upon the task of planning and implementing this Enumeration of Vital Events (EVE 2011) (DCS 2011: Preface).

The term 'vital events', however, was broadly defined to include not only the typical census information, but also deaths and disappearances during the last phase of the war (January to May 2009 in particular) in a deliberate effort to capture the adverse impact of the last phase of the war. This may be seen as a deliberate move by the defence establishment to respond to charges against war crimes and human rights violations during the last phase of the war by putting on record the actual number of loss of lives and disappearances during the last phase of the war as revealed in this official enumeration. However rigorous was the procedure adopted during this enumeration conducted by the technically competent staff of DCS, there may be some deficiencies in regard to the validity and reliability of information about deaths and disappearances obtained from surviving members of the population during a period of military occupation when this enumeration was conducted. There is, however, no reason to suspect information relating to surviving population in Northern Province collected as part of EVE 2011 given the comprehensive nature of the enumeration. It is in that context that we utilize population information collected in EVE 2011 in order to explore some aspects of the demographic impact of the war.

Changes in the Sex Ratio in the Northern Province

The reported changes in total population in the Northern Province and sex composition of the population between 1981 and 2011 are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Size and Sex Composition of the Population in Northern Province, 1981 and 2011

Year	Male	Female	Total
1981	562,851	546,553	1,109,404
2011	480,523	517,232	997,754

Sources: 1981 Census, EVE 2011

Thus the population in the Northern Province declined substantially from 1,109,404 to 997,754 between 1981 and 2011. The overall reduction in the provincial population between pre-war to post-war era was 111,650 or 10 percent. This population decline during the war period may be attributed to the excess mortality caused by the war as well as excess outmigration from the Province, which may be largely attributed to the insecurity and destruction caused by the war, even though we have to bear in mind that a pre-existing pattern of outmigration from the Jaffna Peninsula in search of greener pastures elsewhere was simply exacerbated during the war. This population decline affected both males and females. The population decline among males, however, was 14.6 percent as compared to 5.36 percent among females. This clearly shows that the decline in the male population in the Northern Province during the war was nearly three times that of the female population.

The total population in the Northern Province as revealed in EVE 2011 was 997,754 made up of 480,523 males and 517,231 females. This gives a sex ratio of 92.9 for 2011, indicating a deficit of about 7 males for every 100 females in the population. On the other hand,

the pre-war sex ratio in the Northern Province at 1981 census was 103, indicating a notable excess of males compared to females in the population at the time[2]. This is the typical pattern of sex ratio for South Asia and many other third world countries as widely documented in the literature (Sen 1992, 2003). Sen saw this as a clear manifestation of discrimination against females throughout their life cycle including critical stages of pregnancy and child birth. Apart from a substantial reduction of the total population in the Province during the war, one of the key demographic impacts of the war has been a significant change in the sex ratio in the population whereby the sex ratio in the Province changed from a situation of excess males (103) to one of excess females (92.9), indicating that there has been a disproportionate decline in the male population compared to female population during the period under consideration. Compared to the pre-war pattern a net loss of 10 males per 100 females has occurred in the Northern Province during the war period of about 25 years. This may be attributed to the excess mortality and excess disappearances of males due to the war, as well as due to selective outmigration of males in order to avoid adverse consequences of the war, including insecurity caused by forced conscription and potential reprisals by armed actors.

Changes in sex ratio, however, were not uniform throughout the Northern Province. Inter-district variation in sex ratio in Northern Province in 2011 is evident in Table 2.

2. However, even in 1981 Jaffna District reported a sex ratio of 98.8, indicating that the pattern of male deficit in the Jaffna district started well before the onset of the war perhaps due to the heavy male out-migration from the Jaffna district already well established at the time. In the Northern Province as a whole there was a considerably higher sex ratio in 1981 due to the prevalence of a significantly higher sex ratio in other districts in the Northern Province. On the other hand, the pattern of male deficit in the population in the Jaffna District became much more pronounced by 2011, indicating the duel and cumulative impact of war and male outmigration during the war period.

Table 2: Number of Males and Females and Sex Ratio in Selected Districts, 2011

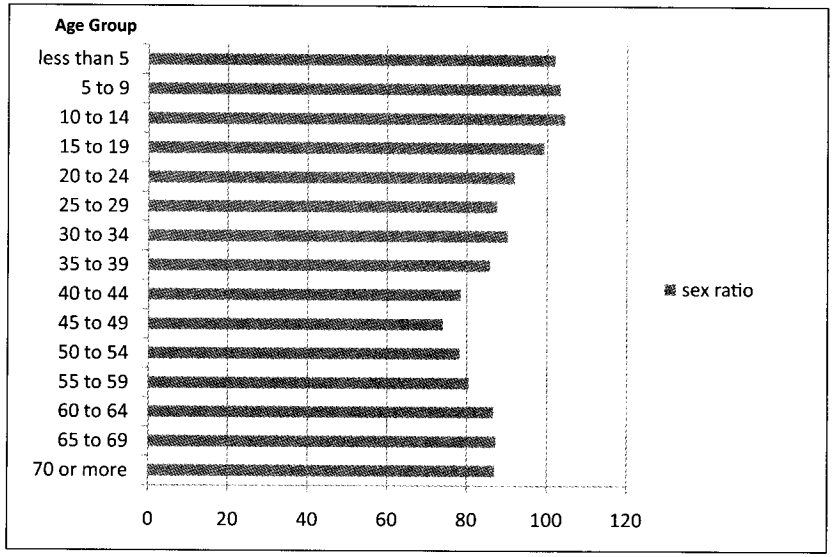
District	No of males	No of females	Sex Ratio
Jaffna	269,237	297,992	90.4
Kilinochchi	50,624	53,093	95.0
Mulaitivu	32,565	33,961	96.0
Vavuniya	80,383	84,469	95.0
Mannar	47,711	47, 719	100.0

Source: EVE 2011

Thus the lowest sex ratio was reported in the Jaffna District with a long history of economic and war-induced outmigration of population and shifts in de facto control from the government forces to LTTE and from LTTE to government forces. The Vanni districts, including Vavuniya North DS division that were directly under LTTE control for longer periods reported higher sex ratios compared to the Jaffna District perhaps due to restrictions imposed by the LTTE upon outmigration. Finally Mannar District, where a significant part of the population was displaced due to the war and where war-related deaths and disappearances were of a lower magnitude compared to the rest of the Northern Province, reported a more or less normal sex ratio in keeping with the specificity of the war impact in this district. On the other hand, going by the results of the 2001 census, certain predominantly Sinhala districts bordering the Northern Province such as Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura reported some of the highest sex ratios in the country, namely110 and 104 respectively. This, in turn, suggests that the reported deficit of male population in selected Northern Districts is a direct demographic outcome of the 25 years of armed conflict engulfing the relevant districts leading to a higher war-related mortality among males and higher male outmigration due to security reasons as well as for education and employment purposes.

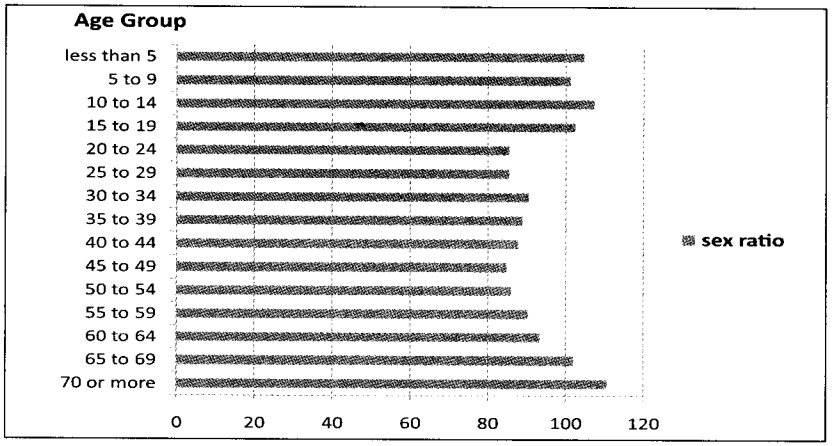
In order to understand its causes and social consequences it is important to examine the variation in sex ratio by age group.

Figure 1: Age Specific Sex Ratios in the Jaffna District, 2011



(source EVE 2011)

Figure 2: Age Specific Sex Ratios in the Kilinochchi District, 2011



(Source: EVE 2011)

Thus the sex ratio in the war-affected populations clearly varies by the age group. There is an excess of male population in the younger ages (below 14 years) followed by a progressive decline in sex ratios up to 40-49 years of age. The sex ratio tends to increase slightly in the older ages, but it remains significantly below 100 even in the older ages. This indicates that the progressive loss of males in the population occurred from ages 15 to 49, politically, economically and even militarily more active ages during the life cycle.

Age specific sex ratios in the Kilinochchi District more or less conform to the pattern observed in the Jaffna District. The only difference in the Kilinochchi District is that there is a higher sex ratio in youngest as well as oldest age groups[3]. This indicates that the distortion from what might be described as "normal" sex ratio is clearly confined to the 20 to 49 age group where males presumably experienced the brunt of war-related violence causing deaths, disappearances and outmigration. While women were as much active in the LTTE as males were during much of the war period as reported by authors such as Schalk (1994) and Coomaraswamy (1996), it is possible that rates of deaths, disappearances and outmigration were much higher in the case of males due to the nature of their engagement or non-engagement in the armed conflict.

On the whole the demographic profile of the Northern Province as revealed in the 2011 EVE conducted by DCS points to a distorted sex ratio in the civilian population where females largely outnumber males. The pattern is more pronounced in the economically and politically active age groups compared to the economically dependent populations of children and elderly. This has wide ranging social, next section.

[3] The reported male excess in the elderly population in the Kilinochchi district is quite unusual compared to the rest of the country where females tend to outnumber males in the elderly population owing to a number of factors including higher longevity among females as reported by Silva (2012). Whether this is an artefact of the war or some other demographic process such as elderly males opting to remain in the conflict zone due to strategic or welfare reasons must be determined through future research.

Unbalanced Sex Ratio and its Impact on Vulnerability and Psychosocial Stress in Civilian Populations in Northeast Sri Lanka

In order to assess the impact of distorted sex ratio in the war-affected civilian population, we utilize data from a qualitative study on underlying causes of poverty in conflict-affected areas (CAAs) conducted by Silva, Sivakanthan and Wickramasinghe for CARE Sri Lanka in 2012 (Silva, Sivakanthan and Wickramasinghe 2012). This study involved analysis of secondary data, interviews with key informants consisting of officials and community leaders at district and divisional secretary levels, focus group discussions with selected stakeholders in the civilian population and case studies of individuals who are winners or losers in terms of recovery from the impact of war.

As the current chapter primarily utilizes the results of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted in the CARE study it is useful to provide some background information regarding these community consultations. The FGDs were conducted with selected population groups, identified as potentially vulnerable groups in the formative stage of the study, namely unemployed youth, women headed households (WHH), daily wage earners and small holder farmers dependent on rain-fed agriculture. Under each category separate male and female FGDs were conducted in order to determine the differential impact of the war for men and women in these different vulnerable groups. These FGDs were conducted by CARE staff at the district level who were especially trained for the purpose. The number of participants in a FGD varied from 4 to 20 depending on the situation, but on the average the number of participants was 8-10. The interview guide used in the FGDs was developed in consultation with CARE staff and had some common questions for each potential impact group as well as specific questions relating

to youth, WHH, daily wage labourers and small holder farmers engaged in rain-fed agriculture.

Table 3: Total Number of FGDs Conducted in Each District by Category of Potential Vulnerable Groups (Male and Female)

District	Un employed Youth		WHH	Daily Wage Earners		Small Farm-ers		Other	
	Male	Fe-male		Male	Fe-male	Male	Fe-male	Male	Fe-male
Ampara	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Batticaloa	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Jaffna	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
Kilinochchi	1	1	2	0	1	2	1	0	0
Mannar	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Polonnaruwa	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
Vavuniya	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0
Total	**7**	**6**	**8**	**5**	**6**	**9**	**5**	**1**	**1**

Thus a total of 48 FGDs were conducted as part of this study. Members of the FGDs as well as the villages from which they were recruited were purposively selected taking into consideration multiple effects of the war, resettlement process and prior CARE engagement in these communities.

It has to be noted here that while the EVE of 2011 was limited to the Northern Province that experienced the last phase of the war, the CARE study covered the Northern Province, Eastern Province and the border district of Polonnaruwa which are broadly defined as conflict-affected areas in CARE programming in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the discussion that follows is not exclusively about the Northern Province, but a wide range of conflict-affected areas assuming that the demographic impact of the war described in the

preceding sections is applicable to varying degrees in parts of the Eastern Province as well.

Unbalanced Sex Ratio and Economic Vulnerability

One clear outcome of the unbalanced sex ratio that has already received considerable attention in research and programming in the CAAs is the high prevalence of women-headed households (CARE INTERNATIONAL 2010, Tiruchandran 1999, Kottegoda 1996). Estimates of women-headed households in selected regions in Northern and Eastern provinces range from 15 to 30 percent of all households. Ruwanpura (2001), however, argued that the rise in female headship in Eastern Sri Lanka cannot be attributed solely to the war, as desertions by husbands as well as de facto separation on the part of women due to misbehaviour and maltreatment by husbands including alcoholism all indicating significant erosion of patriarchal family structures throughout Sri Lanka also make important contribution towards promotion of female headship. On the other hand Silva, Sivakanthan and Wickramasinghe (2012) found that women-headed households are an especially vulnerable group directly impacted by the war and natural disasters such as the tsunami. Identified as households where a woman is the primary income earner in a household, it was found that such households had especial vulnerabilities not only because of reduced earning capacity but also because of potential risks and abuses and prevailing social attitudes and prejudices against women who had lost their husbands due to the war, abandonment or natural death of the husband. While excessive projection of victimhood of such women has been criticized in the feminist literature in particular (e.g. Ruwanpura & Humpreys 2004) that emphasized the need to recognize the agency of the persons concerned, it was nevertheless felt that recovery from the war has been made difficult by the patriarchal values and related social restrictions imposed upon them by the society, including extended kin groups.

While female headship is one important outcome of demographic changes caused by the war with serious implications for economic recovery from the war, there are also other economic vulnerabilities resulting from changes in the sex ratio in the war-affected civilian populations.

Table 4: Wage Differential between Male and Female Workers Concerning Daily Wage for Casual Labour in the Informal Sector, 2012

Field Location	Male	Female
Santhvelli, Batticaloa	Rs. 800	Rs. 250-300
Kiran West, Batticaloa	Rs. 200 (Fish net cleaning)	Rs.100 (fish net cleaning)
Achchelu in Valikamam East	Rs. 700	Rs.200-350
Annivilanthna, Kilinochchi	Rs.700	Rs.300-400
Mulliavalai, Mulaitivu	Rs. 700	Rs.200-300
Nainamadu, Vavuniya	Rs.1000	Rs.500
Akkaraipattu	Rs. 500-800	Rs.400-500
Polonnauwa	Rs. 800	Rs.600-700
Ampara	Rs.800	Rs.500-700

(Based on information gathered in FGDs)

Reported wage differential between male and female casual wage labourers in agriculture was quite significant particularly in the Vanni, Jaffna and parts of the Eastern Province. For instance, for casual farm work the daily wage for female workers was often nearly 50% of wages paid to comparable male workers. In the Vanni a female daily wage earner was typically paid Rs. 300-400 compared to Rs. 700 to 800 paid to male workers. In Jaffna and

in the Eastern Province too the pattern was basically the same even though the gap tended to be narrower compared to that in the e Vanni. Interestingly in parts of Polonnaruwa and Ampara districts the wage differential between male and female workers was much less, signifying that this problem was more acute in the former conflict zone where more women newly entered the labour market due to the death, disappearance or desertion by male family members. In many cases even the women accepted this as part of a natural state of affairs and did not question it in any way. Asked why they accepted this situation, while some women argued that men got what they deserved as they undertook harder physical labour, others said that if they raise this with their employers they will lose even what they were getting at present. The wage differential partly reflects patriarchal social values undervaluing female labour compared to male labour. But we must also recognize that over supply of female labour in the casual labour market due to the unbalanced sex ratio noted above has the effect of further deflating female wage levels by the sheer operation of the logic of supply and demand[4]. In part at least this explains the higher wage gap between male and female workers in areas directly affected by the war such as the Vanni even when compared to nearby border areas such as Polonnaruwa where the demographic impact of the war was of a different kind and different order.

This salary differential had a considerable impact on the quality of life and standard of living in households dependent on wage labour partly because arguably in many instances the higher earnings of men invariably leaked for alcohol consumption and other wasteful expenses, the smaller income of female casual labourers was more or less totally devoted to the welfare of the household including essential expenses for household consumption and education and

[4] Unfortunately there are no reliable data on gender-based wage differential in casual wage labour in the affected areas in the pre-war era. Increased wage gap during and after the war, however, was clearly recognized by key informants and participants in FGDs.

health of the children. On the other hand, the male deficit in the civilian population in the aftermath of the war not only resulted in a significant loss of economically active male household members but also led to a reduction in potential earnings of female household members by taking up casual wage labour in agriculture where female wages are unacceptably low. This has made the primary livelihood available for most unskilled female workers insufficiently remunerative adding to their economic difficulties, vulnerabilities and disadvantages in the labour market.

Impact of Securitization from Outside and Distorted Sex Ratio in the Local Population on Civilian Perceptions of Insecurity

Actual threats to security as well as the sense of insecurity had not totally disappeared among civilians in the Vanni in particular in spite of the end of the war in May 2009. The strong feeling of insecurity among the surviving civilians was clearly one of the ingredients of what Somasundaram (2010a) aptly described as 'collective trauma' of civilians in the aftermath of the war. While during the aftermath of the war most sections of the security forces tended to handle their day-to-day relations with civilians in the Vanni with considerable caution and some humanitarian outlook (for instance, security forces built houses for some of the more destitute returning IDPs in parts of the Vanni), the sheer presence of security forces in big numbers in close proximity to civilian houses created a feeling of insecurity among civilians in general and women in particular also accentuated by the absence of adult males in many houses and the fragile and incomplete nature of many of the houses. In the FGDs some women reported that at night they slept collectively in houses of their relatives and neighbours rather than in their own houses as they felt it safer to sleep in the company of a wider network of friends and relatives. The moral panic concerning unknown male

"Peeping Toms" looking for female victims, popularly known as "grease devils" (*grease bootham*) that prevailed in some of the war-affected areas epitomized the acute feeling of insecurity among female civilians in particular in the aftermath of the war. It must be noted here that the feeling of fear and insecurity among the Tamil civilians in particular stemmed from the combined features of heavy Sinhala male military presence in the vicinity of their villages and settlements on the one hand and the relative absence, in view of the unbalanced sex ratio noted above, of adult male household members conventionally reckoned as the guardians of households in keeping with the patriarchal values entrenched in society. Among the WHHs the feeling of insecurity, however, stemmed not only from the heavily armed security forces but also from potential threats from other civilians as well.

The following case study where a widowed woman describes her existential insecurities, illustrates livelihood difficulties and fear psychosis among the war widows.

Case Study of a War Widow

Place: Nainamadhu, Vavuniya North DS Division
Age: 42
Employment: Wage labour Education: O/L

I am a widow (*vithavai)* now. When I was 19 years old I got married. My husband was working as a farmer. When he was alive, I didn't go for work even a single day. I had four children consisting of two males and two females. We faced a number of displacements in our lifetime. At last we were displaced from our native place on 7th July 2008. During the period of displacement my husband and elder son were killed on 10th of May 2009 when we were in Mullivaaikal due to a shell blast. Since I lost my husband and the eldest son in the same incident, our family became destitute. Prior to the displacement

we had some properties such as a motor bicycle, four bicycles, a sewing machine, furniture and two cattle, but we lost everything due to war and continuous displacements. We were resettled in our Periyamadhu village on 4th of February 2010. Before the war we were living in a semi-permanent house. After the resettlement an NGO namely FOSDO constructed a temporary house for us. And under the ENREP programme we received Rs. 20,000 for house clearing. The same project implemented a cash-for-work (CFW) programme in our village. Since I suffer from asthma, I could participate in CFW only for a limited number of days.

UNHCR gave Rs.25,000 as the resettlement aid through the government. Also the Indian government and UNHCR gave us tool packages. CARE, provided Rs.35,000 worth of livelihood support. Although they gave one cow as a livelihood support it was not useful due to the limited quantity of milk it yielded. Thus I sold it to somebody. My second son dropped out from school due to our economic difficulties. My youngest daughter is three years old and, therefore, it is very difficult for me to go for wage labour. Soon after the resettlement, we received dry rations for six months only. Thus we could manage to a certain extent. But now the family situation is terrible. The sudden and unexpected death of my husband and son, my illness (asthma) and limited opportunities for wage labour are the major causes for our poverty and vulnerability.

Since I am a sick widow, I couldn't educate my son. If I educated my son he could have secured a good job in the future. I worry so much because my son is also suffering as a wage labour like me. My children do not have sufficient food. We are unable to eat three times a day. Generally we eat rice for lunch and light meals for breakfast and dinner. If at all I cook chicken for my children once a month. My second son does not have proper physical growth. The doctor said that he is severely under weight for his age. Now we

are living in a make shift temporary shelter. It does not have proper walls and I live in fear all the time. In our neighbourhood most of the families are women headed. We are using a toilet constructed with the help of CARE. I have two acres of highland and two acres of paddy land but the paddy land has become barren because it had been abandoned for a long time. Since we don't have an agro-well we are unable to do any agriculture on the highland plot. If we construct a deep well in our highland plot we can do some cultivation and can earn an income from highland cultivation. In order to get drinking water and for bathing we have to walk a long distance.

We are using old clothes and we rarely buy new clothes because we do not have enough money. Even for festivals such as *thaipongal* and *deepawali* we are unable to buy new clothes for my children. Therefore I feel very sad. We have poor transportation facilities. If we want to get on the bus we have to go to Nainamadhu which is four km away from the Periyamadhu village. The nearest hospital is in Puliyankulam which it seven km away from our village. We must spend Rs.40 for the bus ride to go to the hospital. And for emergency cases we have to hire a private vehicle at a cost of Rs.1000. It is very difficult to borrow money from other people. There is no bank in our area. The nearest bank is in Nedunkerni, which is 12 km away from our village. The local shop owner (Kadai Muthalali) refused to give goods on credit because we do not have an assured income. I am scared to borrow money from others because if I do not return it on time they will scold me.

The social condition of a widow is terrible in our society. I avoid participating in functions such as weddings and puberty ceremonies. Being a widow I have to bear up all the difficulties and pressures. Society blames us if we go for work or wear any good clothes even if we have them. I realize the value of my husband now. He earned nearly Rs.10,000 per month. It is very difficult to live without my husband. I have to manage everything somehow because I have

to keep my children alive. As far as wage labour is concerned we are unable to get opportunities continuously. The wage is also not enough. A female daily wage labourer (*kulivalai)* is paid mostly Rs.400 per day. I believe that if I start a small business (small shop) I can improve my economic condition. In my view our life became much worse after the end of the war than during the war itself. For the rest of my life I cannot see how I can escape our economic hardships, insecurity, and lack of opportunities.

A woman's narrative presented above point to the multi-factorial nature of vulnerability due to the interpenetration of unstable income, illnesses, malnutrition and physical and social insecurity particularly in a WHH. The perception of insecurity stems from multiple sources including widowhood, unstable income, indebtedness, poor housing, chronic illness and the absence of male earners and male guardians.

Concerns and Worries about Marriageability of Young Women

One of the repeated themes in female FGDs including FGDs with WHHs and unemployed young females is concerns about marriageability of the girl child due to their inability to raise a dowry which is in itself an oppressive patriarchal custom that has clearly survived the war. This situation is also accentuated by a notable decline of marriageable male partners of appropriate ages in the civilian population, and perceived potential risk of abuse of the girl child within the existing security environment and poor housing conditions. According to some key informants, consensual and non-consensual sexual alliances between military personnel and certain categories of civilian women who have limited agency or ability to negotiate in the given situation added another dimension to the moral decay, potential for abuse and distorted sex ratio

in the civilian population. On the whole, the situation added to the mutually reinforcing feelings of vulnerability and insecurity among the females in particular. In a culture where unmarried women were seen as a burden to the family and marriage and child bearing as the ultimate proof of womanhood, unmarried women past the marriageable age experienced a complex mix of stigma, vicious rumours and potential abuse. On the other hand, any suspected sexual alliances outside marriage and outside ethnicity were seen as a broader cultural and existential challenge in that the emerging developments contradicted the conventional patriarchal and puritanical expectation of women as bearers of pure and uncontaminated Tamil culture.

Summary and Conclusions

The first part of this chapter demonstrated the distorted sex ratio in the civilian population based on the findings of the mini-census conducted by DCS in the Northern Province in 2011. A significant male deficit in the economically, socially and politically active age groups in particular was identified not only as a demographic distortion but also a potential enhancer of economic and social vulnerability and psychosocial stress in conflict-affected populations.

The second part of the chapter dealt with aspects of vulnerability and psychosocial stress that can be directly or indirectly attributed to the distorted sex ratio in the civilian population. They included a high ratio of women-headed households, enhanced wage differential between males and females in the casual labour market, acute sense of fear and insecurity and serious concerns about prospects for marriage in the marriage market for women in particular. While there were multiple causes of the vulnerabilities, existential insecurities and 'collective trauma' experienced by the survivors of the war as already well documented in the literature (Somasundaram 2010a, 2010b), the deficit of economically active,

politically alert and socially engaged male household members certainly added to their livelihood difficulties and insecurities.

It is likely that the prevailing distortions in the sex ratio in the surviving civilian population will take a number of generations to get corrected through natural processes even though the age specific sex ratios indicate more balanced sex ratios in younger ages. For the time being, the policy makers, development workers, civil society organizations and even the private sector must take it as a "frame condition" within which economic initiatives, development interventions, psychosocial programmes and security regimes must be introduced. While the existing gender and age profile in the civilian population may present minimal security risks to the state and ruling regimes in terms of facilitating any organized dissent and revolt on the part of politically alert but numerically diminished male youth among the war survivors, it also poses serious challenges in terms of initiating any genuine efforts at promoting participatory development and community mobilization where male participation is concerned. At the same time in the current circumstances there may be an unprecedented opportunity to alter unequal gender relations evolved though cultural processes over a long period of time in so far as women constitute a majority of the population and have entered new positions of decision making not only at the household level but at higher levels of decision making as is implied in some of the emerging feminist literature (Samuel and Kodikara 2010, Ruwanpura and Humphries 2004, Tambiah 2004). It is no accident that in the Northern Province and parts of the Eastern Province women have risen to important positions in civil administration[5] as well as in local government, even though the development of this apparently healthy trend has been adversely affected by the failure of the political centre in

[5] For instance, in 2011 three of the five District Secretaries in the Northern Province were Tamil women with considerable administrative power in spite of the limitations imposed by the military and their interference in civil administration.

Colombo to respond to this potential by establishing the Northern Provincial Council as a means to delegate power to population groups in the periphery even after three years since the end of war (Oakley 2011).

The private sector employers such as the garment industry which has newly entered the labour market in selected towns in the Northern and Eastern Provinces can actually serve to minimize the existing wage gap in so far as they can offer decent salaries and improved working in conflict-affected areas not merely as a lucrative opportunity for profit maximization but more as a means of providing social and economic inclusion to the surviving civilian population in the aftermath of the war within the framework of corporate social responsibility. The state must provide linkages, policy frameworks, corporate subsidies and tax benefits towards bridging the private sector interests and community needs in the newly emerged post-war environment. Skill development and leadership training with a focus on women can make a useful contribution towards enhancing their participation in higher level decision making as well as in more remunerative employment.

The psychosocial needs of the war survivors must be clearly recognized and programs must respond to the specific needs and concerns of various population groups, including war-widows, alcoholic men, under-aged married couples, disrupted families and unmarried women who are at marriageable age. On the other hand, some of the prevailing and ongoing demographic processes such as excess male outmigration through legal and illegal channels are likely to sustain or even enhance the existing distortions in the sex ratio in the civilian population. On the whole, the state policies should make it more attractive and more secure for both men and women from the areas to live in the Northern and Eastern Provinces instead of directly or indirectly compelling them to look for supposedly greener and more humane outside spaces in the global market and first world citizenship.

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Wounded Society: Social Wounds of the War and the Breakup of Community Social Structures in Northern Sri Lanka

Dhammika Herath

Introduction

Sri Lanka is often depicted as a *post-war* society but there is wide ranging agreement in academic as well as policy discourses that Sri Lanka is by no means a *post-conflict* society, which essentially denotes a situation where core causes of the conflict as well as the consequences of violence have been addressed or at least a situation in which significant attempts have been made to achieve this goal. After 30 years of war the question remains as to whether people directly affected by the war and its disastrous consequences have started leading 'normal' lives. As in any other violent conflict, direct consequences such as death, injury and destruction livelihoods and property have been witnessed in the Sri Lankan conflict throughout the life cycle of the war and these consequences have been amply documented. This chapter examines a so far under-explored dimension: the extent to which northern society has suffered social structural damages and how these issues represent a breakup of community social structures which this papers terms a 'community breakup. This study understands community breakup as *the drastic changes in the statuses and roles, distortion of social institutions, weakening of norms and values, social controls and sanctions, and the erosion of social networks.*

Some of the losses experienced by war-affected people in the north such as death of relatives, neighbours, or friends, injury to oneself or others, are quite common to all zones of violence but social and cultural losses can be unique and vary from one cultural context to

another. This study finds that it is exactly these social and cultural losses, as detailed in the following sections, which constitute a community breakup - these in turn, lead to a series of other social problems.

Background

This chapter emerges from a comprehensive program launched in the north of Sri Lanka which extended beyond a pure academic exercise in generating new knowledge[1]. The author was involved in directing an action research program in two districts of the North, Vavuniya and Mannar which included three major components: research into social and emotional impact of violence; a one year training program intended at imparting basic skills of counselling/ befriending to 40 youth in the two districts; and social and cultural activities aimed at fostering interethnic trust and facilitating reconciliation at the micro level.

This paper has the following objectives:

1. To investigate social and cultural consequences of the civil war in selected war-torn communities
2. To assess the nature of social and cultural consequences of violence, displacement and separation associated with the civil war
3. To suggest that these problems represent a breakup of the community social structures

It can naturally be expected that 30 years of violence results in serious social impacts at the level of the individual, family and community. The study is primarily based on qualitative data collected by the author in 40 villages in the north in Mannar and

1. Social Networking and Psychosocial Reconstruction Program was implemented through the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, ICES from February 2011 to May 2012.

Vavuniya and is complemented by a survey of 362 respondents in the same locations. The chapter introduces the, methodology used, followed by a brief discussion of the human and economic impact of the war within an overview of violence and moves on to explore social impacts which stand as indicators of the breakup of the social structure. In the latter stages of this chapter the current coping mechanisms are discussed.

Methodology Used

This research study was conducted through an intermixed array of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods described below

- Observations and informal interactions
- Semi-structured interviews with village level informants, officials and civil society actors
- Case studies and focus group discussions
- Survey with 362 respondents

The research study commenced with extensive discussions with key informants in the government administration, medical practitioners in the health sector and civil society in the north of Sri Lanka. These interviews gathered information on the prevalence of social and emotional problems due to violence, problems in the family and community and the existing mechanisms of social and psychological support for the affected people. Civil society here includes both non-governmental organizations based in these districts and grassroots organizations, specifically rural development societies and farmer societies.

The entire research project involved close observations in the 40 villages on the process of material reconstruction, rehabilitation, rekindling of agriculture, reestablishment of dwellings and

operations of the government civil administration. Information was gathered through case studies of individuals, interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) which constitute the backbone of this study as they helped uncover the present social and cultural conditions in the villages studied and also because they revealed the conditions under which they lived during the last phase of violence in the 2008-2009 period. These qualitative research techniques also allowed discovery of information on displacement which involved mass exodus of people from their original habitat into the jungles of Mullativu and then to the town of Vavuniya on the A 9 road. The case studies and FGDs also investigated the social and *observable* emotional changes in the individuals, family and community. However, it is important to note that the author, due to the action research program, had informal interactions with various people including counselling trainees and the general public throughout a period of more than one year and these informal interactions were instrumental in yielding a wealth of information, which would not have been disclosed in the absence of trust and close interaction over a long period.

The qualitative research findings fed into the process of designing a context-sensitive questionnaire for the survey which was the last component of the research project capturing the basic demographic changes in the community, experiences of violence, changes in the structure of the community, and general social impact from a macro perspective. The study included 362 respondents in two divisional secretary divisions in Vavuniya and Mannar. These two districts were seriously affected by violence and displacement. Although there were other places such as Killinochchi and Mulativu which were equally or more affected, a variety of reasons including government restrictions against research in these areas and issues of access, prevented this study from exploring such locations. Even if access was possible, by the time of the study the

other areas affected by displacement had not been resettled and therefore provided no substantive ground to undertake a study in Killinochchi or Mullativu.

An Overview on the Experiences of Violence

What have they gone through? The losses related to violence can be understood through three perspectives:

- Human losses: death and physical injuries
- Economic losses: loss of livelihoods, houses, gold and savings, livestock, machineries etc.
- Social and cultural losses: sudden and drastic change in status and role, distortion of social institutions, weakening of norms and values, loss of community leaders, loss of faith in religion, disrupted civic life and, impotency of taboos against extra marital sexual activity, increased alcohol abuse and attempted suicide incidents and so on.

Various consequences of violence which are part and parcel of the war have been factors behind the community breakup in the north. Although displacement is usually taken as one of the many traumatic experiences endured in war, sometimes, it is the most common experience for many people and displacement can become the basis for other types of losses associated with war. All the people in this study have suffered multiple displacements during a time period of 30 years but constant and frequent displacements in the 2008/9 period. Initially, at the beginning of serious violence such as in 1983, Tamils were displaced from many parts of the country towards the north while Sinhalese who were resident in the north were displaced inwards towards the north central or other provinces, while during the 90s Muslims were chased out from many parts of the north. In addition to these major waves of displacement there have been a multitude of displacement experiences involving small

geographical areas. 40 per cent of the respondents in this study have suffered displacement five to nine times while 60% have endured displacement 10 to 16 times or more during the life cycle of the war. Table 1 below shows the approximate number of days spent in a displaced condition for the respondents[2].

Table 1: Number of Days in Displacement

Num of days	Frequency	Valid Percent
140 to less than 400 days	52	14
401 to 600 days	68	19
601 to 700 days	111	31
701 to 800 days	74	20
Above 801 days	57	16
Total	**362**	**100**

Everyone in the north was forced away from their homes due to forced displacement and among the sample of respondents in this study, people were away from home a minimum of 140 days while others have stayed away more than 800 days. In fact, this information pertains only to those who have returned to their original villages through state sponsored resettlement programs and it is important to remember that there are significant numbers of people who have moved to other parts of the country and even migrated abroad, and for them displacement could be a lifelong experience until they become integrated into a host community.

Physical Losses

Although the casualty figures of the war in Sri Lanka remain controversial with different sources giving very divergent estimates, there is some consensus that 70,000 to 100,000 people may have

2 The calculation is a very rough one based on people's memories

died throughout its lifecycle. In fact, human damage in the war in Sri Lanka is well documented in peace and conflict literature as well as in reports on human rights (Aryasinha, 2001; ICG, 2010; UN, 2011; Jonathan, 2012) . This vast literature obviates the need to go into a detailed discussion on this aspect. As far as the study areas are concerned, this study involved 362 respondents in two divisional secretary divisions namely Manthai West and Nedunkeerni and close to one third of them (102 respondents) reported having experienced death of family members in the war, although the exact number of the dead cannot be established with the data available. Among the 102 persons who reported death in the family, some had experienced at least one death while others reported more than one death in the family. Given that almost one third of the sample records death of family members, it is possible that the casualty figures for the people in this area are quite high. Another 37 people reported having experienced personal injuries.

Economic Losses

As in the case of human impact, the economic and livelihood impact of the war in Sri Lanka is also well researched (Grobar, 1993; Arunatilake, 2001; Korf, 2004). As in any other theatre of violence, the north of Sri Lanka also witnessed serious economic losses as a consequence of violence. The last phase of displacement in the 2008/9 period involved a mass exodus of people from certain parts of Mannar, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi and Mullativu towards the hinterland of Mullativu District especially towards Pudumathalan and Mullivaikkal areas and then to Vavuniya where they remained in 'welfare centres' for over a year. Towards the end of the war several hundred thousand people ultimately poured into the 'welfare centres' in Vavuniya leading to a situation in which the government and the non-governmental organizations could not cope with the humanitarian crisis which unfolded. The gravity of

destruction which took place in this area is manifest from the fact that by the time of this study in 2010, when the researcher made initial field visits to Nedunkeerni and Manthai West, there were virtually no houses as all the housing units without exception had been razed to the ground due to shelling. Even towards the end of 2011, 92 per cent of the housing units could be still considered 'incomplete' or partly constructed with temporary material such as low quality wood pieces, tin sheets and cement bricks provided by government and/or NGOs.

Dairy farms as a cottage industry was a unique livelihood in northern villages. However, livestock is one of the assets which people had to leave behind during the process of displacement. The LTTE took the people away into the hinterland with them in the face of rapidly advancing government security forces and the hastiness of the withdrawal and the sheer number of civilians meant that there were no means or time to take the livestock along with them and hence the almost total loss of livestock resources. It is possible that most of the domesticated animals died from shelling or they were lost in the jungles. Intense shelling which was a unique feature of the war in Sri Lanka brought similar destruction of valuable machinery and household vegetation including valuable and useful trees which people had cultivated over a lifetime. The long duration of displacement allowed the jungle to invade household gardens in which re-cultivation is impossible with the use of simple tools available to farmers. By all accounts, the development achieved by people for generations was totally destroyed or lost in a very brief time period and almost all residents in this area now have the task of rebuilding from scratch and hence the war has been an unfortunate *'Great Leveller'* of which the social consequences are elaborated later in this chapter.

One of the factors which can be crucial in restoration of livelihoods is whether people have access to savings, that is, those who may

have escaped from the 'great leveller'. The author of this study observes that although the majority of the people appear to be in a poor economic condition despite hard work in agriculture, which may improve their economies in future, a relatively small numbers of residents have already been able to make significant economic progress within a short period of two years. The prime factor behind these successes is the availability of savings [3]or to a limited extent cash transfers from relatives abroad, who are commonly identified as the 'Tamil Diaspora' (Wayland, 2004; Orjuela, 2012).

How did people lose their savings? During the time of LTTE control, they ran their own banking system although the state banks were also allowed to operate to a limited extent. In some interior locations, such as the area of the study, there were only LTTE banks and in any case, the LTTE encouraged people to save in their banks. The literal wiping out of the LTTE meant that their banks also vanished along with their founders thus depriving thousands of people of their life's savings.

Is money the only form of savings? An important form of savings among the Tamils of Sri Lanka is in the form of gold as the Tamil culture places importance on the possession of jewellery as a mark of wealth and also as a means of managing the social institution of dowry in addition to the use of jewellery by women as ornaments. Respondents of this study explained that most of them tried to take away and protect the gold they possessed. However, in a context where it was a challenge to protect lives, holding on to the gold was a difficult task. Most people claim to have lost their gold savings although it is not possible to establish this as a fact because gold possession is highly confidential and people would not discuss its possession due to safety reasons.

[3] A minority of people had been able to save in state banks and thus could save/recover their savings.

The preceding sections on human losses, economic damages and the experience of violence provide a general background to facilitate entry into the major focus of this paper. The following sections explore the indicators of community breakup.

The Community Breakup

As explained earlier, this study focuses on social and cultural losses because they constitute the basis for the greater and more significant impact on society and reveals important facets unique to this community environment. What are the indicators which suggest a community breakup as argued in this paper? These indicators can be identified at the level of the individual, family as well as the community. This chapter dwells on the social and cultural transformation in the north where the Tamil speaking people, mainly ethnic Tamils and significant numbers of Muslims constitute the majority. Hence in order to state that there are transformations, the chapter first attempts to establish a baseline with which the present social and cultural conditions can be compared. Given that the present study is not a longitudinal study, it relies on social and anthropological literature to construct a rough baseline which is tentatively understood as the social structure in 'traditional' Tamil culture.

Social Structure and the Sri Lankan Imagery

What is now considered the 'traditional' social structure of Sri Lanka hinged on the hydraulic civilization and a feudal caste system especially in relation to Sinhalese society (Silva, 1981). One could cautiously say that in the case of Tamil society too, agriculture based on irrigation, and the feudal caste system were important building blocks of the social structure. During the pre-modern and also the early colonial period, in both Sinhalese and Tamil social structure a defining feature was that leadership was related to the

caste hierarchy and in that sense the class status was also consequent to the caste system. In the Sinhalese caste system, those belonging to the Goigama caste, constituted the aristocrats, village headmen and farming class while in the Tamil social structure the equivalent of Goigama was called the Vellalas. Nonetheless, the significance of caste as a foundation of social status began to change in the late colonial period when people of 'lower' castes could find upward mobility through education and business and hence class founded on wealth and education became as important or more important than caste though this relative significance of caste and class may vary in different social and cultural contexts (Silva, 2009).

In the Sinhalese caste system and social structure, the Buddhist monks served as spiritual leaders while being advisors for mundane affairs. However, in Tamil society, Hindu priests did not necessarily provide leadership and leaders of society were invariably from high caste groups. Nevertheless religion played an important role in terms of social control and social organization and Sri Lankan Tamil culture has historically maintained a strong relationship with Hinduism.

The 'traditional' Tamil social structure was in many ways founded on the caste system and norms, values and mores attached to the Hindu belief system. Scholars point out that the status and role was primarily decided on the basis of where one belongs to the caste hierarchy, and although the possession of material wealth, bearing of office in royal or state service, and land ownership were also related to social status, the positions and wealth were invariably a function or an effect of the caste hierarchy. There is no disagreement among the historians on the influence of caste on all aspects of life. However, with the advent of colonialism and opportunities for free education there were some changes in the relevance of caste for social status as other factors — especially the ability to raise wealth through employment in government or business — also became important. However, to this day, caste remains significant in the social structure of Tamil society (Wilson, 2000).

In both Sinhalese and Tamil society significance of religion and caste as a factor of leadership formation may probably have changed in the period after independence although it is difficult for this study to elaborate on this aspect. Especially, in countries affected by conflict and marked by rapid economic changes, social institutions such as religion and caste can undergo rapid changes. However, these social institutions are part of the lived reality for the author and it is still possible to claim through personal experience that religiosity or religiousness do not seem to have waned and caste though weakened remains important in some areas of social and economic life.

This chapter also covers the social and cultural changes with regard to women and hence it is necessary to gain a sense of 'traditional' cultural expectations of womanhood. Social and anthropological literature has depicted Tamil women in general as living under a cultural framework featured by a strong patriarchal system, which was also reinforced by strong norms relating to caste (Rajasingham-Senanayake, 2004). Further, scholars on Tamil culture looking specifically at gender roles have commented that the position of women in society was influenced by the strong ethos in Hindu traditions. Schrijvers (1999), while engaging in a critique of gender roles and cultural expectations ascribed to women, vividly captures the 'traditional' imagery of Tamil Womanhood in the following words and illustrates the significance attached to chastity and virginity:

> *Women should be chaste, caring and self- sacrificing...they should move around in a chaste manner, keep their legs together and cover their bodies decently. They should reserve their sexuality only to their legal husbands and bestow on him respect and procreation (pp 529).*

However, it must be acknowledged that this imagery of womanhood and chastity was not limited to Tamil women only but common to Sinhalese and Muslim imageries of womanhood and thus, this

imagery represents the general conception of womanhood in the pre-modern and early colonial period. This study does not claim that the same conception of womanhood remained in the late colonial and post-independence period which saw rapid socioeconomic and cultural changes especially after the introduction of open economic policies and the exposure of Sri Lankan society to the winds of globalization which swept across the country. Nevertheless, it seems that, despite such rapid changes and consequent changes of notions of womanhood along with associated expectations, Sri Lankan society is yet to experience a radical change in such notions and gender stereotypes. Hence, it may not be an exaggeration to say that 'Victorian' values still hold sway in the general Sri Lankan society among all ethnic groups.

In fact, later studies have shown how during the long years of war, conflicting and different images of Tamil Womanhood emerged; on the one hand, the image of female combatants and suicide bombers in the LTTE and on the other hand women as victims of war struggling to make ends meet in families and trying to save their lives while having to perform some functions considered 'traditionally' as male duties. Nevertheless, these studies acknowledge that new identities or roles women undertook have not replaced the earlier 'traditional' image of Tamil womanhood, characterized by restricted mobility, subservience to males. However, as mentioned, the new conditions forced women and in some ways generated opportunities for women to make themselves visible in the public sphere (Hoole, 1990; Schrijvers, 1999).

In fact, the picture of the Tamil woman painted by many of the scholars cited above is not one of uniformity as they point out how women were traditionally subjected to lower social status, lower authority as well as a position of dependency. Some others highlight how gender roles were transformed through violence giving room for positive and negative outcomes such as giving

women an opportunity to take part in important economic and social responsibilities in the absence of males and also gaining a certain form of agency as active combatants but at the same being positioned as victims of violence. This chapter does not in any way intend to give the impression that within northern Tamil culture women are always positioned as victims but only hopes to show that 'traditional' society had strong sanctions against extra marital relations and norms and stressed virginity and loyalty to their husbands. The available literature confirms to some extent that Tamil society is largely patriarchal. In a context like this, when social change occurs rapidly as it has happened in the north of Sri Lanka, it can potentially lead to many social problems. This will be elaborated later in the chapter.

War as a 'Great Leveller'

As already mentioned war and displacement have been an unfortunate 'great leveller' which has almost eroded economic class differences in the villages under study not by raising the poverty stricken up in the social ladder but by destroying all kinds of economic assets. All interviews and case studies conducted in this study (Int. 1-20, CS.1-10) reveal that formerly well to do people lost their economic assets such as savings and gold, machinery including vehicles, livestock, and household property. At present, except for a minority of people who have benefited from diasporic cash remittances, the majority (formerly rich or poor) find themselves in an impoverished condition. This can be understood as a dramatic change in the status and role, which are dependent on the economic status as well. The intention here is not to argue that one's social status is a function of economic status as other factors such as education, caste, profession and so on are also important variables. However, in modern society economic assets constitute an important dimension of social status. Social

interactions, the level of respect one currently gets compared to what one used to get are different. What you are and what you do have changed and thus it is almost a complete overturning of the traditional social structure. This study does not consider levelling as a positive development; rather this is a cataclysmic re-ordering of society that represents a violent rupture. This is a negative change not just because it involves massive destruction but also because it comes through hasty change creating a cultural lag, although one might argue that this 'great leveller' may also create opportunities for an egalitarian society in a Marxist sense as those who were formerly poor and who were caught up in traditional exploitative relationships can now hope for a new beginning. Nonetheless, land ownership may still have to be factored into this discourse of status and role change as those who possess land, although currently poor, will have greater opportunity to uplift themselves economically. Moreover, when society stabilizes and when other opportunities such as better education and better prospects for prestigious employment emerge, a hierarchical social structure founded on old as well as new pillars may emerge.

Further, although the economic status has changed and in effect broken down the established class hierarchy, none of the social, political or cultural changes, seem to have completely broken down the caste system though it has weakened it to a certain extent. Although this study does not engage in a systematic analysis of caste, it agrees that caste could still be important in marriage and social relations.

Leadership

At present, a prominent feature of the villages in the north under study and possibly everywhere in the north, is the clear absence of leaders at the grassroots level and even at the messo level. Table 2 below gives a picture of the leadership profile in these villages. Here, information was sought on the availability of leaders prior to the last phase of the war in 2009 and after the war up until the present.

Table 2: Leadership Vacuum

Table 2	Before		After	
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**
No leader	276	77	274	76
1 leader	27	7	32	9
2 leaders	14	4	13	4
3 leaders	16	4	14	4
4 or more leaders	26	7	25	7
Total	**359**	**100**	**359**	**100**

As shown in the table above, the overwhelming majority claim a dearth of leaders both prior to and following displacement in the 2008/9 period and it is obvious that there had been a leadership vacuum even prior to displacement extending into the years of control by the LTTE. Why are there no leaders at grassroots level? There is enough evidence to suggest that the level of violence and also coercion during the time of the LTTE may have prevented leaders from emerging in the community. Those who had leadership skills were possibly co-opted into the rank and file of the LTTE. Further, due to potential and assumed association between leadership and membership in the LTTE and the consequences such as arrests may also have prevented many spirited individuals from developing their leadership skills or assuming leadership positions (Int. 10, 11, 13, 14, and 16).

At present, it is a remarkable feature that virtually no grassroots organizations exist in many villages except those newly founded by the government such as the male and female Rural Development Society (RDS) through the divisional secretaries to undertake minor grassroots development projects or Farmer Societies set up to coordinate agriculture—mainly distribution of water and

fertilizer. It is possible that some community leaders could have died during the war but it could also be that many lack enthusiasm or interest to undertake leadership roles in society. This is a matter of attitude and hence difficult to establish but it is plausible that the political conditions under the LTTE and also under the security forces may have driven potential leaders into invisibility to avoid forceful conscription into the LTTE and to avoid possible arrest by government forces due to suspected links with the LTTE.

Further, arguably, conditions in the north do not encourage formation of grassroots societies and many people do not seem to have trust in the government as well as in the majority community. Although officially all the former LTTE controlled areas have come under government control along with the military defeat of the LTTE, three years after the end of the war, it is uncertain whether 'normalcy' has returned to the north despite claims to that effect. Freedom of association is very much limited with the heavy presence of the security forces even at the grassroots level. It is clear from the observations of the researchers that even the administrative powers are not fully in the hands of the civil servant as the military has a strong say in administration. One Grama Niladhari (GN) noted that the police give 'timber permits' to cut down the trees although it is the duty of the divisional secretary and the GN (Int. 19). Still there are vestiges of fear in the minds of people although these may be unfounded in many cases in the post-war context.

This chapter argues that the leadership vacuum and the dearth of community organizations in the north represent a community breakup as leadership is related to social norms, and social organizations are essential to the smooth functioning of civic life. Even if one focuses on intra-ethnic connections, civic behaviour has almost disappeared from the war affected communities in this study and this seems to be related to the absence of grassroots

leaders or civic organizations. Observations revealed that collective actions for common purposes have withered out. The great majority of the people who underwent substantial economic losses are now struggling to rebuild their household economies and hence there is not much time available for civic behaviour. It is possible that violence endured by the people in the north may have persuaded them to move away from civic life although there can be other factors affecting this social change (Int. 10, 12, 13, 21, 25 FGD 1-5).

Faith in Religion

Religion often plays complex and divergent roles in post-disaster situations. Scholars often say that in post-disaster situations as well as in individual crises, people in general and those raised in Asian cultures in particular, often lean towards spiritual or religious practices to gain solace and relieve their grief as modern counselling is often not available or unknown or not accepted socially. People usually went to either spiritual sources, gods, or consulted individual priests for emotional support, which was possibly an alternative to counselling. It is documented in academic literature that there was more religious enthusiasm after the tsunami disaster in 2004 (Ansor, 2003; Ensor, 2003; De Silva, 2006).

However, qualitative evidence from the villages under study suggests that in the case of some of the Hindus, belief in God has lessened. Sociologists are not concerned whether what is professed in religion is right or wrong but are concerned about the functions of religion in society. What does it mean to have low faith in God?

There is contradictory evidence regarding the utility of religion as a means of emotional support on the ground. Respondents of this study mentioned that, when it comes to Hindus, people have lost trust in God after the great loss of lives and destruction of the war.

There is a Kovil just on the other side of our office. Lots of people used to come there in the morning. Now only myself and a few others can be seen there in the morning. I don't know whether God is there or not. But you can't blame the God for what happened (Int.3)

Soldiers [government] had Gana Deiyo in the pockets and Pirith Nool (chanted threads) in the hands. How many threads they have on their hands? They have Buddha Shrines in the camps. So, they were protected (Int. 4)

Both the respondents above are high level state officials in the areas covered by the study and none were directly subject to the level of violence which others experienced and both of them express trust in God while lamenting the lack of faith among the ordinary people in the area. The second informant is of the view that unlike the LTTE which was secular in orientation if not de facto atheist, the government soldiers, majority of whom are Buddhist, also worshipped Hindu Gods. This informant was of the view that the soldiers' faith in religion was one of the reasons why they were able to save their lives. The second informant argued that the LTTE lost the war because they lacked faith in God. According to both informants, people blame God for not protecting them.

The ordinary people have the feeling that if there had been a God, then, this great disaster (death, injuries etc) would not have befallen them. However, disaster did happen and hence there cannot be a God. For many this appears to be a logical conclusion. It came out in many of the interviews, case studies and all FGDs that of those who were severely affected by the war, at least some of the people, have lost trust in God at least in the short term. Generally, there is a wide spread opinion, expressed both by state officers and our trainees in the counselling program that people now visit the Kovil less frequently (Int. 12, 16,17, 20-25 and CS 3,4,8,10, FGD, 1-6). However, it is possible to see that new Kovils are slowly being

built and this low belief in religion could be an indication of short term frustration and anger which is now displaced towards God as a psychological defence mechanism. Nevertheless, the current low faith in religion can be taken as another indicator of the community breakup although this may change in future.

Diminishing religious trust is greater among the Hindus and is interestingly not matched by diminishing faith among other religious groups such as Christians, Catholics and Muslims. In fact, the Muslims were not severely affected in the last phase of violence as they did not live in the areas directly affected by the intense violence in 2008/9 period.

Why have only Hindus lost faith? Although it is difficult to establish, it is possible that even people belonging to other religious groups did lose faith to a certain extent but active involvement and mobilization by priests in some religious groups may have reversed the loss of faith in them. Unlike in the case of Hinduism, Christian and Catholic priests are well educated, socially respected and they are well connected to the government as well as NGOs which helps them play an active role at the grassroots level in terms of housing assistance, welfare, and emotional support. Although high caste Brahmins are at the top of the Hindu caste hierarchy, those priests in the village Kovils are mostly considered 'pusaris' who belong to lower castes and from time immemorial these Hindu priests do not command much respect in society due to the vicissitudes of the caste system and hence they are mere vehicles or instruments to reach the God. Further, while the Hindu Kovil waits for people to come there, the Church as a highly institutionalized and centralized mechanism, reaches out to people and mobilizes devotees proactively. One of our trainees who is a Roman Catholic, remarked in the training class that:

There is a non Roman Catholic group coming to our village these days. I saw even Hindus going there. They do prayer meetings and try to help people to overcome their emotional problems. They advise people and try to give solace. I also saw them giving apples, books etc to people. 'Hindus go to both Kovil and prayer meetings. (Int. 20)

It is not certain whether the Hindus who went to the church were converted to another religion or whether they just went there either due to the materials which were being offered or seeking some solace by participating in some form of active religious rituals or to get both. The informant mentions that Hindus go both to Kovil and to the new church possibly indicating that people haven't moved totally away from the Kovil. It is possible that lively singing, advice and the sense of community generated by the Christian/ Catholic/Evangelical priests have lured people towards the church whereas there is a passive priest and a passive God in the Hindu Kovil to whom Hindus have to go and talk on their own initiative.

As mentioned briefly before, the soldiers although engaged in a war, which meant that they had to kill their opponents of the war violating the Buddhist sanctions against killing, but were still clinging to religion. It can readily be observed that there is a Buddhist statue and a sacred Bo-tree in almost all security forces camps or bases however small they may be. One could argue that this is a matter of identity rather than worship or belief but it seems, faced with danger which is an integral element of war, soldiers may have leaned towards religion for protection. As mentioned earlier, religion for Sinhalese Buddhists essentially involves both the Buddha as well as gods of the Hindu Pantheon. Unlike other public buildings, soldiers have not attacked places of worship in most cases. Soldiers, in fact, worship Gods of the Hindu pantheon by visiting ancient and famous Hindu Kovils considered to be imbued with divine powers and some along with family members make ritual vows termed 'Bhara' in Sinhalese. Some family members of the soldier's visit certain Kovils in places such as Mullativu to thank God for saving their husbands, fathers etc who were in the frontlines (Int. 5, FGD. 4)

As ordinary people reported in five of the case studies, low faith in religion among the Hindus relates to their experiences related to war and violence. Many people seem deeply devoted to rebuilding their livelihood rather than cultural practices or religion (CS. 1, 3, 4, 7, 10). There is very little evidence in cultural anthropological literature to show that there is any gradual societal transformation or modernization which has made religion less important in Sri Lanka. Both empirical first hand evidence and literature support the conclusion that this low faith in God and generally in religion is a consequence of the war. It further reinforces the central argument of this chapter that violence has led to a community breakup.

When considering the impact of the loss of faith, one of the most significant issues is the social vacuum it creates in terms of sources of emotional support and solace. As pointed out earlier, formal systems of counselling support are very weak in the north and all across the country except perhaps in Colombo. It is important to note that there are hardly any alternative rituals or beliefs in 'supernatural' practices which can act as social support for people in the absence of religious faith. The study cannot speculate whether rituals or beliefs have disappeared or whether people have lost trust in them too. Religion and spiritual rituals could also have played an important role in peaceful conflict transformation by providing avenues to express emotions — especially anger and grief.

Suicides and Substance Abuse

Kearney and Miller (1985) examining the issue of suicide in Sri Lanka in mid 1980s, note an increase of suicide during that period throughout the country. According to their study, the highest rate of suicide was observed in the age range of 15 to 29 years. They found a high rate of suicide in the districts of the northeast as well. However, the authors of that study found the increase of suicide to be related to the issues of growing competition for education and

careers, high unemployment, internal migration, and the increasing age of marriage. However, their study related to a period when the Tamil society had not yet felt sudden and drastic social changes although the ethnic conflict had reached a level of militancy by the mid 80s. Silva (2006), shows how suicide came to be used as a deadly weapon by the LTTE who as he argues, perfected the art of using suicide as a military strategy, technique of mobilization of cadres and as a symbolic political tool. The LTTE created a cult of martyrdom which saw significant numbers of young people killing themselves. Silva (2006), however, observes that there are under-explored questions relating to how the LTTE manipulated the body as a form of protest and as an ultimate weapon and also the relationship between self-sacrifice and cultural predispositions.

The present study however finds a high prevalence of attempted suicides in both of the districts along with a perceived drastic increase in alcoholism (Int. 6, CS. 4 and 6). As shown in the following tables, for the district of Vavuniya the suicide rate for 2011 is about 16 per 100,000 of the population and the attempted suicide is a massive 141 per 100,000 of the population. If not for increased health facilities and better access to hospitals, most of these incidents would have been counted as suicides[4].

Table 3 :Death due to Suicide in 2011: Vavuniya

Mode of Death	Number of Death
Poisoning	11
Drowning	8
Hanging	7
Burns	3
Total	**29**

[4] According to the data available in the office of the Inspector General Police, the suicide rate in Sri Lanka remained at about 18 per 100000 of the population. There is no data of attempted suicide.

Table 4: Attempted Suicide in 2011/2012: Vavuniya

	2011		2012	
Month	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
January	8	12	14	15
February	4	20	6	13
March	6	14	11	33
April	4	12	10	22
May	3	19	13	13
June	9	17	10	15
July	6	9		
August	3	14		
September	9	16		
October	8	16		
November	7	12		
December	5	10		
Total	**72**	**171**	**64**	**111**

Suicide can occur due to many reasons and not all of these can be related to war and violence. Nonetheless, medical practitioners are of the view that, according to their experiences in the north, most of the attempts at self harm and heavy indulgence in alcoholism are symptoms of trauma and emotional disturbances (Int. 5.6.7.). According to them survivors of attempted suicide reveal strong correlations with experiences of trauma or emotional disturbances. Qualitative evidence gathered in this study also supports a potential causal link between emotional disturbances, and the prevalence of high attempted suicide rates. For instance, the study met a woman who mentioned to the researcher that she wanted to kill herself after the death of her husband and son: 'People try to console me and tell me not to cry but how can I not cry? I tell my children to go with me to the place their father went'. Attempted and committed suicides which can be considered 'anomic' indicate a community breakup in the in the sense of Durkheim's famous theory on suicide in which he

argued that drastic and sudden social change can create a situation of anomy which reflects a condition of lack of social direction, moral confusion, and lawlessness (Poggi, 2000). This woman appears to have lost all hope and social controls and social support mechanisms around her have become weak and the social conditions around her represent an anomic situation and therefore she demonstrates anomic suicidal intensions. The prevalence of anomic social conditions can be seen as representing a community breakup.

High alcohol consumption could also reinforce the prevalence of emotional issues arising from the experiences of violence? This study was not able to focus on alcohol consumption or its causes and hence the study does not make any concrete claim that alcohol consumption has increased or that it is due to reasons connected with violence. Nevertheless, the study finds anecdotal evidence which could possibly indicate a potential causal link among violence, emotional issues and consumption of alcohol. The study encountered a family of three in Nedunkeerni, Vavuniya in which the father has become a heavy drinker. According to this person's wife, the man runs a small cycle repair workshop from which he earns about 500 rupees a day, which she says, although a small amount is sufficient for basic survival but the woman in this case mentioned that most of this money is lost as he spends a large part of the meagre income on drinking. The woman went on to say that:

[In 2008], our elder daughter had returned home after finishing the Ordinary level examination [at 16 years]. She went to fetch water and did not come back home. We looked for her everywhere. But we could not find her that day. Nobody knew what happened to her. Later we got to know that the LTTE had taken her. We heard from time to time from people that she was doing the bunkers for LTTE in Pudumathanlam. She died in the war. We never saw her body again but we were told she died. My husband cannot

forget his daughters' death. Sometimes, he cries at home. He drinks because he wants to forget about the daughter.

The study met with many respondents who have become drinkers after the experiences of violence in the last phase of the war. The worries the above woman speaks of sketches out the potential prevalence of emotional disturbances or trauma. As mentioned earlier, medical practitioners based on their clinical experiences find that there are widespread emotional disturbances and to some extent trauma though establishment of this as psychosocial fact requires further research. This woman too had many close calls with death. Once a shell fell on their village a few yards away from the little hut they were living in, fortunately without injuring anyone. She thanked God for saving her pointing to a picture of Christ pasted on a wall:

During the war time we could not sleep. When we close our eyes, we see shells coming. Even now I feel afraid when I hear loud noises. Economic losses can be recovered but not our child

Interestingly, the LTTE tried to take away her second daughter as well violating the 'one child from one family' policy, which they were supposed to have implemented. Members of the LTTE in fact had spoken to this second child several times on her way back from school. Fortunately, this time the mother heard the news from the villagers and she yelled at the LTTE members who were trying to persuade the girl to join them. Due to the timely intervention of the mother, the LTTE did not conscript the second child.

Social Institutions: Marriage

Weakening of social controls, norms, and practices reflecting a community breakup in the north can also be witnessed in many other aspects of the society. This study found that sexual agency

and vulnerability of women has increased in the areas subject to this study and this view might possibly be extrapolated to other areas of the north as well. There is a general perception among the informants that rape and domestic violence has increased, although this study has not examined these aspects due to practical difficulties. However, this study found evidence to show that marital relations have come under heavy strain due to supposedly common extra marital relations. There are significant numbers of women and men who are now widows and widowers; in other words there are many single parent families. The present incidences of extra marital relations are in contradiction of cultural traditions and sanctions which emphasize purity, virginity, and loyalty of women to their husbands.

If so, how were these strong sanctions against extra marital relations affected? Social change understandably is multi-faceted and caused by a multitude of factors. Therefore, it is not possible to argue that war and violence are the only reasons for the changes observed but this chapter asserts that war and violence have been major factors contributing to such change. The respondents of this study felt that they were exposed to a new subculture in the refugee camps or what are called 'welfare centres' for internally displaced people. In these 'welfare centres' of which Manik Farm was the biggest, tens of thousands of people initially had to live with strangers; sometimes two or three families living under one roof. Although people were given separate temporary shelters after a while, even after having an artificially separated room, the housing units were tiny little spaces separated by pieces of woods or tin sheets. Hence, unlike in the villages where women performed 'traditional' household chores or worked with relatives or neighbours in the paddy fields, men and women were subjected to a hitherto unfamiliar closeness; a radical and dramatic social change in which they lived side by side with strangers maintaining close relations and again reflecting

conditions which can be considered somewhat anomic. I quote below some of the statements made by counselling trainees sharing their perceptions about the marital relations:

> *A week ago I went Puliyankulam police station. A woman was crying and telling the OIC (officer in charge) about her husband's relationship with another woman. The woman has five children. The man was telling the OIC that he could not give up this new relationship as he loved the new woman. He wanted to keep both women. (The legally married wife had gone and physically attacked the other woman who is now in hospital and the former was locked up by the Police). Finally, the husband agreed to give up the new woman but I don't know what will happen (Int 20).*

> *In my division a woman of 32 with three children...she has a relationship with a boy of 24. The woman is a widow (FGD. 3, a GN).*

> *A woman of 30 who is a widow has given birth to twins, she already had two (other) children. She has given the name of a person who is 60 years old and he stays with her as a guardian. He has signed as father of the twins in the birth certificate (FGD. 3, a GN)*

> *In Oadaveli, there is a woman 37 years who gave birth to a child and she refuses to reveal the name of the father of the child. Her husband died three years before in LTTE. She was the woman RDS leader before. Her (former) husbands' (extended) family lives around and used to take good care of her but now they shun her. She earlier had four children and after this delivery she had gone to get contraception. For that she has to stay in hospital for three days but her former husbands' relatives have refused to take care of the children. During the LTTE time they had very strict punishments against extra marital relations. For rape the punishment was death, mostly shooting in public. Earlier the cultural barriers were strict reducing possibilities for men's and women's contact but it seems during the war period these cultural barriers have lost their power (FGD. 3, a GN).*

In Periyakulam village both mother and daughter are pregnant. The daughter has developed a relationship with a mason who came from Jaffna, who is a married person having two children. After pregnancy he has gone back to Jaffna. The daughter is about 20 years and mother is between 35 to 40 years. The mother's husband's whereabouts are not known. They don't get involved in any public event. People also seem to avoid them. In Olumadi there is a girl and she is only 14 years and she is pregnant (FGD. 3, a GN).

As the above informants suggest there are pregnant women whose husbands have died in the war about two years ago. In one case, both the mother and the daughter of the same family are pregnant but both are without husbands. In yet another case a man openly accepts in the police station that he has an affair with a woman when he already has a legal wife and two children. Even after taking him to the police station this man is unwilling to give up his 'illegal' relationship and wants to keep both women, which is against the law as well as cultural traditions. Therefore, it is obvious that violence and displacement experiences have had serious impacts on norms, sanctions and taboos. Spatial as well as cultural barriers against close association between men and women thus weakened generating the possibility for extra marital relations. Of course, the fact that many men and women are without spouses would have further reinforced this social transformation in which sanctions against extra marital or premarital sexual relations became weak.

It is highly unlikely that any study would have longitudinal data in such matters as extra marital relations due to their sensitive nature. This study depends on anthropological literature to identify the past situation in relation to marriage and sexuality in order to make comparison with the present possible. The study acknowledges two methodical issues which can come up in such an approach. One could argue that social change would have occurred irrespective of war. This study is limited to two districts in the

north and comparable data is not available from southern districts less affected by the war. However, this study argues that the present issues are of such a high magnitude that even in the absence of other comparable data, the evidence presented here does indicate a serious problem and that there is no evidence in literature to show that places less affected by war and violence have the same kind of issues. Hence natural social factors would not have brought in the same level of social transformation without the experiences of violence and associated issues.

In one of the training sessions on problem solving , ten trainees were asked to record and identify the social issues related to marriage in their village and they identified seven specific issues and a general category of 'others' which was undefined. Below is a summary of the record provided for ten villages in which the trainees were working as be-frienders:

Table 5 Problems in Marriage and Family

Identified problem	Number of cases
Extra marital relationships	**53**
Abandonment	**36**
Illegal birth	**17**
Sexual harassment	**6**
Widows	**151**
Early marriage	**10**
Teen Pregnancy	**4**
Others	**5**

Before making sense of this data, a precautionary note is required. The above table results from the data collected by trainees. The issues studied by the trainees are difficult to capture in a normal social science research context due to the sensitivity and secrecy

associated with such issues. Nevertheless, each trainee worked in the above village for a period of six months and by the time the data was collected their understanding of the ground situation was substantial. Hence, although data may not be conclusive, they are illustrative of the conditions.

The number of families in a village could vary between 30-100 but in most of them on average there were about 50-60 families and therefore the total population in these ten villagers could be around 2000-3000 individuals with an average family size of four.

On average there were five cases of extra marital sexual relationships in every village known to the trainees and there could be more such unknown relationships. The frequency of such extra marital relations varied from one to 15 per village. There are no benchmarks to decide high or low levels of social phenomena such as extramarital relations but arguably this level of extra marital relationship for an approximate population of 2000-3000 individuals can subjectively be considered very high and is therefore a clear manifestation of community breakup.

On average there were 15 cases of widows in every village and the total number of widows is 151. Here the widows are those who lost a spouse due to violence and do not include those who have lost a spouse due to natural causes. It is worthy to note that there were 36 cases of abandonment of mostly males leaving their wives and 17 cases of illegitimate births which means fatherless children. In fact, the issues on the table here are very much interconnected, that is, illegitimate births are the flip side of the extramarital relationships. It is not difficult to imagine that these issues will automatically lead to another set of serious social and cultural issues. For example, illegitimate child births will mean fatherless children who face an extreme level of stigmatization as 'avajatha' (lower or impure birth). As the qualitative data cited above shows, mothers with

such children are shunned from the extended families and do not have even the basic minimum human security. These mothers themselves could be the victims of sudden social transformation which this paper calls a community break up. Nevertheless, women are not always victims and they have agency in social relationships and hence in matters like extra-marital relations as well.

Conclusion

This chapter emerges from more than one and half years of active engagement in the north of Sri Lanka through an action research program, which aimed at facilitating social reconciliation. Although the research study itself covers several aspects including social, emotional, psychological and demographic changes, the focus of this chapter is on the impact of war and violence on social structure. This chapter argues that there is a breakup of the community social structures as a consequence of war and associated violence and terms it a 'community breakup'. The chapter examines the social and cultural anthropological literature on the social structure of the country and the Tamil social structure in particular to construct a baseline with which to compare the present social structure.

The chapter examines several key aspects of the social structure including changes in the status and role of individuals, the leadership structure at the community level, loss of faith in religion, attempted and committed suicide, and changes in the social institution of marriage and marriage relations in order to explore the sudden and drastic changes that have occurred in the social structure. The paper argues that the war has acted as a 'great leveller' in terms of causing massive loss of economic assets and induced changes in the established status levels and expected roles that individuals are called upon to play at the grassroots. Due to the fact that economic assets are lost, individuals find themselves put on a more equal

footing in terms of economic status. Although this may present a new opportunity for a fresh beginning with less hierarchy and less socially exploitative systems, this 'equal' status has come at a heavy cost, from which everybody, rich and the poor alike have suffered.

The chapter shows that there is a leadership vacuum with a sheer dearth of leaders at the community level. While some of the community leaders have become victims of conflict, others are unwilling to move forward as there is still no enabling environment for active leadership to emerge due to the fact that vestiges of fear still persist. The emergence of leadership requires a political environment in which control and governance have returned to civil administration and local politicians. Absence of leaders also means the near absence of civic actions at the grassroots. In fact, it is difficult to say whether disappearance of civic actions, is mainly a result of the war, as such civic behaviour could be less in other parts of the country as well, but the conflict can be strongly related to such social changes.

This chapter argues that faith in religion has lessened in general but especially in the case of the Hindus. Nevertheless, loss of faith might have occurred in other religious groups as well but those groups seem to have revived religious faith. One could argue that loss of faith in religion does not represent a community break up as there are many societies in the world which can be considered atheist. However, religion has sociological functions—more so in the Eastern World and loss of faith in religion means the creation of a gap as comparable social institutions to take over the functions of religion do not exist. For example, religion or spiritual means could be the ultimate source of solace for individuals having emotional problems. In Sri Lankan society, counselling as a form of social support is very undeveloped and non-existent at the grassroots and hence religion and spiritual means have to fill this

gap. Therefore, it is possible that loss of faith in religion causes or aggravates emotional problems which have also resulted through the experience of violence. Moreover, religion has a significant role to play in social control and drastic social transformations discussed in this chapter can be seen as related to the loss of faith in some ways. Arguably, religion is also a mechanism for conflict transformation as for example, spiritual means of 'seeking vengeance' is a means of addressing one's suppressed anger without actually causing physical harm to one's enemies.

This chapter discusses how issues such as attempted suicide and substance abuse also stand as indicators of a community breakup. These, it is suggested, have become coping mechanisms through which grief is expressed or suppressed further. The chapter argues that suicide indicates a sort of anomic situation in the society characterised by loosening of controls, sanctions and norms and distortion of social support systems.

The chapter brings out how serious transformations have occurred in the case of the social institution of marriage with the high prevalence of extra marital relations and a host of associated issues such as illegitimate births, sexual harassment, early marriages, abandonment, widows, and teen pregnancies. The chapter shows that these changes represent deep and dramatic social transformations as the society in question is one that featured strict sanctions against extra marital relations and one that sanctified the institution of marriage, virginity and loyalty of women. These transformations are directly related to violence and loss of lives and the conditions in the aftermath of the violence.

It is usual in post-war contexts to see that the most visible repercussions of the violence such as loss of lives, injuries, loss of property, destruction of physical assets receive utmost priority in the processes of post-war reconstruction but issues which can be

called primarily social and emotional do not seem to get sufficient attention. This chapter has attempted to bring to light the social consequences of 30 years of violence in Sri Lanka. The chapter concludes that the community social structures in the areas under study have broken down and shares the view that such changes might even be extrapolated to other areas of the north. Post-war reconstruction efforts by all stakeholders should be sensitive to changes in the social structure mentioned in the study. The chapter does not speculate whether social structures prior to violence will be or should be restored. Social change is difficult to control. Therefore, rather than social engineering, post-war reconstruction may focus on social reconstruction in which social and emotional issues are addressed through culture and context sensitive approaches rather than attempting social restoration based on idealistic common ideals.

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Interviews, Case Studies and FGDs [5]

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- Interview 2: Name withheld. State official. Location withheld. Sept, 2011
- Interview 3: Name withheld. State official. Location withheld. Sept, 2011
- Interview 4 Name withheld. State official. Location withheld. Sept, 2011
- Interview 5: Name withheld. Medical Practitioner. Location withheld. Mar, 2011
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- Interview 8: Name withheld. Grama Niladari. Location withheld. Sept, 2011
- Interview 9: Name withheld. Grama Niladari. Location withheld. Jan, 2011
- Interview 10: Name withheld. Farmer society leader. Location withheld. Sept, 2011
- Interview 11: Name withheld. RDS leader. Location withheld. Sept, 2011
- Interview 12: Name withheld. Farmer society leader. Location withheld. Sept, 2011
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- Interview 14: Name withheld. Grama Niladari. Location withheld. Sept, 2011
- Interview 15: Name withheld. Grama Niladari. Location withheld. Sept, 2011

5 Names are withheld to protect anonymity of respondents

- Interview 16: Name withheld. RDS leader. Location withheld. Sept, 2011
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- Interview 24: Name withheld. Volunteer Trainee. Location withheld. Sept, 2011
- Interview 25: Name withheld. Volunteer Trainee. Location withheld. Sept, 2011

Case Study 1: Name withheld. Location withheld. Jan, 2011
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Case Study 4: Name withheld. Location withheld. Jan, 2011
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Focus Group Discussion 1: Community members. Location withheld. Oct, 2011
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Focus Group Discussion 3: Trainees. Location withheld. Oct, 2011
Focus Group Discussion 4: Trainees. Location withheld. Oct, 2011
Focus Group Discussion 5: Government officials. Location withheld. Oct, 2011
Focus Group Discussion 6: Government officials. Location withheld. Oct, 2011

Putting Back the Pieces Together: The Psychosocial Wellbeing of Returned Communities in Vavuniya and Mannar

Ramila Usoof-Thowfeek

The most severe consequences of war can very often be seen among the civilian populations caught in the crossfire. The ones lucky enough to escape with their lives frequently have to flee the fighting, ending up destitute either within the borders of their own country or as refugees abroad. While refugees are persons who;

> *Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 1951)*

The main characteristic in determining refugee status is fleeing across borders in fear of persecution. However, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are those who "are forced to flee... but they either cannot or do not wish to cross an international border" (UNHCR 1998). Neither situation is enviable. While those who leave the borders may be able to get some respite from the fighting, those who are internally displaced may not have any such opportunity and therefore at least in the short term may face more dire consequences. For example, from a legal stand point refugees, even as foreigners in the host country have several rights and protections. Despite the upheaval and the difficulties associated with their relocation, there is a lot of monitoring of refugees that takes place that holds governments responsible for providing the right kind

of services that help promote wellbeing. However, in the case of IDPs, their protection lies in the hands of parties that are the reason behind their displacement and suffering (Vincent, 2000). While international agencies might play some role in monitoring the wellbeing of these groups of individuals, there is no guarantee that measures are taken to ensure the wellbeing of these groups of people.

A 2011 report by the Internal Displaced Monitoring Centre put the total number of IDPs due to violence and conflict worldwide at 26.4 million; the UNHCR put the number of those displaced internally due to conflict at 27.5 million in 2010. While experiencing a slightly different reality from refugees, they suffer some of the same difficulties as those refugees who are able to leave the country. They may have experienced the same traumas of being injured, of seeing their loved ones die, of losing their belongings and property, of being separated from their families and their communities. However, unlike refugees abroad their suffering is unique because they rarely have relief from the conflict – suffering multiple displacements and repeatedly experiencing violence and its consequences.

The Sri Lankan Situation

In Sri Lanka three decades of fighting between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Government forces has been responsible for a large number of IDPs. The same report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre in 2011 put the total number of persons affected by displacement in the North and East of Sri Lanka, where much of the fighting was concentrated, at approximately over 500,000 persons. Of these approximately 250,000 persons were identified as 'Old IDPs' having been displaced prior to April 2008 and another approximately 250, 000 'new IDPs' were identified as being displaced during the final stage of the

conflict from April 2008 to June 2009. However, these numbers remain fluid since many of these persons had been displaced multiple times and to different parts of the Northern Province and the country (see Table 1).

Table 1: The Number of IDPs as of 2011 in Sri Lanka as Reported by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

			In Displacement		
	Actual case load	**Re-turnees**	**IDPs in camps**	**IDPs with host families**	**Total number of people still in displacement**
New IDPs	265,148	223,745	6,732	34,671	41,403
Old IDPs	251,442	197,311	7,518	46,613	54,131
Total	**516,590**	**421,056**	**14,250**	**81,284**	**95,534**

These IDPs in Sri Lanka have had to suffer displacement and relocation since the early 1980s. For some of them displacement is how they have lived their whole life (Somasundaram, 2010) According to Moore and Shellman (2002) internal displacement is the result of a simple cost-benefit analysis that is done by these communities. They are weighing the cost of being in a particular location (in terms of vulnerability) to the benefit of moving to an area that is seen as better. Typically, the displacement patterns would follow the geographical patterns of fighting: the communities in an area where fighting takes place will leave for an area that is identified as being safe. However, in prolonged conflicts, such as the one in Sri Lanka, this calculation does not often turn out to be correct. What is more likely to happen is that these internally displaced persons are often unable to escape hostilities and will experience violence again which may make them leave the area they have relocated to and move to new areas. For many it becomes a way of life. The reality is that often these places that are seen as 'better' means that

they are going from one vulnerable situation to another (Thomas & Thomas, 2004). Escaping the circumstances of displacement often is not an option for these individuals. Therefore, as many scholars point out, being internally displaced is not a transient state but a permanent transformation of these people's lives (Cohen, 2009). As Somasundaram (2010) points out it is also true that this affect is seen not only in the individual but also the community: communities themselves are transformed.

The psychological trauma that results from the continuous exposure to war and violence has been well documented throughout many areas of the world where war and violence has affected the civilian population. These traumas are often seen to impact the psychological wellbeing of displaced people (Murthy & Lakshminarayana, 2006; Mels, Delryun, Broekaert, & Rosseel, 2010; Drury & Williams, 2012; Morgos, Worden, & Gupta, 2007-2008). A study conducted in 1998 – 1999 with a group of Albanian refugees 15 years and older found that the impact of war trauma and of being refugees had a telling impact on their mental health status. The research found that when non specific psychiatric morbidity of this population was measured it consisted of 43percent of the population and that specific focus on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) found that 17.1 percent of the population was suffering from these symptoms (Cardozo, Vergara, Agani, & Gotway, 2000). Similarly, research has also found that of the large number of populations that are faced with the experience of violence associated with war and conflict, large percentages face the prospect of mental disorders. Additionally, these researches report that even with the end of active hostilities the impact of the war or conflict could continue in the form of poverty, malnutrition, limited access to health care and other essential services. Therefore, even with the cessation of hostilities, there is little likelihood that the fate of those who suffer from psychosocial difficulties related to the experience of war and displacement might improve (Murthy

& Lakshminarayana, 2006). In a 2001 report the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that 10percent of those who suffer from mental trauma will develop PTSD and another 10 percent would develop behavioural impediments that would affect their normal functioning (World Health Organization, 2001).

The situation in Sri Lanka has not been far different from those that have been mentioned above. In Jaffna, a survey of a sample of the civilian population using the Hopkins Symptoms Checklist and the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire found a prevalence rate of 7percent for PTSD, 22.2percent for Depression and 32.6percent for Anxiety (Hussain, et al., 2011). It was found the highest rates of psychological distress could be seen among the elderly and women of the sample studied. In a study conducted among war affected school children in Sri Lanka it was found that 1/5th of the sample scored high enough on the Child-Traumatic Stress Reaction Index to be considered by a clinician as likely to be suffering from PTSD symptoms. Additionally, in the same study, 31percent reported moderate grief levels and 7 percent scored in the range of high grief levels (Chase & Bush, 2002). What is clear from some of the literature is that certain segments of the displaced populations are more vulnerable to psychological distress than others. For example women and children may suffer unique distress associated with sexual abuse that they experience as part of war (Thomas & Thomas, 2004).

However in addition to the psychological difficulties that these individuals experience, being displaced also brings with it other problems that affect different aspects of their wellbeing. Some of these problems include but are not limited to the inhospitality of the host communities, to the disruption of livelihoods, the disintegration of communities and families, the disruption of social support networks etc. Furthermore, they may also suffer from physical health difficulties either due to injuries related to exposure to violence, pre-existing conditions or due to illnesses that

are contracted when they flee from one area to another. Often the situation is made worse by the fact that medical care is not available to these groups as they flee. In addition, lives in displacement also mean that the lives of the IDPs remain in limbo and uncertainty with little agency to do anything about their situation and fairly high levels of dependency on different governmental and non-governmental agencies.

The short term solution to such displacements over the years has been to set up temporary shelters in the hope that these Internally Displaced Persons at some point will be able to return to the villages from where they originally came. Being displaced also means that these individuals experience the unique difficulties associated with living in temporary camps. This adds another layer of complexity to their circumstances. Primarily, the sudden upheaval and the new living conditions mean that the culture of these communities is disrupted. The privacy of families is not protected in camps, which maybe especially difficult for women cope with, especially in communities like the Tamil community in Sri Lanka where modesty is given high priority. Living in a caged and restricted area that is also highly congested can also lead to stress. It can also create tension within the communities because such camps have limited resources and competition to access those resources may create frustrations and unpleasantness among community members. Such groups of individuals also become vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous elements. There have been reports of children being taken from such camps in Sri Lanka to be exploited as domestic servants or sometimes even forced into prostitution. Similarly, many women also end up in prostitution often after they are lured out of camps with the promise of work in garment factories situated in the bigger cities (ILO, 2009). Furthermore, in places like Sri Lanka where the military is in charge of the running of such camps these groups of individuals may also experience fear and insecurity. Given the history of the conflict, government forces have always been viewed

suspiciously by the civilian population. Therefore, having to live under the close scrutiny of the military who are involved in all aspects of camp administration and who have complete power over these individuals also leads to considerable stress and difficulty. In many situations they face marginalization, and may continue to live in poverty especially in the case of people who have been displaced for long periods of time. A World Bank study on those displaced for more than ten years found that these groups of people were far poorer, suffered from more unemployment, and owned less assets and land than those who had not been displaced.

The Problem of Returning

Because the difficulties of living in temporary camps are well recognized, returning to their original places of residency in the case of the internally displaced is advocated. This was the same when hostilities came to an end in Sri Lanka. After the end of the war in 2009, there were calls both by local and international actors for the immediate return of the internally displaced living in camps. Reports in 2011 suggested that about 421,000 of the total IDP population had been returned to their places of residency while a little less than a 100,000 remain either with host families or in the camps (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 2011) (see Table 1). More recently, in July 2012, the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, Gotabaya Rajapakse suggested that the returning process will be completed by mid-August 2012. Much of the returning in the North took place under the government sponsored *Northern Spring (Uthuru Wasanthaya) Program.* However, reports from the areas where returning and settlement has taken place speak of the difficulties that those being returned have to go through. In some cases it has been reported that the returnees have not done so voluntarily, contravening norms of resettlement, with people being pressured to return to their districts of origin. In addition, IDPs have complained that they have had not been afforded basic

facilities required for resumption of daily life as they returned, that there are security concerns that have not been addressed and that there are also legal issues pertaining to their return that have not been adequately addressed (Chandran, 2012). In addition, it is also the case that these individual who are being returned have to start life from scratch. The establishment of services happens much slower than the returning process. This is true for most services including medical services and other basic infrastructure services like electricity, pipe borne water and telecommunication. After being in displacement for years, while most IDPs will welcome the chance to go back to their original places of residency, often there are many legal issues surrounding land and property. One scenario is that perhaps before displacement, an individual may not have owned any property and therefore these people may not have a place to return to. It may also be that the owner of the property has died and the beneficiaries have to take legal action to divide property, however necessary legal services might not be available. In addition, disputes about ownership, acquisition of land by authorities, especially by the military and the obvious physical and cultural changes also make the return of IDPs stressful. Additionally, being able to return does not mean that the psychological scars of war that these individuals bear suddenly go away. However, it may mean that access to health care both for physical ailments and psychological difficulties become more restricted once they return as often the establishment of such services as discussed earlier may take time.

In addition, they are also confronted with new challenges of trying to bring back normalcy to their lives starting with issues related to civil administration, setting up employment and livelihood measures, getting children reengaged in their education activities and accessing basic services like electricity services and telecommunication that enable some degree of normalcy to return.

Much hyped programs like the *Northern Spring Program* in Sri Lanka, create an impression that the lives of these groups of people have returned back to normal, that they may not need as much assistance as they did before. It creates a false sense of closure, which may result in many of the governmental and non-governmental authorities taking a more relaxed attitude towards intervening in the newly returned communities. However, these communities while dealing with the original trauma of war and displacement may also be facing new stresses resulting from the experiences of returning and this may also have a direct impact on the psychological wellbeing of these individuals. The communities may begin to feel as if they are being forgotten and have been left to fend for themselves. While there is much understanding of the psychological impact of war and displacement, the research on how these individuals and communities make the transition with their returning is sparse. This paper attempts to understand the impact of returning and the challenges that result from the said process on the wellbeing of these communities. This paper rather than limiting itself to the psychological distress of these communities, also attempts to examine the psychosocial wellbeing of these communities as the process takes place.

Framework for Understanding Psychosocial Wellbeing

Generally, wellbeing is understood in terms of the physiological and psychological wellness that is experienced by a person. However, in this paper we take a more holistic view of wellbeing, taking into account both psychological factors and social and cultural factors that affect a person. In the context of the returned persons this may mean a plethora of things. While dealing with any psychological distress and physiological difficulties, we also do not neglect the impact factors such as the ability to participate in community activities, fulfil basic needs, and practice ones livelihood etc. has on the individual. The framework that has been used in this particular

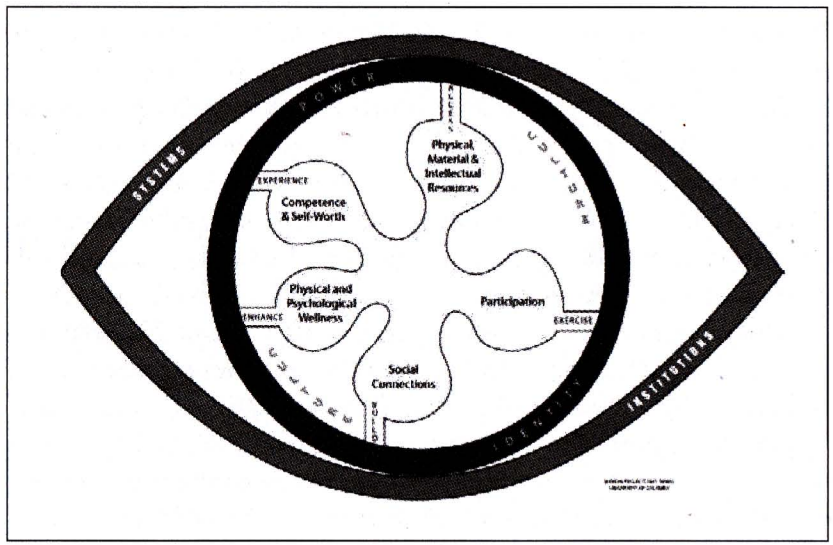
study is one which was designed by the Psychosocial Assessment of Development and Humanitarian Interventions (PADHI) program (PADHI, 2008). The framework describes five domains that are important for wellbeing: access to physical, material and intellectual resources, psychological and physical wellness, experiencing self worth and competency, building social connections and the ability to participate in community. Individuals may identify different elements as being important in each of these domains, but each of these domains is considered equally important in a person experiencing psychosocial wellness (see Diagram1).

Post-Trauma Growth and Resilience in IDPs

While most research focus on aspects of distress and difficulty in this particular paper we are also focused on the positive, both in the case of post-traumatic growth but also resilience. The literature on those who have suffered traumatic events show that there are many who are not adversely affected by such events, there are others who might even show positive changes in themselves after a trauma (Powell, Rosner, Butollo, Tedeschi, & Calhoun, 2003). For example Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli and Valhov (2007) found that the most common outcome to the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center among New Yorkers was resilience (65 percent of those who were surveyed) defined as the complete absence or the presentation of less than two symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and low levels of distress and substance abuse.. While one can argue that the sample in this study had only gone through a single traumatic event, resiliency has also been observed in those who have experienced prolonged exposure to trauma like refugees and the internally displaced who have often experienced continuous violence related trauma (Welsh & Brodsky, 2010; Sossou, Craig, Ogren, & Schnak, 2008; Drury & Williams, 2012). For others traumatic events may result in positive change to the way they live their life which is the hallmark of post-trauma growth. This is also

a phenomenon that is observed with those who have suffered the chronic violence of war ((Powell, Rosner, Butollo, Tedeschi, & Calhoun, 2003). Over estimation of one's positive characteristics (self enhancement), social support, flexibility of character, gender and age have all been identified as factors that support resilience and post-trauma growth (Bonanno G. , 2005). A working paper by the *Working Group on Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Displacement* delineates the ability to fulfil material needs and agency to uplift ones situation as being important in promoting positive adaptation to trauma (UN Working group on Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Displacement, 1995). While given the nature of the available data we will not be able to assess resilience and post-trauma growth we are able to explore if this sample of individuals exhibit factors that have been identified as protective and promoting resilience and post-trauma growth in the face of difficult and stressful events.

Diagram 1: PADHI Framework for Understanding Psychosocial Wellbeing



The Research

The data that forms the basis of this paper was collected as part of a larger program implemented by the International Centre for Ethnic Studies funded by the United States Institute of Peace with the aim of understanding the needs of the community and providing the communities services that they require as they make the transition from camps to being returned. The program funded a year - long project with the communities and this data was collected as part of the first phase of the project. The project was located in two divisional secretariat divisions in Mannar and Vavuniya: Manthai West in Mannar and Nedunkerny in Vavuniya. As part of the project ten volunteers and ten civil servants of the area were trained to be facilitators for the community. The 4 - 12 month training program prepared these facilitators to identify psychological distress among members of the communities and direct them to the appropriate mental health services and also advise community members about matters pertaining to the legal and administrative aspects of resettlement. The said data was collected by these facilitators to assess and understand the psychosocial wellbeing and needs of the communities.

The data consists of 188 interviews conducted with persons being resettled in Nedunkerny and Manthai West. This included 117 interviews in the Mannar district and 71 in Vavuniya district. One member of each household was interviewed with the said individual providing information for the other members of the family when required. A total of 135 of the interviewees were male and another 53 were female and the respondents were between the ages of 28 and 78 years.

The survey that was used to collect this data was the psychosocial assessment tool created by a group affiliated with the Social Policy Alternatives and Research Center of the University of Colombo, based on the PADHI framework for understanding psychosocial

wellbeing. This tool has been used widely in assessing the psychosocial wellbeing of both those who have suffered from war trauma and the tsunami in 2004.

The assessment instrument consists of eight sections – namely, geographical location, demographic information, introduction and consent, domains of wellbeing, power and influence, social mapping, closing the interview and observations of the interview. This study will focus on the sections dealing with domains of wellbeing. The section begins with a general open ended question regarding events the participants experienced that were either negative or positive that they believed had impacted their lives. The next question probed their concept of what it meant to live happily. The next several questions dealt with each of the domains of wellbeing, helping to understand what elements were important in attaining wellbeing in each of these domains – respondents were asked what are the different kinds of resources that are needed for them to live well and be happy (access to physical, material and intellectual resources) what were some of the things that they do in their life that make them feel good about themselves (experiencing competency), what were some of the characteristics about themselves that they valued at this point in time (experiencing self-worth), what were the different kinds of relationships and connections that help them live their lives well and to be happy (building social connections) and what kinds of activities do they participate in within the family and community to live well and be happy (ability to participate).

For each of these domains respondents were also asked how satisfied they were with each of the domains, what factors enabled and curtailed the achievement of wellbeing in each of these domains and how satisfied they were with institutions that were set up to help these communities and how satisfied they were with the level of influence they were able to exert in order to achieve wellness in

each of these domains. While the elements of the domains were identified using open ended questions levels of satisfaction were measured using a six – point rating scale anchored 1 – "extremely satisfied" to 6 – "not at all satisfied" with the mid - point being "no problems". In addition participants were also asked how they prioritized the given domain at the said point in time.

One facilitator trained by the ICES was responsible for doing the interviews in the division secretariat assigned to him or her. The interviews were conducted in the houses of the interviewee. Consent was read and obtained from the individual and the questions in the survey were asked in an interview format from each individual.

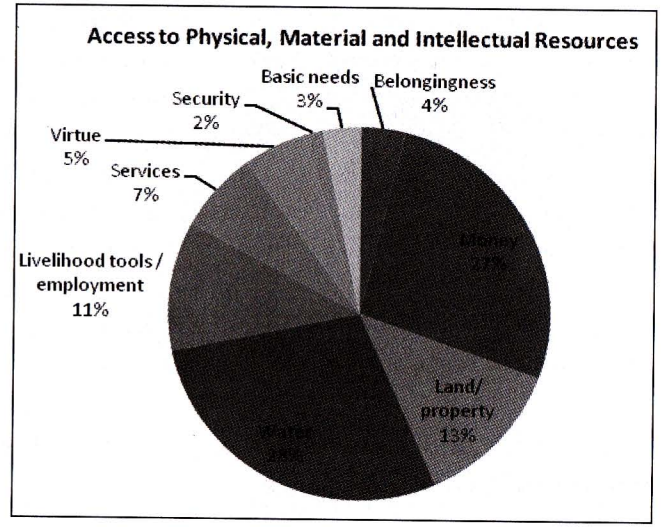
Results

The primary analysis looked at what elements were important to the respondents in each domain. The first response to each question regarding elements of the domains was coded and categorized as per the PADHI handbook. These categories were then used to calculate what percentage of the respondents gave each of the categories as important. In order to assess how satisfied on average respondents were with their present state in each domain the mean score for the sample was calculated. In addition, we also looked at the percentages of persons at each point of the rating scale. The same strategy that was used to understand the elements of the domain was also used to understand what enabled them to achieve wellbeing in each of these domains and what factors constrained wellbeing. In addition, the analysis also described which domains of psychosocial wellbeing these individuals prioritized at this early stage of resettlement and also their perceptions of their ability to exert influence over their environment or power which is an important factor in achieving psychosocial wellbeing.

Access to Physical, Material and Intellectual Resources

The PADHI handbook describes the resource domain as "natural, material and intellectual resources needed to fulfil basic human needs such as food, shelter and health," (PADHI, 2008). It also includes resources that allow people to reach their aspirations. The PADHI framework identifies financial security including availability of funds and savings, employment, education etc. as important elements of this domain. This was also reflected in the present data. Water (28 percent of respondents) and money (27 percent of the respondents) emerged as the two elements with which most individuals interviewed were concerned with in terms of access to physical, material and intellectual resources. This is not surprising that especially given the location and the climate in these areas living with appropriate water supply would be almost impossible. Furthermore, most of these returned communities engage in cultivation to a large extent both as a means of livelihood and for personal consumption. Additionally, as pointed out in the PADHI framework given that these people have nothing, money and financial security is important because money is primary to securing all other material resources, i.e. if they have money they will have the capital necessary to secure all other material resources that they require. Other significant elements that were given as important by the interviewees were property / land and belonging to a community (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: Elements of Access to Physical, Material and Intellectual Resources



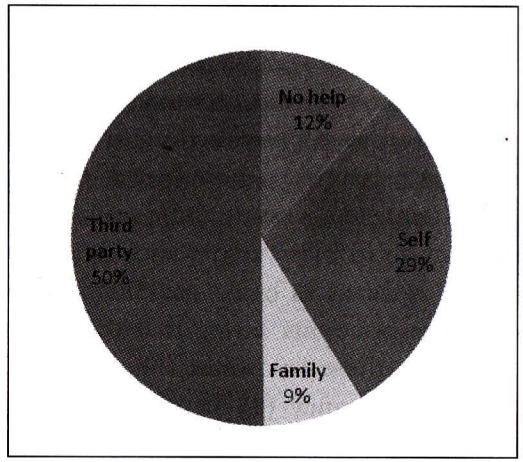
However, the respondents showed a certain level of dissatisfaction with their ability to access these resources with 51 percent of the respondents indicating that they were "not so satisfied" with accessing these elements ($M^1 = 3.39$). Respondents were also asked what helped them access the different elements of each of the domains (enablers) and what prevented them from accessing each of the elements (constraints). In response to questions about enablers and constraints to accessing these resources 50 percent of the participants saw third party actors such as governmental and non-governmental agencies as being enabling with a minority of 12 percent of the respondents saying that they had not received any help in accessing these resources. The two most frequently cited constraints were money (48 percent of respondents) and

1 The mean (M) response on the 6 point rating scale was calculated for the whole sample to obtain a sense of satisfaction with each domain. The six points on the scale were 1 – Very satisfied, 2 – Satisfied, 3 – No problem, 4 – not so satisfied, 5 – worried, 6 – very worried. Later measures of satisfaction were also computed in the same manner.

the lack of time (21 percent respondents) (see Graph 2). This is interesting because money or financial resources were also cited as one of the most important elements in achieving wellbeing in the resource domain. It appears that money is seen as the most primary resource and the lack of it essentially prevents a person from engaging in any activity that will enable him or her to improve his or her financial situation; one needs money to make money. Similarly, the lack of education is also seen as a constraint that will prevent a person from accessing resources and this is significant because education has been identified as being important in furthering one's aspirations. Therefore, the lack of education may affect them not only in the short term but will have an impact on how their futures are shaped.

Graph 2: Enablers and Constraints to Accessing Physical, Material and Intellectual Resources

Enablers



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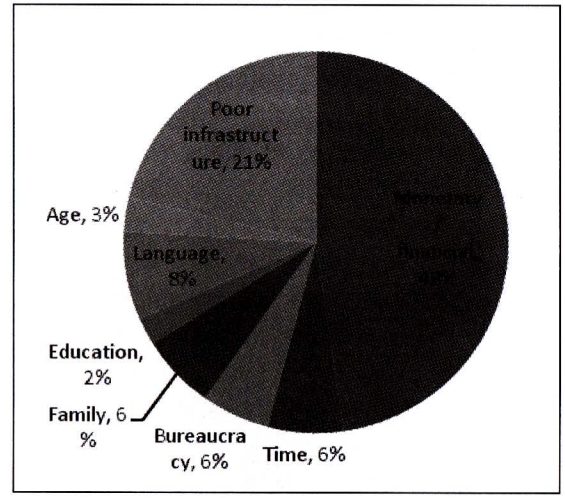
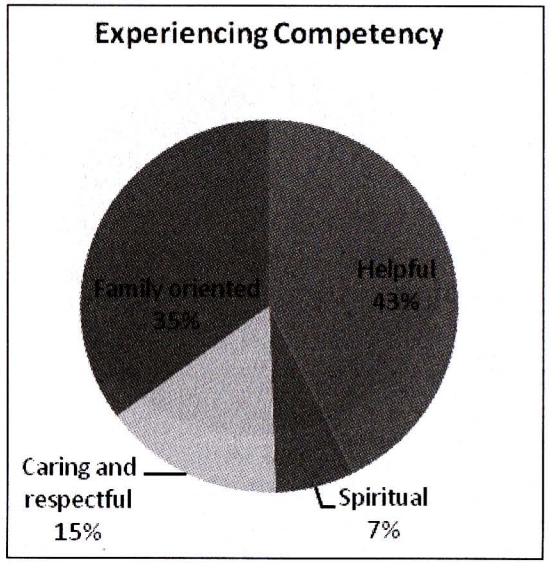


The competence domain discusses what roles and activities these individual engage in that allow them to develop a positive self view. Essentially, this domain looks at the roles and responsibilities a person has to fulfil in their families and communities. If a person is able to fulfil these roles adequately the person is likely to experience competence and have a positive view of their selves. The PADHI framework suggests that competency can be derived by fulfilling their responsibilities toward their families, toward their communities and by believing they are moral. This was reflected in this sample too. Forty three percent of the respondents indicated that engaging in roles and activities that helped other people promoted a positive view of the self while 35 percent of the respondents believed that fulfilling their roles in the family such as parent or spouse or sibling was important in achieving wellbeing in this domain (see Graph 3). The majority of respondents (48 percent) also indicated that they were satisfied with their ability at the present time to engage in those roles and activities (M = 2.28).

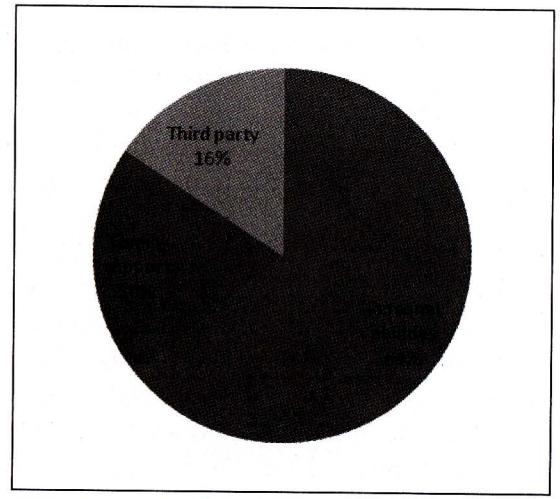
Graph 3: Elements of Feeling Competency



Respondents identified personal qualities and abilities (64 percent of respondents) and family support (20 percent of respondents) as being the two major enablers that promote wellbeing in this domain. Financial difficulty (39 percent of respondents), time restrictions (24 percent of respondents) and interference from others (18 percent of respondents) were seen as the three main constraints to experiencing competency (see Graph 4). It is interesting that in this particular domain the main enablers are skills, abilities and characteristics that the person holds. While the lack of money and time are what really prevent people from fulfilling their roles and responsibilities, it appears that social tensions also stifle wellbeing in this domain. For example, some women in the sample said that rumours and suspicion by others were a hindrance. This was especially so when they derived competence from engaging in community activities.

Graph 4: Enablers and Constraints to Achieving Wellbeing in the Competency Domain

Enablers



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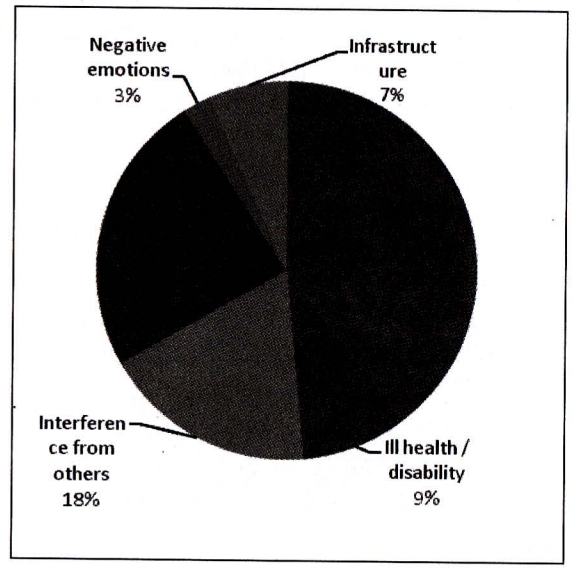
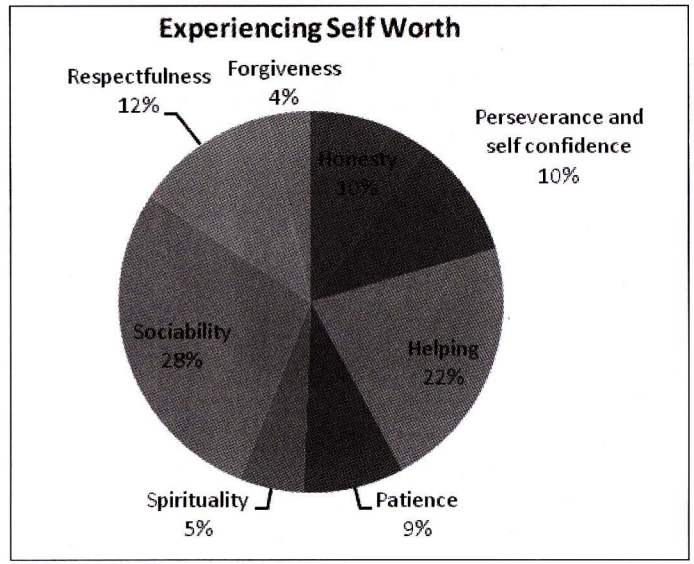


Experiencing Self-Worth

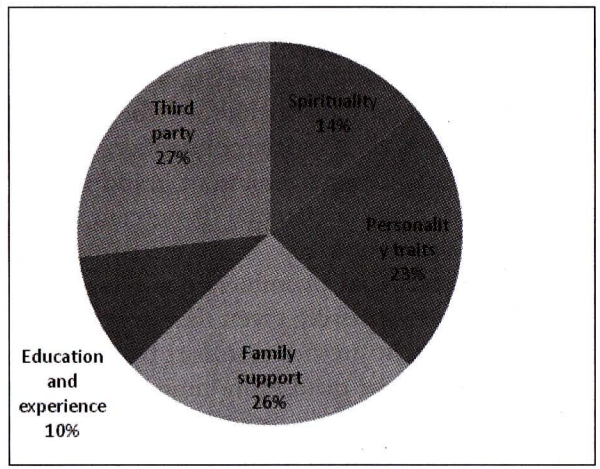
In the PADHI framework self worth is derived from competency and essentially focuses on characteristics that a person values in him or herself. While the PADHI framework identifies educational achievement, employment and being responsible for the family as key elements in this area, the present data shows that personality traits were seen as the basis for self worth. In the self worth domain, respondents named being sociable (28 percent of respondents) and being helpful (22 percent of respondents) as characteristics that allow them to feel good about themselves (see Graph 5). This may speak of the unique situation of the returned. They seem to be giving priority to maintaining relationship with family and community. It may be due to various reasons – they may realise the value of social support or maybe building completely new social networks that necessitates good interpersonal interactions. Half of those surveyed stated that they were satisfied with this domain (M = 2.06). In addition, they identified third parties like community organizations and neighbours (27 percent of respondents), family support (26 percent respondents) and personality characteristics (23 percent) as enabling, and financial difficulties (32 percent of respondents) and time limitations (20 percent of respondents) as constraints that limit their ability to attain wellbeing in this domain (see Graph 6).

Graph 5: Elements Identified by Respondents as Important in the Self - Worth Domain.



Graph 6: Factors that Enable and Constrain Wellbeing in the Self - Worth Domain

Enablers



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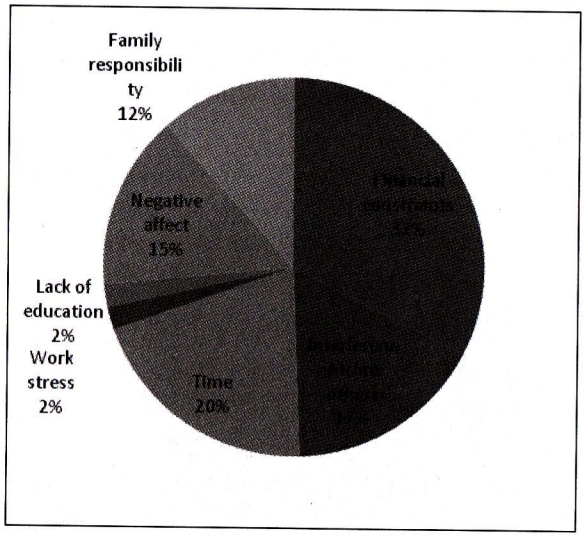
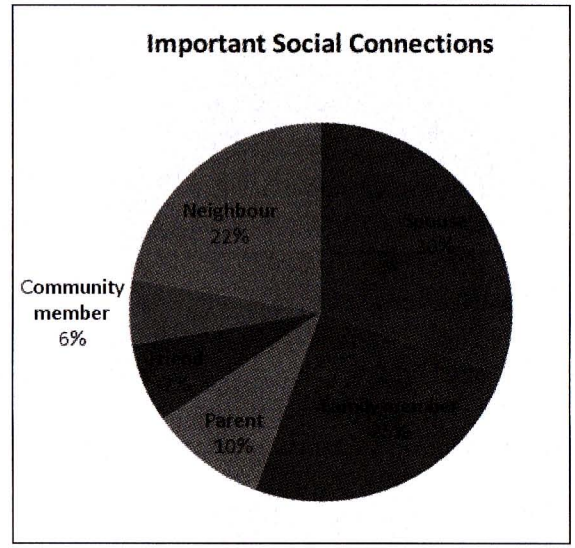


Foster Social Connection

Social connection especially in the case of newly returned IDPs is extremely important because connection with family and community not only enables a person to engage in cultural activities but also gives a person social capital so he or she may access resources more easily. These connections generally tend to be with family and the community (PADHI, 2008). The present data confirms the importance of family connections. Relationships within the family were considered important by over half of the respondents to the survey when describing building social connection. Being a spouse (30 percent of respondents), being a sibling or grandparent (25 percent of respondents) and being a parent (10 percent of respondents) featured in the type of relationships that were considered important in this domain. The fact that prominence is given to relationships within the family is not surprising given that as people re-form their communities, family might provide comfort by being a familiar and safe entity, while people may need more time to start trusting others like neighbours and community organizations. However, being a good neighbour was considered important by the respondents (22

percent of respondents) (see Graph 7). Thirty nine percent of the respondents also stated that they were satisfied with their relationships at that particular point of time ($M = 2.33$).

Graph 7: Relationships Identified as Important in the Social Connection Domain.

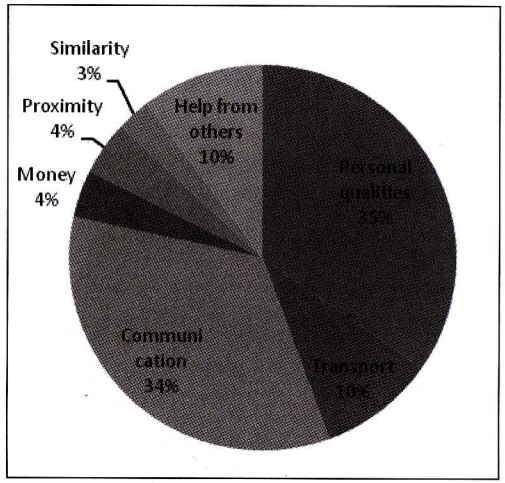


Graph 8 depicts factors that respondents indicated were important in creating and maintaining social connections. Thirty five percent of the respondents stated that personality characteristics were important for maintaining social relationships and another 34 percent of the respondents identified communication services as also facilitating social connections. Limited financial ability emerged as the overwhelming cause for being unable to maintain social connections (40 percent of respondents). Once again money and financial resources appear to be primary to achieving wellbeing in this domain. However, this is not surprising given that the respondents depend heavily on communication services and communication services are available only at a price. What is

encouraging though is that even at these initial stages of returning the modes of communication were available to these communities.

Graph 8: Factors that Enable and Constrain Maintaining Social Connections

Enablers



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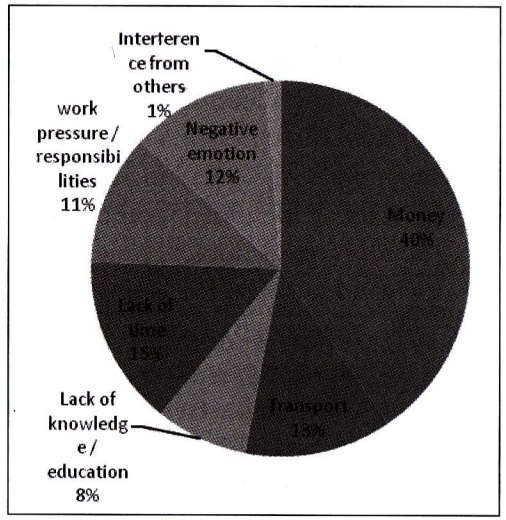
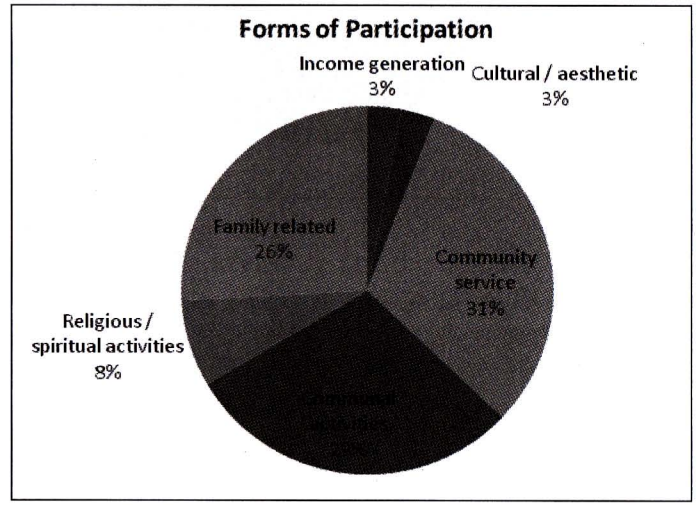


Ability to Participate

Participation is important to wellbeing because of its many benefits to the individual: participation enables the person to create social connections, engage with others, get involved in decision making and to express their views. The manner in which participation is generally exercised is through community engagement that allows the person to cement his or her membership in the particular community (PADHI, 2008). As shown in Graph 9, participation in community centred around engaging in community service (31percent of respondents), communal activities like taking part in festivals or engaging in activities with neighbours (29 percent of respondents) and family related activities (26 percent of respondents). These findings were very much in line with how participation was described in the PADHI framework. Forty seven percent of the participants also stated that they were satisfied (M = 2.24) with their ability to take part in community activities.

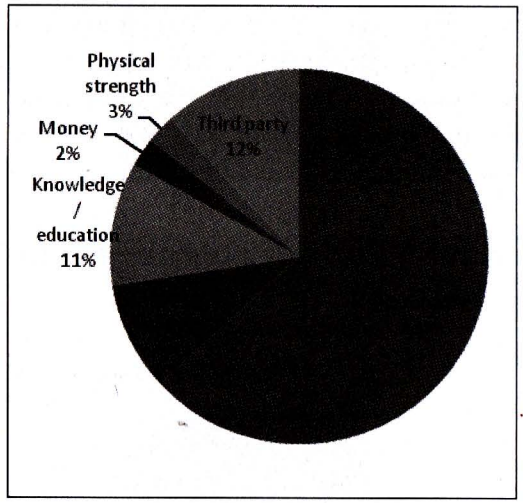
Graph 9: Forms of Participation Identified by Respondents



A majority of 63 percent of the respondents indicated that it was their personality characteristics that enabled them to engage in their communities and families. However, the lack of money (29 percent of respondents) and time (36 percent of respondents) featured prominently as factors that constrain participation (see Graph 10). This parallels what was seen in the social connection domain. Though often social interactions are seen as something that is free, it appears that communal living does have a price.

Graph 10: Factors that Enable and Constrain Participation

Enablers



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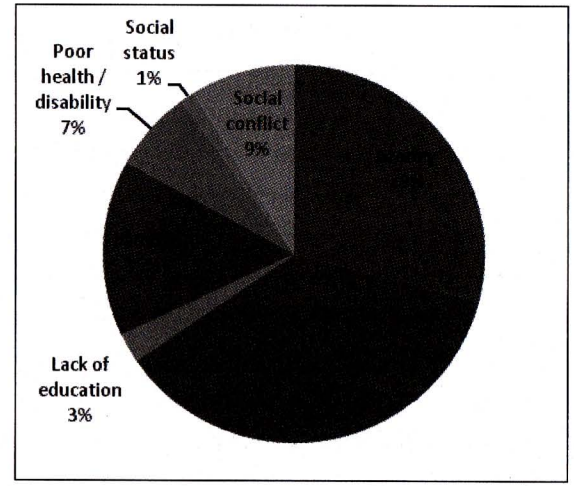

Respondents were asked to list the five domains (access to physical and material resources, competency, self worth, social connection and participation) in order of priority. Thirty three percent of the respondents indicated that their present concerns were with accessing physical, material and intellectual resources. This is not surprising since these newly returned individuals rarely have all their needs for survival met. Participation in community ranked the lowest in terms of priorities with only four percent of the respondents. It also emerged that respondents were less satisfied with their ability to exert influence in accessing physical, material and intellectual resources in comparison to other domains (see Table 3). This maybe a reflection of the fact that while respondents cited personal abilities as key to achieving wellbeing in each of the other domains, access to resources was the only domain where they deferred agency to a third party. Therefore, they had little control and agency over how this domain was fulfilled and hence lower levels of satisfaction.

Table 3: Satisfaction with the Ability to Exert Influence in each Domain

Domain	Satisfaction (Mean)
Access to physical and material resources	3.05
Competency	2.39
Self - worth	2.52
Social connections	2.51
Participation	2.61

A summary of the enabling and constraining factors across the domains showed that respondents overwhelmingly saw personal abilities and characteristics as primary to achieving wellbeing. Family and community also featured as other enablers. However, family and community also emerged as constraints, though not the most significant. These two factors constrained wellbeing in different ways. Family responsibilities were seen as taking too much time, which also fed into the time factor. In addition, family dysfunction such as alcohol addiction or suspicion by a spouse was seen also to constrain wellbeing. Moreover, stress resulting from family situations like having to take care of a disabled person also limited the attainment of wellbeing. However, financial and time limitations were the most frequently cited as the most significant constraints to achieving wellbeing.

Concluding Thoughts

Given that this information was collected at the initial stages of the returning process, it is not surprising that respondents were more concerned with fulfilling the very basic needs than any of the other domains. This was obvious from the fact that this domain was seen as the highest priority and by the fact that respondents

were also the least satisfied with this domain. Any needs based Maslow type theory would only support these findings, positing that it is only once basic needs that are necessary for survival are met that people are actually able to focus on other things. This would be most accurate of our respondents. However, it was also telling that this was the only domain in which participants expected any help from governmental or non-governmental agencies. This is supportive of the idea that services to these communities should not be pruned once the returning process is completed. It must be kept in mind that what people have lost in 30 years of displacement cannot be restored in a few months. These communities require continued engagement.

Furthermore, the preoccupation with financial resources as a constraint to wellbeing needs to be taken into account. It is the reality that money seems to be primary to accessing any of the elements in each of the domains, even when it is something like being involved in the neighbourhood. The continued stifling of the ability to feel financially secure can lead to frustrations that may result in negative consequences. Therefore, special attention needs to be focussed on ensuring that avenues that enable financial stability such as livelihood measures need to be addressed immediately.

Respondents, overwhelmingly, saw strengths in themselves that they believed were important in achieving wellbeing. Over and over again in the competency, self worth, social connection and participation domains, respondents talked of good qualities within themselves as enablers. This augurs well for prospects of resilience and post-trauma growth in these communities. There might be an element of self enhancement in the manner that these respondents view positive individual characteristics within themselves. As pointed out by Bonanno,(2005) this is adaptive and may lead to resilience. From an interventions perspective this finding suggests two things: firstly, that these communities should not always be

viewed as psychologically disabled. Secondly, this also suggests that these strengths need to be taken into account and also that these respondents are able and willing to be stakeholders in the resettlement process. Ignoring this would be a grave injustice to these communities.

In a similar vein these communities are also confident of their ability to exert some influence on their environment, suggesting that they are again able to affect their circumstances in ways which will enable them to achieve wellbeing. This confidence can only mean that they are not passive bystanders in this process but are actively working towards bettering their situation. Another factor that also needs to be taken into account is that though there are reports of the lack of community based organization functioning in such communities, informal community networks seem to be quite functional and helpful in enabling wellbeing among community members. This is obvious from the fact that the respondents lay great emphasis on maintaining connections with neighbours and engaging in community activities and service. They seem to realise the value of social capital not only in terms of benefits but they also seem to see it as a social obligation. For example helping others makes a person feel like he or she is a good person. Engaging with the community might also be important to these individuals also because they see a similarity between their own suffering and the suffering of those around them. It is shared and therefore perhaps it is easier to empathise with others in the community. This may explain the emphasis on community service and helping each other.

However, communal living is not without its travails. In many cases interference from others was seen as a constraint. The collectivistic nature of these communities means that people take liberty being involved in others lives to the extent to which privacy boundaries can be breached. However, it is not likely that this is unique to these communities. It is a characteristic that is quite frequently observed

in collectivistic communities. However, in interventions these networks need to be taken into account and be used by agencies that design intervention programs for such communities. It is not to say that these communities are not without a certain level of dysfunction that can be expected when they have been fragmented in by the experience of war and violence. It is important that these are addressed immediately, so that they do not have a lasting impact as a level of normalcy begins to return. The truth remains however, that these communities are ready to effect change and are not merely looking for hand – outs. They need to be partnered in the resettlement process in ways in which they are able to maintain agency over their lives.

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Psychopathology, Psychosocial Problems and Post-traumatic Growth in North-Eastern Sri Lanka: A Quantitative Analysis

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Introduction

One of the foremost challenges when employing interventions designed to promote psychological well-being in the aftermath of a long and destructive war such as the one in Sri Lanka is determining to what degree one's interventions should focus on the many losses and the sequelae of those losses (e.g., trauma related psychopathology) that members of the affected community have suffered and to what degree they should focus on the strengths of those individuals. In the current paper, we aim to speak to this question, albeit in a preliminary fashion, by drawing on an ongoing research program of ours that has employed culturally valid instruments to assess for both losses - psychopathology and psychosocial problems - and gain in the form of post-traumatic growth, the belief that one has experienced positive changes as a result of adversity. We present findings from our first wave of data collection, which assessed 197 individuals living in North-Eastern Sri Lanka using a set of culturally and psychometrically valid instruments. Finally, we propose some possible future directions in promoting psychological well-being among war-affected populations in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka.

The Need for Culturally Specific Measurement[1]

Any argument for the importance of culture in the study of trauma-related psychopathology should first be prefaced by an

[1] This section draws substantially on material presented in Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme & Foa (2012) and Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme, Atanasov, Goonasekera, & Foa (2012).

argument for why culture should be addressed in the study of psychopathology in general. Lopez and Guarnaccia (2000) argue that culture is an important variable to consider in the study of psychopathology in general, not because psychological suffering is a culturally specific phenomenon, but because expressions of psychological distress may vary according to the value or belief orientation of the culture in question. When differentiating between the expression of psychological distress and the underlying, "core" disorder, it is useful to understand the distinction between *disease* and *illness* (Kleinman, 1981, 1986). An example of the utility of this distinction can be found in the influential work of Arthur Kleinman, a psychiatrist and anthropologist who assessed the presence of mood disorders in China in the late 1970's and early 1980s (e.g., Kleinman, 1981, 1982, 1986). Kleinman found that neurasthenia, which is characterized by somatic complaints including headache, fatigue and muscle tension, was far more commonly diagnosed in that country than depression. His own research, however, found that 87 percent of patients with neurasthenia at a hospital in the Chinese province of Hunan also met criteria for depression (Kleinman, 1982). Given this overlap between neurasthenia and depression, Kleinman posited that it would be clinically useful to conceptualize neurasthenia and depression as different expressions of the same underlying disorder, or disease. He distinguished between the objective process of *disease* - the malfunctioning of physiological and psychological processes – and the subjective experience of *illness,* which is the personal, culturally determined response to the disease. He argued that these culturally determined responses may differ from culture to culture. For example, Chinese individuals' response to an objective "depressive" disorder involves experiencing psychosomatic symptoms, while the response of Western samples involves experiencing depressed mood.

Kleinman's (1982) findings suggest that what is identified as symptoms of illness and therefore signs of distress in one context

may not be applicable in another context. Assuming otherwise leads one to commit what Kleinman named the categorical fallacy, where "the reification of a nosological category developed for a particular group...is then applied to members of another culture for whom it lacks coherence, and its validity has not been established" (Kleinman, 1987, p. 452). Consequently, medical anthropologists and sociologists have argued that illness categories are products of social construction in that they are diagnoses that attempt to frame specific symptoms and experiences as they occur together within a specific context. Such concepts may accurately identify suffering within the context in which they were developed, but may not have any validity outside that context (Ingleby, 2005).

It has been argued that culture can conceivably have a significant impact on the development and presentation of PTSD (Friedman & Marsella, 1996). Since cultural differences are tied to variations in the social construction of reality – which is in turn influenced by cultural differences in cognition and the experience and expression of emotion – the perception of what is a traumatic experience, as well as the individual and social response to it can conceivably vary greatly (Friedman & Marsella, 1996). For this reason, trauma has been a popular subject for medical anthropologists and sociologists. For example, Summerfield and Bracken, both psychiatrists with training in anthropology, have characterized PTSD as a social construction of the West, and have questioned its validity in the context of refugee mental health, where, they argue, the construct fails to adequately capture the complex psychosocial problems this population faces (Bracken, 2002; Bracken, Giller, & Summerfield, 1995; Summerfield, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2005). Young (1995), a medical anthropologist, conducted field research in a Veterans Administration psychiatric unit specializing in the treatment of PTSD and concluded that the PTSD diagnosis was a product of the aftermath of the Vietnam War in the US, when there was a

debate on how to compensate Veterans for their service. Young (1995) posits that the diagnosis is a product of its time, "glued together by the practices, technologies, and narratives with which it is diagnosed, studied, treated, and presented by the various interests, institutions, and moral arguments that mobilized these efforts and resources" (p. 5).

Following the arguments of Kleinman and others, it is possible that symptom presentation of post-traumatic stress could be different. Understanding such differences may be important if one is to successfully identify and treat individuals and communities from different cultures. However, even if it is the case that the current construct of PTSD is applicable in other cultures (i.e., that one is able identify the three symptom clusters across cultures, the presence of which indicates distress), there still may be considerable differences in the way people perceive or express their plight or illness and talk about distress or emotions. Understanding these local "idioms of distress" is important if one is to construct valid instruments for the assessment of PTSD (de Jong, 2002). It is possible that any perceived differences in PTSD prevalence rates and symptom presentation may be the result of the use of poorly validated measurement instruments. Lastly, one other reason why it is important to understand the relationship between PTSD and culture is that certain cultural values, beliefs and practices may act as either buffers or risk factors for PTSD. Surveying the different PTSD prevalence rates across cultures and identifying the specific beliefs/behaviours within those cultures that plausibly act as buffers or risk factors for PTSD is an important endeavour in that such knowledge may enhance our understanding of the disorder and also allow us to potentially identify or customize a treatment depending on the characteristics of the community in question.

Well-Being among War-Affected Populations: From the Psychosocial Approach to Positive Psychology

> *It often appears as if [researchers] base their judgments on observations and ad-hoc interviews instead of having profound and in-depth knowledge of the refugees' views on things. Authors frequently claim with great confidence that they know what refugees need, what problems they have, and that refugees have the same priorities. Often the impression is that refugees are not seen as subjects and actors, with their history, aspirations, resources, capacities, and views. Who has asked the refugees? (Hoeing, 2004, p.3)*

Despite the fact that the PTSD concept has dominated the field of refugee mental health through to the end of the 20th century, other approaches have more recently received more attention. Watters (2001) outlined a series of "emerging paradigms" in the care of refugees and internally-displaced populations. One such approach is the public health approach, which is closely connected to the psychosocial approach. Ahern (2000) defines the term *psychosocial*, following the Oxford English Dictionary, as "pertaining to the influence of social factors on an individual's mind or behaviour, and to the interrelation of behavioural and social factors". Agger (2000) cites Bergh & Jareg's (1998) definition of "psychosocial" as attempting "to express the recognition that there is always a close, ongoing circular interaction between an individual's psychological state and his or her environment" (p.13) .The World Health Organization (1996) adopted the phrase "psychosocial well-being" and defined it as a "state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity," thus connecting the term to its earlier definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being" (World Health Organization, 1948). This definition goes beyond definitions of well-being in the psychology literature in its emphasis on physical and social well-being. In light of this, the aims of psychosocial

assistance under war conditions have been defined as the promotion of human rights and mental health through strategies that support protective social and psychological factors that already exist and lessen the stress at multiple levels of intervention (Agger, 2000; Agger, Vuk, & Mimica, 1995).

An increasing amount of attention has been given to psychosocial programs of assistance that are targeted at populations and communities recovering from ethno-political warfare. In many respects, this approach to refugee care is derived from the principles of community psychology. Community psychology has been defined as an approach that targets systems of social support with the ultimate goal of facilitating healthy individual functioning (Goodstein & Sandler, 1978). In keeping with this wellness-oriented approach, Cowen (1991) claimed that psychology should focus on building health rather than simply attempting to combat sickness. This approach has a historical lineage not dissimilar to that of positive psychology, and owes much to both Maslow's (1954) discussion of basic human needs, and Jahoda's (1958) discussion of positive mental health.

Silove (2005) has identified a number of principles underlying the psychosocial model. He had argued that societies recovering from mass violence have a diversity of needs such that attention to the problems that affect the whole population provides the greatest coverage. Moreover, the psychosocial approach is similar to that of emergency and developmental relief efforts in that it focuses on capacity building and community development. Psychosocial programs also draw on insights from the public health perspective by giving priority to health promotion, disease prevention and strategies of communal self-help (Cowen, 1991). The focus of such interventions is on forging partnerships, developing local leadership and encouraging indigenous initiatives in repairing the damaged social structure, and local personnel and expertise is

favoured over external expertise and imported technology. They place great emphasis on cultural sensitivity and are mindful of local customs and traditions, and since they typically provide services to communities than to individuals, they can be cost-efficient.

The psychosocial approach to refugee mental health has attempted to remedy the one-dimensional approach adopted by the PTSD model, primarily by stressing that the road to recovery for many people affected by conflict lies in alleviating their lives as a whole, and not simply focusing on their psychological health (Almedom & Summerfield, 2004). Moreover, the psychosocial approach adopts a substantially broader definition of what constitutes an appropriate intervention or treatment, given its focus on communal resources and negative social conditions, as opposed to solely focusing on the alleviation of individual pathological symptoms. Given that one of the goals of psychosocial interventions is to help refugees deal with stress through multiple levels of intervention, attempts have been made to disentangle the various domains that may be affected by trauma, and that may serve as efficient targets of intervention. Silove (1999) has proposed a model that defines the key adaptive systems threatened by disasters, arguing that identifying the systems that are mobilized or undermined by trauma may provide psychosocial researchers with a clearer perspective on the intervening processes linking the experience of trauma to mental health outcomes and whether these responses are restorative or dysfunctional. The ADAPT (Adaptation and Development After Persecution and Trauma) model identifies five salient adaptive systems and their associated domains:

1. The safety system- Security and safety
2. The attachment system-Interpersonal bonds and networks (including the family, kinship, groups, community, society)
3. The justice system-Justice and protection from abuse

4. The existential-meaning system-Identities and roles (such as parents, worker, student, citizen, or social leader)
5. The identity/ role system-Institutions that confer existential meaning and coherence, including traditions, religion, spiritual practices, political and social participation

(Silove, Steel, & Psychol, 2006)

Within this framework, the PTSD model is tied most closely to the safety system, with many traumatologists favouring the hypothesis that the perspective of threat is closely linked to increased risk of PTSD (Basoglu & Parker, 1995). Expanding the scope of the systems affected by trauma allows psychosocial researchers to better understand how trauma weights down each of these systems to the extent that they preclude successful *adaptation* to the traumatic experience. Such an approach would also allow researchers to better understand pathological responses to stress and trauma that are not captured by the PTSD model.

Silove (1999) has argued that another benefit of this approach is that it allows the researcher insight into the multi-level approach adopted by psychosocial projects that focus on trauma survivors. His model directly ties into an important psychosocial principle: there are many roads to recovery from trauma and that there is no correct or incorrect level of intervention. That said, some common aims of all psychosocial interventions may be said to include the reestablishment of trust, the opportunity to express feelings associated with traumatic experiences, the reestablishment of self-esteem, the reestablishment of attachment and networks, and the regeneration of hope and belief in the future (Agger, 2001).

Despite the increasing support of psychosocial programs by government and other international humanitarian agencies, a number of serious limitations of the psychosocial approach have been noted. Given that much refugee mental health research has adopted the psychiatric traumatological approach (Silove, 1999),

little is known about factors that promote resilience or serve as protective moderators among populations. While Ahearn (2000) defines psychosocial well-being as consisting of "the ability, independence, and freedom to act and the possession of the requisite goods and services to be psychologically content" (p. 4), identifying the exact definition of well-being remains a source of contention (Jayawickreme, Forgeard & Seligman, 2012), and many researchers shy away from offering a concrete definition of psychosocial well-being. Instead, many psychosocial researchers have been content to focus on factors associated with psychosocial well-being (Ahearn, 2000). For example, Armstrong (1998) examined the effects of income level, household size, and wealth holdings on the psychosocial well-being of Tanzanian refugees in resettlement camps, while McSpadden (1987) evaluated the role of self-sufficiency, employment, schooling and social networks in contributing to the psychosocial well-being of Ethiopian refugees being resettled in the US. One issue here is that there may be a wide diversity of psychosocial needs among refugee populations, and it is frequently unclear which of these factors are most important for psychosocial well-being in any given context.

Moreover, many researchers have desisted from explicitly defining the concept of psychosocial well-being, and those that do have focused for the most part on how the well-being of refugees is *negatively* affected by their experience, usually through the collection of data on traumatic symptoms. Frequently, the analysis of refugees' psychosocial well-being draws substantially from concepts of loss, separation, stress and trauma, emphasizing what is lacking for refugees to experience well-being (Ahearn, 2000). This means that many psychosocial projects remain heavily influenced and restricted by an over-focus on the deficits model. This substantial deficiency will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Another significant limitation with the psychosocial approach concerns the wide range of needs that such programs attempt to fulfil. Many programs undertake a comprehensive "need analysis" before implementing a psychosocial program, and such analyses are at risk of revealing too many needs, and subsequently leading to confusion over which needs to focus on, what the scopes and limits of the program should be, as well as demoralization in the target community. Silove (2005) quotes a Sudanese herdsman living in a refugee camp as remarking: "They certainly know what our needs are—they have come around with their questionnaires many times. We are still waiting for help!" The sustainability of such interventions has also been questioned, given its emphasis on training local individuals and the practical difficulty of such an endeavour in the context of a recently concluded or only conflict situation.

Many psychosocial programs encompass many issues, including cultural, psychological, social, economic and human rights concerns. This broad focus points to three further questions. One is that it is sometimes unclear which programs and organizations are best equipped to undertake such projects. Moreover, it remains unclear whether such broadly based programs have any meaningful impact on those individuals who are most severely affected by psychiatric disorders (Silove, 2005). Thirdly, the wide scope of such programs raises the question of the level of psychological expertise required by the programs, and indeed whether such interventions are primarily psychological in nature.

However, the most significant limitation of the psychosocial model of intervention — which is also true of much work in community psychology — is a lack of systematic evidence supporting the effectiveness of such programs (Hubbard & Miller, 2004). In fact, it remains unclear if such programs are of benefit to either the refugee population as a whole, or to the small group of individuals within that population who suffer from severe psychological distress.

Two possible explanations for the lack of such data have been proposed. For one, it is probably easier to assess the effectiveness of such programs among refugees and other displaced populations in comparatively safe and stable resettlement countries such as the US (e.g., Michultka, Blanchard, & Kalous, 1998). Moreover, the fact that conditions in refugee camps and other settlements close to regions of former or present conflict are in a constant state of flux may discourage attempts to systematically assess the effectiveness of the intervention (Hubbard & Miller, 2004). While this limitation is understandable in light of the volatile nature of conflict zones, Hubbard and Miller (2004) note that one negative consequence of the lack of such data is the creation of what Dawes (2004) termed a "house of cards", where interventions are promoted and propagated based on a substantial body of anecdotal evidence with little empirical data to back it up. As Carballo et al. (2004) point out: "the time has come for psychosocial interventions and mental-health in conflict and post-conflict situations to be evidence-based."

Simply put, little will be known about the well-being of refugees unless their levels of well-being are assessed, as opposed to conceptualizing "well-being" as the absence of psychiatric symptoms, which has been the case *de facto* in most research conducting utilizing the PTSD concept. The assessment of well-being in refugee populations is a straightforward, yet important point. One reason for this is that refugees who do not exhibit symptoms of distress may still exhibit low levels of well-being. In one of the few studies on refugee mental health that incorporated measures of quality-of-life and life satisfaction, Salvadorian refugees who had been resettled in London, Ontario did not differ with respect to overall psychological distress compared to a comparison group of matched Canadians, but differed significantly with respect to quality-of-life and life satisfaction measures (Young & Evans, 1997). The quality-of-life measure utilized here included items on

job satisfaction, material well-being, marital satisfaction, personal growth, and altruistic behaviour. Investigating the well-being of this population provided an insight into the needs of the refugee population that simple measures of psychological distress would not be able to provide, and points towards interventions that could include promotion of specific quality of life domains, enhancing self-esteem or dispositional optimism.

The emerging field of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Forgeard, Jayawickreme, Kern & Seligman, 2011; Jayawickreme, Forgeard & Seligman, 2012) laments modern psychology's continued focus on mental *disease* as opposed to mental *health*, and emphasizes a more "positive" approach, with a reorientation of the discipline towards work on how individuals can lead "better" lives. However, it is to an extent understandable that much research on refugee mental health has concerned itself with healing — with fixing what is wrong or malfunctioning with individuals — given the extraordinary circumstances that many refugees find themselves in. Which accepting both this fact and the evidence that a significant subset of refugees do suffer from severe psychiatric disorders and psychological distress as a result of their experience, such sentiments may be countered by arguments that conflict and warfare are not as unique and unusual an occurrence as many individuals in the developed world may assume (Rieff, 2002), and that researchers should not assume that refugees and other populations affected by conflict cannot experience well-being simply because of the "unnatural" circumstances of their situation. Such arguments should provide another reason to be sceptical of the medicalisation of their experience.

Thus, the approach we propose encourages a complete quantitative assessment of the problems and competencies of war-affected populations in north-eastern Sri Lanka. As we will note later, policy makers should be particularly sensitive to the arguments presented

above when implementing programs aimed at promoting well-being and reconciliation among war-affected populations in the country (Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme & Miller, 2010).

The Penn-RESIST-Peradeniya War Problems Questionnaire (PRP-WPQ) and the Penn-RESIST-Peradeniya Competencies Scale (PPR-CS)

As we have written before (Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme, Goonasekera, & Foa, 2009a, 2009b), we believe that any assessment of psychological functioning should employ instruments that include local idioms and concepts that individuals in the community in question employ to make sense of their surroundings. This is especially true in the case of Sri Lanka. The war trauma suffered by communities living in northern and eastern Sri Lanka is considerable (Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme, & Miller, 2010). We recently (Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme, Atanasov, Goonasekera & Foa, 2012; Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme, Goonasekera, & Foa, 2009) developed the Penn/RESIST/Peradeniya War Problems Questionnaire (PRPWPQ) specifically for this population to assess traumatic events, war-related general problems and war-related psychological and behavioural problems (Appendix A). We examined the psychometric properties of the War-Related Psychological and Behavioural Problems section of the PRPWPQ and assessed whether this scale was a better predictor of functional impairment than two standard measures of psychopathology; the Post-traumatic Symptoms Scale (PSS; Foa et al., 1993) and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; Beck & Steer, 1987). In light of our view that culturally-specific measures of mental health would be more sensitive to participants' reports of psychopathology, we hypothesized that the war-related psychological and behavioural problems subscale of the PRPWPQ would predict functional impairment above and beyond the PSS and BDI, as the PRPWPQ

incorporates local idioms of distress. This hypothesis was supported: High scores on the Anxiety and Depression subscales of the PRPWPQ significantly predicted functional impairment, after controlling for age and standard measures of depression and PTSD. Scores on the Anxiety and Depression subscales of the PRPWPQ demonstrated incremental validity in that they predicted functional impairment above and beyond well-established self-report measures. We encourage those interested in the results to read the full report of these findings (Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme, Atanasov, Goonasekera & Foa, 2012).

These findings provide support for the notion that sensitive measurement of psychopathology in non-Western, war-affected populations may require the development of instruments that incorporate local idioms of distress. There are limited resources available for providers of psychosocial aid in non-Western, war-affected countries. However, our results suggest that measures incorporating idioms of distress may improve our ability over and above the established measures to identify those who are functionally impaired due to mental illness and who therefore need assistance.

In addition to anxiety and depression, the current results also provided significant insight into the different forms of daily problems that participants faced, as well as war-related physical problems. Tables 1 to 4 present the most frequently cited family, financial, social and basic needs problems faced. Table 5 presents the most frequently cited physical problems. These data are important because they highlight the importance of being sensitive to the full range of stressors experienced by war-affected populations, many of which may not be the direct result of their war-related experiences. Miller and Rascoe (2004) identify two major types of stressors that may affect and threaten refugee well-being: *political violence-related stressors*, which involve the problems they faced as a direct result of the war, and *displacement-related stressors*, which

focuses on the challenges they face following their displacement. In addition, two other factors that may contribute to the mental well-being of refugees can be identified: pre-displacement stressors that may not directly be the result of political violence, and post-displacement stressors that occur following displacement that are not directly linked to the experience of displacement as such. We believe that more attention should be paid to these stressors, since it is likely that the psychological distress and lack of well-being that refugees experience cannot be accounted for completely by stressors directly related to political violence and displacement, as substantial as those stressors may be.

We also developed and validated a measure of local competencies associated with well-being — the Penn/Peradeniya/ RESIST (PPR) Competencies Scale — was developed and validated for use among displaced war-affected populations in North-East Sri Lanka (Appendix B). 196 internally displaced people attending psychosocial treatment clinics in North-East Sri Lanka completed the PPR Competencies Questionnaire. The measure showed good psychometric properties. An exploratory factor analysis revealed a three-factor solution — Religious Faith, Material Welfare and Community Status. These three factors were differentially related to measures of functional impairment, depression, life satisfaction and happiness (Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme, Atanasov & Goonasekera, 2012). In light of the literature on cultural variations in well-being (Diener & Suh, 1997), the emergence of these domains is not surprising. A strong and reliable relationship between religiosity and well-being has been documented in numerous studies (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Fulfilment of basic needs is strongly correlated with well-being in low-income communities, while more interdependent cultures emphasize the important of community status in well-being.

Examining Post-traumatic Growth among War-Affected Populations

There is a large and growing literature indicating that people who have experienced adversity are able to identify positive ways in which their lives have changed as a result of a traumatic experience (Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme, & Seligman, 2012). Tedeschi and Calhoun's (1996) conceptualization of posttraumatic growth involving five domains — *improved relations with others*, *identification of new possibilities*, *increased personal strength*, *spiritual change*, and *increased appreciation of life* — is perhaps the most predominant construct in the literature. Post-traumatic growth (PTG) has been reported by people who have been victims of a wide range of traumatic events, including cancer, sexual assault, natural disasters and HIV/AIDS (Lindstrom, Cann, Calhoun, & Tedeschi, 2011).

Our work was driven by insights gathered from two developments in stress and coping research (Weiss & Berger, 2010). The first is that in addition to the negative effects of trauma and stress, struggling with adversity can lead to positive consequences and personal growth. The second is that cultural differences can affect the meaning and manifestation of both trauma symptoms (Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme & Foa, 2012) and positive coping (Weiss & Berger, 2010). The present study added to this growing literature by identifying salient domains of post-traumatic growth among war-affected Sri-Lankans.

It should be noted that growth was not seen as a foreign concept in a series of focus groups we conducted prior to our quantitative study (Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme & Goonasekera, 2012). One interesting observation in these discussions was the intuitive appeal that post-traumatic growth had among many of the focus group participants. They thought that asking such questions was important, since gaining meaning from adversity was important:

Understanding that things happen for a reason is important, even if you don't understand exactly why they [are] happening. If you trust in God, if you trust that everything happens for a reason, he will make you strong. You will become strong.

A link between strength of character and growth was noted by a number of participants, echoing recent research on the connection (Peterson, Park, Pole, D'Andrea & Seligman, 2008). While it should be noted that the emphasis that participants placed on the value of meaning-making and growth may be the result of cultural scripts relating to fatalism in the face of adversity (McAdams, 2006), participants nevertheless thought highly of the post-traumatic growth construct. It was also important that the notion of growth was tied in closely with questions of religion, with frequent mention of "fate" and "God's plan". Many participants spoke of the importance of religion and "accepting one's fate" for well-being.

In our quantitative assessment, we found that high levels of PTG were associated with increased well-being, no relationship was found between a short-form measure of PTG and measures of depression, PTSD, and functioning. An exploratory factor analysis however revealed two domains of PTG in our sample, which we labelled PTG Changes and PTG Religion. The PTG Changes factor was found to be positively associated with well-being and negatively associated with depression, while the PTG Religion factor was only associated with current level of religiosity. Two of Tedeschi and Calhoun's (1996) five domains of growth — *identification of new possibilities* and *increased personal strength* — loaded onto the PTGI Changes factor and seemed to be the most salient domains among the targeted population.

The current study found that increases in the PTG Changes factor were associated with reduced levels of depression but not PTSD. This is consistent with Helgeson et al.'s (2006) meta-analytical review, which found an inverse relationship between

benefit-finding and depression, but no significant relationship with anxiety. While the factor analysis resulted in the identification of two distinct factors, two domains relevant to PTG — relating to others and appreciation of life — did not load onto either factor and were subsequently not included in many of the analyses. However, the predominance of a two-factor PTG construct among displaced North-East Sri Lankans is consistent with cross-cultural research showing that growth through adversity may result in the development of resources that may vary from culture to culture (Pals & McAdams, 2004). In a review of cross-cultural research on PTG, Weiss and Berger (2010) found that the number of salient PTG domains varied from two to five. North East Sri Lankans are thus similar to Israeli (Levine, Laufer, Hamama-Raz, Stein & Solomon, 2008) and Chinese (Ho, Chan & Ho, 2004) populations, in that these two salient domains of PTG have been identified among these populations.

Conclusion: Using Empirical Evidence to Build Interventions that Work

Policy makers in Sri Lanka who are interested in promoting the well-being of war-affected populations need to take these lessons into account for at least two reasons. First, it would be impossible to successfully gauge the success of any intervention program without assessment tools that are sensitive enough to identify individuals who suffer from impairment. Such programs would be inefficient in their ability to identify and assist those with the greatest need, and would also be insensitive to the unique ways in which Sri Lankans express and talk about symptoms of health and well-being. Second, any successful post-war reconciliation program has to focus on both healing the wounds of war and promote the identification and utilization of existing resources to promote positive post-war outcomes.

The question of cultural variation is especially important with regards to refugee mental health and well-being, given the wide cultural origins of different refugee populations around the world. Understanding how different refugee populations conceptualize both illness and wellbeing, and which resources they associate with wellbeing, could have very important consequences for understanding the coping mechanisms individuals use in times of war and conflict. When considering assessments of mental health and interventions designed to improve mental health, it becomes clear that a number of factors need to be taken into account:

Understanding the values different refugee populations espouse, and how individuals' goals are culturally determined;

Identifying what constitutes "well-being" in their perspective—a task that relatively few organizations working with refugees undertake (Hoeing, 2004);

Assessing existing instruments of mental health for their suitability in assessing the needs of the target population

Bolton and Tang (2002) note that suitability of assessment includes ease of use, need for adaptability across many types of cultures, demonstrable scientific validity, and ability to generate data of interest to both researchers and mental health practitioners working with those populations. However, they also claim that with regards to assessing the effects of high levels of psychological distress and low levels of well-being on functioning, most measures of function assessment, such as the SF-36 (Ware, 1993) and the SF-20 (McDowell & Newell, 1996) contain too many culture-bound questions, and the norms of functioning in western countries (i.e. walking a mile) may not successfully translate in a different cultural context. Identifying the local idioms of illness and wellness in specific communities prior to deploying interventions represents

an important first step, and in some respects represents the only feasible approach to the issues raised by cross-cultural function assessment.

Many displaced populations are wary and suspicious of government and non-governmental agencies for their lack of interest in the actualities on the ground, as Hoeing (2004) has pointed out, and paying attention to the specifics of the situation may have the effect of improving the *effectiveness* of the psychosocial interventions provided, given that the refugees would feel that the intervention is not a "foreign" import, but instead has been developed with their specific needs in mind. In a sense, the efficacy vs. effectiveness distinction plays out here: even if an intervention has been shown to be effective empirically, insufficient attention to the specifics of the context may serve to blunt its effectiveness. Identifying the psychological, physical and social problems encountered by war-affected populations, as our work has done, provides important information for the development of sensitive and effective interventions.

Additionally, an important goal of future research in examining PTG among displaced populations should be the use of qualitative studies to identify aspects of PTG that may be unique to particular contexts and cultures. For example, in more family oriented cultures such as Latino and Japanese cultures, self-control and patience related to family roles and responsibilities are highlighted as important domains of growth (Weiss & Berger, 2010). It may be that other domains in addition to Changes and Religion may be important domains of PTG, and that more than one constructive PTG domain may exist. Future research that focuses on identifying local domains of PTG would provide important and valuable information on how the struggles of dealing with civil war could lead to the development of interventions to promote unique strengths and capacities.

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Table 1

Family Problems as Measured by the Penn-RESIST-Peradeniya War Problems Questionnaire (n = 163)

	%
Not being able to reach a steady life because of your duties towards your family	49.1
Insufficient support from relatives	47.9
Children or husband or wife has psychological problems	44.8
Not being able to travel to meet your relatives due to restrictions	42.3
Unable to take care of the children	41.7
Having been separated from husband or wife or children or other relatives	38.7
Not being able to get your children married or to give dowry	28.2
Not having anyone to take care of you in old age	23.9
Problems with husband / wife at home	22.1
Taking care of your children and siblings as a single person	22.1
Problems between children	17.8
Being dependent on relatives	17.8
Unable to control (i.e., discipline) your children	16
Alcohol abuse by self	13.5
Being dependent on wife	12.3
Problems in marriage plans	8.6
Not having any children though wanted	6.7
Alcohol abuse by husband or wife	6.1
Alcohol abuse by parents	6.1
Maltreated by children	0

Table 2

Financial Problems as Measured by the Penn-RESIST-Peradeniya War Problems Questionnaire (n = 163)

	%
Not being able to earn enough money for your basic needs	89
Not having money	86.5
Not being able to work due to illness	81
Unavailability of employment	81
Financial debts	77.9
Not being able to do the job you desire	77.9
Loss of material goods	75.5
Loss of work equipments	67.5
Loss of house / land	67.5
Not being able to work due to being a single parent	49.1

Table 3

Social Problems as Measured by the Penn-RESIST-Peradeniya War Problems Questionnaire (n = 163)

	%
Fear of death (from bombs / land mines / war)	71.8
Fear of being kidnapped	55.8
Not being able to do their usual routines after having moved to a new place	55.2
Problems being able to travel	54.6
Not being able to talk independently	54
Stress when moving to a new place	52.8
Living with relatives	30.1
Not being able to participate or conduct cultural events (e.g. attending weddings or temples)	28.2
Not having essential documents. (e.g. identity card)	25.2
Staying away from relatives because you don't want to disgrace them	25.2
Having to give a bribe in order to get the basic needs or services	25.2
Not being respected in the society	24.5
Losing the society	22.1
Lack of security due to being alone (i.e., you are all by yourself with no one to be there for you)	22.1
Been a victim of theft	18.4
Living alone (without anyone)	17.8
Isolated in the society due to unemployment	17.2
Isolated in the society due to imprisonment	16.6
Neglected by the society	15.3
Living in a camp	14.1
Living with non-relatives	14.1
Problems with neighbours or with others in the camp	7.4
Not being able to get married	6.7
Fear of sexual abuse due to being a widow	6.1
Isolated in the society due to being a widow	5.5
Unable to get married due to stigma (e.g. loss of arms or legs / imprisonment)	4.3

Table 4

Lack of Basic Needs as Measured by the Penn-RESIST-Peradeniya War Problems Questionnaire (n = 163)

	%
Lack of proper security	71.2
Lack of medical facilities	63.8
Losing your rights	60.1
Lack of food	55.8
Lack of clothes	50.3
Lack of fuel	49.1
Not being able to obtain education	43.6
Problem in maintaining cleanliness	33.7
Lack of water	31.3

Table 5

War-Related Physical Problems as Measured by the Penn-RESIST-Peradeniya War Problems Questionnaire (n = 163)

	%
Headache	65.6
Backache/ back related problems	65
Body aches	62
Shivering	42.9
Problems in the eye	35
Problems in using hands or legs	28.8
Loss of teeth	27
High pressure	22.7
Heart problems	22.1
Fractures	18.4
Not being able to walk even with having both the legs	17 8
Burns/Boils	14.7
Being deaf	13.5
Head injury	12.3
Stroke/ blood clots	9.8
Kidney problems	8.6
Loss of arms or legs in a landmine	7.4
Retention of bullet or bomb particles in the body	6.1
Loss of arms or legs of a child or husband or wife or breadwinner in a landmine	4.3

Appendix A

Items represented in the Penn-RESIST-Peradeniya War Problems Questionnaire

Part I: Trauma/Torture Checklist (yes/no responses + frequency)

Torture cluster

Being imprisoned
Being abducted by LTTE/ SL Army
Being beaten in detention
Burnt with cigarettes in detention
Electrocution in detention
Rape
Force-fed a mosquito coil
Beaten with bag filled with Petrol
Dot pins shoved under nails

Other war trauma

Seeing loved ones die in front of you
Being caught in a landmine
Injured by air bombing/bomb blast/ raid/attack
Death of spouse/children due to war
Abduction of spouse/son/daughter/father/mother/family members
Children are disabled
Spouse/partner is disabled
Loss of mother/father due to war

Part II – Problems Checklist (yes/no responses)

Family issues

Separated from children/spouse/partner/relatives
Wanting but not having children
Children/spouse has pain of mind (psychological problems)
Unable to take care of/control children
Domestic disputes with spouse
Disputes between children
Alcohol abuse by spouse/parent/self
Maltreatment by children

No one to look after you in old age
Looking after sons/daughter /brothers/sisters by oneself
Unable to travel to see relatives due to restrictions
Unable to settle down due to family obligations
Disruption in marriage plans
Unable to marry off children/unable to give dowry
Lack of support from relatives
Dependant on relatives
Dependant on wife

Economic issues
Loss of land/home
Loss of material goods (e.g., water pump, TV)
Lack of employment opportunities
Unable to obtain desired work
Unable to work due to illness
Not earning enough money for basic needs
No money
Unable to work due to being a single parent
Financial debt
Loss of work tools

Social problems
Fear of death(by bombs/landmines/army/LTTE)
Fear of abduction
Lack of documents (e.g., ID card)
Problems travelling
Loss of community
Living alone (without others)
Not being able to get married
Living in a camp
Living with relatives
Living with non-relatives
Stress of moving to new place
Unable to do usual activities in new place/ being inconvenienced
Unable to speak freely

Fear of sexual attacks due to being a widow
Neglected (no support) by society
Lack of respect from society
Problems with neighbours/others in camp
Unable to conduct cultural activities (e.g., attending weddings/temple)
Need to bribe people to get services/basic needs
Victim of theft
No security (alone)

(Shame-related variables)
Being shunned by society due to time spent in prison
Being shunned by society due to lack of work
Being shunned by society due to being a widow
Staying away from relatives so as not to shame them
Unable to marry due to stigma (e.g., loss of limb, being in prison)

Lack of basic needs
Lack of clothes
Loss of rights
Lack of health care
Lack of food
Lack of water
Lack of fuel
Lack of safety/security
Sanitation problems
No access to education

War-related physical problems (consequences of torture/trauma)
Shrapnel in body
Loss of limbs due to landmine
Problems using hands and/or legs
Loss of child's/spouse's/breadwinner's limbs due to landmine
Deafness
Head trauma
Eye problems
Headache

Back problems
Boils
Fractures
Heart problems
Kidney problems
Blood clots
Blood pressure
Body ache
Body shivers
Loss of teeth
Inability to walk (while having both legs)

Part III – War Related Psychological and Behavioural Problems (on 5 point Likert scale)

Anxiety-type symptoms

High inner fear/ fear situation in mind
Always worrying/ Psychological confusion (thinking of past too much)/Old memories
Fear of the future/future life is affected/ confusion thinking about what will happen in the future/having no future (for rape victims)
Avoiding going outside the house due to fear
Not visiting relatives/friends who live nearby
Having the need to get out of certain places (e.g., common places) due to fear
Intense emotional reaction when confronted with reminders of trauma (e.g., soldiers)
Fearful reactions due to intrusive memories of trauma
Daily anxiety that something may happen to loved ones ("Grieving in the mind")
Unable to take small risks
Being in a panic situation/feeling panic
Fear of everything (being easily scared)
Fear to go out alone
Fear to be with new people
Physiological tension
Unable to live due to torture/trauma
Being isolated from others
Distrustful of others

Depression-type symptoms

Unsteadiness of mind (due to loss of loved ones)
Lack of interest in participating in activities outside the home (e.g., attending religious festivals, visiting)
Feelings of helplessness (after loss of spouse or family)
Depression/Mentally down/Broken mind
Affected state of mind/problem in mind
Disgust/hatred of life
Bored of life
Disappointed in life
Lack of confidence/self-distrust
Feeling as though I can't do anything
Thinking low of oneself/inferiority complex
Feelings of guilt
Lack of happiness
Attempted suicide
Expecting end of life
Getting angry suddenly
Feelings of frustration (depression/no interest in life)
Unable to make decisions (not knowing what to say and what not to say)
Memory problems (being at unconscious stage)
Unable to sleep
Problems concentrating
Laziness/lack of activity

Other symptoms

Not taking care of self (e.g., not eating) because of working hard
Use of alcohol to forget painful memories
Feeling as though there is no future for children
Development of physical problems (e.g., heart problems, headache, ulcers, inability to walk) due to worry/being mentally upset
Lack of peace of mind
Violent mentality (reacting violently to everything)
Feeling of inferiority due to loss of limbs
War-related wounds in the heart/problems have made heart broken
Acting irresponsibly/carelessness/impatience

Not happy in the heart/Heart pain
Feeling unable to pass one day
Fluctuations in mind
Impact on morals
Has psychological disease/mentally disturbed
No faith in god
Engaging in violent behaviour
"Severe" psychological state – terrible attitude
Unable to do work with a calm mind

Appendix B

Items in the Penn-Peradeniya-RESIST Competencies Scale

Religious Faith: Four items reflect beliefs about religious faith and responsibilities, as well as serving as a good role model and creating a sense of peace and harmony in the family.

- I have been a successful parent/role model for children
- There is a strong sense of harmony in my family
- I fulfil my religious responsibilities
- I have a strong religious faith

Material Welfare/Self-Efficacy: The four items on this scale relate to individuals' ability to fulfil the needs of their family and accomplish important family duties.

- I can successfully fulfil my family's needs
- I have the necessary skills to provide for myself and my family
- I earn a sufficient income for myself and my family
- I have been able to educate my children well

Community Status: This scale consists of items assessing the extent to which individuals are able to garner the respect of their family and community.

- I am a successful member of my community
- I have the respect of my family
- I do my utmost to overcome life's challenges
- I have the respect of my community

A short-form version of this measure can be created by deleting the items in bold. Deleting these items does not significantly impact the reliability of the scale.

To Go or Not to Go: Struggle for Belonging among Second Generation Muslim IDPs in Kalpitiya in Puttalam District in the Context of Post-War Resettlement

Fazeeha Azmi

Introduction

This paper stems from a research study exploring the sense of belonging among internally displaced women in Kalpitiya in the context of resettlement and return to their original habitation in the north of Sri Lanka. In this paper I reflect on the struggle for belonging among the second generation Muslim Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kalpitiya in the context of Post-war reconstruction and resettlement. Following their expulsion from the north by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the 1990s, the northern Muslims have been living in IDP camps and settlements in Puttalam district primarily and in other districts for almost 22 years. Since the official end of the almost thirty year long war, the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) is in the process of resettling the displaced people. According to GOSL the conditions in most parts of the former war areas are improving and are allegedly safe for return and therefore, the IDPs will be able to go back to their areas of origin.[1] With this expectation, since the end of the war, the GOSL has been implementing massive infrastructure development projects. However, despite the above expectations and the justifiable focus of the government's attempt to resettle the IDPs in their places of origins, the IDPs themselves have different

[1] When delivering a speech in 'Northern Provincial Convention, 2009 ' of All Ceylon Muslim Congress, H.E. President assures that all Muslims evicted by LTTE in 1990 will be resettled with honour and dignity on or before May 2010. http://asiantribune.com/news/2009/12/27/northern-province-muslims-idps-be-resettled-may-2010-%E2%80%93-president-mahinda-rajapaksa Accessed 29.07.2012. Asian Tribune, Volume 11, No. 466 .

views in relation to returning to their homes. Among them, IDPs who were below ten years during the time of expulsion (the second generation) feel they are neglected both by their own families and the GOSL in the resettlement decision. For this young group who has lived for almost two decades as IDPs, in Kalpitiya, return and reintegration into a new local fabric which is different from the Puttalam district is a challenge. Using qualitative research methods, this paper aims to reveal the struggle for belonging among the second generation in the context of resettlement. I try to answer the following questions:

- How does the second generation construct the notion of home?
- How do they negotiate resettlement?

Field work for this research took place in Kalpitiya from August 2011 to April 2012. This study conducted informal discussions in the form of dialogue meetings with second and first generation IDPs in addition to the collection of eight life stories of second generation IDPs. The chapter argues that in the context of resettlement, it is important to locate meanings given to home by the IDPs within the interconnected systems of social, historical, geographical, cultural and political dynamics between the new 'home' and familiar 'host' communities. Because, as shown in this paper resettlement should not leave people without viable futures and these young IDPs like the rest of the nation, must be able to move forward for a better future.

Situating Northern Muslims' Protracted Displacement

In the internal displacement history of Sri Lanka, 1990 marks a mile stone. In 1990 almost all of the Muslims in the North were forced to leave by the LTTE. They were about 80,000[2] people and were given

[2] Actual numbers are not confirmed.

two to forty-eight hours to leave their homes. Muslims who were forced to leave with very short notice immediately made their way towards government-controlled areas mainly in the nearest district of Vavuniya, Anuradhapura, and Puttalam. Following the expulsion while the majority of them lived in welfare camps, relatively well-off people, moved to Colombo, Thihariya, Negombo and other parts of the country (Brun, 2003). Expulsion of the Northern Muslims which was very unexpected left them with social and psychological damage. The 'cleansing' of Northern Muslims which was later admitted by the former LTTE ideologue Anton Balasingham as a 'strategic blunder' was a significant historical event that changed the lives of the Muslims of the North. The event and its impact received wider academic attention and criticism due to its serious consequences and protracted nature (Brun,2000; Hasbullah,2001; Shanmugaratnam, 2001; Brun, 2003; Brun, 2008).

The impacts of forced eviction of Muslims are hard to exaggerate, and every person interviewed told sad stories of exile, brutality, families being separated, and similar social and cultural consequences.[3] Puttalam, being the nearest location for the fleeing Muslims, received the highest number of IDPs. They were provided with immediate relief measures and humanitarian assistance by the Muslims of the host community, government and possibly Non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Although the displaced people relied primarily on various support mechanisms (Muslim community, NGOs and state) during the initial years of displacement, they could not depend on such supports for an extended period of time. These IDPs are now facing tremendous problems and difficulties.

[3] For a detail descriptions on expulsion of Northern Muslims see S. H. Hasbullah, *Muslim Refugees: The Forgotten People in Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict* (Nuraicholai: Research and Action Forum for Social Development, 2001).

The living allowance given by the government is hardly enough to cover the family expenses[4]. The amount given has been the same ever since they came to Puttalam as IDPs despite the fact that family members, as well as cost of living, have increased. Due to congestion in camps, people are facing health problems. Further, in addiction to economic woes, there are other socioeconomic impacts; for example, educational opportunities for the children of IDP families are limited as many children from poor families help their parents at home and in the fishing industry instead of schooling. Unemployment among the second generation IDPs is gradually increasing. Many of the IDPs have been living in harsh socio-economic and environmental condition from inception. They also have problems with the host community, in relation to their livelihoods, education, prayers and their day to day lives However, the end of the war has opened up opportunities to resettle these IDPs in their places of origin in the north and the GOSL has opened up the space for return and resettlement.

Although the GOSL has expedited the process of resettlement there are gaps in the process and implementation resulting in differences between government effort and the satisfaction of IDPs. This is particularly problematic in the case of IDPs who have been living in a situation of protracted displacement and associated socioeconomic and cultural repercussions of displacement. Due to the nature and the length of time they have spent outside their places of origin some IDPs have already assimilated to some degree with the host communities. Further, these IDPs have lived in relative safety compared to Tamil IDPs who lived closer to the war zone in extremely vulnerable conditions (Brun, 2008). For the second generation IDPs who were below the age of ten during the time of displacement returning to their places of origin is another kind of forced displacement and therefore, they are uncertain about their future.

[4] IDPs are given dry ration for the value of 1250 SLR. Considering the rate of inflation the amount allocated for each family is hardly enough.

Post-war Reconstruction and Resettlement

A total of 30 years of war in Sri Lanka was characterized by forced displacement, massacres, sexual harassment, abduction and destruction of public properties just to mention a few. With the defeat of the LTTE in May 2009, the overall security situation in the country has generally improved although there are criticisms and many gaps in the social and political environment. With the termination of the war, GOSL launched a number of reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes with the purported aim of restoring normalcy in the former war areas although the extent to which this goal has been achieved is questionable (Herath, 2010). Under these post-war reconstruction programmes, resettlement of IDPs, re-integration of former combatants, improving health and education, de-mining and massive physical infrastructural programmes seem to take central priority of the government (Balasooriya, 2012). Perhaps, the most important issue related to post-war reconstruction was the resettlement of IDPs and according to the Ministry of Defense, the GOSL has resettled nearly 98 % of the IDPs at the end of 2011[5].

Students of displacement such as Deng emphasise that resolving the issue of displacement in post-war nations is a necessary prerequisite for that nation to achieve lasting peace and economic rebuilding Deng, 1993; Deng, 1995). Increasingly, the international community views resettlement as a priority in post-war situations. The majority of post-war countries continue to promote return and resettlement as prerequisites for a durable solution to conflict. The Sri Lankan government also appears to have accorded high priority to the resettlement of IDPs since the official end of the war, although as stated before, it faces criticism over the resettlement process and its consequences. This chapter

[5] http://www.resettlementmin.gov.lk/idps--statistics.html Accessed on 29.06.2012

argues that the GOSL is carrying out the resettlement projects in Mannar without a clearly formulated policy on the resettlement of forcefully evicted people. This situation has provided IDPs with two options: to return and reintegrate or remain and integrate with the host community.

Home: Place and Sense of Belonging

Undoubtedly, the return and reintegration or integrating with the host community is essential for sustainable peace in war-torn societies. Academic literature related to return and reintegration and integrating with the host community has shed light on different dimensions and possible positive and negative consequences therein (Deng, 1993; Deng, 1995; Cohen and Deng, 1995a; Cohen and Deng, 1998b; Mooney, 2005; Muggah, 2008; Fonseka, 2010).

This chapter finds that one of the ways to illuminate the questions on how the second generation construct home and negotiate resettlement was to analyse their feelings about home. Thus the researcher assumes the decision to return and reintegrate to place of origin or integrating with the host community depends on various factors among which how people view home or in other words, different conceptualizations of home are of immense significance. Hypothetically, it is possible that 'home' might take on a dynamic meaning in the process of displacement and especially in the case of protracted displacement and the different meanings of home plausibly have serious implications as regards to return and reintegration or integrating with the host community.

The decision to return and reintegration or integrating with the host community is understood through 'home' 'place' and 'belonging'. In short, the combination of the concepts of home, place and belonging form the basis of a conceptual framework for this research study

and for this chapter. In the sections to follow, the chapter begins first, by contextualizing the concept of home followed by place and belonging in order to situate their use in the analysis.

Scholars from anthropology, geography, sociology and environmental psychology have examined 'home' in its different meanings and contexts and over the past three decades there has been a resurgence of interest in concepts concerning home, place and belonging (Relph, 1976; Tuan,1974: Tuan,1980; Feldman,1990; Case,1996; Moore,2000; Valentine, 2001; Holloway & Hubbard, 2001; Holloway *et al.,* 2003; Mallett, 2004; Blunt and Varley, 2004; Blunt, 2005; Blunt and Bowling, 2006; Azmi and Lund, 2010). From the available literature, one can assume that the concept of home is endowed with powerful meanings including meanings attached to a place and a sense of belonging. The meaning given to home both as a place and a sense of belonging by Mallet (2004) and Blunt and Dowling (2006) influence the theoretical perspective of this chapter. Mallet (2004) discusses the meaning of home within various social sciences. She has reviewed various literature on home and finds that home is variously conflated with or related to house, family, self, gender, and migration. She also points out home is about 'place' and 'belonging'. Blunt and Dowling (2006) also identify the geographical explanation of home with the help of two key elements: place (a physical location) and a set of feelings (sense of belonging) which are relational. They also insist 'the defining feature of home is that it is both material and imaginative' (Blunt, 2005; Blunt and Dowling 2006 :p.22). They highlight that 'imaginaries of home can be connected to numerous places'. Therefore, when people are talking about 'home; it can be about a place or their sense of 'belonging'.

While acknowledging the above scholarly contribution, the theoretical discussion in this chapter highlights the importance of the concepts of place and belonging in geography and sociology

which is useful to expand our understanding of the meaning of home. The following section draws on the geography literature concerning 'place' and sociological literature on 'belonging' to expand the understanding of home from both material and non-material perspective.

In everyday life the concept of place is often used synonymously with location, point, area or space (Agnew, 1987). From a geographical perspective, place is not necessarily an officially recognized geographic entity, but instead may be a site of intersecting social relations and collective meaning (Johnston et al., 2006: p.582). Geographers' academic interest has long been based on exploring the role, relations and influence of place on human life (Holloway and Valentine, 2003; Holloway and Hubbard 2001; Anderson and Jones, 2009). Place as a socio-cultural construct has been researched in relation to its impact on various aspects of people's lives. Particularly, Tuan (1974) and Relph (1976) identify the importance of place in forming identity and emotions. Displacement may invoke an emotional place attachment, and the creation and recreation of places. Thus place is seen as a dynamic construct that is historically produced in social, economic, and political processes (Tuan, 1977; Tuan, 1980; Massey, 1995; Massey, 1997). This implies that places are continuously attributed with meaning. In the context of this research, as places may have changed with time and war, it can be argued that the decision to return to their places of origin is highly influenced by past and present social and emotional experiences attached to the places of origin.

The literature on the concept of 'belonging' mainly comes from Refugee Studies, Gender Studies, Anthropology, Geography and Sociology. From a sociological view point, Yuval-Davis identifies that 'belonging' is constructed at three analytical levels: social locations (constructed along different power axes, for instance, gender, class and ethnicity); individuals' identifications and emotional attachments (for example, narratives about who you are

and where you belong), and ethics and political value systems by which people judge their own and others. These three analytical levels are important for the understanding of belonging. While simplifying the notion of belonging, she further claims that people's self-identity becomes more dominant when they are threatened or when they feel less secure. Therefore, the analytical categories she identifies are not merely three different analytical levels but also a reflection of emotions and attachment of people to a place, or a community. In a protracted displacement context the question of belonging at all three levels identified above may be confusing and ambiguous. However, the struggle over belonging is not static, and therefore it is continuously negotiated (Yuval-Davis 2006: p. 199).

Research Area

The study is mainly based on fieldwork carried out in Al-Manara, IDP camp in the Mandalakkudha GN division of Kalpitiya, in the district of Puttalam. According to statistics available from the DS office Kalpitiya in 2009, Mandalakkudha GN division which is nearly one kilometre away from the Kalpitiya town has ten IDP camps. These camps were established since 1997. The research was conducted in Al-Manar IDP camp, which mainly consisted of people displaced from Thalai Mannar pier. There are 332 families living in this camp. During the field-visits it was observed that the Al-Manar camp is becoming crowded due to an increasing number of people and houses.

In terms of economic activities, IDPs are mainly engaged in fishing[6], labour work, retail trade, and a few people who have migrated to Middle East countries for employment. Young married and unmarried women have migrated to Middle Eastern countries to support their families. Some IDPs also go back to their places of

[6] Fishing and related activities are done as part time jobs by IDP men and women due to limited access to fishery resources. For a detail discussions see Brun (2008; pp. 214-241)

origin as seasonal labourers in fishing. There are small numbers of people engaged in government sector employment. As experienced fishermen, the IDPs are worried about the denial of access to fisheries and aquatic resources. Employment opportunities are shrinking for the second generation IDPs.

The resource exhausted IDP community in the study area does not possess enough resources to educate their children. The host community is also ill equipped to cater to the needs of IDPs. Education of children is also hampered due to poverty. As a result private tuitions are inaccessible to the majority of the students. In terms of state education, there is only one school in Manadalakkudha GN division, which has classes up to GCE (O/L). This school was constructed in 2008 targeting mainly the IDP children. During the informal discussions, it was revealed that the school is understaffed and experiencing severe resource constraints. Students face serious problems in continuing the Advanced Level studies. Further, due to poverty and in order to assist their parents in income earning opportunities, IDP children tend to abandon their education at early ages.

Methodology

This study gathered qualitative data from different sources as the primary method of data collection. It began with a thorough literature review and personal observation during the field visits. As the central focus of the research study is internally displaced people and their sense of belonging in the context of government initiated resettlement programmes, in-depth interviews were selected as the main research technique. The research relied on snowball sampling to identify potential interviewees who can be classified as second generation IDPs. In this study the first-generation refers to persons who were adults or young adults during the time of expulsion from the north (1990) and the second-generation refers to the children

who were below the age of ten during the time of expulsion. In total eight second generation IDPs were interviewed as six males and two females. Except for two males, the rest of the interviewees were married and had children. Interviewees ranged in age from 25-32. The only criterion for those interviewed was that they had been below ten years during the time of exile. This specific criterion had been deemed necessary in order to more effectively explore and analyse the sense of belonging among IDPs over time.

During the interviews, the interviewees shared their experiences, feelings, thoughts, reflections and personal information with the researcher. Recorded interviews were later transcribed. Narratives of interviewees were analysed thematically. The narrative extracts in the sections that follow come from in-depth interviews recorded during the field work. The names of the interviewees have been changed in the study as they requested anonymity. Finally, a number of informal interviews were conducted with senior citizens to get more information.

Narrating Belongings

In this section the chapter focuses in particular on how the second generation IDPs conceptualize home, place and negotiate belonging when the government is encouraging them to return to the north of Sri Lanka, the area considered by the older generation as their place of origin.

Home is a Place

Mahir who is 28 years came to Kalpitiya as a child and had his two children here. His mother and other close relatives are keen to go back to Mannar. But he feels Mannar would be a new place to him. When asked, 'Where do you think your home is?' Mahir responded:

Mannar is my home though it is going to be a new place for me. I don't remember many things about my village except my home, school and class mates whom I used to play around with. My father owned two boats and we were in a good position in the society. We had a large home which I still miss. I came to know it is not there anymore. I was nine when we came here. After three years I lost my father. My education was interrupted and I have to go with my mother for coolie work since I was 12. At first it was difficult to do something like that. But I had six mouths to feed. I was the eldest in the family and I decided to support my mother. My three sisters and brother went to school. They did well in their studies. Life was extremely hard for our family at the initial year of displacement. We lived in a camp, then in a temporary house and finally we bought this land and built a house. Whenever I moved from one place to another, I used to think about the home we had in Mannar. I have been living in this house for six years. But my heart says it is not yours. Since the end of the war people are slowly moving back to Mannar and I feel like going there.

Mahir, 28

As a displaced child when Mahir started his life in Kalpitiya, the loss of his father forced him to face a set of choices and dilemmas in relation to his future and his family. This might definitely be a negative experience for Mahir. With his mother he had helped to support his family and now he seems happy. In the displacement context, the home that IDPs left may no longer exist as almost all physical property and infrastructure has been razed to the ground due to violence. However, as Mahir shows, some may still have fond memories of home due to which he does not consider Kalpitiya, the present place of residence, as his home.

Sameena is 32 and a housewife having three school going children. I could only meet her after four in the afternoon. When I asked her where her home is. She said:

I am looking forward to going home. But I know that our home is not there anymore. My parents told me everything is destroyed there. If we can get assistance from the government we can rebuild our home in the same place. I am not sure whether we will be able to get the same land. But the place we live is Mannar. Therefore we can live anywhere there. Return to Mannar means returning to my home. I have very good memories of the home we had there. If we can get the same land, we would be able to rebuild our home. We had everything from fish to fruits and vegetables. We didn't buy many things from shops. Here we have to buy everything and during the early years in Kalpitiya, I felt shame to buy 250 grams of ladies fingers or drumsticks....we never bought these things at shops when we were there.

Sameena, 32

For Sameena return to home is not exactly return to the home of origin as the latter could now be in ruins, nevertheless, she is happy about going back. Her view suggests that people's sense of belonging to a place is reflected through how they see their own home that once existed. The way of living in the place of resettlement is established by looking back to how life used to be in the place of origin with particular reference to life styles, livelihoods, customs and social relations (Anderson and Jones, 2009). The places they once inhabited hold the deepest meanings and is the focus for very strong sentimental and emotional attachments, as Relph (1976: p.43) puts: "there is for virtually everyone a deep association with and consciousness of the places where we were born and grew up, where we live now, or where we have had particularly moving experiences. This association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security". This can be related to the story of Sameena who ascribes a strong Mannar belonging despite the length of the time spent in displacement in Kalpitiya. Her narrative also reveals that Mannar as a representation of home has not diminished in the

minds of some second generation IDPs. After all these years in exile their sense of home and place is strongly associated with memory and loss.

Home is a Known Place

Sabir is a school teacher teaching mathematics at a local school in Kalpitiya. He earns a good income from evening private tuition classes in addition to his limited income as a teacher. When asked whether his home is Kalpitiya or Mannar, he said:

> *No... I belong to Kalpityia. My home now is Kalpitiya. We had many difficulties when we arrived here. But our family is very happy here now. If we go back, we do not know how our lives will be. Well, I mean, in Kalpitiya you can live, you feel yourself safe, you have everything. So I feel home here. In Mannar you don't know what the future is hiding for you. Have you heard a proverb 'a known devil is better than an unknown angel*
>
> Sabir, 29

For Sabir, who is 29 and has lived in Kalpitiya for nearly 22 years, Mannar no longer represents home. He hardly has any memories of the place his family lived in once. He calls Kalpitiya his home as he has very good memories about it. From Sabir's story we can understand that the passage of time can be a crucial factor when it comes to the meaning of home which can change the reason of the decision to return. Thus, like Sabir, some second generation IDPs may not want to return to a home they know little about or they hardly remember. Displacement affects individuals and groups in profound ways so that the meaning of home is often changed (Brun, 2001). At the same time Sabir's decision to stay in Kalpitiya could also be influenced by economic benefit which is not easily available in Mannar.

Home is Where Your Family is

Ayesha 28 years old is married to a person originally from Kalpitiya. She now lives in a newly built separate house with her husband. Her family lives in another house. When I asked where her home is, she explained:

> *I think that despite my place of origin, I can't just say that Kalpitiya means nothing to me... I grew up here and I have all family and friends here... All that my family achieved by hard and difficult work took place over here. Even my marriage took place here. Kalpitiya is now part of me. No close relatives of mine decided to move to Mannar. All of them are living here.*
>
> Ayesha, 28

The reason she gives is that her close kin do not live there anymore and that there is no tangible base to return to Mannar. In order to discuss the issue of belonging upon post-war return, it is obviously necessary not only to focus on the personal lives of the returnees, but also to include their everyday interaction with other people – often those people who chose to stay put when others left. These meanings are constantly being evaluated and redefined in the light of changing social and physical relationships with place. For Ayesha, the main reason to think Kalpitiya as her home is related to the fact that all her family and friends live there. For her, family and friends are synonymous with home and necessary features of the meaning of home.

Home as a Place of Continuity and Belonging

The researcher met Zavahir in one of his relatives' place in Kalpitiya. He had brought some dried fish from Mannar to sell to a local shop which he does once a fortnight. When I asked Zavahir where he thinks his home is. He said:

> *I have been living here since we were forced to leave Mannar. I have been to my home town a few times even during the war. It is because of my emotional attachment to our place. Our family lived in Mannar happily and we were rich at that time. Our expulsion and the hardships we underwent here (Kalpitiya) is now a dream for me. I want to forget that bad dream. More than losing our properties, leaving Mannar was extremely hard for me even as a child. I thought we would return soon. It took nearly 20 years to breathe freely in Mannar. My home is in Mannar and I am proud to be from there as I have recognition and I know each and every corner of my village. After all, you are not looked down upon or called as refugee there (Mannar). Having a house or job in Kalpitiya is not a big thing. But when your dignity is challenged and whenever you feel you are not part of them...you do not want to stay here. I think my choice is good. I am a person who is appreciating best of both places. It has become a survival strategy. You know in a way I can live in both places, yet, still identify myself as a person who belongs to Mannar.*
>
> Zavahir, 32

I find Zavahir's narrative very interesting as it provided interesting conceptualizations about home and place and how he negotiates belonging. Zavahir calls Mannar his home. Because, he has very good memories about the years he lived in that place where his mother, sister and friends still live. Like Case (1996) points out, the concept of home gains meaning through being away from home. Zavahir's words, "Leaving Mannar was extremely hard for me even as a child" emphasises that loss of place tends to provoke

strong social and psychological responses precisely because it entails a loss of self even for a child. Arguably, Zavahir visited his home in Mannar even during the war because of the meaning and attachment he had towards his home of origin. Although the bond between him and his place came under threat during the war, the end of the war has provided him with the opportunity to go back to his home.

Zavahir's narrative also highlights the fact that the sense of belonging has an important influence on an individual's or community's decision to return or reintegrate. Belonging is connected with a set of relationships - to belong to a place means to belong to the (dominant) people there. The feeling of not belonging can result from the loss of a familiar place or loss of a role in a social group like in the case of Zavahir. He thinks the host community does not see IDPs as one of them. Zavahir values dignity and recognition which, according to him, is not possible to get in Kalpitiya for an IDP. Like Yuval-Davis (2006) has shown in her analysis of 'belonging', Zavahir says that "after all, you are not looked down upon or called as refugee there (Mannar)", indicating that 'individuals identifications and emotional attachments' make it difficult for IDPs to belong truly in the host community and for the host community to accept IDPs belonging to their community. Therefore, the extent to which the idea of belonging has taken root in IDPs hearts and minds is an important factor when decisions regarding return and resettlement are taken.

Home is Where I can Make a Living

The researcher met Ismail at his home when he came home to have his lunch. He said he was busy as he undertook the responsibility to stitch some frocks for a Montessori concert. Despite his busy schedule, he allocated an hour to the interview. When the researcher asked where his home is:

Well, I have been living in this place for nearly twenty two years. I feel home here. I will not go back to Mannar again. I am happy where I am now. It doesn't matter where you live. But what you do and earn matters a lot. I am a tailor and I have lots of customers here. Most of them are youths. I know that I am popular among them as I go with the fashions they want. They don't see me like an IDP. May be their parents have this in their minds, but the young people do not bother about it. All what matters for me is to run my family, which I think is not possible if I move back to Mannar.

Ismail, 31

Ismail's story shows how people may actively work to 'fit in' to the host society by adopting various strategies. He is afraid that in Mannar he will not be able to earn an income that is sufficient to support his family. Ismail's construction of home is strongly linked to economic opportunities which are important for survival.

As home is a term linked with personal meanings, in the above accounts, different people understand home to mean different things at different times and in different contexts. While some respondents reinforce and preserve the attachment to their homes (place/belongings) in their places of origin, others try to create their homes in host communities.

Negotiating Resettlement

Rafeek is 25 years old and came to Puttalam when he was just three years.

Home: An Unknown Place

When my parents speak about Mannar, it is about Mannar in the 1990s and before that. They conveyed these images upon us. But in the meantime a war of more than 30 years has destroyed everything there. I have seen this over TV and read about it in newspapers. It has to be completely different now. It cannot be the same place my parents talk about. I have never gone to Mannar. I hardly remember anything about it. But my parents want to go back. They do not listen to me. I have my friends here both locals and IDPs. I am working in a computer shop. The Government also forces us to leave...I can't even imagine a life there. But you know my father has changed his registration to Mannar and we are not getting any government assistance here. My father and brother go to Mannar to get the rations and come back. But they are disappointed as they can't continue to do so and now they are firm on going back. When we go back home, wouldn't we be strangers in our own place? If they move to Mannar, I may stay here with a friend or relative. I have lot of friends here. My parents think their home is Mannar but I can't. Sometimes I get confused. How can you say you belong to Mannar when you do not even remember it?

Rafeek, 25

Displacement and conflict have had varying impacts on the different generations. In many ways the elderly suffer the impact of displacement most acutely. They remember the way of life in Mannar before they were evicted, often with fond memories. They are the 'flag bearers' who both represent the culture that has been lost and serve as Mannar's unrecognized historians, who can pass on stories and a way of life to younger generations in a culture built on oral tradition. As the years pass by, the older people may no longer be there to pass on the way of life they have known and lived. At the same time for children, displacement is a way of life. Most will be unable to remember a time they lived in Mannar

like Rafeek. Stories told by their parents give them a sense of a place which no longer exists. In Rafeek's case media has given a different picture of Mannar which is different from his parents view (what Mannar is now and what it used to be). Therefore, he is not ready to go to an unknown place. Some second generation IDPs like Rafeek who have grown up with two different social and environment systems (host community and home) appear reluctant to return to Mannar. Rafeek is struggling with the issue of belonging and the question of where his home is. From the interview, the study could understand he has adapted to the host society and prefers integration. His parents who are from the first generation are exploring the feasibility of return. But for him return would mean a new uprooting. Rafeek's case is also an example to highlight how age at displacement is a crucial factor regarding the decision to return or remain.

Home is Your Root

When asked whether Jabbar is willing to go back to Mannar:

> *I want to go back and repair my home. I have a home here in Kalpitiya also. I think it is all about time ... as you are here longer you get used to it ... you like it because it is familiar ... I don't think I will ever know Mannar like here. But you know one should have their own roots and identity. It is because of this I want to renew my links with Mannar. I may not permanently settle down there. If the government is willing to help us to build our place again, I will build a house.*
>
> Jabbar, 27

Time and positive and/or memorable experiences in the host community (the new place) also can serve to influence the decision to return or reintegrate. Like in the case of Jabbar, for some people,

maintenance of a link with a specific place that has emotional significance provides a sense of continuity to their identity. Jabbar's narrative also reveals an interesting facet of the link between the individual and the place, that is, people and communities in situations of displacement can still ascribe to their place identities and lay claim to their homes in the places of origin while physically inhabiting another place.

Concluding Reflections

This paper explored the struggle for belonging of the second generation through how they construct home and negotiate resettlement. In doing so the paper explored meanings of home among IDPs living in Kalpitiya through the related concepts of place and belonging. Looking across informant's accounts of home it is possible to see that the meaning of home which is reflected through the concepts of place and belonging are important (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Respondents constructed and reconstructed the meaning of home depending on different priorities and experiences. The narratives also show that different meanings of home co-exist. The above analysis demonstrates the richness and complexity of the concepts of home, place and belonging in the context of resettlement. From the above accounts we can understand that the second generation IDPs construct home, place and belonging in different ways. Home, place and belonging are defined in terms of social relations, namely family ties and social networks, economic benefits and past memories of the places where IDPs lived.

As the case studies vividly show , displaced older generation as well as some of the younger generation IDPs feel emotionally attached to their homes in different ways. It is through which they identify themselves, and to which they would want to return. Yet, analysis of the interviews show attachment to home can differ under

certain circumstances elaborated above. Some second generation IDPs said that they would not want to return to an unknown place or a place they are not familiar with.

Narratives presented above show how people view return and reintegration and integration with the host community though the concept of home. Return, under a protracted displacement should be understood and handled carefully. Post-war return necessitates building up a life in an environment which was once familiar, but to which one is now a stranger. It is obvious that return cannot be another disaster. The home and place people were forced to leave behind does not exist anymore. Conflict has changed the social meaning of places once IDPs lived in. Further, experiences gained in host communities may positively or negative influence the meaning of home which has implications for return. An individual's identity is intimately connected with home, place and belonging.

Integration with the host community is preferred by some respondents. It is a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process between IDPs and host communities in which IDPs gradually become integrated members of society legally, economically and socially. This is clearly identified by Yuval- Davis (2006) when explaining belonging according to three different analytical levels. The social dimension of local integration utilizes social and cultural frameworks to enable IDPs to access and share resources as well as to participate in the social fabric of the community. Developing a sense of belonging may in the long run lead to better social cohesion and inclusion.

Accounts of people cited in this paper also bring out that fact that there are people caught in the decision to go or not to go. The narratives presented here suggest that second generation IDPs possess the views of both return and reintegration and integration with the host community. This complexity of attachment to home

and differing views about return and integration show that there should be special efforts to ensure the full participation of displaced persons in the planning and management of their own decisions regarding return. Although scholars have long assumed that it is always in the best interest of IDPs to resettle, evidence illustrated in this paper point that this is not always the case and therefore, the decision of the GOSL to resettle IDPs is a challenging issue and will need to be reviewed through identifying the nuances in people's perceptions towards return or integration. Research and scholarship show that understandings of the relationship between people, home, place, and belonging have influenced policy discussions and debates on finding durable solutions for IDPs in protracted displacement across the world. Therefore, it is vital that the government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) should recognize that, being given the opportunity to resettle is not sufficient for the people who are displaced.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to extend sincere thanks to the reviewer for constructive comments, and to the copy editor. The research financially benefitted from the University of Peradeniya Research Grant: Project- No RG/2011/14/A.

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Concluding Thoughts: Why Wounds of War in Sri Lanka Must be Openly Recognised and Explicitly Addressed: Some After Thoughts

Kalinga Tudor Silva

The preceding chapters in this book and some of the related academic publications that came out since the end of war have highlighted that the war has left some indelible marks and major ruptures in the society, psyche and political system of the country. As Suzie Beling of Transparency International cogently argued, "the end of the conflict has left us with many loose ends, people to resettle, wounds to heal, reconciliation and rehabilitation to be facilitated and the need for tangible means of redress that have suffered as a result of the war" (Beling 2010: 12). We can indeed question whether 2009 marked the end of the conflict or merely a particular phase of the conflict which was characterized by ruthless armed confrontation between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. The metaphor of wounds stresses the need for healing, but healing can be a natural process that happens automatically with no deliberate or carefully initiated efforts at healing as such. The metaphor itself implies that while minor wounds usually get healed naturally, serious wounds require therapeutic interventions. Similarly, while we clearly recognize that communities have an inherent capacity for resilience and recovery, for the most part the war-affected wounds that we identified and examined in this volume are not of a self-healing nature and they are likely to get worse if left unattended.

Yet who is indeed wounded, which of the severe wounds of the affected people require immediate and long-term attention and what can be done to facilitate the healing process are not immediately apparent. As elaborated by Uyangoda in this volume, the different

stakeholders in the Sri Lankan conflict, the Government of Sri Lanka, Tamil political parties, Tamil diaspora and the international community hold diverse and even conflicting perceptions and interpretations about each of these issues and, correspondingly the remedies needed to overcome them.

The multiple restrictions imposed by conflicting parties on critical social science research in the war-affected areas throughout the war and in the aftermath of the war have served to further complicate the picture and limit the capacity and potential of the research community to help evolve mutually acceptable remedies and broader policy frameworks that cover and respond to all parties who are wounded, all wounds that require urgent interventions and interventions that will be most effective. This has indeed made it possible for political leaders to drive partisan and ideologically motivated policies. Such policies have been implemented without questioning the underlying assumptions or seeking any validation from policy-oriented social science research.

Drawing on the contributions to this volume and the larger body of social science literature, this concluding chapter seeks to paint the larger picture and, thereby, expand our understanding of who is indeed wounded, which wounds still remain unattended or only partially attended to and what can be done to facilitate the healing process in ways that overcome the narrow ethnic solitudes which feed into mutual mistrust among ethnic communities and painful memories of the past, thereby opening seemingly healed wounds in some circumstances.

Who is Wounded by Whom and in What Ways?

Every war-affected community harbouring ethno-nationalist meta-narratives of historical injustice, hegemony and fear arguably may nurture the feeling that their wounds were inflicted by some hostile

ethnic other. In the north of Sri Lanka, irrespective of whether we are talking about Muslim IDPs in Kalpitiya, Tamil IDPs in Nedunkerny or Tamil and Muslim IDPs in Manthai West, whose narratives have been examined in various contributions to this volume, a similar picture is painted. The Muslim IDPs in Kalpitiya would see their wounds as those inflicted by the LTTE that ousted them from their original "homes" in the Northern Province and would even argue that their wounds were aggravated due to the step motherly treatment they received from the state and local "host communities". Similarly the IDPs in Nedunkerny would see themselves as victims of the Sri Lanka security forces particularly during the last phase of the war. On the other hand, a similar logic would prevail among inhabitants in Sinhala border villages who were subjected to ruthless LTTE attacks from time to time.

While all these claims and counterclaims have a substance of truth, what emerges from the studies reported in this volume is that the wounds inflicted by the war were multiplex and not necessarily intended in the way they actually affected and/or were perceived by the parties concerned. The research studies which ended up as the chapters of this volume bring to light that the wounds caused by the war can be seen at different levels: violence affected individuals as in the case of emotional disturbances reported by Usoof-Thowfeek and Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme and Lacasse; violence affected entire communities as in the case of community breakup described by Herath, or as in the case of the population dynamics and demographic distortions reported by Silva and the "collective trauma" of entire ethnic populations affected by the last phase of war as reported elsewhere by Somasundaram (2010a, 2010b). The wounds of the war are not only those ostensibly inflicted by others but also include those of a more insidious nature as evident from a number of contributions in this volume. For example notable male-female differences in wages in part

due to the changing demographic profile among the war survivors (Silva), intergenerational differences in perceptions of identity and ideas about whether they actually belong to Kalpitiya where they have been living since their displacement in the 1990s and ancestral villages in Mannar that were demolished by the war (Fazeeha Azmi), perceptions of low self-esteem (Usoof-Thowfeek) and high rates of alcoholism and suicide among resettling IDPs (Herath). Some of these are at least partly self-inflicted by the persons concerned, possibly in response to given circumstances. In other words detailed analysis and disaggregation of the wounds of war as undertaken in this volume indicate that these wounds have complex genealogies that problematise and question the stereotypical and ethnically articulated "epistemologies of suffering" noted by Uyanagoda.

The wounds of war are typically associated with "the vanquished in the war" to use terminology adopted by Uyanagoda. Many studies on Vietnam war veterans in the US, however, have challenged the view that soldiers are free from the psychosocial impact of the war (Haggerty 1991). Whether this is indeed the case in Sri Lanka requires further investigation. In spite of repeated and highly publicized official celebrations of war heroes (Ranaviru) in Sri Lanka since the end of war, soldiers do not appear to be immune to wounds of war. The ways in which the "winners" or "victors" of the Sri Lanka war suffer from wounds of the war becomes evident from media reports on the recent crime wave in southern Sri Lanka where persons connected with the security forces (currently serving or military deserters) have reportedly often been implicated in organized crime, hired assassinations and homicide of loved ones followed by suicide. This is indeed a highly sensitive area that perhaps reflects the fallout of the war beyond the conflict zone as such, which in turn may suggest that healing of wounds caused by the war is needed not only for the so-called 'losers', as it were, but also for the so-called 'winners' of the war whose, aggression

if not contained, may now be diverted to other potential targets. This in turn points to the need for further research on the wounds of war beyond the immediate theatre of war that received primary attention in the studies published in this volume.

War Trauma: Real or Imagined?

Some of the authors contributing to this volume (Usoof-Thowfeek, Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme and Lacasse) as well as others whose writings appear elsewhere such as Somasundaram (2010a, 2010b) in his extensive research on the psychosocial impact of the war identified clear signs of PTSD in the war-affected populations in Northern Sri Lanka. Somasundaram (2010a) identified it not so much as a psychic wound caused by the war at the individual level but as a collective phenomenon stemming from their repeated exposure to displacement and cycles of violence. Trauma is a hotly debated topic in psychiatry, psychology and anthropology (Young 1998, Fassin, Rechtman and Gomme 2009).Whether trauma is indeed universal as is assumed in psychiatry or merely a construct of Western psychiatry in its efforts to grapple with complex social and political realities using psychiatric concepts and categories has received considerable attention in the literature in recent years. Some have argued that trauma is actually an artefact of the measurements used and a "looping effect" of analysts searching for trauma following disasters of one kind or another (Hacking 1986).

According to Hacking, trauma is "an entirely new idea . . . closely connected with the soul, and which has radically transformed our sense or ourselves" (2002:18). Drawing on the work of anthropologist cum psychiatrist Allen Young, he shows how trauma is "rapidly absorbing all the symptom profiles of the old neuroses" (ibid). In short, the concept of "trauma", like that of "stress," resonates deeply with modern people, who find in it a concept

that accounts for much of their suffering. In paradigmatically Foucauldian fashion, the science of traumatology creates experts, who conduct research, and through a process of "looping" this research in turn affects our subjectivities, so that modern people increasingly experience themselves as "traumatize-able." In Hacking's view, the scientific validity of traumatology is not called into question: trauma is indeed a real, measurable, pathological condition. However since trauma has been created as a self-fulfilling prophesy due to a looping effect attributed to expert knowledge, in cultures which such knowledge has yet to penetrate trauma is unlikely to occur. In other words trauma may not be a universal phenomenon similar to other diseases.

While this debate is certainly relevant for assessing the psychosocial impact of the war in Sri Lanka, Somasundaram as well as Jayawickreme, Jayawickreme and Lacasse tend to highlight the cultural specificity of the so-called emotional disturbances attributed to war and other forms of mass violence.

What Should be Done?

On the whole the studies reported in this volume argue that rapid economic development and rebuilding of physical infrastructure damaged by war vigorously pursued by the Sri Lankan state alone cannot heal the multiple wounds caused by the war among parties to the conflict. Alongside economic development, targeted mental health services with widespread outreach and accessibility must be developed as a means to address the wounds caused by the war and related ailments. The state must clearly recognize the social and psychological impact of war and evolve policies and programmes for dealing with the relevant issues. Similarly, parallel developments in devolution of power are necessary in order to address root causes of the conflict and facilitate collective engagement of war-

affected people in the healing process. What is needed is not so much a unilateral emphasis imposed from outside on rebuilding war damaged physical infrastructure such as roads, harbours, hospitals and so on but a multipronged engagement where economic progress is accompanied by increased involvement of local communities in decision making at various levels and a process of community rebuilding. Whether or not a process of reconciliation along the lines of Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa is feasible or even necessary is questionable given the political reality of the country, the emergence of rival ethno-nationalisms and the cultural specificity of ideas on reconciliation, healing and admission of complicity and responsibility.

While recognizing the coping abilities and resilience of the communities in dealing with the impact of war, such inherent capabilities have largely eroded due to the widespread community breakup during the armed conflict as highlighted by Herath in this volume. The emergence of new religious cults such as the Amman cult has served to respond to the some of the emotional needs of families affected by death or disappearance of family members (Lawrance 1998, 1999). Similarly ethnicity itself may be seen as a means of articulating a sense of social and political exclusion on the basis of identity as elaborated by Uyangoda in this volume and therefore a way of conceptualizing collective wounds. At the same time ethnicity has been employed as a framework for mobilizing mutual support including remittances from diaspora in ways that cushion them against adverse impact of the war.

In terms of healing the wounds of war, here are some of the practical suggestions that can be made based on the studies reported in this volume:

1. In order to facilitate the healing process gradual withdrawal of security forces from the former war zone according to a suitable time frame.

2. Reorientation of any security forces remaining in the war zone for providing peace and security in war-ravaged communities. This re-orientation should change the security personnel from war mentality to peace mentality and involve enhanced public relations with local communities and a clear recognition of possible long-term effects of exposure to war in civilian population as well as in military personnel.

3. Increased recruitment of Tamil and Muslim persons as members of security forces serving in the Tamil-speaking areas.

4. Establishment of the Northern Provincial Council and conduct of peaceful and fair elections in order to elect the people's representatives for the North Central Province (NCP).

5. Augmenting of relevant psychiatric services in war and tsunami-affected populations. In bridging the gap between professional psychiatric services inclusive of community-based counselling and affected communities suitably trained volunteers may be engaged as contact persons. The training modules developed by the Social Networking and Counselling Project may be used in the training of volunteers with required modifications.

6. Carefully implemented cross visits and cultural exchanges between resettling IDPs in the North and East and communities in the South may be organized on a regular basis in order to promote mutual understanding and eliminate ethnic biases and prejudices among ethnically divided and polarized communities.

7. A host family scheme may be organized in selected households in the South particularly for young people affected by war. Proposed measures and under 6 and 7 require the intervention of relevant government and civil society organizations.

8. The positive role that religion can play in facilitating peace and mutual understanding as well as recovery from emotional disturbances in war-affected populations must be carefully identified and promoted.

9. Policy-oriented and neutral social science research must be promoted in war-affected areas with a view to identifying ways and means of facilitating recovery, reconciliation and normalisation of life after long exposure to war and ethnic tension.

10. The education policies and programmes in the country must be critically examined and reorganized in ways that contribute towards promoting peace, harmony and mutual understanding among socially, culturally and ethnically polarized communities in various parts of Sri Lanka as is also proposed by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission.

Each of these proposed measures require further discussion and informed policy debates among key decision makers in the government and civil society organizations in the country which we hope will be inspired by the publication of this volume.

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About the Book

Rebuilding the war-ravaged communities in Sri Lanka and healing the conflict survivors who continue to suffer from the wounds of the war present a major challenge for Sri Lankan society as it embarks on post-war reconstruction. While considerable progress has already been made regarding resettlement of IDPs and rebuilding physical infrastructure, corresponding efforts to rebuild the communities and heal the social and emotional wounds of the war have been lacking. Based on research conducted among the affected populations, this volume makes a strong case for addressing the root causes of the war and rebuilding the war-torn communities with a view to achieving demilitarization, sustainable peace and human development.

Editors

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ISBN 978-9-55-580132-4

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