Local Conditions on the Universal Liberal Peace: Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This paper examines the Western experience of liberal peacebuilding in Sri Lanka during and after the three decade long civil war. It is recognised that the peacebuilding undertaken in Sri Lanka was 'emancipatory' in nature, in that it did not involve military coercion by the peacebuilders at any point; due to the existence of a robust state, the peacebuilders focused on harnessing individual and local agency through the civil-society as a means of encouraging a bottom-up process that would influence the government to institutionalise minority rights, and thus cement a positive peace that reflected social justice. The Sri Lankan case is indicative of the complex contexts that contemporary peacebuilding operates in, and is ostensibly, ill-equipped to transform on account of internal lacunae in the liberal peacebuilding discourse. Two such assumptions that the failure of liberal emancipatory peacebuilding in Sri Lanka brings into question is - first, the 'linearity' of the discourse in conceptualising greater agency of internationals in shaping post-conflict contexts due to the lack of agency in the 'local.' Second, the romanticised and limited view of the 'local' that is at the centre of ideas about including and harnessing the 'local' in the liberal peace project. Focusing on the peacebuilding work by ethical-principled donors in Sri Lanka highlights how in cases of friction between the local and the global liberal peace project, local actors at different levels may have the greater agency and thus capacity to manipulate and impose conditions on internationals and their discourse; this is not only limited to organised opposition by the domestic elite, but also mass opposition by the very polity that the liberal peace seeks to transform.

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Introduction

For most observers, the 2009 military operation that ended the two decade long Sri Lankan civil War, famously labeled by President Rajapaksa as " the battle to defeat terrorism," marked the failure of the liberal peacebuilding project.[1] Also known as the 'Northern offensive,' the operation marked the Sri Lanka Army's (SLA) offensive against the separatist (LTTE), towards regaining control of the Northern Province, the Tamil heartland which had been the LTTE's stronghold during the 25 year civil war. The separatist group had been defeated and forced to retreat from the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka in July 2007, and the loss of the north meant a decisive victory for the SLA and their Commander-in-Chief, President Rajapaksa. What has been of continued embarrassment for proponents of international peacebuilding is that during the year and a half long military operation, the UN and other international humanitarian actors decided to withdraw from the contested territories, following the government's declaration that it could, 'no longer guarantee the safety of international staff.'[2]After successfully re-capturing the Northern Province, and thus decisively bringing the war to an end, the Sri Lankan government was emphatic that the end of the civil war had been made possible despite the intensive decade long international peacebuilding involvement in the region. As President Rajapaksa in his now famous victory speech to the Sri Lankan parliament on 19th May 2009 stated, "We do not have the time to be experimenting with the solutions suggested by other countries. Therefore, it is necessary that we find a solution that is our very own, of our own nation (...) We expect cooperation for it from the international community and not obstruction. Should the international community doubt our capability to find such a solution, when we have successfully overcome a challenge that that the world was unable to achieve? No. We can achieve this."[3]

This final military operation which established the Rajapaksa government's 'Victor's Peace,' came at the heels of one of the most internationalised peace-negotiations in the post Cold War contexts, and has been a subject of much policy debate in the international community. Most of these have focused on the Sri Lankan case as an example that the larger international project of liberal peacebuilding, which emerged following the end of the Cold War, is in crisis and that there is a need to revisit this viability of this discourse.[4] It was not only

[1]Mahinda Rajapaksa. *'Our Aim Was to Liberate Our Tamil People from the Clutches of the LTTE' President*. May 2009. URL: `http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=20090519_04`.

[2]Secretary-General's Internal Review Pane). *Secretary General's Internal Review Panel on United Nations Action in Sri Lanka*. Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), 2012, (pp. 17).

[3]Rajapaksa, *'Our Aim Was to Liberate Our Tamil People from the Clutches of the LTTE' President*.

[4]Jonathan Goodhand, Bart Klem, et al. *Aid, Conflict, and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka, 2000-2005*. 1. Asia Foundation Colombo ; A report prepared for the World Bank, DFID, the Netherlands Embassy and SIDA, 2005; Jonathan Goodhand and Oliver Walton. "The limits of liberal peacebuilding? International engagement in the Sri Lankan peace process". In: *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 3.3 (2009), pp. 303–323; Sarah Holt. *Aid, peacebuilding and the resurgence of war: buying time in Sri Lanka*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011; Kristine Höglund and Camilla Orjuela. "Friction and the pursuit of justice in post-war Sri Lanka". In: *Peacebuilding* 1.3 (2013), pp. 300–316; Kristian Stokke and Jayadeva Uyangoda.

the inability of the Western governments to bring about a negotiated peace, but specifically, the domestic backlash against the political solutions that would lead to the liberal peace, that fed into this skepticism about the efficacy of liberal peacebuilding.[5] The nature of liberal peacebuilding in Sri Lanka had been distinctly different from the oft cited examples like Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Kosovo that are characterised by an exercise of coercion by peacebuilders, in the form of heavy military involvement. Within Heathershaw's framework, peacebuilding carried out in the Sri Lankan context, with a well-functioning state and political system, was 'emancipatory' and motivated by the specific interpretation of liberal peace as 'justice;' peacebuilders had focused on circumventing the government to socially mobilise a just peace, as opposed to confronting the state and instituting top-down norms.[6] This is different from the notion of peace as 'order,' starting with the enforcement of basic security, which characterises more orthodox peacebuilding as has taken place in Afghanistan and Iraq. Most Western policy assessments that guided the work of peacebuilding practitioners and donors during the conflict characterised the Sri Lankan conflict as a state formation conflict, which has evolved beyond its trigger based on minority grievances.[7] The post-independence Sri Lankan state had retained the centralised state structure of the colonial era, at the center of which was the Sinhalese-Buddhist majoritarian identity. The conflict was thus viewed as a continuous struggle between the Sinhalese majority and the ethnic minorities for the reconstruction of the post colonial Sri Lankan state. Informed by this analysis, the conflict then reflected these demands for restructuring, through a struggle between the three parallel state formation projects of the Sinhalese, Tamils, and the Muslims. The Sinhalese state formation project seeks to protect and maintain the post colonial unitary state while the Tamil state formation project seeks regional statehood or separate statehood. The Muslim state formation claims to respond to the conflict between the Sinhalese and Tamil contest for state power.[8] As a result, the focus of peacebuilding in Sri Lanka was to institute a 'just' peace by transforming attitudes and sources of grievance among these competing factions. It was hoped that this grass-root transformation would pressure the government to address these root causes by undertaking state-reforms that devolved power away from the center and created more inclusive federal power sharing structures.[9] The key focus of peacebuilding

Liberal peace in question: politics of state and market reform in Sri Lanka. Anthem Press, 2011; Oliver Walton. "Between war and the liberal peace: The politics of NGO peacebuilding in Sri Lanka". In: *International Peacekeeping* 19.1 (2012), pp. 19–34.

[5] Walton, "Between war and the liberal peace: The politics of NGO peacebuilding in Sri Lanka".

[6] John Heathershaw. "Unpacking the liberal peace: The dividing and merging of peacebuilding discourses". In: *Millennium-Journal of International Studies* 36.3 (2008), pp. 597–621.

[7] Goodhand, Klem, et al., *Aid, Conflict, and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka, 2000-2005*; Jayadeva Uyangoda. "Ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka: changing dynamics". In: (2007).

[8] Jayadeva Uyangoda. "Government–LTTE Peace Negotiations in 2002–2005 and the Clash of State Formation Projects". In: *Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka: Caught in the Peace Trap* (2011), pp. 16–38.

[9] Oliver Walton. "Conflict, peacebuilding and NGO legitimacy: National NGOs in Sri

then, was to develop local capacities and agency through a consensual process, effectively categorising it as a fourth-generation approach that was concerned with emancipation and social justice beyond the state.

The employment of this emancipatory gradient had emerged as a consequence of circumstances, rather than conscious design. The peacebuilding project in Sri Lanka had not been a consistently unanimous 'Western' project; only a specific group of Western states had consistently worked during the conflict to 'build' a liberal peace.[10] Away from the realm of rhetoric, there has been a distinct divide in how Western states have worked with or against the Sri Lankan government during and after the conflict on the issue of building a positive peace. The Department for International Development's (DFID) Strategic Conflict Assessment in the year 2000 identifies that among the existing three types of bilateral donors, peacebuilding work had been led by one specific group.[11] The first category contains donor like Japan and Korea, which provided a substantial portion of aid to Sri Lanka and worked "around" conflict by focusing on 'neutral' development issues; this often backfired and even reinforced ethnic differences. The second category was donors that work "in conflict." Among these donors, there was an institutional recognition that the conflict was an issue and need to be taken into account to some degree in aid planning, so as to minimise conflict-related risks. This group typically included larger Western donors like the US, Australia and Canada, who only expressly began engaging with conflict during the peace-negotiations period of 2000-2005. Lunstead, in his discussion on the nature of superpower engagement in Sri Lanka, highlights that the immediate trigger for intensive Western superpower engagement in Sri Lanka from 2001 onwards was the post 9/11 agenda which advocated the simultaneous pursuit of conflict resolution, liberal democracy and market sovereignty.[12] The short-lived Sri Lankan peace-process period from 2000-2005 is thus recognised as being emblematic of the growing number of experiments in 'liberal peacebuilding', which had intensified in the post 9/11 security environment. For larger Western donors, this meant breaking away from the traditional model of development aid, where conflict regions were perceived as the domain for 'neutral' relief work alone, and exploring potential linkages and sites of operation for development aid in conflict, towards building this liberal peace.[13]

The last group, which has long self-identified itself as the 'Coalition of Like-Minded,' (CLM) consists of bilateral donors like Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands, who have had a longer history in their bilateral

Lanka 1: Analysis". In: *Conflict, Security & Development* 8.1 (2008), pp. 133–167.

[10] Goodhand and Walton, "The limits of liberal peacebuilding? International engagement in the Sri Lankan peace process".

[11] Jonathan Goodhand. "Conflict Assessments". In: *A Synthesis Report: Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Nepal and Sri Lanka, Centre for Defense Studies King's College, University of London* (2001). URL: http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0708/DOC21465.pdf.

[12] Jeffrey Lunstead. "The United States and Sri Lanka1". In: *Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka: Caught in the Peace Trap?* (2010), p. 54.

[13] Joanna Macrae and Adele Harmer. "Beyond the continuum: an overview of the changing role of aid policy in protracted crises". In: *Harmer and Macrae (eds). ODI, July, London* (2004).

engagement with the Sri Lankan conflict, including frequent consultations and attempts to negotiate with the government towards a power-sharing solutions even during the early years of the conflict, and through the 1990s.[14] Focusing on issues of judicial reform, human rights and conflict resolution this group of donors expressly developed programmes to reduce or manage conflict, and promote long term reconciliation. In other accounts, this group of donors have also been described as 'ethical-principled' donors, on account of the fact that they lack of obvious strategic interests in the country, but focus on issues of peace and development based on the rationale of moral obligation and solidarity in the international system.[15] As a group, they are also recognised as being in favour of more bottom-up approaches to external intervention, both on moral grounds of respecting state sovereignty, and establishing an international democratic liberal order.[16]

In the post-war context, this group continued to propagate the view that aid has the potential for inducing change, including state reform through greater democratisation. Despite the decisive end to the conflict, there were concerns about the direction and the translation of this Victor's Peace to a durable positive peace; from a Galtungian perspective and located in the discourse of liberal peace, the military conflict had only served to create a negative peace, in terms of an absence of violence due to the elimination of the opposition, the LTTE.[17] However, a positive peace, which is constructed as the core of the liberal peacebuilding paradigm, would require an addressing of the core socio-political elements, biases and divides that had caused and perpetuated the ethnic conflict for decades. From 2009 onwards, while some donor agencies from this group like the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Dutch Technical Corporation closed operations in Sri Lanka, these countries continued to be engaged in peacebuilding processes by setting up funding mechanisms for CSOs and INGOs via their embassies.[18] From 2009-2011, along with these embassies other agencies like the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) continued to provide aid that focused on five issue areas: (i) human rights and accountability; (ii) reconciliation and social integration; (iii) governance, democracy and the political settlement; (iv) development and reconstruction; (v) conflict

[14] Jonathan Goodhand. "Sri Lanka: NGOs and peace-building in complex political emergencies". In: *Third World Quarterly* 20.1 (1999), pp. 69–87.

[15] Alberto Alesina and David Dollar. "Who gives foreign aid to whom and why?" In: *Journal of economic growth* 5.1 (2000), pp. 33–63.

[16] Alex J Bellamy and Paul D Williams. "The West and contemporary peace operations". In: *Journal of Peace Research* 46.1 (2009), pp. 39–57.

[17] Jonathan Goodhand, Jonathan Spencer, and Benedikt Korf. *Conflict and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka: caught in the peace trap?* Routledge, 2011.

[18] During interviews, it was also indicated that there are a series of 'anonymous' funding mechanisms that local CSOs and NGOs can apply to. As a practice, one of the example of the institutionalization of this practice can be seen by the EU and its European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (EIDHR) that was set up with the intention of supporting local groups, "without the agreement of the governments of third countries." http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/eidhr_en.htm

sensitivity.[19]Their strategy has been perceived as one that is in opposition to the Sri Lankan state, as it focuses on mobilising the masses and civil society to place checks on those in power. It was initially criticised by more pragmatically inclined donors as being to simplistic and confrontational, as it is seen to not adequately leverage the potential of back-door channels, as is preferred by the larger donors.

There was also a question of the strategy's efficacy: from 2006 onwards, the work done by the CLM donors and peacebuilding had come to be 'dirty words,' which faced repeated public backlash, similar to those seen in contexts where more orthodox peacebuilding had been employed.[20] The domestic civil-society had visibly turned hostile to the peacebuilders' agenda, and worked to distance themselves from political solutions advocated by the internationals. In the aftermath of the conflict, despite the persistence of peacebuilders led by this group of donors, involvement in the domestic arena and on the ground seemed as problematic as ever. By 2012, just as larger Western donors broke away from the pragmatic wait-and-watch policy that the group adopted for the first three years after the end of the war, the CLM donors were parallely 'winding down' peacebuilding work on the ground. This was marked by departure of NORAD, DFID, the Dutch Technical Cooperation and the French Development Agencies by late 2011, and a closing of civil society or governance issues based funding from the embassies. At the time that research for this thesis was being conducted, high level sources in the SDC, Norwegian Embassy and GIZ confirmed that they expected to end operations by 2015, effectively reflecting an end to the emancipatory peacebuilding these donors had funded for the past two decades.[21]

Based on this trend of withdrawal by peacebuilders, central research question of this thesis seeks to address is:

> Why after decades of local engagement towards emancipatory civil peacebuilding, did the group of 'like-minded' donors wind-down their peacebuilding operations in the post-conflict period?

There is a distinct paradox in the way this group of donors have pursued their goal of peace as justice against larger international developments: Globally, there has been a renewed political momentum from 2011 towards condemning the lack of progress made by the GoSL in addressing war atrocities and devolving power, as is highlighted by the Secretary-General's Panel of Experts Report of 2011 and United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Resolution 19/12. This momentum came from larger bilateral Western donors who have tended to link their aid to commercial or strategic security interests and for whom it was strategically relevant that the Sri Lankan government had a growing alliance

[19]Goodhand, Spencer, and Korf, *Conflict and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka: caught in the peace trap?*

[20]Oliver Walton and Pakiasothy Saravanamuttu. "In the Balance? Civil society and the peace process 2002-2008". In: *Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka: Caught in the Peace Trap?* (2011).

[21]Interviews with Colombo based policy-makers from the SDC, GIZ, NORAD, EU Representation to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Swiss Embassy, and UNDP

with more 'illiberal' non-traditional donors like China, Iran and Russia, which allowed it to defy Western pressures and even undercut commercial Western interests. In contrast, CLM donors have either withdrawn to the sidelines or have focused on 'normalising' relations with the government, effectively signaling that the peacebuilding baton would be dropped.[22]

In order to unpack this research problem, two sets of research questions were relevant:

1. Why were the peacebuilders in Sri Lanka unsuccessful: what were the fundamental internal inconsistencies in the peacebuilding project that led to its unpreparedness for the Sri Lankan context?

2. Second, what were the specific domestic conditions, processes and actors that directly and adverse impacted the peacebuilding project? Theoretically, what does this response to peacebuilding bring into focus about the liberal peacebuilding project?

The central argument of this thesis is as follows – In post-conflict Sri Lanka, the group of like-minded donors was forced to increasingly scale down civil peacebuilding due to the setting of conditionalities on their work by local actors, which led to a shrinking of humanitarian and policy space in which the peacebuilders could operate. An examination of two-way conditionality in bottom-up peacebuilding is juxtaposed against a critical theory exploration of peacebuilding which questions the 'linearity,' and normative framework of the civil peacebuilding discourse.[23][24] Based on this, the thesis highlights that local actors are adept at manipulating conditionalities in their favour, thus providing evidence to support the findings of an emerging critical literature on liberal peacebuilding interventions, which has placed emphasis on the role of domestic political actors in mediating the peacebuilding outcomes and dynamics of peacebuilding interventions.[25]It employs relatively recent analytical lens developed by Björkdahl and Höglund, that uses the concept of 'friction' to identify points when an external discourse is mediated by and between local actors.[26] The direction this friction will take - for, against, or partially accommodating of the global discourse - is dependent on vertical power relations between peacebuilders and

[22]Stokke and Uyangoda, *Liberal peace in question: politics of state and market reform in Sri Lanka*.

[23]Oliver P Richmond. "Critical agency, resistance and a post-colonial civil society". In: *Cooperation and conflict* 46.4 (2011), pp. 419–440.

[24]David Chandler. "Peacebuilding and the politics of non-linearity: rethinking 'hidden'agency and 'resistance'". In: *Peacebuilding* 1.1 (2013), pp. 17–32.

[25]Goodhand and Walton, "The limits of liberal peacebuilding? International engagement in the Sri Lankan peace process"; Jonathan Goodhand. "Stabilising a victor's peace? Humanitarian action and reconstruction in eastern Sri Lanka". In: *Disasters* 34.s3 (2010), S342–S367; Georg Frerks and Bart Klem. "Conditioning Peace among Protagonists. A Study into the Use of Peace Conditionalities in the Sri Lankan Peace Process". In: *The Hague: Clingendael Institute, fc* (2006); Stokke and Uyangoda, *Liberal peace in question: politics of state and market reform in Sri Lanka*.

[26]Annika Björkdahl and Kristine Höglund. "Precarious peacebuilding: friction in global–local encounters". In: *Peacebuilding* 1.3 (2013), pp. 289–299.

local populations, and also horizontal power relations between different local actors. Björkdahl and Höglund also provide a template of how different types of response to the friction can be categorised. Based on this framework, this thesis conducts a long-term analysis of how through a feed-back loop process, local rejection set stage for the option of a military victory, which in turn set stage for the government's co-option of the liberal peacebuilding process in the post-conflict era.

This thesis thus discusses two types of frictions and resultant conditionalities that emerged at different points but operated simultaneously in the post-conflict context : a long existing local rejection, coupled with the government's ability to impose structural limitations. The first conditionality is discussed as first having emerged from the vertical 'friction' between the global liberal peace project and the local populations during the peace negotiations era from 2000-2005. Contrary to accounts which focus on the public's rejection of the Norway mediated peace-negotiations in Sri Lanka as a phenomenon of "ethno-nationalist hysteria," this thesis highlights that the local resistance emerged primarily due to a friction between local and external visions of what a stable peace entailed : For peacebuilders it was located in a federal solution, which was supported by the domestic elite in power. For the local majority, it meant preventing the potential splitting of the state.[27] This local rejection of the Western peacebuilders support for a federal state that operated within the ethno-nationalistic framework in order to appeal to the masses, is analysed as a consequence of the peacebuilders unwillingness to engage with "non-liked minded" factions of the civil society. The local rejection inculcated a culture of self-censorship among potential local collaborators during the conflict period, thus creating effective limits or conditions on who the Coalition of Like-Minded donors can collaborate with. It also played a key role in bringing to power a government that was able to pursue a war for peace agenda, despite Western resistance to the project

Second, the end of the conflict in a military defeat drastically altered the domestic political dynamics in Sri Lanka. The Rajapaksa regime drew legitimacy from this Victor's Peace, and no longer required the support of local marginal political groups which had brought it to power. Demands from these groups were now seen as 'limiting' to the government's progress and pragmatism because of a horizontal friction between the national elite and local groups with regards to the potential Western involvement in the post-conflict processes in the country: While the local groups agitated for a complete rejection, the government was bound by pragmatic concerns and needed to seem more accommodating and respectful of international concerns. The resultant response to this friction is the Rajapaksa regime's focus on consolidating its position as the primary space for domestic agenda settings. Within the governments agenda, it is not against all Western donors, but only against the ethical-principled group, that constantly agitates and demands for the pursuance of peace as justice. Thus the government too has developed a state framework that imposes conditions

[27] David Rampton. "'Would the Real Dutugemunu Please Stand Up?'The Politics of Sinhala Nationalist Authenticity and Populist Discontent". In: (2010).

on donors in order to focus their resources on areas that it prioritises, while effectively 'squeezing out' those that it wants to make irrelevant. This reflects a 'co-option' response wherein the government has selectively appropriated certain aspects of the peacebuilding discourse. However for the ethical-principled donors, faced with both local rejection and government conditionality, which at points have been complimentary, there was effectively no space for operation.

This thesis draws from and builds upon the strand of case-specific practitioner-oriented research that has focused on Sri Lanka in order to highlight the complexity of contexts that peacebuilding is employed in. experience. Past research on Sri Lanka has dominantly focused on the unraveling of the peace process by 2005, peacebuilding during the tsunami response, and factors that led to the termination of the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA), and has drawn similar conclusions: in Sri Lanka, the liberal peace project has always been mediated by domestic actors that are in the dominant position of being able to translate or manipulate the project towards self-serving interests, which in the past has led to ' decidedly illiberal outcomes.'[28] The recognition of the primacy of domestic actors and processes brings into question certain foundational assumptions the discourse makes about itself, as being a process where international actors have greater agency and ability to transform underlying conflict structures. Richmond in his disaggregation of the liberal peace highlights that the notion that an external neutral third party has the ability to 'bring' peace in a conflict environment is common to all versions of the liberal peace thesis.[29] Building on this tradition, this thesis attempts to span a longer period of time, starting from the period after the unraveling of the peace-process in 2003, in order to present a more comprehensive reading of how this exercise of local agency has transformed, changed hands, and in turn impacted the potential role for peacebuilders in post conflict Sri Lanka.

The argument is structured as follows: Chapter 1 which follows this introduction, locates the research question within a larger academic study of peacebuilding. It locates the Sri Lankan experience of peacebuilding and local resistance within the Richmond and Heathershaw's typology of peacebuildings; their critique of the linearity of the peacebuilding discourse is one of the primary conceptual tools used to frame the idea of local agency in setting conditions on international peacebuilding. Drawing from this theoretical exploration, the chapter then details the methodology and design of the research which uses the Björkdahl and Höglund conceptual framework on frictions in local-global encounters for analysing the Sri Lankan case. The modalities of collecting data for this analysis through field research are also presented, including a discussion of the dilemmas encountered in conducting fieldwork in a "dangerous" setting. Chapter 2 discusses the first form of friction that is vertical in nature, emerging between the peacebuilders and the local Sri Lankan population, and the rejection response that emerges as an outcome. The emergence and evolution of

[28] Goodhand and Walton, "The limits of liberal peacebuilding? International engagement in the Sri Lankan peace process".

[29] Oliver P Richmond. "The problem of peace: understanding the 'liberal peace'". In: *Conflict, Security & Development* 6.3 (2006), pp. 291–314.

the local rejection is analysed; this includes a focus on ideologically disparate groups which in common shared their resistance against Western intervention, and the process by which this effectively limited the ability of peacebuilders to build a liberal peace through the civil society. Chapter 3 looks at the post-conflict environment and the second type of horizontal friction between local and national elite which has impacted the pre-existing vertical friction with peacebuilders. The outcome of the horizontal friction has been the emergence of a state framework to moderate any external peacebuilding, which is discussed as a post-conflict local conditionality. This is examined through a case study of the JPA and the role of the Presidential Task force. Between this and the local resistance, peacebuilding done by the CLM donors has thus become ineffective and impractical to the point that, by consensus, peacebuilders have opted to 'abandon the sinking ship.'[30]

[30] Quote from interview with SDC

Chapter 1

Conceptual Framework

This chapter provides a conceptual discussion of the research topic by focusing on the specific form of peacebuilding that has been carried out by ethical-principled donors in Sri Lanka. It addresses the difference of this type of peacebuilding from typically cited cases of peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq, as it has not involved any form of top-down nation-building or state-building in Sri Lanka. Thus, the usage of an umbrella term "peacebuilding," to describe activities towards building different versions of a liberal peace in these different contexts would be confusing, and conceptually unsound. It then discusses the critical theorists' critique of the emancipatory peacebuilding strand , as was operationalised in the Sri Lankan context, in order to examine flaws in the liberal peacebuilding model which overlooks the potential that 'local agency' and resistance has to destabilise a liberal peace.

1.1 Disaggregating peacebuilding

The first institutional articulation of the peacebuilding discourse, which emerged following the end of the Cold War, can be traced to Boutros Boutros Ghali's 1992 'An Agenda for Peace.' In the report, the UN Secretary-General argued that there was a need to 'identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.'[1] The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 had saliently signaled the superiority of the liberal paradigm, and thus, in identifying intrastate conflicts as the most significant threat to the international order, this key document also located the solution within the liberal peace framework - it called for an expansion in the role of the international community from only containing conflicts (peacekeeping) to resolving conflicts (peacebuilding).[2] Recurrently criticised as a 'set of problem-

[1] Boutros Boutros-Ghali. "An Agenda for Peace Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping". In: *International Relations* 11.3 (1992), pp. 201–218, (pp.11).

[2] Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping".

solving strategies' as opposed to a concretely developed framework, the term peacebuilding has come to be associated with a wide-range of interventions in conflict and post-conflict contexts. The proliferation of activities and strategies has meant that the term is less concerned with 'how' to achieve peace, as opposed to what this peace must look like.[3] As a result, peacebuilding has come to be associated with the end ideal that the economic and political reforms it endorses seek to achieve - to build peace within and between states through the promotion of liberal democracy and market economics. The theoretical underpinning of liberal peacebuilding project is the notion of liberal peace. According to this, democracies based on the rule of law are less likely to go to war due to domestic institutional constraints upon leaders, and due to the economic interdependence that arises out of pursuing market economics globally.[4]

Goodhand's distinction between the different types of donors based on the conflict sensitivity of their aid marks a break from earlier literature that focused on variation in institutional behaviour between donors, as these typically discussed the issue within the traditional scope of development aid as aid in a non-conflict environment.[5] Within this scope, conflict situations are viewed as areas of operation for humanitarian aid alone, as was the dominant practice till the end of the Cold War. The peacebuilding discourse, in this sense, marks a new orientation for development aid in conflict and post-conflict contexts. It was developed with the intention of establishing continuities between humanitarian and development aid, while attempting to harness the potential of development aid in conflict resolution and transformation processes.[6]

One part of critical theory on peacebuilding, in the exercise of critiquing the seeming homogeneity of the discouse and to outline the inherent tensions in conceptualisation and implementation of the project, has identified that there are four distinct interrelated strands of liberal peace and hence, multiple 'peacebuildings.' Oliver Richmond and John Heathershaw argue, that these differences and contentions are obscured in mainstream policy discourse in order to create a seemingly cohesive meta-narrative, where peacebuilding is more 'described than defined,' as a set of problem-solving strategies that are universal.[7][8] In their disaggregation of different peacebuilding strategies, there is a differentiation between the underlying vision of peace as conflict management, peace as order and peace as justice.[9] Each of these different versions of peace reflect the four intellectual strands about the possible ontology of the liberal peace- the 'victor's peace', the 'institutional peace', the 'constitutional peace' and the

[3] Holt, *Aid, peacebuilding and the resurgence of war: buying time in Sri Lanka*, (pp.3).

[4] Alex J Bellamy and Paul Williams. "Introduction: Thinking anew about peace operations". In: *International Peacekeeping* 11.1 (2004), pp. 1–15, (pp.3).

[5] Goodhand, "Conflict Assessments", (pp. 67).

[6] Macrae and Harmer, "Beyond the continuum: an overview of the changing role of aid policy in protracted crises".

[7] Heathershaw, "Unpacking the liberal peace: The dividing and merging of peacebuilding discourses", (pp. 597).

[8] Richmond, "The problem of peace: understanding the 'liberal peace"'.

[9] Heathershaw, "Unpacking the liberal peace: The dividing and merging of peacebuilding discourses", (pp. 604).

'civil peace,'. The victor's peace reflects the age-old realist argument that a peace that rests on a military victory and upon the hegemony of a victor is more likely to survive. The institutional peace rests upon attempts to anchor states within a normative and legal context in which states multilaterally agree how to behave and how to enforce or determine their behaviour, reflecting an idealist, liberal-internationalist vision. The constitutional peace develops from the liberal Kantian argument that peace can only be developed through democracy, free trade and the prevalence of cosmopolitan values. The final identifiable strand is that of the civil peace. It draws from the sphere of direct action and democracy, towards the attainment of democratic governance and basic rights.[10]

The first gradient of peacebuilding, which privileges the development of democratic systems in post-conflict contexts, was mainstreamed into global policy discourse and practice by the UN under Boutros Boutors Ghali, and later Kofi Annan, against the rekindling of liberal internationalist ideals in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse. First operationalised following the Balkan Crisis, democratic peacebuilding subsumed under it the concepts of peacemaking, and peace-enforcement along with the traditional peacekeeping role that the UN system had carried out during the Cold War. The emergence of the peacebuilding discourse intimately linked with reconceptualisation of notions of state sovereignty. During the Cold War, International interventions had been underscored by a Westphalian notion of the state, wherein the desire to endorse the pursuit of liberalism and democracy took place against the recognized precedence of territorial and political sovereignty.[11] The end of the Cold War marked a transition to a post-Westphalian conception of sovereignty that inextricably linked peace within states to peace between states, with a liberal system of economic and political structuring being advocated as the ideal form of sovereign governance. The underlying rationale was that liberal democratic states, through increasing trade relations and economic integration along with an open political culture, are most likely to make decisions that are mutually beneficial. As argued by former US President Clinton, 'democracies don't attack each other, ' drawing from which, 'the best strategy to insure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy everywhere'.[12] Reflective of this, the Agenda of Peace suggested a wide range of post-conflict interventions that included the monitoring of elections, reform of governmental structures, and the promotion of political participation.[13] Heathershaw underlines that the statement of intent was broad enough to allow participation by every UN agency in a project that had an explicit discursive link with the ethics of liberal-democracy.[14]

Against the experience of democratic peacebuilding experiments in Cambo-

[10] Richmond, "The problem of peace: understanding the 'liberal peace"', (pp. 297).

[11] Bellamy and Williams, "Introduction: Thinking anew about peace operations", (pp.3).

[12] President Bill Clinton. *State of the union address.* 26 January 1994.

[13] Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping", (pp.32).

[14] Heathershaw, "Unpacking the liberal peace: The dividing and merging of peacebuilding discourses", (pp. 601).

dia, Latin America and Kosovo, it became clear that the nature of 'peace as order' was not entirely consensual, as its creation often hinged on a conditional relationship between peacebuilding agents and recipients.[15] Identified as a 'conservative' model of peacebuilding, the process of democratic norm diffusion in post-conflict societies took place through an enforced norm transfer. Initially, this 'enforcement' entailed a carrot and stick process of allocating benefits or punitive measures to the reforming country by the multilateral liberal system. However soon, in the highly charged security environment in the aftermath of the 9/11, there was emerged a consensus among a small group of Western states on the use of physical force in order to enforce these norms. While the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq represent the extreme extent of this shift, moderate versions of interventions guided by the 'peace as order' vision have taken the form of conflict-management, and can be seen in Mali, The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola; in the latter set of cases, the 'host' state continues to have some say in the kind of order that is to be established.[16] The key difference between peace as conflict management and peace as order has also been the point of intervention - in the latter conceptualisation, described as 'hyper-conservative' peacebuilding, interventions are pre-emptively undertaken in contexts that are considered prone to conflict due to the existence of illiberal governance systems and a consequent lack of basic security. The key target of 'peace as order' is thus, the failed state, which to peacebuilders , is representative of anarchy that has the potential to destabilise the international system , allowing for the repositioning of peacebuilding as state-building.[17] At the very core of this notion is the need for a militarily imposed settlement in order to reconfigure who has the monopoly over force in the identified 'failed' state. This established basic security as an a priori condition to any form of successful domestic and international institutional development of a democratic peaceful order. As Krause and Jutersonke note, a key feature in the formulation of peacebuilding as state-building processes is the institutional linking of security with development and development aid by donors. Through the Cold War Era, within Western states, these had been separately pursued by parallel institutional and political structures.[18] Following 9/11, development aid has become an explicit instrument in the stabilisation and state-building agenda that certain Western actors undertook under the umbrella of 'War on Terror.' The clearest indication of this blurring between the two spheres, leading to the 'securitisation of development' is the emergence of aid practices that purely lend to the military rationale of these operations, and are often disbursed in coordination with military authorities.[19]

Heathershaw argues that while the emergence of the peacebuilding as state-

[15] Richmond, "The problem of peace: understanding the 'liberal peace"', (pp. 304).

[16] Edward Newman, Roland Paris, and Oliver P Richmond. *New perspectives on liberal peacebuilding*. United Nations University Press Tokyo, 2009.

[17] Newman, Paris, and Richmond, *New perspectives on liberal peacebuilding*, (pp.12).

[18] Keith Krause and Oliver Jütersonke. "Peace, security and development in post-conflict environments". In: *Security Dialogue* 36.4 (2005), pp. 447–462, (pp. 455).

[19] Oliver P Richmond. "UN peace operations and the dilemmas of the peacebuilding consensus". In: *International peacekeeping* 11.1 (2004), pp. 83–101.

building discourse has emerged to be the dominant focus of policy, academic and popular literature in the last decade, the tendencies toward this can be traced from the early 1990s.[20] Academics like Helman, Rathner and Zartman used ideas of 'failing' or 'collapsing state' when discussing the increase of civil wars in Africa, while the CIA funded a wide scope research programme called the State Failure Task Force. But the possible main-streaming of military interventions during the mid 1990s faced an insurmountable roadblock in the form of high-profile failures of state-centric peacebuilding projects in Somalia and Rwanda. The potential centralisation around the 'state failure' agenda was thus delayed by a shift in focus to 'people centric' peacebuilding, against a call for new approached that moved away from the state, and adopted a more consensual peacebuilding practices that built peace from the grassroots.

During this period, against the mass backlash against top-down peacebuilding, which was criticised as hegemonic and neo-imperial, donors and the peacebuilding community sought to move towards a more measured approach that equally divided risks and dividends between the peacebuilders and recipients. Based on a broad conflict transformation model which recognised the interaction of social, political and economic factors and inequalities in creating and perpetuating conflict, peace was reconceptualised as social justice. Peacebuilding was then presented as a form of custodianship, wherein through a combination of consent, inducement and occasional coercion, peace as justice can be achieved through facilitating the acceptance of difference and otherness, as well as the institutionalisation of social justice.[21]

As Richmond discusses, the pursuance of civil peace is an anomaly in thinking about liberal peace, because the state is not envisioned as the site of transformation. It instead privileges individual agency as a means to achieve human security and justice, beyond the state system, and was seen as the 'emancipatory' version of liberal peace.[22] The incorporation of civil society in peacebuilding interventions can also be discussed as a more invasive peacebuilding. First, the positioning and access of CSOs made possible more intimate forms of norm dissemination, helping construct a 'peacebuilding consensus' among the masses. Second, in states which were perceived to be 'difficult' or 'inadequate' in cooperating with the international community, funding agencies positioned CSOs as an ancillary form of governmental authority.[23] Richmond highlights this emancipatory civil society-led peacebuilding is typically carried out in contexts where the primary 'peacebuilders' are donor agencies, without the prioritisation of negotiations in the state-centric arena; specifically the group of small donors or the 'like-minded' states, who prioritise the effective achievement of aid project goals, privilege the emancipatory version of peacebuilding. The centrality and application of this gradient of peacebuilding led by aid agencies or donors is dis-

[20] Heathershaw, "Unpacking the liberal peace: The dividing and merging of peacebuilding discourses".

[21] Richmond, "The problem of peace: understanding the 'liberal peace"', (pp. 294).

[22] Richmond, "The problem of peace: understanding the 'liberal peace"', (pp.294).

[23] Walton, "Conflict, peacebuilding and NGO legitimacy: National NGOs in Sri Lanka 1: Analysis".

tinctly different from more orthodox forms of peacebuilding, where civil society peacebuilding is preceded by military interventions as has increasingly become the norm.[24]

Critical theorists argue that in the last decade, as evidenced by the institutionalisation of concepts like the 'Responsibility to Protect,' proponents of peacebuilding as state-building have attempted to present civil peacebuilding as a part or a stage in the larger state-building process, associating civil society activism with basic security. In an attempt to present a cohesive narrative in the form of a universal 'peacebuilding consensus', these different gradients of peacebuilding may often by combined and thus, in any one peacebuilding intervention, these different strategies may be employed at different points; this chronology and degree to which a gradient is privileged depends on priorities associated with dominant state interests, donor interests and the capacity of peacebuilding actors.[25] In light of this, the biggest criticism against the homogenisation of these different discourses and modes of operation is that this process may well limit the ability of implementer to take into account operational realities; conservative, orthodox, and emancipatory versions of the liberal peace may actually contradict and undermine each other, leading to disruption in the broader peacebuilding process.[26]

1.2 Questioning an 'emancipated' liberal peacebuilding

In cases like Sri Lanka, which represent a conflict and post-conflict context where there government can competently provide basic security and where there are ostensibly functional democratic practices, the emancipatory gradient presents with the only course of peacebuilding intervention. As a result of this, emancipatory peace-builders in these contexts face radically different challenges than state-builders, who have the sanction of force. Led by donors and aid agencies, the operationalising of emancipatory peacebuilding in such contexts is motivated by larger concerns in the aid community- first, for the sake of the ethics and legitimacy of the peacebuilding project, and second, the search for efficiency and sustainability.[27] Principles of donor engagement based on there two concerns, that are considered mutually reinforcing, were developed in a operational scope that is much broader than peacebuilding. These principles originally developed with a focus on non-conflict contexts, but have also come to guide donor-led

[24] Richmond, "The problem of peace: understanding the 'liberal peace"'.

[25] Oliver P Richmond. "Resistance and the Post-liberal Peace". In: *Millennium-Journal of International Studies* 38.3 (2010), pp. 665–692; Richmond, "UN peace operations and the dilemmas of the peacebuilding consensus"; Roger Mac Ginty and Oliver P Richmond. "The local turn in peace building: A critical agenda for peace". In: *Third World Quarterly* 34.5 (2013), pp. 763–783.

[26] Heathershaw, "Unpacking the liberal peace: The dividing and merging of peacebuilding discourses".

[27] Timothy Donais. "Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes". In: *Peace & Change* 34.1 (2009), pp. 3–26.

peacebuilding interventions . This has been stressed on by the 2008 Accra Declaration which states that, "aid effectiveness principles apply equally to development co-operation in situations of fragility, including countries emerging from conflict, but that these principles need to be adapted to environments of weak ownership and capacity."[28] The general thrust of most principles guiding the aid architecture has been that ethical and legitimate donor interventions are more likely to produce more effective and sustainable results; In this respect, the idea of 'local ownership' or 'community led' interventions has come to become a commonly shared buzz-word between the aid and peacebuilding worlds.[29] [30]

However, despite the seemingly more consensual of intervention reflected in the emancipatory version of peacebuilding, critical theorists are equally skeptical of its 'emancipatory' potential, as they are of the more orthodox gradients, arguing that it takes places within the limited space that the neo-liberal paradigm will allow. The failure of the different peacebuildings is thus, ' not because of the efficiency problems related to the technicalities of its workings, but in the problematique [sic] assumptions and contradictions within the model itself ...'[31] The emancipatory gradient continues to be based on the machine-like workings and faith-based assumptions of liberal peace, attempting to technically addressing contextual problems with universal answers, in the process, denying the local constituencies' right of being an organic part of their own peace.

The linear framing of international intervention in the cause of peace has an implicit liberal telos. For the achievement of this telos, the role of emancipatory peacebuilding can be understood as the removal of blockages by entrenched power elites by freeing the local agency of civil society, which, it is assumed, would undoubtedly express their support for universal liberal democratic norms. It thus constructs a dichotomy between those doing the peacebuilding intervention, and those for whom the intervention is designed.[32] Within this imagery, the 'local' is understood as lacking agency and mobility, and post-conflict spaces are conceptualised as empty spaces in need of new norms, governing institutions and patterns. Further, liberal peacebuilding relies on a form of civil society that is relatively free of ethno-nationalism and generally oriented towards liberal norms and values, in other words, mirrors the Western model. As a result, it overlooks a range of other 'un-like minded' actors that play a key role in mobilising social attitudes and sentiments.[33] Certain scholars have described this as a "romanti-

[28] Paris Declaration. "Accra Agenda for Action". In: *Paris, ocDe (http://www. oecd. org/dataoecd/30/63/43911948. pdf, acessado em 13 de agosto de 2011)* (2005), (pp.5).

[29] Development Assistance Committee et al. *Shaping the 21st Century: The contribution of development co-operation.* 1996.

[30] 'local ownership' as a source of legitimacy and effectiveness in non-conflict contexts has been a key concern for traditional bilateral donors since the early 1990s. It was formally recognized as a key concern for development aid in 1996, with the OECDs Development and Assistance Committee (DAC) which called for a comprehensive approach that —respects local ownership of the development processes (DAC, 1996: 9).

[31] Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh. *Rethinking the liberal peace: external models and local alternatives.* Taylor & Francis, 2011, (pp. 5).

[32] Chandler, "Peacebuilding and the politics of non-linearity: rethinking 'hidden'agency and 'resistance"'.

[33] Walton, "Between war and the liberal peace: The politics of NGO peacebuilding in Sri

cising of the local," wherein liberal peacebuilders are unable to constructively engage with local agencies and processes due to their specific normative understanding of what compromises the ' local ' to be engaged with. It thus overlooks the possibility that the emergence of local agencies could mean a resistance to the 'emancipatory project' of liberal peace builders, which may lead to claims of autonomy from the regional and international sphere and the intended end vision.[34][35] This resistance has the potential to destabilise the monopoly of both national elites and the interveners.

Given that aid or funding the key instrument for mobilising peacebuilding activities in conflict, in peacebuilding contexts like Sri Lanka, internationals are increasingly realising that this local resistance is reflected in the reverse imposition of conditionalities to their aid. As Richmond notes, 'internationals are now learning that where they set conditionalities so local actors also expect conditionalities to be observed. Furthermore, local actors are becoming adept at manipulating conditionalities in their favour. If a sustainable peace is to be constructed, there can be no exit until both locals and internationals have agreed that such a version of peace has actually been achieved."[36]Thus while emancipatory liberal peacebuilding has coalesced around idea of local ownership, civil society or capacity-building approaches, implying an acknowledgement of concerned power relations between the local and the international, it is a selective acknowledgment that fails to recognise the potential for local agency and resistance. What this implies at an operational level is that peacebuilders choose to view any form of resistance as 'non-compliance,' or in the language of peacekeeping, as "spoilers" that are to be mitigated rather than engaged with, as a result of which, the final consensus is as artificial as top-down models.

Drawing from this, critical theorists have called for a 'local turn' in peacebuilding, that eschews the normative liberal ideal and instead adopt a pluralist view of difference, conceptualising peace as hybrid, multiple and often agonitic. The 'local turn' thus implies an engagement with the critical and resistant local agencies that have a role in shaping a subaltern view of peace, and how they act to engage with different conflict related social dynamics and the structures that maintain them. Drawing from the post-structuralist writings on resistance to structural domination, the notion of a "local turn" implies that agency can only really be exerted politically through public mobilization on a large scale. This collective agency emerges through forms of hidden, everyday resistance, in the engagement with structural power. They are discussed as being "hidden" because they operate at a level where they may be invisible to formal theory and methodologies, and those that operate based on these.[37] Critically, local agency is not a "new" phenomenon and has always been present in different forms. It is the present crisis of the liberal peace, along with the growing number of re-

Lanka".

[34]Oliver P Richmond. *The transformation of peace*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

[35]Richmond, "Resistance and the Post-liberal Peace".

[36]Richmond, "The problem of peace: understanding the 'liberal peace"', (pp. 304).

[37]Chandler, "Peacebuilding and the politics of non-linearity: rethinking 'hidden'agency and 'resistance"'.

searchers from the "sub-altern" ranks, that has enabled academia to "see" the local and bring into focus how legitimacy can be collectively constructed by the different elements of the local, and in the case of Sri Lanka, by dominant elements that were fundamentally against any liberal peacebuilding.

1.3 Analytical framework : Friction in Global-Local Encounters

Informed by the critique of different strands of peacebuilding, there has been a growing body of work led by peacebuilding practitioners as well as academics focused on main-streaming academic thinking into policy debates that have adapted this theoretical idea of a 'local turn' towards developing analytical frameworks for assessing post-conflict environments and peacebuilding. Björkdahl and Höglund have attempted to further refine the theory of a 'local turn,' and develop the idea of 'friction' as a conceptual lens through which conflictual engagements between global and local ideas, actors and practices in peacebuilding can be identified and analysed. The notion of 'friction' is based on the recognition that the constructed dichotomy between those doing the peacebuilding, and those for whom the intervention is designed is a false separation; global– local interactions are identified as being encounters that 'can be both a site for empowerment and for domination.'[38] Drawing from the post-modernist thought, its analytical lens of perceiving all interactions in terms of the exercise of power and resistance to this power, 'friction' with respect to the peacebuilding paradigm refers to the evolving confrontations that necessarily emerge when external actors, discourses, and practices interact with the local counterparts at peacebuilding sites.[39]

The friction metaphor was first developed by Tsing to capture the diversity and different types of inequality that influence global-local encounters and give rise to new power dynamics in the process.[40][41] Peacebuilders tend to overestimate the attractiveness of the normative package inherent in the liberal peace while under-estimating the power of local agencies to resist and transform their project. In this context, friction can be understood as the process which is triggered by conflictual encounters and then gives rise to other outcomes, rather than being an outcome to study itself. Björkdahl and Höglund equate the notion of friction to concepts like localisation, vernaculisation and hybridisation, which in common indicate the agency of the recipient to mold and influence the direction of an externally introduced idea. The added value that this brings to the analysis of peacebuilding encounters is the recognition that while any

[38] Johanna Mannergren Selimovic. "Remembering and Forgetting after War. Truth, justice and reconciliation in a Bosnian town". PhD thesis. PhD Dissertation, University of Gothenburg, 2010), 22, 2010, (pp. 35).

[39] Björkdahl and Höglund, "Precarious peacebuilding: friction in global–local encounters".

[40] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing. *Friction: An ethnography of global connection.* Princeton University Press, 2005.

[41] Tsing introduces this idea suggests that '[r]ubbing two sticks together produces heat and light; one stick alone is just a stick'

encounter will result is some sort of friction, dependent on the ability of actors to negotiate these, the outcome can be oppositional but also accommodating, or selectively accommodating. Thus the idea of friction in peacebuilding encounters refers to, " an uneven, unexpected and uncertain process in which global and local confluence to mediate and negotiate difference and affinity. Friction thus tends to change facts on the ground as it creates new and messy dynamics, agencies, and structures as well as unexpected coalitions built on 'awkwardly linked incompatibles' based on either universal or particular ideas."[42] Thus, while in cases like Sri Lanka, this friction has led to perverse outcomes by valourising local actors against ideas of power-sharing, in other contexts it may well encourage greater democraticastion.

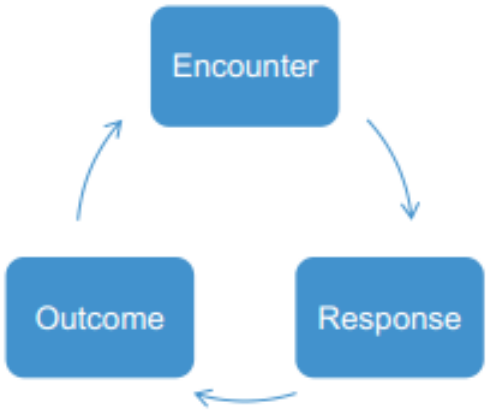
An important component of this framework is the recognising the multilayered nature of power contests. Peacebuilding interactions can see the emergence of vertical frictions, that results in asymmetrical relations between the international and the local. But there is also the issue of horizontal frictions, wherein these interactions impact the relationships between different 'domestic,' or 'local' actors or between the external global actors, in the post-conflict landscape This implies that there is a potential that in the local, there are different perceptions about the peacebuilding process as a result of which a first contest may very well take place between local factions, the result of which then impacts what course the vertical friction will take. As a recognition that there is a multiplicity in terms of power structures that determine the eventual outcomes, the analytical point of departure is to use an actor-oriented perspective to identify the points at which this mediation or negotiation occurs, and thus involves moving beyond the broad categories of 'conflict between the local and the global.'

Björkdahl and Höglund use the concept of friction to identify different categories of responses in terms of compliance, adoption, adaption, resistance, cooptation and rejection . A response of compliance by local actors results in a forced adherence or submission to global external discourses. An adoption response refers to the local adoption of global norms. An adaptation response refers to the hybridisation of global norms and practices with local characteristics. A co-option response is largely led by the local elite and sees the strategic adoption of external norms and practices as a means of averting pressure. The resistance response sees a dominance of global characteristics and a limited adoption of external norms. Finally, the rejection response refers to the complete exclusion of global practices from the local. These responses create new realities as they alter power relations, transform agency and mediate practices related to peacebuilding. The new realities, which emerge from these encounters, will in turn create feedback loops which may create new encounters.1.1 As an example of a feedback loop, the intensification of Sinhala nationalistic fervour among the masses, which is reflective of relective friction between 'local' actors and peacebuilders, was responsible for bring into power the Rajapaksa

[42]Björkdahl and Höglund, "Precarious peacebuilding: friction in global–local encounters", (pp. 295).

led United National Freedom Party (UNFP), whose election rhetoric was a decisive no-negotiate policy with regards to the LTTE. This effectively altered the local realities and signaled new conditions for the next stage of interactions and the potential directions any vertical friction would go.

Figure 1.1: Björkdahl and Höglund's Friction and Feedback Loop Model



Björkdahl and Höglund have used this framework in Sri Lanka order to conduct a short-term analysis, which focuses on the dynamics that exist and emerged due to demands for transnational justice. There however continues to be a need to analyse friction in the context of peacebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka from a the long-term perspective. This requires an analysis of the feedback loops created by long-term engagement and discussing how the resulting outcomes bring into existence new and unexpected arrangements.

1.4 Research Design

As an explanation to why the coalition of like-minded donors rapidly reduced peacebuilding interventions in the Sri Lankan post-conflict context despite the seemingly less-confrontational nature of their project, this thesis examines the factors and dynamics that demonstrate the primacy of local actors and their agency in 'allowing' any form of external peacebuilding . As discussed by Berdal, ' the unfortunate consequence of conceptually abstracting peacebuilding is that these operations do not adequately leverage local knowledge or appreciate how past experiences set limits on what outsiders can achieve.'[43] Thus, this thesis has a two fold focus – first, to disaggregate the discourse on peacebuilding and locate the Sri Lankan case within a specific gradient of peacebuilding, against existing documentation on the trajectory and trends of Western peacebuilding

[43]Mats R Berdal. *Building peace after war.* Routledge New York, 2009, (pp. 214).

engagement. Second, to examine the process by which local challenges to peacebuilders emerged and limited peacebuilding in the post-conflict context. These foci require an engagement with both the theory and practice of peacebuilding in Sri Lanka, and thus three methods have been used in order to develop this research- desk literature reviews of academic studies as well as practitioner papers, primary unstructured interviews and content analysis of government documents and state media reports from 2009 onwards.

The central methodological approach of this thesis is the case study approach, where the objective is to delve into cases in support or against an existing theoretical proposition. In political science, there is a rich history of case study research in public administration and public policy studies, as well as a vibrant contemporary methodological discussion within comparative studies of political system. Yanow et al detail that while "the case study" has been recognised as the most common method of analysis in political science, the term has been used to refer to a range of meanings and usages that vary from specific methods to a research approach.[44] They detail that, "those advancing "case study" as a set of methods – the predominant meaning – engage the concept as a specific form of research involving multi-site studies aimed at establishing causal inferences and hypothesis-testing. Those taking the second perspective typically treat "case study" as part of a broader methodology that emphasizes human meaning and reflexivity. These scholars more often engage in single-site research aimed at detailing the lived experiences of persons in that setting."[45] These two perspectives attach a different importance on case study methodology.

This thesis is reflective of the latter tradition of 'single-site' case studies, where the nature of analysis is is inductive and human-centered. The focus is to learn about the potentially multiple social realities that characterize the setting and its actors. Yanow et al discuss that field research-based case studies engage in an ethnographic version of observation wherein the number of "observations" ie number of interviews, interactions and examinations of documents and data – does not have the same boundaries as number of locations in which the case study is carried out. Thus, field research generates a wide rage of qualitative-interpretive, within-case "observations" that reflect patterns social relations, routines, organisational behaviours, actions, and so on. In contrast, multi-site case study analysis, which is privileged by the comparative politics sub-field, draws upon case studies to explore human diversity with the intent of using these to establish general propositions about human conditions and interactions. However, since the aim of multiple-site case study analysis is to present and test generalisations, nuances, and specific dynamics are often glossed over in order to focus on commonalities across cases. In other words, " the focus on law-like generalizations that this entails runs counter to a more interpretive approach that focuses, instead, on verstehen, thick description, reflexivity, and

[44] Dvora Yanow, Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, and Maria José Freitas. "Case study research in political science". In: *Encylopedia of case study research. Los Angeles: Sage.[Links]* (2008).

[45] Yanow, Schwartz-Shea, and Freitas, "Case study research in political science", (pp. 2).

other such elements for establishing the trustworthiness of the research."[46]

In order to addresses the first question regarding the nature of peacebuilding in Sri Lanka and the motivations and modalities of this process, the thesis draws from the critical theory typology of peacebuilding and the critiques that explore emancipatory peacebuilding specifically, as discussed in the earlier sections. The analysis for this question has thus largely been informed through a literature review on peacebuilding and the specific experience of peacebuilding in Sri Lanka. This was then located within the larger body of research that already exists on Sri Lanka, in order to further build on already existing insights on the challenges that the CLM donors and supporters of peacebuilding have had in engaging with a post-conflict state like Sri Lanka. An exploration of the history of peacebuilding during the conflict has been crucial in helping construct what the present government administration's approach to CLM donors has been

In order to explore local challenges to and conditionality on external peacebuilders, the assertions made by non-mainstream political groups from early 2003 onwards has been marked as the starting point of analysis. The employment of Björkdahl and Höglund framework of identifying frictions and the power relations that influence the eventual response to this frictions, has been the primary conceptual tool for analysing the nature of local resistance against devolution of powers in the during the conflict and post-conflict periods, and later, the emergence of government imposed conditions. The latter set of conditionalities have been motivated by the need to balance appease these local reactions, against macro political considerations of positioning Sri Lanka as a democratic state. The process of identifying the different types of frictions and their point of emergence has, in turn, been informed by a literature review and through fieldwork that was carried out over a period of three months from January to late March 2014. A majority of interviews with national NGOs, think tanks and government officials took place in Colombo. Interviews with donors took place in Colombo, Geneva and in Jaffna, to examine the implementation of peacebuilding on the ground by donor agencies.

1.4.1 Ethical Considerations in Designing Research

While it has been five years since the end of the Sri Lankan conflict, fieldwork or research on issues that are considered 'sensitive,' particularly in light of the increasing Western pressure on the government, has meant that it continues to be a potentially dangerous setting for external researchers. The agents of peacebuilding, donors and INGOs, who continue to face daily challenges in their domestic interactions toward shaping the post-conflict environment are unlikely to provide information that will put their organisation in an unfavourable light. Thus, while interviews with donors, senior government staff, INGOs and the UN provided valuable contextual information, it was through informal channels, wherein the most valuable information and analysis was provided 'off the

[46] Yanow, Schwartz-Shea, and Freitas, "Case study research in political science", (pp. 7).

record." Fieldwork for this project, clearly touched on highly political themes and issues, particularly in light of the then impending UNHRC session in late March 2014, due to which any external researcher was viewed as a 'Western fact-finder.' Thus most of the interviews with government agents and local NGOs had to be done with a degree of caution.

Jacobsen & Landau stress on the need for social scientists undertaking field-work in humanitarian situations to continuously maintain high academic and ethical standards, while avoiding the tendency to engage in advocacy research whereby ' researchers already know what they want to see and say, and come away from the research having "proved it." '[47] They suggest that one way to mitigate against such "ethical traps" is to fully disclose the methodology which was used, including possible biases and the ethical dilemmas encountered in designing and executing it, which is what this section attempts to do.

This is particularly important in the specific case of exploring government conditionalities, which are less overt than the local rejection process. Research on this specific type of local agency exercise was based on an assessment of the factors which led to the launch of the Joint Plan of Assistance for the Northern Province (2011) under the Presidential Task Force for Resettlement, Development and Security (PTF), the CLM donor response to this, and how this was related to the departure of donor agencies from the domestic arena. This involved conducting primary research through unstructured interviews with key international policy-makers from the UN and CLM donor agencies who were present in Sri Lanka during the time that the JPA was launched. This helped to grasp the Western donor perspective or narrative of how the trajectory of participating in the Sri Lanka post-conflict context had evolved after the war, as well as identify changes in donor strategy. Supported by testimonies recorded in International Crisis Group reports across years, the initial interviews also helped to piece together an understanding of what the intent and goal of peacebuilding during and after the conflict has been, and how this appropriately fits within existing theoretical work on peacebuilding.

At the same time, a number of interviews were also conducted with key elected representatives to the Sri Lankan Parliament , the PTF in the Northern Province, members from prominent CSOs, and the Indian Donor Team based in Colombo and New Delhi. The interviews with government officials and local CSOs helped in understanding the 'local' institutional perspective on and resistance to Western peacebuilding, and further, to clarify the modes and the intent of exercising local agency either in favour or against this peacebuilding. The content from these interviews has helped to flesh out the government's dilemma with regards to balancing external demands for accountability with local constrains demands for disassociation from the West. The interviews with the Indian Donor Team, on the other hand, helped clarify how the Sri Lankan government has worked with non-traditional or non-OECD donors, and if the similar conditionalities have been placed on Indian aid. This was felt to be

[47] Karen Jacobsen and Loren B Landau. "The dual imperative in refugee research: some methodological and ethical considerations in social science research on forced migration". In: *Disasters* 27.3 (2003), pp. 185–206, (pp. 187).

relevant as while India is a non-Western donor, it has had a tumultuous and separate history of attempting to build peace in the Sri Lanka during the early years of the war. The value it added to this research was in helping identify what the Sri Lankan government's alternative model of collaboration with external actors in the reconstruction process looks like.

The ethics of this research fall into three categories: that the research should avoid doing harm, that those involved do so with consent, and that confidentiality is maintained unless stated otherwise.

'Do no harm'

The active presence of the researcher in a 'dangerous' fieldwork site generates several risks. There is a risk that those involved in the research are somehow punished by those in authority for the opinions that they hold. The principle of ' do no harm ' was therefore followed to the maximum extent possible. Donald Warwick discusses the risk that a researcher could be in danger of prosecution, imprisonment, death or torture for research that is seen as a threat to security.[48] There is also potential harm to the research profession in such environments as the actions of a researcher may make it difficult for subsequent studies. This may either take place due to tougher restrictions on research and limitation on the movement of researchers by local authorities, or the inculcation of a culture of fear and/or aversion, where subjects becoming hardened to researchers or prefer to not participate in any further research. In an effort to prevent harm arising from the findings of this research, all quotes in this research are anonymous. To this end, all interviewees were assured that their identity would be kept strictly confidential and that they would never be identified as having participated in the research or as having said particular things

Researcher's positioning

As Holt discusses, in a 'divided society,' there is a danger that all actors are perceived to be partisan based on family name, religion or residence; both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' are subject to different but equally limiting constraints.[49] As Fujii explains: not only are researchers studying their informants, their informants, in turn, are studying them back – to figure out who the researcher is and whether the researcher is a source of potential threat [...] How informants identify researchers can determine the amount or level of access the researcher can gain. If people suspect that researchers are state agents, informants may invoke a party line in interviews and conversations rather than reveal their deeper thoughts. The task of the researcher is to take people's fears and suspicions seriously and try to allay them as much as possible.[50]

[48] Donald P Warwick. *Social research in developing countries: Surveys and censuses in the Third World*. Psychology Press, 1993.

[49] Holt, *Aid, peacebuilding and the resurgence of war: buying time in Sri Lanka*, (pp. 12).

[50] Lee Ann Fujii. "Shades of truth and lies: Interpreting testimonies of war and violence". In: *Journal of Peace Research* 47.2 (2010), pp. 231–241, (pp. 233).

In the case of this thesis, there was a degree of concern over the researcher's identity and intentions, specifically as an academic who is simultaneously perceived as being both 'foreign' (Indian citizen) and 'local' (Tamil surname). My family name was particularly problematic as it indicated that I was from South India, a region that has vociferously denounced the treatment of Sri Lankan Tamils, despite the Indian central government's move to normalise relations and have a restricted dialogue on this contentious issue. Second, as earlier discussed, against the impended Geneva United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) session of March 2014, where the international community was to vote on the setting up of an independent inquiry commission, any research by a 'foreigner' was problematic. That the academic institution I belonged to was in Geneva thus was often an issue.

The next chapter provides some contextual information on the nature of contemporary Western and peacebuilding engagement during Sri Lankan civil war. It presents the problematique wherein despite mainstream accounts that have focused on the failure of the West mediated peace-process as a consequence of the domestic elite's instrumentalisation of ethno-nationalism, a more nuanced historical examination indicates that the resistance first emerged from the grassroots. Till the end of the conflict in 2009, this resistance has played a crucial role in shaping the government's agenda, which has depended on its support base amongst these groups in order to stay in power.

Chapter 2

Conclusion

Five years after the end of the conflict in 2009, the most recent UN Human Rights Council Resolution 25/1 of March 28th 2014 which mandated the UNHRC to conduct an external international inquiry on the war crimes committed during the last legs of civil war in 2009, are indicative that the Western aims for a liberal peace in Sri Lanka are far from over. Significantly, one day after the Resolution being passed, the Sri Lankan polity in the Southern and Western Province were to vote for their provincial councils; in this highly charged environment, the opposition had keenly worked to leverage the upcoming Resolution vote against the ruling party. In light of this, the Rajapaksa led UPFA's winning both provincial councils with 55% of the vote share (the closest next competitors, the UNP, having secured only 26% of the votes in comparison) can be considered a confirmation that the local rejection of the larger liberal peace vision continues to exist at the very grass-roots. Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa did not mince words in his post-Provincial elections victory speech, declaring that, " the victory is a fitting-reply to the anti-Sri Lankan elements.. (it) is a clear mandate by the Sri Lankan people against the UN rights resolution threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country..."[1] Parallel to this, he also reaffirmed that, "We are a nation that is enriched by a very rich humanist thinking. Therefore, false concepts of national unity or processes for peace that become active because of funds coming from abroad will not bear fruit (...)Developing concepts without knowing the history of the nation will not serve national unity. One must understand the indigenous ways and aspirations."[2]

This thesis, in discussing the failure of the more emancipatory and participatory gradient of liberal peacebuilding, has sought to highlight how like every other external process, the process of building peace through a people is also mediated by the people. That in the case of post-conflict Sri Lanka, the majority

[1] *Sri Lanka ruling party's victory is a mandate against UN resolution - President.* 30 March 2014. URL: http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14A/Mar30_1396194543CH.php.

[2] *President Mahinda Rajapaksa Addressing the National Unity Convention, at the BMICH.* July 2014. URL: http://www.president.gov.lk/speech_New.php?Id=141.

has chosen to see Rajapaksa as their voice and primary mediator in this process, brings up the question of what respecting the local mandate implies in terms of externally influencing a move towards a more inclusive peace, that would take into account the concerns of the Tamil and other minorities. A concrete operational answer to this can unfortunately not be found in critical theory, which while engaging in a much needed discursive exercise of questioning the perverse assumptions and mis-perceptions that guide seemingly universalistic discourses, is still nascent in lending itself to pragmatic policy or practitioner oriented thinking. Significant frameworks that have been developed as alternatives to the existing ' problem-solving ' orientation of peacebuilding include advocating the framework of ' hybridity,' which recognises the heterogeneity of the local which lends to the legitimacy of formal and informal ' illiberal ' structures, and thus advocates an engagement with them to produce more locally relevant structures; the notion of the ' everyday peace ' which focuses on understanding what peace entails in informal spaces of social interaction, in order to enhance the social contract between externals and the local; and the lens of 'friction' that this thesis employed, which focuses on the points that mediation of the global discourse occurs, recognizing the inherently confrontational nature of any norm transfer. In common, these frameworks question the notion of the 'local,' advocating a larger role for the recipients in shaping and implementing a contextualised peace, in recognition that internationalism has real limits. But as more moderate critics like Roland Paris highlight, much of these seemingly anti-liberal but pro-peacebuilding positions draw from thinking in the liberal paradigm to support their alternatives, leading the moderates to assert that pragmatically, there may be ' no realistic alternative to some form of liberal peacebuilding strategy. '

In terms of a stand in this large debate, this paper offers a focus on the issue of ' who ' from the international community builds peace and ' how,' to identify what an alternative if there is one - could entail. In Sri Lanka it must be stressed that while the initial local rejection stemmed from the faulty modalities of civil-peacebuilding, the spiral that ensued was compounded by the existence of a greatly divided international community, which the government further leveraged; thus, in discussing local rejection and a direction towards a realistic alternative, this paper would further like to raise the question of if the present failures occur not only on account of a disconnect in the theory of peacebuildings with existing realities, but also a disconnect among the actors who purportedly are unanimous in their interpretation and support for these different gradients. It would thus support the critical theory perspective for the need to begin by disaggregating peacebuildings, against a broader practitioner-based introspection of the context at hand, that more importantly, factors in the degree of agreement and priority given to the peacebuilding process by the different international actors involved in its implementation.

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Appendix A

Figures

Figure A.1: Aid Trend in Sri Lanka (OECD Database)

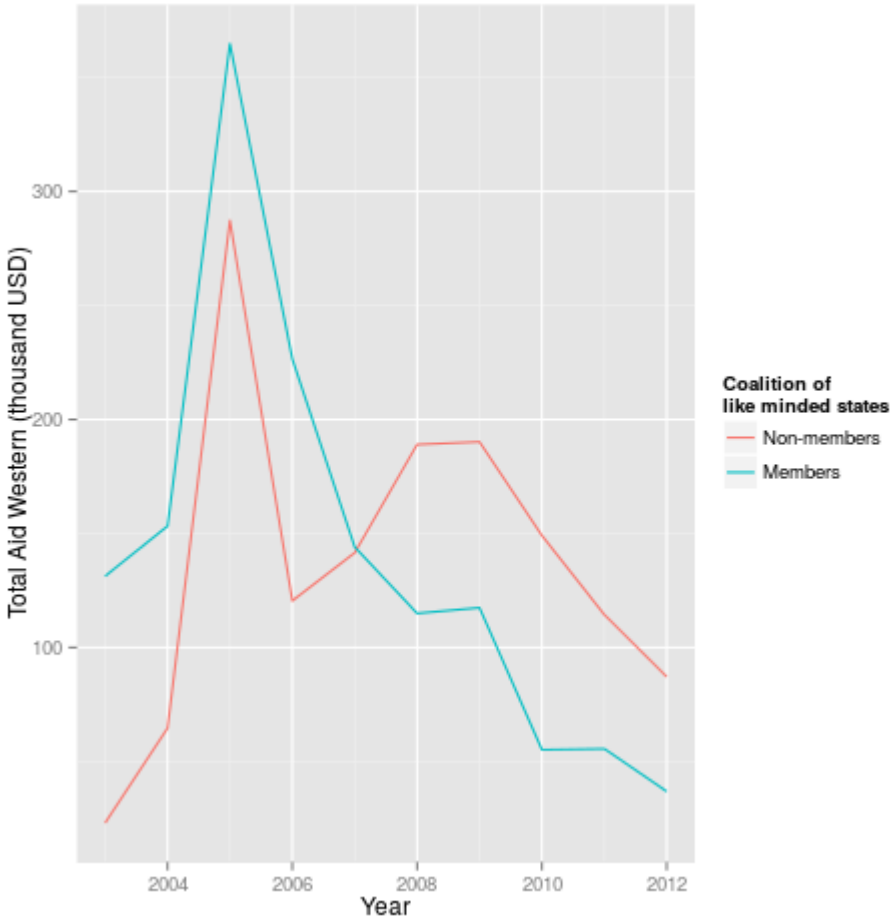
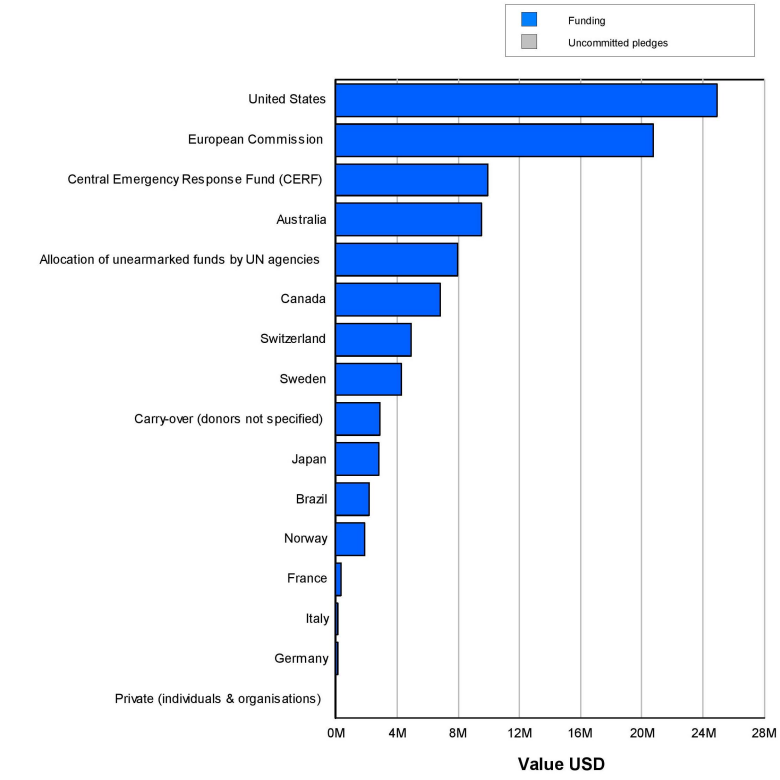


Figure A.2: OCHA Financial Tracking System; Joint Plan of Assistance to the Northern Province, Funding by Donor (2011)



* Funding = Contributions + Commitments

Contribution: the actual payment of funds or transfer of in-kind goods from the donor to the recipient entity.
Commitment: creation of a legal, contractual obligation between the donor and recipient entity, specifying the amount to be contributed.
Pledge: a non-binding announcement of an intended contribution or allocation by the donor, which does not necessarily specify which organisation it is intended for or if it is for an appeal or response plan project. In some cases, pledges are recorded early in a crisis and there is a time lag in the commitments and contributions resulting from the announcement. As soon as commitments are made from that pledge, only the remaining balance of the pledge appears in the pledge column in FTS.

Figure A.3: ' Other Humanitarian Funding, ' CLM donors and Political Strategic donors (Source: FTS data on funding to non-JPA appeals)

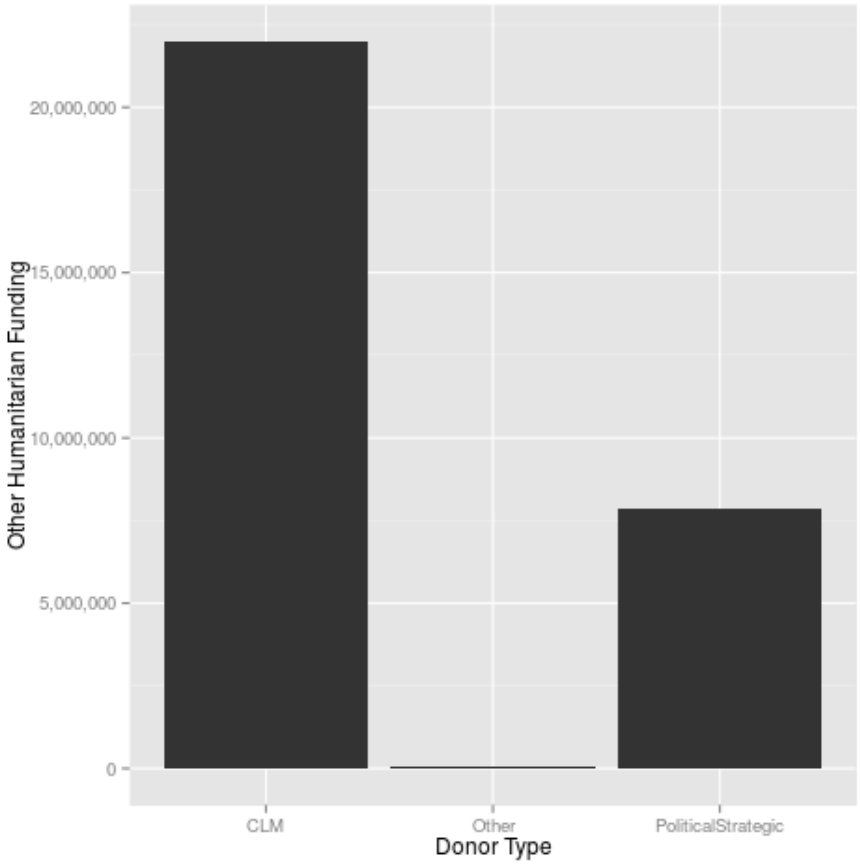
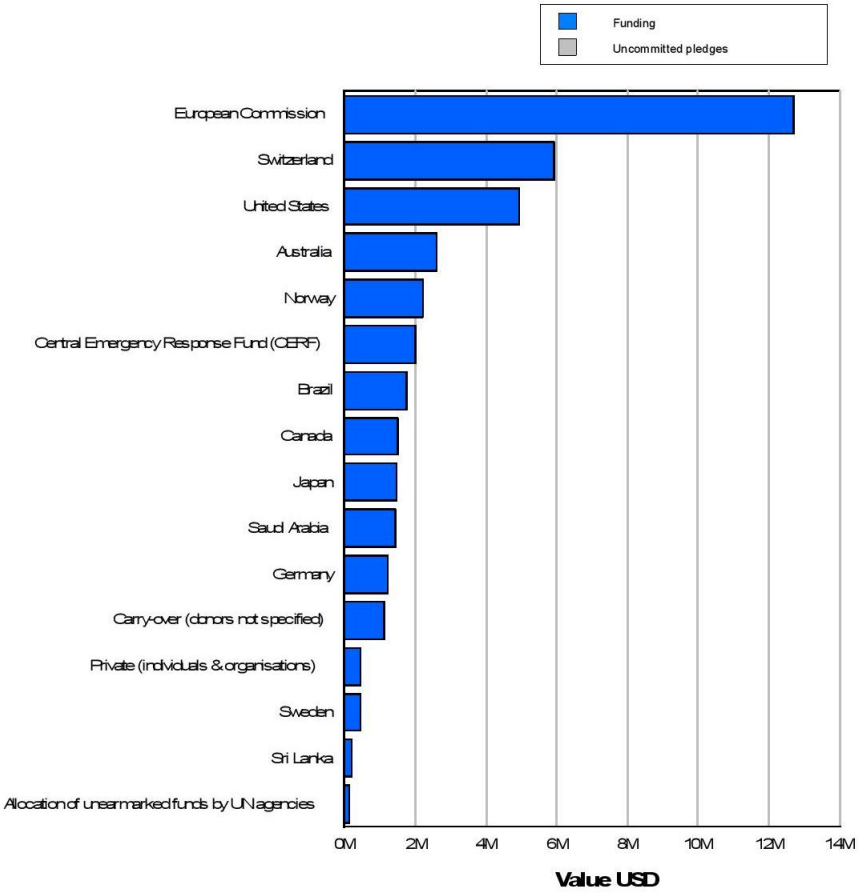


Figure A.4: OCHA Financial Tracking System; Joint Plan of Assistance to the Nothern Province, Funding by Donor (2012)



* Funding = Contributions + Commitments

Contribution: the actual payment of funds or transfer of in-kind goods from the donor to the recipient entity.
Commitment: creation of a legal, contractual obligation between the donor and recipient entity, specifying the amount to be contributed.
Pledge: a non-binding announcement of an intended contribution or allocation by the donor, which does not necessarily specify which organisation it is intended for or if it is for an appeal or response plan project. In some cases, pledges are recorded early in a crisis and there is a time lag in the commitments and contributions resulting from the announcement. As soon as commitments are made from that pledge, only the remaining balance of the pledge appears in the pledge column in FTS.

Figure A.5: Other Humanitarian Funding, ' CLM donors and Political Strategic donors (Source: FTS data on funding to non-JPA appeals 2012)

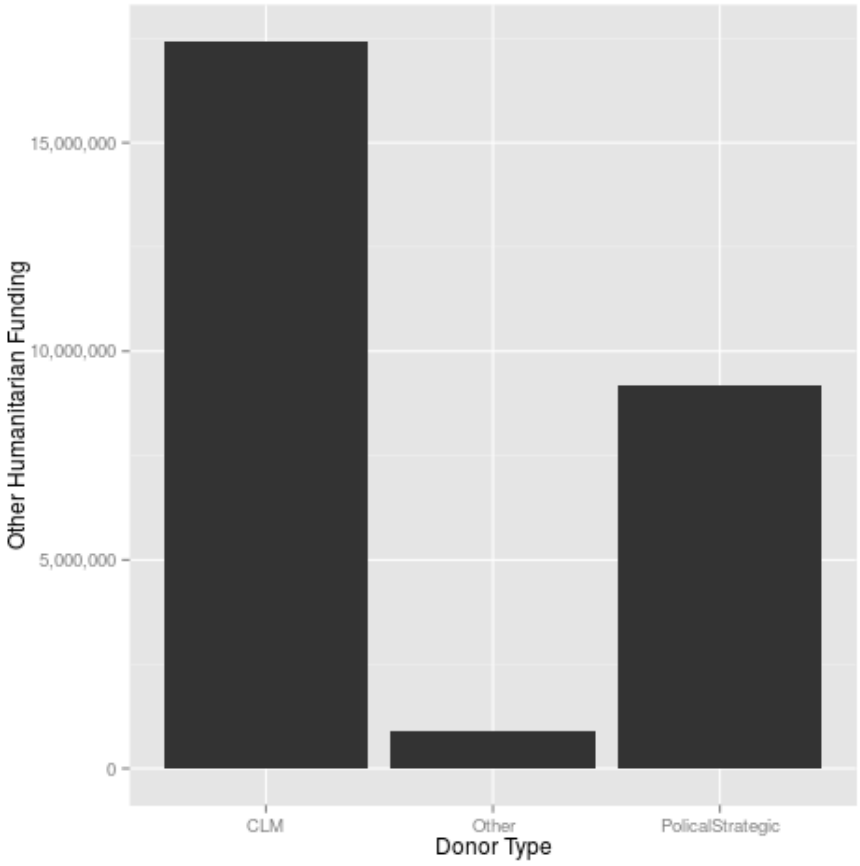


Figure A.6: Development Partners Forum Structure (Source: DPF Secretariat)