Between Negotiation Support, Relationship Building and Propaganda.

The Contribution of the Peace Secretariats in Sri Lanka

to Conflict Transformation

Dissertation

zur Erlangung des Grades einer Doktorin der Philosophie

am Fachbereich Sozialwissenschaften

der Universität Hamburg

vorgelegt von

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aus Berlin

Hamburg 2012

Datum der Disputation: 03. April 2013

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Berlin,   _____

                                                          Ulrike Hopp-Nishanka

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List of Abbreviations

AED	Academy for Educational Development
APRC	All Party Representative Committee
CFA	Ceasefire Agreement
EU	European Union
ICG	International Crisis Group
ISGA	Interim Self-Governing Authority
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, People's Liberation Front
JHU	Jathika Hela Urumaya, National Sinhalese Heritage
n.d.	not dated
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
n.pag.	no page number
NUA	National Unity Alliance
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
PS	Peace Secretariat
PSM	Peace Secretariat for the Muslims
PM	Prime Minister
P-TOMS	Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure
SCOPP	Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process
SDN	Sub-committee on De-escalation and Normalisation
SGI	Sub-committee on Gender Issues
SIHRN	Sub-committee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs
SPM	Sub-committee on Political Matters
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLMC	Sri Lanka Muslim Congress
SLMM	Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission
SOMA	Status of Mission Agreement
UN	United Nations
UNP	United National Party
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
TNA	Tamil National Alliance

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is inspired by experiences and questions that originated from my work with the Berghof Foundation and its partner organisations in Sri Lanka. The research process helped me to understand and answer many of these questions, but the overall human mystery of intractable conflict on this beautiful island remains. While the research concerns very 'technical' aspects of transforming conflict, it is deeply rooted in the search for justice, freedom from fear, and peace. The dissertation's first thoughts were formulated when another woman, Kumari Kumaragamage, wrote these lines, originally in Sinhala and translated by Kusal Perera:

The Exodus

Saw tiny tots,
Frail with thirst and hunger,
Drenched with dust and dirt,
Pleading for a haven,
From a scorching hot sun.

Saw vast numbers,
Amidst raining fiery fire,
Burning with grief and hunger
Searching for affection
In seven rows, of barbed wire.

18 June 2009

The inspiring and challenging time in Sri Lanka and my extraordinary opportunity to reflect on them would not have been possible without the influence and support of Dr. Norbert Ropers who invited me to work with him in Sri Lanka, and without the generosity of my colleagues at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), who first granted me leave to work in Sri Lanka for three years and then allowed me to use my parental leave to write this dissertation. Prof. Dr. Dr. Hajo Giessmann smoothed the way for my academic adventure and with the greatest confidence and the lightest supervisory touch guided my research and, together with Prof. Dr. Cord Jakobeit, agreed to review the dissertation.

In the process of research I have enjoyed the trust, honesty and inspiration from my interview partners and other resource persons, who will remain unnamed. Please be assured that I am most grateful to you for sharing your insights and concerns with me.

This dissertation was written under relatively unusual academic circumstances: from my desk at home in Colombo. This deprived me of the otherwise common academic environment of a university, which surely would have benefited my work. I am grateful, however, to many colleagues in the field of conflict transformation and peacebuilding who discussed with me ideas and concepts or commented on parts of the thesis: Beatrix Austin, Nirmanusan Balasundaram, Sunil Bastian, Susanna Campbell, Véronique Dudouet, John Gooneratne, Hannes Siebert, Jannie Lilja, Kathrin Lorenz, Camilla Orjuela, Thania Paffenholz, Norbert Ropers, Barbara Unger and Paul van Tongeren. In addition, I enjoyed the company of my fellow travellers at the Berghof PhD colloquium in Berlin as well as the support and encouragement of my doctoral 'sister-in-arms' Katy Agg in Colombo.

Cede, aka Claus-Dieter Wild, and Katharina Gotzler at the Berghof library and resource centre have to be thanked for their untiring support with scanning and copying, help with literature research, good ideas and good spirits from a distance. Katy Agg and Kathrin Lorenz helped out when access to literature was difficult. Mubashir Ahmed Mir and Till Moeller from Berghof Foundation provided most helpful instructions on citation management software, and Beatrix Austin as my patient style guide on how to use it well. Kaveena Siluvaimuthu tirelessly helped with the visualisation, and Judy Waters Pasqualge was a wonderful copyeditor and a great assurance during 'those last days'.

Without Stella and Susan, my quiet support team at home, this research would have been impossible. Thanks for keeping the household going and entertaining my sons during working hours and whenever I "just needed another 10 minutes".

My two amazing sons Alexander and Aaron have to be thanked for making sure that after 'those extra 10 minutes' an entirely different perspective on the world around us would take over and make me forget 'this book that Mama is writing'. This book is dedicated to you: may you one day call a peaceful Sri Lanka your home, without soldiers, poor and angry people on its streets.

I also have to thank my parents who always knew that I should write a dissertation and who let me embark on a plane to Sri Lanka seven years ago. That I did not come back soon after is mostly due to my husband and creative companion Nish. He is also

responsible for making this dissertation happen in his very own way, pushing, encouraging, grounding, paying all the bills for this luxurious time of reading and reflection, not listening to any whining and grumbling, and firmly believing that it can be done, that I can do it.

Thanks to all of you for making this enlightening journey possible.

Ulrike Hopp-Nishanka

Colombo, July 13, 2012

Part I: Research Question, Background and Design

Chapter 1 Introduction

Now I have played some rugby football in my youth and I know that the second row in a rugby scrum is where the power and weight lies. It is the second row that provides the shoving and the pushing that eventually helps to win the ball in the scrums. Similarly, in negotiations, it is the second row that provides the background papers, the options and the research that the first row must depend on to make their political decisions.[1]

While the LTTE's Peace Secretariat was flattened by bombing during the hostilities, that of the government continued to function through the fighting, albeit in a much diminished role. The government has not given a reason for its closure of the Peace Secretariat [after the end of the war] … It has indicated that it doesn't have use for a Peace Secretariat.[2]

These quotes refer to the peace secretariats that were established by the main conflict parties to assist the peace talks of 2002 and 2003 in Sri Lanka; they display a wide spectrum of perceptions and ideas about these secretariats, depending on the perspective and expectations of the observers. While the peace process of 2002 and 2003 is widely seen as an exemplar of liberal peacebuilding, Sri Lanka in 2006 and the years after is often described as a "model for successful counterinsurgency and regime stabilization" (Goodhand & Korf 2011, p.2; Jalal 2011). As will be argued in this research, the peace secretariats, and particularly that of the government, were a part of both endeavours.

A peace secretariat is defined in this research as a unit within a larger organisation or an independent organisation that has been established by and is closely affiliated with at least one of the conflict parties. This agent implements a mandate with the purpose of supporting the party with services relating to the negotiation, dialogue or mediation process, or the implementation of process results before, during or after official peace talks.[3]

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[1] Jayantha Dhanapala, a former secretary general of SCOPP, on the role of the Sri Lankan government's peace secretariat; see Dhanapala (2007b, p.1).

[2] Part of a journalist's analysis of the closure of the government secretariat in July 2009 (Ramachandran 2009b).

[3] This definition will be developed in chapter 2 and refined at the end of chapter 3.

This research covers the life span of the peace secretariats established in Sri Lanka in the course of the peace talks that began in 2002.[4] By the end of July 2009, two of the three peace secretariats ceased to exist. The LTTE secretariat was physically destroyed through shelling of the office in early October 2008, and while activities continue from abroad the LTTE has de facto ceased to exist with the end of the war and the killing of its head in May 2009. The government's secretariat was closed at the end of July 2009.[5]

The concern of this research is to understand the peace secretariats' contributions to the peace negotiations and beyond that to the transformation of the conflict in Sri Lanka. How can these contributions and possible limitations be explained? This research will argue that peace secretariats, while being established with the purpose of negotiation support, can contribute to conflict transformation, if their mandates and self-concept, or organisational identity, allow for transformative action.

This argument will be developed based on empirical research on the three peace secretariats in Sri Lanka, namely, the government's Secretariat for the Coordination of the Peace Process (SCOPP), the Peace Secretariat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE PS) and the Peace Secretariat for the Muslims (PSM). The empirical findings will be analysed with the help of a conceptual framework developed on the basis of academic literature from various disciplines, informing international negotiations, peace and conflict studies as well as organisation theories. As a result, this research will contribute both to answering the research questions regarding the concrete cases at hand and to theorising the transformative contributions of negotiation support structures such as peace secretariats.

The text is organised in the four parts below; each chapter begins with a detailed introduction.

Part 1, consisting of four sections, offers an introduction to the subject, the motivation for the research and research question, the research design and methodology. It also

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[4] The peace secretariats were established and closed at different times, the details can be found in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

[5] In the beginning of 2011 the government peace secretariat's website was reactivated by the last secretary general in his capacity as Presidential Adviser on Reconciliation in order to communicate government initiatives regarding reconciliation, see http://www.peaceinsrilanka.org/home accessed on June 06, 2011. These activities, however, will not be discussed here.

presents a short introduction to the Sri Lankan conflict, providing background for the empirical cases.

Part 2 presents the theoretical and conceptual framework. The conceptual framework is built on two theoretical pillars, covered in two chapters on conflict transformation and agency. Throughout the text, systemic thinking has left its mark in the understanding of both conflict transformation and organisational theories. The thesis, however, does not contain a separate chapter on systemic thinking.[6] At the end of part 2, the overall conceptual framework is summarised and operationalised in chapter 4; it will be used in the following to present the empirical findings.

Part 3 consists of four chapters and presents the empirical findings and their analysis. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 deal with the three peace secretariats. After a brief introduction on the background of the secretariat, its functions according to the mandate and its contribution to conflict transformation are discussed in detail and explained with a closer view on interactions and identity of the secretariats. Chapter 8 summarises the findings and thus prepares the ground for answering the research questions on the basis of the empirical findings.

Part 4 comprises the synthesis of theory and empirical findings. On the basis of the empirical findings, chapter 9 returns to the conceptual framework to explain the empirical findings and discuss the assumptions of the research. In the end, options for third-party support to peace secretariats are discussed. Chapter 10 goes beyond the research questions: the findings are contextualised; open questions and suggestions for further research are offered.

This first chapter provides an introduction to the research. In the first section, the research question, underlying assumptions and author's motivation are explained. The second section reviews the state of academic research and practitioners' literature on peace secretariats. The third section provides information on the peace process of 2002. Finally, section 1.4 explains the research design and methodology.

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[6] For an overview on systemic thinking in conflict transformation see Wils et al. (2006) and the edited volume of Körppen et al. (2011) which also contains chapters on the peace process in Sri Lanka. Both are Berghof Foundation publications, aiming at an innovative understanding of conflict transformation (Debiel et al. 2011). For a discussion of agency in social systems see Archer (1996); for an overview of systemic thinking and organisational studies see Millett (1998).

1.1 Peace Secretariats – *terra nova* or *fata morgana* in Conflict Transformation? Motivation and Research Question

The ending of an engagement in conflict transformation activities and projects usually sees internal reflection processes by the work team and reporting towards partners and donors. Part of this process is often a reflection on the different partners' roles and contributions to the joint conflict transformation effort. In the context of a faltering peace process and return to violence, these questions often carry a disappointed and self-critical undertone (Burke & Mulakala 2011). What could we have done differently? Did we really make use of all our potential and opportunities?

This was also the case with the team of the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies, Sri Lanka Office, when the organisation's work ended in 2008.[7] The engagement began in 2001 on invitation by the then government, to accompany the peace process and the official negotiations with a wide range of activities on different tracks and issues. Berghof's work in the following years witnessed the various turns and changes of the peace process: the years of negotiations, hope and even euphoria, the no-peace-no-war years of scepticism and frustration, and the return to war. The Berghof team also experienced increasing resistance to and criticism of its work[8]; the organisation's office was closed six months before the official end of the project in December 2008.

Against this background, some of the questions regarding the peace secretariats remained open, and answers did not reflect sufficiently their special role and contribution in the peace process.[9]

Looking back at the years 2002 to 2009 with its failed peace process and the war, it could be argued that there had never been a genuine commitment to talks and that both negotiating parties were just buying time to prepare for the next war. If so, have

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[7] The author served as deputy director of the project from May 2005 to December 2008. An overview of the approach and activities of the project is provided in the report "Space for Peace" by the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies (2008).

[8] This was particularly the case regarding two elements that had been accepted by the earlier UNF government but did not fit into the new war-for-peace approach of the years 2006 and beyond: transformative engagement with the LTTE and the promotion of power-sharing among all communities.

[9] The peace secretariats played a significant role in Berghof's work, both as partners in the conduct of joint workshop activities as well as in capacity building activities and advisory services, which focused on enhancing the expertise and engagement of all stakeholders for a non-violent solution of the conflict.

the peace secretariats, being established in order to support the respective negotiating parties, been a *fata morgana*, an illusion of the conflict parties' genuine commitment to a negotiated settlement and political solution? Consequently, when the talks failed and the war started the peace secretariats turned into 'war secretariats',[10] providing – as the title of the thesis suggests – a propaganda-machine for each warring party.

Or, assuming that there was such commitment of the parties at least in the beginning of the peace talks, what was their peace secretariats' role in the negotiations and beyond that in the peace process? Did they 'only'[11] take notes, book flights and fulfil other relevant secretarial tasks, or did they also contribute topical advice through preparing political positions? Given the fact that there were peace secretariats within each negotiating party, did they perhaps build constructive relationships with each other and other stakeholders? What did the secretariats do when the negotiations broke down? Could under certain circumstances the peace secretariats be considered a *terra nova*, a relatively undiscovered but promising new terrain of supporting conflict settlement and conflict transformation?

How should the secretariats then be understood in light of the immense criticism regarding procedural and structural issues of the peace talks? One criticism is that the peace process depended too much on Track 1? If so, how did this limit the role of the peace secretariats to be 'their masters' voices' and communicate and propagate their positions? Or did the peace secretariats perhaps play a complementing role, e.g., reaching out to the other tracks in support of Track 1 efforts? Was there space to explore alternative scenarios for a political solution, or to work 'behind the scenes' on confidence building?

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[10] This change of name was suggested in an opinion article in a Sri Lankan English-language newspaper at the end of 2007 when the war had re-escalated significantly. The suggestion served as criticism of the government peace secretariat's involvement in a debate on statements of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (Jayawardena 2007; Uyangoda 2007a). The then secretary general of the peace secretariat responded that this title was rather suitable for the LTTE peace secretariat since it had, among other reasons, "proudly circulated" photographs of suicide cadres and the LTTE Air Force prior to an attack (SCOPP 2007, n.pag).

[11] This is not to degrade secretarial support, which is essential to the negotiating teams. From the perspective of potential conflict transformative contributions, however, the secretarial work would require additional activities.

The author's personal effort to understand the secretariats' role and their limitations led to an initial literature search in order to discover the impressions of others; the meagre results of that search inspired this dissertation.

Literature on negotiations, mediation and dialogue provides a vast amount of insights into the effectiveness of different negotiation settings, ways of supporting dialogue and assistance of talks through third-party mediation efforts. One aspect hardly covered concerns support organisations for Track 1 negotiations, although they can be found in peace processes around the world. For unclear reasons, these efforts have been documented in only a very few cases, and there is no substantive work that analyses the secretariats' role and contribution in peace processes.

This research wants to fill this gap in practical and academic reflection through an in-depth case study of such support structures in one particular peace process. The value of the dissertation goes beyond the documentation of the structures' work and their adaptations over time; it helps theorise the role of support structures in peace negotiations and their contribution to conflict transformation. Both stakeholders and third-party actors from the international community placed high expectations on the organisations, as this research shows. Especially at Track 1, their very existence was often interpreted as evidence of the parties' 'serious' engagement in the process. What is not clear is their actual relevance in each situation beyond political symbolism, and their vulnerability to day-to-day political influence, changes in the parties' negotiation tactics and the overall volatility of the peace process.

The guiding questions of this research therefore are:

- What is the contribution of peace secretariats in the peace process in general and to conflict transformation in particular?
- How can their contributions and possible limitations be explained?

These research questions have to be qualified to a certain extent in order to make clear what they do *not* intend to explore. Most importantly, this research does not measure outcome or impact of the peace secretariats' contributions; this research does not intend to conduct an evaluation of the peace secretariats or of the support that they received from third parties.

The perspective of this research is rather one of explanation: how do the peace secretariats and other domestic actors that engage with the secretariats see their contribution, and how do they explain limitations and changes?

Since this research aims at exploring and explaining the role and meaning of the peace secretariats, the different perspectives of interview partners need to be respected. As often in conflict research, these different narratives of stakeholders and observers present conflicting perspectives (Policzer 2005). This is particularly so since the peace secretariats and their principals represent the warring conflict parties, one the government, one a non-state armed group, and a third one another stakeholder and party to the violent conflict.[12] Thus, there will be dissenting viewpoints on manifold aspects of the discussion here, with changing perspectives in the context of the political and conflict dynamics during the years 2002-2009.

In this analysis, the researcher deviates from the earlier mentioned, predominant scepticism regarding the conflict parties' genuineness to make peace. Here, the general hypothesis is that all parties at certain times were serious in their negotiation efforts and at other times considered alternative options. This realistic interpretation deviates from the current discourse in Sri Lanka regarding the peace process, which sets the scene for this research (see section 1.4).

The inquiry is guided by several assumptions. They are outlined here briefly since they inform the research process, and are developed in the theoretical chapters.[13] The assumptions regard the peace secretariats' potential (assumption 1) and describe the secretariats' positions and mandates, which define their potential significance and dependency (assumptions 2 and 3). The potential contribution to conflict transformation, or the variable of this research, appears to be determined by various 'internal' and 'external' factors that were established during the preparatory phase of the research (assumptions 4, 4a and 4 b).

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[12] The dissenting perspectives begin with the terms referring to the conflict parties. While the term government is relatively uncontested "although the legitimacy implied by the term is often a major point of issue in the conflict" (Zartman 1995, p.5), this is not the case for the opposing party in internal violent conflict. None of the various terms that express intentions (i.e., freedom fighters) as well as criticism (i.e., terrorists) is without criticism from at least one side of the conflict. Here the term non-state armed group, or shortly armed group, will be used since it expresses the contestation of the government's legitimate monopoly of violence and its authority, as well as the organisational form of a non-state entity that encompasses organisational sub-units with combatant and non-combatant purposes.

[13] Chapter 1.4 explains the research design and sequencing in detail. Here, suffice to say that due to the inductive approach the empirical preceded the theoretical research.

The assumptions are:

1. Peace secretariats have the potential to be change agents for conflict transformation.

2. Peace secretariats hold a particular position within and between the negotiating parties that implies a potentially significant influence on the negotiation process as well as on conflict transformation.

3. The mandate of peace secretariats as support structures for negotiations is defined by the negotiators, based on their respective strategies and on third-party advice, and is interpreted and implemented by the peace secretariats.

4. Both external context-related factors and internal organisational characteristics determine the organisation's contributions to conflict transformation.

4a. Context-related factors encompass the form of government, the type of violent conflict and the conflict phase.

4b. Internal characteristics are expressed in the organisation's identity, with traits such as proximity to the principal, political alignment/identification, professionalism and access to resources.

The research questions and assumptions guide the following discussion of the state of research.

1.2 Peace Secretariats as Negotiation Support Organisations and Infrastructures for Peace – State of Research and Relevance

As mentioned earlier, scholarly literature on peace negotiations and conflict transformation rarely mention peace secretariats. Similarly, only a few third-party practitioners note the importance of such support structures. Baechler argues that the most powerful and influential actors within the conflict parties are often difficult to access since "prime ministers, presidential advisers, army generals, field commanders, etc. do not often participate in conflict transformation seminars and interactive learning workshops" (Baechler 2008, p.55). In his view, peace secretariats provide an entry point with a high capacity to influence the decision makers, e.g., "in Nepal, there was a kind of second track task force with the Peace Secretariat (later Ministry) which prepared

some of the core issues well in advance. The parties could make use of non-papers, concepts, proposals, etc. when they saw it as being useful and adequate" (ibid., p.62).

Likewise, SCOPP's former Secretary General Dhanapala opined – as highlighted already in chapter 1 – that "in negotiations, it is the second row that provides the background papers, the options and the research that the first row must depend on to make their political decisions. At international summit meetings it is the quiet unostentatious work of the 'sherpas' that lays the foundation for the success or failure of the leaders" (Dhanapala 2007b, p.1).

Besides content-related work, peace secretariats also provide space for communication and relationship building between parties, which is essential for progress in peace talks and for crisis management. For example, the South African National Peace Secretariat coordinated the work and built capacities of the regional and local peace committees, which were instrumental in containing violence that otherwise would have increased (Gastrow 1995). As Ball and Spies note in a study on the peace committees, virtually every peace worker interviewed maintained that the structures had "saved lives" (Ball & Spies 1998, p.20).

In general, the South African National Peace Secretariat established in the context of the 1991 peace accord offers relevant insights (Marks 2000; Spies 2002). As some of the interviewees in this research noted, the South African experience was a model for establishing peace secretariats in Sri Lanka (Interview 1, 14, 19). In South Africa, however, the National Peace Secretariat was established during constitutional negotiations in 1991 when escalating violence threatened to derail the process (Spies 2002). It was part of several structures created at the national level in order to implement the National Peace Accord. The secretariat supported the National Peace Commission in monitoring the Accord's implementation and was at the top of a wider and decentralised structure of peace committees that helped with conflict mitigation and dispute settlement at the regional and local levels. Another exceptionality of the South African National Peace Secretariat and the other peace structures was their independence, for some an inspiration in the Sri Lankan situation where ideas first concerned the establishment of an independent and inclusive secretariat to serve all parties. As the empirical findings of this research show, such a joint structure was impossible in the context of the peace negotiations between the government and the LTTE, although a ceasefire agreement had been signed already.

These differences point to the need for a more differentiated understanding of peace secretariats as organised negotiation support, and this research will offer insights on

how such an advanced conceptualisation could look. There are three elements on which such a concept can be built: the few existing case studies on peace secretariats and other organisational forms of negotiation support; a small body of references to organisational structures in conflict transformation literature; and the evolving concept of infrastructures for peace.[14] All three are reviewed in the following sections.

A word of caution is required: while the text at times draws parallels or compares aspects of the diverse structures found in the literature and the Sri Lankan organisations, there is no intention to generalise structures. As always in conflict transformation, there exists no one-size-fits-all model.

1.2.1 Organised negotiation support

Organised negotiation support concerns organisations established in order to assist the parties with the preparation, conduct and implementation of peace negotiations. These may be called peace secretariats or otherwise; and while every negotiating party can use secretarial support, there is a notable dearth of literature on such organisations, both in terms of their activities as well as organisational details.[15] This lack of reflection extends to more general questions regarding the support for conflict parties in peace negotiations, e.g., through capacity building, despite assumptions that such support might be helpful (Conciliation Resources 2009; Walton 2011).

One exception is a brief guideline prepared by an international non-profit law firm, the Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG 2006). The guide provides an overview of types, functions and organisational features of peace secretariats. According to PILPG, "state-sponsored peace secretariats may take the form of national institutions, multi-national institutions, government ministries, or commissions. Their func-

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[14] The focus here is on national, domestic institutions as compared to international structures for conflict mitigation and resolution, such as the United Nations, OSCE, European Union or similar regional co-operative structures. These regional and international institutions are relatively well researched, and this research does not attempt to provide an overview of the extensive literature (see for example on the UN Peck 1998 and Doyle & Sambanis 2006; on European examples Siedschlag 2000; on the OSCE Schlotter 2002).

[15] Even the before-mentioned South African peace architecture and its organisations – despite the vast body of literature – are not examined sufficiently concerning their functions and impact, as Baumann highlights (2008, p.119).

tions may include facilitating communication between conflicting groups, coordinating relationships with the media, and implementing negotiated settlements" (ibid., p.1). Chapter 2 of this research discusses these functions. It should be noted that in contrast to the PILPG publication, this research does not concern state-sponsored organisations only; the three peace secretariats are established by a government, a non-state armed group, and a political party coalition, respectively. A defining element here is that the organisations have been established and are mandated by, and closely affiliated with, at least one of the conflict parties.

The PILPG overview distinguishes between national and multinational peace secretariats that address conflict within a single political and legal system or in a regional context, respectively. Examples mentioned are national peace secretariats in Nepal, Guatemala and South Africa as well as the regional peace secretariats of the International Authority of Development (IGAD) working on the conflicts in Sudan and Somalia (PILPG 2006, p.2). The focus of this research is on peace secretariats working on intra-state conflict.

On-going research of the Peace Appeal Foundation and Berghof Peace Support reveals that there are more than 30 peace processes in which the parties have established structures in order to facilitate peace negotiations and monitor the implementation of agreements. The majority of these structures are government organisations, often with a mandate from several or even all parties and mostly established after at least a ceasefire or a peace agreement was reached. Examples can be found in various African and Central American countries, e.g., in El Salvador's National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, and in Asia, as in the Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities between the Philippines government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, or the Nepalese Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction that was established after the peace agreement. The latter was borne out of the government's peace secretariat, which assisted the peace talks between the government and Nepalese Maoists (Thapa 2007). In some cases, the organisations include representatives of international actors, such as the Joint Ceasefire Commission in Burundi that involves, apart from the main stakeholders, representatives of the United Nations, Organisation of African Unity and the Regional Peace Initiative for Burundi (Jackson 2006).[16]

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[16] A variation of inclusive structures in a peace process is organisations that support national dialogue outside legislative bodies. Examples can be found in diverse situations, such as the national dialogue in Lebanon or the National Conference in Liberia, an association of political parties, religious bodies and prominent citizens (Common Space Initiative 2011).

Only a few cases are documented where formal structures were established in order to specifically assist non-state armed groups. One example besides the Sri Lankan LTTE peace secretariat is the Palestine Negotiation Affairs Department of the PLO. It was established in 1994 to support the implementation of the interim agreement between the PLO and the government of Israel and continues to support the peace negotiations.[17]

Altogether, it appears that the Sri Lankan situation of three peace secretariats for three stakeholders in a negotiation process presents a unique situation. Likewise, this research presents a unique topic since the existing literature – both in terms of case studies and in terms of general negotiation studies – hardly considers the "workings" of peace secretariats in detail.

1.2.2 Organised conflict transformation support

Compared to negotiation studies, conflict transformation literature conceptualises organisations and networks that help promote conflict transformation significantly more. The focus of this overview is narrow since literature on conflict transformation actors covers a wide spectrum, from states and inter-governmental organisations, development and humanitarian organisations, and international NGOs concerned with conflict prevention and transformation, to parties to the conflict and other relevant groups within affected societies, as Miall distinguishes the four groups (2004, p.80). Interestingly, literature on the latter category of local actors is relatively limited compared to that on the other categories, in which the role and approaches of third-party interventions, impact of interventions and good practices are discussed in great detail.[18]

Most literature on domestic actors concerns those that promote peace. While most literature attends to the various actors within civil society (see for example the overview on civil society in conflict transformation in Fischer 2006, 2011) and discusses

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[17] The department received assistance from the Negotiation Support Unit that was established in 1999 to improve the Palestine Authority's preparedness for talks. The support unit, strongly funded by several European governments and administrated by the British Adam Smith Institute, was disbanded in February 2011 after some of its staff leaked information to the television station Al Jazeera (Milne & Black 2011).

[18] In Miall's overview, for example, roughly one A4 page is dedicated to each of the three 'external' actor groups, while the domestic actors are discussed on a quarter page (Miall 2004, pp.12-15).

the contribution of non-governmental organisations (Richmond & Carey 2005; Paffen-holz 2010) to conflict transformation and peacebuilding, relatively little is said about the conflict parties themselves. According to Miall, there are "cases of 'embedded third-parties' who emerge out of conflict parties and play a significant role in opening channels of dialogue and opening political space" (2004, p.14). These can be individual persons or groups that make a difference in their respective conflict party; their initiative, however, is often ad hoc and the conflict parties usually do not institution-alise their activities in order to strengthen their influence. Conflict transformation litera-ture, nevertheless, is greatly concerned with supporting such transformative actors and with strengthening the collaboration and networking (Ricigliano 2003) between all relevant actors in order to enhance their cumulative impact (Chigas & Woodrow 2009).[19]

One specific form of organisation may be found at the grassroots and middle level of society – peace commissions (Lederach 1997, 2001) or, as other authors prefer, peace forums (Odendaal 2010). These concern any "inclusive forum operating at sub-national level" that works with methods of "dialogue, promotion of mutual understand-ing and trust-building, as well as inclusive, constructive problem-solving and joint ac-tion to prevent violence" (ibid., p.3). While there are also informal organisations estab-lished by civil society, the focus is here on formal structures with a mandate through a peace agreement, as in the case of the South African peace committees (Marks 2002). While Odendaal points out that peace forums can contribute to improved com-munication between the conflict parties, support joint monitoring of violence and facili-tate dialogue and reconciliation, their contribution is limited by the national-level impo-sitions: "if the national political context makes peace impossible, it is unreasonable to expect miracles" (Odendaal 2010, p.4). This resonates with the questions posed above regarding the role of the peace secretariats, especially since the author high-lights the risk of formal, national-level mandates by the conflict parties leading to po-litical manipulation.

As with the literature on peace secretariats, studies on local peace commissions from such diverse conflict contexts as South Africa, Kenya, Nepal and Macedonia, show that organisational aspects are relevant: independence and inclusive staff composition are highlighted as well as credible leadership with the 'right' dose of power and con-nectedness (Odendaal & Olivier 2008). Building on experiences with reconciliation

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[19] Chapter 2.3 offers an introduction to conflict transformation concepts and, for example, the different societal levels or Tracks in conflict transformation.

commissions in Central America, Wehr and Lederach (1991) developed the concept of 'insider-partials', which provide these qualities and can thus serve as mediators from within as well as ideal leaders of peace forums (Odendaal & Olivier 2008, p.14). Furthermore, in order to achieve the necessary commitment by all stakeholders, the staff should include not only peace-promoting individuals with moderate viewpoints. Rather, a mix of "hawks and doves" (ibid., p.14) is required; this creates an unavoidable tension in the organisation.

Altogether, while different from peace secretariats in their functions and role, peace commissions and forums might offer interesting insights into the organisational limitations and underline the assumption of this research, which considers internal characteristics of the peace secretariats as a determinant of their contribution to conflict transformation.

One of the three success criteria for peace forums – besides local ownership and external support – is their embeddedness in a national peace architecture, or infrastructure (Odendaal 2010). The concept of a peace infrastructure again goes back to Lederach who, building on experiences in Nicaragua and South Africa, posited that conflict transformation requires a "house of peace [that] relies on a foundation of multiple actors and activities" (1997, p.xvi), and establishes a network of actors, skills and relationships necessary for transformative collaboration. This concept is developed further in the following, third area of research.

1.2.3 Infrastructures and architectures for peace

As van Tongeren notes, Lederach's initial understanding of peace infrastructure does not refer to a rigid structure but to a "platform for change: a functional network that would span across the divisions and levels of society and that would ensure optimum collaboration between the main stakeholders" (van Tongeren 2011a, p.401). Nevertheless, recent concepts using the term infrastructure or architecture give more attention to the structural, organisational elements. These concepts constitute the third area of research that might be relevant for the discussion here.

As van Tongeren traces in various UN reports, the term 'infrastructure for peace' found its way into official documents in the years 2002-2006 (van Tongeren 2011a, 2011b). These documents highlight the need for a national architecture and domestic capacities both in order to prevent violent conflict and to build peace after war.

A concept paper published by the UN Non-governmental Liaison Service takes a comprehensive approach, and considers international actors and the overall national government and non-governmental structures to be part of an infrastructure for peace. National structures include the judiciary, legislature and executive, as well as the financial and penal systems, as all elements are needed to promote justice and fairness (Dress 2005, p.4). Similarly, the idea of a peace architecture, which designs and arranges the multiplicity of structures and processes involved in a peace process, encompasses all relevant actors (Reychler 2002; Reychler & Langer 2006).[20]

Taking a narrower approach, recent discussions of UNDP, UN DPA and others describe the national infrastructure for peace as a "dynamic network of interdependent structures, mechanisms, resources, values, and skills which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to conflict prevention and peace-building in a society" (Kumar 2011, p.385), a definition developed by practitioners in African countries and close to Lederach's understanding. The network, however, is often supported by concrete organisations at different levels in society: local and regional peace forums are part of the structure as much as national-level organisations, e.g., units within a ministry, or a even a dedicated Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation, as in Nepal.

The value of these structures lies in complementing and, at times, substituting for external mediation support that is not suitable or sufficient in all conflict situations; moreover, they reflect a growing ownership and commitment to build internal structures for peace, as Kumar argues (ibid.). The multi-level engagement of all stakeholders not only supports peacemaking but also helps to maintain security and enables development, as the World Bank argues in its 2011 World Development Report (World Bank 2011, p.189).

The two pioneering country cases of Ghana and Kenya build the starting point in gathering the experiences of national architectures, but there are more examples and the concept is still a work in progress (Hopp-Nishanka 2012).[21]

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[20] The terms architecture and infrastructure are used in some of these 'early' texts intermittently, without a clear differentiation. Both evoke, even if not intended, the notion of a master plan or blue print for establishing structures. Later documents and discussions highlight repeatedly that such a blue print cannot exist, and infrastructures should ideally evolve out of existing structures and develop from bottom to top. See van Tongeren (2011a), and the discussion at a meeting in Berlin on August 25, 2011 on "Multi-stakeholder Engagement on Infrastructures for Peace" on invitation of GPPAC and the Global Peace-building Strategy.

[21] Kumar (2011) portrays 15 cases of infrastructures for peace that have been established up to mid-2011 with the assistance of UNDP.

As will be elaborated in more detail in section 2.2, peace secretariats can potentially be part of a national infrastructure, perhaps even providing the focal point at the national level, given their access to negotiating teams and the conflict parties' leadership. There are, however, a number of challenges for peace secretariats in such a role, since more independence and inclusiveness are required than the peace secretariats were endowed with in Sri Lanka. This points to critical design questions as the organisation's potential might, among other factors, depend on its mandate and composition, its outreach and collaboration with other tracks.

In addition, as the different examples of peace infrastructures show, there is not only a need for internal support structures in a negotiation process, but also in the context of preventive as well as post-war restorative and reconciliatory efforts. This raises the question as to when to begin and end the activity of peace secretariats? With a view to the various peace infrastructures that in several cases have become institutionalised as ministerial departments or ministries, the answer might be, never. While in some cases, new organisations succeed the former ones, in other situations the organisational structure and functions of existing organisations are adjusted to new tasks and challenges in society.

Considering the state of research in the above-outlined three areas of organised negotiation support, conflict transformation support and infrastructures for peace, the limited literature and the recent concepts under development point towards a need for more research. How does this study contribute to the growing expertise?

1.2.4 Relevance of this research

Compared to the wide range of local infrastructures and support organisations for peace negotiations and conflict transformation, this research looks at one particular form of Track 1 support for negotiations in a peace process. Since this study examines organisations within one conflict setting, the conceptualisation developed here needs further consolidation and validation through comparative work in order to contribute to theory development.

This dissertation offers insights for three fields of further research: negotiation and mediation studies, conflict transformation, and organisation studies.

<u>Negotiation and mediation studies</u>

First, there is a gap in the current discourse on mediation and negotiation where inadequate attention is paid to domestic support structures. Domestic structures, however, can be relevant in order to promote local ownership and a commitment to the process. While recent conceptual work looks at infrastructures for peace to assist internally negotiated solutions to violent conflict, these do not include such Track 1 negotiation support structures as the peace secretariats (Kumar 2011; Odendaal 2010).[22] This research provides a contribution to filling this gap.

Domestic structures also can help strengthen the sustainability of peace processes, but the literature on the sustainability of ceasefires and peace agreements does not consider such aspects (see for example Fortna 2004; Hampson 1996). At the same time, the discussion on sustained mediation beyond peace agreements and the need for facilitation in the post-agreement phase (Cousens 2008) does not discuss the contribution of domestic actors. When international mediators and peacemakers move out, who will take over? Peace secretariats with their facilitation and coordination role during the negotiations might be in a position to do so.

Moreover, the research contributes to the understanding of negotiation processes and their preparation. Peace secretariats ideally are established before the commencement or at the beginning of talks. As section 2.3 shows, the literature on negotiations does not discuss this aspect of prenegotiation preparations (Fisher, R.J. 2006; Pantev 2000; Saunders 1985, 2001; Zartman 1989b). The empirical analysis of the peace secretariats' establishment and the decisions on their mandates and functions thus contributes to a deeper understanding of a so far under-researched aspect of pre-negotiation decision-making. What are the interests and concerns that inform the decisions of establishing a support structure and what can be learned about reasons for their continued existence or closure?

In addition, the study touches on one of the core issues of negotiations: the challenge of dealing with asymmetry in power of the conflict parties (Zartman & Rubin 2002). Through the establishment of peace secretariats for the negotiating parties in Sri

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[22] Concept development of donor agencies and third-party practitioners, however, considers this gap: the German GIZ for example discusses the potential to support mediation and peace negotiations through development cooperation instruments that include capacity and institution building (BPS 2011). Likewise, Berghof Peace Support develops concepts for supporting peace support structures and national dialogues (BPS 2010).

Lanka, the government and the LTTE, a levelled conduit for contact and facilitation of the talks was created. While the two parties for political reasons did not acknowledge this aspect of symmetry, others recognised this potential contribution. This research shows how much the peace secretariats contributed to establishing a level playing field at the negotiation table, and which other functions organisational establishment might serve. At the same time, Muslim communities, who wished to be included at the negotiation table as stakeholders in the conflict, established a peace secretariat with the implicit aim to level the playing field. Did this establishment help increase their recognition?

With a view to engaging non-state armed groups, there is growing awareness that these actors often require support in order to increase their readiness for negotiations and their capability to conduct negotiations, e.g., through negotiation training (Gorman & Le Sage 2005). The debate so far does not mention the establishment of peace secretariats as one option to do so; thus, this research contributes to widening the options for engaging with non-state armed groups.

Lastly, in the area of negotiation studies, there is – despite the repeated call for collaboration among third parties – little insight on how to divide tasks among third parties. The critical experiences of the Norwegian facilitator, who in addition provided funding and other support to all peace secretariats, show that such assistance can present both a reputational risk as well as a burden in view of the limited capacities of the mediator (Sørbø et al. 2011). Thus, early involvement of additional third-party actors might be useful; developing the required level of trust among all third-party actors and the conflict parties, however, might prove to be a challenge.

Conflict transformation studies

The second area in which this research offers new insights concerns conflict transformation. Again, there is hardly any discussion of the potential intermediary role of domestic actors. Whereas there is a common understanding to regard intermediary intervention as a process made up of different roles and functions over time, it appears that these are largely attributed to outsiders (Lederach 1989; Mitchell 2006). The few exceptions that conceptualise the role of so-called insider mediators, peace advocates and peace practitioners look at individual persons rather than at organisations (Garcia 2006; Mason 2009). Moreover, such actors appear to be *per definitionem* third parties, i.e., are not part of the organisational structure of the conflict par-

ties themselves.[23] Consequently, the discussion on peace constituencies and peaceful agents for change mostly focuses on civil society organisations. Here, this research will probe the question if, and under which conditions, representative structures of the conflict parties can take over such a role.

Moreover, the cases of this research examine the space for transformative action during 'good and bad times' in a peace process and thus help understanding opportunities and limitations for transformation. How did the organisations contribute to the peace process after the end of negotiations? Could they engage with peacebuilders on other tracks once the official talks stalled? Were they in a position to strengthen the political dialogue in order to contribute to building political consensus within the respective conflict parties? How can their contributions be strengthened? This research considers the potential for capacity building of domestic actors involved in such efforts.

This question needs to consider the values, interests and positions of the stakeholders. Can a stakeholder organisation truly serve transformative purposes and go beyond its own party's interests? Can conflict transformation's principles of empathy and joint problem solving be implemented while serving one conflict party's agenda? The findings of this research contribute to furthering the debate on embedded third parties and transformative change agents within conflict parties.

Moreover, this research concerns and questions the organisational capacity building of conflict parties. The existing body of research mostly considers situations occurring after negotiated agreements and regime changes. The strengthening of organisational capacities during change processes is being less discussed for various reasons, and this research will touch upon some of the pertaining questions. One particular question concerns partiality: organisations established with the mandate of representation of conflict parties are bound to be partial; how does that affect capacity building and the position of third parties involved in such exercises?

Another question concerns ownership: since no conflict party is monolithic, there is always a struggle for influence among different perspectives of hardliners and moderates. This raises questions for third parties involved in capacity building during a peace process, first and foremost the dilemma of respecting ownership versus the

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[23] Odendaal for example suggests designating leadership of the local peace forums to insider-partials, who are not representatives of the conflict parties themselves (Odendaal 2010). Kumar in addition suggests considering the UNDP peace and development advisors as insider-partials who can work with all stakeholders (Kumar 2011).

wish to strengthen champions in peaceful change and transformation. The research shows how the third parties engaged in supporting the peace secretariats in Sri Lanka dealt with this challenge and offers some lessons learned.

Organisation studies

The research questions and assumptions, and this discussion of the relevance of the research, repeatedly point to organisational questions. This research will therefore develop a conceptual framework with the help of organisation theory contributions, particularly agency theory. Consequently, this research also offers insights and questions for consideration in the field of organisation studies.

This is foremost the case with a view to the political character of the actors involved. The mainstream of organisation theories and agency theory did not have much influence on political science, or on international relations,[24] as compared to its influence on economics (Moe 1991). As Moe points out in his research on principal-agent relationships in the United States administration, agency theory and more specifically the theory of political control need to pay closer attention to the political character of the relationship between the political leadership as principal and the bureaucratic organisation as agent. Moe consequently develops a theory of public bureaucracy that is useful for this research (Moe 1984, 1995). Its assumptions, as those of positive political theory in general, however, are rooted in the concept of a Western democratic government. This model applies only in a limited way to political decision-making by conflict parties in other parts of the world. Whereas Moe points out that bureaucratic agents have power over their political principals through the democratic framework and their right to vote (Moe 1990, 2005), this is the case only to a limited extent in administrative systems such as the one of Sri Lanka, which is strongly influenced by political patronage. Further research on political agency in fragile situations is required to adapt political theories to different situations.

As a result, the theoretical discussion of this research resembles a puzzle of various concepts and theories brought together in order to assemble a conceptual framework that can help explain the peace secretariats' behaviour. This approach adds value to the research's contribution: first, this research combines in an interdisciplinary approach different academic areas of interest. Second, the study brings together practi-

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[24] Most notable exceptions in the field of international relations are contributions to negotiation theory (Kher 2008, p.4).

cal experience and academic reflection. It is hoped that this effort of developing an innovative conceptual framework advances theory development in the broad, complex and interdisciplinary field of transforming conflict and promoting peace.

1.3   The Peace Process of 2002 as Background of this Research – Short Introduction to the Sri Lankan Conflict

Writing on the Sri Lankan conflict, its intractability and violence in a brief and comprehensive way is a daunting task, given a voluminous body of literature as well as the difficulty of doing justice to the diversity of contested perspectives. This section will not introduce new aspects of the history and complexity of the Sri Lankan conflict.[25]

The purpose of this sub-chapter is to contextualise the research. To this end, the reader needs to understand the immediate context of the peace secretariats, the peace talks in 2002/2003 and the larger peace process accompanying these talks, marked by the ceasefire agreement signed in early 2002 and abrogated in January 2008 when both negotiating conflict parties had entered a full blown war. However, the government and the LTTE peace secretariats continued to exist until 2009 when the war ended (and the Peace Secretariat for the Muslims even beyond that date). Beyond this immediate context, the peace secretariats find themselves as parts of a complex conflict system that needs to be considered in order to understand the intractability of the violent conflict and the situation of the secretariats.

Thus, the sub-chapter is organised in three parts: the first one gives a brief overview on the conflict system with a focus on the actors and their different positions, interests and relationships. The second outlines the peace process of 2002 and the years after, focusing on the circularity of transitions from war to peace talks to the limbo of 'no-war-no-peace' and back to war. The third looks into a particularity of the 2002 Sri Lankan peace process, namely, the institutionalisation of support structures for the negotiations and the wider peace process.

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[25] For a general overview on Sri Lanka as a country and its ethnic communities see the introductory chapter of Richardson (2005); for a history of the conflict(s) see de Silva (1981), and Little (1994) for religious and Rösel (1997) for political perspectives.

1.3.1 Background to the ethno-political conflict in Sri Lanka

The start of the ceasefire and peace talks in 2002 was characterised by a strong optimism about ending the long-lasting violent conflict. The enthusiasm was palpable, people's lives changed all over Sri Lanka and especially in the conflict zone. Soon, however, dark clouds emerged with violations of the ceasefire agreement and the suspension of talks in 2003. Still, there was hope to revive the negotiations despite a political power constellation in South that presented a checkmate to the peace process, escalating violence and decreasing patience of the stakeholders. After the failure of the peace process, the resumption of war and its victorious end on the side of the government of Sri Lanka, peacebuilding actors and scholarly researchers have examined the reasons for the failure of a negotiated settlement.[26] Despite diverse perspectives and many contestations, the debate can be summed up as follows:

The situation in Sri Lanka is often overly reduced to the violent conflict between two parties that are the government, aiming to preserve unity of the country and predominance of majoritarian democracy and centralised government, and the LTTE, a non-state armed group striving for secession and self-determination for the Tamil ethnic minority that it claimed to represent. In the course of the violent conflict, the LTTE gained control over large parts of the Northern and Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, which were considered as Tamil homeland (see Annex 1.1 for a map of Sri Lanka).[27]

Rather, than a bilateral scenario, the situation should be understood as a complex conflict system that involves multiple conflict parties and stakeholders beyond the two warring parties (Richardson 2005; Ropers 2008, 2011) and thus cannot be responded to with peace talks between two parties only.[28]

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[26] This reflection process is displayed in a growing number of publications (for example Goodhand et al. (eds.) 2011; Keethaponcalan & Jayawardana (eds.) 2009; Liyanage 2008; Orjuela (ed.) 2010; Ropers 2010; Swamy 2010).

[27] According to government data, the LTTE controlled at its peak in 2000 ca. 76 % of the landmass in the Northern and Eastern Provinces; see the Ministry of Defence website for a chronological presentation of the development of geographical occupation of land by the LTTE (accessed on January 22, 2012 under http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=Humanitarian).

[28] Apart from the general reduction of the conflict system to the government-LTTE confrontation, even this relationship serves to simplify the conflict as one between ruling classes of the Sinhalese and Tamil populations, which goes back to enmity among ancient ethnic kingdoms (de Silva 1981).

Richardson (2005, pp.39-40) outlines the following "sometime contradictory conjectures" made by different scholars as elements of the conflict system: "ethnicity[29]; unremedied structural weaknesses in the post-colonial economy[30]; ruling class exploitation[31]; social disruptions caused by privatisation, deregulation and structural adjustment[32]; too much democracy[33] [or, as this author would reframe: too many broken promises by political leaders and too much disillusionment]; democratic governance failures[34]; and leadership failures".[35]

Similarly, the complexity of the conflict sources is summed up in one very long sentence by Rainford & Satkunanathan (2009, p.7) as:

> the failure of the British colonial power to leave behind a constitution that more accurately reflected the island's pluralistic nature thereby locking into place a misguided belief that the majority will rule with responsibility; the subsequent edicts that arose from that inaction which disadvantaged minorities, first the Tamils of recent Indian origin and subsequently the Sri Lankan Tamils through the 'Sinhala Only' Act[36], standardization of university entry, and state-sponsored colonisation; the contending and fractious notions of 'historical

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[29] This conjecture is elaborated for example by de Silva (1986).

[30] See for example Abeyratne (2004).

[31] This is in the Sri Lankan discourse often referred to as an aspect of feudal society in present times (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (2008); referring to colonial times Jayawardena (2000) and on feudal polity and caste de Silva (1981); with a particular view to Tamil society Pfaffenberger 1994; Fuglerud 2009).

[32] See Gunasinghe (2004) and Bastian (2005, 2011).

[33] Richardson here refers to the political argument of the first executive President J.R. Jayewardene that Sri Lanka should have adopted a less democratic approach in order to succeed like as other 'Asian Tiger' states, e.g., Singapore (Richardson 2005, p. 611).

[34] See e.g., de Silva (ed.) (1993) and Moore (1985).

[35] The last point refers in academic literature mainly to former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike and former President J.R. Jayewardene (for a discussion see Richardson 2005, p.611). For an illustration of leadership styles of the post-colonial heads of government until 2004 see Weerakoon (2004).

[36] The Sinhala Only Act (formally the Official Language Act) was passed in parliament in 1956. The law mandated the language of Sri Lanka's majority as the only official language. While also attempting to establish a post-colonial independence from English through choosing a vernacular language, the law discriminated against the Tamil language of the Tamil and Muslim minorities as well as against English as the language of the Burgher and other Indian-origin minorities.

homeland' put forward by both the Sinhalese and the Tamils; the decision by the Tamil political leadership to demand a separate state and upon its refusal, the decision by mobilized youth to take up arms to fulfill that pledge; economic liberalization of the post-colonial state that arguably and unwittingly embedded social inequalities, factionalised elites, and promoted corruption, and the myopic and opportunistic decision-making of political elites in Colombo spurred by a system embedded in partisan and patronage politics, fuelled by nationalism and the effects of economic liberalization on the political classes and society as a whole.

This description points to a wider map of actors in the ethno-political conflict that goes beyond the warfare between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE: a multiplicity of stakeholders exists both on the side of the Sinhalese dominated, majoritarian governments of Sri Lanka and on the side of the Tamil opposition and militancy. These encompass political mainstream parties, moderate actors and extremist nationalist actors, as well as civil society organisations and vernacular media, which are embroiled in, often radical and violent, contestations of the many subjects outlined above.[37] To a certain extent, the international community, represented by diplomats, multilateral and bilateral aid agencies and donors, international NGO as well as several third parties that engaged in conflict settlement and conflict transformation, also became a stakeholder given the strong international support for the peace process.[38]

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[37] For an introductory overview of the main stakeholders see Armon and Philipson (1998); for a more detailed discussion of politics in the Northeast and in the South, respectively, see Philipson and Thangarajah (2005) and Rampton and Welikala (2005).

[38] Just as with other stakeholders, the international community does not represent a homogenous body, given different intentions, i.e., to give strong material incentives for progress, critically observe and sanction human rights violations, and to offer military and intelligence support to the government's war. While initially actively embraced by both the then government (and partly also the LTTE) as an 'international safety net' to the peace process (Burke & Mulakala 2011; Lunstead 2007, 2011), the international support was also seen critically as an over-internationalisation and as putting the "development cart before the conflict resolution horse" (Sriskandarajah 2003), and later also criticised by the LTTE which felt sidelined in the allocation of funds (Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008).

The government of President Rajapakse chose a different approach in dealing with the LTTE as well as different allies who supported a military strategy and were less attached to ideas of liberal peacebuilding (Goodhand & Korf 2011). The recent years of international engagement in Sri Lanka witnessed the by now global trends in international development assistance with the classic like-minded western actors

This map of actors within the conflict system points to an understanding of the conflict in Sri Lanka that cannot focus on root causes only but needs to take into account the dynamics of the overall system and its diverse sub-systems. Violent conflict, or war, is, as Winslow and Woost argue, "a fully embedded part of the social formation, consequence as well as cause. … war is not just what is happening *in* Sri Lanka; it has become an important part of what Sri Lanka *is* (2004, p.12, quoted in Frerks & Klem 2011, p.170).

Given this predominance of the ethno-political conflict in Sri Lanka's collective identity, or rather collective identities, it is, however, important to note that besides the civil war between the government and LTTE, of which the beginning is mostly backdated to the anti-Tamil riots in 'Black July' 1983 and the ending to May 2009, Sri Lanka has seen confrontation and violence of three types (Wadlow n.d., n.pag.)[39]:

1. Sporadic communal violence among ethnic groups and religious actors concerning local concerns and incidents[40];

2. Political violence between the government and a Sinhalese nationalist Marxist movement, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP, People's Liberation Front)[41];

3. Intra-Tamil militarisation and violent competition over dominance and representation.[42]

Altogether it can be said that "'violence has pervaded both individual, social and political relations and has been established 'as a legitimate mode of political behaviour,

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losing influence to such 'newly emerging donors' as China and regional players such as Pakistan and India (in more detail see Keethaponcalan 2011; Liyanage et al. 2011).

[39] Focussing on violence during the time of the peace process from 2002 to 2005, Höglund (2005) differentiates three types of violence as, first, between the LTTE and the government; second within the LTTE; and third, between the LTTE and other Tamil groups. This categorisation neglects, however, Wadlow's first type that also occurred during this time period, e.g., in the form of violent encounters between the LTTE or other Tamil militant groups and Muslim settlers in the East.

[40] While this form of violence can be found until present times, it contributed during the 1970s to the escalated form of ethnic riots and to polarisation and militarisation between the government and the Tamil militant groups.

[41] This form of political violence centres around two insurrections, or uprisings, by the JVP in 1971 and 1987-89, especially in the South of Sri Lanka.

[42] The LTTE has progressively developed a monopoly of the leadership of the armed movement. At the beginning of Tamil militancy there were four dominant groups besides the LTTE (Wilson 2000, p.126; for an overview of the situation of Tamil militant groups during the period of the peace process of 2002 see Philipson & Thangarajah 2005).

whether by the state or anti-state forces'" (Höglund 2005, p.160 citing Uyangoda 1996, p.121). The persistently violent strategies of resistance against the state as well as the government's violent approach to counterinsurgency led not only to internal displacement and disruption of the social fabric and livelihood patterns, but also to a significant number of Sri Lankan international refugees.[43]

It should be noted that, while the ethno-political conflict between the government and the LTTE receives most attention in literature as well as in conflict transformation interventions and international politics, the violent conflict with the JVP took a significant toll on Sri Lankans in terms of political development, death and disappearances due to two insurgencies of the JVP and the state's violent reaction. The radicalising mobilisation power of the party, particularly among marginalised youth in the South, and its extremist forms of political strategy and tactics carry the history of the JVP into the politics of present times. This is relevant since the JVP, although having given up the militant political struggle after 1989, wields significant power over Sinhalese mainstream politics in the South and had a strong influence on the presidencies during the peace process and in the timeframe of this research (Rampton & Welikala 2005).

In addition to the JVP, another nationalist Sinhalese political fraction is of similar relevance.[44] Driven by majoritarian Sinhalese nationalist ideas similar to those of the JVP, the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU, National Sinhalese Heritage) caters to a different socio-economic electorate and builds its aggressive political strategy, which involves the fielding of Buddhist monks as election candidates and MPs, on Buddhist principles (Deegalle 2004; Rampton & Welikala 2005, 2011). The JHU strives for a Buddhist state and Sinhalese supremacy and strictly opposes any political initiative towards power-sharing and federalism. This is grounded in the belief that Sri Lanka and its Buddhist, Sinhalese people are particularly chosen to protect the specific form of Theravada Buddhism practiced in Sri Lanka and thus require primacy above minorities of other religions and cultures (Bartolomeusz 1999, 2002).

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[43] The Tamil and Sinhalese diaspora communities have a significant impact on the peace process in Sri Lanka, predominantly strengthening the respective nationalist spectrums of political and militant representatives in the home country (Orjuela 2008b; Pirkkalainen & Abdile 2009).

[44] The explicit mentioning of these Sinhalese nationalist actors should not be understood as interpretation of Sinhalese nationalism as a root cause of the ethno-political conflict; they, however, appear more influential than their Tamil counterparts, with exception of the LTTE.

Moreover, it should be noted that, despite being not mentioned as a perpetrator of violence, there is a third community caught in the crossfire (ICG 2007).[45] The Muslim community, divided in diverse fractions between geographic communities as well as diverse political camps, presents a third conflict party that despite its vulnerabilities and victimisation has not taken up arms (yet) to express its interests and positions.[46] Their mostly non-violent, political approach, however, faces marginalisation by the other conflict parties and exclusion from the negotiating table as an independent party (see chapter 7). Nevertheless, election demographics leave the Muslim political parties (as well as Indian Tamil political parties) repeatedly with political power as kingmakers in coalition building after presidential and general elections (Frerks & Klem 2011, p.174).[47]

As Wadlow (n.d., n.pag.) notes with a view to all three forms of violence outlined above, "the Sri Lankan state has fallen short of in its task of societal integration. This failure has led to increasingly violent struggles among the elites for economic and political power". Todate, uneven power relations between ethnic and religious groups, political parties and as well as different socio-economic strata of society, divided in

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[45] Sri Lanka's population consists of several socio-ethnic groups: 74% of Sinhalese, 7 % Sri Lankan Moors, Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils 3.9% and 4,6%, respectively, and a number of smaller groups. The population is multi-religious, consisting of Buddhists (69%), Hindus (15%), Muslims (nearly 8%) and Christians (6 %), all data sourced from the CIA World Factbook (accessed on October 5, 2011 under https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ce.html). The distinction between the Sri Lankan and Indian-origin Tamils is relevant since the latter, also known in Sri Lanka as hill country or up-country Tamils, were mostly descendants of plantation workers sent from South India to Sri Lanka in the 19th and 20th centuries and were not actively involved in the ethno-political conflict between the LTTE and the government despite being considered as the most disenfranchised and marginalised community in Sri Lanka (Bass 2004; de Silva 1981; Devaraj 2005).

Muslims, while ethnically different from Tamils and tracing their identity to ancient Arab traders, today also use Tamil as their language and consider themselves the largest minority group in Sri Lanka (for a discussion of Muslim-Sinhalese and Muslim-Tamil relations see Nuhman 2007). While in the early days of Tamil militancy a small number of Muslim sympathizers supported the evolving movement, the Muslim community later distanced itself from the Tamil cause and opposed the idea of a Tamil homeland given its own fears of becoming a 'minority within a minority state'.

[46] McGilvray and Raheem (2007, pp.41-43; similarly Lewer & Ismail 2011) discuss the potential of militarisation of Muslim youth in light of the community's marginalisation.

[47] This happened for example when the SLMC switched allegiance when President Kumaratunga came to power in 1994 and when she lost political power in 2001 and had to call for parliamentary elections after the SLMC left the coalition (Lewer & Ismail 2011).

class and caste, characterise political, social and economic processes (Orjuela 2010). This research cannot discuss these inequalities in detail; their existence, however, needs to be kept in mind in order to grasp the complications that the peace process faced, and that ultimately the peace secretariats in their functions also had to deal with.

The over-focus on the government-LTTE conflict in the form of bilateral negotiations in the peace process of 2002 did not sufficiently take into consideration the other relevant conflict lines which played out in political and partly violent opposition to the peace talks on the side of Sinhalese nationalist forces on the one hand, and in violent power struggle among Tamil militant factions and a fractionalisation within the LTTE on the other. Both had a significant impact on the peace talks and the overall outcome of the peace process.

In order to explain the complexity of violent relationships and interconnected conflict lines in Sri Lanka, two different concepts need elaboration: the paired or double minority syndrome and the strategies of ethnic, violent and even religious outbidding.

The first, the 'paired minority syndrome' (Cohen 2003), refers to the two-fold perception of insecurity and mutual distrust among both the majority and the minority groups given their respective status in comparison to a majority. The Sinhalese 'majority group with a minority complex' (de Silva 1986) feels that they are under threat by the minority of the Tamil population, although they are in the majority (74% of 20 million), since the Tamil minority is related to the 65 million Tamil population in India. Locked in suspicion and a simultaneous belief that their respective side is stronger, rightful and morally superior to the other, they resemble two people on a seesaw and take "turns in playing the role of the advantaged/ disadvantaged. They may briefly achieve equality, but their state of dynamic imbalance inhibits the prospect of long-term negotiations and tends to abort any effort to have an institutionalized peace process" (Cohen 2003, p.33 quoted in Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p.9).

The Sinhalese majority's perception of threat and insecurity, be it a genuine fear or a mere excuse for seizing power and rectifying exclusion, is encouraged by the above-mentioned Buddhist interpretation of Sri Lanka as the chosen repository and guardian of Theravada Buddhist philosophy (Bartholomeusz 2002) as well as restrictions on Buddhist monks' involvement in education and other social services under British colonial rule, which replaced them with Christian missionary services (Tambiah 1992).

The Tamil perspective is built on experience of marginalisation, particularly rooted in post-colonial policies, as well as the historic fact of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural

ancient Sri Lanka in which Tamil kingdoms had a place since the second century BCE (de Silva 1981; Wilson 2000). The historic, pragmatic coexistence increasingly was felt by Tamils to require proof for the Tamil right to live in Sri Lanka (Hellmann-Rajanayagam 1994). This led initially to moderate demands for a federal solution that would grant autonomy to the Tamil dominated northeast, but this position succumbed over time, and, in light of its disregard by the Sinhalese-dominated southern polity, to increasing calls for separation (Tambiah 1986; Wilson 2000). The resulting Sinhalese rhetoric (and, at times, ensuing actions) confirm Tamil fears of subalternation, discrimination and expulsion as experienced in the past; likewise, Tamil nationalist and extremist calls for secession and creation of an independent Tamil homeland (Tamil Eelam) confirm the fears of the Sinhalese Buddhist majority as well as those of the Muslim communities.[48]

The resulting confrontation can also be connected to the development of political strategies in which the emotions and fears of people are instrumentalised for gaining voter support. These can be described with the concept of ethnic outbidding (Bush 2003; DeVotta 2004). As Harris notes, "successive [Sinhalese] governments were more preoccupied with securing their own base among the Sinhalese ... at virtually any cost — or rather, in the political auction, preventing themselves being pushed out by their rivals. If the Tamils had not existed, Colombo would have had to invent them" (Harris 1990, p.221 quoted in DeVotta 2007, p.37). While this phenomenon initially concerns the competition between the southern mainstream political parties, this is later during the 1990s and 2000s often challenged by the more overtly nationalist parties (Rampton & Welikala 2005). With a view to Buddhist voter mobilisation, the concept can be translated into 'religious outbidding' in which political elites under pressure resort to religious reframing of contentious issues, which contributes to the intractability of violent conflict (Toft 2007 cited in Svensson 2007). In addition, Ropers translates the concept into one of 'violent outbidding' between the LTTE and other Tamil militant groups and political parties. This 'fractricide' does not serve the competition over electoral votes; rather the LTTE strives to consolidate through violent intimidation and confrontation, including assassinations and disappearances, its proclaimed status of 'sole representative' of the Tamil cause (Ropers 2010).

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[48] Despite their common language, Muslim political identity during colonial and post-colonial times was increasingly formed through religion and in an effort to mark distinction from Tamil identity. This was partly due to Tamil political tactics that subsumed Muslims as part of the Tamil nation (in detail McGilvray & Raheem 2007).

Resulting from this systemic dynamic is the emergence of "two contradictory and mutually exclusive state-formation agendas" and an increasing autonomy of "two war machines" from the political process (Uyangoda 2007, p.viii).[49] While one side attempts both through negotiations and military and administrative action to establish an autonomous territory for the predominantly Tamil population in the North and East of the country,[50] the other side resists these efforts and, moreover, aims at consolidation of the unitary state with a Buddhist and Sinhalese majoritarian foundation (Stokke 2006). This leaves virtually no space for a discussion on power sharing with the minorities or even of state reform and devolution with a view to other inequalities mentioned above. The consequent non-negotiability of state power from both perspectives enforces the intractability of the conflict and makes a negotiated settlement, according to Uyangoda (2007), at least in form of a comprehensive peace agreement, impossible.

This assessment contributes to explaining why the several efforts to negotiate a political solution have not been successful. The following section will consider the last of these efforts that took place during the years 2002 to 2006. An overview of earlier negotiation attempts goes beyond the scope of this research (see annexure in Loganathan & Ropers 2002; for a more detailed discussion the first volume of Rupesinghe 2006).

1.3.2 The peace process of 2002 and the years after

As this research is not only interested in the contributions of the peace secretariats during the time of negotiations but also during times of stalemate, re-escalation and return to war, this section extends its perspective beyond the years of the peace pro-

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[49] Uyangoda even suggests a third contesting state-formation project that can be identified in the Muslim efforts to respond to the other two projects and find a place for a community that partly sees itself alienated from the others (2007, 2011). There is, however, no agreement within the Muslim community since some parts, and particularly Colombo-based business and political elites, profit until today from coalitions with Sinhalese mainstream parties (McGilvray & Raheem 2007; Wagner 1990).

[50] The state formation project of the LTTE serves two parallel purposes: establishing a de facto state for its acclaimed population with state trappings like a seemingly independent administration and welfare system leading to a *fait accompli* on the ground; moreover and with a view to international law, the peace negotiations (and later the provocation of human rights violations by the Sri Lankan government) also serves as a demonstration of 'earned sovereignty' (Scharf 2004; Williams & Pecci 2004).

cess from 2002 and 2003, to the efforts to revitalise the process during the years 2004 to 2006 until the end of war, and the resulting end of existence of two of the three peace secretariats in 2009.

These years present a full cycle from ceasefire and a palpable proximity of (at least negative) peace to war and its victorious end by elimination of the LTTE leadership. They also present an intensive period of political change that followed a political power struggle between the president and prime minister and the president's seizure of control in late 2003, the dissolution of parliament and parliamentary elections in April 2004 and a new presidency after presidential elections in November 2005. In the meantime, the LTTE experienced its own power struggle in March 2004 and a significant reduction in force when factions loyal to an influential Eastern commander broke away, fought the LTTE in the East and later joined forces with the government.[51]

Moreover, on December 26, 2004 Sri Lanka together with other Asian countries with coasts on the Indian Ocean was affected by the tsunami, which left between 35,000 and 40,000 people in Sri Lanka dead or missing and 1.5 million people on the South and East coasts displaced. With the LTTE-controlled areas severely affected, the post-tsunami period briefly led to a renewed hope for peace when an operational mechanism for the rehabilitation efforts (P-TOMS, Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure) was negotiated. These hopes, however, were shattered given the political dynamics in the South that led to a Supreme Court ruling in mid-July 2005 that judged parts of the mechanism as unconstitutional.[52]

Sri Lankans in the years 2004 to 2008 witnessed increasing violence in different forms ranging from suicide bomb attacks on politicians and civilians, to assassinations and disappearances mostly on the side of Tamil people, to undeclared but full-blown military warfare first in the East and then the North of the country, while repeated efforts to hold ceasefire-related talks between the government and the LTTE in 2006 hardly offered a respite for the affected people.[53] Similarly, President Rajapaksa's new ap-

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[51] V. Muralitharan, whose nom de guerre was Colonel Karuna Amman, later renounced the armed struggle for independence and joined the government as a minister. His 'Karuna fraction' split further into competing paramilitary groups and an established political party.

[52] Efforts to respond to the Supreme Court ruling and make the whole P-TOMS functional were stalled with the announcement of presidential elections at the end of 2005.

[53] The ceasefire was officially abrogated on January 3, 2008 by the government of Sri Lanka; this ended the international monitoring mission and started the fourth phase of the Tamil Eelam wars. The latter began unofficially in July 2006 with the first large-scale military battle around water supplies for villages in government-controlled areas, which had been cut off by the LTTE.

proach to a power-sharing solution through an All Party Conference and its Representative Committee (APRC) in 2006 did not lead to substantive progress concerning the much-sought political solution (Liyanage & Sinnathamby 2007).

Despite these developments, the period 2002-2009 also saw an improved socio-economic situation for some Sri Lankans, triggered by significant development assistance offered during the peace process as well as increasing economic growth. The latter was surprisingly unaffected by the years of violent escalation and war but did not have significant distributive effects (Burke & Mulakala 2011).

Against this complex background, the peace secretariats were active in different functions that relate to many of the above-mentioned aspects. The empirical chapters trace these activities in detail. The following offers a short introduction to the peace talks in 2002-2003 and some of the relevant developments thereafter.

This section can neither provide a full account of the socio-economic or political situation during the years 2002-2009 nor can it trace the cycles of violence, paramilitary and military developments during the period. Most unsatisfactorily, it can also not pay due respect to the victims of the violent conflict on all sides; rather the text focuses on the technicalities of the 2002 peace negotiations and other political initiatives necessary to understand the peace secretariats' situation and activities.

On February 22, 2002 the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE entered into a bilateral ceasefire agreement (CFA) that not only ended the third phase of the Tamil Eelam war (1994–2001) but also established an international monitoring mission (SLMM, Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission) and was the starting point for a series of six peace talks facilitated by the Norwegian government. The war had led to high casualties on both sides as well as to a number of particularly damaging suicide attacks by the LTTE,[54] which left the country exhausted from the war (Uyangoda 2006) and led to a growing peace and human rights movement, strengthened by the international community's disillusionment with the government (Burke & Mulakala 2011) and calling for a different approach.[55] President Kumaratunga's strategy of 'war for peace' that intended to weaken the LTTE in order to enter into negotiations from a position of strength back-

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[54] These targeted among others in 1996 the Central Bank, in December 1999 the then President Kumaratunga, and in July 2001 the international airport, all of which caused a severe economic downturn and financial crisis.

[55] This movement was based to a significant extent on the Sudu Nelum (White Lotus) movement created under the President's previous government in 1995 in order to create public support for the previous peace effort (Haniffa & Abeygunawardana 2008; Saravanamuttu 2006).

fired, and in early December 2001 the president's party lost elections to Ranil Wick-remasinghe's coalition, which campaigned on a pro-peace platform and a negotiated settlement of the conflict.[56] At the same time, the LTTE from its relative position of strength and with an eye on international developments after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 offered a 30-day ceasefire that consecutively was reciprocated by the government of new Prime Minister Wickremasinghe and led to the ceasefire agreement.[57]

This situation presented in the eyes of many observers at the time a ripe moment for peace negotiations, and the following months saw preparations for peace talks between the two signatory parties of the CFA. Continuing the bipolarity of the ceasefire agreement, the peace talks during 2002 and 2003 solely involved the then government administration and the LTTE. Other representatives of the Tamil community, the opposition parties in the South and even the president as the cohabitation partner of the government, as well as the Muslim community, were excluded.[58]

The preparation of peace talks, however, had already begun already in 1999/2000 under President Kumaratunga who invited the Norwegian government as a facilitator for her own efforts in returning to the negotiation table (Sørbø et al. 2011). There had been contact and agreement between the Norwegian facilitator and the LTTE; as a result, the process of negotiating the ceasefire as well as the agreement on its implementation built on this established contact. The Norwegian government did not only facilitate the process and the signing of the ceasefire but also became its first monitor by agreeing to "organise, equip and establish" the international mission (Preamble of Status of Mission Agreement 2002) as well as by appointing the head of the international monitoring mission consisting of expert monitors from Scandinavian countries.

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[56] This offered a new opportunity for the peace efforts but at the same time posed a challenge for the peace process since the president remained in office and formed a cohabitation government with the incumbent prime minister.

[57] The ceasefire agreement was later heavily criticised both in terms of process as well as content and was seen by many as a flawed starting point for the peace talks (Keethaponcalan & Jayawardana (eds.) 2009).

[58] This bipartisan approach made for an unstable balance that could not lead to a political settlement but rather brought to surface and even increased insecurities and divisions between and within the various constituencies (Goodhand & Korf 2011). Particularly the exclusion of the president contributed to the early failure of the peace process (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p.118). At the same time, the lack of inclusiveness of other Tamil parties is argued to have empowered the LTTE without any urge to transform and contributed to encouraging their violations of the CFA (Loganathan in an interview in June 2006 cited in Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p.121).

Among the initial measures in the run-up to the negotiations was the implementation of confidence-building measures that were considered on the side of the LTTE as pre-conditions to peace talks.[59] Since several of these measures took time in implementation, some observers felt that important momentum was lost before the first round of talks took place in mid-September. The parties, however, also required time to prepare themselves for the peace talks during the prenegotiation period.[60]

From September 2002 until March 2003 six rounds of peace talks took place with Norwegian facilitation and in different locations. While all rounds contributed incrementally towards building a working relationship and successively established a negotiation support structure in form of working groups, so-called sub-committees, the most successful session is considered to be the third meeting in Oslo in December 2002 in which both parties agreed to explore a solution "based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka" (Royal Norwegian Government 2002, n.p.). This meant a compromise on both sides, the LTTE giving up its goal of independence and the government agreeing on a power-sharing solution with the LTTE.

One month after the sixth meeting in Japan, however, the LTTE pulled out of the talks in April 2003, criticising the process and its perceived marginalisation due to being excluded from a preparatory meeting for an international donor conference, which was hosted by the US as a donor co-chair. The LTTE, however, could not travel to Washington, DC, since it was proscribed as a terrorist organisation.[61] Beyond these immediate concerns, the LTTE complained of the lack of a peace dividend on the ground, which should translate into normalisation of livelihoods and security of the population, as well as disparities between LTTE and government-controlled areas in the North and East. While feeling trapped in the peace talks and disappointed by

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[59] Besides humanitarian actions in the war-affected areas these measures also entailed the de-proscription of the LTTE, which after some delay took place in August 2002.

[60] One example here is the delay in releasing the nominated secretary general of the government's peace secretariat from his former ambassador post in China; he consequently was shuttling between Beijing and Colombo during the preparation period.

[61] The peace talks from the start saw perhaps a unique level of international support that expressed itself not only through the international facilitator and monitoring mission for the ceasefire, but also a group of donor co-chairs to the peace process (consisting of the US, Japan and the EU besides Norway), various donor working groups and assistance pledged to many realms of the peace process in order to help the parties move forward and provide a peace dividend to the Sri Lankan people. Particularly remarkable is the amount of 4.5 billion USD pledged with strong peace conditionality at the international donor conference in Tokyo in June 2003 after the talks had actually broken down (for a detailed discussion see Burke & Mulakala 2011, pp.159-160).

unmet promises of the international community (International Crisis Group 2006; Goodhand & Korf 2011), the organisation remained committed to the peace process and pledged to return to the negotiation table after improvements in the ground situation.[62]

The ensuing stalemate resulted in the breakdown not only of the peace talks at the main table but also stopped the work of the sub-committees which had just started their work. Only the monitoring of the CFA continued and for the coming months and years remained a thin and continuously deteriorating line of communication. The peace process of 2002 altogether did not recover although several attempts were made in 2003 and 2004 from different sides to revitalise them. The reasons for the failure of the peace talks are manifold and partly controversial. They can, however, be summed up in two broad arguments (Liyanage 2008; Swamy 2010).[63]

First, the difficult co-habitation arrangement and overall problematic relationship between the prime minister and president led to an exclusion, and partly alienation, of relevant actors, e.g., the military and the president herself, during the peace talks and contributed to mistakes in the ceasefire agreement as well as in its negotiation process and implementation. This, together with the earlier mentioned bipolarity of the ceasefire agreement that led to the exclusion of other relevant stakeholders, set the peace talks on a flawed foundation.

Second, the strategy of the then government and the international community was to appease and legitimise the LTTE through an even-handed approach and through downplaying the relevance of the LTTE's CFA violations that outnumbered those of

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[62] After repeated critical statements of the LTTE during April 2003, these claims were made in a letter from the LTTE's chief negotiator Anton Balasingham to Prime Minister Wickremasinghe on April 21, 2003 (Balasingham 2004, pp.434-439). Besides these concerns and the legitimate criticism of for example the government's neglect of LTTE-controlled areas in an important development strategy for the country, observers also read the withdrawal as a late reaction to the earlier agreement on the 'Oslo formula' which, as some consider, was not agreed with the LTTE's leadership (Uyangoda 2011). At the same time, however, it needs to be noted that the main beneficiaries of the peace dividend indeed were the elites in the southwest and not the poor in the war-affected zone of the country (Bastian 2011).

[63] Liyanage (2008) considers four issues problematic in the negotiation design: besides the lack of inclusiveness he criticises the parity of status between the negotiation partners that was expected and demanded by the LTTE but challenged by the southern nationalist constituency, the even-handedness of the facilitator towards both negotiating parties and the primacy of group rights over human rights with regards to LTTE atrocities. Höglund and Svensson (2008) discuss the dilemmas of mediators dealing with asymmetric relationships between negotiating parties and describe the Nordic approach of the facilitators and the SLMM in more detail.

the government. In the eyes of critics this contributed to the organisation's strengthened position and increasing demands rather than to their transformation. The strategy was not well understood in the southern polity, or was considered a wrong or too risky approach during the early years of the peace process.[64]

Most noteworthy among the efforts to revitalise the peace process are two occasions that can be seen as lost opportunities. The topic was not any more concerned with finding a final solution through power sharing but focused on interim arrangements. In both situations, the parties, however, mostly did not meet face-to-face but exchanged their positions and proposals via shuttle diplomacy of the Norwegian facilitators (Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008, p.36; Sørbø et al. 2011).[65]

The first effort was that of the two negotiating parties during 2003 to develop their own proposals for an interim administration. The government presented two sets of proposals in May and July 2003 that were rejected by the LTTE as insufficient despite their character as drafts meant to inspire a continuation of talks. Then the LTTE was asked to present its own proposal and came forward with the proposal for an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA). While the government's proposals were constrained by the political circumstances and presented less than the minimal requirements of the LTTE, the LTTE proposal for an interim solution until the final settlement was considered to be 'pitching high' and going beyond the agreed Oslo formula. Rather than offering a power-sharing option, the proposal was based on self-governance (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, pp.91-96).

While the LTTE's proposal was widely seen in the southern polity as a step towards an independent homeland and thus a regression from the Oslo agreement, the government nevertheless maintained its commitment to negotiations and offered the LTTE to continue the dialogue. This presented a tactical move that was seen by southern critics as surrender to the LTTE (Swamy 2010, p.xxx). However, before there was an emotive reaction in the southern media, the president seized the opportunity and declared a state of emergency, took over three key ministries from the prime min-

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[64] In hindsight, however, the strategy contributed to weakening the LTTE as became transparent in a growing alienation between the LTTE and Tamil population, decreasing discipline and morale among LTTE cadres and the Karuna split (Swamy 2010).

[65] In the aftermath of the tsunami, the parties first met directly but these direct encounters were cancelled by the LTTE after the alleged assassination of a LTTE leader by government forces (Interview 30).

ister's administration (defence, mass media and interior), dissolved parliament and won parliamentary elections in April 2004.[66]

The second opportunity for renewed dialogue and possible collaboration arose in the aftermath of the tsunami when in the first months of 2005 the reconstruction efforts halted, or at least slowed down, the previous hostile developments and presented an opportunity for peacebuilding.[67] While both parties were weakened in their logistical and military capacities, the traumatic experience of the tsunami also encouraged hope for a peaceful turn of events, particularly since the peace talks in tsunami-affected Aceh between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement led to an agreement just at this time. Consequently, in Sri Lanka similar ideas were developed for a renewed peace effort through a cooperative management structure for the tsunami-relief operations. Encouraged by joint humanitarian efforts on the ground, the design of the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS) presented a unique moment in the peace process since there was for the first time agreement by the LTTE to collaborate with government structures in the implementation of the relief structure (Burke & Mulakala 2011; Interview 30).

Despite the enormous amount of goodwill and public support for the tsunami victims immediately after the disaster, the P-TOMS negotiations were difficult and faced a lot of opposition. Ultimately, the effort failed due to the resistance of the nationalist actors in the South. The implementation of the P-TOMS was partly halted by a Supreme Court order that came on the initiative of the JVP; and the problems with certain parts of the agreement as expressed in the order were not mended in light of the up-coming presidential elections at the end of 2005.[68]

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[66] Failing a strong majority, the elections, however, led to a fragile coalition of the president's party with the nationalist parties JVP and JHU.

[67] While many observers felt that "war was very much in the air then" (Swamy 2010, p.xx) and that the LTTE was preparing for a resumption of violence (according to a TV interview with Tamilchelvan, the leader of LTTE's political wing, in June 2006 cited in Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p. 28), there also was internal discussion within the government in order to arrive at a final solution and then Secretary General Dhanapala prepared an initiative just before the tsunami hit (Interview 30).

[68] While the JVP left the government coalition in protest, the president signed the P-TOMS document in June 2005 after significant delays. The JVP filed a fundamental rights petition in the Supreme Court against the mechanism and achieved an injunction of those aspects that would have provided significant power and recognition to the LTTE. The mechanism, and its achievements in renewed confidence building, consequently became irrelevant as the government established a new reconstruction agency that served as counterpart for donor assistance, and ultimately the government – and the course of the peace process – changed with the presidential elections in November 2005. Frerks & Klem (2011) add that by

It needs to be added, however, that the process towards reaching the P-TOMS agreement was fraught with mistakes: The president, given her uncomfortable alliance with nationalist forces, took a long time to consult the various parties over the draft in order to create consensus and understanding in the South but did not succeed. Many observers felt that the consultative process took too long and the mechanism should have been established immediately after the tsunami; some government officials even felt that they were just waiting and stalling the process in fear of opposition (Interview 25). Moreover, the marginalisation of the Muslim community as party to the P-TOMS negotiations, despite it being the most affected community in terms of tsunami victims, enhanced suspicion that the P-TOMS would serve as a vehicle to give the LTTE inappropriate influence and lead to an interim administration towards a Tamil homeland (Stokke 2007).

When the incumbent President Mahinda Rajapakse came into power in November 2005 with the support of the Sinhalese nationalist parties JVP and JHU, he pledged to end the war. In his annual Heroes Day speech in the same month, LTTE leader Prabhakaran welcomed this move in a reserved way and announced that the LTTE, which had actually helped the incumbent president win the elections through a call for an elections boycott, would observe the new course of the government carefully (Institute for Conflict Management 2005).[69] At the same time, however, the government's course was limited by a number of conditions imposed by the JVP and JHU.

At the beginning of 2006, violations of the ceasefire increased further as did the fighting between the LTTE and the Karuna fraction. Already during the tsunami reconstruction period of 2005, violence had moved to a new level. The assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kardirgamar in August 2005 was one key event, another the killing of a Tamil parliamentarian during a Christmas mass in December 2005.[70] Also, an increasing number of military intelligence, informants and armed forces personnel were targeted by the LTTE. In addition, the situation of the SLMM became aggravated, as in June 2006 the LTTE had asked SLMM staff from EU member states to withdraw in

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then the leverage of the donor community and the previously agreed 'Tokyo principles' was reduced due to the influx of funds and debt relief.

[69] The Heroes Day speech, delivered by the LTTE leader annually on the anniversary of the first death of an LTTE cadre, is often used to announce policy statements and is broadcast in many countries where LTTE-supporting parts of the Diaspora communities congregate on the occasion.

[70] In both cases, the LTTE had been suspected but the killers have not been brought to justice.

light of the EU listing the LTTE as a terrorist organisation, which would impair the monitors' objectivity.[71]

Both issues led to a renewed effort of talks in 2006, first in February 2006 in Geneva and, after several failed attempts to schedule a new meeting in April and a meeting in June 2006 in Oslo that was cancelled at the last minute by the LTTE, again in Geneva in October 2006. While the first meeting was relatively successful and led to agreement to continue talks, the talks in the second meeting collapsed after one day when the LTTE delegation withdrew. Eventually, as observers note, the "half-hearted peace talks" in Geneva and Oslo did not lead to substantive agreements or a continuation of dialogue and "stopped as quickly as they started" because they "were perhaps not meant to succeed" (Swamy 2010, p.xx).[72]

Amidst further escalating violence from the LTTE's side, hostilities conducted by other paramilitary groups and increasing counterattacks from government forces, which involved for the first time after the ceasefire agreement aerial attacks in retaliation for the assassination attempt on the Army commander, another attempt to discuss power sharing as a solution to the ethno-political conflict was undertaken by the government.

In 2006 the president invited an All Party Conference and its Representative Committee (APRC) to develop a consensus among all parties on a political solution to the conflict. The committee continuously met over 18 months and developed a set of proposals for power sharing based on the so-called 13th Amendment (1987) and its system of provincial councils. This consensus, however, was weak since the mainstream opposition party of former Prime Minister Wickremasinghe and the JVP withdrew from the process, and the largest Tamil political party with close links to the LTTE (Tamil National Alliance, TNA) was never invited to participate.

The APRC process and its eventual outcome, however, were outmanoeuvred by nationalist resistance in the South as well as sidelined by the shadow war that started with the breakaway of the ex-LTTE's Karuna faction and escalated during 2006 and

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[71] The listing came in May 2006 as a response to the earlier assassination of the foreign minister, the assassination attempt on the Army commander in April 2006 and an unsuccessful attack on a naval carrier transporting over 700 unarmed soldiers. The foreign minister's assassination had already led to a travel ban in September 2005.

[72] Some observers speculate about the timing, as both sides decided to follow a military strategy and return to war and thus, for example, question the genuine purpose of the APRC as an effort to find a political solution or rather an instrument for deflecting international criticism (Goodhand & Walton 2009). Peiris and Ranawana (2007) interpret the APRC process as catering to international audiences mostly.

the first months of 2007 into an undeclared war. Two more incidents contributed to renewed warfare: the LTTE's closure of the Mavil Aru sluice gates in government-controlled rural areas that was responded to by a large-scale military operation in July and August 2006, and an assassination attempt in early December 2006 on the government's defence secretary who is one of the president's brothers.

The ensuing cycles of violence and repercussions from the international community that were intended as sanctions for both sides were perceived by the LTTE as biased and encouraging the government (Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008, p.41), whereas the government and a southern constituency critical of foreign involvement and international NGOs present in the country perceived the international response as too soft on the LTTE. Against the background of nearly 'traditional' suspicion against western NGO and charity activities, which is rooted in colonial experience, efforts to increase state control of NGO funding and activities in the 1990s were renewed and extended to bilateral donors, international agencies and the UN system, both with a view to complicate their work and intimidate possibly critical voices (Law and Society Trust 2008). At the same time, the LTTE complained about a lack of engagement to protect minority rights and appears to have hoped for international intervention until the last moments of war (Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008; Interview 4).

In parallel with the accusations against international actors came the intimidation of domestic civil society organisations and NGOs from both sides. Orjuela (2004) and Emmanuel et al. (2008) trace non-violent mobilisation of public support as well as intimidation and repression against organisations not supportive of the respective cause. On the side of the southern polity and society a multiplicity of actors is involved: government security forces, JVP, JHU and other Sinhalese groups, including Buddhist monks in the border areas. Often, NGO staff is labelled as 'tiger supporters' and 'traitors' simply because they worked with Muslim and Tamil communities (Emmanuel et al. 2008; Walton & Saravanamuttu 2011).

The abrogation of the ceasefire agreement by the government in the first days of 2008 marks the beginning of the last phase of the period described here. With the formal declaration of the end of ceased hostilities, the return to war became official.[73] Tracing the military and humanitarian developments during the next 17 months until the end of

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[73] The international monitoring mission stopped its work as agreed in the CFA regulations; the Norwegian facilitators, together with the donor co-chairs, continued to call upon the parties and work towards a non-violent solution but became increasingly sidelined.

the war goes beyond this research. More relevant for the discussion here are the trends in the political discourse that can be summarised as follows:

- the war went hand in hand with a militarisation of society and polity (Smith 2011); civilian efforts to conflict resolution and transformation were considered increasingly obsolete, and concerns for human rights and humanitarian law were mostly sidelined by the warring parties;

- on both sides the earlier attempted debate on power sharing and state reform was muted, and particularly in the South any renegade attempt to dissent and highlight the need for a political solution was vociferously bedevilled as treacherous and supporting terrorism[74];

- the spectra of political opinions were reduced on both sides: in the South nationalist and Buddhist voices dominated a silent majority and increasingly eclipsed the voice of the mainstream opposition party; on the Tamil side three camps evolved: the LTTE and its supporters in Sri Lanka and in the diaspora, anti-LTTE political parties and paramilitary groups that took the side of the government; and a silent and increasingly traumatised Tamil and partly also Muslim population in the North, East and South of the country that was literally caught in the crossfire.[75]

The war ended with the military defeat of the LTTE and the death of its leader in mid-May 2009. The government and the armed forces declared victory and the South of the country celebrated the perceived 'liberation from terrorism'. Cautious domestic and international voices, however, immediately raised concerns not to antagonise the Tamil minority and to work towards constitutional and state reform in order to address the needs and aspirations of the minorities.

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[74] This tendency was mirrored in the LTTE-controlled parts of society where dissent was not allowed either. On both sides, parts of the vernacular media played a significant role in propagating war and dehumanising the other side. Moreover, on both sides moderate and dissenting voices from journalists, civil society or religious clergy were silenced with violent means; the perpetrators of most of these atrocities, however, have until today not been identified.

[75] At the time of writing, both the government and LTTE are accused by human rights organisations of committing war crimes against Tamil civilians caught in the warzone during the last months of war (International Crisis Group 2010; United Nations 2011). Moreover, the Tamil population outside the warzone suffered from increased scrutiny among generally high security measures against terrorist attacks in the South and a general suspicion of supporting terrorism that was perceived by many as discriminating.

Within the coming weeks and months, the government began to reframe policies and rename parts of administration that formerly concerned issues such as constitutional reform or national integration. One part of these changes was the closure of the government's peace secretariat at the end of July 2009.[76] Declaring that a political solution would be found on the basis of constitutional amendments already in place, the government asked the APRC to continue its work and engaged with the TNA, the largest political group representing the Tamil community, after it forfeited its allegiance to the LTTE and the claim for a separate state, in a bilateral dialogue that is still to produce substantive results at the time of writing in 2012.

The outline of events relevant for the understanding of the peace secretariats ends at this point. Several of the developments during the 2002 negotiations and the years afterwards will be revisited in chapter 2, which provides the conceptual and theoretical background to understand conflict transformation and negotiations support. Among these are concepts for defining peace and peace processes, ripe moments and readiness for peace negotiations, concepts to understand the non-linear dynamics of a conflict system, and to describe and analyse the different levels and groups among stakeholders that can be supportive or obstructive in a peace process. This discussion will contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities of the Sri Lankan situation. Moreover, the events appear in the discussion of the empirical findings where they present the background for the peace secretariats' activities.

Before that, the following section will provide a brief overview of the negotiation support structure that was established during the peace talks in 2002 and 2003 and of which the peace secretariats are one relevant part.

1.3.3 Peace Secretariats as a part of the institutionalised negotiation support for the 2002-2003 peace talks

Observers often argue that the 2002-2003 peace talks presented an unprecedented level of coordination, systematic organisation and professionalism (Goodhand & Korf

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[76] The Muslim peace secretariat remains functional as of the time of writing in 2012 and engages in a restrategising process in order to engage in the new political process. The LTTE peace secretariat in Kilinochchi was destroyed by shelling in early October 2008. In January 2009 the Sri Lankan Armed Forces took over Kilinochchi, and the peace secretariat operated in displacement or from abroad until the end of the war.

2011, p.1; Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008, p.36). This approach comprised external facilitation and a set of donor co-chairs to accompany the process (and give security assurances through military cooperation) (Lunstead 2011), the support of various third parties engaged in conflict resolution and transformation on an unofficial level, an international monitoring mission with representation in all war-affected parts of the country, several sub-committees consisting of representatives of both parties and supporting the discussions at the main negotiating table, and the peace secretariats. These different forms of institutionalising the peace talks in the form of a 'peace architecture' (Burke & Mulakala 2011, p.157) are relevant to the understanding of the peace secretariats.

The systematic and organised approach is probably due to several factors. The approach of the Norwegian facilitator influenced the process design and the establishment of support structures. Learning from other peace processes around the world was also a contribution of many third-party advisors and capacity building activities (for example Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies 2008; Siebert 2007). In addition, the Wickremasinghe government encouraged policies close to those of the donor community and was eager to reform and modernise the public sector (Bastian 2005).

At the same time, the LTTE followed two interests when establishing a peace architecture: pairing the structures of the government signalled parity of status and symmetry between the negotiating parties; moreover, the structures contributed towards the overall goal of statebuilding since they were seen as steps towards the establishment of an administration (Philipson 2011).[77]

Already in February 2000, the Norwegian government on invitation of the then government of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga explored the possibility of facilitating a dialogue between the government and the LTTE on both humanitarian issues and towards a political settlement of the ethno-political conflict (Uyangoda 2006; Sørbø et al. 2011).[78] In mid-2000, the Norwegian government appointed Erik Solheim as Special Peace Envoy to Sri Lanka, who would also be the main facilitator

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[77] In order to engage with the donor community, the LTTE also established a Planning and Development Secretariat.

[78] Despite the rhetorical agreement of both parties to do so, fighting continued and direct dialogue did not take place due to the deep mistrust between the parties. Only the military stalemate in 2001, the economic and financial crisis caused by the attacks of the LTTE and the war, increasing donor pressure on the government and the expected proscription of the LTTE in the UK in early 2001, and an overall changed international approach towards 'terrorism' after the Al-Qaeda attacks of 9/11 made a cessation of hostilities possible (Uyangoda 2006).

of the peace talks in 2002 and lead a small team of personnel both based at the Norwegian embassy in Colombo and at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo. The facilitators travelled frequently to Sri Lanka but were not continuously based in the country.[79]

The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission was established in due course with the ceasefire agreement. Staffed with monitors from Scandinavian countries, initially under a Norwegian head of mission,[80] the mission set up district offices and contact points in order to be accessible to the public in the war-affected zone. In addition to the main office in Colombo, an office in Kilinochchi, the LTTE's de facto capital, served to liaise with the conflict parties. While on the side of the SLMM dedicated liaison officers were appointed, the parties established units within their peace secretariats to engage with the SLMM as well as with their respective military counterparts.

In addition to the structures that both negotiating parties set up in order to liaise with the SLMM, they also established four sub-committees in order to deepen, continue and implement the results from the negotiations at the main table.[81] Following a decision at the second round of talks in November 2002 in Thailand, it was agreed to install three sub-committees: one on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs (SIHRN), one on De-escalation and Normalisation (SDN) and one on Political Matters (SPM). [82] A fourth committee, the Sub-committee on Gender Issues (SGI) was agreed

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[79] The set-up of the Norwegian facilitation team as well as the person of the main facilitator were later criticised by observers. While criticism in hindsight for example highlighted the insufficient presence on the ground, the role and alleged partiality of the chief facilitator was a concern already during June 2001 when the Sri Lankan president and foreign minister sought to reduce his role and consulted the Norwegian government bilaterally without consultation of the LTTE (Sørbø et al. 2011; Uyangoda 2006, p.254). The latter accusation of partiality towards the LTTE continued throughout the coming years and was one of the main criticisms forwarded by southern nationalist groups as well as of Tamil voices critical of the LTTE (University Teachers for Human Rights, UTHR 2005a). The framing of the Norwegian support as facilitation instead of mediation also goes back to the deep scepticism concerning foreign intervention in issues of national sovereignty.

[80] The close staff connection between the Norwegian facilitators and monitors as well as Norway's predominant role in establishing the SLMM led to similar criticism regarding an SLMM bias towards the LTTE as mentioned above for the facilitator.

[81] This section draws heavily on one of the few publications on the sub-committees by Rainford and Sathkunanathan (2009) who discuss the, in their view, flawed approach of the Wickremasinghe government 'to mistake politics for governance'.

[82] The Wickremasinghe administration embraced a 'staged' approach towards power sharing through an interim administration and promised such a structure for the North and East of the country in its election manifesto (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p.87). The rationale was to enable economic development

upon later at the fourth round of talks in January 2003 in order to ensure consideration of gender issues.

The sub-committees in theory had a special role due to their bipartisan staff composition which was seen as part of the bridge-building effort between the parties, a contribution towards reducing asymmetry, and as first step into the direction of interim arrangements between the government and the LTTE (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009). Consequently, the sub-committees, particularly the one on humanitarian concerns and rehabilitation (SIHRN), as well as the later mechanism proposed to coordinate the tsunami relief effort (P-TOMS), were highly contested in the southern polity.[83]

Each of the sub-committees was chaired by a government and LTTE representative and consisted of an equal amount of members from each party and representatives of the Norwegian government (and in the case of SIHRN the Japanese government). The chairs of the three sub-committees were part of the negotiating teams.[84] The sub-committee dealing with gender issues differed in terms of personnel on the government side: it was chaired by a well-respected academic, Kumari Jayawardena, and the members were academics and women activists, whereas on the LTTE's side the team consisted of female cadres and was headed by the leader of the LTTE's women's political wing, Thamilini.[85]

The effectiveness of these support structures, however, varied depending on their respective tasks' contentiousness and the timing of their establishment. While the sub-committee on political matters only existed 'on paper' as it never met, SIHRN and

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through a cessation of hostilities and to win over the LTTE and its constituency through improved living conditions and power sharing. Since the government's cohabitation partner did not endorse the approach, an interim administration could not be established legally and the sub-committees, particularly SIHRN, were intended to replace the mechanism at least temporarily (ibid., p.24).

[83] In both cases, the effort of the government and the LTTE to create a non-political, rather bureaucratic support mechanism failed because of the lack of inclusion of the political, nationalist Sinhala opposition to such structures (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p.36-38).

[84] The SPM was chaired by the respective leaders of the negotiating teams, Minister G.L. Peiris and Anton Balasingham, SDN by Defence Secretary Austin Fernando and LTTE Eastern Commander, Karuna, and SIHRN by the Secretary General of SCOPP, Bernard Goonetilleke, and the head of the LTTE Political Wing, Tamilchelvan, since the LTTE peace secretariat was only established later.

[85] Several interviewees in this research refer to the SGI as an example of bridge building and an effective support structure for interaction and inter-party consensus building.

SDN were more active (for a description of SDN see Fernando 2009).[86] Initially supported with donor funds, SIHRN after 2004 was able to supply funding to local initiatives through a government budget (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p.79). When the LTTE suspended the negotiations in April 2003, it also cancelled an upcoming SIHRN meeting that was scheduled for the end of April. Later, the SIHRN activities were said to have revitalised for a short time since the government considered it useful to continue the collaborative exercise and maintained the sub-committee as the last functioning working arrangement and a possible space for interaction. Moreover, the LTTE was encouraged to interact through SIHRN with civil administration at the local level (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p.79).[87] When the president took over responsibility for the peace process, the old structures were replaced.

Finally, the peace secretariats should be mentioned briefly as part of the peace architecture. They will be described in detail in the empirical part of the research. Here, the focus is on the international support extended to them.

The three secretariats received significant attention from the international actors that supported the peace process. International actors eager to support the peace negotiations and the wider peace process identified the peace secretariats as a possible entry point for assistance, both by supporting their establishment financially as well as through capacity building.

While the SLMM establishment, staffing and maintenance were funded by the five Scandinavian countries (see for details Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission 2010) and the sub-committees did not receive assistance besides the Norwegian facilitation services, the peace secretariats were supported by a number of bilateral and multilateral donors.

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[86] It seems in hindsight that SPM was established due to domestic and/or international pressure on the government to approach the core political issues of the conflict along with the issues of normalisation and humanitarian relief, but neither party appeared willing to enter the discussion, probably due to awareness on both sides about the delicate situation of the cohabitation government (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p. 78). Without support of the president, the government could not carry through constitutional reforms that would have been required in order to implement power sharing.

[87] There exist different accounts on SIHRN's functioning after the stalemate in 2003. According to Rainford and Sathkunanathan (2009) it continued until 2006 but this was not remembered by their source in an interview for this research. Other sources confirm that SIHRN was not functional after the stalemate and refer to a letter of withdrawal by LTTE political head Thamilselvan on April 24, 2003 to the head of the government's peace secretariat (Philipson 2011).

All secretariats received assistance from the Norwegian government, the German and Swiss governments through the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies in Sri Lanka, and the UNDP. These donors highlighted their concern for conflict sensitivity and paid attention to concerns regarding equal access to resources and support offered (Interviews 1, 3, 5 20, 33).

The government as well as the Muslim peace secretariats also received support from the US government via AED/USAID.[88] Financial assistance was only provided by the Norwegian government in order to help the establishment of the secretarial office facilities and infrastructure, and in the case of the government secretariat the initial contribution in 2002 was consecutively replaced by funding from the government budget (Interview 23, 29, 33).[89] The other donors as well as several other third-party actors, which partly engaged only unofficially, provided support in kind or through capacity building in order to improve the peace secretariats' skills and expertise and in order to engage them with each other and their respective constituencies (Interviews 1, 2, 4, 18, 20, 23, 26, 31).

What were the intentions, or theories of change, behind this support, and what do they tell about the international community's views of the peace secretariats? Some donors consider the existence of the peace secretariats themselves as useful and describe their assistance to them as contributions to support the inter-party relationship and trust building, to decrease the asymmetry of the parties which might be detrimental to the peace negotiations, to enhance the representation of stakeholders in the peace process, and to improve the parties' preparation for and participation in the peace talks. Others refer to particular activities of the peace secretariats in which they see relevance for the overall peace process. Here, enhancing the connection between the different societal levels through helping the peace secretariats engage with other tracks and supporting civil society activities are mentioned, as is the potential to mobi-

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[88] Due to the LTTE's proscription in the US, their peace secretariat did not receive assistance, and there were no direct meetings with US officials for political reasons (Lunstead 2006, 2011, p.62). This led to complicated working arrangements in the case of the One-Text-Initiative, an institutionalised track 1.5 dialogue and problem solving program that was supported by the US, among other donors, and facilitated as part of its activities meetings between the peace secretariats and other stakeholders (personal observation of this author during the years 2005-2007).

[89] In agreement with the then government, funding for the LTTE continued. This was, despite agreed controlling mechanisms, later scandalised as biased support for the LTTE by opposition and succeeding political leaders (Interview 29, 30).

lise public support for the peace process through the peace secretariats' communication and information.

While some of these theories of change proved valid, others did not. As this research will show, the peace secretariats made relevant contributions in their various functional areas. At the same time, however, these contributions could not influence the peace process at large towards any of the above-indicated intentions of the international community in a way that transformed the dominant conflict dynamics. In light of the above outlined complex conflict system, this can hardly be a surprise. A less obvious finding of this research concerns the significance of the peace secretariats in symbolic politics and in representing and manifesting the statebuilding projects of their respective leaderships.

With this short glimpse at the conclusions of the research, this background chapter to the Sri Lankan conflict ends. As cautioned in the beginning, much more could be added to prove the complexity and the entrapments of the system. The purpose of this section, however, is to provide the reader with the information required to understand the deliberations and findings of this research.

The following, and last, section of the introductory chapter presents the methodological approach and critical considerations of the researcher.

1.4   Research Design and Methodology

This sub-chapter explains the research design and methodology. This research consists of a mix of strategies, or traditions, of inquiry (Creswell 1998) that appear useful for the particular questions and concerns.

The approach of this research concerns understanding different perspectives and interpretations of the conflict actors (Johnston 2005). Inspired by the thinking about conflict analysis of Boudreau, the research should be understood as a "systematic inquiry into the multiple, simultaneous and often contradictory knowledge claims made by all significant parties to a violent human conflict" (Boudreau 2003, p.101). As such the research is inspired by ethnographic methods that take a middle ground between emic and etic, i.e., insider and researcher, viewpoints (Seligmann 2005). It does not try to measure outcome of behaviour, evaluate performance and assess the cases in terms of effectiveness from an outsider/donor perspective. This research considers the dif-

ferent perspectives of three organisations, their views of themselves, of each other and the views of their respective environment. Section 1.4.1 explains the case study selection.

The research is inductive and qualitative because there is no adequate literature presenting theory that could be tested as a response to the research question; this research, however, does not start from scratch.[90] The research process can be divided into three stages: the research design and empirical research; the literature research and development of a conceptual framework; and, the synthesis of the empirical findings and the conceptual framework leading towards theorising the findings. This process is described in section 1.4.2.

The perspectives presented in the research as well as the conceptual framework underlie to a great extent situational factors – of time, of place, of discourses, problems and personal restrictions in research. This chapter therefore concludes in section 1.4.3 with a situational analysis according to Clarke (2005a) that details ethical and critical considerations of this research and leads to identifying three situational themes of the research: silence, blame and mistrust.

Clarke's approach is rooted in grounded theory, and it needs to be noted that the outset of this research was inspired by grounded theory as well. The inductive research process started with the empirical research, developed categories emerging from the data, compared these to the research assumptions, undertook a first attempt of conceptualisation and only afterwards reviewed the theoretical literature in a comprehensive way. Although some of the methodological elements of this research are inspired by grounded theory methodologies, the author does not claim to have conducted grounded theory research according to the methodology developed by its founding fathers Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser (Glaser & Strauss 1967).[91] Elements of this research with a grounded theory character are the cyclical process that moves back and forth between data gathering, analysis and conceptual development; the

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[90] The research question and the assumptions are based on existing literature, and the later developed conceptual framework builds on theory both on conflict transformation and on organisational behaviour.

[91] This disclaimer appears appropriate given the criticism that a significant amount of research in social sciences allegedly claims to follow grounded theory without truly adhering to its originally strict principles (Hood 2010). However, it should be noted as well that there is no 'one grounded theory method' but rather a family of grounded theory methods that can be classified in different ways (see Babchuk (2008) for an overview). The approach taken here leans towards a constructivist understanding on grounded theory (Charmaz 2006) but does not adhere strictly to a classic grounded theory paradigm (Glaser 2003).

constant and iterative process of data comparison; and the visualisation of relationships among categories towards conceptualisation and theorising.

Rather than aspiring to develop formal theory as classic grounded theory does, however, the intention in this research is to theorise. As Clarke (2005b, n.p.) expresses so suitably when explaining her postmodernist approach towards grounded theory,

> this brings theory down off its ghastly Enlightenment pedestal of generalizability, universality and ahistoricity. I certainly have zero interest in prediction – which is to me the goal of formal theory. To me, theorizing is a tool for generating working understandings and need[s] to be regularly revised, updated, tossed out and reinvented in the face of changes.

Following this understanding, the results of this research need to be considered as a 'work in progress' (Archer 2007, p.35).

1.4.1 Selection of the research approach

The research presents an inductive, qualitative approach towards theorising the organisational behaviour of the peace secretariats based on a sample of three case studies in one country. The three organisations represent different institutional backgrounds in the same macro context of country and conflict during a period of seven years from 2002 to mid-2009. Given the state of research on the particular topic and the difficulties in generalising findings about (organisational) behaviour in fragile situations and violent conflict, the resulting detailed account appears more helpful than a comparative approach that investigates, for example, various organisations in different conflict settings.

The intention of the research is not a comparison, but the explanation of organisational behaviour and its complexities. Thus, the inductive approach is preferred over a deductive one, which would have required a preselection of potential explanations in order to develop the theoretical framework to be tested with the empirical research. Instead, the empirical findings are used to develop a theory-based explanation. The

author does not claim validity of the conceptual framework developed on the basis of this research; it does, however, present the findings in a reliable way.[92]

The case study selection at the time of research at the end of 2009/2010 presents a challenge since data is difficult to access for various reasons. First, by mid-2009 two of the three organisations had ceased to exist due to the course of the conflict and war.[93] For the same reason, resource persons were difficult to access; this is particularly true for interview partners with an LTTE affiliation. Second, the opinions of all interview partners are affected by the situation at the time of research: the before-mentioned overall notion of frustrated and failed efforts towards peace makes a discussion of specific achievements difficult and subject to the overall perspective of the discussants.[94] Moreover, the present perspective of interview partners on the conflict parties' behaviour is influenced by the controversial and politicised views on the negotiation effort of 2002, the end of the peace process and the consequent war.[95] The efforts of the current government to establish its own Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission and to defend itself against international allegations of war crimes create during the time of research in 2010-2012 an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion against both critical voices on the end of negotiation and the conduct of war as well as against constructive reflections regarding the outstanding political solution of the underlying causes of violent conflict.

It could therefore be asked if not other cases would be more suitable for the discussion of the research questions. To answer this question, four methodological considerations should be taken into account:

First, given the state of literature on peace secretariats as negotiation support structures, a detailed exploration of functions and roles as well as a discussion of different

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[92] In order to test the validity of the concept for other cases, a comparison of organisations in different conflict situations could follow as a next step in research.

[93] As described in more detail above, this concerns the government's secretariat as well as that of the LTTE.

[94] As mentioned before, some observers doubt the initial commitment of the conflict parties to the peace process and consider other interests as dominant, e.g., to use the talks as a breathing space to recuperate and rearm, to secure international support and to pursue other agendas (Chandrasekharan 2002). Such an assessment would affect the views on the peace secretariats that, without genuine intention to negotiate, were merely façades.

[95] It should be noted, however, that most interview partners spoke with deep respect for the work and opinions of others; there were no hard feelings, harsh criticism or allegations against each other. Rather, most expressed interest in and gratitude for the opportunity to reflect on their own and others' roles.

cases within one conflict setting contribute to academic progress in any case. Even on the basis of this small sample of case studies, theorising can be explored and contribute as a 'building block' to further theory development with other case studies (George & Bennett 2005). Second, the in-depth knowledge and access given in the Sri Lankan situation could not be matched in other cases, and this would lead to a research bias. Third, from an ethnographic perspective one can argue that research is always implicitly comparative work: the researcher's understanding of a particular situation necessarily draws on a comparison of other cases, e.g., one's own experiences (Seligmann 2005, p.230). Fourth, the Sri Lankan cases present a unique research opportunity with regards to the questions outlined in section 1.2.4.

Altogether, the author argues that the selection of the cases for this first exploration and development of a conceptual framework is relevant to academic research. Future research could test the emerging framework in other conflict settings.[96]

1.4.2 Research process and stages

Research is a process of incremental steps towards answering the research questions. Building on the choice of topic, the selection of cases and the research questions discussed in the previous sections, the author followed a process of three stages, inspired by qualitative inductive research design and grounded theory methodologies.

The three stages comprise:

1. the research design, preparation and empirical research leading towards first ideas for the conceptual framework;

2. the literature research and revision of the conceptual framework; [97]

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[96] A comparison as such, however, cannot lead to generalised recommendations, let alone a 'master plan' for establishing peace secretariats.

[97] The literature research comprised primary, secondary and tertiary source material on peace secretariats and other support structures, conflict transformation and negotiation support. Sources of primary literature on the peace secretariats were written statements of the peace secretariats or representatives of the respective conflict parties in official documents, parliamentary recordings, newspapers and magazines as well as the Internet, here particularly the websites of the three peace secretariats. It should be noted that the destiny of the LTTE secretariat's archive is unknown and the government secretariat's ar-

3. the synthesis of the empirical findings and the conceptual framework leading towards theorising the findings (see Annex 1.2 for a timeline and detailed overview of the activities during the stages).

The stages, however, do not imply a unilinear procedure but should be seen rather as a process of iterations and constant comparison between empirical and theoretical findings, between interviews and literature towards the author's conceptualisation.

Some aspects of stages 1 and 2 will be described in more detail; these concern the preparation of interviews and the securing of adequate data quality; the process of conceptualisation; and the revision of assumptions. Finally, feedback to the interview partners at the end of the research process is considered.

Preparation of empirical research

Based on the initial assumptions and the dearth of literature, the author decided 'to jump right away' into empirical data collection through conducting interviews. For this purpose, four different categories of interview partners were identified that allowed for triangulation of viewpoints:

– insiders: staff of the peace secretariats, mostly in middle and top-management levels;

– partners: staff in organisational units of a conflict party that cooperated with the peace secretariat, e.g., staff of other government departments, or from civil society that cooperated with the peace secretariats, e.g., as members of boards and working groups;

– observers: academic and civil society members that have a good knowledge of the peace secretariats' activities in the overall context of the peace process;

– third-party actors: donors to the peace secretariats and other (domestic or international) third-party actors that supported or collaborated with the secretariats for different purposes, e.g., facilitation or capacity building.

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chive at the time of research not accessible. In addition, a limited amount of documents provided by donor organisations was available on a confidential basis.

Secondary literature refers to reports, papers and other publications about the three peace secretariats in Sri Lanka; tertiary literature refers to literature about peace secretariats and negotiation support in general.

Altogether, 34 in-depth interviews were conducted with an average duration of 80 minutes (see Annex 1.3 for an anonymous list of interview partners). The interviews represent the four categories, with some interview partners counted in two categories (e.g., as partner and third party) as displayed in table 1.1:

Insiders	Partners	Observers	Third parties
13	8	9	10

Table 1: Distribution of interview partners along categories

Disaggregation of the categories is only relevant for the insiders since the interview partners in the other categories always spoke about all three secretariats. The insider category divides in 6 interviews with staff of the government secretariat, 5 with the Muslim and 1 with the LTTE secretariat. Availability was particularly limited with a view to LTTE 'insiders' and 'partners' due to the killing, disappearance, imprisonment or flight of the largest number of relevant persons.[98]

It needs to be noted here that the interview situation for representatives of the government side presented challenges, too, although not comparable to the ones of the LTTE side. On the government side, the concerns were related to the current government's critical stance towards the earlier negotiations and in their view overly permissive dealing with the LTTE, which at times was compared to treason and betrayal of the country's interests.

Regarding the ensuing concerns about confidentiality, interviews followed due procedure to guarantee anonymity as was requested by many interview partners (Diener & Crandall 1978). The dissertation accordingly does not identify the interview partners by name or functional description.[99] In addition, interview location and context, the recording of interviews as well as data storage and documentation were subject to security precautions.

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[98] Potential interview partners were always difficult to contact even through gatekeepers, mostly did not respond, or refused to be interviewed due to security concerns or on-going application processes for asylum or immigration in third countries. In addition, many appear to wish leaving their old lives and experiences behind and establishing a new identity, which does not allow for retrospection, especially if having undergone interrogations and questioning before.

[99] In addition, several interview partners requested to see any reference made to their statements, which was granted.

The selection process of the interview partners can be described as a mixture of 'judgmental sampling', i.e., the selection of individuals who have a direct bearing on the research topic[100], and 'opportunistic sampling', i.e., the selection of accessible persons who are available and do not represent a risk for other interview partners or the research project (Seligmann 2005; Wood 2006).[101]

Altogether, the selection of interview partners provided a collection of unique and mostly unheard perspectives on the subject. They offered first-hand insights and experiences from different periods of the secretariats' activities that in most cases have not been discussed or published before. The interview material thus can be considered as relevant despite challenges in access to certain perspectives.

Building on a preliminary literature search, the author developed semi-structured interview guides for all four categories of interview partners (see Annex 1.4).[102] After opening with an introduction and explanation[103], an assurance of confidentiality and other clarifications, the interviews were conducted in an interactive manner asking the interviewees to contribute and highlight questions that would be integrated in subsequent interviews. Activities of the secretariats were described along key events of the peace process; the secretariats were characterised with a view to their internal cul-

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[100] In grounded theory methodologies, 'theoretical sampling' focuses on finding new data that helps building the emergent theory. Rather than being concerned with representativeness of data, data collection aims at saturation and thus stops when no more new insights can be gathered.

[101] Accordingly, other methods for data collection had to be excluded, too. For example, a survey on opinions about the peace secretariats and their perceived roles would have been interesting as well, but was not conducted in light of the difficult political environment that renders question about LTTE organisations and the earlier peace talks suspicious 'by default'. Likewise, observation of peace secretariat behaviour was not possible since two of the organisations had ceased to function and the third one conducted during the years 2010-11 a process of reflection and restrategising. The researcher, however, could draw on earlier observations during the period 2005-2008 when engaging with the peace secretariats in her capacity as deputy director of the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies, Sri Lanka Office.

[102] This is a variation from theory-free conduct of empirical research as suggested in the very early grounded-theory methodologies (Strauss & Corbin 1994). Rather, it is mostly accepted today that literature can serve as orientation for the researcher without defining the research project (Babchuk 2008). The guides also follow methodological suggestions for participatory inquiry in conflict analysis (Fisher et al. 2000). In addition, recommendations regarding data collection in conflict environments were considered (Brounéus 2011; Wood 2006).

[103] In all cases, the author explained topic and general gist of questions in advance and mostly in writing in order to prepare the interview partner.

ture, interactions with other actors and the relationship with political leaders and principals. The guideline also contained questions regarding the achievements of the secretariats and asked the interviewee to imagine alternative designs and roles for peace secretariats.

Test interviews with informed observers and third-party members revealed that some of the intended questions needed revision and the interviews required a free flow of conversation to ensure a trustful exchange.[104] Consequently, the guides were used more in the sense of check lists in order to cover all relevant aspects of interest and to point to specific questions, e.g., to verify earlier information or consolidate a particular perspective. The order of questions was not always followed and topics of discomfort were not pressed further.

The author also noted a relatively high level of emotional reactions. These were not related to the peace secretariats but to general concerns regarding the course of the peace process, the war and the current political situation. Persons with a political, human rights or civil society background responded especially strongly and used the opportunity to speak about past experiences and the future outlook of the country in general.

The different levels of emotional involvement, the concerns for confidentiality as well as the difficult access to some interview partners resulted in biases in the representativeness of interview data; these were mitigated as much as possible through interviews with 'proxies' who were close to the 'insider' positions as well as through triangulation of views and methodologies (Bryman 2003).

Given the divergence of viewpoints, the following precautions were taken to validate data: At least two sources were required to validate factual findings, e.g., statements

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[104] Test interviews revealed that the questions regarding effectiveness were difficult to answer. The idea to let interviewee's visualise the history of the peace secretariats proved in the course of the test interviews as too difficult and time-consuming. Some felt that events were too far away and could not remember details of particular activities well. Most interview partners who were not 'insiders' did not know the organisational details while 'insiders' paid a lot of attention to questions concerning organisational culture and self-image, highlighting differences from the other secretariats and also other units of their conflict party's organisation. Some did not understand the questions regarding alternative peace secretariat designs since the organisations in their views fulfilled their functions. Relating the activities to conflict transformation was easier but mostly required pointing by the author towards specific types of conflict transformation. The author consequently adjusted the interview questions and style and paid more attention to organisational identity and the negotiation context. Both corrections in the interview course are reflected in the data and also the choice of the consequent literature and theory discussion.

on activities and functions; these could be either two interview statements or two different sources. A convergence of viewpoints and perceptions, however, was only expected from comparison of findings within one conflict party position, i.e., if two opinions regarding a particular aspect of the peace process contradicted each other this did not disqualify the viewpoints – they were simply different.[105] On the contrary, diverging viewpoints can contribute to validation if the dissent can be interpreted within the context of the conflict, e.g., if the divergence is based on affiliation with adversary conflict parties.[106] In order to avoid exertion of undue influence on the interview partners, questions were framed in a factual manner that did not have any bearing on the conflict and the current political situation.

Conceptualisation of findings

Empirical data was coded and categorised immediately after data collection.[107] The assumptions and questions of the interview guidelines served as a starting point for coding the first interviews. Soon additional categories emerged, particularly with a view to the political background, the conflict context, leadership and management issues as well as identity, belongingness and loyalty, while others, e.g., on organisational structure or size, proved to be not relevant for the emergent concepts that were documented in theoretical memos and later in presentations to a doctoral colloquium.[108]

While the empirical data provided the foundation for the first attempts in conceptualising the findings, the literature research of the second stage provided additional insights that helped to interpret the empirical findings and connect them to existing theory. Given the empirical findings and emergent categories, the theory research was

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[105] Cautious interpretation is required, however, since non-contradiction can also be telling. Silence, interviewees not responding directly to a certain part of a question and other ways of avoiding the answer might hint at divergence as well. See for example Fujii (2010) and Wood (2006) on the analysis of 'metadata', e.g. silences, lies, evasions and denials. This aspect has to be kept in mind as well when considering the earlier mentioned difficulties that interviewees had with some questions.

[106] The divergence (or convergence) of views – both in interviews as well as in primary material and literature – may be based on different reasons and does not validate or disqualify the findings automatically. This is particularly so in situations of violent conflict where there is no agreement on core issues regarding the substance of conflict as well as on procedural issues (Wood 2006).

[107] Following grounded theory methodology, the data was coded on the basis of field notes, using the recorded interview material as control for accuracy of statements without transcription (Holton 2007).

[108] Annex 1.5 outlines the coding scheme for the interview material, which was used for all interviews.

directed towards organisational theories and particularly to agency theory. Unlike a qualitative research approach where the theoretical discussion serves as a preconception of the empirical data, here – following a grounded theory approach – the theoretical literature is treated rather as additional data that complements the case study data and helps develop the emerging concept (Glaser & Holton 2004; Holton 2007).

The iterative process of empirical data collection and comparison with findings in literature leads the literature research towards specifying, for example, agency theory in the context of political systems and violent conflict. These iterations can be traced in the theory chapters that follow the process of research and the emergence of the conceptual framework. They also informed, following a process of theoretical sampling, the on-going selective data collection in areas where additional data was needed to saturate the emerging codes and categories towards the synthesis of empirical findings with the conceptual framework developed (Glaser & Holton 2004).

Following the first stage of empirical research that concluded in the presentation of initial conceptualisations at a PhD colloquium in December 2010, the emerging concepts were compared to literature and the theoretical chapters developed. These present the conceptual framework as it can be established from scholarly literature (since the author does not claim, for example, to have developed agency theory). Nevertheless, the conceptual framework is grounded in the empirical findings.[109] Part 2 of the research presents the empirical findings along the 'theoretical' conceptual framework.

Adjustment of assumptions

As mentioned earlier, the first phase of data collection led to adjustments in the research orientation and a revision of the initial assumptions that read as follows:

> 1. While organised negotiation support structures are not sufficient for explaining the success, or failure, of the peace process, they can contribute to conflict transformation.

> 2. Both external context-related factors and internal organisational characteristics determine the organisation's contributions.

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[109] Here, methodology deviates from grounded theory. The research presents existing scholarly literature that is helpful to establish and validate the conceptual framework borne from the empirical data. Annex 1.6 shows the empirical findings as presented in December 2011 on the occasion of a colloquium of PhD candidates reading under guidance of Prof. Dr. Dr. Giessmann in Berlin.

3. The organisational characteristics can be influenced through external assistance, e.g., through capacity building.

The following adjustments took place:

Assumption 1 was developed in the context of the general public sentiments against the earlier peace talks and the triumphalism of the victorious end of the war. In hindsight, it served as an explanation for investigating a question perceived as odd and anachronistic by some rather than expressing a research assumption. It was therefore reframed in order to expose the high expectations of some of those who were supporting the peace secretariats. These expectations were explained in an additional assumption that highlights the particular position of the peace secretariats.

While listening[110] to the different voices during the phase of interviewing and later the documentation and coding, the author realised that she had additional implicit assumptions about the determinants of the secretariats' performance.[111] Consequently, assumption 2 was complemented with two additions that express the most important characteristics of the organisational and context determinants.

In the course of the interview and documentation phase, the author decided to drop the examination of the effects of external assistance (assumption 3).[112] Instead, the viewpoints of the third-party interview partners were used to complement the perspectives presented by the other interview partners.[113]

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[110] Almost all interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewee.

[111] While the assumptions about the context-related determinants were established already during the initial literature review and preparation of interviews, the internal characteristics became manifest during the initial pilot and test interviews.

[112] This happened in light of the interviewees' avoidance of effectiveness questions and the general reluctance to expose details of external assistance in the light of a generally critical discourse on the 'over-internationalised' peace process. In addition, the issue of capacity building to the LTTE was considered too contentious to be discussed openly, and, given allegations and criticism regarding governance and accountability issues at the Muslim peace secretariat, interview data regarding external assistance and its relevance appeared problematic.

[113] In this sense, the third-party views contribute to the multiple 'realities' (Druckman 2005, p.7) expressed by the conflict parties. This multiplicity creates a tension between the positivist aspiration for validity in research and the constructivist acceptance of the different voices and views that do not allow for one absolute truth (Charmaz 2006). Following the latter view, this author tends towards an emic approach giving space to the self-reported senses of meaning.

Consequently, the initial three assumptions of the author were refined in formulation as well as depth of understanding and are presented here as revised:

1. Peace secretariats have the potential to be change agents for conflict transformation.

2. Peace secretariats hold a particular position within and between the negotiating parties that implies a potentially significant influence on the negotiation process as well as on conflict transformation.

3. The mandate of peace secretariats as support structures for negotiations is defined by the negotiators based on their respective strategies and on third-party advice, and is interpreted and implemented by the peace secretariats.

4. Both external context-related factors and internal organisational characteristics determine the organisation's contributions to conflict transformation.

   4a. Context-related factors encompass the form of government, the type of violent conflict and the conflict phase.

   4b. Internal characteristics are expressed in the organisation's identity with traits such as proximity to the principal, political alignment/identification, professionalism and access to resources.

As the theory chapters evolved, their development followed the outline of the assumptions. The assumptions are therefore presented in the course of the theory chapters despite having been established prior to the theory research. Therefore, the assumptions are not formulated according to agency theoretical phraseology.[114] The terminology instead roots them in the early explorative phase of research design and framing of research questions.

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[114] Had the assumptions been developed from the theoretical literature following a deductive approach, they would translate as:

4. Structure and identity of the agent determine agency.

4a. Relevant aspects of structure encompass the form of government, the type of violent conflict and the conflict phase.

4b. The agent's identity can be described with traits such as proximity to the principal, political alignment/identification, professionalism and access to resources.

The research approach, however, remained an inductive one: the theoretical literature served the author to understand and explain the findings. Thus, the reviewed literature on agency was selected with a view to explaining findings. Stewardship theory was introduced (in chapter 3.2.2) since the case studies showed fulfilment of mandate and hardly any tendencies towards shirking behaviour. Likewise, the selection of the identity traits of agents (in chapter 3.4.3) is based on observations from the empirical research. To emphasise the inductive approach, the titles of the sections in chapter 3 paraphrase empirical findings.

<u>Feedback</u>

After generating findings and writing of the dissertation the question of feedback to the interview partners arises. Ethical rules of good practice in social research as much as the author's desire to share her thoughts with the people who helped in the research process ask for a forum to provide insights into the research and also to discuss the findings in their 'packaging' of a conceptual framework that builds on the experiences of the interview partners. Such a feedback is not only beneficial to the research process when mirroring back the author's 'proposals of reality' (Fendt & Sachs 2008), but might also serve the interviewees in their reflection of past experiences and future activities.

1.4.3 Self-reflection and situational analysis

While earlier sections dealt with concerns for confidentiality and data security as well as with the biases in data access, here a reflection on the author's personal bias is added. The different strands of critical appreciation are summarised in a situational analysis that serves as an exercise of reflexivity of the researcher and helps the reader to understand the situation of research and researcher. Reflexivity enables the researcher and the research community "to detect the biases that creep into our research – biases which constitute likely threats to the validity of our knowledge claims – and hopefully try to overcome them next time we engage in research" (Tsoukas & Knudsen 2005, p.6-7).

The discussion of personal bias is particularly relevant given methodological considerations in grounded theory that the researcher should be 'neutral' towards the re-

search question (Clarke 2005a). This presents a problematic demand in light of any author's personal interest and motivation for research (Fendt & Sachs 2008). Researchers are both participants in the field and observers of their action. While reflexivity might help to realise the social relationship between the research object and the researcher (Weber 1993), the researcher is nevertheless implicated in the research in ways that she or he only becomes aware of through an active process of reflection or feedback from other researchers (Tsoukas & Knudsen 2005).

This particular author carries her past work experience into the research. At the same time, interviewees might have interpreted the previous occupation as a tendency towards specific concerns and beliefs regarding negotiations and conflict transformation, which in turn led to interviewee assumptions regarding the desirability of their answers (social desirability bias).[115] Other interview partners might not measure their own answers but contest the findings of the research altogether. This is just one example of how the researcher's person potentially affects the interview process and its outcomes. As Weick (2002, p.895) adds, "culture, ideology, race, gender, class, language, advocacy, and assumed basis of authority limit, if not destroy, any claim [a researcher's] work has to validity in some interpretive community".[116]

One 'tool' or practical approach towards this reflection, or an "interpretation of interpretation" (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000, p.6) is the use of a research journal or diary during the research process.[117] The author used a journal during parts of the preparation of interviews and interviewing phase as well as during parts of the analysis and writing phase. The purpose of the journal is similar to that of so-called memos in grounded theory and thus was at times replaced by the memo writing process.

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[115] The work of the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies is widely known among the interview partners for conflict transformation work that included engagement with the LTTE. Being aware of this influence, the author at times tried to 'broaden her profile' through explaining her personal relationship with the country (living in Sri Lanka since 2005; married to a Sri Lankan citizen with two children) or through highlighting personal understanding of bureaucratic organisations (as a German civil servant).

[116] The term 'interpretive community' was coined by Stanley E. Fish referring to the reader's subjective interpretations of a text depending on his/her membership in various communities with distinct epistemologies (Fish 1976, 1980).

[117] Eliciting assumptions or questioning findings in empirical research are processes within the research process that do not find their space in the final text of the dissertation but nevertheless require attention; and their formulation, the very act of writing them down, is helpful for bringing questions and concerns to awareness and for integrating them into the research (Nadin & Cassell 2006).

One concern of these reflections deals with the before-mentioned sense of 'failure' of the collective field on conflict transformation in light of the military end of war and how this notion affects interpretation of data.[118] In this context, critical remarks of interview partners regarding the contributions of peace secretariats to conflict transformation have to be read cautiously. A second issue was the security and visa situation of the author in Sri Lanka, which required consideration of sensitivities towards the research topic and subject, in particular towards the case study on the LTTE peace secretariat.[119]

A third concern relates to the post-war situation and its psychological effects on the interview results. As mentioned above, the author realised during interviews that many interview partners showed emotional reactions to questions regarding their role during the peace process and when describing particular situations that they considered important to explain their organisations' contributions and limitations. This is not surprising since in a post-war situation any in-depth discussion with individuals involved in peaceful efforts to end the violent conflict will reflect their respective trauma, fear, frustration, defiance, or assertiveness and triumphal feelings over the outcome of the peace process.[120] While some interviewees intellectualised the discussion, others demonised their antagonists or appeared sad.[121] This may point to different strategies of

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[118] See also the adjustment of the first research assumption discussed above.

[119] Since the closure of the previous employer's office in Sri Lanka can be described as a complicated and politicised process and given the increasingly strict handling and cancellation of visa for expat staff of NGO and donor organisations, the author was careful not to wrongfully appear as investigating the failure or misconduct of authorities or as defending a failed peace process and the assumptions on which the process was based, e.g., parity of the negotiating parties.

[120] The latter did not necessarily relate to the government's victorious end of the war but rather to the interviewee's perception that they had known earlier that the peace process was doomed to fail and that they had realised that one or the other actor was not genuine about the negotiations (e.g. the LTTE), did not do it the right way (e.g., the previous government), had other hidden interests in Sri Lanka (e.g. the Norwegian facilitator), etc. Consequently, these interview partners at times disowned their own efforts and role in the peace process, either ignoring it or explaining that they had been cheated, pressurised or otherwise manipulated.

[121] Intellectualisation as a defence mechanism to stressful situations can be described as a 'flight into reason', where the individual avoids uncomfortable feelings by focusing on facts and logic only (Skynner & Cleese 1994, p. 54).

coping with disappointment and stress but also to other psychological concepts useful to explain some of the interview findings.[122]

While this discussion goes beyond the research topic, it seems highly relevant to understand the psychological dynamics of qualitative research in a post-war situation. Additional research might be required to shed more light and inform future research design. Such research would also benefit the field of conflict transformation when assisting third-party practitioners with debriefing and dealing with their own experiences.

Bringing together the different concerns, ethical considerations and challenges that the researcher confronted during the different phases of the research project, a situational analysis of the research provides a good overview in which to contextualise the findings and the (co-) construction process of knowledge between interview partners and researcher (Clarke & Friese 2007). A situational analysis helps to "deeply situate research projects individually, collectively, organizationally, institutionally, temporally, geographically, materially, discursively, culturally, symbolically, visually and historically" (Clarke 2005a, p.xxii).

Inspired by Clarke's techniques that are understood as a supplement to grounded theory methodologies, this researcher developed a situational map to visualise her situation of research.[123] This can be considered as analytic exercise and "on-going research 'workout' of sorts" (Clarke & Friese 2007, p.371). In line with Clarke's intention to provoke the researcher to analyse more deeply, the instrument is adapted here to suit the purpose of reflection on the methodological challenges of the research.

The leading question for a situational map is what is present in the research situation but remains so far unarticulated? While some aspects were predominant in the researcher's mind, e.g., the political sensitivity of the topic, other concerns 'surfaced' as

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[122] For example, emotions were often not related directly to the description of a particular task of the peace secretariats but to the perceptions of others, or the interviewee's perceptions of other actors' activities and how these had influenced their own role. This can be explained with psychological concepts as the 'fundamental attribution error' that says that people tend to explain other people's mistakes, or aggressive behaviour, in dispositional terms and their own behaviour in situational terms (Ross 1977). People tend to believe that while their own behaviour is necessitated by the circumstances, and probably the enemy's actions, the enemy just follows his devious nature – which resonates well with concepts of enemy demonisation in violent conflict situations mentioned earlier.

[123] The form of visualisation as a mind map follows the example of Larsen (2010). The situational map is one of three exercises of situational analysis; the other two concern the mapping of social worlds and discourse arenas in which the research is located and the mapping of positions that are taken in the data (Clarke 2005a, p.86).

situational aspects only in the course of the mapping process. Examples are the influence of the scholarly and practitioner discourse, or problems with literature access. Moreover, the understanding of the relatively conscious aspects gained complexity; the political sensitivity, for example, is linked to both the critical discourse on the 'over-internationalisation' of the peace process as well as to the 'war-on-terrorism' discourse.

Figure 1.1 below shows an already ordered situational map in which the at-first unordered thoughts and concerns of an initial mind map are organised in clusters. Central to its interpretation is the positioning of the researcher as part of the map, as part of the research project and process. The researcher does not stand outside the project as an observer but relates both to the human elements or actors in the research as well as to non-human elements and discourses.

In addition, the map includes relational connections indicated by the arrows between the situational aspects.[124] Thus, the exercise also shows how situational aspects are connected and possibly perturb, i.e., reinforce or neutralise, each other in the sense of systemic or cybernetic thinking. This could for example be the case with the lack of access to LTTE-related data. While some aspects may be countered, e.g. through triangulation of data, others have to be acknowledged and accepted as limitations of the research and its findings. Future efforts to further investigate aspects of the research questions can consider these limitations.

Since the situational aspects are partly elaborated in this sub-chapter or appear self-explanatory, the elements of the map will not be discussed in more detail. Reflecting on the map as a whole and its complexities, the researcher sees three themes emerging that accompany the research process, especially the early phases of design and interviewing, and implicate its findings. The themes can be named silence, blame and mistrust.

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[124] The arrows indicate relational connections; however, in order to keep the map readable, not all possible links are visualised by arrows.
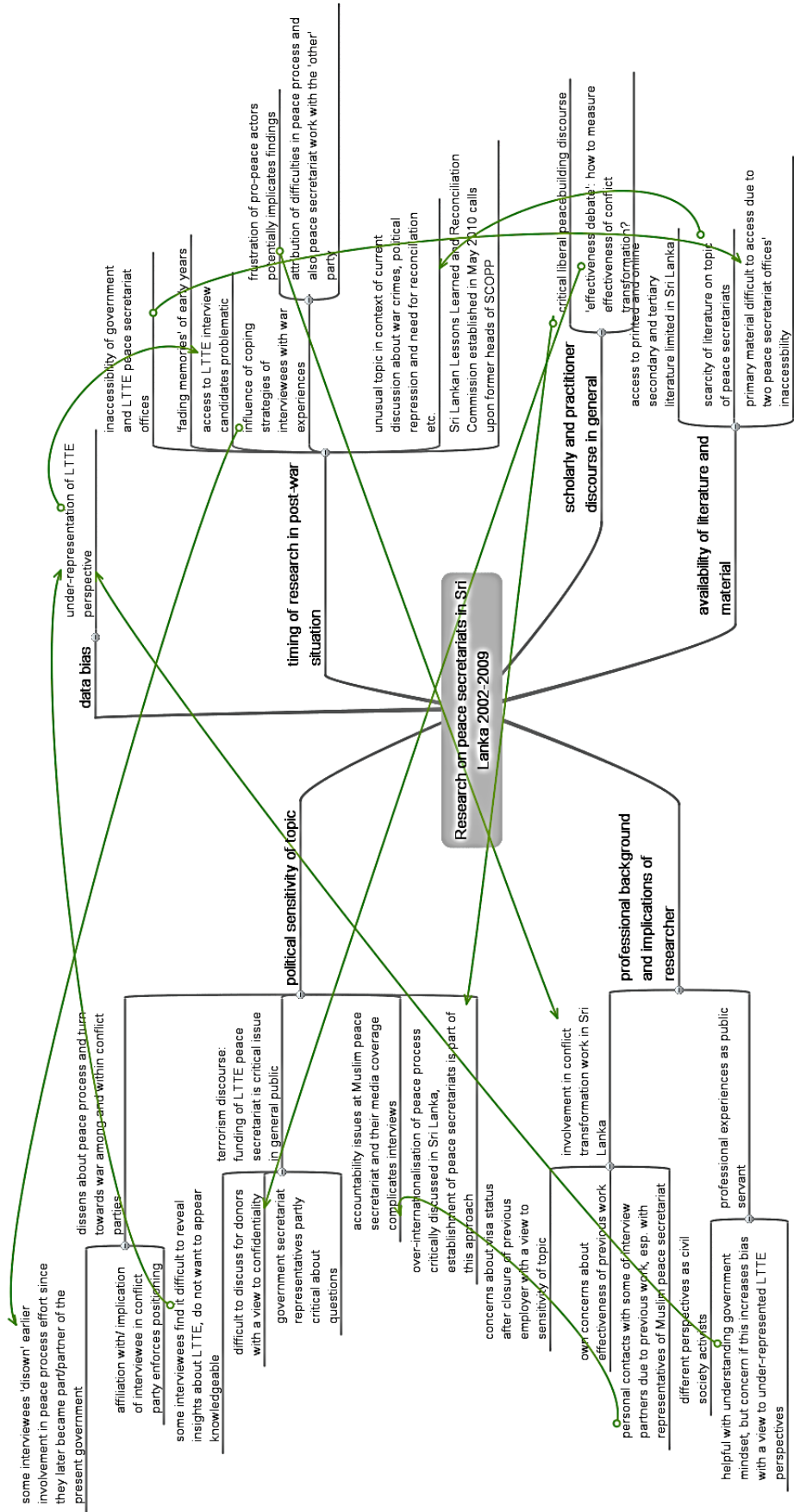
Figure 1: Ordered situational map of research with relational connections

Silence can be found already in the academic literature and material on Sri Lanka regarding the 'unusual' topic of the peace secretariats and influenced the research from the outset. Silence is also experienced in the interviews regarding questions on activities, impact and effectiveness; it may be caused by weak memory, lost archives and closed offices. Silence also relates on a more profound level to people's choices not to talk about the past and what in Sri Lanka today is largely seen as a flawed and pointless peace process. Lastly, it points to the situation of those without a choice and without a voice: who are not able or do not dare to be interviewed anymore.

Blame can be found mutually among the conflict parties for the failed peace process. It can also be found among some interviewees regarding other stakeholders or third parties that should have done more or done it differently. In the middle of this, the author finds herself with a concern not to insinuate the blame of anybody. On the contrary, there is the more reflective position that nobody is to blame for the turns and tides of a systemic change process.

Mistrust confronts many research projects and investigations about the peace process in general and this researcher takes extra measures to explain her effort. Some actors might feel mistrust regarding the researcher's past and future intentions, and even the researcher at times experiences the feeling of mistrust and avoids sharing her research endeavour in wide circles in case the topic might appear too contentious to some audiences. In addition, the interview findings often require extra vetting: why did someone not remember, or tell the story this way?

The challenge is to overcome the limitations that are expressed in these themes through engaging the interviewees, through contributing to an emerging field of literature on peace infrastructure, and through encouraging joint learning on similar case studies.

With this reflection ends the first, introductory chapter and leads to the development of the conceptual framework. The second part of the dissertation consists of three chapters. Two chapters develop the conceptual framework and one summarises and operationalises it for the analysis of the empirical material.

Part II: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Chapter 2 Conflict Transformation and Peace Secretariats

My staff in SCOPP teased me over the frequency with which I quoted the Chinese proverb "The more you sweat in peace; the less you bleed in war". Today, however, what Elie Wiesel – novelist, holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate – has said is more appropriate to our times. "Peace is not God's gift but our gift to ourselves". Are we, as Sri Lankans, capable of giving ourselves and succeeding generations this precious gift?[125]

The above comment serves well to introduce central elements of this research's understanding of peace processes and conflict transformation. The quoted Chinese proverb expresses the purpose, role and dedication of the government's peace secretariat and its counterparts from the other conflict parties. The work of the peace secretariats aimed at helping the negotiating parties in their effort to bring about a peace agreement and went beyond this service in a wide area of tasks that related to monitoring, facilitation, capacity building and communication. The tasks thus reflected functions that are often part of external assistance for conflict transformation. Through the establishment of the peace secretariats, they are placed in the hands of the conflict parties. This is expressed the quote by Wiesel that peace is "our gift to ourselves". It is a central assumption of many people engaged in conflict transformation and also a core belief of this author: despite complex challenges in ownership and domestic responsibilities, peace lies, foremost, in the hands of the conflict parties.

It is important to state this belief clearly since there is a tendency in the peacebuilding discourse, and especially the discourse on liberal peacebuilding, "to underestimate the importance of domestic political processes and the agency of individual actors who are either importers or resisters" (Goodhand & Walton 2009, p.307) of the offered support.[126] This research finds itself in the context of a highly critical and controversial debate on just these issues. In the aftermath of Sri Lanka's highly internationalised, failed peace process (Sriskandarajah 2003; Burke & Mulakala 2011), an analysis of a particular aspect of this peace effort cannot ignore the wider debate. The research itself, however, will only touch upon the interaction between international assistance

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[125] Jayantha Dhanapala, a former secretary general of SCOPP, on SCOPP's tasks; see Dhanapala (2007b, p.5).

[126] During recent years, the discussion has taken a more critical turn (discussing the case of Sri Lanka Goodhand et al. (eds.) 2011; Stokke & Uyangoda (eds.) 2011) and suggests, for example, that understanding the complexity of interactions between intervention and domestic actors is a negotiation process in itself (Bonacker et al. 2010).

and domestic actors where necessary, and focuses on a more internal, or domestic, perspective: understanding the peace secretariats' contributions to conflict transformation as endeavours owned by the conflict parties.

The aim of this chapter is to introduce and connect the key terms of the research question: peace secretariats and conflict transformation. As the first chapter of this research has shown, scholarly literature is neither concerned much with organisations in support of peace negotiations in general, or with peace secretariats in particular; nor does it link these support mechanisms to conflict transformation. This chapter will therefore review the existing literature on conflict transformation and on negotiations in order to first clarify what is known already, and second to help develop a conceptual framework to explain the organisations' contributions to negotiations in peace processes and to conflict transformation. This conceptual framework will build on both theoretical chapters of the dissertation: this chapter explains the context – violent conflict and peace processes, and the function of the organisations – assisting negotiations and furthering the conflict parties' efforts in making peace. The third chapter will discuss insights from organisation theory that help understand the organisations' performance, or, rather, in order to avoid the connotation of evaluation, their behaviour in the specific situation of the peace secretariats.

Chapter 2 starts with a 'rough guide' of this research's understanding of peace, peace processes and the different types, or generations, of interventions to end conflict. This part can only offer a brief glimpse into the vast existing literature; its purpose is to locate and contextualise conflict transformation within the vast landscape of interventions and clarify its specific character in comparison to other kinds of interventions. The more detailed discussion of conflict transformation in section 2.2 is presented with a view to the nature of conflict that is relevant to this research: protracted, ethnopolitical conflict between conflict parties in an asymmetric power relation. Here, specific approaches that have significant influence on the understanding of conflict transformation, as for example the one of 'multi-track diplomacy', will be introduced as well.

2.1 From War to Peace – Peace Processes and Interventions to End Violent Conflict

While embarking on the exploration of definitions and terminology used in conflict and peace-related work, the pitfalls and inconveniences of this journey need to be acknowledged; this research does not discuss abstract ideas but takes place in a post-war setting where all the incompatibilities and contestations that made the conflict an intractable one in the first place are still valid. Where possible, examples and illustrations from the Sri Lankan context will be given; at the same time, many of these examples might be contested according to different perspectives.

2.1.1 Introduction to terminology of peace and peace process

Describing organisational behaviour with regards to ending violence and building peace suffers from a problem: despite much research and literature on it, peace remains a "vague and much debated concept" (Campbell 2010, p.5). Oftentimes, authors do not define their own understanding of peace, in contrast to elaborate definitions of the various forms of interventions to achieve it (see for example the terminology section in Ramsbotham et al. 2005, p.27-30). Richmond in his critical analysis of peace research in the study of international relations suggests that there is often a mistaken assumption "that the project of peace is so apparent as not to require detailed explanation" (Richmond 2008, p.16). But this is not the case. As an example of research on civil society involvement in peacebuilding in Sri Lanka shows, the very definition of peace is contested among conflict parties and their constituencies. The perception among interview partners was that "while Sinhalese want an end to the violence, Tamils want justice – not 'peace' with continued oppression" (Orjuela 2003, p.200).

Thus, when attempting to end violent conflict and to bring about peace, it is important to ask who defines that peace and which peace is spoken about – both with a view to the differences between external and domestic actors and to differences between and within the domestic parties (Lidén 2006; with a view to Sri Lanka and the LTTE Philipson 2011). While this problem is increasingly recognised in scholarly literature and practitioner debate, especially when it comes to measuring success in peacebuilding (Call 2008), there are frequently "silences and assumptions" where there should be

definitions and explicit conceptions (Richmond 2007, p.6). These silences can be explained by four interrelated problems confronted in the scholarly and practical study of conflict and peace:

First, conceptions are based on conflicting paradigms in international relations theories that represent the varying perspectives on real life dealings with violent conflict and peace. As Sandole notes, such "different mappings of the 'same thing' mean different realities" (Sandole 1999, p.111).[127] Following these different perspectives as reflected in the above example of Sinhalese versus Tamil perspectives on peace, violent conflict either needs to be contained as a threat, or offers the opportunity for emancipation and justice.

Second, any attempt to define peace for research or practical intervention has to confront the dilemma that the conflict parties themselves by nature cannot agree on one conception of peace, and that attempts to define it by a third party from the outside, although perhaps of benevolent nature, run into the legitimate criticism of imposing a foreign, often western conception of peace.[128]

Third, within practitioner circles there is a focus on feasibility in the light of difficulties to measure impact of peace interventions and the infinite process character of peace. [129] Rather than failing to address the tension, definitions and measures are kept on a 'tangible' level of project goals and outcome (e.g., Smith 2004).

Fourth and closely related to the previous one, scholars and practitioners in the disciplines of peace and conflict studies often work closely together and mutually influence each other's work (Paffenholz 2010). While this is in principle a welcome exchange, it is argued by some authors that this has led to an overly pragmatic approach towards building peace at the expense of critical, academic reflection (Paffenholz 2010; Bonacker 2011). While moderate criticism is taken into consideration (Heathershaw 2008), literature mostly sidelines the 'bigger questions' of "ideology, hegemony, dividing practices and marginalisation" (Richmond 2008, p.3).

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[127] Sandole (1999) differentiates four paradigms that influence the conception of conflict and conflict regulation: political realism (realpolitik), political idealism (idealpolitik), Marxism/structuralism, and non-Marxist radical thought/post-structuralism. For a similar differentiation of international relations perspectives see Richmond (2008) and Paffenholz (2010).

[128] For a discussion of the criticism of the liberal peacebuilding concept see Paris (2010). For a reflection on postmodern influences on peace research see Weller (2003).

[129] The author is grateful to Beatrix Austin for pointing out this aspect, personal communication, June 1, 2011.

This situation leads to the paradox that while many are working towards peace, most find it difficult, or inconvenient, to say what it is. This consequently leaves room for one predominant notion: "liberal peace has become a hegemonic concept" (Richmond 2008, p.17).[130] While predominant in practice and sometimes regarded as a panacea, the concept of liberal peace faces increasing criticism in scholarly discourse. Summing it up in a nutshell, there are two strands of criticism that are already reflected in the above problematisation.[131] First, liberal peace is a political project that is concerned with building peace through liberalisation and modernisation without sufficiently realising the risks and social tensions that these processes impose on divided and fragile societies. Second, the approach to building liberal peace is seen as a toolkit or "composite of neoliberal problem-solving strategies – a form of practice rather than a theory or concept" (Heathershaw 2008, p.599). Some authors argue in addition that the concept is too focused on efficiency and in its template-like application ignores the realities of the ground situation and thus may recreate the conditions of conflict (Barnett 2006).[132]

Why is this criticism and the idea of liberal peace relevant to this research? The subjects of this research are organisations that were established with external assistance as part of donor support to a peace process, and more concretely to the negotiating (or aspiring-to-negotiating) parties. The peace secretariats could thus be seen as part of a liberal peacebuilding package that ignores local approaches towards ending the armed conflict (Mac Ginty 2006) and is part of the over-internationalisation of the peace process (Goodhand & Walton 2009). Moreover, the establishment of the secretariats played into the conflicting statebuilding projects of the main adversaries, the government and the LTTE (Uyangoda 2011). It is therefore important to display the critical distance of this research towards liberal peace. At the same time, this research

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[130] Liberal peacebuilding suggests rebuilding of states after violent conflict based on the ideas of Kantian democratic peace theory and Adam Smith's economic liberalisation, assuming that high levels of both increase the chances for peace. While comprising a combination of democratisation, economic liberalisation, neoliberal development, human rights and the rule of law (Richmond 2007), the focus in practice is often on post-war statebuilding and with that on institution building and governance (Paris 2004; Heathershaw 2008).

[131] A more thorough discussion of the concept and its criticism cannot be included in this research. The dominance of the concept in international peacebuilding is documented in Barnett et al. (2007). An overview of the relevant critical literature is offered in Lidén (2006).

[132] Alternatives to the concept are being sought and discussed in a growing body of post-structuralised, emancipatory literature that is denominated as the fourth generation of peacebuilding (Ramsbotham et al. 2005; Richmond 2010b).

requires a conception of peace that is both open to the different paradigms inspiring the discourse on peace (Sandole 1999, p.112) and can serve as an inclusive starting point for the discussion of a still highly contentious topic in the Sri Lankan polity and society.

For the purpose of breaking with the cycle of silent assumptions and to avoid 'getting caught in the liberal peace trap', the core concepts underlying this research need to be defined. For an understanding of peace in this research, three aspects of the discourse are relevant.

First, it is important to bear in mind Galtung's distinction of 'negative' and 'positive' peace, one of the most commonly agreed upon notions of peace (Richmond 2008, p.11). Positive peace goes beyond the absence of personal, physical violence (negative peace) and includes the absence of structural violence, inequality and injustice.[133] This notion of positive peace includes ideas of social progress and social development (Mac Ginty 2008).

This research follows a positive understanding of peace and defines, according to Mac Ginty peace as "the facilitation of non-exploitative, sustainable and inclusive relationships free from direct and indirect violence and the threat of such violence" (ibid., p.32). At the same time, the research remains sensitive to the fact that the conflict parties, and also the interview partners in the empirical research, understand peace in their own particular and often contradictory ways that differ from the language of research.[134] This points to the fact that peace and the process of achieving peace are social constructs that reflect the prevailing political, economic and social power relations (ibid., p.15) as well as the cultural context of society (Avruch 1998).

Second, peace can be seen both as a goal and as a process of endless search, since positive peace is never fully achieved (Aggestam & Jönsson 1997). Thus, peace is "forever 'becoming'" (Richmond 2008, p.18). In this sense, peace remains a utopian aspiration for most societies that have to be satisfied with a lesser, and often negative,

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[133] Galtung in his later work importantly includes a third form of violence: cultural violence comprises all those "aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) – that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (Galtung 1990, p.291). Accordingly, positive peace can only be reached by overcoming both structural and cultural violence.

[134] For a discussion of differences in insider versus researcher peace definitions see Funk and Said (2010) who draw on the anthropologist distinction of emic versus etic behaviour description.

peace (Mac Ginty 2008).[135] This is particularly relevant if violent conflicts are terminated through a victor's peace that does not deal with the needs and grievances of the defeated, or those represented by them (Aggestam & Jönsson 1997; for Sri Lanka Orjuela 2010; Höglund & Orjuela 2011).

This leads to the third aspect to be highlighted when defining peace. It concerns the sustainability of peace. Given the fact that peace agreements are mostly fragile and peace processes relapse into violent conflict with a significant probability[136] within the first five years after a peace agreement, there is generally a strong focus on making peace last, to attain sustainable peace.[137] This means that efforts towards building peace cannot stop with a peace agreement; rather, society needs to be empowered in order to create a peace process that sustains, or has the capacity to regenerate, itself over time (Lederach 1997, p.75). This implies transformation of the existing societal structures that so far have contributed to violent conflict.

Reflecting the complexity and dynamics of violent conflict, conflicts are often described as conflict systems.[138] This is especially the case when social conflicts are considered to be intractable, i.e., if three interdependent dimensions apply: conflicts persist for a long time and are protracted (Azar 1990); they are waged in destructive ways; and attempts to end or transform them, for example through intermediary inter-

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[135] Uyangoda in his discussion of the trajectories of the ethno-political conflict in Sri Lanka distinguishes accordingly between a 'possible peace' as compromise and one step on the road towards the ultimate goal that is not achievable since the conflict parties express their respective 'desired peace' in non-negotiable terms. The author thus argues for a "protracted process of incomplete, transformative peace" (2007, p.3).

[136] Estimates vary according to samples and timeframes from between 20 and 50%; for a critical discussion see Suhrke & Samset (2007).

[137] Boulding (1964) addresses the problem of instability and returns to violence with his early concept of 'stable peace' that is based on interdependence, multiplicity of integrative relationships, tabooing of violence and other factors. This conception, however, does not receive the same attention in literature as Galtung's definition and seems to be replaced mostly by the term 'sustainable peace'. This understanding, that lasting peace is based on the capacity of a society to resolve conflict by non-violent means, goes back to Lederach (1997).

[138] The term 'conflict system' was used in early organisation literature to describe conflict in organisations, see March's seminal work on business organisations as political systems (1962; Cyert & March 1963). Around the same time, it appears in early literature on interpersonal conflict, describing the dyadic relationship between the conflict parties (Aubert 1963, p.38), but is applied more frequently only much later (e.g., Bercovitch 1991; Mitchell 1991). For a discussion of the state-of-research on systemic conflict analysis and transformation see Wils et al. (2006) and Körppen et al. (2011).

ventions, fail (Kriesberg 2003a, 2005). Violent conflict then is considered chronic; it is embedded in the social, political and economic systems, and it infects all strata of life and human psyche.

Analogously to the protracted character of conflict, peace efforts have to be protracted and should be seen as a process (Uyangoda 2007).[139] Consequently, ending violent conflict requires systemic change and transformation towards an alternative system that can be seen as a 'peace system' (Ropers 2011a). In such a wide sense, a peace process is the process of change in a society and polity from violent conflict towards positive peace among and within all communities. It entails efforts of a broad variety addressing and transforming the manifestations and root causes of differences that have led to dispute or conflict in order to achieve and sustain peace (Ramcharan 2009). While these diverse efforts ultimately aim at reducing violence and bringing peace, the underlying assumptions of how to reach that aim differ and the overall process of transformation is not always peaceful but rather violent (Mitchell 2011).

As a result, there are wide-ranging perspectives and definitions in a conflict-ridden society. A public opinion poll on peace related issues in Sri Lanka, the Peace Confidence Index, does not provide a fixed definition in its polls, understands the peace process in such broad terms as "a process to cease conflict amongst the ethnic communities by addressing the causes of conflict"[140] and is not considered to be finished yet.

In a narrower sense, a peace process defines a phase of concrete efforts between the conflict parties to end violence and achieve a non-violent solution, e.g., through a ceasefire and negotiations or peace talks.[141] Following Darby and Mac Ginty (2000, pp.7-8) a peace process is understood as a process of engagement between conflict parties which fulfils the following criteria:

1) parties are willing to negotiate in good faith;
2) the key actors are included in the process;
3) negotiations address one or multiple of the central issues in dispute;
4) negotiators do not use force to achieve their objectives; and

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[139] See also similarly the call for 'sustained mediation' in Cousens (2008).

[140] Quoted from email communication on April 4, 2011 with Pradeep Peiris, unit head of Social Indicator, the survey research unit at the Centre for Policy Alternatives, Colombo, which conducts the opinion poll. For a detailed discussion of public views on the peace process see Peiris and Stokke (2011).

[141] This process can aim at a comprehensive or gradual step-by-step peace agreement (Aggestam & Björkdahl 2011).

5) they are committed to a sustained process.

These are relatively strict criteria that already point to the conditions of success. With a view to the Sri Lankan peace process of 2002, many observers would state with hindsight that several of the criteria do not apply. A more relaxed interpretation maintains the focus on concrete engagement between the parties, which begins with an official and mutually agreed starting point. After preparatory, prenegotiation phases, peace processes usually officially begin with a public announcement and often with a ceasefire, and their progress is halted, at times, by periods of stalemate or 'no-war-no-peace' (Mac Ginty 2006). Although it is characteristic of a peace process that fighting is at least stalled, low-scale violence in most cases continues (Darby & Mac Ginty 2000).

While the narrower reading of peace processes provides a clear understanding about the beginning of a peace process, there are different views on its end; neither is there agreement on how far a peace process includes the post-agreement peacebuilding phase (Ramcharan 2009, p.231), nor at which point a return to violence by the main parties marks the end of a peace process (Dudouet 2006, p.64). While the threshold between a holding agreement, i.e., the termination of conflict, and revived violent conflict is commonly defined with 25 battle-related deaths per year, the conflict parties often do not admit the collapse of a peace process until a later point with much higher numbers of casualties.[142] The reasons can be found both in domestic and international politics as well as in the tactics and interests of the conflict parties.

In a less conceptualised and more pragmatic way, Bell therefore argues to follow the conflict parties' narrative, since the use of the term 'peace process' by conflict parties signifies a "value judgement attached to efforts to resolve a conflict at a particular time", thus a peace process takes place "whenever [and for as long as; UHN] it suits one of the parties to describe it so" (Bell 2000, p.16). This is the case in the Sri Lankan peace process. As will be shown in the discussion of the empirical findings, it was therefore part of the parties' narrative, or propaganda, to maintain the peace secretariats as a token for their commitment to peace.

Consequently, the peace process under discussion begins with the declaration of the ceasefire in February 2002, includes the prenegotiations phase in 2002, the peace

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[142] This follows the definition of low-intensity conflict of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, see http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/#Battle-related_deaths.

talks during 2002 and 2003, and the efforts to revitalise the talks during 2003 to 2005. The election of President Rajapaksa in November 2005 made such efforts more difficult since the president's programme and approach towards peace, as well as his coalition partners' political interests, de facto ruled out the power-sharing solution proposed during the talks of 2002/3 and questioned other agreements and the Norwegian facilitation (Manoharan 2005). The renewed but eventually failed talks during 2006 were aimed at a cessation of fighting and a reform of the ceasefire agreement, but excluded substantive topics of the peace talks.

The peace process of 2002 could therefore be described with hindsight as ending in 2005 (see for example Liyanage 2008; Goodhand et al. 2011). Formally, however, the negotiating and later warring parties did not declare an end to the peace process, and the official unilateral abrogation of the ceasefire by the government at the beginning of 2008 officially marked the return to a so far 'undeclared war' on both sides (Manikkalingam 2008).

As in the case of Sri Lanka, the efforts of conflict parties towards peace are in almost all cases assisted or accompanied by third-party interventions. The peace process of 2002-2008 saw a multitude of activities, from the international monitoring mission, which was established in the context of the ceasefire agreement, to the Norwegian facilitation of the peace talks accompanied by three international donor co-chairs (US, EU and Japan), to various dialogue activities on official, semi-official and grassroots levels, to reconstruction in the war-affected areas and reconciliation efforts between all communities (Burke & Mulakala 2011). In fact, the peace process of Sri Lanka provides a showcase for international peacebuilding efforts, described as a "veritable 'peace rush'" in 2002 and 2003 (Goodhand & Walton 2009, p.314). The next section takes a closer look at the different approaches that these interventions take and identifies the distinct features of conflict transformation.

2.1.2 Interventions in peace processes

Interventions in peace processes are based on the experience that the capacities of conflict parties are often too limited to arrive at a settlement of the violent conduct as well as of the underlying incompatibilities and causes of the conflict (Crocker 2001; Burgess 2004). This realisation has led to a great variety of concepts and models that can be categorised into several intervention types or, as Paffenholz (2010, p.50) re-

fers to them, middle-level theories of peacebuilding. They are often presented in form of generations of peacebuilding discourses since the early schools inspired the development of the later ones (Ramsbotham et al. 2005; Richmond 2007; for the development of the field of conflict resolution see Kriesberg 2007). Consequently, conflict transformation is seen by many authors "not as a wholly new approach, but rather as a re-conceptualisation of the field in order to make it more relevant to contemporary conflicts" (Miall 2004, p.69).

Third-party interventions aim at ending violence and warfare as well as at promoting non-violent solutions to the conflict. While the latter are by nature non-violent, the first kind of interventions comprises military intervention. Conflict and peace interventions relate to the above differentiated understanding of violence and peace. While some interventions address direct violence and lead to a negative peace, others concern structural and cultural aspects. Only a combination considers the full multi-dimensionality of violent conflict and can lead to positive peace.

While Galtung (1969, 1996) developed the well-known triangle in order to distinguish between peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping and relates these to the three types of cultural, structural and direct violence, today there exists a multiplicity of terms and concepts differentiating the complementary and overlapping types of interventions.[143] Early models of timing interventions often use a typical linear curve of escalation and de-escalation of violent conflict and consider sequenced interventions along the presumed life cycle of conflict (see for example Lund 1996).[144] Recently, peacekeeping interventions have been conceptualised in 'packages' with humanitarian peacebuilding activities; and the lines between military and civilian actors become increasingly blurred (Fetherston 2000; Ramsbotham et al. 2005).

This section focuses on forms of non-violent intervention, since the concern of this research is conflict transformation and since the Sri Lankan peace process of 2002 and the following years did not see any direct military intervention by third parties.[145]

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[143] For a differentiation between peacekeeping and peace enforcement see Boulden (2001) and Coleman (2007).

[144] The visualisation usually resembles a wave or an inverted V-shape inviting overly optimistic linear interpretation; it has to be noted, however, that most models mention the frequent re-escalation, relapse into violence or collapse of agreements (for a discussion see Dudouet 2006, pp.6-8).

[145] While the first phase of the violent conflict between the government and the LTTE, Eelam War I, was ended in 1987 with the deployment of an Indian Peacekeeping Force, there was no direct military intervention afterwards. During the war years of 2006-2009 the Sri Lankan Armed Forces received indirect support through intelligence, training and equipment from various external actors (Sengupta 2008).

In this research, terminology with regards to the regulation of conflict rather than peace-related terminology (i.e., peacebuilding, peacemaking) will be applied since it contextualises the concept of conflict transformation. The relevant terms include conflict management, conflict settlement, conflict resolution and conflict transformation, which are seen in some literature as a continuum of conflict regulation (as in Lund's concept of preventive diplomacy that links interventions to certain stages and levels of conflict intensity) (Lund 1996; similar also Glasl 1980), and by other authors as complementary (for example Diamond & McDonald 1996; for a discussion see also Botes 2003).[146]

The focus here is on conflict management, settlement, resolution and transformation and leaves out prevention and post-conflict interventions. The often generically used term conflict management signifies for the purpose of this research all "activities undertaken to limit, mitigate and contain open conflict" (Berghof Foundation 2009, p.1), including military interventions.[147]

In contrast, conflict settlement refers to the "achievement of an agreement between the conflict parties on a political level which enables them to end an armed conflict but which does not necessarily fundamentally alter the underlying causes of the conflict. It is usually content orientated and restricted to the Track 1 level" (Berghof Foundation 2009, p.3). The latter is often analogously used with peacemaking, which refers to any "Track 1 intervention consisting mainly of negotiation and mediation … It is a process that is usually striving for a political settlement … It is normally result orientated but may also seek to change the attitudes of the main protagonists" (ibid., p.6).[148]

The process of negotiation, often with support through mediation, is then a conflict settlement, or peacemaking, activity. It can include aspects of conflict resolution (Ramsbotham et al. 2005, p.29). Mediation can take different forms with varying levels

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[146] One model that combines both perspectives is Fisher and Keashly's (1991) contingency approach: it discusses the influence of interventions along stages of conflict escalation and at the same time argues for complementarity, especially between mediation and consultation during negotiations.

[147] As mentioned before, there is no consistent use of terminology in literature. Other authors offer a very different understanding. For Bloomfield and Reilly, "conflict management is the positive and constructive handling of difference and divergence. Rather than advocating methods for removing conflict, (it) addresses the more realistic question of managing conflict: how to deal with it in a constructive way, how to bring opposing sides together in a cooperative process, how to design a practical, achievable, cooperative system for the constructive management of difference" (1998, p.18). In this research, such an understanding is closer to the concept of conflict transformation.

[148] Track 1 refers here to the official negotiation level; for a distinction of tracks see section 2.2.2.

of substantive involvement and authority; examples range from offering good services to facilitation of talks to power mediation.

Conflict resolution concerns "activities undertaken over the short term and medium term dealing with, and aiming at overcoming, the deep-rooted causes of conflict, including the structural, behavioural, or attitudinal aspects of the conflict. [The process focuses] more on the relationships between the parties than the content of a specific outcome" (Berghof Foundation 2009, p.2). Dialogue workshops that involve representatives of the conflict parties are often part of conflict resolution activities.

Conflict transformation goes beyond the activities of conflict settlement and includes conflict resolution, or "represents its deepest level" (Ramsbotham et al. 2005, p.29).[149] It refers to "actions and processes seeking to alter the various characteristics and manifestations of conflict by addressing the root causes of a particular conflict over the long term. It aims to transform negative destructive conflict into positive constructive conflict and deals with structural, behavioural and attitudinal aspects of conflict" (Berghof Foundation 2009, p.3). The focus here is on the notion of transformation of overall societies, or systems, in order to arrive at lasting peaceful arrangements. Moreover, it has to be noted that conflict is not avoided; rather conflict transformation is conceptualised to aim at the constructive and non-violent conduct of conflict (Kriesberg 2007).[150] The concept is discussed in detail in the following section.

While some authors prefer to call such multidimensional approaches 'peacebuilding' rather than conflict transformation (Richmond 2007, 2008), others consider peacebuilding an umbrella term that comprises the above triad of conflict settlement, resolution and transformation (Paffenholz 2010). Similar to the confusion regarding the individual concepts, there are also various suggestions regarding a generic or umbrella term. Thus, while some use peacebuilding, others prefer the term conflict management as an umbrella term that embraces the same triad (Reimann 2004, p.41), or suggest conflict resolution to embrace both resolution and the more recent concept of

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[149] Some authors believe conflict transformation to be different from conflict resolution for various reasons, they particularly welcome the stronger focus on relationships (Kriesberg et al. 1989) and structures in transformative efforts as well as the rejected notion of a 'solution' to the conflict in the term 'resolution'. For example see Lederach (1995b); for a detailed discussion see Botes (2003). An initially critical view of the concept is expressed by Mitchell (2002) who is later more open towards transformative concepts (see Mitchell 2006).

[150] This interpretation points to the mostly normative application of the concept where transformation is for the better. Naturally, transformation can also happen in a pejorative way (Siedschlag 2000, p.20) or have destructive, violent consequences (Mitchell 2011).

conflict transformation (Ramsbotham et al. 2005, p.9; indirectly also Kriesberg 2007).[151]

Peacebuilding is generally defined as effort "to create the conditions for durable peace and human development in countries that are just emerging from war" (Paris & Sisk 2007, p.1). More concretely, it means "a generic term to cover all medium-to-long term activities intended to encourage and promote peaceful relations and overcome violence. A long-term process seeking to positively alter structural contradictions, improve relations between conflict parties and facilitate overall constructive changes in attitudes. It also may refer to activities that create framework conditions suitable for peaceful and equitable development" and "applies to all stages and levels of conflict, but mainly operates at Tracks 2 and 3 levels" (Berghof Foundation 2009, pp.5-6). An overview of practical peacebuilding activities is given in Smith's synthesis report of a donor survey on peacebuilding experiences: his 'peacebuilding palette' shows a wide array of areas that encompass projects dealing with structural conditions for violent conflict and "diplomatic initiatives as well as military operations" (2004, p.27).

This research is concerned with conflict transformation, and not with peacebuilding, for several reasons.[152] First, since it actively embraces work on all tracks, conflict transformation is the more appropriate concept to understand the contributions of the peace secretariats that were part of the official representation of the conflict parties in the peace process. Second, there is a strong focus in conflict transformation on working during phases of escalation while peacebuilding is – originating in the United Nation's early interpretation in the 1994 Agenda for Development (UN 1994) – often conceptualised by practitioners as post-war or even post-conflict intervention (Tschirgi 2004). Third, as discussed earlier the term peacebuilding carries the problematic connotation of the concept of liberal peacebuilding. And fourth, conflict transformation guided the author's own professional involvement in the peace process through the Berghof Foundation's work with the peace secretariats.

One of the biggest contributions of the conflict transformation school, as is discussed in the following section in more detail, is the shift of focus from international to local

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[151] Note that scholarly and practical literature offers various combinations and interpretations of the used terms, often without explaining the deviation from other interpretations (Reimann 2004, p.41). For the purpose of this research the above-offered definitions are sufficient. Literature references to other concepts such as peacebuilding will be 'translated' into the above-proposed terminology if the authors suggest the same meaning.

[152] The author acknowledges, however, that many aspects of the following chapter apply to the concept of peacebuilding as well.

actors and to building their capacities to end violence and promote peace (Lederach 1997). While in most conflict resolution concepts local actors, although viewed with much differentiation, are objects of outsider intervention, conflict transformation puts them into the driver's seat of transformative activities (Lederach 1995a 1997, 2005; Paffenholz 2010). As also expressed in Bush and Folger's (1994) transformative model of mediation, people have the capacity to empower themselves. Identifying actors that can promote transformation and strengthening their agency is one of the core activities of third parties in the conflict transformation school.

2.2 Conflict Transformation as a Process of Systemic Change

The earlier brief definition of conflict transformation downplays to a certain extent the truly challenging nature of the concept that is expressed in this quote: "To reach an agreement between officials, or to win a war, is one thing, but to change a social, political, and economic landscape is another" (Richmond 2007, p.206). The latter is the aim of conflict transformation, and it resembles the broad objectives of sustainable development with their focus on change in structures and institutions, as well as the wide aims of social change processes with their focus on attitudes, relationships and power. Conflict transformation, in fact, goes beyond the existing conflict and aims for a different, new scenario of social relations and structures – that of peace. Similar to other concepts of social change, conflict transformation can be described as a complex non-linear, or systemic, process that embraces conflict as a manifestation of dissenting interests and needs, includes all relevant actors, and changes their relationships as well as the substance of dissent.

Before going into detail, a closer look at the characteristics of conflict is necessary in order to fully understand the concept of conflict transformation.

2.2.1 Intractable conflict and systemic processes of conflict transformation

Conflict transformation commonly addresses 'protracted social conflict', a concept shaped by Edward Azar (1986, 1990) that is widely used to describe long enduring

ethno-political conflicts such as the one in Sri Lanka.[153] Their protractedness, which today is often referred to as intractability, is determined by "multi-ethnic and communal cleavages and disintegrations, underdevelopment and distributive injustice" (Azar 1986, p.29). Summing up the complexity of intractability, such conflicts commonly share "four key characteristics:

- they are conflicts between identity groups, of which at least one feels that their basic needs for equality, security and political participation are not respected;

- they are essentially about access to state related power, often in the form of an asymmetric conflict between a government and an insurgent party;

- they cannot be understood without various types of international linkages affecting the course of events (kinstates, diasporas, international interference);

- they are often based on deeply rooted antagonistic group histories" (Fischer & Ropers 2004, p.13).

These characteristics comprise the preconditions or sources for violent conflict. Identity plays a crucial role in protracted conflict and is discussed below in more detail (Gurr 1993, 2000; Saxton 2005). It is important to note that protracted or intractable conflicts are not 'just' about the identity dimension, as the nomination of ethno-political conflict might indicate. The political aspect of the violent conflict is also related to the deprivation of security, development and political access (Azar 1990, p.155).

Identity can be understood broadly as the "subjective, symbolic, or emblematic use by a group of people of any aspect of culture in order to create internal cohesion and differentiate themselves from other groups" (Brass 1991, p.19, quoted in Bush 2003, p.10). As Bush notes, central to this understanding of identity is a "shared belief in common descent, birth or kinship which may be (but usually is not) based on biological fact" (ibid.). Ethnic identity is regarded as "nominal membership in an ascriptive category, including race, language, caste, or religion", often as a combination of several categories (Chandra 2005, p.236).

Two aspects need to be highlighted in order to understand identity-based conflicts: first, human attachment to a certain identity is an expression of personal dignity, pride and honour (Fearon 1999; Volkan 1997). Second, identity refers to membership in a

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[153] Considering conflict typologies, these kinds of violent conflict concern Holsti's category of "state-nation wars including armed resistance by ethnic, language and/or religious groups, often with the purpose of secession or separation from the state" (Holsti 1996, p.21 quoted in Ramsbotham et al. 2005, p.65).

social category that can be radicalised, politicised and used for mobilisation for solidarity among one's own group and against the 'other' (Enns 2007; Gurr 1993, 2000; Ropers 1995). Therefore, such conflicts tend to be particularly intractable, as each identity appears to the respective holders as non-negotiable human need (Burton 1990; see also chapter 3 for a discussion of the effects of identity-based conflict and violence on agency).[154]

When describing a conflict as ethno-political, not only the identity-based mobilisation of communal groups is highlighted but also the relevance of political use and misuse of governmentality in the struggle over identity rights and power. This is the case in intra-state conflict where different groups struggle over control of the government or where governments are set against one group (Gurr 1993; Fischer & Ropers 2004). In the context of Sri Lanka, this differentiation is relevant since the conflict is characterised by an ethnicisation of political violence, in which the state is involved on one side, rather than communal violence between population groups (Tambiah 1986; Pfaffenberger 1994).[155] It is also important to note that such conflicts are characterised by intra-group power dynamics and violent practices that instigate inter-group tension and guarantee intra-group cohesion at the same time (DeVotta 2002; Bouffard & Carment 2006). This is achieved among other factors by symbolic politics that drive hostile popular emotions towards the out-groups (Kaufman 2001, 2006a, 2006b).

Since violence features much in the description of intractable conflict, it is important to note that conflict transformation does not consider conflict to be negative. Rather, conflict of interests is required as a natural aspect of social change. The negative aspect is the violent conduct of conflict (Francis 2002). Thus, conflict transformation embraces methods to contain and to stop violence, often by integrating approaches of short-term conflict management. At the same time, however, it aims at working with the underlying interests. Väyrynen identifies violence "as a means of political collectivities to defend or expand their interests in a given social structure" (1991, p.3). Violence serves a purpose; it needs to be understood in its function and thus it is not sufficient to deal with the tactics of violence but to understand the strategy that employs it.

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[154] For a wider discussion of conditions that lead to insurgency and violent conflict, see for example Fearon and Laitin (2003).

[155] For a more detailed discussion of ethnic and nationalist violence as well as the ethnicisation of political violence see Brubaker and Laitin (1998).

While much of violent conflict, especially the aspect of protracted suffering, appears to be 'irrational' to outside observers, the actors themselves follow rational strategies to achieve their objectives. Thus, it needs to be understood that "people rarely regard the resort to violence as the worst possible means of struggle. People often assert that there are some goals for which it is worth both dying and killing to advance" (Kriesberg & Millar 2009, p.28).[156] Kriesberg and Millar analyse the factors contributing to the strategic choice of protagonists; they identify both the conflict circumstances and organisational characteristics as relevant.[157] This finding will inspire the discussion of agency in chapter 3 as well as the assumptions formulated there.

The above reading of violence as a manifestation of interests and strategic choice does not mean that conflict transformation does not engage with it. In distinction to interventions in negotiation that are concerned with ripeness of the conflict and readiness of its protagonists (see discussion in section 2.3.1), conflict transformation can and must happen throughout the cycle of violent conflict. For this research, it is relevant to note that conflict transformation may also take place during the stages of "hot conflict" (Lederach 1997).[158] In fact, according to Curle, who can be considered as one of the 'founding fathers' of conflict transformation, the relationship between the conflict parties can only be transformed when moving through instability of overt conflict, which comes with conscientisation and confrontation between the parties, towards conciliation and peaceful development (Curle 1971). This is certainly an ideal typical description of the transformative process and, as the peace process in Sri Lanka shows, it does not always happen this way.[159]

Closer to the Sri Lankan case is Francis who develops a more detailed understanding. Her model realistically includes stages of stagnation and return to confrontation, for example in case of unjust conflict settlement (Francis 2002). In such a situation, transformation has not been completed. Building on this more complex approach, Dudouet

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[156] Reassuringly, the authors go on to state, "in retrospect, however, after periods of extreme violence, many people come to believe they were mistaken" (Kriesberg & Millar 2009, p. 28).

[157] Analysis of these strategic deliberations is complicated by the fact that the actors often give misleading explanations and ex-post reformulations for the purpose of justification or claiming success.

[158] In contrast, the following section on negotiation discusses the concept of ripeness.

[159] The difficulties of working on transformation during the 'hot' phases of conflict are reflected in such toolkit approaches as that of Lund (2001, 2005, p.304), which recommend practitioners to avoid working on structural causes during that time and to focus on ending the violence instead.

(2006) suggests picturing the process of conflict transformation not along a linear model of conflict stages, but as a cycle in the literary sense:
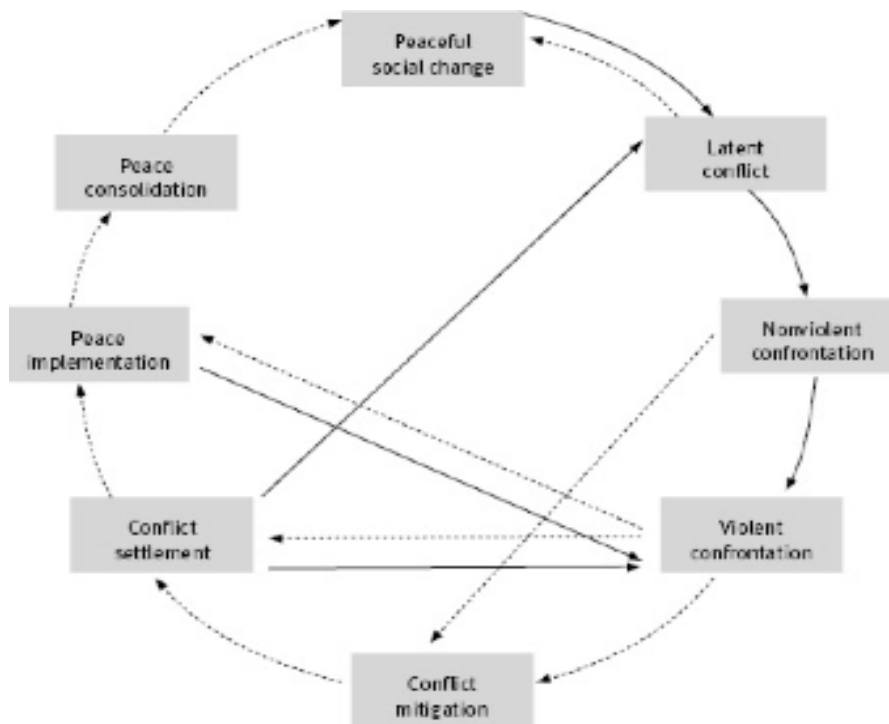
Figure 2.1: Conflict transformation cycle[160]

The circular diagram offers a sequential view on conflict (and conflict transformation) stages but in a multi-directional and not necessarily sequential order. The conflict can move forward or relapse, it can "jump stages altogether" (Dudouet 2006, p.20). This is certainly a systemic reading. Lederach suggests seeing peace processes not as a line in time where the peace agreement marks the end of efforts and afterwards starts automatically the period of 'posts' – the post-agreement, post-war, post-conflict (2005, p.43). Rather, the process should be read as a constant flow towards violence or towards proactive engagement, either the wheel turns one way or the other.[161]

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[160] This graph was adapted by Dudouet (2006, p.21 from Ramsbotham et al. 1999, p.16).

[161] Lederach builds his metaphor of flows from a continental divide towards two shores on Boulding's distinction between fear – "defined by recrimination and blame, self-justification and protection, violence and the desire of victory over the other" – and love – "defined by openness and accountability, self-reflection and vulnerability, mutual respect, dignity and the proactive engagement of the other" (Lederach 2005, p.42 referring to Boulding 1985 and 1989); the concept, however, can be traced back to Boulding's text 'Economy of Love and Fear' (1973).

Bringing together both readings of a cycle and of a constant flow, Dudouet's wheel should perhaps be opened towards a series of multiple cycles, wheels or a never-ending spiral along which the system can move forwards and backwards in loops of systemic feedback and learning, transforming as new actors engage or issues change.[162]

Accordingly, Ropers suggests reading peace processes as corridors for (potential) systemic change, which consider the following four characteristics (Ropers 2011a, p.153):

1. "that peace efforts to transform protracted conflicts might take years, if not decades or generations before they lead to sustainable peace

2. that this long process will most likely face various hurdles, setbacks and resistances and might go through phases of re- and de-escalation, i.e. that it will be non-linear

3. that it comprises a multiplicity of actors, initiatives and relationships (often de-scribed as multi-track diplomacy)

4. that eventually the process has to lead to some kind of change in the pattern of relationship and interaction between the conflict parties, here described as systemic change to achieve sustainable peace".

As cautioned before, this brief section cannot go into detail of the systemic discourse on conflict transformation. So far, this section introduces conflict transformation as a complex non-linear, systemic process that embraces conflict as manifestation of dissenting interests and needs, includes all relevant actors, and changes their relationships as well as the substance of dissent. The following sections therefore concentrates on two central questions: Who transforms? And, what is being transformed?

2.2.2 Conflict actors as transformative agents

In line with the focus on conflict parties and their relationships in the analysis of intractable conflict, conflict transformation places the focus on actors as the unit of analysis

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[162] The author is grateful to Norbert Ropers for this suggestion (personal email communication, May 18, 2011).

and of intervention (Azar 1986; Dudouet 2006, p.25). Two assumptions guide the work with the conflict parties and stakeholders[163]: first, all parties have to be part of the transformation process; second, the parties are heterogeneous entities and within these sub-systems change agents can be identified who promote transformation.

As mentioned before, all stakeholders need to be included in and contribute to the process of transformation. As case studies show, often the transformation of one actor is a condition for the transformation of others and vice versa (Orjuela 2009). Only the system as a whole can transform and find a new balance. Since one transformation process is related to the others, the connections and relationships are at the core of transformation. Again, this core element of transformative understanding goes back to Curle (1971) who considers transformation processes as the process from unbalanced to balanced relationships in order to deal with the incompatibilities of the parties' interests.

While all stakeholders need to be engaged, they are not equal in terms of power. This is true both for relationships between conflict parties as well as within parties. The first is captured in the concept of asymmetric relationships between the conflict parties that will be elaborated in the next section on peace negotiations.[164] Second, the conflict parties do no represent homogeneous monolithic blocks but consist of sub-units with heterogeneous interests, needs and beliefs that can be engaged in processes of change (Bush 2003; Lederach 1997; Wils et al. 2006). While intervention and cooper-

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[163] While Azar (1986) speaks of identity groups, this research uses the terms conflict parties and stakeholders. The latter are all groups that have an interest in the conflict and its transformation, while the conflict parties are those actors among the stakeholders that have incompatible interests.

[164] With a view to its relevance to conflict transformation, it suffices here to state that one central realisation in many intractable conflicts concerns the fact that the asymmetrical power balance between the actors is a hindrance to successful peacemaking (Zartman 1989a; Bercovitch et al. 1991; Kleiboer 1996). Thus, transformative efforts often aim at creating conditions of power parity in order to support peace negotiations (Dudouet 2006, p.16 and p.41). The challenge, however, lies in the fact that "asymmetry is a more complex conception than a simple matter of power imbalance" (Mitchell 1991, p.23). Besides legal and structural aspects, it has to be acknowledged that, particularly in ethno-political conflict, asymmetry is closely linked to identity (Francis 2004; Sen 2008). This makes transformative interventions in the power balance of the conflicting parties extremely difficult.

The discussion of the empirical findings later shows that both negotiating parties refuse with different arguments to acknowledge that the establishment of the peace secretariats was linked to efforts in this regard; the incumbent claims that such efforts would neither be feasible nor acceptable, and the insurgent insists that symmetry or any kind of parity with the 'oppressive regime' would not be desirable anyway. Only the Muslim peace secretariat regarded the peace secretariats as a contribution to parity, which is consistent with its constituencies' interests.

ation is relatively easy with those actors that are 'pro-peace' and are considered moderate in their expression of interests and needs (see the discussion of peace constituencies below), engagement with hardliners is important as well. Whereas the warring parties are officially acknowledged through their participation in a negotiation process where they can veto developments, other stakeholders exercise their veto power in less formal, official ways. This realisation has introduced the concept of 'spoilers' (Stedman 1997).

In a systemic transformative understanding, however, there should be no 'spoilers' as a specific type of actor to be 'chastised' with normative judgment for their spoiling behaviour in covert or open opposition to the peace process (Newman & Richmond 2006). Rather, they should be considered as actors that choose a destructive violent strategy in a specific situation (Greenhill & Mayor 2006; several contributions in Körppen et al. (eds.) 2008; Schneckener 2009). As Kelman points out, "even doves harbor 'little hawks' that can be aroused by the experience of threat, frustration, or humiliation" (Kelman 1993, p.242).[165]

While these recent concepts of engagement with so-called spoilers focus on those stakeholders that oppose a peace process, much of conflict transformation literature concerns the identification and promotion of actor groups that 'are pro-peace'. Transformative engagement with these groups is deemed to be successful since they promote transformation processes in their own interest and with non-violent means and thus can serve as multipliers. This notion is captured mostly in practitioner concepts of analysing and engaging with stakeholders that developed during the past decades.

In search of peace protagonists, transformation practice considers all levels of society. The realisation that transformation needs to take place on all levels of society and does not become obsolete with an officially signed peace agreement led to the development of multi-track approaches that complement and go beyond the efforts of official diplomacy (McDonald & Bendahmane 1987).

Building on the distinction of originally two tracks in diplomatic engagement – the official diplomatic and a second unofficial one for professional actors engaged in conflict resolution (Davidson & Montville 1981) – today literature commonly distinguishes three tracks: top-, middle-, and bottom or grassroots levels.[166] The latter are depicted in

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[165] For a similarly differentiated view on victims and perpetrators that recognises the victim's destructive role in order to undo what was done to them, see Enns (2007).

[166] According to Austin et al. (2004, pp.464-466) Track 1 refers to "activities on the stratum of high-level leaders, primarily in the form of conflict settlement. Track 2 means "activities in parallel with the formal

a hierarchical triangle or pyramid (Lederach 1997) as in figure 2.2, while other models also differentiate between societal groups at the same level.[167]

Types of Actors

Level 1: Top Leadership
Military/political/religious
leaders with high visibility

Level 2: Middle-Range Leadership
Leaders respected in sectors
Ethnic/religious leaders
Academics/intellectuals
Humanitarian leaders (NGOs)

Level 3: Grassroots Leadership
Local leaders
Leaders of indigenous NGOs
Community developers
Local health officials
Refugee camp leaders

Approaches to Building Peace

Focus on high-level negotiations
Emphasizes cease-fire
Led by highly visible,
single mediator

Problem-solving workshops
Training in conflict resolution
Peace commissions
Insider-partial teams

Local peace commissions
Grassroots training
Prejudice reduction
Psychosocial work
in postwar trauma

Figure 2.2: Peacebuilding pyramid[168]

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processes of communication and negotiation that are designed to open up dialogue and understanding between parties in conflict and encourage new thinking about future relationships after the conflict … They do not normally involve the top leadership of the parties in conflict as they are not able to enter into the kind of open discussion implied by Track 2 processes, but they often involve influential second level leaders and civil society actors who can interact more freely but at the same time have influence back in their own communities". Track 3 concerns "the grass roots level. It encourages interaction and understanding between formerly hostile local communities and involves awareness raising and empowerment within those communities".

[167] Diamond and McDonald (1996) develop a model of nine tracks with the idea that conflict transformation efforts need to engage all tracks, or strata, of society in the process of change. This differentiation goes beyond a vertical distinction of top-level decision makers to grassroots communities and aims to overcome a rigid and hierarchical understanding of society (McDonald 2003). It adds a horizontal segmentation of society that highlights influential societal sectors such as the business sector or religious groups, but also includes areas of conflict transformation work, e.g., education and research, or funding, which are not actually levels of society.

[168] This figure depicts Lederach's triangle (1997, p.39).

Some authors in addition distinguish between Track 2 and Track 1.5, which "comprises public or private interaction between official representatives of conflicting actors mediated by a third party not representing a political institution" (Böhmelt 2009, p.167). While this intermediate or 'mezzanine track' involves Track 1 actors, it works with Track 2 methods (Debiel et al. 2011; Wolleh 2007).

This research applies the three-track differentiation with the well-known pyramid visualisation since representatives of the peace secretariats themselves use the terminology to describe their organisations and often highlight their place and role in a hierarchy. The peace secretariats are placed on Track 1 for being a part of the official negotiations effort.[169] Their position within the conflict parties can be visualised accordingly:
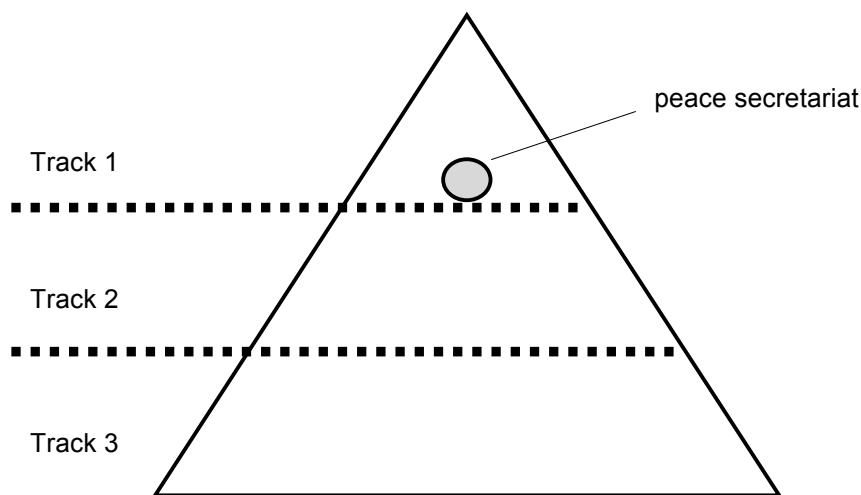
Figure 2.3: Peace secretariat within the peacebuilding triangle

With a view to overall society and its levels and tracks, the question for conflict transformation is now with which actors to engage? Most conflict transformation literature shares the realisation that no track on its own can build lasting peace (Diamond & McDonald 1996; McDonald 2003). Thus the idea of multi-track diplomacy is widely applied in various concepts such as Berghof's multi-track approach, which "simultaneously operates on several tracks and attempts to combine these different activities for a broader synergistic effect" (Berghof Foundation 2009, p.4). Individual conflict

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[169] The secretariats also participate in Track 1.5 dialogue and problem-solving endeavours (Siebert 2007).

transformation interventions, however, cannot cover all tracks at the same time; often the choice is then to conduct activities, particularly conflict transformation workshops and training on Track 2 in parallel to official peace negotiations. This focus is famously expressed in Lederach's 'middle-out approach' (1997, 2001).

The idea behind this approach is to identify and involve those individuals and groups within the conflict parties and overall society that are accessible and can affect change. This notion is captured more generally, and beyond Lederach's particular approach, with the concept of change agents who champion change processes in organisations, societies, or more generally systems (Beckhard 1969; Schaller 1972).[170] Change agents can be described as persons, small groups of individuals or organisations, who initiate change and influence events in their environment. While these can be domestic as well as external actors (Mitchell 2006), the focus here is on domestic players. While change agents may be able to initiate change processes, they need followers and a critical mass in order to consolidate and maintain the transformation (Gladwell 2000) – and, as Mitchell critically notes, individual change agents might not have the capacity to initiate change given the complexity of social processes. Rather than burdening them with the notion of being 'drivers' of change, they can take different roles in order to enable change (Mitchell 2006).[171]

In adopting the idea of change agents, one central concept in conflict transformation literature emphasises the need to strengthen 'peace constituencies' (Lederach 1997; similarly Garcia 2006) in civil society, e.g., within the business community, which help create networks countering those actors that profit from violent conflict. Starting with these middle-level opinion leaders, top-level decision-making can be influenced and support for peace garnered within the wider public.

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[170] This is not a concern of conflict transformation literature specifically, thus concepts from other arenas of social change are of relevance here. The idea to introduce change in larger social systems with and through such change agents was first embraced in organisation development studies and applied for example in educational sector reform (McLaughlin 1990), but is today widely applied in social sciences. Different conceptions frame the idea as 'drivers of change', 'champions' in change management (Kotter 1995; Eisenbach et al. 1999), 'social entrepreneurs' (Leadbeater 1997; Martin & Osberg 2007), or in colloquial language as 'movers and shakers'.

[171] In conflict transformation, Lederach emphasises the motivational, catalytic capacity of change agents with his concept of 'critical yeast' (2005, p.91). Rather than focusing on creating a critical mass of followers, Lederach uses the metaphor of yeast to elaborate the idea of a specific 'mediative capacity' that observes relationships and introduces a transformative quality into them in order to promote constructive change (ibid., p. 97).

The network that these actors, individuals and organisations, create among themselves can be considered as a peace infrastructure (Lederach 1997). As mentioned before in section 1.2, a peace infrastructure is part of a comprehensive peacebuilding framework and can be seen as a sub-system within the conflict system that helps sustain transformation (ibid., p.117). A peace infrastructure encompasses the historically evolved landscape of peace organisations, but commonly points to organisations established in an orchestrated effort towards peacebuilding. The latter usually sees the establishment of a coordinating national body in form of a ministry, secretariat or presidential office (GPPAC 2010).[172]

Part of this infrastructure can also be change agents who are explicitly part of the conflict party itself. If these 'insider-partial' actors can be engaged in transformative processes, or mediation efforts, they often add credibility to the process and contribute significantly to its success, since they are more invested, knowledgeable and often are more trusted by the parties than outsiders (Lederach 1989; Wehr & Lederach 1991; McCarthy 1994). Highlighting their trusted intermediary position, Miall speaks of "'embedded third-parties' who emerge out of conflict parties and play a significant role in opening channels of dialogue and opening political space" (Miall 2004, p.83).[173]

It is important to note, however, that although change agents might present specific communicative skills and social competencies, they usually do not represent a fixed set of individuals in a particular part of society. Just as different groups can be spoilers in different situations, many individuals or groups with certain capacities may be change agents in a specific situation.[174] The research discusses determinants of individual and organisational agency in the following chapter.

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[172] This coordination, however, cannot replace a bottom-up grown landscape of peace actors and movements that leads to development of a peace-oriented, democratic political culture (Hemmer et al. 2006; more generally also Carothers 1999).

[173] Similarly, 'insider mediators' take up a third-party role when they step between the parties, thus differentiating between their person and their relational partiality, and their role as an even-handed mediator that is impartial with regards to process and outcome (Mason 2009, p.4 referring to Elgström 2003; Kumar 2011). The most noteworthy aspect of their nature is, however, their trustworthiness with all parties, both their own party as well as their opponent (Mason 2009). This particularity enables them to establish a connection between the conflict parties that complements the mediation effort of external third parties and thus strengthens the wider transformative process.

[174] Individuals with change agent qualities usually are considered as charismatic, of energetic demeanour and skilled in communications and leadership.

For now, it suffices to acknowledge that there exist various concepts within conflict transformation literature that consider the potential of transformational actors within the conflict system. Such an understanding of transformational actors moves beyond a black-and-white categorisation that distinguishes between a few key individuals such as the Track 1 negotiators and a mostly passive mass of bystanders within the conflict parties.

This proposition leads to the first assumption of this research that, whereas the peace secretariats' performance is certainly not sufficient for explaining the course of the peace process, they can contribute to conflict transformation; in fact, they may be change agents within their own or between the conflict parties:

Peace secretariats have the potential to be change agents for conflict transformation. (Assumption 1)

This assumption might face resistance or scepticism based both on experiences and beliefs: how can actors within the conflict parties that are so deeply involved in violence and mistrust be agents for peaceful change?

Given the involvement in violent conflict of both government and armed groups, early concepts of conflict transformation focus on working with non-violent actors. Many practitioners consequently concentrate on civil society actors although there is an increasing realisation that not every civil society actor is peaceful and benevolent.[175] Civil society – just like society altogether – consists of heterogeneous groups with diverse loyalties and identities (Pouligny 2004), among which peaceful change agents can be identified (Belloni 2008; Orjuela 2003). This implies that they can be found among the conflict parties as well.

Another aspect of scepticism might concern the different nature and background of the conflict parties as armed group or government. This author argues that change agents can be found on both sides. As mentioned before, responsibility for the conflict and the necessity for transformation lie in the hands of all parties of the conflict. Recent literature shows a particular interest in non-state armed groups, their intransigence and need to engage, as well as their possible transition towards democracy

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[175] For a critical discussion of the role of civil society in peacebuilding see Barnes (2006), Fischer (2006, 2011) and Paffenholz (2010).

(Lyons 2009; Dudouet 2009).[176] As some authors argue, however, this trend neglects at times the role of the state (Herbst 2000; Sobek 2010).

Explaining the nature of protracted social conflicts, Azar highlights the role of "incompetent, parochial, fragile, and authoritarian governments that fail to satisfy basic human needs" (1990, p.10). It is argued that governments, expected to be unbiased and impartial, tend to be dominated in such conflicts by the leading identity groups or those groups that have been able to monopolise power within a country or territorial entity.[177] This creates a "crisis of legitimacy" (ibid.) in the governance of these countries (similarly Gurr 1970; Skocpol 1979). Thus, the structure of the government needs to be changed so that all citizens are equally cared for and equally represented without bias or corruption.

Similarly, on the other side of the coin, the armed groups have to undergo a transformation from non-legitimised, violent and often likewise discriminatory actors to political, peaceful representatives of interests (Söderberg-Kovacs 2007). A more detailed discussion of the vast literature on the antagonists and their roles in violent conflict and civil war is beyond the scope of this research; the Sri Lankan government as well as the LTTE will be introduced in chapters 5 and 6. The argument here is that all actors have to undergo transformation and that according to an active understanding of agency all conflict actors can and must contribute to conflict transformation.

The focus in this research is thus on these primary actors of conflict transformation, the conflict parties, while being aware that their efforts are supported by secondary, outside actors.[178] Section 2.2.5 discusses the role of peace secretariats as transformative actors in more detail and for this purpose returns to the notion of 'insider change agents'. Before that, the following section briefly introduces the dimensions of transformation.

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[176] This is encouraged by the security policy-inspired discourse on extremist violence and terrorism (Hirschmann 2000; Kydd & Walter 2002;) as well as critical reflections on the root causes of violent conflict and the 'greed versus grievance' debate (Collier 2000; Collier & Hoeffler 2004; Schneider 2009).

[177] More recent texts emphasise the role of state capacity as a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses military as well as administrative capacity and political institutional coherence (Sobek 2010). Weak state capacity is seen as creating political opportunity structures for civil violence (Gleditsch & Ruggeri 2010).

[178] While most literature acknowledges the need for external support in complex transformation processes, the domestic actors are considered the primary actors; see for example the critical discussion about external and internal actors in Bloomfield et al. (2005).

2.2.3 Dimensions and types of conflict transformation

Regarding the question what needs to be transformed, literature offers two broad categories, or dimensions. The structural conditions of violent conflict, which need to be transformed, have two dimensions: the substantive dimension encompasses all forms of actual discrimination against or among the conflict parties, while the relational dimension consists of the perceptions and expectations of the conflict parties with regards to each other's behaviour resulting from current and past interactions (Goetschel 2009, p.94).[179] This interaction leads to an escalatory, self-perpetuating dynamic (Kelman 2007, p.64).

Systemic transformation literature regards both the substantive and relational dimensions as intertwined (Dudouet 2006), and most literature considers the resulting rational and psychological approaches of transformation as complementary (Kelman 2007). In combination, they help to understand why conflict parties, despite their acknowledgement that negotiations are in their own best interest, still undermine the process, cause delays and failure. Both approaches in combination also bring together micro- and macro-level analysis and contribute to understanding violent conflict from the perspective of the individual and the structural levels simultaneously.

The rational, or realpolitik, approaches assume that decision-making in conflict settings takes place according to rational choice theory.[180] Leaders simply make strategic decisions that suit their interests best; thus, in order to create opportunities for transformation, for example in a post-settlement situation, incentives need to be established and institutional reforms conducted in order to lower barriers for democratic participation of armed groups (Shugart 1992, referred to in Lyons 2009, pp.94-95). Accordingly, a 'change of hearts' in individual leaders or their constituencies is not required; transformation happens through institution building in support of democratic regimes. This strong focus on institution building and governance mechanisms is a

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[179] Kriesberg (2005) further distinguishes between internal and external factors within the substantive dimension: while the internal ones are situated within the conflict parties, e.g., disparities in socio-economic development, the external factors are located in the wider societal, regional or international context.

[180] For a more detailed discussion of rational choice and strategic decisions see chapter 3.

trademark of liberal peacebuilding approaches discussed earlier (e.g., Fukuyama 2004).

As mentioned earlier as well, many authors note that this approach falls short of understanding the comprehensive nature of transformation (Paris 2004), which encompasses a deeper structural change in society (Mitchell 2002) and the overall conflict system towards demilitarisation and non-violent conduct of conflict and political contest (Lyons 2009). Psychological concepts need to be taken into consideration in order to grasp the complexity of transformation of the conflict system towards "new social relations, institutions, and visions" (Väyrynen 1999, p.151).

What then entails a psychological approach towards transformation, what is meant by a 'change of heart'? Kelman (2007) develops an understanding of violent conflict as a societal process driven by collective needs and fears rather than entirely a product of rational calculation on the part of decision makers. These collective needs and fears do not relate to material aspects only, but also to psychological needs such as identity, recognition and autonomy (Burton 1990). They involve both objective and subjective factors; and the latter play an important role in conflict escalation and perpetuation and explain the perceived intractability of the conflict – and its 'irrationality' from an outsider's viewpoint.[181]

Of special relevance for this research are conflict norms, i.e., norms on how to conduct conflict and how to engage with the adversary, and enemy images that are rooted in collective needs and fears and deeply entrenched in the conflict parties' perspectives on history and justice. They govern leadership action since leaders assume that their constituencies' evaluation of them depends on adherence to these conflict norms.[182] Thus, these norms are reflected in the 'rational' realm of tactical and strategic choices, negotiation approaches or also in public communication of peace efforts, which is often perceived as propaganda on the side of the conflict parties, vilifying the other side as well as intermediaries. One example for this phenomenon is the vicious cycle of 'ethnic outbidding' in Sri Lanka where the majority community's political leaders strive to outdo each other in communalism in order to gain politically (Horowitz 1985; DeVotta 2002; Chandra 2005).

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[181] For a discussion of theoretical explanations of ethno-political violence that show that this kind of conflict is not so irrational after all, see Brubaker and Laitin (1998).

[182] Literature, however, also offers other, perhaps complementary explanations, for example that of convenience of voter mobilisation along ethnic lines in patronage systems (Chandra 2004).

On the part of the public, adherence to conflict norms is relevant in order to qualify as loyal to their own group; deviation from the norms, e.g., in the form of acknowledging the other side's cause, is seen as treason (Kelman 2007, pp.79 and 86). The silencing of dissent leads to further conformity of views and thus the reduction of options for conflict transformation. As will be shown later, this element of violent conflict strategies is of crucial relevance in the Sri Lankan context.

Bringing together the substantive/rational and subjective/psychological factors that need to be considered for transformation, literature offers different comprehensive categorisations that cut across the above two dimensions (Goetschel 2009). Some authors speak of objects (ibid.), some of transformers (Miall 2004; Ramsbotham et al. 2005, p.163). Altogether, the categories or types – based on the founding work of Galtung (1969, 1990), Curle (1971), Burton (1990), Azar (1990), Väyrynen (1991) – highlight that transformation is required with regards to the context, the relationship between the conflict parties, the issues at stake, and to the actors on an organisational and an individual, personal level. This combination makes it clear that both the intergroup and intra-group relations are addressed.

In the following, the types of transformation are elaborated along Miall's model of transformers of conflict (Miall 2004), which distinguishes between context, structure, actor, issue, and personal/elite transformation as shown in the figure below:

Box 3: Transformers of Conflict	
type	examples
1. context transformations	change in the international or regional environment
2. structure transformations	change from asymmetric to symmetric relations change in power structures changes of markets of violence
3. actor transformations	changes of leadership changes of goals intra-party change change in party's constituencies changing actors
4. issue transformations	transcendence of contested issues constructive compromise changing issues de-linking or re-linking issues
5. personal/elite transformations	changes of perspective changes of heart changes of will gestures of conciliation

Figure 2.4: Types of conflict transformation (derived from Miall 2004, p.78)

It has to be noted that the types should be seen in a complementary manner; none of them alone is sufficient to transform a conflict system. Also, the reader needs to be cautious not to interpret the transformers in a language of intervention, of 'what needs to be done'.[183] Conflict transformation is essentially an incremental and complex societal process that can only be guided or supported in a very limited way; the examples below include both transformative interventions by secondary actors as well as transformations that happen through the hands of the primary conflict actors. It has to be remembered that transformation is not a 'one-way road' and can take place in ameliorative and pejorative ways. While amelioration is desired, destructive strategies of conflict actors as well as unintended effects of well-meant efforts might contribute to a pejorative transformation and thus increase the intractability of the conflict. The following examples will illustrate this understanding.

Transformations of context happen in the regional or international context and affect the conflict parties' "perception of the conflict situation, as well as their motives" (Miall 2004, p.77). This occurs for example when funding sources of the warring parties are cut off, e.g., through freezing of international bank accounts of armed groups. Such transformation also concerns changing alliances among hegemonic powers in the region that support the conflict parties.

Transformation of structure refers to the structure of the conflict, i.e., the number of parties involved and their relative power balance and relationship, and their sources of power. This is often related to the structural aspects of violence, if for example the source of power of one conflict party over the other is based on political exclusion, e.g., from access to public office, and marginalisation of parts of the population (Gurr 1993). Institutional and state reform measures have a particular role in this type of transformation while relating to issue transformation at the same time. An example for a structure transformation without implications regarding the conflict issue is the split in an armed group, as in the case of the Karuna faction in Sri Lanka in March 2004.

Actor transformation relates to strategic choices in the organisation and general approach of the parties to conflict. Of particular relevance here are changes in leadership or constituency of the conflict party; both aspects provide opportunities of en-

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[183] See for example Mitchell's enumeration of "basic methods for bringing about change" that resembles the types of transformation discussed here: changing leaders; changing leaders' and followers' minds; changing strategies, policies and behaviour; and changing parties' environments (Mitchell 2006, p.28).

gagement with and through insider change agents (ibid.). This can occur in the case of a regime change after elections as well as through awareness and capacity building of constituencies by means of political education and information programmes.

Issue transformation concerns the parties' positions towards the conflict issues, the substantive matter. Reframing of positions might lead to constructive compromise, as (at least initially) in the instance of the agreement on exploring a federal solution in the third round of talks between the government and the LTTE in 2002. Likewise, positions can harden around contested issues, often as a result of crisis and violent escalation without new substantive insights.

Lastly, personal or elite transformation refers to changes in individuals' perceptions, attitudes and values. These can take place in manifold ways, often inspired through personal insights at critical moments. These insights concern the adversary and inter-group relationships as well as their own identity and intra-group dynamics. While some interventions aim at creating conditions for such transformations, for example through workshops and peace camps, it is obvious that they can only reach a limited circle of people. Often, they focus on a selection of elite, or potential change agents, albeit at all levels of society. In order to affect a wider circle, personal transformation requires a combination with actor transformation. Another challenge lies in the translation of personal changes reached under artificial workshop conditions into action in real life situations (Malhotra & Liyanage 2005).

The illustrations show that the categories overlap at times and transformative events or interventions can be interpreted as various types, as in the case of the 2004 tsunami that hit the Sri Lankan coast and affected the military power balance of the LTTE and government forces. While the natural disaster led to a structure transformation between the parties (mostly by weakening the LTTE's military power), it also affected the international context in terms of external humanitarian assistance and availability of financial and material resources and thus contributed to a context transformation. At the same time, the ensuing negotiations of a post-tsunami relief operations mechanism, the P-TOMS, offered an opportunity for experiencing power sharing among the conflict parties and thus an opportunity for issue transformation.

Miall's types of conflict transformation will guide the analysis of transformative contributions of the three peace secretariats in chapters 5, 6 and 7. With their introduction, the part on conflict transformation of this chapter is complete.

Before turning towards a discussion of peace negotiations, however, a short caveat on conflict transformation interventions is in order. The following section, however,

does not intend to offer a comprehensive overview of methods and approaches but will only highlight some critical issues with relevance for this research, since the peace secretariats received assistance from third parties and also partnered with external third parties in their efforts to bring about conflict transformation. Most important to understand for the purpose of this research are the wide range of conflict transformation interventions and the question of effectiveness of the measures.

2.2.4 Conflict transformation interventions and their effectiveness

Conflict transformation is primarily in the hands of the conflict actors; and ideally, third parties or external, secondary actors would not be required. Due to the nature of protracted conflict, however, direct cooperation between the parties without facilitation is often difficult.

The range of possible facilitating interventions is often presented according to a temporal order, or according to levels of escalation along which the interveners take different roles ranging from monitor to convener, facilitator, guarantor or verifier of agreements (Mitchell 2006) and applies a repertoire of approaches and methods to assist transformation (Dudouet 2006). Lund (2001) offers one of the most comprehensive overviews with his 'toolbox' for responding to conflict and building peace, albeit going beyond conflict transformation measures.

Which kind of activities can then be considered as specifically dedicated to conflict transformation? As said before, the focus of conflict transformation interventions is on the relationships between the conflict parties (Mitchell 2002). Often, the relational and substantive dimensions of transformation are combined in external intervention activities, e.g., when a dialogue workshop deals with relationship building while discussing power-sharing options (Fisher & Keashly 1991). Transformative activities also have a strong aspect of conscientisation (Freire 1972), raising self-awareness or enlightenment (Lederach 2005), since conflict transformation aims at "transformative human construction and reconstruction of social organization and realities" (Lederach 1995a, p.17).

While relationships are commonly addressed in form of dialogue and problem solving workshops, reflection and capacity building takes place in activities of self-reflection, education, training and research (see for example the definition of conflict transformation by the Alliance for Conflict Transformation cited in Goetschel (2009, p. 96); the

range of methods discussed in Austin et al. (2004); and also Francis (2002) on conflict transformation workshops).

Lederach in his overview of 'middle-range' activities (1997) considers three classical approaches: problem-solving workshops with participation from conflict parties; conflict resolution training in order to raise awareness and impart skills; and the formation of peace commissions as a way to create – together with the other two approaches – an infrastructure to support official peace efforts through networking, communication and provision of insider-partial mediation.[184] This last approach is of specific relevance here.

The creation of peace commissions has a strong element of institution building, since such commissions, committees or councils, as they are often named, mostly do not exist beforehand. While Lederach refers to examples in Nicaragua and South Africa (ibid., pp.50-51), today there are many other examples to be found not only at the middle and grassroots level but on all tracks (Hopp-Nishanka 2012; van Tongeren 2011a, 2011b; Zelizer 2008). While the earlier examples relate to government-sponsored organisations, there are also examples of bipartisan structures, encompassing representation from all conflict parties, or civil society-sponsored organisations (Hopp-Nishanka 2012). As said before, the peace secretariats of this research can also be considered to be part of such a peace infrastructure.

Support for these organisations can be considered as support to conflict transformation in a two-fold way (see figure 2.5): The peace secretariats at the same time are subject of (third party) intervention (through institution building) as well as agent of (their own) conflict transformation interventions, which can be further supported by third parties through capacity building or funding.

First, the support in institution building helps directly with the establishment of the organisation as a potential 'insider-partial' actor and in doing so strengthens the conflict parties' capacities in dealing with conflict and working towards peace, e.g., through intra-party consensus building or relationship building (Mason 2009; Ropers 2011b). The aim of such support, as will be seen later with regards to the peace secretariats of this research, is to encourage the organisation in its capacity as a transformational change agent.

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[184] These activities are included in Figure 2.2, which depicts not only the tracks or levels of activity but also examples used in Lederach's approach (1997).

Second, third parties often offer indirect support for conflict transformation interventions to and through the peace infrastructure, for example when funding their activities or when offering capacity building in facilitation skills (Hopp-Nishanka 2012; Kumar 2011). Often, these interventions enable the organisation to conduct activities that otherwise would not be feasible or would not take place in the same manner. Through this support, the organisation itself conducts interventions for conflict transformation.
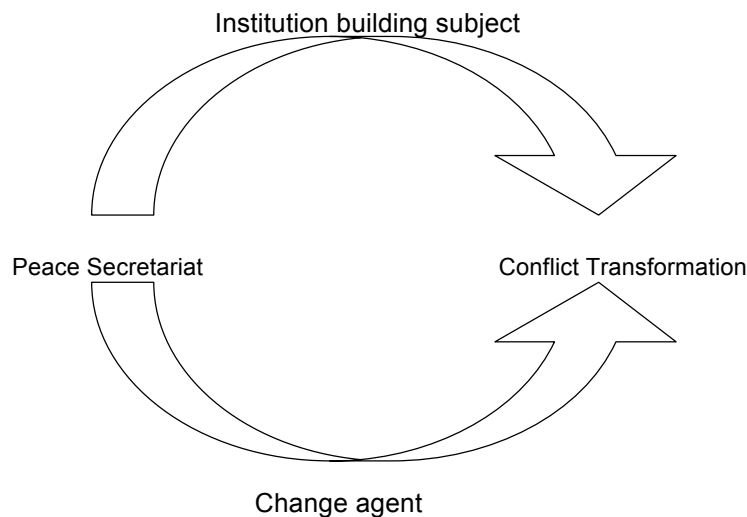
Figure 2.5: Peace-infrastructure organisation as subject and agent in conflict transformation

The distinction is relevant since the newly created organisation is an agent in its own right and with its own agenda. Its establishment, although perhaps funded by external secondary actors, depends on primary conflict actors and their interests. Likewise, the organisation's activities depend on the agenda of the respective conflict party. The third chapter of this research discusses in detail how the agency of organisations such as peace secretariats can be explained.

Before that, this section offers a brief glimpse into the current discourse on effectiveness, since interventions in support of conflict transformation in their different forms cannot be discussed without addressing the question: how do we know that an intervention will contribute to transformation?

In short, the causal argument between an intervention and the expected transformative change is expressed in underlying assumptions, or theories of change (Church & Shouldice 2003; OECD 2008).[185] With regards to relationship building, the underlying

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[185] For a general discussion on whether transformative interventions can be connected in a linear fashion to impact, see Neufeldt (2011).

assumption is that in intractable conflict, the cooperative elements of relationships have been reduced to the greatest extent and the relationship is thus merely competitive and destructive. Accordingly, the cooperative element needs to be restored through transformative measures and relationship building (Kelman 1996, p.100). Moreover, direct contact, exchange and cooperation between groups may lead under certain conditions to reduced prejudice and bias (Allport 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp 2006).[186] Thus, capacity building measures that deal with issue transformation, for example education on contentious topics, may contribute to restoring relationships if conducted in a way to create opportunities for cooperation.[187] As a result, the impact of conflict transformation interventions not only depends on their objective, e.g., issue transformation, but also on the manner in which they are conducted.[188]

How do interveners know if they have any impact? As some critical voices argue, intervention strategies "more often than not reflect unexamined assumptions and deeply rooted organisational mandates rather than 'best practices' born from empirical analysis" (Barnett et al. 2007, p.53 quoted in Campbell 2008, p.23). Many authors argue that despite considerable efforts in developing methodology and analysing good practice, interveners find it difficult to demonstrate results of their work and to measure their success, or effectiveness (for an overview see Schmelzle 2005; Paffenholz & Reychler 2007; Campbell 2008).[189] This critical assessment is based on various arguments that range from substantive to methodological.

On the substantive side, problems begin with the before-mentioned blurred definitions and concepts that guide interventions (OECD 2007). Some authors argue that there is a mismatch between the aspired change and interventions, and that methods such as training and problem-solving workshops fall short of the challenges addressed by conflict transformation. Complex social and institutional change requires reform of public policy and institution building in the economic, social and political realms (Clements 1997). Conflict transformation should thus build more on methods and approaches

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[186] While the original contact hypothesis of Allport (1954) has been refined over the years and remains valid under specific conditions, further research shows that inter-group work needs to be complemented or precedented by intra-group work, e.g., Church et al. (2004) and for Sri Lanka also Bush (2003).

[187] The text will later return to the theories of change that guide support to the peace secretariats in this research.

[188] This goes beyond conflict sensitivity, a concept that will not be discussed within the scope of this research. For a detailed discussion see Barbolet et al. (2005).

[189] For a differentiation between success and effectiveness see Henderson (1996).

dealing with structural transformation and systemic change, which are common in areas of nation building or development (Diamond 1994; van der Merwe 1989).[190] Others point out that there is still too limited an understanding about how different interventions add up, for example on how the effects of interventions on different tracks cumulate (Miall 2004; CDA 2008; Ricigliano 2011).

Goodhand and Walton (2009, p.314) summarise the situation of international assistance to the Sri Lankan peace process:

> Just because international actors failed to 'bring peace' does not necessarily mean that international intervention was ill-conceived or a failure. … the metrics of success are contested and their measurement is difficult because of the problems of data, counterfactuals, attribution and variance in time frames.

Two core problems will be highlighted here: the attribution gap and the question of perspective. The 'attribution gap' concerns the common problem of all kinds of impact assessment; it cannot be known for sure how far a certain intervention has contributed to a specific change in its environment (Rossi et al. 1999). Thus, methods for assessing the impact suggest constructing result chains between intervention and intended societal effect; so far, however, these remain largely unfeasible (Körppen 2007).[191] As a practical step, assessments distinguish between outcomes and impact, the first referring to "the changes an intervention has initiated within its immediate environment. The impacts are determined by examining the larger changes an intervention has initiated within the general context, which often occur only after a longer time" (Paffenholz 2004, p.11). Impact measurement also considers unintended and sometimes counterproductive effects of interventions.

Since in many situations both the outcome and the impact are difficult to measure, e.g., the change of identity concepts in workshop participants, interveners often resort to assessing the output (Church & Shouldice 2002) instead, i.e., measuring the achievements of the workshop in numbers of participants and publications of workshop results. At times, this is also related to confusion between assessing effectiveness and impact. While impact concerns the effects of the intervention on the larger

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[190] This aspect also receives counter-criticism; it has to be noted that the downside of such a wider understanding runs the risk of losing focus and "of becoming a movement for the general improvement of society rather than just mitigating and redefining the conflict" (Väyrynen 1999, p.151 cited in Botes 2003, p.9).

[191] For a similar discussion regarding the limitations of assessing organisational performance see March and Sutton (1997).

context, effectiveness asks for the extent to which an intervention has attained its objectives that are made measurable through indicators; and these often detail just the numbers of workshops and participants (Paffenholz 2004) while other effects might be less tangible.

In addition to these methodological concerns there is a second problem: who decides on the objectives of interventions and whose perspective determines effectiveness? This connects to the earlier question regarding definitions of peace and who is defining peace (Lidén 2006; Barnett et al. 2007). On the one hand, definitions and thus indicators and measurements differ among interveners; on the other hand, these views are not necessarily consistent with the beneficiaries' or target groups' ideas.

To make things more complicated, consistency between the conflict parties regarding their objectives and strategies for change cannot be assumed. Thus, it is no surprise if one conflict party applauds an intervention, e.g., capacity building on power sharing, whereas its adversaries reject such intervention. These perspectives might change in the course of time as conflict dynamics change (for a similar discussion regarding mediation effectiveness see Bercovitch (2006)). As will be explained in the section on negotiation in more detail, actors who find themselves bound by conflicting expectations of different audiences and stakeholders will find it difficult to deal with the ensuing dilemmas.

While practitioners' literature commonly suggests to engage all stakeholders in intervention planning and thus to involve different perspectives in the preparation for assessment (Paffenholz 2004), this does not solve the dilemma of power differences among the parties and their consequently differing relative influence on interventions, which essentially aim at empowerment of actors in order to make transformation possible (Fetherston 2000; Schwerin 1995). Moreover, it does not address the power differences between the conflict parties and the interveners and the resulting moral and ethical questions related to transformative intervention in general (Botes 2003; Körppen 2007). The empirical discussion will show how the peace secretariats as objects and potential agents of conflict transformation have dealt with these challenges.

While it is important to keep the critical concerns regarding conflict transformation interventions and their evaluation in mind, the focus of this research will remain with the perspective of the conflict parties as the primary actors of transformation. Although the discussion will later return to the assistance offered to the peace secretariats and the underlying theories of change, the perspective of this research is about understanding the potential and limitation of agency: the peace secretariats are agents

within their conflict parties and were established by the respective decision makers for various purposes during the course of the peace process.

While one of these purposes is to contribute to conflict transformation, the necessity for the establishment of the secretariats arose in the context of preparations for negotiations. Section 2.3 will therefore turn to negotiations. Before this, the following section briefly summarises the discussion on conflict transformation.

2.2.5 Peace secretariats as agents of conflict transformation

This chapter so far has introduced the author's understanding of peace and peace processes as well as the various types of interventions to help the primary conflict actors end violence and achieve peace. Conflict transformation is one of them, addressing the root causes of a particular conflict over the long term through actions and processes that seek to alter the various characteristics and manifestations of conflict. It aims to transform negative destructive conflict into positive constructive conflict, or the system of violent conflict into a peace system.

The primary actors, or agents, of such a complex transformation process are the conflict parties and stakeholders in the conflict. While the conflict parties receive support from third parties, the latter remain secondary actors that cannot bring about transformation on their own. When analysing the conflict parties' positions and actions, it is important to acknowledge that they represent heterogeneous sub-systems within the conflict system and are often categorised according to societal level and influence (Tracks 1 to 3). The peace secretariats are placed within Track 1 as depicted in above graph 2.3. The following sections discuss in more detail the role of the peace secretariats as a negotiation support organisation and their connections to other actors in a peace process.

A second categorisation of actors, besides their location on tracks or levels, concerns their willingness and ability to engage constructively towards transformational change (e.g., drivers of change, peace constituencies, or spoilers). A specific category is that of change agents who are seen as champions and multipliers of transformational change (DFID 2004, 2005). Such change agents can be found on all levels or tracks as well as among all conflict parties, within the state and within non-state armed groups. None of them, however, can affect transformational change on their own.

Consequently, it can be argued that while the peace secretariats are not sufficient for explaining the course and eventual failure of the peace process, they can contribute to conflict transformation.

In order to analyse the secretariats' contributions, the above dimensions and types of conflict transformation will be used. Conflict transformation is understood here to have two dimensions; cutting across the relational and substantive dimension are five types of transformation. Following Miall (2004), they relate to context, relationships, issues, actors and personal transformation (see figure 2.4).

Since the peace secretariats' original purpose and tasks related to the negotiations and their mandates are formulated in the context of the negotiation strategies of the parties, the next section takes a closer look at negotiation processes and the support for the negotiation parties of which the peace secretariats are part. In section 2.4 the literature on peace secretariats as negotiation support organisations and on peace secretariats as potential agents of conflict transformation will be brought together, serving as a summary of the assumptions and the first part of the conceptual research framework.

2.3   Peace Secretariats as Negotiation Support Organisations

The previous section on conflict transformation highlighted the complexities of the transformational challenges of large systems and social change. As this part will show, negotiations, or the accompanying efforts in peacemaking and conflict settlement, are by no means simple endeavours either. As Zartman (1995, p.3) points out, intra-state conflicts – or civil wars – "are the most difficult of conflicts to negotiate".[192]

How painfully and tragically difficult they can be becomes obvious in the context of the Sri Lankan negotiations between the government and the LTTE. The last five decades since 1957 have seen several attempts to negotiate a political settlement, or at least a ceasefire between the warring parties (for an overview see Bouffard & Carment 2006; Tilakaratne 2006). While some negotiations were assisted by third parties (India and Norway), others were of a bilateral character between government representatives

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[192] This is an introduction and discussion of basic terms and concepts with a view to negotiations in intra-state or internal conflict. This literature is commonly subsumed under international negotiation since it usually involves various collective actors with different cultural backgrounds as well as representatives and third parties from the international community (Babbitt 1999).

and Tamil groups, or of multilateral character, e.g., the All-Party Conferences of 1984 and 2006. The last negotiation at the centre of the peace process of 2002 is described in detail in chapter 1. The theoretical discussion here will be illustrated with examples from this effort.

What matters here is to show and explain the different mindsets and perspectives that guide negotiators (Pruitt 1983) in comparison to conflict transformation practitioners, since these differences will be relevant to understand the research question: how can peace secretariats that are bodies of a negotiation framework contribute to conflict transformation?

Negotiation is "a process by which contending parties come to an agreement" (Zartman 2002, p.71). The official Track 1 representatives enter negotiations with their respective party interests and goals in mind and try to pursue these mostly through what Lax and Sebenius describe as "potentially opportunistic interaction [of the parties in order to; UHN] do better through jointly decided action than [they] could otherwise" (1986, p.11).[193] Whereas there is a general understanding of interdependency between the parties and their respective interests and desired outcomes, the parties can be guided by varying mindsets, or negotiation strategies. These are informed by a dual concern for one's own and the other party's outcomes (Pruitt & Rubin 1986) and lead to a distinction of two main strategic directions: distributive bargaining versus integrative negotiation. In other words: the parties choose between competition or co-operation; they can be guided by their interest to achieve the utmost for themselves while trying to get the other party to yield or concede, or by the realisation that they can achieve more in a joint problem-solving approach (Fisher & Ury 1981; Lax & Sebenius 1986; Pruitt 1983).

While negotiations go in parallel with conflict transformation efforts, there is not much connection in literature.[194] Conflict transformation necessitates an integrative approach of the actors whereas a hardliner's negotiation approach to maximising his/her own outcome against the interests of the other party excludes compromise and transfor-

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[193] This is certainly a simplification and exaggeration since negotiations today see increasing influence from a multiplicity of actors and approaches that regard negotiations as joint problem solving or joint construction of the future rather than bargaining (Sergeev 2002). For this research, however, the traditional view on negotiations (Fisher, R. 1986; Kremenyuk 2002) is still relevant in order to understand the conflict parties' perspectives on the process.

[194] Note exceptions such as Saunders (2001) that are discussed in detail below.

mation. The following section refers to the two basic negotiation strategies at several points (for a comprehensive overview see Lewicki et al. (2004, 2010)).

This section of the research faces a challenge: the central concern of negotiation literature is to explain the outcome of the negotiation process. This, however, goes beyond the purpose of this research, which does not ask for the reasons of the failed peace negotiations in Sri Lanka. The author therefore presents only selected aspects from a vast body of negotiation literature, which appear relevant to explain the peace secretariats' roles.

In the following, a brief overview of basic terms and concepts with a view to intra-state negotiation and its structure and process is given; it places the peace secretariats in the context of prenegotiation and negotiation functions and it will deal with the influence of asymmetry in negotiations. The next section 2.3.2 turns to the actors, their roles and relationships in negotiations. Specific attention is paid to role conflicts and concepts that deal with the balancing of intra-party and inter-party processes. Section 2.3.3 looks at the delegated tasks of peace secretariats, and section 2.3.4 relates to other support mechanisms and structures for negotiation of peace agreements, such as sub-committees and interim administrations.

Altogether, the chapter will lead to a proposed preliminary working definition of peace secretariats:

> *A peace secretariat is a unit within a larger organisation or an independent organisation that has been established, is mandated by and closely affiliated with at least one of the conflict parties with the purpose of supporting the party with services relating to the negotiation, dialogue or mediation process or the implementation of process results before, during or after official peace talks.*

As will be developed in the following, this preliminary definition focuses on the aspect of delegation: the peace secretariat is part of a larger organisation and recipient of a mandate. This understanding, and consequently the definition, will be refined in chapter 3. There, peace secretariats are considered as organisations that enact agency on their own and thus might transcend the delegated functions described in the definition so far.

2.3.1 Understanding negotiation process and structure in intra-state conflict

Negotiations can be analysed on different levels, concerning different issues and areas of application. The levels of analysis concern the system, the process, the structure, the actors, strategies and metaphors, as well as the outcome of negotiation (see for example the overview in Kremenyuk (2002). Earlier literature distinguishes between process and conditions, preconditions and background factors as well as outcome and implementation (Saywer & Guetzkow 1965). While few authors attempt to establish a comprehensive framework, most prefer a partial analysis that identifies determining key factors for aspects of the overall process (Dupont & Faure 2002).

In this section, the focus is on process and structure.[195] These aspects are relevant in order to understand the relationship of the parties and the factors that determine three aspects: first, their negotiation strategy and behaviour including the mandate for the peace secretariats; second, the resulting functions, role and the role conflicts of the peace secretariats within the setting of the actors in the negotiations; and third, the phases of negotiation and the establishment and mandating of peace secretariats as part of prenegotiation preparation.[196]

The negotiation process – while being at the centre of the definition of negotiation it-self – has not received much scholarly attention compared to the inputs and outcomes of negotiation (Weingart & Olekalns 2004). Process is often observed and defined along stages with definite functions.[197] Descriptions resemble the earlier discussion of conflict and peace process stages in which the negotiation process is embedded (Saunders 2001) and which it influences at the same time; hence "the process may be fuzzy, the phases may be of different duration, they may overlap or backtrack, and confusion may appear in the succession of events. Nevertheless, looking at the whole sequence, one sees the process as distinctive and original" within the larger peace process (Dupont & Faure 2002, p.42).

Negotiations take place, as Lax and Sebenius pointed out in the earlier quoted defini-tion, when the contending parties prefer to talk, and thus to cooperate, rather than

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[195] This overview leans heavily on an excellent overview on structure in negotiation by Zartman (2002).

[196] As will be seen, this is more an ideal case scenario since not all of the secretariats were set up during the prenegotiation period.

[197] Other approaches distinguish phases according to strategic orientation; see for an overview Dupont and Faure (2002).

continue to fight.[198] The intention to cooperate, however, is not always paired with a preparedness to genuinely compromise. Fighting parties use negotiation periods also for strengthening their position, rearming and other purposes. At least for a limited time, however, de-escalation is intended (Giessmann & Wils 2009). Thus, negotiations might lead to settlement but also simply to a pause and later re-escalation.

This moment of change in strategy is described in literature as a moment of 'ripeness' (Zartman 1989a, 2001).[199] It occurs after fighting has reached a 'hurting stalemate' that is considered by all parties as detrimental to their interests. At the same time and usually in the context of a crisis, the parties realise that the situation will only get worse. An 'unacceptable plateau' as well as a 'threatening precipice' have been reached. Hence, the current strategy is considered not feasible and motivation to escape the conflict sets in (Pruitt 1983). If negotiations occur to the parties as a 'way out', then the moment is ripe for negotiation (Zartman 2001).

The concept of ripeness brings attention to the timing of negotiations and the right moment to start them. Ripeness, however, is not derived from a chronology of incidents; it is based on the parties' perceptions. Recent additions to the concept emphasise factors that might hinder negotiations despite perceived stalemate and crisis (for an overview see Pruitt 2005b). Similar concepts such as that of 'readiness', which looks at the conflict parties' perceptions separately (Pruitt 2005a, 2005 b), or the idea of 'willingness' (Kleiboer 1994) underline the psychological, communicative and ultimately subjective aspects of the concept. While third parties can assist the conflict parties with their assessment and may influence their decision, it ultimately depends on the conflict parties to agree to negotiate.

Kriesberg (1998, p.274) describes the process of negotiation along the following general stages: preparing to de-escalate; initiating negotiations; conducting negotiations; and implementing agreements. While peace secretariats often accompany the whole process, their establishment and mandate is part of the preparation for negotiation. Thus the preparation, or prenegotiation stage, is of particular interest. Prenegotiation concerns de-escalation, redefinition of relationships, re-evaluation of strategies, as well as consideration of third-party roles (Kriesberg & Thorson 1991). Zartman and

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[198] The willingness to cooperate requires a minimum of trust, as Bloomfield and Reilly point out (1998); similarly argue for the situation in Sri Lanka Höglund and Svensson (2003).

[199] Haass (1990) and Stedman (1991) also develop conceptions of ripeness, although literature predominantly refers to Zartman; for a discussion see Kleiboer (1994).

Berman (1982) highlight the diagnostic aspect of these activities: the parties consider negotiation as one strategic option.

The phase before actual negotiations begin is crucial in order to prepare for negotiations, and to consolidate the conditions of ripeness. This often takes place in the form of negotiations that serve as a prelude to the 'real' negotiations on substance (Zartman 1989b, p.1) or, as Bloomfield et al. refer to an Irish conception, as the "talks about talks" (1998, p.66). Saunders (1985) points to three phases of the preparations: definition of the problem, commitment to negotiate, and arrangement of the negotiation. Similarly, Rothman (1989) finds three stages serving diagnostic, procedural and agenda-setting purposes.[200] Establishing peace secretariats is part of the procedural arrangements of negotiations.

While literature distinguishes the tasks and the prenegotiation phase from the substantial negotiations, real life situations are often more blurred and rushed as stages overlap, leapfrog or recede back (Zartman & Berman 1982). This was also the case in the 2002 negotiations in Sri Lanka where, for example, preparation for substantial negotiations happened at the same time as the implementation of ceasefire conditions, which served as consolidation of ripeness, and attention was divided between these different and competing tasks.[201]

Insufficient preparation has a significant detrimental effect on the overall negotiation. As Saunders points out, the prenegotiation phase links the negotiation process to the wider peace process: "in many cases [this stage; UHN] is even more complicated, time-consuming, and difficult than reaching agreement in negotiations … Human beings do not negotiate about their identities, fears, suspicions, anger, historic grievances, security, dignity, honor, justice, rejection, or acceptance" (2001, pp. 483-484). This illustrates the difficulties of prenegotiations; it also resonates well with the notion of conflict transformation that concentrates on the conflict parties' relationships and hence argues for complementarity between the fields of conflict settlement and transformation (similar also Fisher 2005, 2006). Some authors, such as Saunders (2001),

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[200] Zartman identifies more broadly seven functions: identifying and lowering the risk of cooperation; assessing the costs of agreement; assurance of reciprocity; consolidating internal support; developing alternative solutions; selecting participants; building bridges from conflict to conciliation; and preparing for transition (1989). For a detailed discussion of different prenegotiation concepts see Pantev (2000).

[201] As will be seen later, this situation led in the eyes of many observers to insufficient attention to preparations although there was sufficient time available.

argue consequently that prenegotiation must not refer to a limited period in time but to a level of preparedness that the parties need to achieve.[202]

Which procedural considerations are relevant during the 'negotiation over process'? Bloomfield et al. present the following list (1998, p.69):

- agreeing on the basic rules and procedures;
- participation in the process, and methods of representation;
- dealing with preconditions for negotiation and barriers to dialogue;
- creating a level playing-field for the parties;
- resourcing the negotiations;
- the form of negotiations;
- venue and location;
- communication and information exchange;
- discussing and agreeing upon some broad principles with regard to outcomes;
- managing the proceedings;
- timeframes;
- decision-making procedures;
- process tools to facilitate negotiations and break deadlocks;
- the possible assistance of a third party.

As stated earlier, literature rarely mentions secretariats or support staff when discussing prenegotiations. It is therefore noteworthy that this comprehensive and practical outline mentions the establishment of "secretarial backup" (ibid., p.78) as one aspect of resourcing the negotiations. In other parts of the handbook, the authors refer to secretariats for information sharing and communication as well as for a potential backchannel in case of negotiation deadlocks (ibid., pp.86 and 100). Backchannels are considered as unofficial or indirect communication between official representatives in prenegotiation or crisis moments of negotiation (Pruitt 2008, 2011), but these do not necessarily have to be the negotiation leaders.

Likewise, it appears that many of the other tasks and their implementation are not performed by the negotiators themselves and can be delegated to support structures.

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[202] Saunders (2001) argues consequently that prenegotiation paves the way for negotiations as well as accompanies them throughout the non-linear peace process and should thus be described as 'circum-negotiation'. In this wider understanding, the author elaborates a multi-level peace process that encompasses official negotiations as one of four arenas (besides the quasi-official Track 1.5/2 process, the public peace process and civil society engagement). Within the official process, however, Saunders does not identify different roles of the 'officials' and there is little discussion regarding the actors.

The potential functions of secretariats are dealt with in a later section. For now, it suffices to note that secretariats are rarely mentioned but do play a role in the preparation and accompaniment of negotiations. Before going into further detail, one central element in the list above is key, the levelling of the playing field of the parties.

While the concept of asymmetric power relations between the conflict parties plays a great role in determining the negotiation structure and the potential outcome of negotiations, the focus here is on levelling the negotiation terrain for the duration of talks so that all parties consider the process as legitimate. While the mutual acceptance of the parties already confers a certain level of recognition, the design of the negotiation process and the provision of equal resources to the parties can contribute further to creating equality, at least at the table (Bloomfield et al. 1998, p.77). Resources concern here both material resources in terms of financial means, equipment and meeting facilities, and human resources in trained staff, secretarial support and capacity building for the negotiation teams. In the case of the Sri Lankan peace secretariats, some of the donors explained their support with the intention of levelling the playing field, and as described by above authors, this intention was impossible to acknowledge by the conflict parties.[203]

This can be explained by the power asymmetry between the conflict parties, which defines their relationship but also the identity construction and rationale of the respective parties. This might create a dilemma that can be explained by the contradictory character of power equality.[204] While in the situation of a fighting stalemate or negotiation deadlock, power equality occurs momentarily, the parties arrive at this situation with structurally different power resources. They may attempt to overcome the perceived deadlock through escalation in an effort to disprove the momentary equality (ibid., p.73). At the same time, both parties expect dynamic equality, or reciprocity, as a behavioural norm: concessions are expected to be reciprocal, not necessarily at every turn or step but in the overall process. This procedural fairness (Deutsch 1973) is expected between the negotiators, whereas their constituencies do not wish to acknowledge and refuse equality – which leads to a dilemma for the negotiators (Druckman 1977). The argument returns to this in the next section.

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[203] The original text refers particularly to the more powerful party; in this research, however, both main contending parties refuse the notion of equality for different reasons, as will be discussed later.

[204] Academic literature uses the terms power symmetry and equality as synonyms (see e.g. Zartman 2002), while in the Sri Lankan context the term equality is highly contentious for obvious reasons. Applying the term here follows scholarly usage and does not imply a characterisation of conflict parties in the Sri Lankan context.

The following section takes a closer look at who actually holds and represents the power of the conflict parties at the table.

2.3.2 Actors and roles in negotiations

Negotiation analysis is often based on the assumption of bilateralism. This is a matter of analytical convenience but of course not true in most situations. In fact, it could be argued that bilateral negotiations do not exist since each side is always a composite (Zartman 2002). This section will briefly introduce the different actors and their roles. This is helpful in order to understand the position of the peace secretariats within the actor setting of the negotiation as well as within the wider landscape of actors in the peace process.

With a view to the Sri Lankan peace talks of 2002 and 2003, three additions to a stereotypically bilateral set of actors have to be made: they concern the intra-party composition of the negotiating parties; third party actors at the table such as mediators; and conflict parties that consider themselves not represented at the table. Each addition will be briefly explained and then visualised, building on the system of multi-track diplomacy (see section 2.2.2 and figures 2.2 and 2.3).

The first addition concerns the intra-party composition of the negotiating parties at the table. This refers to factions or stakeholders within each conflict party's constituency as well as to the composition of negotiation teams or delegations that represent each party. In both cases, views and opinions are not homogenous and need to be considered in strategic decision-making, especially if in-group factions have veto power and thus potentially request compensation (Kremenyuk 2002).

With a view to party representation at the table, the negotiator is usually not a single person but a small team that is part of a bigger organisational setting, e.g., a government or an armed group or social movement. How are these teams composed? Saunders (2001) in his discussion of negotiation tasks refers to leaders, officials and policy makers. In more detail, the team consists of a team leader; a spokesperson; representatives from different intra-party stakeholders, e.g., political party leaders or ministers; representatives of the military; experts on specific negotiation topics; and

support staff (Babbitt 1999). It is noteworthy that academic literature is little concerned with staffing of negotiation teams, their composition and division of labour.[205]

The previous section has positioned the peace secretariats within Lederach's peace-building triangle (see figure 2.3). The additions here lead to a refined triangle that stylises the fragmentation of the conflict party and the position of the peace secretariat as part of a negotiation team:
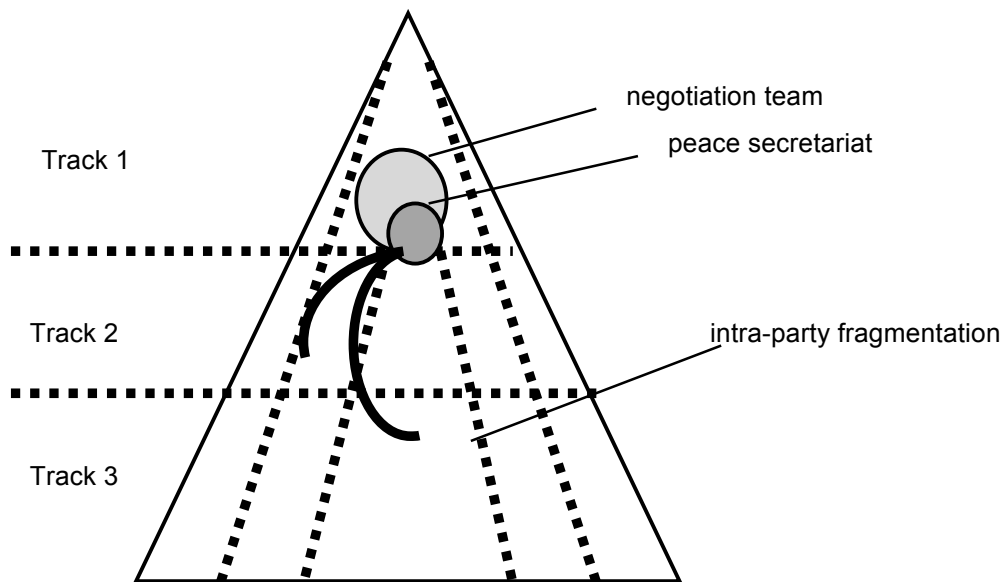
Figure 2.6: Peace secretariat within negotiation team and in context of intra-party fragmentation

This is a simplified visualisation that neither considers inter-party variations nor details of fragmentation within negotiating teams. The figure, however, indicates that the peace secretariat reaches out to various stakeholders at different tracks.

The second addition to the bilateral negotiation model concerns other actors at the table. While two conflict parties negotiate, often a third-party facilitator or mediator is at the table as well, "occupying a variety of positions ranging from the neutral conduit or catalyst for the interaction to the central party who negotiates with both parties" (Zartman 2002, p.78). Scholarly literature and observers of the Sri Lankan process

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[205] While for example Harris & Reilly (eds.) in their practitioner handbook (1998) repeatedly mention the issue of equal and representative staffing of post-agreement organisations such as truth and reconciliation commissions and election bodies, the staffing of negotiation secretariats is not discussed. Literature on negotiators concerns mainly research on leadership and personality traits and the question as to how far negotiation skills can be trained (for an overview see Rubin (2002)).

argue about whether mediators are a party to the conflict or whether they can be impartial (Bercovitch 1991; Bercovitch et al. 1991; for the Sri Lankan discussion see Höglund & Svensson 2008). It is assumed here following Zartman (2002, p.79) that they are "part of the interaction but not parties to the conflict or the solution".

In general, mediators take on different roles such as that of a translator, educator, resource-expander, but also scapegoat for difficulties in the negotiation process (Baechler 2007; Bercovitch 2002 referring e.g., to Stulberg 1987; Mitchell 2006). Often, the position and influence of mediators is contested. In the case of the Norwegian role in Sri Lanka, the denomination of 'facilitator' was chosen over the term 'mediator' due to Sinhalese fears of foreign power intervention. The weaker term highlighted that the Norwegian team concentrated on facilitating communication, serving as a 'go-between' rather than mediating and possibly imposing a solution (Uyangoda 2006, p.260).

The mediator builds relationships with all negotiating parties and moreover with a multiplicity of actors within the parties.[206] Often times, the mediating team is not only in touch with the negotiators, and here again different members of the teams, but also regularly communicate with other stakeholders in order to consider their views (Crocker et al. 2004). As will be seen in the empirical discussion below, the Norwegian facilitator was in regular contact with the peace secretariats and in fact substantively contributed to their establishment. The aspect is resumed in section 2.3.3.

The figure below depicts – again in a technical simplification of the multiple relationships that exist in reality – the interaction between two negotiating parties, represented by the peace secretariats, and the facilitator (F). Leaving aside the details in figure 2.6, this figure presents the direct interaction between the peace secretariats of two conflict parties, the indirect, facilitated interaction between the peace secretariats through the facilitator. While the negotiators entertain separate interactions with the facilitators and their counterparts, these are not included in the visualisation.

The presence of the facilitator allows for an indirect interaction where the facilitator is passing the messages between both parties. Moreover, both peace secretariats interact with the facilitator in order to conduct their various secretarial support functions.

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[206] Moreover, in most cases the mediator consists of a team, often representing different states or international bodies and seeing similar fragmentation as the negotiating teams.
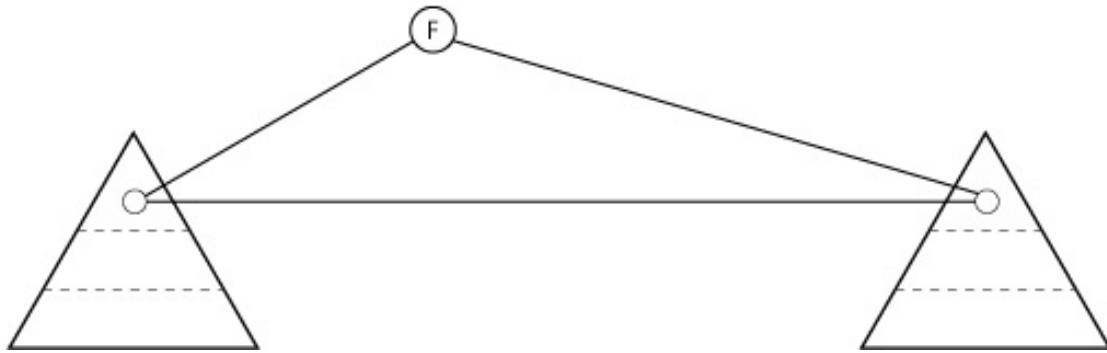
Figure 2.7: Peace secretariats in trilateral relationship with facilitator

The third addition to the set of actors refers to those not represented at the table. Besides stakeholder groups that consider themselves represented at the table through one negotiating party and communicate their interests and needs to the negotiators, there are stakeholders to the conflict that do not consider themselves represented. In the Sri Lankan case this is true regarding Tamil groups that opposed the LTTE but did not align with the government, and the Muslim communities that asked to be given a separate seat at the negotiation table and eventually established their own peace secretariat. The focus here is on the second group.

The two negotiating parties maintained relationships with Muslim stakeholders either through political representatives or through their respective peace secretariats. The Muslim peace secretariat to a certain extent acted as a representative in the peace process, albeit not at the negotiation table. It maintained close relationships with the facilitator. Consequently, the figure above can be elaborated further:
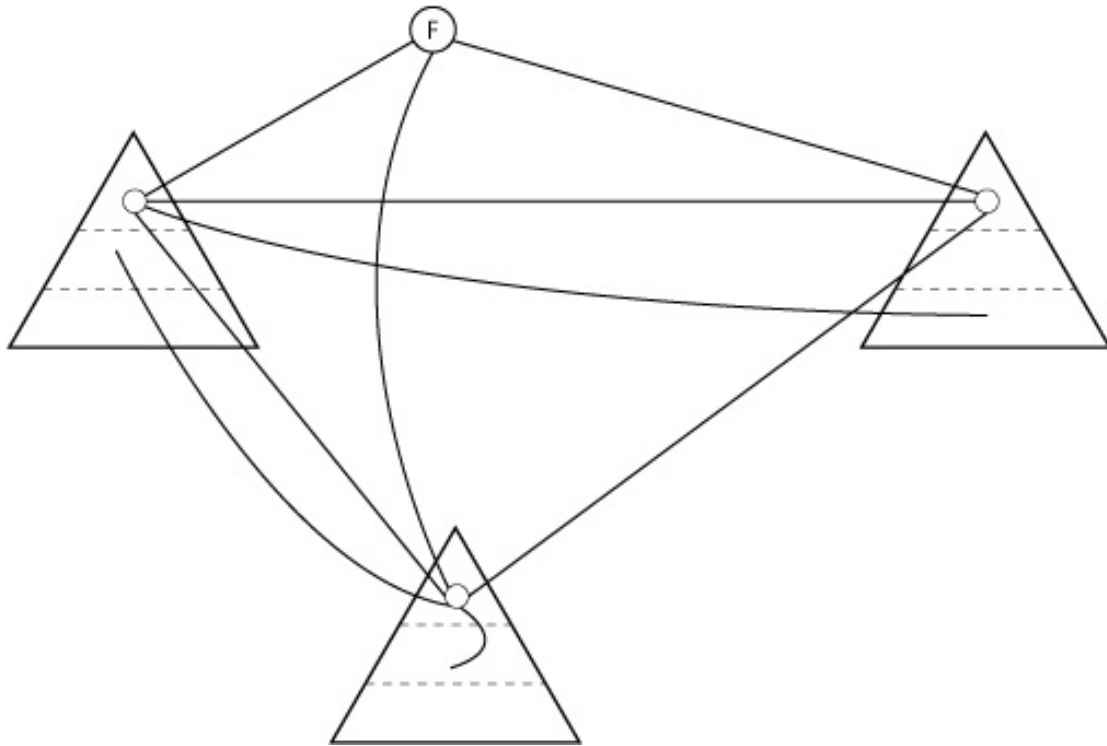
Figure 2.8: Interactions between three peace secretariats and facilitator

The multiplicity of relationships between the peace secretariats and other actors at, or behind, the table is increased in this visualisation by adding the interactions of the peace secretariats with audiences within their party, as introduced in figure 2.6, as well as with stakeholders outside.

This multiplicity requires more consideration since it presents to the peace secretariats a potential for role conflicts. The peace secretariats as members of the negotiation teams act on behalf of their parties within delegated mandates. They do not decide the negotiation strategy on their own and their principals are hardly part of the negotiation team.[207] Often, they are 'actors' in the true sense of the word: they enact a script written by others rather than speaking for themselves (Rubin 2002, p.101).

At the same time, their negotiation behaviour is determined by a number of other factors: the organisational environment and its standards and ethics, e.g., in the case of career diplomats; the power of intra-party constituencies that influence the negotiation strategy decided by the principal; the immediate contact and relationship with the ne-

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[207] Principals such as state leaders commonly join the negotiations only at the concluding stage for practical and tactical reasons, e.g., in order to reduce the risk of being pressured into agreement (Babbitt 1999; Rubin 2002).

gotiation opponents at the table; and personal determinants such as negotiation style, values and culture. If these determinants contradict each other and require differing negotiation behaviour, a role conflict arises.

A typical role conflict for negotiators arises from contradictory expectations that are related to the roles of representation (of their own party) and of negotiation (with the other party) as described by Walton and McKersie (1965) and later in Druckman's model of negotiation as dual responsiveness (1977). Negotiators are obliged to be responsive to the competing claims of both their party and of the other side.

Similarly, Putnam (1988) speaks of a two-level game that is played simultaneously in diplomacy and in domestic politics. Putnam describes the situation of the negotiators as playing on two different game boards on an international table in front of him as well as on a domestic one behind him. This model helps to understand the complex dynamics between inter- and intra-party consensus building: it is essentially about politics in the domestic arena that negotiators have to be concerned about since these constitute the power base (ibid., p.457). Bush (2003) and DeVotta (2004) highlight the importance of the intra-party processes for a negotiated settlement in Sri Lanka; ethnic outbidding within the Sinhalese majority obstructs negotiations with the 'other'.[208]

The complexity of the situation arises from the fact that the moves on the game boards have to be consistent in both sets and the different audiences tolerate only a small divergence in rhetoric; the negotiating parties observe how their counterparts 'sell' the negotiations to their constituencies, and each negotiation agreement between the conflict parties will need to undergo 'ratification' by their respective constituencies (Putnam 1988, pp.434-436). An example for the ensuing role conflicts is the development of 'working trust' between the negotiating parties that will have to form an uneasy coalition (Kelman 1993; Mitchell 2000). While it is essential to develop a trustful working relationship that might involve simple things such as handshakes and shared meals, the negotiators often face allegations of treason from their constituencies for becoming 'friendly' with the adversaries (Babbitt 1999). This is further complicated by factional conflicts within the constituencies (Walton & McKersie 1965). Thus, it is not only the tension between the bureaucratic government politics and the inter-party negotiations, as modelled in Putnam's game, which the negotiator has to

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[208] This is described in more detail in section 1.3, see also the systemic explanation of ethnic outbidding via archetypes in Ropers (2008).

balance. He has to incorporate opposition claims and the strategies of so-called spoilers in the polity in order to survive the political competition.[209]

How does this discussion of negotiator roles apply to peace secretariats? This research will show that role conflicts have a significant effect on the organisations' transformative contributions. As said earlier, 'the negotiator' is in reality a team that finds itself spanning the boundaries between the different roles.[210] In the case of the government peace secretariat and that of the LTTE, their heads were part of the negotiation team and experienced role conflict in the various functions delegated to them. This matches the description of Putnam who sees the chief negotiator at the centre of the table and "at his elbow" diplomats and advisors (Putnam 1988, p.434). While negotiation literature does not discuss in detail the role behaviour of officials other than negotiators, it is argued here that theoretical explanations for the behaviour of official negotiators can be used to explain official behaviour in support of the negotiators, too. The empirical analysis will discuss in more detail how the peace secretariats' staff experienced the role conflicts and which coping strategies they developed.

One example of such a coping strategy is discussed in organisation studies; here the response to the problem of boundary spanning between the different role expectations lies in a differentiation of functions. These consist of two sets: information processing functions and external representation functions (Aldrich & Herker 1977). This categorisation – more technical functions that help monitor, filter and facilitate information flows on the one hand, and the communication and representation of decisions taken by the leadership of organisations on the other – invites for a division of labour within negotiating teams. Both functions are performed in collaboration with different parts of the organisation, or here the negotiating party, but are always supposed to coherently reflect the policy decisions of the leading negotiators (Friedman & Podolny 1992).

Summarising the argument above, the peace secretariats are – unlike third parties or civil society organisations engaged in conflict transformation and accompaniment of negotiations – integral part of the representation of the negotiating parties and thus are hypothetically in a strong position to influence the negotiation outcome. This argument was introduced in the discussion of change agents in conflict transformation processes; it is argued here that it is also true for the negotiation process. The role

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[209] Additional complications can be expected if the relationships and role expectations from mediators or other, regional stakeholders are included in the model.

[210] Similar observations are made in organisation studies for negotiators outside the context of international negotiations (Friedman & Podolny 1992; Kahn et al. 1964).

conflicts that peace secretariats face, however, can limit this potential. The effectiveness of the peace secretariats will depend on, among other factors, the strategies developed in order to deal with boundary spanning between intra- and inter-party expectations.

Altogether, the argument is posited here as a second assumption as follows:

> *Peace secretariats hold a particular position within and between the negotiating parties that implies a potentially significant influence on the negotiation process as well as on conflict transformation. (Assumption 2)*

It has to be kept in mind, however, that decisions about the mandate of the peace secretariats are part of the strategic choices of the negotiating parties, and that the peace secretariats fulfil specific functions within a negotiation strategy not decided by them on their own. The following section discusses the functions of the peace secretariats from the perspective of literature and then develops a working definition of peace secretariats.

2.3.3. Support for negotiations through peace secretariats

Establishing a peace secretariat is first of all a strategic choice of the conflict party in order to strengthen its capacities with a view to the negotiation process. It can also be part of the negotiation approach of the mediator or other third parties that wish to support the conflict parties by establishing a negotiation support organisation (see earlier figure 2.5). While some of the reviewed literature is written for third-party audiences (PILPG 2006), the focus here is on the negotiation strategies of the primary parties.

Most negotiation literature, as mentioned earlier, distinguishes between the two main strategies of distributive bargaining and integrative negotiation (Lewicki et al. 2004). As Pruitt (1983) and Pruitt and Rubin (1986) develop in more detail, five basic negotiation strategies can be identified: problem solving; contending or distributive bargaining; yielding and reduction of one's own aspirations; inaction; and withdrawal.[211] The

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[211] In later publications, Pruitt (2002) discards the last two options and speaks of three strategies. While Pruitt and Rubin (1986) are often cited in recent literature as reference for a distinction of negotiation strategies, there exist several models for the distinction of individual conflict styles, e.g., the Thomas-

establishment of a peace secretariat can contribute to both the strategy of problem solving and of bargaining, and to a limited extent to the one of yielding. While not being compatible with inaction or withdrawal, the establishment of a peace secretariat could be therefore either part of an integrative or a distributive approach.

The negotiation strategy is embedded in the wider conflict strategy of the respective parties that is defined by the relationship and form of engagement with the adversary, as well as such as other factors as mobilisation of resources, intra-party representation and regional and international linkages. One example from Kriesberg and Millar's discussion of strategic choices shows how tactics of dealing with intra-party dissent affect the negotiation strategy and consequently the establishment of the peace secretariats: the authors refer to the LTTE's factional elimination of rival Tamil militant groups, critical Tamil intellectuals and politicians as a limiting factor for the conflict parties' human and intellectual resources (Kriesberg & Millar 2009, p.20). The resulting limitations affected the resources available for the party's peace secretariat.[212]

The functions of peace secretariats can be understood on two levels. The peace secretariat fulfils specific operational functions and tasks within the negotiation process that will be outlined below. Moreover, its very establishment and existence serves a signalling or symbolic function (Mitchell 2000).[213] In this understanding, establishing a peace secretariat is part of a de-escalation strategy and signals the readiness to de-escalate and invest in a negotiation process towards different domestic and international audiences (Kriesberg & Millar 2009, p.23). In the Sri Lankan case, the creation of peace secretariats increases transparency and trustworthiness of the

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Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument or the Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory. Most of them go back to Blake & Mouton (1964) and their Managerial Grid Model. The model serves to distinguish managerial leadership behaviour along two axes, concern for people versus concern for production, and develops five management styles. The Thomas-Kilmann diagnosis instrument distinguishes five conflict styles along the axes of assertiveness and cooperativeness (Kilmann & Thomas 1975). Similarly, Pruitt and Rubin (1986) develop a dual concern for one's own outcome versus the other party's outcome in a negotiation.

In addition to negotiation strategies, more short-term, adaptive tactics can be distinguished that are subordinate to strategies (ibid., p.27).

[212] The assassination and repression of Tamil dissent also affected other aspects of the LTTE's strategy and ultimately, in combination with other factors, the outcome of the war; the focus here, however, is on resources for knowledge and negotiation support.

[213] If for example a negotiating party yields initially and then enters an integrative problem-solving approach, the establishment of a peace secretariat has initially a signal function of recognition and later contributes in operational terms.

process from the point of view of the respective parties and of the public and the international community (Höglund & Svensson 2003, pp.15-16; similar 2006, p.378).

Another example of the signalling function of a peace secretariat lies in the recognition of the 'other side': the establishment of a government peace secretariat implies for the LTTE that the government is taking the process seriously and through setting up a qualified negotiating team signals recognition and acceptance of equality in the process. Höglund and Svensson (2003, pp.10-11; similar 2006, p.374) note that,

> the striving for parity and recognition of the LTTE as a legitimate negotiating partner is reflected in the composition of the negotiation teams. Wickremasinghe's government delegation is made up of high-level politicians, in the inner circle of the government, with substantial power and close relations to the Prime Minister. Furthermore, the leadership of the Sri Lankan Government's Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP) is drawn from the foreign services, which imply that they have competence to handle negotiations with equal parties.

This research will discuss the various messages to different audiences in more detail in the empirical chapter. As will be seen, both the establishment and the different 'fates' and endings of the peace secretariats can be read as symbols of commitment to the negotiation and peace process. Nevertheless, as this research will show, the peace secretariats in the Sri Lankan context also had a symbolic role in the later phase of escalation of the violent conflict.

Returning to the operational functions of peace secretariats, the question concerns which activities support the selected negotiation strategy of the conflict party. Given the fact that literature does not offer any theoretical explanation of secretarial support tasks, these need to be developed for the purpose of this research. Two approaches can be followed: a deduction of functions from conceptual negotiation literature, or the enumeration of functions found in case studies of negotiation support organisations.

Negotiation literature does not offer a concept for support structures; nevertheless functions can be deducted from the stage of negotiation in which the support is offered as well as from the negotiation strategy. As mentioned earlier, peace secretariats are established during the prenegotiation stage, which allows them to support the preparations for negotiations as outlined in section 2.3.1.

According to the list of Bloomfield et al. (1998, p.69), preparation functions include: development of the basic negotiation rules and procedures; preparation of representation; creating a level playing field for the parties; resourcing the negotiations; consid-

erations regarding venue and location; communication and information exchange; managing the proceedings; timeframes; decision-making procedures; and the engagement with possible assistance of a third party.

Operational activities during the conduct of negotiations will follow the selected strategy. Consequently, this list grows beyond a feasible overview. For one example, Lewicki et al. (2004, p.229) outline several strategic approaches to support negotiations in a difficult situation in order to resolve impasse. They mention,

> reducing tension and synchronizing the de-escalation of hostility; improving the accuracy of communication, particularly improving each party's understanding of the other's perspective; controlling the number and size of issues in the discussion; establishing a common ground on which the parties can find a basis for agreement; enhancing the desirability of the options and alternatives that each party presents to each other.

Peace secretariats can be seen as supporting any of these approaches but they might just as well do the opposite if their respective party considers an escalatory tactic within a distributive bargaining strategy. In such a scenario, a secretariat might contribute to blur communication messages intentionally, or assist in analysis of the opponent's position without helping them to understand it's own party's position.

Looking at case study material on negotiation support, the functions can be elaborated without strategic direction. According to PILPG's overview (2006, p.2) they encompass

> facilitating communication between conflicting groups; coordinating relationships with the media; promoting human rights; implementing negotiated settlements; supporting new or amended legislation; and organizing resettlement, reconstruction, and rehabilitation efforts.

Individual case studies and literature on management of peace processes (e.g., Harris & Reilly 1998; Mac Ginty 2008; Marks 2000; Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction of the Government of Nepal n.d.; Schlotter 2002; Secretaría de la Paz n.d.; Zelizer 2008) offer similar accounts that complement the PILPG overview and can be summarised in the following list.[214] While included in the list as a specific item, confidence building

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[214] Zelizer (2008) in his overview also refers to organisations that are established outside conflict contexts, e.g., in countries that act as third parties; here an additional function of advocating and lobbying for an enhanced engagement of government and society in conflict transformation efforts (within and outside the home country) can be identified.

plays a particular role among the functions since it reflects in the mode of conducting functions in general.[215]

Operational functions of peace secretariats can be grouped in five categories and entail the following options:

Secretarial functions:

– providing accompanying secretarial, administrative, logistical and other supportive services during peace negotiations;

Capacity building functions:

– providing information (e.g., on other peace processes), advisory services and building individual and collective capacities of the conflict party representatives relevant to the overall peace process;

– initiating or preparing political proposals for negotiations for individual parties or joint proposals for further discussion, e.g., constitutional drafts (often in collaboration with other agencies of the negotiating party);

Communication and consultation functions:

– information sharing and communication strategy during negotiations;

– coordination and consultation with other stakeholders and civil society, building of intra-party consensus; encouraging public participation in the peace process;

Facilitation functions:

– confidence building between the parties on procedural matters related to the peace talks, or on special issues (e.g. reduction of violence);

– supporting formal or informal communication between parties (also in support of crisis management), e.g., serving as a backchannel;

Implementation functions:

– facilitating, steering or guiding particular political and societal processes as part of the overall peace process (during and after negotiations), e.g., truth and

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[215] Literature on the South African National Peace Accord structures highlight their role in confidence building between the parties and crisis management (Gastrow 1995; Marks 2000); these contributions are also particularly relevant in such international negotiation support structures as the OSCE (e.g., OSCE 1990).

reconciliation, human rights documentation, compensation of victims, demobi-
lisation, disarmament and reintegration processes; and

– monitoring the implementation of negotiation results (e.g., on reduction of vio-
lence, arms control, disarmament, resettlement of IDPs, etc.).

This outline illustrates that peace secretariats are tasked with services during various stages of a violent conflict: they assist in the prevention and de-escalation of violence as well as in the implementation of peace agreements. Not all functions may be relevant at all times of a peace process; at the same time, timing of functions is not accurate.

Functions are defined in a mandate or job description for a peace secretariat more or less clearly, as can be seen in some of the earlier mentioned case studies. This often goes beyond the acute moment of prenegotiation and already anticipates later stages of the process; or the mandate is adjusted at later points according to changes in context or strategy. This gives flexibility for negotiation tactics and strategic direction. While the mandate decides the secretariat's operational functions, the overall strategy explains the symbolic function of the secretariat. The negotiation strategy serves as the foundation for the mandate of the peace secretariat.

It has to be remembered, however, that neither the peace secretariat nor the negotiating party decide about the mandate on their own. The PILPG Quick Guide on peace secretariats mentions in its executive summary: "Peace secretariats receive financial and technical assistance from government institutions, foreign states, and international organizations. This assistance may take the form of direct funding or a partnership to carry out specific projects" (PILPG 2006, n.pag.). As described in section 1.3.3, third-party actors and donors assisted the establishment of peace secretariats in Sri Lanka.

If such support is offered, the third party might advise the recipient party with a view to the mandate or other strategic aspects concerning the establishment of the peace secretariat; the PILPG guide, however, does not specify this kind of support and other cases studies remain equally silent about third-party assistance in this regard. It will therefore be a matter of the empirical analysis to consider the possible influence of third parties on peace secretariat mandates.

Summing up, it is assumed that mandate and strategy are relevant in order to understand the organisation's potential contribution to conflict transformation. Besides the

negotiators, other actors might influence this process of definition. It is posited in the third assumption that:[216]

> *The mandate of peace secretariats as support structures for negotiations is defined by the negotiators and is based on their respective strategies as well as on third party advice. (Assumption 3)*

The following working definition of peace secretariats sums up the key characteristics:[217]

> *A peace secretariat is a unit within a larger organisation or an independent organisation that has been established, is mandated by and closely affiliated with at least one of the conflict parties with the purpose of supporting the party with services relating to the official negotiation or mediation process or the implementation of process results before, during or after official peace talks.*

The next section takes a closer look at the first part of the definition in reference to the environment of the peace secretariats: either they are part of a 'larger organisation' or, if independent, they are surrounded by and consequently engage with other support organisations.

2.3.4 Coordination, cooperation and joint structures for negotiation support

As seen in section 1.3.3, the peace secretariats in Sri Lank were not the only organisations to support the negotiation process. In general, negotiation teams and support staff will liaise with other parts of the peace infrastructure of the parties, e.g., political party committees, government bodies, representatives and committees within an

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[216] Note that assumption 3 will be reframed in chapter 4 in light of agency theory. Thus, the wording here deviates from the wording in section 1.1, which presented the full set of final assumptions.

[217] Note that the working definition is refined in the fourth chapter in light of agency theory.

armed group, and with the wider landscape of peacebuilding organisations. This section discusses the coordination of these diverse support organisations.

While being a relevant topic in the peacebuilding and conflict transformation discourse regarding effectiveness, networking and creating synergies, negotiation literature pays less attention to coordination. As Hemmer et al. note in their critique of the study of peace negotiations, it is "dominated by a relatively simple, socially disembodied model of negotiation, focused on formal negotiation between high-level political or military leaders" (2006, p.130). An Internet literature search reveals that coordination is mostly of concern in international and transnational negotiation teams that have to deal with inter-cultural and team building issues. Regarding intra-state conflict, the focus of coordination is often on exchange and cooperation between the tracks (Fisher 2006; Smith & Smock 2008) or between multiple official and unofficial mediators (Fisher 2006; Strimling 2006).

Moreover, whereas intra-party coordination is a topic in negotiation training and simulation (e.g., Winham 2002), there is not much discussion about who should coordinate. This is perhaps due to the tension between international mediation roles and national ownership (Cousens 2008). From the constituency's perspective, one can speculate, coordinating is assumed to be a natural task of the team leader due to hierarchy and therefore does not merit much discussion.

Considering the case study material, coordination appears to be part of the mandate of peace secretariats with a view to horizontal and vertical connections, i.e., within one track and between tracks (Höglund & Svensson 2006, p.15; PILPG 2006, p.6). While much of the above-mentioned functions of peace secretariats relate to the official negotiations on Track 1, peace secretariats can also reach out to the other tracks and, for example, support peacebuilding efforts at the provincial or local levels. In such cases, the national-level peace secretariats establish representative committees that involve the key stakeholders to the conflict (Spies 2002).

If part of the government, they usually are mandated the task of coordinating comprehensive government strategies, albeit not always with sufficient clout to overrule such powerful government bodies as ministries of defence or foreign affairs (PILPG 2006, p.7). Nevertheless, such an arrangement can be beneficial since civilian involvement in monitoring or coordinating military activities contributes to de-escalation (Grist 2001). As will be seen in the cases of this research, the secretariat smoothed the facilitation of the monitoring of the ceasefire and the collaboration with the respective domestic bodies and the international monitoring mission.

The challenge of coordination becomes more imminent when parts of the negotiation agenda are delegated to subgroups or sub-committees, as was the case in the Sri Lankan negotiations of 2002.[218] Sub-committees are often introduced in order to pre-pare fresh ideas and proposals or to resolve factional disputes outside the main nego-tiation agenda (Harris & Reilly 1998; Smith & Smock 2008). Similar to peace secre-tariats, sub-committees can also serve other operational support functions, e.g., in monitoring and implementation.

The difference between peace secretariats and sub-committees with similar functions lies in their composition of governance and staff members. Sub-committees represent joint staff and multi-partisan members, while peace secretariats can be either shared structures or organisations serving just one conflict party (and here, some or all of its intra-party fractions). A joint structure offers the opportunity for relationship building and cooperation between the parties, which is desirable in order to consolidate confi-dence in the negotiation effort (Mitchell 2000). In such situations, however, party rep-resentation in staff and an organisational structure that reflects impartiality is deemed crucial (PILPG 2006, p.5). Only then does the support structure reflect fairness of the negotiation process and that 'procedural justice' has been achieved (Kelman 1996, p.106).

Like peace secretariats, sub-committees convey symbolic meaning. In the Sri Lankan case they present a step towards a pre-interim administration which the government had agreed upon with the LTTE but could not deliver in the political context. The sub-committee dealing with humanitarian issues provided an alternative to meet the LTTE's required empowerment (Rainford & Satkunanathan 2009, p.24 and p.38). Going beyond the symbolic function, a shared structure generates a precedent for in-stitutionalising joint problem-solving processes that might lead towards a self-reinforcing cycle of cooperation and send strong signals to both the moderate and confident constituencies and to possible spoilers (Fortna 2004; Dayton & Kriesberg (eds.) 2009).

The example shows that coordination concerns intra-party information and consen-sus-building as well as the facilitation of inter-party contact, e.g., through supporting dialogue and mediation or through conducting or steering of joint committees and

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[218] As described in section 1.3.3, altogether four sub-committees were formed in order to deal with hu-manitarian issues and de-escalation as well as with political concerns and gender issues.

working groups of the parties that complement the Track 1 negotiations and thus strengthen the cooperative aspect of the parties' relationship.[219]

Interestingly, this form of inter-party cooperation is hardly mentioned in scholarly literature concerning interactive problem-solving or negotiation. For example, Kelman suggests creating specific arenas that provide opportunity for joint problem analysis and solving among officials, negotiators and unofficial representatives before or alongside the official negotiations, but does not refer to peace secretariats or similar support structures (Kelman 1996). Exceptions are found in practitioners' literature, e.g., Bloomfield et al. (1998, p.100) suggest that secretarial units can be used in different ways beyond their original functions, e.g., serving as a backchannel for unofficial communication. The authors also suggest establishing a central, joint secretariat that can disseminate information between the parties, develop position papers or handle media communication (ibid, p.86).

Since the idea of a shared secretariat inspired some of the initial efforts of establishing the peace secretariats in Sri Lanka, the suggestion merits a more detailed reflection. With regards to sharing secretarial services between the conflict parties, it appears important to understand the wider context of the negotiation process. These contextual factors of strategic decisions concern negotiation circumstances such as asymmetry and resources of the party; organisational characteristics such as relationships to other organisations and ideologies; and the negotiation strategy (Kriesberg & Millar 2009).

The level of escalation, or respectively trust between the parties, seems of particular relevance. Joint secretariats are not feasible in a prenegotiation phase while the conflict parties are still at war and mutual trust is particularly low. At a later stage, especially after negotiated agreements, a joint structure, e.g., for local-level monitoring and implementation of the agreement, is possible. In this regard, it is remarkable that the government and the LTTE in 2005 achieved agreement over the establishment of a joint post-tsunami relief structure while the official negotiations were stalled.[220]

Much of this discussion regarding coordination and cooperation between the negotiating parties and their support organisations relates to the nature of intractable conflict

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[219] The Sub-committee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs (SIHRN) was chaired by the respective heads of the government and LTTE peace secretariats.

[220] The argument of mutual trust as a prerequisite for such structure nevertheless holds true. The joint structure never became operational due to mistrust and blockade on the side of Sinhalese nationalist forces.

and avenues for its transformation: confidence and trust need to be built in order to develop working relationships; crisis and escalation in violent conflict ask for specific arrangements such as backchannels that can help overcome deadlock; and concerns regarding equality at the negotiation table are entangled with aspects of identity of the conflict parties.

While literature at first sight does not offer many cross-references between negotiation studies and conflict transformation concepts, this discussion reveals the connections and the potential for synergy. The following section tries to connect the 'dotted lines' and place the peace secretariats within both fields.

2.4 Peace Secretariats between Negotiation Support and Conflict Transformation – Connecting the Dots

Resuming the argument of section 2.3, peace secretariats are essentially organisations dedicated to supporting the negotiation process. The working definition developed earlier describes them as units within a larger organisation or an independent organisation that have been established, are mandated by and closely affiliated with at least one of the conflict parties with the purpose of supporting the parties with services relating to the negotiation, dialogue or mediation process or the implementation of process results before, during or after official peace talks.

The discussion in this chapter brings forward three assumptions that underlie the research question:

- The section on conflict transformation shows that peace secretariats have a potential to be change agents for conflict transformation (assumption 1).

- The section on negotiations and particularly the presentation of actors leads to the position that peace secretariats hold a particular position within and between the negotiating parties that implies a potentially significant influence on the negotiation process as well as on conflict transformation (assumption 2).

- The exploration of prenegotiation and the conditions under which negotiation begin shows that the mandate of peace secretariats as support structures for negotiations is defined by the negotiators and is based on their respective strategies as well as on third-party advice (assumption 3).

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Reviewing these assumptions, two variables of peace secretariats can be hypothesised to determine whether the secretariats contribute to conflict transformation: one are the interactions of peace secretariats within and between the negotiating parties and their conditions; and the second are the functions that the mandate prescribes.

The peace secretariats take a particular position in the setting of the negotiation teams, the wider negotiation context as well as the landscape of actors involved in the peace process. This position influences their interactions and can empower them to coordinate the negotiation effort as well as to become a transformative agent within a peace infrastructure. Section 2.2 discussed the characteristics of such agents and especially those that can be considered insider mediators or embedded third parties. While some of the tasks and characteristics of peace secretariats encourage the observer to understand these organisations by means of these concepts, there are restrictions to such a role. Being part of the negotiating team, the peace secretariat's role in the negotiation context is restricted through role conflict as described in section 2.3; and this reflects on their role behaviour in general and inform their potential for conflict transformation.

The complexity of interactions and relationships and the resulting restrictions become obvious in the earlier developed figures, especially figure 2.8. As described in Putnam's two-level game, the peace secretariats interact with the other parties, and here with both their counterpart secretariats and stakeholders in opponent parties. They also interact with stakeholders in their own party, e.g., when receiving input for negotiations during consultation or when communicating negotiation outcomes. The peace secretariats in these multiple interactions suffer from similar role conflicts as negotiators, which present dilemmas and restrict their interactions. While inter-party relationship building and the problem-solving role require trust of the opponent and impartiality towards the outcome of the process, these are characteristics that their own constituency may find hard to accept in their negotiation representatives.

The second variable that connects conflict transformation and negotiation support are the functions of peace secretariats. Looking at the list of negotiation support functions in section 2.3.3 and the earlier overview of types of conflict transformation in figure 2.4, connections and overlap can be identified. Throughout the text, reference was made to examples of such connections, e.g., when the establishment of the Muslim peace secretariat contributed to the recognition of the Muslim communities as a stakeholder to the conflict and hence to structure transformation. The following visualisation shows some of the possible connections between the secretariats' functions

(on the left side) and the types of conflict transformation (on the right side). Many more are possible, depending on the details of tasks entailed in the functions:
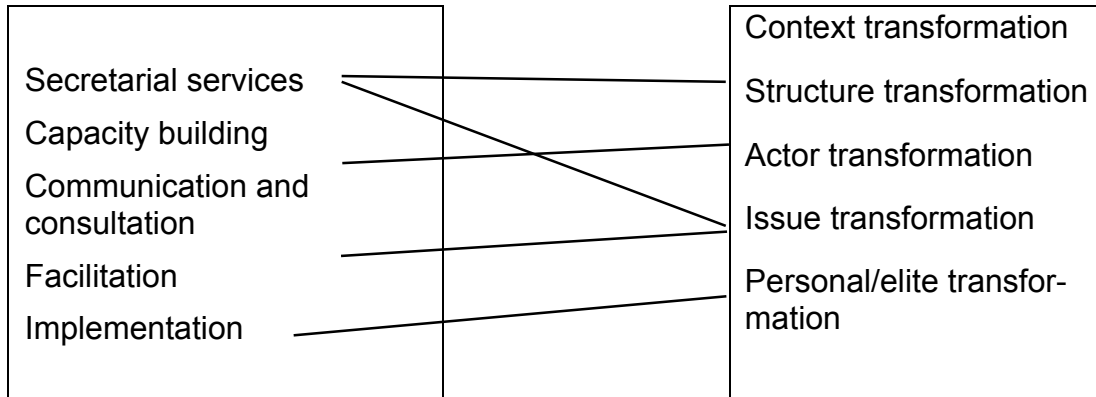
Figure 2.9: Connections between peace secretariat functions and conflict transformation

The following examples explains some the connections. It needs to be noted that what matters is not the factual activity but the manner in which the activity is conducted. As said before, secretarial functions can be part of various negotiation strategies and can serve cooperative, integrative or competitive, distributive approaches. Depending on the strategic direction, a function can thus contribute to ameliorative or pejorative conflict transformation.

Thus, capacity building can contribute to issue transformation if it is conducted in a way that the concerned party realises alternative options in dealing with contested issues. Likewise, capacity building can help level the playing field at negotiations, decrease symmetric power relations and thus improve conditions for a negotiated settlement – if conducted in a way that different needs are considered and integrative problem solving is at the core of the training rather than positional bargaining. Similarly, the coordination of ceasefire monitoring can lead to personal transformation if gestures of de-escalation and good will take place and affect the attitudes of personnel involved.

Looking at the picture from the other direction, one can see that conflict transformation contributes to negotiation conduct and outcome as well. The example of more symmetric relations as a precondition for a negotiated settlement has been mentioned before. Other examples can be derived when going back into the earlier discussion about roles and relationships. If actor transformation leads to intra-party change, this will ease the role conflicts experienced by the negotiators and peace secretariats. If

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constructive compromise between the parties arises as an option through issue transformation, then direct contact and cooperation between the peace secretariats might become feasible.

It can then be argued that the peace secretariats can be transformative agents if their functions are conducted in an integrative manner that is oriented towards problem solving rather than contention and bargaining. This argument was introduced in section 2.3, which presented negotiation and conflict transformation literature as being determined by different mindsets and perspectives, respectively.

The question is, then, how and by whom is the manner of conducting the secretariat's functions decided? It was posited earlier that the negotiation strategy presents the foundation for the mandate of the secretariat and that the negotiators decide on the mandate. It appears thus that to only a limited extent at best can the peace secretariats determine how to conduct their work.

If the delegated mandate is dominated by a bargaining mindset, only limited transformative agency is possible. If the mandate is formulated with an integrative perspective, it will encourage the organisation to expand the secretarial tasks and conduct the other operational functions with a transformative mindset. If the mandate is formulated in a vague manner, kept flexible or is based on an ambivalent strategy, the secretariat will have to interpret the mandate according to its own understanding of functions, its reading of the negotiation strategy and other factors. Similar to the negotiation strategies discussed earlier, the mandate and its interpretation often will not be black-or-white only, neither completely integrative nor fully distributive.

The next chapter turns to the factors determining the interpretation of the mandate, and how the peace secretariats deal with potential flexibility, ambivalence or vagueness. How closely do they follow formal prescriptions? On which criteria is such a decision based? Do all peace secretariats behave in the same way; if not, how can differences be explained?

The next chapter introduces principal-agent theory as a central element of a possible explanation. The two elements of interactions and functions, which characterise peace secretariats' contribution to conflict transformation, will be integrated into the conceptual framework of this research.

Chapter 3 Mandate and Identity, Agency and Structure – Organisation Theory Explanations of Peace Secretariat Behaviour

To understand organizations is to understand our world.[221]

This chapter will introduce the reader to those parts of the complex world of organisation theories that are relevant to understand peace secretariats and their contribution to conflict transformation. The focus of this chapter lies on concepts and theories that inform an organisational framework explaining peace secretariat behaviour. The central theories are the principal-agent theory and its applications in Moe's theory of public bureaucracy and in stewardship theory. In order to understand the agency of political actors involved in violent conflict, this chapter will borrow from structuration theory, social movement theory and from concepts of identity.

At the centre of these theories and concepts are humans, their actions, beliefs and values. While this theoretical chapter with its focus on organisations at times may sound technical, it essentially explains human behaviour in organised environments. This human behaviour is mostly of a collective nature, since it is the purpose of organisations to structure and 'organise' human action. Between the lines, and more explicitly at the end of the chapter, the individual is nevertheless present. It is always an individual human decision to comply with organisational rules and routines.

As in chapter 2, the theoretical discussion will be connected with the research questions and assumptions. The assumptions that guide the empirical research will be introduced together with reviewed literature. Step by step, the conceptual framework initiated in chapter 2 will be expanded. In chapter 4, the reader will be presented with the complete framework including all assumptions that underlie the research questions.

Before beginning to assemble the building blocks of the conceptual framework, a short introduction to organisation theory is in order.

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[221] Quoted from Baum and Rowley (2002, p.1).

3.1 Introduction to Organisation Theory: Definitions, Perspectives and Dilemmas

Organisation theory, it must be noted, does not represent a unified set of knowledge (Scherer 2003). Thus, some authors prefer the term 'organisation studies' as it indicates multiple perspectives (Clegg et al. (eds.) 1996).[222] There is no single common paradigm guiding research; rather, different theoretical approaches compete with and complement each other (Schreyoegg 2008, p.27). Since a specific theoretical discussion in most cases only describes one aspect of an organisation, a combination of theories, or organisational images, needs to be applied in order to acknowledge the complexity of organisational life, or to capture the full picture of an organisation (Morgan 2006). Accordingly, this research will draw on several theoretical approaches: while the central theory is represented in more depth, secondary ones with a relevance to understanding the overall framework are discussed in lesser detail. Baum and Rowley (2002, p.22) capture this research's approach well:

> Research is not directly concerned with reducing the number of perspectives, either through integration or competing tests. Instead, emphasis is placed on corroboration and development of individual perspectives and conditional analyses at the boundaries of adjacent perspectives.

This section provides an overview of basic definitions and perspectives required for this research. These will help to develop an organisational profile of the case study subjects. Furthermore, it will illustrate some of the conceptual dilemmas in organisation studies that this research confronts.

3.1.1. Basic definitions and perspectives of organisation theory

An organisation in the widest possible sense and without predetermination of a specific theoretical approach is a social arrangement or group that pursues collective goals and interests and has a boundary, or membership rules, separating it from its environment and non-members (based on Parsons 1960; Etzioni 1964). Some authors argue, however, that there cannot be a 'general' definition (Eldridge & Crom-

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[222] This author prefers the term 'theory' in order to stress the theoretical character of the presented literature that informs the conceptual deliberations and empirical study.

bie 1974) and any comprehensive definition is usually specified according to the theoretical approach and purpose of research.

Organisation studies concern various levels of analysis. Depending on whether theories deal with individual behaviour in organisations (and society), with the behaviour of a whole organisation or with relationships among organisations, they can be distinguished into micro-, meso- and macro-level theories of organisation dealing with intraorganisational, organisational or interorganisational issues respectively (Hage 1980 in Scherer 2003; Baum & Rowley 2002). While this differentiation is useful as an analytical convenience and helps to reflect on the complexity of the field, research and resulting theory regularly span several levels. Conclusions conceived at one level are commonly applied at multiple levels (Baum & Rowley 2002; Whetten et al. 2009).

Likewise, the central theoretical building block of this research, the principal-agent theory or simply agency theory, can be applied at all levels, as it is used to explain relationships between individuals within an organisation (the classical model of employer-employee), the contract behaviour of a whole organisation, or the relationship between organisations that supervise or control and report to each other (Morgeson & Hofmann 1999).

Organisation theory also offers several perspectives of analysis, some of which are compatible and overlapping. German organisational management literature, however, distinguishes between institutional and instrumental perspectives (Schreyoegg 2008).[223] The instrumental perspective can be further differentiated in firstly a configurative, or process-related perspective where the organisation is viewed as an entity that is being organised, and the focus is on the organisation as a set of tasks or actions that have to be structured and implemented in a certain order (Gutenberg 1983). Second, the functional perspective focuses on the services that entities such as businesses or state authorities provide for their environment (Katz & Kahn 1978). From an institutional perspective, an organisation is viewed as a purposeful structure within a social context. The focus here is on the organisation as a system itself within a wider system, and its interactions with the environment, as well as the interactions within the organisation in order to fulfil its purpose (March & Simon 1958). This later institutional understanding of organisations will guide this research.

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[223] As a third perspective organisation ecology could be added. Here the focus is on adaptation of organisations to their environment, the organisational struggle to survive and on the mortality of organisations (for example Aldrich 1979; Hannan & Freeman 1989).

According to this variety of theoretical approaches and purposes of research, there exists a multitude of terminology and definitions of organisation, and it can be argued that, whereas "the range of definitions can create confusion, together, they also provide a means of capturing the full breadth of organizational life" (Baum & Rowley 2002, p.2).

According to Scott (2002), the variety of definitions can be distinguished in three categories that each highlight different features of organisations and carry different assumptions.[224] Historically, they evolved to a certain extent out of another but still do all exist today and inform present-day organisation theory:

1. The rational systems views focus on organisations as highly formalised social structures that pursue specific goals (for example Weber's understanding of bureaucracy which is often considered as one of the cornerstones of organisation theory (1972). The attention here is often on the cognitive function of goals (Simon 1957, 1958).

2. Natural systems views regard organisations as collectivities with a common interest in system survival and high adaptability and informality (e.g., Selznick's (1957) understanding of organisations as adaptive organisms that take on a life of their own and become institutionalised), but also in the motivational properties of organisational goals, for example through identification (Whetten & Godfrey 1998) or through the symbolic significance of goals and other organisational structures (Weick 1993).

3. Open systems views regard organisations as entities with less distinct boundaries and continuous exchange of interactions with their environment (as in Lawrence and Lorsch's 'contingency theory' (1967) that tries to identify best fits of organisations under certain environment conditions).

Most contemporary theoretical perspectives encompass elements of rational, natural or open systems definitions.[225] For example, Morgan (2006) speaks of images of organisations and develops metaphors such as the 'organisation as a machine' or as 'an organism'. Each metaphor contains various theoretical approaches to understand-

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[224] The categories display a certain similarity to the perspectives of analysis, but they are not identical. Rational systems approaches can be found in instrumental and institutional perspectives, e.g., March and Simon's theory of decision-making (1958).

[225] Only economic approaches, as agency, transaction cost or game theories, rely strongly on rational system thinking and are consequently viewed with great criticism, which is discussed below.

ing organisational life. Similarly, this research will draw on literature from different views.

Returning to the basic definition of organisation above, it can be noted that this definition highlighted two aspects of organisation: purpose/goal and membership/distinction from environment. In a more differentiated form, and with a more obvious institutionalist perspective, three central defining elements of an organisation can be identified (adapted from Schreyoegg 2008, p.9 following March & Simon 1958 and Mayntz 1963):

- one or several specific purposes, which do not have to be identical with the goals of members and do not have to be consistent with each other;
- a division of labour among members of the organization along rules that create regulatory patterns which make up the structure of the organisation and that are the basis condition for membership in the organisation;
- persisting but variable borders that help to differentiate between organisation and environment.

Based on these three elements of definition, the peace secretariats can be described with the following features of commonalities and differences. This explains the choice of theoretical approaches in this research.

3.1.2. Organisational features of the peace secretariats and explanation of choice of organisation theories

While chapter 2 introduced the peace secretariats through their functions as support structures in the negotiation process, the organisational perspective complements this view and gives 'more flesh' to the functional skeleton.

First, the peace secretariats serve specific functions according to the mandates given to them by the heads, or leaders, of their respective conflict parties. The secretariats also serve other purposes than those listed in the mandate, e.g., they symbolise a certain political position and commitment towards the peace process. However, the goals of the organisations are not identical with those of the members. Whether the members agree with the goals seems not to be an issue: agreement and alignment is simply assumed. The manner of delegation of tasks thus is crucial to understand the secretariats.

Second, all secretariats follow bureaucratic rules in structure and processes of their organisations. While staff recruitment is based on alignment and identification with the leadership, the rules of conduct are of an administrative and technocratic character. On a deeper level, however, the nature of the three organisations is different, since one presents a government body, one a social movement organisation that subscribes to armed violence, and the last a political party affiliate organisation. These conditional differences lead to variations and deformations in the common bureaucratic rules and structures since they are based in what Albert and Whetten (1985; Whetten 2006) refer to as organisational identity.

Last, the secretariats consist of identifiable organisational units with clear borders towards their respective environments and distinct resources. While the size of the three cases varies, all of them represent relatively small organisation units within a much larger organisational environment. Nevertheless, individual membership of staff, physical location, financial resources as well as products of the organisations, e.g., in form of publications, are clearly identifiable. Moreover, although the secretariats' existence is linked to the peace process, the temporary character is not clearly defined. The secretariats are therefore considered as distinct and persistent organisations rather than as temporary project task forces or informal networks.

Within the vast body of organisation theory, an explanation of the secretariats' behaviour is sought that focuses on the organisation as the level of analysis, embraces an institutional perspective and is open to both rational and natural systems views. Agency theory, or more precisely principal-agent theory, offers these qualities and focuses on the core question of mandating, or contracting, the specific behaviour of an organisation according to non-members' preferences.

Agency, however, cannot be understood without acknowledging the duality of agency and structure (Giddens 1984; Reed 2005) and this chapter will give both aspects due attention.

While the focus of the research is on the meso-level, the organisational behaviour, it also is necessary to understand the structural conditions that lead to this behaviour. The macro-political context has to be considered in the analysis as it concerns organisational behaviour in the context of ethno-political conflict: it provides the framework conditions for the three organisations' activities and interaction. Considering the interplay between agency and structure will help to identify "the conditions under which agents have greater degrees of freedom or, conversely, work under a considerable stringency of constraint" (Archer 2000, p.6).

Moreover, since the three organisations are positioned in different organisational contexts, structure will play a role with regards to the organisational level – the enabling or hindering conditions for peace secretariats in their respective organisational environments: a government, a non-state armed group and a political party environment.

As will be seen, this distinction of levels of analysis is not an easy one in agency theory since the levels mutually determine each other. For example, bureaucracy will appear in the political, non-profit context of the government secretariat as well as a trait of its identity.

3.1.3 Difficulties and dilemmas in building a conceptual framework

The attempt to establish a comprehensive conceptual framework that explains organisational behaviour over time is confronted with several theoretical problems and dilemmas.

First, the above agency-structure dilemma requires an analytical framework that coherently links structure and agency and influences the conception and as well as the efforts to change organisational practice. This author is certainly not the only one to address this "central theoretical task facing contemporary social and organization theory" (Reed 2005, p.291 referring to Archer 2000, n.p.). However, the effort to establish a conceptual framework to explain the peace secretariats' agency will contribute to the search for adequate modelling.[226]

Dealing with complexity poses the second problem. While a conceptual framework, especially one of a visualised nature, attempts to detail relationships, interdependences and disconnects, it is automatically confronted with human and technical limitations in processing complex information. Systemic thinking has to a great extent "infiltrated the study of organisations" and dominates the language used to describe organisations (Millett 1998, p.3). For example, feedback loops come to mind when describing interdependent effects, but an organisation in an open systems perspective resembles more a number of "systems of interdependent activities linking shifting coalitions of participants; the systems are embedded in — dependent on continuing exchanges with and constituted by — the environments in which they operate" (Scott

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[226] Giddens, the founding father of structuration theory, is himself reluctant to apply the idea of structuration to concrete empirical research (Giddens 1983, pp.75-77 quoted in Dessler 1989, p.442).

2002, p.25). Naturally, the capacity of humans to perceive, analyse and describe such complexity remains limited and, while drawing on systemic thinking, simplification must be a dominant feature of this conceptual framework.

The tension between rationality and uncertainty poses a third dilemma. These are the two core concepts that form the backbone of organisation theory (Shenav 2005). While most of the economic approaches that dominate a great part of organisation literature are based on rational choice theory, it has to be understood that rationality is bounded in the sense that people only possess a limited cognitive ability to process information. Thus, rather than the rational choice assumption of utility maximisation, 'satisficing' under conditions of uncertainty is the rule (Cyert & March 1963) – even more so in situations of violent conflict where uncertainty about functioning institutions and contracts is the rule (Korf 2007). This conceptual framework, while theoretically being based on rationality assumptions, applies to real-life situations and has to explain how agents and principals cope with the uncertainties of political contention and violent conflict. It thus has to be complemented with insights from other disciplines, as will be shown in this chapter.[227]

The practice of "theory borrowing" from such underlying disciplines as psychology and sociology is commonplace in organisation studies, argue Whetten et al. (2009). The challenge, however, lies in reviewing literature in a sufficient manner without excessively extending the theoretical capacities of this thesis. For example, this research draws on concepts and theories that complement the framework: identity and social movement. By treating the organisations of peace secretariats as social actors in a way that is sensitive to context and organisational level, this literatur can help explain the organisations' behaviour. While organisational behaviour on a superficial level seems to follow similar rules of bureaucracy, for example, it is rooted in different identities. Doing things in a similar way then does not imply 'to be the same'. While agency is similarly enacted, there might be different reasons considered in organisational choice to do so.

This leads to a last concern: perspective matters. Without going into detail on subjectivism, constructivism and postmodernism, it can be accepted that the world and people's world views are socially constructed and what people "see" or believe depends

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[227] For a comprehensive critique of rational-choice-based, econometric approaches towards explaining violent conflict see Korf (2006).

on their social situation (Scott 2002).[228] As such, equivocality in interpretation of organisational behaviour has to be accepted and dissent in explanation has to be explained. Following Weick's reading, organisations are "puzzling terrains because they lend themselves to multiple, conflicting interpretations, all of which are plausible" (Weick 1993). The organisation will engage in reduction of equivocality in order to arrive at a shared justification of behaviour that is in line with its identity. Outsiders, however, might not share this specific justification – which does not mean that it does not hold valid for members of the organisation. This research on a contentious topic, situated in a sensitive environment, respects the different perspectives while trying to 'make sense' of them in response to the research question.

Of special relevance are symbolic elements in organisational behaviour, which are enacted in order to be interpreted by outsiders in a specific way without bearing on any other purpose for the organisation. In order to achieve legitimacy with their constituents, organisations are prone to construct stories about their actions that correspond to social expectations about what they should do. These stories are used as forms of symbolic reassurance (Meyer & Rowan 1977). In other examples, a whole organisation's existence can be understood as a symbol. McNamara (2002) discusses the symbolic relevance of independent central banks that are established by governments in order to symbolise stability and respectability to foreign investors. Similarly, companies create independent governance structures that symbolise scrutiny (Bednar 2008). The challenge for conceptualisation lies in the mismatch between organisational functions and meaning.

With this, the discussion of conceptual and theoretical difficulties of modelling a conceptual framework ends. Bearing these challenges in mind, the building blocks of the conceptual framework have to be assembled. The following sections do so in reviewing the literature on principal-agent models, agency, structure and organisational identity.

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[228] For a discussion of postmodern influence on organisation theory and the issue of organisational perspectives in particular see Willmott (1995).

3.2 'That's What We Were Told to Do': The Mandate as the Defining Element of Peace Secretariats' Agency[229]

While preparing this research and during first test-interviews, the author was almost always confronted with statements concerning the peace secretariats' mandates, their limitations and the secretariats' strong dependence on them. Official text documents from the peace secretariats describing their work in different contexts do not use one term consistently to describe their tasks and goals; instead they speak of objectives, aims, goals, missions, tasks and roles. However, conversations with former staff of peace secretariats confirmed the relevance of a mandate rather than objectives decided by the organisation itself. The mandate was important in order to understand the organisation's work as commissioned by their leaders and decision makers. Thus, the third of the research assumptions takes up this notion and posits:

> *The mandate of peace secretariats as support structures for negotiations is defined by the negotiators and is based on their* strategy as well as on third party advice. (*Assumption 3*)

While the previous chapter already discussed some of the elements of this assumption, this section will look into the mandate of organisations. Where do the peace secretariats' mandates come from? Who are the parties involved in the assignment, and how is their relationship relevant to understanding the organisation's performance and potential? Agency theory – and the complementary stewardship theory – will be at the centre of this exploration.

As a first step, the term mandate will be briefly introduced. The word mandate has different meanings in different contexts; often it is used in legal terminology where it signifies a commission or an order to perform a service on someone else's account. As a political term, it refers to the authority granted by a constituency to an elected person to act as its representative and to carry out a policy or a specific course of action. More generally speaking and in the sense of the original Latin meaning of the verb *mandare*, a mandate means the authority to act in a certain way following an assign-

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[229] The following section headings present paraphrases of interview statements in order to link the theory chapter to the empirical research and express the inductive character of this research. Instead of quotes the author uses paraphrases that synthesise findings from several interviews without exposing a single interviewee's wording.

ment or a command.[230] In this sense it is also applied in negotiation studies where negotiators receive a mandate to negotiate on behalf of their parties (Babbitt 1999).

In the context of organisation theory, however, the term mandate is hardly used. The following elaborations on principal-agent theory refer to the term 'contract', which signifies the mutual agreement of both parties to enter an agreement. As will be seen later, in the context of public service and politics, agency is more often agreed upon in the form of delegation by the principal, whereas the public servant agent is understood to enact whatever mandate he/she is endowed with. While not all of the case studies of this research refer to public service, all of them received a task and role description that can be called a mandate in the negotiation context.[231] Thus, the term 'mandate' will be applied for the case studies while the following literature review will use the term 'contract' dominant in organisation theory.

3.2.1 Understanding the mandate as a principal-agent contract

The mandate is the unit of analysis of principal-agent theory. It concerns the contract between a principal who delegates work and an agent that performs the task (Jensen & Meckling 1976). The participants of this contract relationship can be individuals or organisations, and the principal engages the agent since the principal cannot or will not carry out a task him/herself. Principal-agent models in general describe the problems of risk sharing in relationships of cooperation and delegation where the parties have different goals and assessments of risk as well as different information (Ross 1973). This contract relationship leads to various problems, which are commonly distinguished in:

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[230] Quoted from New Oxford American Dictionary, 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[231] It is noteworthy, however, that the peace secretariats themselves used different terms. The three peace secretariats have no common format for self-description and used different forms of documents to outline their tasks and roles for different audiences. Closest to a comparable document are the organisations' websites that refer to their respective authorised tasks: the government's SCOPP uses the terms 'vision', 'mission' and 'strategy', the LTTE PS speaks of an 'aim' (www.ltteps.org/list-27881.ltte.html), and the PSM website uses the term 'objective'

(http://www.peacemuslims.org/Objective-3.html).

1. agency problems which occur when the principal's and agent's interests or goals differ and control is difficult for the principal, and
2. the problem of risk sharing when principals and agents have different attitudes towards risk.

The first category, agency problems, can further be differentiated into two constituting characteristics: information asymmetry problems (also referred to as adverse selection, where the principal cannot completely verify the agent's skills or abilities when she is contracted) (Arrow 1985) and the problem of moral hazard, which occurs since the agent's goals and interests differ from the principal and thus her actions deviate from the principal's goal. The main attention of agency literature is on this divergence of interests and the motivational problems of agents related to the conflict of interest. Other possible reasons for failure of agents to achieve their principal's objectives (e.g., lack of capacity, knowledge or poor information) are of less concern.

The relationship between principal and agent is visualised below:
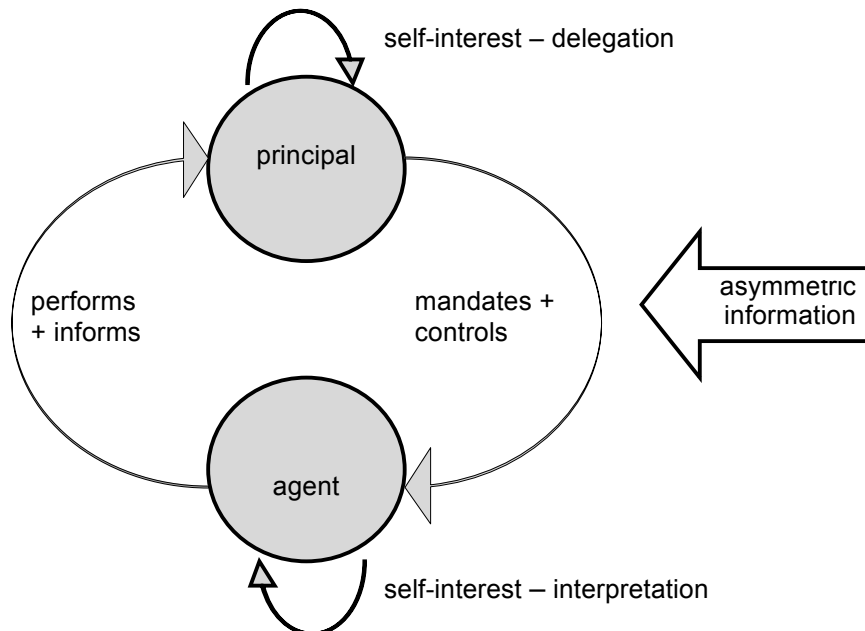
Figure 3.1: Principal-agent relationship[232]

The term 'objective' means "a thing aimed at or sought", or a goal, which again stands for the "object of a person's ambition or effort". An 'aim' refers to "a purpose or intention, a desired outcome … or also a target against which a weapon directed". Terms like 'mission' and 'vision' have a more inspiring connotation: a 'mission' means an "important assignment carried out for political, religious, or commercial pur-

The objective of the theory is to reduce the agency costs incurred by principals when imposing internal, and if that fails external, monitoring in order to assess and control the agent's behaviour (Jensen & Meckling 1976). At the same time, efforts towards aligning the interests of principal and agent, e.g., through financial compensation schemes, can be undertaken with the same intention. Consequently, principal-agent theory prescribes two mechanisms: governance structures and financial incentives in order to deal with and reduce the potential conflicts between the two actors (e.g., Laffont & Martimort 2002; Williamson 1975). These control mechanisms are of intermediate character since the principal cannot avoid delegation of authority to the agent to act on her behalf altogether. Total control of the agent would imply no discretion for the agent but also no advantage for the principal to use the capacities of the agent.

Initially principal-agent theory was introduced with the classic example of stockholders (principals) and managers (agents) paid to act on their behalf. The theory originally dealt with the problem of business owners who in the context of growing enterprises during industrialisation hired managers to run the business.[233] Later, principal-agent models were applied to other kinds of economic contract relationships (for an overview see Eisenhardt 1989) and consequently found resonance in other fields of social sciences, most notably in political science and sociology.[234]

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poses, typically involving travel" and a 'vision' refers among other meaning to "the ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press).

[232] These terms are regularly used in organisation design and management literature glossaries to emphasise the actor's own future aspirations and their importance to all members of the organisation as shared beliefs and values (for example Daft 2009, p.618).

[232] Adapted from Wikipedia Commons under

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/Principal_agent.png.

[233] While often seen as rooted in the 1970s with publications by Ross (1973) and Jensen & Meckling (1976), the origins of principal-agent theory can be traced back to Weber's sociological deliberations on bureaucracy in the 1930s (Zajac & Westphal 2002). Parallel to the development of the economic model presented here, agency theory emerged in political studies in the 1970s (Mitnick 1973), too, but only developed later and with strong borrowing from economic theories (Moe 1984; Shapiro 2005).

[234] In sociology, the focus widened from the narrow question of the most efficient governing contract between the agent and the principal to broader concerns of individuals, or human agents, engaging in their social context. This shift of attention towards the relationship between agent and structure, rather than

Since this part of organisation theory originates in economic thought, it is referred to as 'theory of the firm', or 'economics of organisation' (Moe 1984; Petersen 1993).[235] Accordingly, the assumptions are based on neoclassic modelling and are considered by many authors to be simplistic and unrealistic (Jensen & Meckling 1994). These assumptions concern the character of information, organisation and the human being (Eisenhardt 1989, p.59). Of particular interest in the scholarly and critical discourse on agency theory are the assumptions of rationality of the actors and self-interest, which lead to goal conflicts, as well as the assumption of information asymmetry between agent and principal.

First, agency theory is based on the assumption of rational behaviour.[236] Rationality is here understood in an instrumental way and implies that the individual always acts as if balancing costs against benefits in order to arrive at action that maximizes personal advantage.[237] Rational choice implies that individuals have perfect information about all possible choices as well as the cognitive ability to weigh all choices against each other. Individual behaviour, it is then assumed, is driven by universalistic rules of rational calculation of maximal individual utility without reflection on the worthiness of the goal. Moreover, collective behaviour is simply an aggregated form of individual choices. Both the assumption and the behavioural predictions of rational choice have sparked criticism from various camps in the social sciences (for an overview see Donaldson (1990); Shapiro (2005)); this has inspired further theoretical development. Identity, for example, is believed to explain irrational behaviour and thus critically affects economic behaviour modelling; Akerlof and Kranton (2000), however, show that the psychological and social effects of identification with different social categories

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between agent and principal, is also expressed in shifting terminology. While the economic concepts use both the terms 'principal-agent theory' and the shorter 'agency theory' as synonyms (see for example Eisenhardt 1989; Waterman & Meier 1998), sociological research refers to 'agency theory' only and narrows its concern to the agent-structure relationship. The main quest of this discourse within organisational sociology is to establish the primacy of social structure vs. individual agency. Since this research is concerned with agents' interactions with their context, or social structure, this understanding will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.

[235] It can be characterised by three elements: a contractual perspective on organizational relationships, a theoretical focus on hierarchical control, and formal analysis via principal-agent models.

[236] Rational choice theory became one central, or perhaps the leading, microeconomic paradigm. It also entered political science (for example Olson 1965) and to a more limited extent also sociology (Coleman 1990).

[237] Note that this instrumental rationality does not judge the rationality of the goals in an ethical, social or human sense.

can be integrated into economic models. Other authors have developed models of bounded rationality (e.g., Kahneman 2003; Simon 1957), i.e., a more limited capacity of receiving and assessing information as well as of ranking preferences. The idea is to be more psychologically plausible without completely abandoning the notion that reason underlies decision-making processes.

Second, agency theory is based on the assumption of self-interest: a shirking agent maximises his own interests and pursues the logic of exit in order to try alternative better options when, for example, working conditions in the organisation decline (Hirschman 1970). In reality, that is not always the case: human action is understood to be more complex than the singular motivation of self-interest suggests. Alternatively, based on Hirschman's logic of commitment, the agent might also be motivated to stay engaged and fulfil the contract with the principal despite less than maximal fulfilment of his own interests (Ellerman 2005). This can be explained through various concepts; the most relevant one is that of organisational identification (Simon 1991). Following such logic of long-term commitment to the organisation, the agent contributes to the transformation of the organisation rather than leaving it. This is possible since the agent and the principal have a trust-based relationship that allows the agent a voice that might also include concerns or criticism (Hirschman 1970). This resonates well with literature on management and leadership that prioritises non-material aspects of motivation over material ones.

Self-interest and rational actors are depicted in the concept of the Homo economicus, or 'economic man'. As argued in literature, economic approaches to organisational life with their singular view of human nature as that of self-interest need to be complemented with other theories in order to yield a more realistic view of organisations (Donaldson 1990; Hirsch et al. 1987; Sen 1977; for a discussion of the concept in the context of violent conflict see Cramer 2002).

The third assumption, which is fundamental to principal-agent theory and perhaps less controversial, is that of information asymmetry. Depending on the model setting and properties of the actors, principals are characterised by varying levels of information asymmetry and uncertainty about the agent's fulfilment of the contract. Thus, the principal needs to find mechanisms to control the agent's tendency towards shirking behaviour. At the same time, however, the principal will try to avoid costs incurred from monitoring and policing the agent as much as possible; this situation poses a dilemma for the principal (Mitnick 1973).

This assumption appears to be of less relevance for this research (for a discussion of different cases in administration see Waterman & Meier (1998)). Due to the political importance of the peace process and the existence of interest groups, information asymmetry between principals and agents is reduced and the respective principals are highly involved in their agents' activities. At the same time, risk aversion, i.e., the need to find assurance that the agent does exactly as told, is not so important to the principals in the three cases, since they have ensured contract fulfilment by other means, particularly that of identification.

Whereas the assumptions of the principal-agent theory are under criticism and have led to further development of theory in order to improve the assumptions, scholars also offer alternative models on which to build an understanding of agency altogether. One of these is described in stewardship theory: under which circumstances do agents choose to comply with their principal's wishes? As before, the peace secretariats actually behaved according to their mandates and their principals' interests. This seems at first glance to contradict principal-agent theory.

3.2.2 Explaining agent compliance with mandates

The previous presentation of agency theory highlighted that self-interest of the actors is the main motivation of agents and thus conflicts of interest between principal and agent are unavoidable. This does not apply to all situations and all agents – as will be seen in this research. While several former staff and other interview partners stated that they would have preferred the peace secretariats to act differently, they complied with their mandates. How can this be explained?

If interests of principal and agent are identical, there is of course no agency problem (Donaldson 1990). But even if there is no alignment, some agents will place organisational interests above their own. This behaviour is explained by stewardship theory. This relatively recent theory is still evolving and assumes that the agent's behaviour adheres to the principal's interests even if these differ from the agent's own interests.[238] To mark the difference, agents are here called stewards in reference to the

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[238] Common areas of application are research on family businesses, public infrastructure and ecological sustainability, as well as value-based management and leadership literature.

biblical parable where the steward is entrusted with a valuable asset and is obligated to improve the asset (Luke 16: 1-13).

Stewardship theory is built on concepts from psychology and sociology that can fill the explanatory gaps in principal-agent models. As Davis et al. (1997, p.24) state;

> The model of man is based on a steward whose behavior is ordered such that pro-organizational, collectivistic behaviors have higher utility than individualistic, self-serving behaviors. … Thus, even where the interests of the steward and the principal are not aligned, the steward places higher value on cooperation than defection (terms found in game theory). Because the steward perceives greater utility in cooperative behavior and behaves accordingly, his or her behavior can be considered rational.

It is important to note that in this explanation the agent – or steward – still maximises his utility function as also posited in agency theory. The difference is that the steward finds the pursuit of collective interests more satisfying than self-interest. Similarly to negotiation literature that suggests that negotiators should be given discretion in order to ensure the success of negotiations (Babbitt 1999), Donaldson and Davis (1991) argue that a steward should be given high autonomy and discretion since he can be trusted to pursue the organisation's interests. Accordingly, stewardship theory focuses on creating enabling structures that facilitate and empower rather than control and monitor, as agency theory suggests.

Since prescriptions in agency theory and stewardship theory are contradictory, it is important to identify the factors that help to differentiate the underlying assumptions. According to Davis et al. (1997), they can be distinguished in psychological and situational factors.

The psychological factors go back to the above-mentioned model of man that underlies theory. Stewardship theory is based on a more complex view of humanity, as is expressed in Argyris' "self-actualizing man" (Argyris 1973). Based on Maslow's work (1970), this model of man expresses the human need to grow beyond a person's current state and aspire to higher levels of achievement. Three aspects of this model of man are relevant to stewardship behaviour (Davis et al. 1997, pp.27-32): motivation, identification and the use of power in the context of hierarchy. In contrast to agents, stewards are motivated by higher order needs in Maslow's pyramid of needs as well as by intrinsic, non-material factors that create feelings of self-determination and of purpose. Accordingly, institutional power that is vested in the hierarchical position of principals and involves rewards or coercive power plays a lesser role in influencing

stewards than agents. Between principal and steward, personal relationships and the inherent personal and referent power matter (for an introduction to categories of power see French & Raven (1959); Gibson et al. (1991)). This is strongly related to the third psychological factor: identification of stewards with their organisation. Identification means that stewards define themselves in terms of their membership in the principal's, or rather 'their own', organisation by accepting the organisation's mission, vision and objectives (Kelman 1958). Success and failure of the organisation becomes the steward's success or failure and contribute to the steward's self-concept (Katz & Kahn 1978; Kelman 1961).

The situational factors that help explain stewardship behaviour concern the organisation's management philosophy and the cultural orientation in the organisation's environment towards individualism or collectivism (Hofstede 1980). The argument is that these factors create enabling conditions to develop stewardship or agency-oriented attitudes. Management can focus on involvement or on control and thus create more or less intrinsic commitment to achieve the organisation's objectives (Lawler 1986). A more distant influence is culture, and the extent of its influence varies among individuals. While other experiences might affect individual orientation more strongly, however, collective orientation in a society is argued to increase the tendency towards stewardship. Contrarily, the relative acceptance of power inequality in societies and organisations, referred to as power distance (Hofstede 1980), indicates a tendency towards agency behaviour.

Stewardship theory does not suggest that the validity of agency theory as such is put into question in principle. Rather, authors argue that agency theory is complemented by stewardship theory under certain conditions and individual predispositions (Davis et al. 1997). Stewardship theory goes beyond agency theory in its effort to identify reasons for the behaviour of the contracted person in both psychological and situational factors.

In light of the criticism of agency theory's assumptions and the brief discussion of stewardship theory, the context in which agency takes place appears to matter more than acknowledged in the original principal-agent model. As mentioned before, agency theory initially focused on managerial relationships in private businesses. Despite, or perhaps because of, its economic background, simple model character and basic assumptions, the theory found a broad spectrum of application in the social sciences beyond managerial concerns (Kiser 1999). It is relevant to basically any kind of delegation of tasks to another person or organisation. Consequently, scholars have adapted agency theory to various other contexts, for example to that of bureaucracy

or social movements. Below, relevant literature on agency in a political context is reviewed.

3.2.3 Putting agency into political context

In political sciences agency is relevant to understand the two central relationships — between voters and politicians and between politicians as legislators and the bureaucracy.[239] Delegation through principal-agent contracts is a central concept in political studies since governments use delegation in order to provide services and to manage public goods (Lupia 2001). While only one of the case studies in this research represents a government agent, this chapter first introduces the literature on bureaucracy and later discusses the differences concerning the other cases. As the empirical research will show, the overall attention given to political context and bureaucratic organisations proves partly valid even for the two other cases although they are not part of government administration.

Public choice theory studies the behaviour of politicians and government officials who serve as agents of the public and underlie the same assumptions as the managers in agency theory (Tullock 2008).[240] Consequently, the theory claims that the principal is confronted with the possibility of 'agency loss', or, in political science jargon, slippage, bureaucratic drift or slack (Shapiro 2005), that occurs when the agent does not comply with the principal's preferences.[241] Non-compliance of bureaucrats can become manifest in several ways: "shirking by undersupplying policy outcomes; pursuing policy objectives that are inconsistent with the preferences of elected political officials; or

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[239] For an overview of areas of application in political studies see Shapiro (2005).

[240] Similarly to the concerns of economic scholars, which assume self-interest of the agent and information asymmetry on the side of the principal, the early literature on bureaucracy and delegation in politics is sceptical about the management of agency problems (Niskanen 1971; Weber 1972). Likewise, politicians' actions in political decision-making can be critically viewed as conflicting with the preferences of the electorate and the general public (Buchanan & Tullock 1962; Buchanan 2003).

[241] 'Agency loss' is a common metric that describes the difference between "the consequences of delegation for the principal and the best possible consequence" (Lupia 2001 p.3376; Lupia 2003). While the term describes the problem of divergence between the principal's interests and agent's behaviour in general, it is mostly found in literature concerning agency in public administration and politics (as an exception see Donaldson 1990). Economic models of agency mostly refer to agency costs and differentiate according to causes.

creating new, organized political interests that are a political threat to political overse-ers" (McCubbins et al.1987, p.273).[242]

McCubbins et al. (1987) argue in their seminal work about agency control in bureau-cracy that not only are incentives and performance monitoring required, but that ad-ministrative procedures and organisational design in general serve the purpose of po-litical control over bureaucracy. The foremost reason is that the principal cannot pass on a part of the generated profit as economic incentives (Moe 1984). Moreover, the situation of the political principal is more complicated: whereas the principal in the classic model of a private business – at least in theory - has the authority to take deci-sions regarding his enterprise on his own, this is not the case in political settings. Since the conditions of political systems differ from economic systems, control mechanisms have to be different. Of particular relevance in political contexts are find-ings on institutional design that involve opposing interest groups in policy design and implementation, and on selection of agency staff that share political interests of the legislator (for an overview see Lupia 2001; Shapiro 2005).

However, agency loss and its reduction is not always the guiding perspective of politi-cal decision makers. On the contrary, their ability to control agency is often limited, for example due to poor information, as is their willingness to invest in control mecha-nisms. Under such conditions, the question is often rather how much agency discre-tion can be allowed before political intervention is required. As Calvert et al. (1989, p.589) note, "agency discretion consists of the departure of agency decisions from the positions agreed upon by the executive and legislature at the time of delegation and appointment". As these authors' analysis shows, bureaucratic choice is determined by the initial appointment power of the executive and legislature together with the threat of sanctions. What matters is not only its real implementation but also the avoidance of expected sanctions by the bureaucrat. Thus, political control not only works actively if sanctions are implemented, but also in its latent form if sanctions are anticipated and therefore keep the agent 'in line' with political preferences. This latent control is, by definition, never observed but Calvert et al. (1989) argue that it is as important as active control.

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[242] Agency problems in bureaucracies are often modelled as arising from information asymmetry between principals and agents; however, bureaucratic agents also have political power if they take collective ac-tion in elections (Moe 2005). This behaviour then alters the model since politicians might opt not to con-trol agents as much as they could. Since this situation is not relevant for the case studies of this research, the variation of the model will not be discussed further.

Moreover, not only sanctions, or their anticipation, guide agency behaviour. The appointment power of politicians concerns the initial design of the agency: organisational structure, procedures, jurisdiction and personnel. Following this, researchers should, for example, ask, "why particular leaders are in office at any given time" (ibid., p.606). Literature also shows that the more important a policy area is to politicians, the more they invest in reducing uncertainty in the initial and appointment stage, thus reducing the opportunity for agency discretion.

The above sample of literature points to the relevance of the specific context of agency. As will be seen in this research as well, agency cannot be explained without the political process that accompanies the agent's establishment and activity. The conditions of contracting between principal and agent depend on context. Moe argues consequently that a distinguished theory is required to explain agency in the context of public bureaucracy, since the economic school in organisation theory is "not built to capture the distinctive features of politics that shape public bureaucracy, and (therefore) a successful political theory is likely to be different in its fundamentals rather than in a simple extension of the economic theory". Thus, a dedicated theory of public bureaucracy "owes its logic and substance to the fundamentals of politics" (Moe 1995, p.117).

While this theory concerns bureaucracy in the sense of formalised, long-term government agencies, it also has relevance for executive agents with a mandate of limited duration as long as they act in the political and bureaucratic environment described by the theory.[243] Following Moe's theory of public bureaucracy, agency in political settings is based on four essential features (Moe 1995) that demarcate the differences between economic and public non-profit agency:[244]

1. Public Authority: Whereas the contract between principal and agent in economic contexts is based on the principal's authority through her property rights and both parties' self-interest to enter into the agreement, such an authority of the parties does not exist in politics.[245] Here, the principal's authority is attached to her political role, i.e., the public office held by a politician. The politi-

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[243] For an overview of public sector agents see for example Horn (1995).

[244] Earlier attempts of Moe involve five, slightly different elements, see for example Moe (1991).

[245] This is a simplification of political processes in order to highlight that design and performance of bureaucratic agency are not voluntary acts like economic contracts where the contracting parties theoretically can walk away in dissent. Likewise, it is a simplification to assume security for private property rights; for a critique see Williamson (1990).

cal role contains rights and resources that are granted only for a certain period until the next elections and the role holders cannot sell them while being in possession of them.

2. Political Contract[246]: Following the different source of authority, the contract in a political setting has to be understood on two levels accordingly. First, there is a political contract between the politician and the social actors who voice demands and hold stakes in the agency issue. These can be described as interest groups and via their contract with the politician they influence the rules and regulations set up for the public agency's behaviour. While literature mostly discusses the case of a new public agency created on the basis of the contract, agency tasks can also be delegated to an existing agent. In any case, the result is a "two-tiered hierarchy: one tier is the internal hierarchy of the agency, the other is the political control structure linking it to politicians and groups" (Moe 1995, p.122).

3. Political Uncertainty: The fact that politicians hold office for only a limited time and cannot be sure of re-election, or even have to fear an earlier loss of office through changes in government, implies that their political property rights and the resources bestowed on them are not guaranteed. Similarly, the political influence of interest groups is not a stable force but might change over time. This uncertainty results in extra precaution taken on the side of the interest groups as well as politicians to design policies and structures – the public agency – in such a way that it is protected from political opposition and persists in case of regime change.[247]

4. Political Compromise: Both the economic and the political actors involved in agency pursue interests that are assumed to conflict with each other. In both cases, compromise needs to be reached in order to arrive at the establishment of agency. However, economic agency is based on a mutually beneficial compromise between principal and agent since the actors otherwise would not enter the contract. In contrast, political contracts often involve zero-sum situations in which minority interest groups or politicians that are opposed to the agency's mandate will lose, e.g., entrepreneurs in the case of regulating business or radical militant groups in the case of conducting peace negotiations. Although these actors oppose the contract, they need to be involved in the

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[246] Moe calls this feature the "political firm" using the analogy of the business firm (Moe 1995).

[247] For a similar description of the problem with different terms see Horn (1995), and Huber and Shipan (2002).

agency's design because of a politically uncertain future that might bring these actors into a dominant position at a later point (McCubbins et al. 1987). In order to avoid these actors obstructing or destroying the agency, they are invited in the design from the beginning.[248] Consequently, public bureaucracy essentially is a structure of coercion of which the design is not based on achieving the most efficient structural design as in the case of economic agency. Rather, "public bureaucracies are designed in no small measure by participants who explicitly want them to fail" (Moe 1995, p.127).

In order to understand the political nature of the agency model, Moe argues that the perspective on agency has to be moved from the principal/politician to those actors that truly determine delegated agency: interest groups. An interest group is any organisation that aims to influence public policy through public opinion and/or policy-making; common examples are labour unions, faith-based advocacy organisations and environmental protection groups.[249] Through their political influence and expertise with a view to the agency issue, they constitute the public authority that empowers the politician during time in office to delegate tasks to agents in alignment with their interests.[250] While some interest groups support the contract between principal and agent, others might oppose certain arrangements or even the fact of establishing agency on

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[248] Moe (1995) explains this compromise through separation of powers in the American political system; however, the argument is valid outside this particular system in any not-stable power situation in which political parties or groups might enter changing alliances in order to gain power.

[249] 'Interest group' is a term regularly used in literature describing the particularities of the US political system (for example Salisbury 1969) but by definition has a more general meaning. Literature on other political contexts, for example on negotiations and violent conflict, commonly employs the terms 'stakeholder' with a similar meaning but lesser level of organisation and professionalisation: groups or organisations that hold an interest in a conflict issue or the process of dealing with the conflict and that will be affected by its outcome (e.g., definition of the Conflict Research Consortium of the University of Colorado, accessible underhttp://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/glossary.htm). For a similar definition in organisation theories see Rowley (1997).

For the sake of theoretical clarity, this text applies Moe's terminology in the introduction of his theory, although his practical examples from the US legislature and administration are not relevant here. This research will later apply the term stakeholder for the conceptual framework.

[250] Authority is given to politicians through the voting process. Moe (1995), however, argues that individual or even the mass of voters do not influence structural decisions of politicians.

the issue itself. Thus, interest groups are often considered as a plurality of actors, unlike the agent and the principal.[251]

The interest group perspective is relevant to modelling agency in the context of ethnopolitical violent conflict since it explains how agency is affected by diverse, and often conflicting, interests. Politics is a process of conflict; if groups compete for authority and the control of scarce resources, tension between interests arises. If political systems fail to manage conflicting interests, conflict may express itself violently.

As discussed above, this management of conflicting interests, their non-violent expression and the transformation of political systems that fail to provide the required conditions to do so is of central concern in conflict transformation literature and practice. The constitution and implementation of agency as a process of managing conflicting interests is therefore a relevant addition to the assumptions of this research. The focus here, however, is not on the diverse instruments that the legislature can apply in order to define agency accordingly,[252] but rather on the interplay between context and agency. Before elaborating the assumptions and discussing the relevance of violent conflict as context for agency, other aspects of the extended agency model need to be briefly introduced.

In the above theoretical model, both the principal and agent as politician and bureaucracy are given specific characteristics that distinguish them from the earlier introduction of the principal and agent roles in the beginning of the chapter. Two aspects need to be noted to appreciate the model. The principal has to take into consideration diverse group interests given the condition of political uncertainty. At the same time, the political principal is not merely a conduit for the interest groups' pressures and concerns about the issue at hand, for example peace negotiations, but follows other concerns and agendas that are relevant for the principal's main objective: maintaining power and securing re-election.[253] This relatively singular interest of the politician is true for various constitutional arrangements and principal arrangements.[254]

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[251] In reality, neither the principal nor the agent in a political contract consists of one individual; these are simplifications for modelling purposes.

[252] See for example Huber and Shipan (2002) for a comparative discussion of designing legislative statutes.

[253] This is a simplification for modelling purpose; see for example Moe's sceptical stance towards political agendas and interests and his discussion on American positive political theory in Fiorina (1990). Whereas politicians certainly also follow other agendas than personal interest, the point to note is that agency mandates might be informed by other interests that do not automatically support agency but might side-

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The bureaucracy as the agent has a dual character: on the one hand the agent needs to be treated as an actor with delegated objectives, strategies and resources as well as its own career and institutional interests which make the bureaucratic agent a "player in politics, just as interest groups and politicians are"; however, bureaucracies are "structured, staffed, and overseen by their creators, interest groups and politicians", which makes them "creatures of the other participants' designs. Both sides of bureaucracy need to be recognized" (Moe 1995, p.131).[255]

The latter perspective, bureaucracy as a creature of its political masters, is of great benefit to the principal and a deviation from the original principal-agent model. It helps ensure that the principal's interests are appreciated and thus reduces agency problems significantly. Principals can design the agent in a way that it identifies with the principal's interest. It will be seen in the empirical research how this applies to the peace secretariats.

3.2.4 Developing a conceptual framework for agency of the peace secretariats

Summing up the discussion of this section, agency theory helps explain the contract, or the mandate, of the peace secretariats in this research. Agency theory identifies the agent and the principal as key actors who define the mandate.

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line or even contradict it, as discussed for example in McNamara (2002). This aspect will be revisited later under the notion of symbolic agency.

[254] Literature differentiates between, for example, individual politicians and committees as principals. Also, presidential and legislative principals are discussed (Huber & Shipan 2002; Moe & Caldwell 1994). Moe's theory is based on the US presidential system; however, the general idea of differentiation between president and legislators is relevant to the Sri Lankan context where the government's peace secretariat was under control of the prime minister's and later the president's office.

[255] While agency mandates might be adapted over time according to the changing dominance of interest groups, or agents might win or lose influence over their mandate and enact changing interests, the crucial moment of structural choice that defines agency usually happens in the beginning when the agency is designed and empowered with a mandate. This base is often protected by legislation as well as by political clout of the designers and "most of the pushing and hauling in subsequent years is likely to produce only incremental change" in agency (Moe 1995, p.146).

The theory of public bureaucracy – based on the more general agency theory – underlines the relevance of the organisational mandate and describes factors that explain the secretariat's behaviour. Different from an economic model, the political circumstances lead to a situation in which two rational actors do not by default end up with the most effective contract; rather, as Moe points out, the political environment creates – at least in many cases – a situation in which "agencies are not built to do well" (Moe 1995, p.148). In addition, the theory of public bureaucracy offers two relevant additions to the understanding of agency developed above.

First, Moe's theory as well as similar literature discussing agency in other forms of government point to the relevance of the political context. The political context influences the organisation's behaviour since it informs the key features of public authority, political contract, uncertainty and compromise. The particularity of Moe's interest groups underlines this relevance, especially since they might change and form different alliances in varying political situations.

Second, the addition of bureaucracy as a characterising element of the agent's identity and behaviour points to the relevance of goal alignment between principal and agent as well as to psychological features of agents, such as loyalty or identification with the principal. As introduced regarding stewardship theory, the characteristic features of the agent play an important role in understanding agency behaviour. It is therefore relevant to 'look inside the agent' in more detail than the original principal-agent model suggests.

The two additions to agency, interest groups as part of a defining political context and bureaucracy as a defining element of agency behaviour, explain the fourth assumption of this research:[256]

> *Both external context-related factors and internal organisational characteristics determine the organisation's contributions to conflict transformation (Assumption 4).*

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[256] Note that the terminology of the assumption is not consistent with the terminology of the theoretical explanation of agency in this chapter. As explained in the methodological chapter, the assumptions were developed before the theory chapters. In order to keep the inductive character of the research in mind, the assumption is not formulated as if deducted from theory alone.

Figure 3.1 depicting the relationship between principal and agent can be modified in order to incorporate the additions. The principal and the agent are identified as politician and bureaucracy with particular characteristics that affect agency. In addition, a second loop is added in order to depict the political control structure and agency between interest groups and principal. This leads to a two-tiered hierarchy of mandate and agency between interest groups and principal as well as between principal and agent. The relationships and the performance of the agent are determined by the political context as shown in figure 3.2.
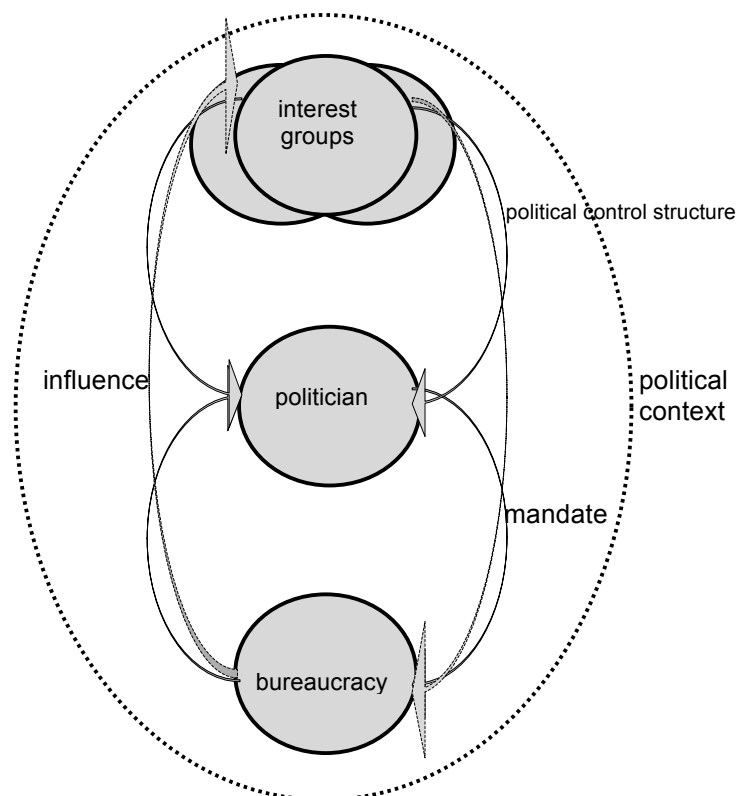
Figure 3.2: Principal-agent relationship in political context

The following two sections consider in more detail how the context of violent conflict and organisational characteristics of armed groups and political parties determine agency; this will add to the conceptual framework under construction.

3.3 'There Was Nothing We Could Do about It': Contextualising Agency in Violent Conflict

While the previous section explained principal-agent relationships in the context of political systems, the following section focuses on the context of violent conflict.

Literature, especially that in organisation theory, rarely discusses principal-agent theory and violent conflict. Most research in this field with an economic perspective assumes the relatively stable contracting conditions of western democracies.[257] Even politically sensitive approaches such as Moe's theory do not capture the volatility of political decision-making in crisis situations and the effects of violence on politics and its actors. The following section will therefore first review some of the literature on agency in this specific context and then, arguing that agency theory needs to pay more attention to context, discuss the duality of agency and structure. This will lead to a stronger emphasis on structure, or rather – as will be elaborated – the political opportunities and restraining factors in modelling agency.

This section will contribute to appreciating the case studies' context and different characteristics: the specific conditions and experiences of violent conflict affect all forms of agency independently of the principal's and agent's characteristics, or properties. Nevertheless, agency as in the enactment of violence, or of peaceful conflict transformation, depends on specific constellations of opportunities and constraints.

3.3.1 Agency in the context of violent conflict – insights from structuration theory

Agency in the context of violent conflict is not as easily accessible in literature as agency in political systems, since the literature is based on different disciplines in the social sciences as well as different schools within, for example, the discipline of politi-

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[257] The fact, however, that literature presents such an assumption points to the relevance of environment and, for example, political conditions such as the rule of law in order to make the theory with its assumptions work.

cal studies (Hall & Taylor 1996).[258] The various perspectives on the topic show little interchange.[259]

Following the tradition of applying rationalist economic theory of behaviour to international relations and foreign policy research, principal-agent theory relates to situations of violent conflict in various regards, or areas of application.[260] These deal mostly with the problems of information asymmetry, self-interest and role conflicts.

The first one concerns decision-making in violent conflict, war or crisis situations.[261] Here, the politician is modelled as basing her decisions on information delivered by the agent, the government bureaucracy or advisors. The focus of this model is on the transactions costs of delegation and information asymmetries between principal and agent. The model can describe various constellations in this relationship; most commonly it refers to the voter constituency as principal and the politician, or the executive leader, as agent. For example, Downs and Rocke (1994) discuss how voters can ensure that leaders do not go to war against their will and how they can prevent the principal from "gambling for resurrection" in a situation where the principal's advanced information indicates that the war cannot be won. One recent contribution with reference to politicians as principals applies the principal-agent model to delegation in political decision-making in war (Kher 2008). Here, political decision makers are confronted with agency problems that concern the reliability of information from government agencies regarding the cost of war. Similarly based on empirical material and politically relevant events of the time, Allison in his seminal work discusses decision-making in the context of the Cuban missile crisis (Allison 1971). Both texts, as examples for this area of research, show the relevance of the model for explaining principal strategies in light of information asymmetry.

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[258] Hall & Taylor (1996) and in response Hay & Wincott (1998) discuss – albeit without reference to violent conflict – different schools within the so-called new institutionalism that resemble the different approaches discussed here.

[259] For one exception see Carlsnaes' effort to conceptualise the interplay of agency and structure in foreign policy analysis (1992).

[260] This chapter cannot provide a general overview of the rich economic literature that studies civil war and violent conflict. For an overview of recent political economic approaches to intra-state conflict see Korf (2007). For an application of the economic theory of behaviour with its assumption of utility maximisation on violent conflict and war see the seminal work of Bueno de Mesquita (1981).

[261] While the examples cited here refer to political and governmental settings, there is increasing application of agency theory to armed groups and terrorism, see for example Shapiro (2007) and Schneider (2009).

On a different note, principal-agent theory serves as a foundation for the analysis of civil-military relationships. Here, soldier behaviour – the agent's actions – underlies civil control – enacted through civilian political structures that represent public authority. Feaver (2003) discusses different conceptions of the military as agents (Huntington 1957; Janowitz 1960) and finds that – similar to the discussion above on bureaucracy and stewardship theory – the military does not act under any circumstances according to its self-interests but is motivated by collective values as well as professional ethics of obedience and honour that lead to subordination as preferred behaviour. Moreover, Baker (2007) argues that such an explanation is valuable even outside western democracies and their respective cultures of military submission to civilian rule.

Third, principal-agent theory has been applied to model international negotiations (Cross 2002). The understanding of international negotiations and also intra-state negotiations in the context of civil war is that the principals do not negotiate directly with each other but use agents that represent their interests and negotiate on their behalf. As discussed earlier in the chapter on negotiation, this application helps to understand role conflicts of negotiators as well as the common agency problems that stem from the diverging interests of agents and information asymmetry and lead to negotiators' 'shirking' behaviour. Mostly applied with regards to international negotiation, for example on trade agreement or environmental issues, this literature provides relevant insights for negotiations in peace processes as well (see for example the understanding of negotiation as a balancing act between finding intra- and inter-party consensus in Putnam (1988)). Assuming rational choice and self-interest, this literature neglects for the purpose of simplicity, however, the additional complications of controversial negotiations in a climate of long-term and often intractable violent conflict. Here, the behaviour, attitudes and values of principals and agents are influenced by their social and public identities.[262] Moreover, principal-agent modelling of negotiations often neglects the influence of power (Zartman & Aurik 1991).

All three areas of application as well as general criticism in literature point to problems with the different assumptions of the economic theory of behaviour, particularly re-

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[262] The rich body of literature discussing role and identity in negotiation cannot be reviewed here; for an overview see Donohue and Taylor (2007) and Pruitt (2001). Druckman (2006) discusses the influence of nationalist or patriotic group attachments that lead negotiators to act in favour of in-group preferences. For a discussion of different processes of influence that lead to attitude change see Kelman (1958): identification with a certain group is one of them, another relevant one is compliance with expected punishment or incentives from a dominating group.

garding rational choice. While acknowledging the value of the theory and the potential of increased analytical understanding through modelling an actor's behaviour according to the economic tradition (e.g. Cross 2002), critics argue that a significant aspect of reality in violent conflict is neglected to such an extent that analysis remains inconclusive and does not capture the complexities of social life (Jabri 1996). This argument is often introduced by researchers from other disciplines of the social sciences, namely, sociology and psychology. These disciplines have developed a different perspective on agency and violent conflict. Two differences have to be noted.

Other than in political studies, the discourse on agency in violent conflict predominantly refers to the individual and its agency in vulnerable situations. One popular subject of research concerns women and their suffering and/or support of violence, regularly discussed as the dichotomy of victimhood and/or agency (see for example Gjelsvik 2010; Kelly 2000; Manchanda (ed.) 2001; for the example of agency of child soldiers in armed groups see Maclure & Denov 2006).[263] The perspective of this conceptualisation of agency is one of empowerment of the individual to change her life and living conditions, as found commonly in the emancipating discourse of development studies and development assistance (for example Sen 1985; Narayan 2005).

Second and as a consequence of the choice of the research subject, this literature is not concerned with the contractual relationship between principal and agent (except for the aspect of power and exploitation); rather the relationship between the individual human and society matters. As Jabri notes, human agency is "always located in a mutually constitutive relationship with the structural continuities of social and political life" (Jabri 2006, p.74). While agency in this context refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices, structure refers to the arrangements of social, political, economic or cultural life, which inform the opportunities and choices of the individuals.[264] This understanding is based on the mostly sociological literature regarding the 'duality of human agency and social structure', an ex-

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[263] This literature and the discourse on gender and agency are often informed by feminist theory and activism that adopt the concept of agency in an emancipating, liberating sense, see for example the various viewpoints presented in Gardiner (1995).

[264] Note that this addition complicates the use of the principal-agent terminology. In a 'sociological conception' both the agent and the principal have agency and enact structure, either as individuals or groups. This research focuses on the agency of the agent, here the peace secretariats, and will continue to use the terms 'principal' and 'agent' in order to distinguish the different roles in the contractual relationship.

pression first coined by Anthony Giddens in his theory of structuration (Giddens 1979, 1984; for a discussion also Sewell 1992).[265]

In brief, Giddens argues that social structure – rules and institutions, cultural traditions and moral codes – inform social action and that at the same time social action creates, i.e., either reproduces or changes, this very structure. It is important to note that while a repetition of acts of individual agents will perpetuate the structure, change is also possible, since agents have a reflexive capacity and can influence the rules and resources that constitute structure (Giddens 1984; Giddens & Pierson 1998).[266]

While 'rules' can be interpreted as schemas and general procedures for the enactment of social life, 'resources' are human and non-human – material – sources of authoritative or allocative power in social interactions (Sewell 1992). Similar to the interplay of agency and structure, rules and resources are interdependent as well. The value of resources is determined by the rules over resources that inform their social use and, at the same time, the power that establishes rules. As such, structures and agencies are determined by differences in power. But only if both – agency and structure – are mutually sustaining each other, is structure constituted. This constitution, however, is not indefinite.

Since agents have knowledge of the schemas that perpetuate patterns in social life, they are capable of applying them in different contexts or to change 'the rules of the game' so that transformation is feasible. This is possible since neither agency nor structure is monolithic in society: individuals bring different sets of structure to play depending on their respective socialisation and identity; structure is historically and culturally determined (Sewell 1992, p. 20). The argument is continued in the next section on inter-agency differences based on identity.

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[265] With concern to the quest of agency vs. structure primacy, this theory occupies the middle ground between agent and structure determinist approaches. See Archer (1995) for a distinction of the approaches based on conflation, which denies one of the two sides of the duality autonomy.

[266] This also excludes a more deterministic conceptualisation of structure, which treats the individual as a victim of its circumstances and sees structure as determining agency. In its strictest determinist understanding, structural approaches reduce agency to zero, thus "the only agent of social action is structure itself" (Walsh 1998, p.11). Such strict concepts of structure determinism encompass the structural contingency theory of Donaldson (1985), the evolutionism of Hannan and Freeman (1989) and Aldrich (1979) or the radical structuralism of Burrell and Morgan (1979). They have in common that agency is determined by structure and that these social and organisational structures "'work behind people's backs' according to an immanent logic of emergence, elaboration, and change that the latter are unlikely to comprehend much less influence or direct" (Reed 2005, p.297).

Before that, the discussion returns to the question of how structuration theory is relevant to understand agency in the context of violent conflict. Bearing in mind the earlier overview of the Sri Lankan conflict and the discussion on conflict transformation in intractable situations, structuration theory offers a framework to understand both the conditions of human agency restricted through violent conflict as well as the potential of human agency to overcome the restrictions and induce transformation.

While literature on civil war and accounts of conflict transformation practitioners and civilians trapped in civil war remind of the intractability of the situation, it is noteworthy to remember that this is a condition created by human action and difficult but not impossible to resolve. Jabri (1996, 2006) in her development of a structurationist theory of conflict argues to "understand war or violent conflict as a form of human action centrally implicated in the relationship between self and society" (Jabri 1996, p.55). While her discussion of war is not relevant here in detail, what matters is her explanation of human agency in interplay with structure. Drawing on Jabri's rich and discursive theory development, the following elements – key in Giddens' structuration theory as well – appear of relevance for this research:

First, the specific experience of violence informs agency. While violence in one academic school is considered a rational strategy to influence the rules of political competition and the power balance in peace processes (for an overview see Darby & Mac Ginty 2000), others such as Jabri argue that the human cannot be conceived as a rational maximiser of utility under all circumstances. The latter suggest that rationality is distorted by cognitions and other psychological mechanisms in order to deal with the stress and complexity of violent conflict situations (Holsti 1990). Psychological and organisation theory literature discusses in depth the effects, for example, of group pressure or cognitive dissonance on individual and collective behaviour; much of the literature informs the understanding of the creation of bedevilling enemy images, violent conflict and victimhood (Stein 1996). Korf (2007), for example, shows how mental models are affected by violent conflict and thus affect the functioning of institutions and organisations in society.

Going beyond the experience of acute violent conflict, some scholars note that violent conflict affects agency by shaping collective identity (Volkan 1997, 1999).[267] As men-

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[267] Much of what is said in this section, especially with regards to identity and experiences of violent conflict, seems to resonate with the notion of identity by birth. The author, however, in line with the immanent meaning of agency as choice, considers identity to be both ascribed by birth as well as acquired through choice (Kriesberg 2003). See also the earlier discussion of identity and ethno-political conflict in chapter 2.

tioned earlier, collective identity – as well as the view of other groups – is shaped by collective experiences as a group as well as by adversary interactions with the 'other' (Kriesberg 2003b). Such experiences shape identity and contribute to the distortion of rationality even at a stage of latent conflict: some scholars argue that if basic psychological human needs are not met during childhood the resulting deprivation can lead to frustration that increases the likelihood of aggression in the individual.[268] In the same way, deprivation of basic social and economic human needs can increase the violence of groups (Burton 1990; Staub 2003).[269] Without going into further detail with regards to explaining the recourse to violent means as individual or group strategies, it suffices here to note that the collective experience of violent conflict in a society affects all human action, albeit in different ways and with different consequences. Consequently, individuals experience and enact, or transform, structure differently.

Second, individual agency does not depend only on past experience but also on the individual's role in society and the expectations connected with that role (Jabri 1996, p.64). Roles thus moderate the individuals' interests and the norms and values that individuals consider as guiding and legitimising their action.[270] Following Giddens' idea of structuration, this role, if institutionalised in societal rules or schemas, becomes a part of structure and as such informs relationships between human actors. These continue to exist outside context, i.e., the time and space of the specific situation in which they were established (Giddens 1984), and inform individual actions and relationships. This resonates with theoretical and empirical literature on the manifestations of violent conflict in group identity and inter-group relationships, as for example in the politicisation and mobilisation of ethnic identity in violent conflict (Brubaker & Laitin 1998). The experience of violent conflict informs all parts of society and all aspects of social life, albeit in different ways depending on the nature or type of conflict.

Furthermore, hand in hand with rules, structure also brings specific resources to the individual to actually enact agency. While for some individuals or groups a specific context might constrain their agency, for others the same context is an enabling one that creates new opportunities. This difference can be explained through the influ-

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[268] Collective trauma can be passed on to following generations, thus informing the formation of identity even without direct experience of violence and deprivation (Volkan 2001).

[269] Jabri here points to the influence of objective conditions of social structure in the generation of conflict, as in Galtung's concept of 'structural violence' (Galtung 1969).

[270] One example refers to bureaucratic organisational self-interests in warfare; as Sigal (1988 in King 1997) shows, the position in bureaucracy affects decision-making regarding the termination of war.

ence, or power, that is bestowed on them in their role in society.[271] While power is a central component of all social systems and implicated in both conflictual as well as cooperative relationships, it is of course – if distributed asymmetrically – of particular relevance for the constitution of dominant structures and violent conflict (Jabri 1996). The example of majoritarian rule and violation of minority rights in Sri Lanka's ethno-political conflict serves as illustration.

Last, while this brief and admittedly sketchy outline mostly presents elements that appear to reiterate the primacy of structural influence over human agency, the human in Giddens' theory not only perpetuates structure but is also capable of intentional decisions to transform the patterns of life through knowledge and self-reflectivity. The theory of structuration insists that although resources might be distributed asymmetrically, there remains agency and the potential to induce change – or at least to deny compliance with the dominant structure: "So long as actors retain the capacity to refuse, even in suicide, they remain agents" (Whittington 1992, p.696).[272]

Transformation, however, happens only if deliberation dominates agency and thus does not contribute to perpetuating patterns of domination and violence, as the suicide bombers of the LTTE did. Rather, the individual may resist the hegemonic discourse and develop a critical and emancipating perspective on structure surrounding agency – and through this transform structure (Sewell 1992). Examples for such agency can be found in the manifold efforts of peace and human rights activism and also in efforts of the 'regular' civilian population, or even individuals such as government servants otherwise implicated in the dominant structure, who 'make a difference'.

This sounds relatively easy but, of course, is not. As manifold as efforts are to break the vicious cycle of violent conflict, e.g., through the establishment of 'peace zones', so are experiences of failure and relapse into violence. Returning to theory, some authors therefore contradict Giddens and argue that change cannot happen 'out of the blue'. They posit that agency happens in the context of pre-existing structural conditions and relations that in turn establish the institutional and material conditions for social interaction. A generally supportive context needs to exist in order to allow the

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[271] This aspect reminds of the earlier criticism of agency theory and the elaboration of stewardship theory with the difference that role here applies to society as a whole and not to organisations.

[272] For a different interpretation see Foucault's discussion of power and knowledge, which according to Korf (2007, p.691) considers people only appearing to have agency but rather being trapped in the structure of dominant discourse that informs violent conflict.

creative and transformative potential of agency to be enacted (Reed 2005, p.302).[273] Only then can agents create new roles and transform their social relations as well as the very structures that condition them. In other words: agency underlies constraints, but is also offered opportunities for transformation, through structure.

Before turning to this argument in more detail, one conclusion should be drawn from Jabri's elaboration: all the aspects discussed above point implicitly to the relevance of the specific nature of the violent conflict in question, or the conflict type. Whether concerned with experiences of violence, the impact of violent conflict on role manifestations and identity, the asymmetry of resource allocation or deprivation between groups, the nature or type of violent conflict seems to be a determining element of agency. The conflict type thus will be considered as one of the context-related aspects mentioned in the fourth assumption of this research.

The following will illuminate how structure – beyond the brief remarks on Giddens' theory and beyond Jabri's discussion of agency as violent conflict – can be framed in a more differentiated manner highlighting the emergence of opportunities and constraints in the political process as well as the necessity of mobilising resources for change. This is of particular relevance in order to understand the context of these peace secretariats in this research that are not part of the government bureaucracy.

3.3.2 Political opportunities and resources as social movement structure

The study of social movements is concerned with the processes and conditions under which groups can mobilise support for a social or political issue that in their view needs reconsideration and change.[274] Social movements are defined broadly as "col-

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[273] Reed (2005) offers an overview of realist perspectives on agency that argue for a more nuanced understanding of agency and structure with distinct properties. This perspective resonates well with the understanding of conditions for conflict transformation or negotiations; see for example the concept of ripeness (Zartman 1989a) or readiness for negotiations (Pruitt 2005a, 2005b). The realist discourse on agency, however, is too rich to be added to here.

[274] Social movements are studied and explained in various sociological theoretical approaches that discuss the emergence of movements, the political process and the resource mobilisation required for the organisation of collective action, as well as the framing of issues based on collective identities. The intention of this chapter is not a general discussion of social movements but the extraction of a small segment of relevant findings for the further development of this research. In line with the argument so far, these

lective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities" (Tarrow 1998, p.4; for a discussion of definitions see Diani 1992). A differentiation of types of social movement considers scope, type and target of intended change as well as method and tactics.

Of concern in this research are social movements that mobilise on the basis of ethnic and political identity and that address violations of minority rights with the intention of political reform. While political parties classically are not seen as social movements, they can be understood in the context of this research – and particularly the case of the Muslim political parties in Sri Lanka – as movement-related organisations based on common identity and shared grievances that are engaged in political representation of their constituency to the majoritarian authorities (Haniffa 2007; Kriesi 1996; Mayilvaganan 2008).

Likewise, social movement organisations may encompass armed groups that include violent means in their tactical repertoire while aiming at radical change (della Porta 1995). In such understanding, armed groups such as the LTTE are seen as "violent challengers to the state's monopoly of legitimate coercive force" (Policzer 2005, p.8) and are part of a wider ethnic or nationalist social movement (Olzak 2004).

Movement literature highlights three broad sets of factors influencing the emergence and development of social movements: "(1) the structure of political opportunities and constraints confronting the movement; (2) the forms of organization (informal as well as formal), available to insurgents; and (3) the collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action" (McAdam et al. 1996, p.2). The three factors remind of the earlier discussion of the mutually constituting processes between societal structure and agency. Here, the collective framing processes interpret societal structure, and identify and act on opportunities and constraints based on the resources already existing in the collective or generated through joint action. While agency per se is not directional, a social movement's agency induces transformation, albeit through various means and tactics.

Particular relevance is given to the organisational form of social movements as it provides the resources for transformation (Kriesi 1996). With a view to violent conflict, the form or level of organisation of armed groups is relevant in various regards, most prominently as an aspect of determining the asymmetry of relationships between the

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segments complement economic behaviour explanations with social and psychological arguments. For an overview of the rich field of social movement studies see McAdam et al. (eds.) (1996), Polletta and Jasper (2001) and Tarrow (1998).

conflict parties (King 1997). While asymmetric relationships pose difficulties in negotiated settlements (see the previous chapter), they provide opportunities for an insurgent movement that applies guerrilla tactics and secretive organisational structure. Organisation is furthermore relevant when armed groups gain territorial control and consequently need to enlarge and differentiate their organisation and its functions (Schlichte 2009). Institutionalisation becomes then a requirement in order to maintain power and mobilise continuous support of the dominated population.[275] At the same time, this process carries symbolic value, as can be understood from the LTTE's effort to signal an on-going state-building process through institutionalisation (Stokke 2006).

The main gist of the theory is in principle relevant for the study of the behaviour of all conflict parties that wish to induce transformation, even if these are part of a government; nevertheless the theory refers to actors outside the state as the 'movers', organising themselves in form of social movement in interaction – and often in conflict – with 'the state'. This can be explained with two arguments.

For one, social movements are regularly described as a reaction of the masses to injustice and as a challenge to authorities representing repression (Tarrow 1998).[276] Historically concerned with left-wing movements, the government is considered to be the antagonist. Rooted in the analysis of civil rights struggles in the United States, for example, theory development on political process was motivated by concrete political concerns to explain protest as a rational strategy to resolve legitimate grievances. It therefore focuses on the interaction between movement attributes, such as organisational characteristics, and the broader economic and political context that triggered the movement's emergence (Caren 2007).

While economic or social conditions may be at the root of the grievances expressed by social movements, it is generally the political system, or the 'political opportunity structure', that leads to their emergence and development. Political opportunity manifests itself in three sets of properties: "the formal institutional structure of a political system, its informal procedures and prevailing strategies with regard to challengers, and the configuration of power relevant for the confrontation with the challengers" (Kriesi 1996, p.160). Different political systems vary in influential factors, such as the relative openness of the institutionalised political system or the state's capacity and

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[275] Schlichte (2009) distinguishes between formalisation, or bureaucratisation, and patrimonalisation strategies that describe the decreasing personification of power within armed groups.

[276] Tarrow traces the lineage of studies on social movements back to Marx's discussion of mass collective action as a response to structure in society (1998, p.11).

propensity for repression (McAdam et al. 1996); and the manifestations are not static. Political systems change, albeit often only marginally, and political tendencies change due to various internal and external influences.

Second, political actors in government are in a different, and often more favourable, position to induce change. In principle and with an undue extent of simplification, their dominance in the legislature and in the executive provides them with ample opportunities to introduce policies according to their constituencies' interests. Access to government administration guarantees resources to mobilise support for change. Of course, there is a great body of literature that shows that things are not so easy in politics (for a review of literature regarding multiple political principals and multiple actors within a government agent see Waterman & Meier 1998; Shapiro 2005). Some authors thus expand social movement studies into studies of contentious politics that include 'challengers' within governmental institutions (McAdam et al. 2001). In fact, this research indicates that opportunities and resources in an organisation are relevant conditions for government agency if it wishes to induce change.[277] Nevertheless, theory concerned with social movements clearly focuses on the constraints and opportunities of anti-authoritarian movements outside government power.

Altogether, the theory is relevant for this research since it sheds light on the question of how agency is constituted in actors that do not underlie the conditions of public agency earlier outlined in the theory of public bureaucracy. Whereas social movements and armed groups such as the LTTE often see in their life cycle phases of formalised organisation, internal professionalisation, differentiation and bureaucratisation (Kriesi 1996), the theory does not fit well since these bureaucracies are not legitimised democratically and their leadership does not contest elections.[278] Moe (1995) referred

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[277] A more recent strand of organisation studies applies social movement theory to explain change within organisations, for example within bureaucracies. It can be argued, however, that movements by definition are challengers outside the state and thus 'inside challengers' could only be described as movement-like (Whetten et al. 2009).

Rootes (1999) points to a third explanation: especially the early literature on social movements displays confusion between sociological and political application of the term 'structure'. Whether slippage or deliberate use of the term in its denoted meaning, 'structure' both implies often long-standing formal government institutions and the contingencies and dynamics of structure in the sociological sense. In more recent literature, political opportunities are understood more clearly as situational (Tarrow 1998, p.77).

[278] Kriesi (1996) provides an overview of organisational forms of social movements in a political context, which distinguishes between the social movement organisation and its wider infrastructure that provides support, political representation and mobilisation carrying the movement.

to the public authority of the principal/politician, the political contract, the political uncertainty of the mandate and the political compromise that influences agency. These features constrain the freedom of the principal's contract with the agent as well as the bureaucratic agent's opportunity to defect from the contract. While these insights are relevant for the study of a government agency, they are only applicable to a limited extent to the armed group agency that is of concern in this research.

Social movement studies help to fill the gap in understanding legitimisation of the movement's organisation and representation of the collective interests of its constituency. For example and without going deeper into the study of armed groups, such an organisation while not subject to the uncertainty of electoral defeat nevertheless needs to ensure legitimisation of its contract with its constituency, since it needs to mobilise resources for the sustenance of the organisation. This legitimisation might not be based on persuasion only, since coercion is a regular part of the mobilisation repertoire of armed groups. In most cases, however, coercive measures alone cannot sustain the long-term support required for the establishment of an administrative organisation and especially for the conduct of continued civil war (Kalyvas 2006; for a specific discussion of LTTE mobilisation of support see Lilja 2010).[279]

Picking up the earlier argument of Moe, an additional actor has been introduced to the bilateral contract between principal and agent: interest groups hold indirect influence over the contract, and both the principal as well as the agent need to consider their interests. In the context of social movements as well as violent conflict and peace negotiations, the term stakeholder is preferred and will be used consequently in order to define groups and organisations that have an interest in and are affected by the outcome of a conflict or peace process.

Section 3.4 will discuss in more detail differences and commonalities between the agency of armed groups and political and government actors as portrayed in the case studies of this research. The above presents only short glimpses into a rich and complex scholarly literature. Nevertheless, in the sense of a summary the literature find-

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[279] Some authors in political economy studies model ethnic groups as stakeholders of armed groups on the basis of their "enduring common preferences over all public policies" (Fearon 2006, p.858). Compared to Moe's model these stakeholders, however, have only limited influence on the armed group's behaviour. Whereas armed groups depend on civilian support, the latter have only restricted options to sanction the armed group's behaviour, for example through withdrawal of support or defection to the opposition. Civilian choice is regularly constrained by the armed group's threat of violence 'against their own people' (Horowitz 1985; Kalyvas 2000).

ings so far will be integrated into the conceptual framework. The following will consider how the perspective presented in section 3.3 translates into the model developed so far on the basis of principal-agent relationships.

3.3.3 Introducing structure to the conceptual framework

The discussion presented in section 3.3 confirms that the application of agency theory in the conceptual research framework of this thesis will remain incomplete and unsatisfying if not complemented by a conceptualisation of structure. Accordingly, agency has to be understood in the context of specific structure and specific characteristics of the agent. This notion presents a relevant addition to the above understanding of agency in this research, since it argues for the recognition of both the 'context' and the 'individual characteristics' as stated in assumption 4:

> *Both external context-related factors and internal organisational characteristics determine the organisation's contributions to conflict transformation.*

Structuration theory explains how this 'context' understood as structure and the agency of individual or group actors mutually constitute each other and how this process is dependent on the continuities and interpretations of social life by the agent as well as on the 'characteristics', or properties, of the agent, expressed in identity with its embedded rules and resources.

The dynamic interplay between agency and structure leads to a different understanding of the above assumption, which speaks of determination. Agency is not embedded in determining factors; it is shaped by them but also influences them at the same time to a certain extent. This relationship can be visualised as follows:

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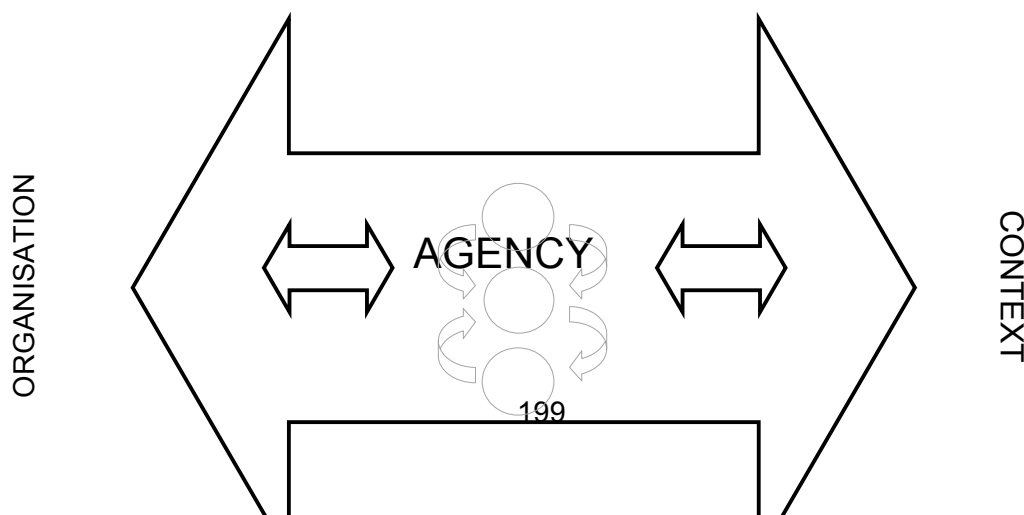
Figure 3.3: Agency in interplay with context and organizational characteristics

Going back to Jabri's application of structuration theory, it becomes clear that violent conflict informs all aspects of the interplay of agency and structure that explains social life, even if the respective agent might not be a perpetrator of violent acts. Implicit in the explanation of violent conflict as discussed in earlier chapters is the differentiation between demographic, economic or other framework conditions and structure as the human-made rules and resources. This understanding of structure, however, is too vague to be helpful for the development of a conceptual framework. Which aspects could be more incisive?

As a first attempt of approximation, it is argued here that a further differentiation, along the lines of aspects regarding agency in public bureaucracy as well as in the context of violent conflict, might be useful. Such aspects might encompass such manifestations of structure as:

- the forms of government that result in exclusion or underrepresentation of parts of the population in political decisions, political conflict and contestation as well as in a repressive state response to rebellion;
- the types of violent conflict ensuing from and leading to different grievances of various groups within the population; and
- the phase of violent conflict with different levels of confrontation, atrocities, mistrust, break-down of communication and isolation between and within groups, but also with the opening of opportunities for (re-)engagement between the groups and transformation of the subject of dissent, or the structure altogether.

The form of government is the foundation of Moe's characterisation of public bureaucracy and one of the key elements informing agency delegated to government bodies. Literature in the field of conflict and peace research comes to similar conclusions regarding determining agency in violent conflict. As discussed in the previous chapter on conflict transformation, the exclusion of minority groups from government policies is one of the central grievances leading to armed struggle and violent conflict (Gurr 1993). Findings from social movement theory highlight the relevance of the political context, or the political opportunities, for the organisational development of move-

ments and their strategic choice of repertoires of contention, including the use of violent means, and the response to counterinsurgency. These together with the government's reactions, among other factors, inform the type of violent conflict.

As mentioned earlier, neither government policies nor movement strategies are static; they are mutually dependent and develop over time in a complex conflict system. Describing violent conflict in phases, or describing a movement along its life cycle, is an effort to capture this dynamic development.

In summary, it is suggested here that the fourth assumption could be elaborated in more detail as:

> *Context-related factors encompass the form of government, the type of violent conflict and the conflict phase. (Assumption 4 a)*

The figure above can be differentiated now as follows:
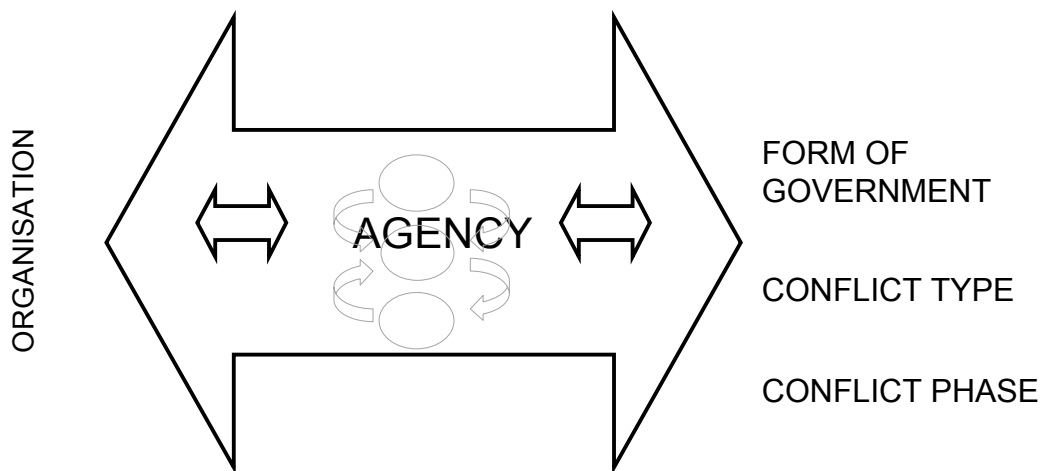
Figure 3.4: Agency in interplay with conflict phase, conflict type, form of government

This section has stressed the relevance of identity informing human agency in the context of violent conflict. While the framework already recognises 'organisational characteristics' as an intervening variable for agency, it seems useful to understand what constitutes agency of an organisation. The following section takes a closer look at the left side of the arrow.

3.4 'We All Sat Together a lot and Spoke about Our Options Internally': Inside the Agent

The previous sections on agency have pointed to the relevance of particular characteristics of the agent. Moe's theory of public bureaucracy, as the name indicates, builds on the characteristics of bureaucratic agents in a political setting. Moreover, agency in violent conflict was found to depend on both the context and the identity of the agent as manifest in the rules and resources available to him. This points to the relevance of identity in order to understand a particular organisation's agency. However, since this research concerns delegated agency, it has to be kept in mind that agency is not determined by the actors independently from the principal's contract. This aspect has already been discussed. It suffices to remember that the contract, and with it the principal's control and incentive mechanisms to avoid or reduce agency loss, constitutes one defining, structural element of an organisation's agency.

This section tries to look inside the agent. Picking up on the earlier-mentioned literature on bureaucracy is necessary; however, the perspective now changes from a bird's eye view considering bureaucracy mostly as a form of political context, or structure, to a frog's perspective, from inside the agent. Bureaucracy in this discussion appears as both, or is represented on both sides of the Janus face of agency.[280]

The focus here is on literature that helps to understand organisational agency behaviour and inter-agency differences in similar situations. One central notion in the interviews with former staff of the three peace secretariats was that they considered themselves fundamentally different from the other organisations despite finding themselves in similar situations and fulfilling similar functions. The purpose of this section is therefore to provide the theoretical background for a causal explanation: why do agents behave differently while having similar functions; or, why do they behave in the same way while having such different backgrounds?

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[280] The effort of applying different perspectives on agency suffers from the inherent dilemma of agency literature. Due to their fundamental interrelatedness, agency and structure appear like a Janus face: no side can be presented without invoking the other one (Carlsnaes 1992, p.246). Thus, while trying to look 'inside the agent' in this section, references to structure, and thus to the previous section, cannot be avoided.

First of all, however, the argument will return to the definition of agency and establish an understanding of organisational agency, given the fact that the most of the literature discusses individual agency and assumes collective agency to work in the same way. Then, organisational identity will be introduced in order to help understand organisational agency; and lastly, the section will concretise the second part of assumption 4 that was introduced earlier.

At the end of this section, an attempt will be made to describe the internal organisational characteristics more closely. This will complete the conceptual framework under development in this chapter.

3.4.1 Understanding organisational agency as decision-making and learning processes

Despite the wide range of application and interpretation, some authors argue that most conceptions of agency remain vague and usually do not capture its complexity. The conception of organisational agency suffers from two problems: understanding agency as a process and differentiating between individual and organisational agency. As the empirical findings show, agency is negotiated within the organisation, or – depending on power relations within the organisation and their connection to the power struggle between stakeholders within wider society – not negotiated since the actors within the organisation are aware of stakeholder expectations and anticipate the outcome of negotiation efforts.[281]

First, and this is true for individual agency as well, agency needs to be disaggregated as a process in time. Most authors highlight either aspects of routine, habitualisation and perpetuation of structure, or of purpose, deliberation and emancipation. It remains unclear how the "'doubly constituted' interplay between social action and structural constraint" (Reed 2005, p.290) actually takes place. While Giddens implies that 'structuration' is a process rather than a steady state (Sewell 1992, p.4), the theory does not shed light on how to understand this process and how to analytically distinguish the relative influence of both factors on each other.

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[281] Waterman and Meier in an overview of internal goal conflicts between bureaucratic agency staff, for example, mention that "groups of career bureaucrats [that] might see a change in political leadership as an opportunity to reopen old bureaucratic disputes and gain the upper hand on their intra-agency rivals"; they, however, do not consider political power struggle among agency staff in detail (1998, p.181 quoting Pfiffner 1988).

Due to these difficulties, agency remains "flat and impoverished" (Emirbayer & Mische 1998, p.963). The authors therefore suggest conceptualising human agency as "a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)" (ibid., p.963). Agency can then be imagined as a 'chordal triad' of iteration of past routines, projections of future potential action and evaluation of the present practice (ibid., p.970).

The three elements – evaluation, iteration and projection – can be disaggregated into sets of '"internal structures" that translate in simpler language into a process of decision-making with distinct phases of goal or problem identification, information gathering, identification and assessment of alternative options, decision, execution and reflection (Emirbayer & Mische 1998, pp.988-1002). The process ultimately leads to choice; as Jasper in his effort to explain agency in social movements points out: "if agency means anything, it would seem to involve choices" (Jasper 2002, p.2).

According to the theory of strategic choice (Child 1972, 1997), which essentially describes decision-making – and thus agency – as a political process within the organisation, those members with decision-making power negotiate and perform choices based on structural influences such as the expectations of principals, environmental, or societal factors and their own preferences informed by identity.[282] Such a process perspective helps to understand agency since it differentiates between the action in decision-making and structural – either external or intra-organisational – influences on the decision-making process.[283]

The process of making strategic choices can also be understood as a "continuing adaptive learning cycle … within a theoretical framework that locates 'organizational learning' within the context of organizations as socio-political systems" (Child 1997, p.44). Such learning is based on the evaluation of feedback provided by the organisation's environment on decisions taken at an earlier point in time. These feedback and learning loops reach different levels; literature generally describes three forms of

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[282] One relevant and, according to Jasper (2002), underutilised avenue to explain agency in social movements is a stronger focus on micro-foundations of political action – in contrast to the dominating focus on structure.

[283] This understanding embraces the flow of time similar to Margaret Archer's approach of analytical dualism. She proposes isolation of both the structural factors and the agent's actions along temporal ordering and analysis of so-called morphogenetic sequences that constitute social processes (Archer 1995, 2000).

learning, deepening the level of adjustment from 'changing gears' in the implementation of organisational functions (single loop, or first order learning) to changing the functions and policies of the organisation (double loop, or second order learning) to questioning and changing the underlying paradigm, i.e., the goals of strategy behind the organisational functions and the ideas and principles guiding them (triple loop, or third order learning).[284]

Second, explaining organisational agency is problematic since human agency is usually conceptualised as the agency of individuals. The choices discussed above are made by individuals within the organisation (Beckert 1999). Consequently, literature about agency often does not distinguish between agents as individual persons and collective agents, for example in organisations. While mostly concerned with the individual, theory applies to collective agency in the same way, and, even more, assumes that agency is collective because of its societal structure and frame of enactment (Sewell 1992).[285]

Here a clarification is in order since an organisation as an agent, of course, consists of several individuals. As said before, the assumption of the agent as a firm and unitary actor is a convenient fiction for modelling purposes, which ignores conflicts of interest, organisational politics and resulting agency problems (Zajac & Westphal 2002). Child's analysis of strategic choice as well as much of the literature concerned with decision-making and change processes in organisations focuses on elite groups within organisations, e.g., the earlier mentioned change agents. This focus often sidelines the influence of other organisational members on decisions and essentially the 'political' aspect of the decision-making process. While accepting the simplification, the question remains whether leadership preferences are a mirror of greater society surrounding them, or if there is a difference between 'structure in society' and 'structure inside the organisation'.

While some authors follow Giddens' notion of the all-constituting duality of agency and structure, others are less purist and introduce a differentiation "between 'inner' and 'outer' contexts, describing the first in terms of organizational politics, the second almost exclusively in terms of the … 'environment' [that] is portrayed in the language of

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[284] A detailed introduction to organisational learning literature cannot be offered here. The essential references relevant to the discussion here are as follows: on single and double loop learning see Argyris and Schön (1978); on triple loop learning see Flood and Romm (1996); for social learning in organisations see Hall (1993, cited in Grin & Loeber (2006)) and Common (2004).

[285] For a discussion of cross-level theorising in organisation studies see Morgeson and Hofman (1999).

'trends', 'impacts', 'pressures' and triggers'" (Whittington 1992, pp.700-701 referring to Pettigrew 1985). This differentiation is also evident in the discourse on strategic choice, which distinguishes between internal and external constraints, with the latter as environmental constraints and the former as comprising such organisational aspects as, for example, mindsets, expertise and demography of leadership (Child 1997).[286] Whereas this must not imply a disconnection between 'two levels' of structure encompassing rules and resources of individuals in society, it may still serve as a useful distinction for analytical purposes.[287] Agency appears to be informed, constrained or empowered on both 'levels': the organisation is not simply 'embedded' in society (as structuralist determinism suggests), but appears to be "mutually pervasive" with its environment (Child 1997, p.58).

Rather than creating different terms or avoiding the matter, Whittington (1992) suggests an active exploration of the tensions between different and overlapping sets of social structures since these tensions create the potential for change in agency. As mentioned earlier, all actors in an organisation bring along structures from different systems of activity that they are part of. One is the organisation itself with its characteristic properties, e.g., of a bureaucracy, but others involve family, ethnicity, professional unions, political parties, etc. Thus, action in organisations is not guided by one monolithic set of structural rules and resources.

These multiple positions and the respective resources, e.g., a gender or ethnic privilege, inform the identity of the actors and their capacities in different situations in a restraining or enabling way. As Whittington notes, "with access to a diversity of social systems, actors have some choice over the structural principles they enlist in their organisational activities" (Whittington 1992, p.697).[288]

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[286] Similarly, Pemberton develops, based on policy network analysis, three levels of a policy-making terrain that influence organisational learning; they can be described as the organisational culture, the organisation's environment and the wider historical, sociological and political context (Pemberton 2000 cited in Grin & Loeber 2006).

[287] It also points to a more general semantic difficulty in applying the term structure both for the conditions informing agency and the outcome of agency. As Sewell notes, social science appears to be trapped in a terminology of structure that implies stability (Sewell 1992, p.2) and points to Giddens' choice of the term 'structuration', which implies process rather than steady state (ibid., p.4).

[288] Thus, human agency could be rather considered as 'agencies' (Sewell 1992), since there is no singular form of agency that is enacted or appropriate in all social and temporal situations. The multiplicity of agency options is, of course, reduced in principal-agent contracts by the principal's interest in controlling the agent's agency.

Summing up, the two notions above – of agency as a decision-making process and of organisational agency in interplay with society – can be brought together. In order to explain the political process of organisational agency, it is relevant to understand both the particular social and temporal situation of the organisation with its members, and their respective identities and relationships, as well as the organisation's constituting structural characteristics found in society. This was expressed in similar words in the last section. It appears that organisational agency can be explained in the same way, keeping in mind that an organisation does not consist of a homogenous unit but many individual agencies – which are moderated by the contract between principal and agent.

Individual agency was earlier disaggregated into rules and resources that inform agency. It was explained how these rules and resources are manifest in and inform individual identity. The next section will take a closer look at a concept that helps describe different rules and resources relevant for organisational agency through identity: the concept of organisational identity.

3.4.2 Organisational identity as expression of rules and resources for agency

Organisational identity is a concept rarely applied in political science; it is more commonly found in organisational studies and management literature.[289] Like other concepts in this research, it is based on insights from psychology and sociology, and is mostly considered in political settings if discussing questions concerning public management.[290] While the essential concern of classic management scholars such as

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[289] Political studies, and particularly those of international relations, rather apply another concept of corporate identity: that of state identity. For an overview of literature with regards to European state identities see Marcussen et al. (1999); for a reference to state identity and violent conflict see Fearon (1999). Both state and organisational identity treat the corporate actor as a person and encompass functions of distinction from 'out-groups' as well as self-respect and pride for the 'in-group'. The shared ideas of state identity are embedded in the institutions of the state and thus are partly relevant for the discussion of this research. The focus here, however, is on organisational identity since it applies to all three case studies of this research.

[290] One noteworthy exception is Allison's work on governmental decision-making in light of the Cuban missile crisis (1971) – his three models of 'rational actor', 'organisational process' and 'governmental politics' could be read as highlighting different aspects of organisational identity. He, however, does not ar-

Chester Barnard (1938) lies in the conflict between individual goals and organisation goals (Waterman & Meier 1998, p.181), the concept of organisational identity is not often connected explicitly with agency theory. The following will briefly introduce the academic view without going into detail with regards to its manifold interpretations in practical management studies.[291]

The concept of organisational identity is useful for this research since it might provide a comprehensive explanation for agency behaviour. Literature on strategic choice, or agency, does not offer many insights into what constitutes organisational agency in a given situation. Jasper, for one example, in his discussion of strategic choices in social movements does not detail the relevant properties of the actors except for a brief mention of resources and skills (Jasper 2002, p.5). Similarly, most research focuses on a limited set of aspects of leadership, organisational competence and skills.[292]

One of the comprehensive concepts explaining individual agency is identity;[293] and identity is of particular relevance in the context of violent conflict. As seen earlier, identity informs the individual and collective experience as well as the response to violent conflict. The question is then if the concept of organisational identity is similarly helpful to explain organisational agency, as suggested by some authors who consider "organizational identity as an analogue of individual identity, drawing attention to the parallel functions identity plays for both individual and collective social actors" (Whetten 2006, p.219).[294]

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gue that the three models represent distinct identities but rather point to the necessity to look beyond rational actor models.

[291] This section draws heavily on Albert and Whetten's texts on organisational identity (1985, 2004) as well as Whetten's clarifications and validations of the concept (2006).

[292] For an example regarding effective public service see Rainey and Steinbauer (1999); for an overview of organisational characteristics of armed groups see Schlichte (2009).

[293] A similarly comprehensive concept rooted in psychological discourse and explaining collective agency is that of collective personality (Yolles et al. 2010), which discusses the influence of personality traits and context on agency. Given the relevance of social characteristics and comparison, the concept of identity, however, appears more relevant for this research.

[294] Organisational identity is considered as the identity of a collective actor, the organisation as a whole, whereas collective identity refers to the identity of a collection of actors that are not necessarily part of an organised setting (Whetten 2006, p.221). While both organisational and collective identity can for example refer to a certain ethnic identity, the organisational identity of the LTTE was focused on describing itself as 'the sole representative' of the Tamil people (Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008).

Organisational identity is defined by Albert and Whetten (1985, p.265) as the "central, enduring, and distinctive" (CED) set of organisational forms "that distinguish the organization from the others with which it might be compared", or with which the organisation's members might compare themselves.[295] This relatively abstract definition, which is concerned with clarity, distinctiveness and measurability of the concept, can be brought to life through a "hierarchically ordered set of CED organizational attributes, roughly paralleling the social, relational, and personal attribute-sets constituting an individual's composite identity" (Whetten 2006, p. 225). As Whetten (ibid.) explains;

> The highest level of this nested array includes adopted social forms, social categories, and comparable group memberships; the middle level includes established ties with organizations and institutions; and the lower level includes distinguishing organizational practices, competencies, and traits, including organization-specific attributes of members, products, and services. We might also think of these three types or levels of identities as broad categories on a 'menu of available organizational forms' embedded in cultural knowledge.[296]

An illustration shows how the concept applies to this research. The highest level, consisting of social forms and organising logics, can be "considered structural analogues of 'inherent' individual attributes, such as gender and ethnicity" (Whetten 2006, p.226) and evolves naturally with the emergence of the organisation.[297] An example would be

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[295] Whetten points to several inconsistencies in organisational identity literature, which remind of the general discourse on identity; one concerns the question of whether organisational identity is a subjective conception of the observer or a verifiable objective concept (Whetten 2006). Another concern addresses the question of whether identity, if presenting 'enduring' properties, is static. Summarising a substantive scholarly discussion that is reflected in Whetten's article, this author suggests that organisational identity here is considered a dynamic concept that includes conflicting as well as complementing, supporting properties, the effects of which are partly observable by outsiders but are shaped by the subject of identity in the sense of self-definition.

[296] This understanding of nested levels reminds of the concept of organisational culture that also distinguishes between three cognitive levels of manifestations of patterns of behaviour in the organisation – artifacts, values, tacit assumptions – that are visible to different degrees to the observer (Schein 2004). The difference, however, is that identity primarily concerns the sense of self (who we are) and only indirectly aspects of organisational culture (the way things are done). Albert and Whetten (2004, p.91) consider aspects of organisational culture to be part of organisational identity if they are of central, enduring and distinct nature.

[297] This comparison is made on the basis that Whetten assumes that the relative costs of changing these attributes are prohibitively high, as in the example of a bakery switching to be a software firm (Whetten

the establishment of a government body to serve political leadership in a particular area of politics: the fact of being a government body cannot be changed easily after the establishment. At the same time, this high-level aspect of organisational identity informs the lower levels. The organisation will develop relationships with other government bodies or civil society organisations based on the identity trait of a government organisation. Similarly, organisational structure, staff recruitment and the technicalities of service provision will be based on government practices based in the cultural context of the specific environment.

On all three levels, rules and resources for the specific agency of the organisation are defined: if, for example, an organisation is characterised as a bureaucracy, then formalisation is one of its key organisational traits and will as a general rule impact on any activity of the organisation.[298] At the same time, a specific government organisation (e.g., a ministry of foreign affairs) might have specific practices that deviate from the general rule since it maintains specific relationships with particular organisations and parts of society (for example, diplomats from other countries or social movements engaging in peace activism). One of the key resources of an organisation, its expertise and knowledge base incorporated in staff and external services practices, is defined by government practices of professional bureaucracy and public service regulations. Financial resources will be provided through a government budget (but some government bodies might be able to attract third-party funding); and the organisation's power base will be defined through the cultural conventions of the polity: access to political leadership might be relevant in some cases, public interest in the area of service provision in others.

Rather than offering a comprehensive statement on observable elements of organisational identity, the above definition points to three criteria that a statement on identity should satisfy: 'central' refers to features that are seen as the essence of an organisation (we would not be who we are without this trait); 'enduring' refers to features that show continuity and 'sameness'; and 'distinct' signifies the difference of this trait in comparison to others (no other organisation is like us) (Albert & Whetten 2004). These can help to explain organisational behaviour.

2006, p.226). It has to be noted that in this research ethnicity is considered as both an ascribed and acquired identity trait.

[298] This is especially the case if a rule has gained appreciation as a value in society and becomes an institution. North (1990) defines institutions as the constraints that shape social behaviour and consequently organisational agency. See Schlichte (2009) for a discussion of formalisation in armed groups and how it is affected by societal practices.

Like an individual, the organisation's agency is driven by its identity. Identity particularly explains agency in situations that do not lend themselves to be explained by other theories, and especially by rationalist approaches. It has strong emotional ties and is best observed in situations of crisis when the organisation's identity is threatened (Whetten 2006).[299] And just like an individual, an organisation can possess multiple identities that it struggles to reconcile towards a consistent concept – a process that often leads to suppression of alternative behaviour patterns in favour of the dominant identity claim.[300]

Due to its abstract character, Albert and Whetten's definition does not emphasise the emotional relevance of organizational identity as a concept of self-definition and self-actualization for the organisation's members. This quality becomes more apparent in a definition of collective identity as the "cognitive, moral, and emotional connections with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, and it is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity" (Polletta & Jasper 2001, p.284). As mentioned earlier, social movement studies use collective identity extensively "both as a necessary precursor and product of movement collective action" (Hunt & Benford 2004, p.433). Discussing literature findings regarding collective identity's contribution towards building commitment, the authors also summarise that "collective identities facilitate commitment by enhancing the bonding to leadership, belief systems, organizations, rituals, cohorts, networks, and localities" (ibid, p.448).[301]

Similarly, organisational identity informs individual identification with the organisation, formation of in-group identities versus out-group identities, and a feeling of 'we-ness' (Erikson 1980; Albert & Whetten 2004). Much of management literature is concerned with the use of this motivational aspect of organisational identity in the sense of a

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[299] The authors developed the concept when no other explanation was satisfying in order to explain seemingly irrational responses to budget cuts at their university (Whetten 2006).

[300] In line with Whetten et al. (2009) and Morgeson and Hofmann (1999) who argue that organisational constructs can be borrowed from other levels of analysis if they have the same functions, findings with respect to individual identity are here used asides findings regarding organisational identity.

[301] Although having explained earlier that organisational and collective identities are not identical, findings on both are here combined. While organisational identity expresses the self-concept of an organisation, it can be argued that the collective identity of the organisation's members is based on identification with this very self-concept.

management tool for the organisation's leadership.[302] The concern of this research is not to help devise organisational identity as a tool to control and align organisational agency deliberately. Rather, it is argued that organisational identity as it emerges through involuntary identification with the principal (in the case studies the respective leaders of government, LTTE, and the Muslim political parties) helps explain agency through establishing the rules and resources that guide the agent (here the peace secretariats).[303]

With the fundamental identity-based differences between the three principals of the case studies in mind, the concept then might be able to explain agency behaviour, or also inter-agency differences in the fulfilment of similar functions in similar situations, as the agents themselves perceived them. In the following, a more detailed discussion of organisational identity traits will be offered, which might help establish the explanation for differences or similarities in agency. The identity traits appear to be determinants of the agency of bureaucratic and armed group actors.

3.4.3 Exploring identity traits of the peace secretariats

The discussion of identity traits that follows does not assume complete coverage of all possible relevant identity traits that define organisational behaviour. Literature cannot offer generalised comprehensive overviews since organisational behaviour is situation specific. This research does not have the capacity to filter and connect the extensive literature body on potential explanations of organisational behaviour to the concept of organisational identity.[304] Rather than attempting the impossible, this section refers

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[302] While much literature outlines the benefits of organisational identification, some authors point to downsides as well, that might be of interest for this research: reduced ability to adapt to changing demand from constituencies and from exogenous crises; stereotyping of outgroup members and increased level of conflict; over-conformity to organisational dictates, decreased risk taking and creativity (Pratt 1998).

[303] The notion that this identification is unintentional does not rule out that the respective principals might have been well aware of it and for example have selected politically aligned staff for management positions. To the knowledge of the author, however, organisational identity was not applied as a deliberate management tool to control agency of the peace secretariats.

[304] Identity traits that explain organisational behaviour are often discussed in the context of functional performance (i.e., the effectiveness of a specific organisation type), organisational development or change. Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) for example propose 12 conditions of identity traits with 29 sub-

back and sums up findings from the literature used to develop the conceptual framework so far. The relevance of the literature in light of empirical findings serves as a criterion for screening and selection.

Without foregoing analysis of the empirical data, interview partners' descriptions of the peace secretariats can be summarised following Albert and Whetten's definition of organisational identity as the central, enduring, and distinctive traits. These descriptions, it can be argued, form part of the organisations' identities.[305]

First, the secretariats are characterised by relative proximity to the respective principals.[306] The principals of all peace secretariats have direct access to the organisations' services and command work; and vice versa the secretariats (albeit the LTTE secretariat to a reduced extent) have direct access to the principals.[307] The principals personally appoint agency heads and consider them as their personal advisors; and (in the case of the government) the head of the organisation as a political position is exchanged when the principal changes (through election).

This trait can be explained with principal-agent theory as well as with social movement theory. In both, mobilisation of commitment and alignment of agency can be increased through proximity of the agent to the principal. Proximity or access can be both an avenue for control as well as an incentive, since it lends recognition and power vis-à-vis third parties to the agent. Agency staff selection and political appointments are part

conditions for effective public bureaucracies. Caiden (1991) offers an overview of ca. 175 bureaupathologies that could be – following Caiden's explanation – interpreted as elements of organisational identity traits at the second and third level of Albert and Whetten's definition. Similarly, a discussion of organisational determinants in social movements in general does not shed much light on a particular movement organisation since the concept is so wide that organisational aspects can hardly be compared beyond their common general features (Diani 1992).

[305] This section does not argue that the three entities can be compared with a view to their legitimisation. It only attempts to show that the identities of all three are based on the same identity traits without being identical. Moreover, the terminology sometimes does not suit the description of the LTTE as an armed group; since the description of the phenomena is nevertheless valid, the author prefers not to complicate the argument with more differentiated terminology.

[306] While earlier chapters referred to the political and LTTE heads as leadership, this section as much as this chapter altogether refers to them as principals while considering the heads of the secretariats as agency leaders.

[307] Although the peace secretariats are formally subordinated to other units, the relationships with the principals are considered to be of an immediate nature since they are considered to be service providers in the original meaning of the word secretary. The word secretary comes from the Latin *secretarius* ("one entrusted with secrets") and refers to a 'confidential officer'.

of the mechanisms described in literature on controlling agency in political settings in light of limited options to provide material incentives to the agent (Moe 1984; Shapiro 2005). Given the power asymmetry between principal and agent in all cases, this is a relationship of subordination, even though the mandate of the organisation might include advisory services. While Moe (2005) highlights the power of the agent over the principal – as political control in reverse where the bureaucrats have power over political principals through election – this appears not relevant for the cases in this research, as outlined earlier in the chapter on Sri Lankan background. Political patronage and the organisational characteristics of an armed group certainly influence the power dynamics otherwise assumed in western democratic models.

Second, all peace secretariats are described as being closely aligned with the political goals and strategies of the respective principals. The secretariats' personnel interpret the mandates according to political feasibility and appropriateness; rules of the respective organisational backgrounds as government organisation, political party affiliate or armed group organisation are internalised. This leads to high levels of predictability of behaviour, which is a key feature of bureaucracy (Moe 1995). Furthermore, in the case of the government and the Muslim peace secretariats political sensibilities of the principals and their coalition partners and constituencies are taken into account. The secretariats identify themselves strongly with their principals and their political strategy and display a significant amount of loyalty[308]; political affinity or useful political connections often play a role in leadership selection.

Identification with the principal's goals and strategies serves both as a rule for organisational decision-making – and thus as a control mechanism for agency – as well as a resource for the agent, since the organisation gains reputational status and power from alignment with the principal. For bureaucracies in political contexts, this relationship can be summed up with the concept of politicisation (Rouban 2003).[309] In contrast, agency of the armed group organisation does not underlie political uncertainty as described in Moe's model (1995). Rather, the agent appears to 'belong' to the autocratic principal very much in the sense of the classic economic principal-agent

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[308] Loyalty and commitment to the strategy of the respective principal is even displayed ex post: the interviews took place after two of the organisations ceased to exist and often the interview partners had left earlier. Exceptions are some of the interviews regarding the Muslim peace secretariat where dissatisfaction with strategy and governance influenced the interviewees' perspectives.

[309] According to Rouban (2003, p.311), politicisation of public service is distinguished in three distinct phenomena that can coincide: participation of the bureaucracy in political decision-making, political control over nominations and careers in the bureaucracy, and the political involvement of bureaucracy staff.

model in which the principal holds contractual authority as the proprietor of a company. In armed groups, independence of individual movement organisations is rare; identification with the group and its principals is bound to be strong, otherwise betrayal and fractionalisation are suspected. In this sense, there is an involuntary and undemocratic element in identification: both in armed groups and in political patronage systems, alignment can be explicitly or implicitly enforced and the use of violence or patronage reduces the influence of oppositional stakeholders on the agent.

Third, despite politicisation and identification all peace secretariats are described as professional and formalised organisations with separate missions, goals, budgets and offices. The secretariats of the government and the LTTE are part of a larger organisational hierarchy. The secretariats are aware of their specific expertise that gives them a particular position in the hierarchy; however, they consider themselves more as experts than as policy makers. Thus, the agents, for example, avoid the role of mediation in political conflict between principal and opposition.[310] In the cases of the government and Muslim peace secretariats, opposition stakeholder groups' concerns are anticipated and conflict avoided, just as most involvement in politically sensitive issues altogether.

Again, two key features of bureaucracy seem important: professionalism and predictability of behaviour. Earlier mentioned literature on bureaucratic agency mentions professionalism and predictability as properties that ease principals' efforts to control agency, though professionalism is considered to have ambiguous effects (Rainey & Steinbauer 1999), as it increases the bureaucrats' sense of empowerment and independence at the same time as it strengthens their codes of conduct. Embedding agency in organisational structure with internalised bureaucratic standards and rules similarly encourages rule- and role-consistent behaviour. The organisational identity of bureaucracies generally encourages staff self-images as experts and service providers rather than as policy makers. Whereas building relationships with opposition interest groups is mentioned in literature as a strategy of bureaucratic agency in western democracy, this seems not to be a feasible option in Sri Lankan politics. But again, refraining from involvement in politically sensitive issues is not unusual in public service in other contexts as well, as Bach (2010) shows for bureaucrats in Germany.

Fourth and finally, both the government and the LTTE peace secretariats are described as well-equipped and staffed. Access to funding and other resources appears

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[310] This does not apply to the LTTE peace secretariat given the LTTE's mostly violent approach towards intra-group opposition.

not to be a problem; in the government's case, it is provided from the government budget after initial external support. Both secretariats' offices and equipment are considered to be outstanding from their respective organisations' environments, which leads to acknowledgement but also critical comments (especially in the case of the LTTE). In the case of the Muslim secretariat, the material situation is less comfortable and depends fully on external funding.[311] In all three cases, interviewees observe that the secretariats' funding situation is 'telling' something about their standing and relevance.

Literature confirms that the level of resource allocation is often considered as an indicator of the relative importance of an organisation's mandate and role in overall bureaucracy. This is mirrored in organisational artifacts such as facilities, offices, furnishings and equipment, as much as in staff's ways of interactions with each other and with outsiders.[312] This part of organisational culture is often designed by leadership in order to create a self-image of the organisation (Rainey & Steinbauer 1999; Schein 2004). According to this interpretation, both the government and the LTTE peace secretariats appear to be in important positions.[313] There is, however, another explanation offered in literature that resonates in some of the critical remarks of interviewees: funding and material aspects of organisational identity can also be chosen deliberately to symbolise a particular status and value without actual validation of importance. The location and appearance of offices serves then as a mask, or as a façade, but also – once the true relevance is detected – as a metaphor for revealing the true organisational identity. In this interpretation, agency, or the agent's power, is symbolic and serves interests of the principal other than those stated in agency mandates. The empirical discussion will return to this aspect later.

Summing up, this discussion has offered organisational identity as an explanation for organisational agency and proposes four concrete identity traits that help characterise the cases of this research and their respective agency. These traits are: proximity to principal, political alignment/identification, professionalism and access to resources.

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[311] All three secretariats received support from international donors in terms of funding and capacity building and advise.

[312] For a detailed discussion see the chapter on empirical findings.

[313] Although the LTTE secretariat received continuous funding from external sources, it can be argued that the LTTE's acceptance and allocation of funding in a particular way can be read as a deliberate statement of importance.

While in some of the discussion above the respective principals appear to have a strong hand in identity formation – or design – it has to be kept in mind that organisational identity is not formed only by the principal-agent contract. The previous chapter pointed to the influence of structure on agency: it comprises both the generalised structural properties of polity and society as well as their situational characteristics. The latter includes, as introduced in the previous section, the form of government, the type of conflict as well as its phase. These aspects of structure inform organisational agency via their influence on identity formation – of individuals and organisations.

3.4.4 Introducing identity to the conceptual framework

The conceptual framework developed so far treated the agent as a 'black box' that is determined by structure and the contract with its principal. Literature in the earlier parts of this chapter refers to the interplay between agency and structure and the agent's capacity to shape agency within or beyond the principal-agent contract. This capacity makes transformational change possible; however, it is often not clear in literature what determines this transformational capacity. The earlier oft-quoted Giddens speaks of self-reflective knowledge, but remains rather vague in explaining how this reflexivity is brought about.

Section 3.4 therefore takes a closer look at agency as a decision-making and learning process. Since this research is concerned with organisational agency, these processes have to be understood within their respective contexts. Organisational agency is then explained through the concept of organisational identity, in analogy to individual identity explaining individual agency.

Identity thus has to be introduced to the conceptual framework by integrating the four identity traits in the fourth assumption of the research and also in the framework by filling the 'black box' of the organisation.

Recapitulating assumption 4, it was posited that:

> *Both external context-related factors and internal organisational characteristics determine the organisation's contributions to conflict transformation.*

The previous section on structure then led to the concretisation of the context-related factors:

4a. Context-related factors encompass the form of government, the type of violent conflict and the conflict phase.

This section now adds the concretisation of the organisational characteristics:

4b. Internal characteristics are expressed in the organisation's identity, with traits such as proximity to the principal, political alignment/identification, professionalism and access to resources.

The figure below accordingly captures both the identity traits and the aspects of structure in the political and violent conflict setting:
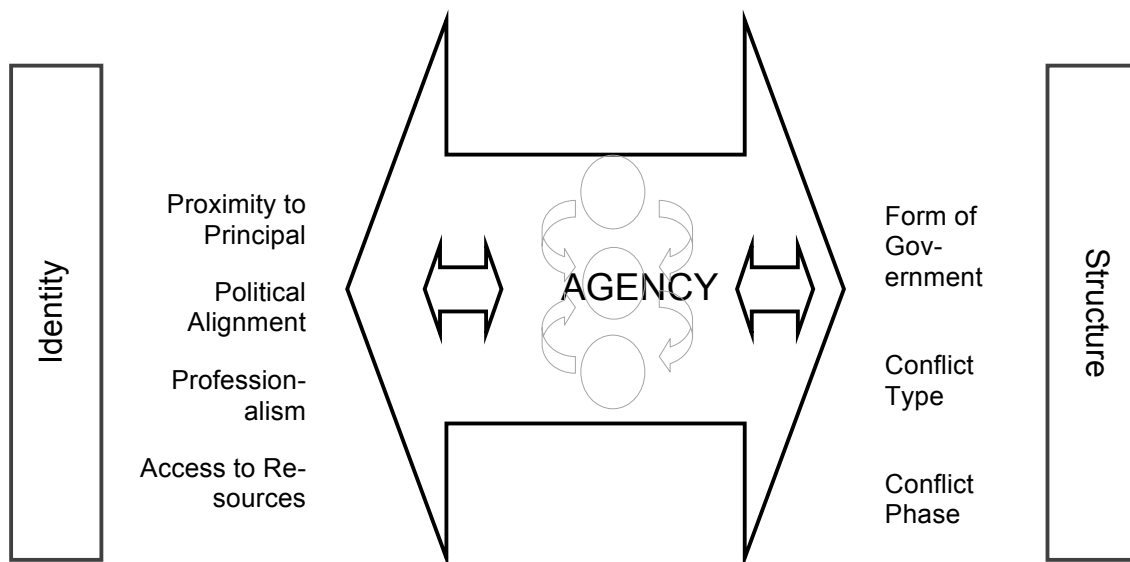
Figure 3.5: Agency in interplay with organisational identity and structure

Mindful of the earlier understanding of agency as a process of decision-making and learning which helps to understand agency as a mutual interplay of agency and structure, the visualisation can be adapted through the introduction of two loops that represent the process and flow of time. It has to be noted that the loops between identity and agency and agency and structure in figure 3.6 are not two separate closed circuits (in the sense of oo) but interconnected through agency (in the sense of the lemniscates, or infinity symbol ∞). Structure thus informs agency and through agency identity, as well as identity informs agency and thus structure.

IDENTITY   STRUCTURE
PROXIMITY TO PRINCIPAL   FORM OF
POLITICAL ALIGNMENT/   GOVERNMENT
IDENTIFICATION   CONFLICT TYPE
PROFESSIONALISM   CONFLICT PHASE
ACCESS TO RESOURCES
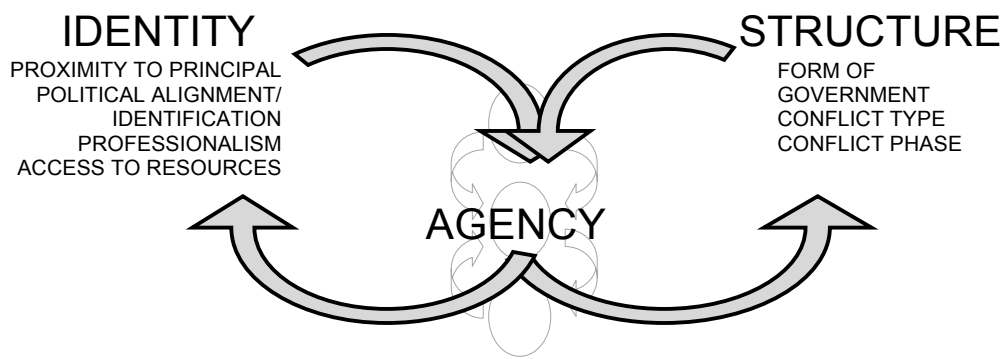
AGENCY

Figure 3.6: Dynamic interplay of agency with identity and structure

The level to which agency informs both structure and identity, i.e., affects change, can be described in terms of the learning loops that were introduced earlier. Change can be initiated through the agent in terms of first order learning, which leads 'only' to an incremental change in the performance of organisational functions. Or agency can be affected by second or even third order learning if functions and policies, or even underlying paradigms, are changed.

While a first order learning experience, e.g., the increase of press releases within the communication function of the peace secretariats, might not result in changes of identity and structure, second or third order learning and resulting decision-making might have such transformative impact.[314] A change in policy, e.g., the decision to participate in problem solving activities with representatives of the other conflict parties or to engage their own constituency in a dialogue on peace process-related issues, can result in structural or actor transformation. Likewise, a paradigm change affected by a third order learning experience might have transformative impact if, for example, a conflict party decides to end military confrontation and to disarm, or if a conflict party decides to engage in constitutional reform that will affect the roots of the violent conflict.

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[314] Note that these examples draw on the types of transformation introduced in section 2.2.3 and figure 2.4. Identity in these examples refers to the identity of the conflict party, of which a peace secretariat is one part. In this section identity refers to the organisational identity, of which identification with the conflict party is one aspect.

3.5 Integration of the Conceptual Framework

Chapter 2 ended with a discussion regarding the interpretation of the mandate by the peace secretariat: If the delegated mandate clearly indicates an integrative or distributive negotiation strategy, the peace secretariat does not have much room for interpretation. If the mandate, however, appears vague, flexible or based on an ambivalent strategy, the peace secretariat has to interpret the mandate. The question was then which factors influence the process of interpretation and implementation.

This led to chapter 3 and the second step in the conceptual framework, which has agency at its core. Whereas principals (under the influence of interest groups and third parties) delegate the mandate, the interpretation and implementation of the mandate is subject to the agent's agency.

The understanding of secretarial agency in dynamic interplay with identity and structural conditions as captured in the third chapter results in amendments to some conceptual elements developed in the second chapter.

First, building on the assumptions and findings of the theoretical discussion, the working definition of peace secretariats developed in chapter 2 needs to be refined in order to express agency:

> *Peace secretariats are units within a larger organisation or an independent organisation that have been established by and are closely affiliated with at least one of the conflict parties. These agents implement a mandate with the purpose of supporting the parties with services relating to the negotiation, dialogue or mediation process or the implementation of process results before, during or after official peace talks.*

Second, assumption 3 needs to reflect the interpretation and negotiation of the mandate by the agent more clearly and is reframed accordingly in chapter 3:

> *The mandate of peace secretariats as support structures for negotiations is defined by the negotiators, based on their respective strategies and on third-party advice, and is interpreted and implemented by the secretariats.*

In addition, chapter 3 discusses factors that influence this interpretation and thus agency; it distinguishes between context, or structure, and internal characteristics, or organisational identity.

The following assumptions are therefore added in the course of chapter 3:

> *Both external context-related factors and internal organisational characteristics determine the organisation's contributions to conflict transformation.*

> *4a. Context-related factors encompass the form of government, the type of violent conflict and the conflict phase.*

> *4b. Internal characteristics are expressed in the organisation's identity, with traits such as proximity to the principal, political alignment/identification, professionalism and access to resources.*

This interplay was expressed visually in figure 3.6, which connects agency with identity and structure. How can this interplay be brought into connection with the interactions and functions of the first part of the conceptual framework – how can they be integrated as agency determinants and expressions?

Interactions and functions from the first part of the conceptual framework can be depicted in interplay with agency. This integration of the framework is discussed with the help of two examples: If the peace secretariat's mandate is interpreted in an integrative way and leads to contributions in conflict transformation, this transformation will in turn affect the interactions of the peace secretariat, the manifestation of role conflicts and thus parts of the context that determined the negotiation strategy in the first place. Similarly, transformation of issues in the perspective of the negotiators, which was induced through consultations conducted by the secretariats, might lead to restrategising in the negotiation team and consequently changed mandates and functions of the peace secretariat.

As a result, functions and interactions can be read as aspects of identity and structure, respectively.

The functions defined with the mandate of the peace secretariat can be understood as a part of their organisational identity: without mandate and functions the peace secretariats would not exist. The earlier definition of organisational identity as the central, enduring, and distinctive (CED) set of organisational forms that distinguish the organisation from others (Albert & Whetten 1985) suits the organisational mandate and the

secretarial functions as part of it. Since organisational identity is understood as a dynamic concept, changes in mandate, just as much as in other aspects of identity, are possible.

Placing the interactions in the interplay between agency and structure is a bit more difficult.[315] Interactions describe the ways the peace secretariats relate to the actors in the negotiation setting and beyond. The earlier discussion in chapter 2 shows that it is not so much the activity itself that determines contributions to conflict transformation, but the manner in which it is conducted.[316] Thus, the particular rules matter that guide interaction. Arguing that interactions can be described as the enactment of rules, however, they will here be placed on the side of structure and accordingly integrated into the framework as shown in figure 3.7.

IDENTITY   STRUCTURE

FUNCTIONS AND   INTERACTION AND
MANDATE   ENACTMENT OF
                           RULES
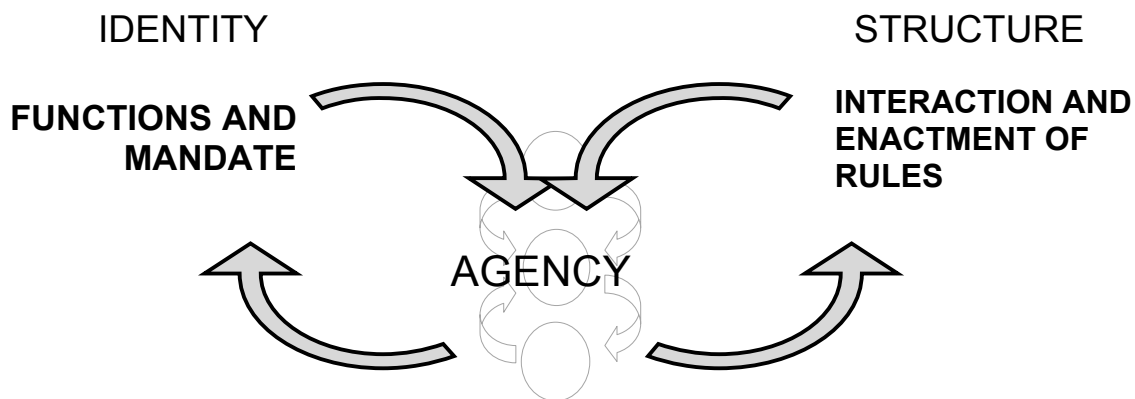
AGENCY

Figure 3.7: Agency in interplay with identity and structure including mandates and interaction rules

This integration of the elements of functions and interactions from the first part of the conceptual framework into the conception of agency of the peace secretariats ends

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[315] Chapter 3 repeatedly referred to Giddens' and other authors who argue that agency and structure cannot be divided since they represent different sides of the same coin, or the two faces of Janus. As mentioned earlier in section 3.1.3, one of the central difficulties of this conceptual framework lies in the agency-structure dilemma, which makes a clear categorisation of aspects as part of agency or structure difficult.

[316] This reminds of the presentation of structure in chapter 3. Role conflicts that determine interactions are based on rules, traditions, norms and codes in the specific context of violent conflict. This is what constitutes structure in Giddens' sense (1979, 1984).

the theoretical discussion. As a next step, the conceptual framework needs to be op-erationalised with a view to presenting the empirical findings.

Chapter 4 Summary and Operationalisation of the Conceptual Framework

The previous two chapters presented the theoretical foundations of this research, which will be summarised here in the form of a conceptual framework consisting of two visualised parts.

The empirical chapters 5, 6 and 7 will present 'interpretations' of the framework for each case of this research, and the concluding chapters 9 and 10 will discuss the usefulness of the framework for this research and beyond.

The author is aware that the framework is only a preliminary effort at explaining the agency of negotiation support organisations. The empirical material discussed in this research is not sufficient to argue for the general validity of the suggested framework beyond the three cases. Thus, the concluding chapters will raise relevant questions for further development and validation. Nevertheless, the framework serves the purpose of connecting the theoretical arguments, and of clarifying them by means of visualisation and by exemplifying them with the three cases of this research.

The conceptual framework as developed in sections 2.4 and 3.5 consists of two parts:

1. the functions and interactions of peace secretariats bringing together negotiation support and conflict transformation;

2. the understanding of agency as affected by/affecting identity and structure and thus potentially influencing interpretation and implementation of the mandate, i.e., the functions and interactions of the peace secretariats.

In the following, the two parts are brought together and operationalised in order to make them useful for the analysis of the empirical findings.

4.1 Functions of the Peace Secretariats

As a first step, the functions of the peace secretariats as described by the interview partners are analysed. Interview partners were asked about their understanding of the peace secretariat mandates, its objectives and the activities described in mission statements, strategy documents and other manifestations of the mandate. While the mandates depict the formalised and official version of the objectives and activities of

the secretariats, the former staff, their partners, as well as observers and supporters describe how the work of the peace secretariats in daily life looked. Their views of the functions are described regarding their significance (which functions were important for which reasons; which dominated the activities, left the strongest impression) and along a timeline (which functions were dominant at which stage).

The term significance refers to the dominance of the functions in the memory of the interview partners; it does not refer to the relevance or effectiveness of the activities as defined for evaluation standards (OECD 2007). In addition, it should be noted that these are subjective views of the interview partners as a product of qualitative interviews. Activity levels were not measured in any objective way. It might therefore be the case that other persons have different views on the functions and their contribution to conflict transformation.

The description of functions follows the list from section 2.3.3, which is in figure 4.1, repeated for easy reference:

Secretarial functions:

- providing accompanying secretarial, administrative, logistical and other supportive services during peace negotiations;

Capacity building functions:

- providing information (e.g., on other peace processes), advisory services and building individual and collective capacities of the conflict party representatives relevant to the overall peace process;

- initiating or preparing political proposals for negotiations for individual parties or joint proposals for further discussion, e.g., constitutional drafts (often in collaboration with other agencies of the negotiating party);

Communication and consultation functions:

- information sharing and communication strategy during negotiations;

- coordination and consultation with other stakeholders and civil society, building of intra-party consensus; encouraging public participation in the peace process;

Facilitation functions:

- confidence building between the parties on procedural matters related to the peace talks, or on special issues (e.g., reduction of violence);

- supporting formal or informal communication between parties (also in support of crisis management), e.g., serving as a backchannel;

Implementation functions:

- facilitating, steering or guiding particular political and societal processes as part of the overall peace process (during and after negotiations), e.g., truth and reconciliation, human rights documentation, compensation of victims, demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration processes; and

- monitoring the implementation of negotiation results (e.g., on reduction of violence, arms control, disarmament, resettlement of IDPs, etc.).

Figure 4.1: List of functions

In order to summarise the interpretation the functions, these are presented in a 'word cloud', a visual representation of text data based on the method of creating so-called 'tag clouds' that present the prominence of terms on websites. These clouds present the compared significance of the functions and later the types of conflict transformation. An example of a word cloud in this chapter is given in the following figure 4.1, showing that 'peace secretariats' and 'functions' feature dominantly in the text.[317]

Conflict   Functions

transformation

interview   peace secretariats
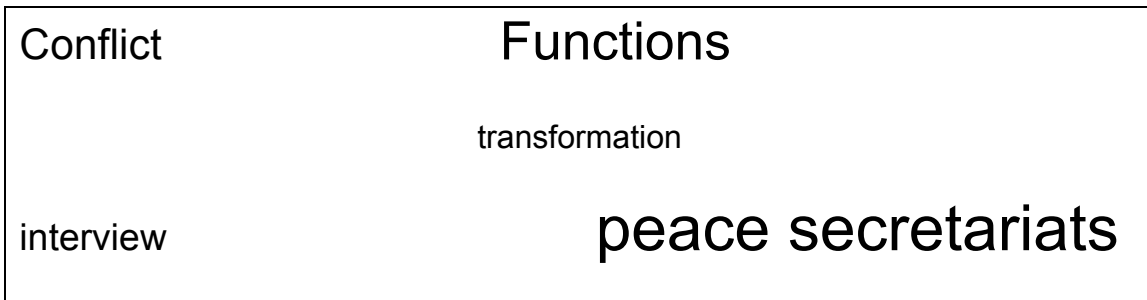
Figure 4.2: Example of word cloud

The presentation of the functions along a timeline is based on narratives of the interview partners. Interview partners described the 'achievements' of the peace secretariats along a timeline, using events of their own choice to outline the timeline. Based on these narratives that, for example, referred to the peace talks in 2002/2003, the pre-

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[317] The dominance of the functions and later types of conflict transformation, however, is not derived from the number of their appearance in the text of the thesis. These word clouds are based on the qualitative assessment of the interview partners when asked about dominant functions.

paration of the ISGA proposals at the end of 2003 or the Geneva talks in 2006, an overall picture emerges and is visualised along an axis of years and an axis of significance levels that are roughly differentiated as low, medium and high. Figure 4.2 below shows the functions of SCOPP as an example for such a timeline:
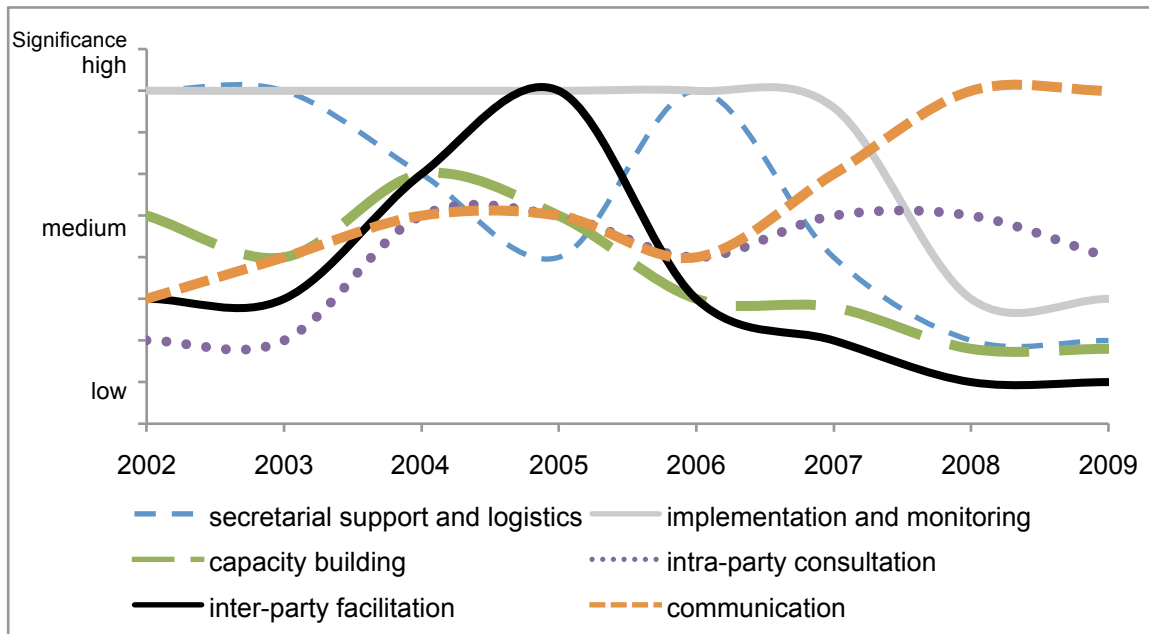
Figure 4.3: Example of timeline of peace secretariat functions

In order to read the timeline against the real life events in which the peace secretariats played a role, annex 2 provides a timeline of relevant events during the years 2002-2009. This timeline should not be confused with a complete chronology of the Sri Lankan conflict or the last peace process. The information provided stems from literature, interviews conducted for the research, and from unpublished material provided by interview partners.

4.2 Contribution to Conflict Transformation

The next step of analysis leads from the functions to the conflict transformation contributions. This part of the analysis answers the research question regarding the contribution of the peace secretariats to conflict transformation.

Based on interview findings, the secretariats' functions or concrete activities are linked to the types of conflict transformation. Here, the interviews did not provide sufficiently explicit data since the sources either did not elaborate on conflict transformation contributions explicitly or did not present their views on the transformative contributions according to the terminology used in this research. Therefore, the author had to rely on her own interpretation of the interview data in order to explore the transformative contributions.

Again, a word cloud is used to visualise the significance, or prominence of transformative contributions according to the interview findings. Miall's categories of types of conflict transformation (Miall 2004) are used to describe the different contributions. They were introduced in section 2.2.3 and are repeated here for convenience:

Context transformations	change in the international or regional environment
Structure transformations	change from asymmetric to symmetric relations; change in power structures; changes of markets of violence
Actor transformations	changes of leadership; changes of goals; intra-party change; change in party's constituencies; changing actors
Issue transformations	transcendence of contested issues; constructive compromise; changing issues; delinking or re-linking issues
Personal/elite transformations	changes of perspective; changes of heart; changes of will; gestures of conciliation

In a next step, the functions are linked to the types of conflict transformation in a visualisation presented in chapter 2 and repeated in figure 4.3. This connection shows in a simple way which functions led to certain transformative effects and is useful to summarise the complex qualitative descriptions based on the interviewees' narratives.
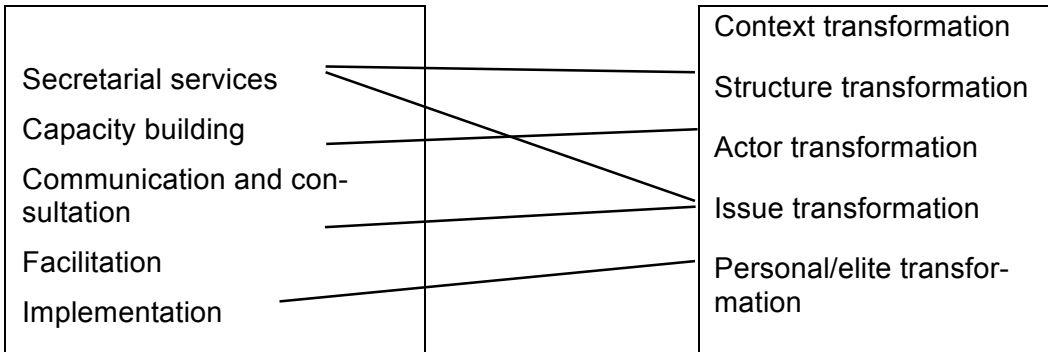
Figure 4.4: Example of connections between conflict transformation and peace secretariat functions

Since the analysis led to the discovery of unintended consequences of some of the functions and some functions showed conflicting effects in the overall conflict system, these effects are explored and visualised as well. Systemic feedback loops describe the positive, or reinforcing, and negative, or counteracting, effects that increase or oppose the input of the original function. Figure 4.4 below shows an example of feedback loops used to describe the engagement of political leadership in a peace process.
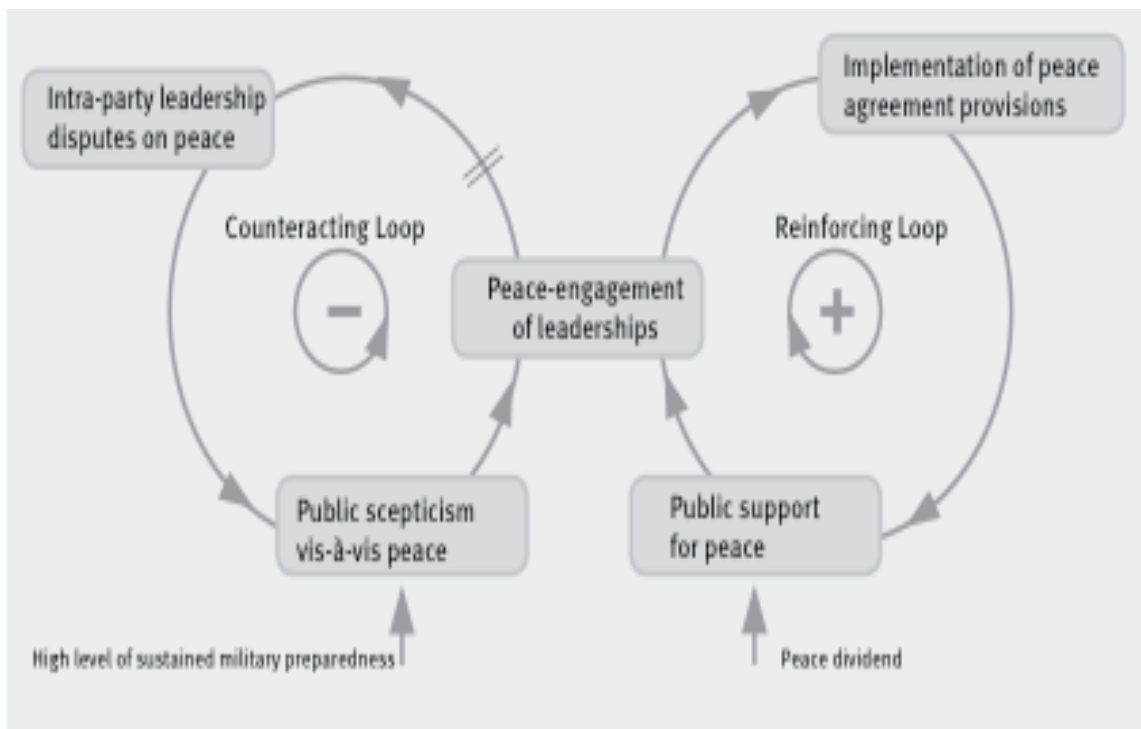
Figure 4.5: Example of feedback loops[318]

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[318] The figure is derived from Ropers (2008, p.14).

The form of visualisation of feedback loops will be used to explain the interconnectedness of different transformative contributions of the peace secretariats in the following chapters.

The analysis of the functions and the transformative contributions of the secretariats led to the realisation that aside from operational activities the secretariats also had a symbolic relevance rooted in their sheer existence. This symbolic function contributed to the overall transformative effects of the peace secretariats as well. In fact, in some of the interviews the symbolism of the secretariats appears as the strongest impact the secretariats had on the overall peace process. The symbolism of the peace secretariats is therefore discussed in a separate section in each chapter.

4.3   Interactions of the Peace Secretariats

The third step of the analysis explains the conflict transformation contributions, or agency of the peace secretariats in general, based on the interactions with their principals, their secretariat counterparts and other relevant interlocutors.

Here, the visualisation presented earlier in section 2.3.2 will be developed further. The peace secretariats were placed within triangles of their constituency and in interaction with the facilitator as well as with other stakeholders. Figure 4.5 below adds a new component from the third chapter: the relationship between peace secretariat as agent and its principal in person of the respective leadership of each conflict party. According to the terminology introduced in chapter 3, the peace secretariats are named agents (A) and their leaders are called principals. The facilitator is indicated with F.
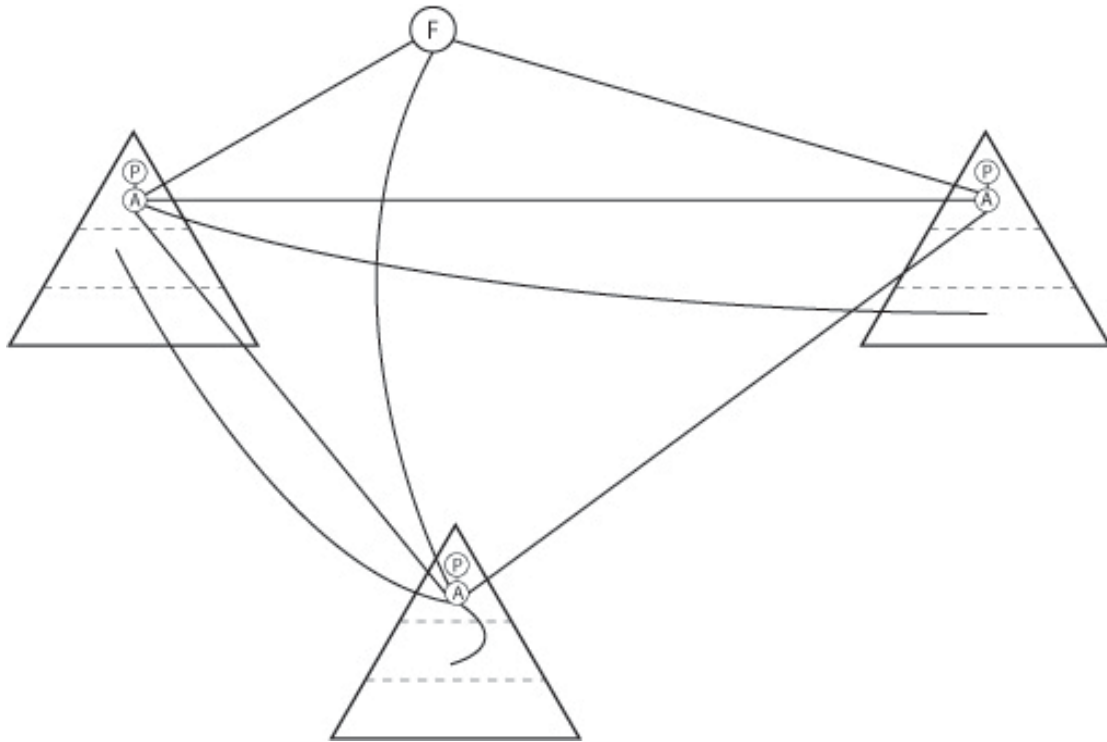
Figure 4.6: Example of peace secretariats' interactions

In the following case studies, the interactions will be visualised for each peace secretariat separately.[319] Accordingly, the interlocutors of the secretariats vary since the peace secretariats interacted with different actors, in particular within their respective constituency and organisational environment (depicted in the respective triangles). A legend will detail the different actors.

The level of interaction will be differentiated as low, medium and strong according to the interview results. Again, these results are subject to individual perceptions and interpretation.

4.4   Identity of the Peace Secretariats

As explained earlier, interactions and identity inform the agency of the peace secretariats. Thus, the identity of the secretariats will be described on the basis of the interview findings and additional literature.

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[319] In order to show the details of the intra-party relationships, the description and visualisation will 'zoom in' on the respective triangle and depict it as bigger than the others. This does not imply relative size or importance.

While figure 3.7 brought together functions and interactions with structure and identity elements that determine agency, the discussion in the case studies will focus on the identity aspects only, e.g., proximity to the principal, political alignment and the professionalism of the secretariats. In addition, characteristics of the organisational environment of each secretariat play a strong role in defining organisational identity.

Agency-determining elements of structure, in particular the conflict phase, are partly included in the description of the functions since they are reflected in the timeline presented earlier. The other elements of structure discussed in section 3.3 present the overall background for the three peace secretariats and were already presented in the background chapter on Sri Lanka. They did not play a significant role in the interviews since they were seen as a given aspect of the conflict system.

4.5 Comparison of the Peace Secretariats

Each chapter ends with a summary of the findings. These serve as 'filters' to develop the overall findings of the empirical research, which are presented in chapter 8 and further discussed in chapters 9 and 10.

It needs to be noted that the individual summaries and chapter 8 will not offer a comparison of the findings in detail since the purpose of this research is not to compare the achievements and performance of the peace secretariats against each other.

Thus, the significance of the various functions of the peace secretariats, the connection between functions and conflict transformation types, or their interactions will not be compared on the basis of the detailed descriptions and graphs. The portraits of the three peace secretariats will stand on their own.

Instead, the findings will be used to reflect on the validity of the conceptual framework and its value for explaining the behaviour of the three organisations. For this purpose, findings need to be aggregated in chapter 8 and synthesised in chapter 9.

Part III: Empirical Findings: The Peace Secretariats in Sri Lanka

Chapter 5 From Quiet Helpers in the Second Row to Propaganda Machinery – Analysis of Findings on the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process

The self-description of the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process on its website described the secretariat as "the main instrument of the Government to consolidate and strengthen the peace process" (SCOPP n.d., n.pag.). Despite this understanding and a wide range of described activities, several former staff and observer interviewees felt that the central role of SCOPP was not recognised sufficiently in general, and in particular towards the end of its operation time.[320] This chapter explores the different perspectives on the secretariat's efforts, its potential for conflict transformation, and its limitations during the peace process and the following years of warfare.

This discussion, after a short section with background information, begins with an analysis of the functions of the secretariat, their adjustment over time, and their relative significance. In the second section, contributions to conflict transformation are identified on the basis of the interview findings. Achievements and limitations are discussed in the third section on the basis of the interactions of the secretariat, which sheds light on the structural aspects interplaying with agency. The fourth section explores the secretariat's scope for agency based on insights regarding the organisational identity of SCOPP, while the fifth section returns to the functions of the secretariat and considers their symbolic relevance. The last section summarises the findings in a 'nutshell' that will be useful for the later synthesis of findings.

5.1 Introduction to SCOPP

While the introductory section on Sri Lanka in chapter 1 described several aspects of the Sri Lankan state relevant to an understanding of the ethno-political conflict between Sri Lankan governments and the LTTE, here the focus is on those characterist-

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[320] As one interviewee noted, "unfortunately nobody noticed" the wide spectrum of activities and "that is why the government thought that it was a waste of money" to continue SCOPP's existence beyond 2009 (Interview 21). Another interviewee wondered about the lack of recognition from the international community, as they (themselves being public servants and government employees) should understand how government agencies work "without talking so much about it" (Interview 23).

ics of the state bureaucracy that appear important to contextualise the government agency SCOPP. These can be described as having a duality of feudal-patrimonial and rational-legal elements that embraces most aspects of bureaucratic governance in Sri Lanka (Hewege et al. 2008).

Whereas popular discourse highlights the politicisation of government bureaucracy as a matter relating to the power struggle between political parties and the resulting 'administration capture' by politicians from the 1970s and in particular the presidency of Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga (CBK) from 1994 to 2005 (Fernando 2006), it needs to be noted that patrimonial and feudal elements in bureaucracy have precolonial roots and were maintained and integrated into the administrative system under colonial rule, combining Weberian elements of bureaucracy with political patronage.[321] The increasing politicisation of the public service made the bureaucracy essentially dependent on politics (Iqbal 2002).[322] This trend went hand in hand with the nationalisation of enterprises and the establishment of a state-regulated market economy. Political favouritism among the mostly Sinhalese decision makers in administration and legislation made this development equal to a Sinhalisation of significant parts of the economy during the period 1955-1977.[323]

Afterwards, repeated efforts at public sector reform failed mainly due to the high level of political influence and an imbalance between political institutions and the bureaucracy (Samaratunge & Bennington 2002). The 17th Amendment to the Constitution in 1998 reinstated the role of several commissions to guide public service, police, judicial services and elections procedure. The commissions, however, remained defunct due

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[321] On the foundation of ancient irrigation systems run by feudal landlords and farmers, often involving Buddhist monasteries, and a patrimonial relationship between kings and landlords, a caste-based social structure evolved with highly centralised power (Hewege et al. 2008). Colonial intervention destroyed the social structure and led to a disintegration of the ancient governance system while leaving behind factionalised rule based on the patronage of new administrators. The former feudal landlords were assigned official positions and land titles under the colonial administration, their children became the bureaucrats of the colonial administration and a new class structure in society emerged (Jayawardena 2000).

[322] Building on the colonial legacy of British rule, the administrative service of Sri Lanka is similar to the British one, with the Sri Lanka Administrative Service in the most senior position and constituting the permanent bureaucracy of the government. Staff selection and promotion, whereas only in theory independently conducted based on performance assessments by the Public Service Commission (Fernando 2006), are nevertheless a matter of pride among public servants.

[323] This aspect contributed significantly to the marginalisation of minorities in private and public sectors, as Gunasinghe (2004) points out. The later abolition of preferences with the introduction of an open economy model contributed to the escalation of ethno-political conflict.

to violations of the amendment under CBK, and the effort of depoliticisation was repealed by the 18th Amendment in September 2010 (CPA 2010).

As a result, "Sri Lanka's public service is hugely overstaffed and inefficient, its ranks bloated by recruitment by successive governments made by both the two main political parties who have ruled the island in order to win votes" (Lanka Business Online 2011, n.pag.). At the same time, the sense of professionalism of the former elite administrators under colonial rule prevailed and left its mark on the Sri Lankan top bureaucracy, subscribing at least theoretically to some of the ideal notions of Weberian organisational features (such as meritocratic recruitment and predictable careers for bureaucrats).[324] Some of these rational and legal features were introduced in the context of administrative reform measures in 1997 but were not received well in the public sector at large (Samaratunge & Bennington 2002).

The Wickremasinghe government aimed at further reform after the election victory in late 2001, and public sector reform became part of the overall reform strategy called 'Regaining Sri Lanka'. Within a large package of neoliberal economic reform and liberalisation came initiatives for modernisation of the public service and the reduction of public sector employment by 30%. Most of these measures were politically sensitive and faced resistance. Some of the growing resistance against the government policies among southern constituencies fed into negative sentiment against the peace process, the other complex political project of the Wickremasinghe government (Bastian 2005). Both projects eventually failed.

As will be seen in the following, SCOPP saw itself, and was seen by others, as part of the top-level government administration due to its specific mandate from the highest government leadership, its form of organisation, its professionalism and relevance in the political arena and the peace process. Former staff describe the organisation as a well-run office, different from regular public service with clear division of labour and high levels of efficiency (Interview 25). The particular situation of SCOPP within the government, however, led to alienation from other actors within government and also civil society (Interview 1, 24). In the context of overall government administration, SCOPP needs to be regarded as a special experiment of professional but nevertheless politicised bureaucracy.

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[324] In a comparative study on expert perceptions about professionalism in 97 countries, views on Sri Lankan bureaucracy are close to those on Spanish and US bureaucracies (Dahlström et al. 2011).

5.2 The Many Faces of SCOPP – Dynamic Functions and Shifting Priorities

When Ranil Wickremasinghe's United National Party coalition won the parliamentary elections in December 2001, the election campaign was based on a strong pro-peace platform and a pledge to find a negotiated settlement to the on-going war with the LTTE. After only 10 days in office Prime Minister Wickremasinghe's administration received the LTTE's announcement of a 30-day ceasefire. The government reciprocated and lifted the economic embargo as asked by the LTTE. This was the beginning of the 2002 peace process.[325]

Observers remember the resulting rush of events that led to the continuation of the truce's timeframe and its consolidation into a ceasefire agreement via shuttle mediation by the Norwegian government (Interview 29, 33). The agreement was signed on February 22, 2002 between the government and the LTTE, but two weeks earlier the government has already established its support structure for the peace talks in the form of SCOPP, with approval of the Cabinet of Ministers on February 6, 2002.[326]

The decision to establish a peace secretariat was born out of the perceived "need to institutionalise the peace process" (SCOPP n.d., n.pag.). This was reportedly a concrete demand of the prime minister who wished to professionalise the management of the peace talks and felt that earlier peace efforts had lacked such professionalism (Interview 25).[327] There was also awareness that the government did not command

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[325] As described in section 1.3, the events were preceded by earlier, failed efforts to establish a ceasefire and facilitate talks through the Norwegian mediator.

[326] Much of the information about SCOPP can be found on its website

http://www.peaceinsrilanka.org/about-scopp. After SCOPP's closure, its last secretary general continues to use the website in his function as presidential advisor on reconciliation.

[327] Gooneratne (2007, p.4) quotes a letter from Prime Minister Wickremasinghe to the Norwegian prime minister expressing that "past experiences have demonstrated the definite need for an institutional structure to back up such processes. Therefore, I have set up a secretariat in my own office for this purpose. This secretariat will be headed by an experienced diplomat and staffed by a team of experts." Weerakoon outlines how this secretariat was part of a comprehensive approach of institutionalising the peace process. The approach had the following elements: a facilitator trusted by both sides, a ceasefire agreement, "an official institutional structure which could manage the manifold requirements needed to keep the negotiations between the parties on track, an effective mechanism to coordinate the relief, rehabilitation and development activities which would sustain the process". In addition, there would be an "international

the same institutional memory as the LTTE, which had used the same chief negotiator continuously (Goonetilleke 2009, p.13; Interview 1). Moreover, the establishment of the peace secretariat together with another Office for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in the North and East within the prime minister's office was interpreted as a sign of the "seriousness of the Government for integrated peacemaking" that in turn was seen as a "team effort, handling multisectoral activities" (Fernando 2008, p.xii).

Within this set-up, SCOPP was officially described as "primarily a coordinating and facilitating body of the Peace Process. It was the main instrument of the Government to consolidate and strengthen the Peace Process". Its mission was to "develop confidence in the peace process and its potential benefits for all Sri Lankan citizens, whilst building up an institution that is equitable and acts in the national interest of all our people, and is accepted as such" (SCOPP n.d., n.pag.).

While this general mission statement remained valid, objectives and tasks of the secretariat were adjusted in the course of time according to the changing dynamics of the peace process and political changes within the government. As will be seen, SCOPP underwent comparatively more visible and profound adjustments than the other peace secretariats:

First, changes concerned the governance structure of the secretariat: initially the secretariat was under the direct purview of the prime minister and part of his office, but when President Kumaratunga took over the peace process SCOPP was brought under her responsibility and stayed under the president's office with the succession of President Rajapaksa.

Second, the leadership of the secretariat was exchanged several times. At the time of its establishment, the secretariat was headed by Ambassador Bernard Goonetilleke (February 2002-April 2004)[328]. After the general elections in April 2004, government was taken over by the president and the Sri Lankan diplomat and UN Under-Secretary General Jayantha Dhanapala (June 2004-November 2005) became secretary general of SCOPP. After the presidential elections in 2005, he resigned and several months later the Australian and UN diplomat Dr. Palitha Kohona took over (April 2006-January 2007). When Kohona became permanent secretary at the Foreign Ministry, he was

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safety-net" composed of leading international community members that could intervene when necessary to achieve a negotiated settlement (Weerakoon 2004, p.334).

[328] Goonetilleke was seen as part of the inner circle of the prime minister. He served among other appointments as foreign secretary. At the time of establishing SCOPP, he served as ambassador to China (Fernando 2008, p.72).

replaced by an academic, writer and political analyst, Professor Rajiva Wijesinha (June 2007-July 2009).[329] SCOPP reflected the priorities set by the respective secretary generals (Interview 29).

Third, the objectives and functions of SCOPP reflected both revision in political and negotiation strategy as well as the volatile course of the peace process and increasing violence. Initially, former staff noted that there was no formalised mandate at all. The secretariat accompanied its principal and the negotiators right from the first moment of the peace process. Its leading staff came together in the first days of 2002 and were already part of the ceasefire negotiations. Its functions initially concerned the preparation of the peace negotiations and its documentation, the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and its monitoring, the travel and transport of the delegations, and incoming visits of the facilitators and other members of the international community. The list of tasks developed fluidly and the peace secretariat played it 'by ear', as its functional understanding developed on demand by its principal (Interview 29).

During the time that SCOPP was under the purview of President Kumaratunga, the mandate was formalised and slightly reframed[330]:

– "Coordinate the implementation of decisions of the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) on the Peace Process;

– Liaise with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and the Norwegian facilitators;

– Monitor the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) between the GOSL and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE);

– Provide research and logistical support to the GOSL delegation during political negotiations between the GOSL and the LTTE;

– Liaise with government ministries, institutions, armed forces and the Police, UN agencies, international humanitarian organizations and national and international NGOs on matters pertaining to the Peace Process;

– Monitor the free movement of people and goods to and from the uncleared areas;

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[329] Between the assignments of the different secretary generals, Deputy SG John Gooneratne, who had worked at SCOPP since its inception, took over intermittently until he left SCOPP in early 2006.

[330] This description is found under

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretariat_for_Coordinating_the_Peace_Process. Although undated, its origin can be deducted from the mention of the National Advisory Council on Peace and Reconciliation, which was an initiative of President Kumaratunga.

– Communicate issues relating to the Peace Process to the national/international media and the public through its Communications Division;

– Provide logistical and technical support to the National Advisory Council on Peace and Reconciliation (NACPR)."

In addition, the secretary general of SCOPP chaired the North East Donor Coordination Cluster, which was one of the committees under the National Council for Economic Development and dealt with issues relating to IDP resettlement, reconstruction, land and property rights, health and education (Dhanapala 2005).

During the last period from 2007 to 2009, SCOPP's wide-ranging objectives are described in the following strategy statement (SCOPP n.d., n.pag.):

"1. To act as a resource centre for the Government and its representatives in any negotiations and contribute to their appreciation of the various needs and requirements of all affected parties; and

2. To liaise with facilitators and potential facilitators of the peace process so as to:

- ensure synergy by bringing together all possible stakeholders and developing awareness of the wider benefits of cooperation and mutual understanding;

- promote activities that develop a sense of ownership, responsibility and commitment amongst all Sri Lankan citizens with regard to the peace process and related reforms;

- promote constitutional changes that will ensure security and confidence for all citizens whilst facilitating efficiency and 'good governance';

- ensure commitment, in particular through its own practices, to truth and objectivity in reporting events and responses to them, and minimize distortion and innuendo that will weaken confidence in the peace process;

- remove barriers to economic activity and social intercourse, whilst recognizing and respecting security constraints due to continuing terrorist activity;

- drive livelihood development activities, and in particular for IOPS [sic, IDPs], with relevant stakeholders so that adequate income generation alternatives are provided to the people in the East and North;

- facilitate training and education as well as investment in areas affected by war so as to enhance opportunities for individuals as well as the wider society in such areas;

- initiate programmes that would contribute to greater understanding of mutual needs and promote strategies to satisfy these;

- ensure transparency in its relations with stakeholders and encourage all of them to work to similar standards;

- enhance understanding of other peace processes and assess their relevance to the Sri Lankan situation."

These changes can be summarised as moving away from the initial Track 1 focus on SCOPP's secretarial role and from preparing and advising on the content of peace talks towards an increasing focus both on Track 3-related activities on the ground and propaganda. The function of CFA monitoring and related logistical support, however, remained a consistent task of SCOPP. Notably, the functions of facilitation of inter-party communication and confidence building as well as intra-party consultation and consensus building did not feature high among the interviewees' views of the secretariat's functions.

The functions of SCOPP along a timeline are presented in the following figure, the secondary axis representing the level of significance:
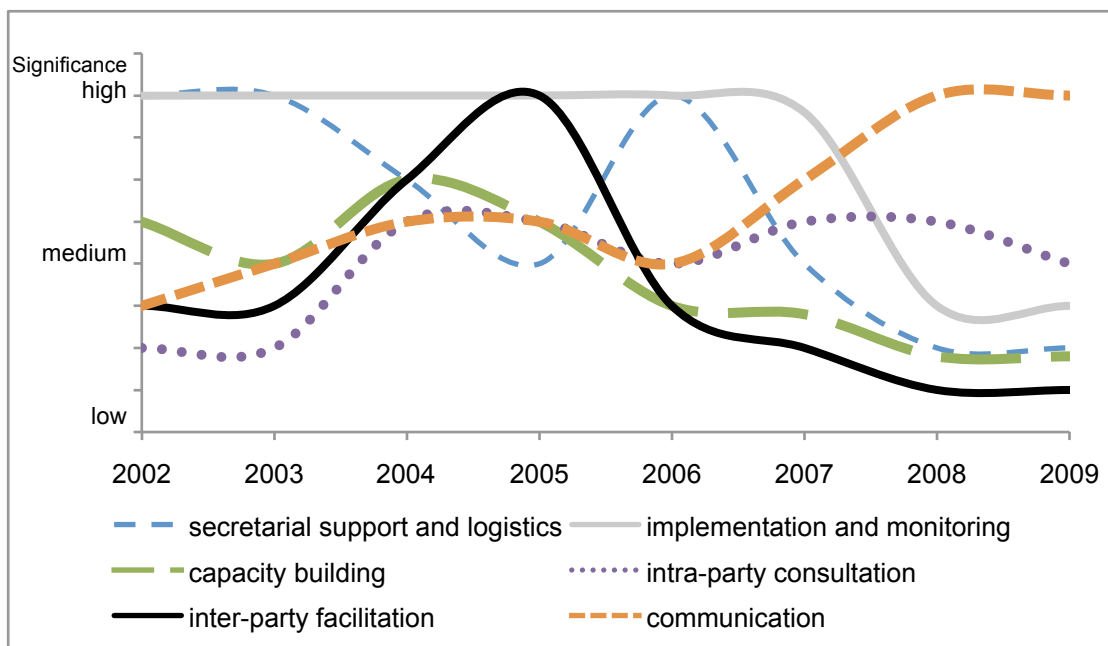
Figure 5.1: Significance of SCOPP functions

Descriptions of the early time of SCOPP during the peace talks mostly view SCOPP as a secretariat for the negotiators and a body to facilitate the monitoring of the cease-fire and implementation of agreements made during the six rounds of peace talks. The secretarial and implementation functions are dominant (Interviews 10, 12, 27).

With a view to the CFA monitoring, the task of SCOPP was to facilitate the communi-cation of the monitoring results gathered by the armed forces and to collect and pres-ent the data in liaison with the SLMM (Interview 9, 27). While the CFA monitoring function was consolidated over time and saw strengthened support through a distinct unit that some referred to as the 'intelligence room' (Interview 10), it was also noted that there were insufficient staff and appropriate monitoring tools. The monitoring re-sults of the armed forces were supplemented by information from civil society organi-sations that worked in the respective geographical areas (Interview 10). From 2007 onwards, SCOPP established a separate field structure to monitor the war-affected districts and document human rights and humanitarian issues (Interview 23).

Others note that the focus of the monitoring activities was too much on "blaming ra-ther than mending" and concentrated on documenting the numbers of ceasefire viola-tions rather than analysing the underlying problems and engaging the LTTE to solve them (Interview 7, 22, 25; Jayasekera 2009, p.86). Despite the criticism, interviewees noted that the civil-military interface contributed to trust building, gave emphasis to a civilian rather than military approach and strengthened the civilian committees that existed outside the LTTE-controlled areas (Interview 9, 12, 22). Without SCOPP, some felt, the ceasefire would have collapsed early in the peace process (Interview 9, 12).

The other dominant function was secretarial and logistical support (Interview 10, 30). This concerned on the one hand logistical support for the negotiating team abroad and the Norwegian facilitators and other members of the international community in Sri Lanka. On the other hand, it meant supporting the logistics of the SLMM and the coordination of movements of armed forces troops and LTTE cadres, or the visit of the LTTE's chief negotiator to Kilinochchi in 2002 (Interview 12, 24, 30; Uyangoda 2002, p.56). SCOPP also facilitated as a sign of good will the transport of ill or wounded LTTE cadres. This function was later extended to the movement of food and supplies to IDPs in the North, and SCOPP became a conduit between the government and NGOs and international humanitarian organisations (Interview 21; SCOPP 2009, p.4). As part of the logistical and secretarial functions, the secretariat also assisted the

communication with the Norwegian facilitation team during the ceasefire negotiations and the later peace process (Interview 29). The secretariat was represented through its secretary general during all rounds of the peace talks as well as during the 2006 talks on humanitarian issues.

SCOPP's contribution regarding the ceasefire and later the peace negotiations went beyond logistics to include advisory services, thus contributing to capacity building of the negotiating team. SCOPP was reportedly involved in the drafting process of the CFA and prepared content-related information for the talks, e.g., notes on de-proscription of the LTTE or briefings on power-sharing (Interview 1, 14, 23, 29). This function remained relevant during all phases of SCOPP; the secretariat prepared dossiers for President Kumaratunga and briefed the negotiating team under President Rajapaksa extensively (Interview 1, 23).[331] In preparation for the 2006 talks, SCOPP was instrumental in organising a training workshop with Harvard experts on negotiations for the new team that was to meet the already established LTTE team (Interview 25, 29). Advisory service in the later years also went beyond the concrete occasion and involved more far-reaching topics such as modalities of transitional justice, as for example in truth and reconciliation commissions (Interview 23).

While communication was always a relevant function of the peace secretariat, it gained priority status only during the later years (see below). Communication consisted of information and consultation differentiated along several levels: there was communication within the party and ranks within the administration, the ruling party coalition, the opposition, general public and within the international community (Interview 30).

Regarding the early years of 2002-2003, many interviewees noted that the efforts to explain the peace talks and win public support, or even that of the prime minister's own political party, for the peace process were not sufficient (Interview 19; Jayasekera 2009, p.74). Some regarded the communication strategy of the Wickremasinghe ad-

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[331] Not all sources, however, are convinced of the quality of this capacity building. According to government officials interviewed by Rainford and Sathkunanathan, the delegations for the sub-committee meetings were not always well prepared while the LTTE delegation acted with "efficiency and single purpose" (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p.57). Along a similar line, it was noted that the LTTE PS was prominently represented in the meetings while SCOPP had more an observer role and sent lower-level staff (Interview 24). Staff was not specifically trained and not involved in agenda setting for the talks, which was left to the Norwegian facilitator at most times of the peace process (Interview 12, 21).

ministration as flawed, too 'academic' and abstract, too much focused on elites.[332] There were different views on SCOPP's role, however; and there was also dissent within the negotiating team about this issue (Interview 29).[333] Whereas some note that SCOPP did not do enough (Interviews 4, 22, 33), others stated that it was a task of the political leadership to explain why they negotiated with the LTTE, and that SCOPP did not have a mandate to interfere and counter the political campaigns of actors opposing the peace talks (Interview 27, 29).[334] Others considered that the then government felt that there was already strong public support for the peace process in place, given their victory on a peace-based election platform, or that the situation was too complex, that there was not sufficient staff and "all actors were overwhelmed in the beginning" (Interview 23, 29, 33). Some, however, critically stated that the secretariat did not deserve its title as a coordinator since it did not do this sufficiently (Interview 9, 14, 24).

This situation also led to a lack of systematic engagement with civil society (Interview 9, 16, 28), often contrasted with the previous government's successful creation of the *Sudu Nelum* movement, which helped create awareness about minority concerns and the need for the devolution of power within a united Sri Lanka (Emmanuel et al. 2008, p.38). Initially, the Wickremasinghe government did not have a proper mechanism to coordinate with civil society peace efforts and thus failed to gain sufficient public support (Jayasekera 2009, p.85). Only in mid-2003 did the government initiate for this purpose the Peace Building Unit at the chief negotiator's Ministry of Constitutional Affairs (Jayawardana 2009, p.95). Before that, Minister Peiris had already invited the local civil society organisation Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies, Sri Lanka Office, to conduct a series of workshops and background papers with the aim of inspiring a conceptual and political debate in support of the negotiation process (Interview 1, 19; Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies

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[332] This led to problems in the overall peace process, since the "government failure to provide up to date information about the peace process, in order to counter often fictionalised nationalist anti-peace propaganda, contributed to the creation of unwarranted fears among the Southern public", e.g., misconceptions about rehabilitation funds controlled by the LTTE (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p.56).

[333] Here, reference is made to different viewpoints between the chief negotiator Peiris and others, including the peace secretariat. As a result, Peiris reportedly established his own communication channels in order to garner mass support for the peace process (Interviews 1, 20). This problem is discussed in more detail below.

[334] While negotiating with the LTTE was seen as impossible and as something that needed to be explained to the Sinhalese majority by politicians, there reportedly was a strong sense among the Sinhalese population that a political compromise on power-sharing was necessary (Interview 27).

2008). Interviewees, however, noted that even these discussions were not used well by politicians to share information or discuss viewpoints, and that there was hardly any genuine engagement with informed civil society and scholars. In hindsight, it was also recognised that the topics in the discussion series did not deal with the political dynamics in the South sufficiently; the overall approach appeared too much focused on governance and too 'rational' and soberly academic (Interview 1). Engagement concentrated on the civil society present in Colombo, and there were hardly discussions in the vernacular languages (Interview 19).

During the years of stalemate from late 2003 onwards, increasing violence and renewed efforts to return to negotiations were at the centre of attention of SCOPP, which considered itself a "hub around which a formula was being developed for re-opening talks" (Interview 30). While some view this time as an active period of SCOPP in which the secretariat developed proposals in order to re-engage with the LTTE, others felt that they "just followed orders", busily kept the administration running but did not have substantive discussions on how to break the impasse (Interview 25). While much of SCOPP's work appeared to become more systematic, it did not achieve much overall change.

Communication and intra-party consultation in the years 2004 and 2005 became more systematised and concentrated on official, formalised channels. Briefings for other ministries and especially the diplomatic service were regularly prepared, and the official communication and website was maintained (Interview 30). The secretariat organised regular meetings with selected groups of professionals, e.g., from the business sector or civil society (Interview 28). While it was noted that engagement with civil society increased, observers still felt that the new approach was not concerned with mutual consultation and Track 2 engagement but rather focused on selling the new government strategy (Interview 9, 16).

In October 2004 the National Advisory Council on Peace and Reconciliation (NACPR) was established by President Kumaratunga in order to facilitate national consultations at three 'tables': one for the political parties in parliament, one for civil society, and one for religious leaders from the country and co-chaired by high-ranking monks. The civil society table had about 30 members who were specifically selected from the business sector, NGOs, academia and the professions (Interview 23; Dhanapala 2005, p.117). SCOPP served as the secretariat for the NACPR and nominated specific staff to attend to the consultations. While SCOPP used the opportunity to gather ideas from civil society and integrate them into the government approach, civil society activities showed ambiguity and suffered from scepticism (Interview 12, 23).

Whereas the president reportedly had high hopes of using the platform to build a consensus, the effort was without success and was not received well by the different stakeholders (Interview 3, 21, 25; Sørbø et al. 2011, p.52). It was not possible to align support from the religious leaders (Interview 25), and, as one former member of the Kumaratunga administration noted, peace-promoting civil society was too much aligned with the previous administration's peace talks while the nationalist actors at the other end of the civil society spectrum did not engage in the consultations either – in the end, nobody wanted to use the opportunity for a more inclusive approach (Interview 12).[335] A noteworthy setback, however, needs to be acknowledged: the tsunami interrupted the government efforts, and the preparations for presidential elections afterwards stalled the activities further.[336] In February 2006 the NACPR was stopped by the new president and replaced to a certain extent by the All Party Representatives Conference (APRC) (Interview 23). SCOPP's involvement with this later platform, however, was limited to the secretarial tasks of coordination and logistical support of meetings.

In addition to the Track 2 consultations in Colombo, this period saw consultations with local communities in the context of 'fact finding missions', or field visits, to areas of CFA monitoring (Interview 25). This appeared to be an improvement in the eyes of some observers since it increased the outreach of SCOPP, and in some instances SCOPP solved local problems in liaison with other government units (Interview 23, 25). There also were critical voices in civil society who felt that direct contact with line ministries was more effective in order to 'get things done' (Interview 28).

During the later years and wartime, SCOPP focused mostly on policy questions, outreach to civil society, public relations and economic promotion in war-affected areas. While some felt that SCOPP scaled down its earlier activities, new areas were explored and expanded (Interview 7, 12).

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[335] A press release reveals that inclusivity was limited from the start since the former prime minister's party did not participate and the president only briefed the opposition leader after the inauguration of the NACPR in November 2004 (SCOPP 2004b). Thus, the consensus-building effort of the president had the same flaw as the efforts of the former prime minister.

[336] Some interviewees noted that SCOPP and other government actors hoped to use the NACPR platform for consensus building on the post-tsunami relief mechanism P-TOMS but failed to do so (Interview 25).

The latter concerned investment promotion and fostering market connections, e.g., through encouraging exchange programmes with the chambers of commerce, restoring telecommunication facilities and lifting fishing restrictions (Interview 21; Daniel 2009; SCOPP 2009, pp.4-5). This was, however, a continuation of earlier efforts in 2005, when SCOPP, for example, engaged with World Bank and MIGA to establish an investment guarantee facility enhancing foreign investment and the transfer of technology to conflict-affected areas (SCOPP 2006b, p.25). Already in 2004 SCOPP had taken the chair of the North East Donor Coordination Cluster, which met quarterly with the international donor community to address implementation bottlenecks or policy issues, e.g., regarding IDPs and property dispute resolution or the improvement of welfare camps (Dhanapala 2005, p.119). Other tasks related to the new military strategy involved the facilitation of civil-military relations and coordination of crisis response.

SCOPP also continued the local outreach approach after 2006, e.g., when sending books to Jaffna or organising peace culture events (Interview 23, 25). Some staff observed that the focus turned from an analytic approach of understanding the ground situation for policy improvement to a more operational Track 3 activity on non-controversial matters, e.g., inter-community programmes for youth, sports exchange programmes and investment promotion in sports infrastructure in conflict areas (Interview 25; SCOPP 2009, p.7). Others, however, felt that the secretariat still dealt with relevant issues, e.g., negotiating the release of child soldiers in the East (Interview 21) and also pushed for new policy approaches. Reportedly, this involved policy consultations with relevant ministries and government bodies such as the Law Commission and the armed forces on matters of reintegration of former combatants and resettlement of IDPs (Interview 23, 27; SCOPP 2009, p.2). SCOPP also developed proposals for increasing the representation of minority communities in the public service, the armed forces and the police (CALD 2007).

This was in line with the government's position of highlighting "the need to distinguish between the LTTE and the peace process. We repositioned ourselves also as a confidence building institution that promoted interaction between communities, and developed initiatives to strengthen pluralism and human rights, as well as contributing to the economic and social development of the North and East of the country" (SCOPP 2009, p.1).

SCOPP's activities with regards to public outreach and propaganda were increasingly extended, e.g., by using the website extensively to communicate viewpoints, develop-

ing a Facebook profile and a quarterly newsletter (SCOPP 2008).[337] Some interview partners felt that the approach of 'taking on' opposing voices became a central strategy of the government and that SCOPP played a crucial role in it. SCOPP, for example, helped the Foreign Ministry to prepare reports on the human rights situation (Interview 21; SCOPP 2009, p.3) and developed a "vocal presence" in the government's delegations to the UN Human Rights Council where its "consistent role was to deny reported abuses and attacking the local and international groups that continued to highlight the dire human rights situation" (Fernando 2009, p.285).

It should be noted, however, that interviewees recognised the trends of increasing defensiveness towards criticism and demonisation of the 'other side' in both conflict parties' peace secretariats (Interviews 1, 4, 32; Fernando 2009).[338] SCOPP saw its effort in "countering the propaganda" that the government faced (SCOPP 2009, p.8) as one part of a comprehensive communication strategy which also included efforts to communicate the government's peacebuilding activities and to reflect on the past, e.g., when remembering the infamous anti-Tamil progroms in July 1983 (SCOPP 2009, p.6). According to the government, only the international audience needed to be addressed with counter-propaganda, whereas the domestic audience understood that the government's approach was not aimed against the Tamil people altogether but only the LTTE (Interview 27).

Nevertheless, the communication strategy of the war period could be summed up in "you are either with or against us" and alienated peacebuilding actors on other tracks. The propaganda approach additionally strained the relationship of SCOPP with civil society organisations that felt antagonised by the criticism and allegations of being

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[337] The website was launched in the English language in 2002, in Sinhala in 2003 and in Tamil in September 2004 (SCOPP 2004a). The new focus and approach that adopted a sharper tone after the war began is well described on the secretariat's Facebook site: "Have you ever listened to an international news agency rambling on about 'racial injustice' in Sri Lanka and wished you could answer back? Or maybe the most recent episodes of the David Miliband [then Foreign Secretary of the UK] saga had you on the edge of your seat. Over the last few months there was a torrent of accusations and allegations against the Sri Lankan government. In the past we may have taken a back seat and let all criticism wash over us. But times have changed. On the Peace Secretariat's website professor Rajiva Wijesinghe takes on the most recent controversies and publishes inspiring articles" (Facebook, n.d.,

http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=84856418615, accessed on November 8, 2011).

[338] Moreover, it was not the peace secretariat's decision alone to embark on this route of communication; it was initially requested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SCOPP 2009, p.1).

pro-LTTE or influenced by international paymasters (Interview 28).[339] Interaction with civil society was also seen as being controlled by the JVP, which reportedly intervened in media programmes of SCOPP (Interview 25).[340] Civil society in Colombo thus, despite continued efforts to conduct civil society meetings, considered SCOPP less as an entry-point for government interactions and preferred to contact the respective government departments, e.g., on human rights issues, directly (Interview 28).

As seen in the above discussion of SCOPP's functions along a timeline, the functions were not found to be equally strong in the interviewees' opinions. While secretarial and logistical support as well as communication and implementation (of negotiation results as the ceasefire) played a big role, capacity building appeared less significant. Inter-party facilitation and intra-party consultation both played a small role, as will be discussed below in detail with a view to interactions and relationships. Without indicating an empirically proven incidence of the functions mentioned, their relative importance can be indicated as below:
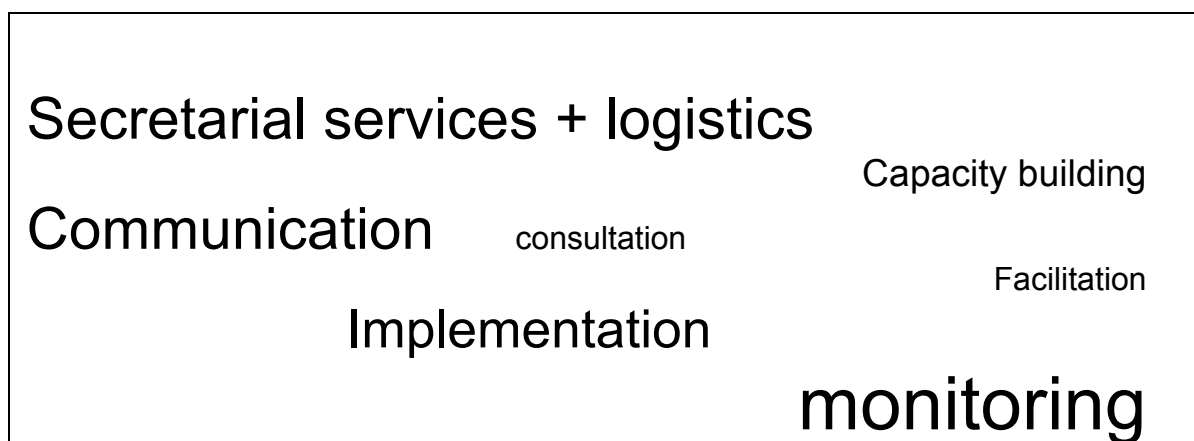
Figure 5.2: Overall significance of functions of SCOPP

The following section connects the operative functions to SCOPP's contributions to conflict transformation as perceived by the interviewees.

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[339] From SCOPP's perspective, this engagement was described as discussing accountability and transparency concerns (SCOPP 2009, p.1).

[340] This refers to JVP-led interventions in TV talk shows conducted by SCOPP on the occasion of International Peace Day.

5.3 Managing Peace? Contributions to Conflict Transformation and Conflict Management

As discussed earlier in the section on methodological considerations, there is little evidence in the interview material that directly points to proven or perceived conflict transformation according to the types of conflict transformation outlined earlier. No interviewee named a particular type of conflict transformation and related it to activities of the secretariat. Interviewees, however, implicitly mentioned several kinds of transformative contributions that are presented here. Furthermore, the interviewees pointed to contributions of the secretariat, which do not commonly register as conflict transformation but as conflict management; this will be discussed later.

Altogether, the types of conflict transformation connected to the secretariat's functions appear in various combinations with predominance of personal and issue transformation. Visualising their significance according to the qualitative interview findings, the following picture emerges:

Context transformation

Structure transformation

Actor transformation

Issue transformation

Personal transformation
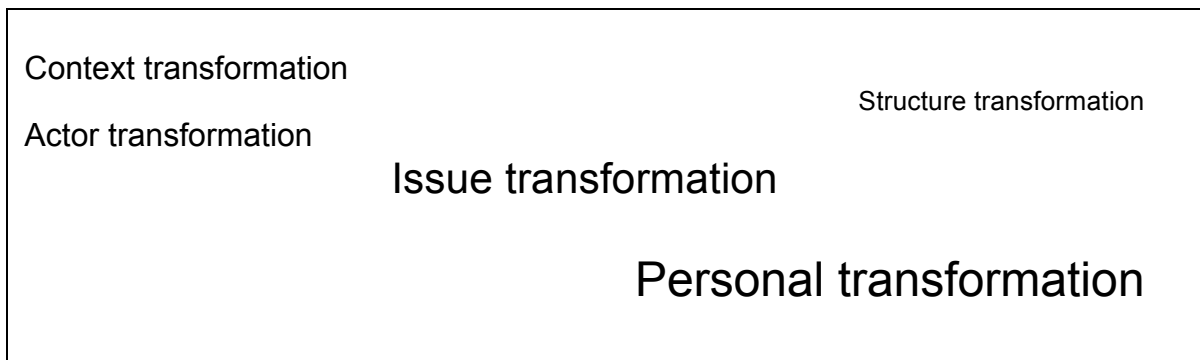
Figure 5.3: Overall significance of contributions to types of conflict transformation of SCOPP

Since the transformations often overlap or relate to several functions, the following presentation is outlined according to functions.

The first transformative contribution refers to the secretariat's function in implementing and monitoring the ceasefire agreement and can be read as issue transformation as well as personal transformation. Through its civilian facilitation support of the CFA monitoring, SCOPP reportedly helped reduce the stress in the handling of data as well as the potential escalatory impact of reporting CFA violations (issue transformation). Coordinating and communicating the violations reports through a civilian structure had reportedly a sobering effect on the other actors. Moreover, these interactions were

seen by some interviewees as contributing to trust building between the conflict parties (personal transformation) (Interview 9, 12).[341]

In addition to the transformative contribution, and probably on a much more significant level, the monitoring and implementation arrangements contributed to conflict management and thus helped avoid violent incidents from escalating. Facilitating the military engagement on monitoring issues helped mitigate tension and thus reportedly contributed to de-escalation during the time of the peace talks and the years of stalemate and helped avoid an accidental return to war (Interview 9, 12).[342] Only later, when both conflict parties deliberately turned towards a military strategy, this effect was reduced and ultimately lost.

The second transformative contribution suggested by interviewees refers to the facilitation of problem solving at the community level and can be interpreted as issue transformation, and perhaps personal transformation. While only a few interviewees could account for the activities and had remarkable little memory of them, some concrete examples were given.

SCOPP helped, as part of its implementation function, to expedite the highly important transport of goods on the A9 highway,[343] which was instrumental in confidence building between the conflict parties as a gesture of conciliation, change of hearts and will (personal transformation). By helping to improve livelihoods in war-affected areas, SCOPP contributed to creating a peace dividend and reduced pressure on the conflict parties concerning contested issues (issue transformation). Furthermore, the secretariat assisted in reducing mounting tensions at the community level in the eastern city of Trincomalee, which regarded the placement of Buddha statues in predominantly Muslim and Tamil areas (personal and issue transformation) (Interview 25). SCOPP also helped with legal clarification on land issues in Muslim communities, which re-

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[341] Some note that the peace secretariat's involvement in this function also made a very practical contribution in the form of translation since the military actors of both parties predominantly communicated in Sinhala and Tamil (Interview 24; Fernando 2008).

[342] One interview partner was more cautious with regards to this assessment and did not see a strong role of SCOPP in trouble-shooting and de-escalation during the years of 2002 and 2003 (Interview 24). This was explained by the lack of a mandate in this area and lack of division of labour.

[343] The A9 highway connects the northern city of Jaffna to the government-controlled areas. It was an important military target since it served as a lifeline for government troops stationed in the North and thus had strategic value for the LTTE. From 1984 onwards, the LTTE controlled parts of the highway, and only after the CFA in 2002 was it ceremoniously opened again. The opening of the A9 was, however, reported to have counterproductive effects on the LTTE (see section 6.3).

portedly led to a revision of a land proscription ordinance and thus changed contested issues (issue transformation) (Interview 23). As mentioned before, these activities contributed not only to conflict transformation but also, and in fact more directly, to conflict management.

One outstanding example of SCOPP's otherwise relatively weak facilitation function is found in its involvement in negotiating the post-tsunami relief mechanism P-TOMS. Initiated with an informal meeting at the Norwegian ambassador's residence, the two heads of the government and LTTE peace secretariats together with small advisory teams took the lead in developing the draft proposal for the relief mechanism. They met at the SCOPP office. With the Norwegian ambassador in an observer-cum-informal-advisor position, the two peace secretariats engaged directly in the beginning (Interview 29, 30). After making good progress in negotiations, the talks stalled when a LTTE military leader was killed. Afterwards, the Norwegian facilitator had to shuttle between both sides to finalise the agreement (Interview 30). SCOPP afterwards had to leave it to its principal to find a political consensus to implement the structure, which ended without success.

Nevertheless, former staff and observers considered the agreement on the mechanism as SCOPP's greatest achievement, since it took place in a time of hardening stalemate, mounting ceasefire violations and increasingly open preparations for war (see also section 1.3.2). It can be read as contributing to three types of conflict transformation. First, it relates to issue transformation in terms of finding a constructive compromise and also an effort in delinking contested issues, when the negotiators attempted to create a reconstruction mechanism without connecting it to the contested debate on interim arrangements. Since the P-TOMS proposal also included Muslim representation and the drafting process involved Muslim actors, the second transformative aspect refers to changing the actors and thus actor transformation. As discussed in more detail in the chapter on the Muslim peace secretariat, this transformation had lasting effect according to their perspective. The third contribution is seen as personal contribution since perspectives were changed and the negotiations led – at least to a momentary – increase of hope and good will among the conflict actors and their constituencies. This became manifest in improved daily communication between the parties on other practical reconstruction and security issues (Sørbø et al. 2011, p.53). Since intra- as well as inter-party tensions increased with the frustrating delay in empowering and implementing the mechanism, the negotiation success, however, did not have lasting transformative effects, except on the matter of Muslim representation as a general principle.

Regarding the other strong functions of secretarial services and communication the following observations can be made.

Communication (and to a lesser extent intra-party consultation, or the lack thereof) impacted on the fragile power balance among the southern stakeholders. While at first intra-party communication and consensus building appears to have been neglected for various reasons, it later was approached in a more purposeful but at times antago-nising way. In both situations, the secretariat's communication and consultation ef-forts, however, failed to build public support for the peace process and strengthened those forces within Sinhalese society that followed a hardline approach and promoted a military solution. This can be understood as an actor transformation since it relates to intra-party change. The APRC deliberations, facilitated by SCOPP, can similarly be seen as contributing to issue transformation since they increased public insight into the various political positions towards power-sharing, albeit not towards a constructive end. Moreover, the later communication efforts, especially during the years 2008 and 2009, reframed contested issues in a non-constructive way, supported hardening per-spectives and presented non-conciliatory gestures. SCOPP, true to being dubbed by some as a 'war secretariat', contributed to issue and personal transformation, albeit, due to its "180 degree turn of directions" (Interview 20), not in a constructive or am-eliorative way.

Furthermore, the secretariat reached out to the international community in order to criticise its involvement and, in SCOPP's view, actively counter its allegations against the government. This contributed to transforming the government's relationship with the international environment and thus the global context. It needs to be questioned, however, if this transformation was intended: did the government hope to change the international community's perspective regarding the LTTE? Or, did it actually aim at transforming other relationships, e.g., its own rapport with the nationalist voices in the South, and was merely catering to parts of its constituency known to carry anti-international and anti-LTTE attitudes?

In any case, the government's increasingly hostile approach towards the international community contributed to an actor transformation in the South and indirectly to other structure and context transformation. These systemic effects can be depicted with a feedback loop as in figure 5.4. The loop starts with the government's criticism of the international community as being pro-LTTE. The southern actors suspected the inter-national community to have an LTTE bias and feared the resulting exploitation of the relationship by the LTTE. Thus, these activities appeared to have pejorative effects on critical observers in the South who questioned the objectivity and even-handedness of

the international interlocutors and created an increasingly hostile climate against the peace process. Notably, these pejorative transformations came into effect independently of the actual transformation of personal or context aspects among the international community; the mere suspicion of bias and friendly relationships between the LTTE and the international community sufficed to lead to actor transformation among the government and Singhalese stakeholders.

Government criticism of international community as being pro-LTTE

Increasing alienation of international community from government and communication of concerns = context transformation

Strengthening of government rapport with nationalist, anti-interventionist constituencies in South = actor transformation

Rejection of international support for peace process = issue transformation

Increasing intransigence of government position and increasing refusal of both sides to negotiate = structure transformation

Figure 5.4: Systemic feedback between types of conflict transformation based on SCOPP's communication function

In contrast, the secretarial service function had a more constructive impact. Staff and observers noted that the secretariat and its facilitation of logistics for the negotiating teams, international actors accessing the conflict zone, and LTTE cadre movements helped build confidence in the peace process and eased inter-party interactions. This can be read as a contribution to personal transformation with its effects on the 'hearts and minds' of the constituencies and the negotiating conflict actors. In particular, the evacuation and transport of injured or ill LTTE cadres, e.g., the head of the LTTE peace secretariat and his wife, were intended and perceived as gestures of conciliation. With these activities, the image of the government as a conflict party in the eyes of the international community was affected in a similar way. Thus, the same activities can also be seen as contributing to context transformation in an ameliorative way.

At the same time, it was noted that the very existence of both peace secretariats contributed to structure transformation since it affected the asymmetric power structures between the two warring parties and contributed to a more symmetric relationship through creating parallel structures and thus levelling the playing field, at least in a superficial way.

Finally, the capacity building function of SCOPP theoretically could be connected to various transformative effects. While capacity building did not play a dominant role during any period of the secretariat's existence, it was a constant function in terms of briefing notes, drafting of presentations and speeches, and provision of content-related information in preparation for inter-party talks. Notably, interviewees neither highlighted the function nor referred to any results from these activities, whereas in theory they could have contributed both to actor and issue transformation, e.g., when informing discussions about power sharing or language policies. The potential effects are therefore not included in figure 5.5 below.

Another potential contribution could be found in context transformation, if briefings of the peace secretariat, prepared for example for the sessions of the UN Human Rights Commission, influenced international responses to human rights violations committed by the LTTE and the increasing influence of anti-terrorism measures. These in turn would have resulted in increasingly hostile reactions from the LTTE and thus contributed to structure transformation; in addition, they would have contributed to increasing the alignment between government and nationalist forces in the South, which called for fighting terrorism, thus contributing to actor transformation in a pejorative way as described above.[344]

In sum, activities may have direct and indirect effects and need to be considered with their enhancing and counteracting effects within the wider conflict system. Moreover, transformation can take place in an ameliorative or pejorative way. This makes the discussion of transformative effects very complex. Not all of these aspects and systemic linkages can be discussed here in detail. The examples derived from interview material display the variety and different levels as well as directions of the transformation processes triggered by the secretariat's functions.

Transformative and other effects varied during different periods. For example, personal and issue transformation due to the secretariat's implementation and monitoring

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[344] It should be noted here again that the terms ameliorative and pejorative do not indicate a value judgement but a positive regenerative or negative degenerative effect on the intended non-violent conflict transformation.

function appeared to be high during the initial period of the ceasefire agreement and the first rounds of peace talks in 2002. While this function continued until the abrogation of the ceasefire and the termination of the SLMM interaction, it can be assumed that its transformative effects would have changed over time. It can be hypothesised, for example, that the personal transformation effect would have decreased given the lack of novelty of the interaction and resulting routine. The transformative effect was probably also affected by the increasing level of ceasefire violations and resulting tensions between the conflict parties, which were beyond the secretariat's control. It is, however, not possible to delineate trends in the transformative effects along a timeline on the basis of the empirical data at hand.[345]

Considering this gap in the existing data, it appears feasible, however, to establish a connection between the secretariat's functions and the types of conflict transformation as identified on the basis of the interview material. Connecting the different functions with the types of conflict transformation, the following picture emerges:
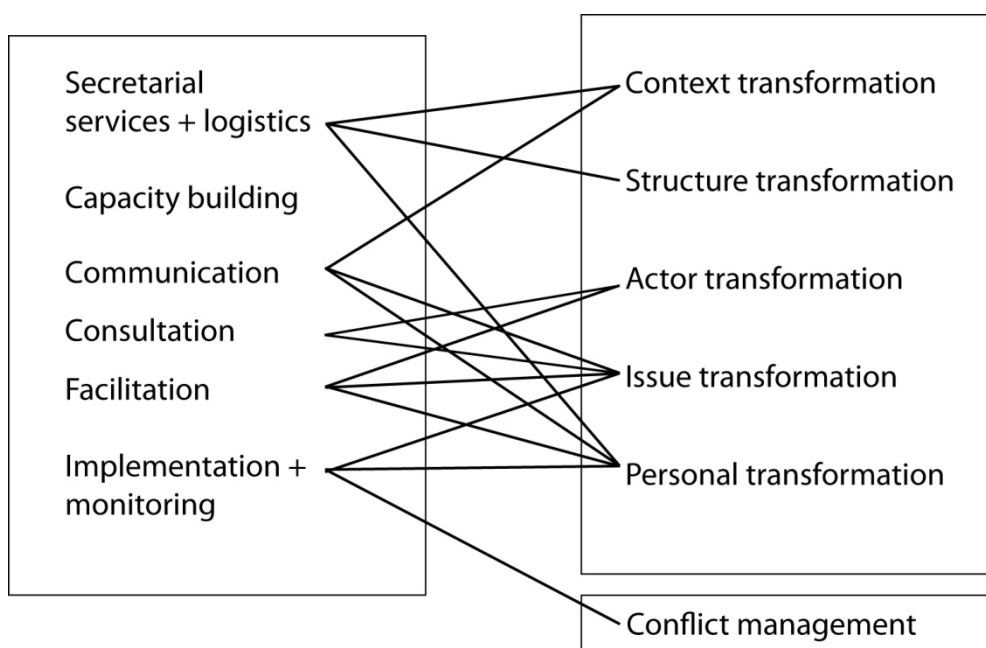
Figure 5.5: SCOPP's contribution to conflict transformation connected to functions

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[345] In addition, there appears to be a methodological gap. According to this researcher's knowledge, methodological approaches to assess the patterns and trends of transformative effects of interventions in a peace process on the basis of qualitative or quantative data do not exist.

As can be seen in figure 5.5, the secretariat's functions can be linked to various types of conflict transformation and to conflict management. Most of the transformative effects, however, appear not to have led to lasting changes in the conflict dynamics or were overshadowed by other transformative processes that counteracted intentions or were not controlled by the peace secretariat. The transformative contribution was limited by factors beyond the secretariat's influence. In the following two sections, these limitations will be discussed in more detail.

5.4 Interactions: Between Trustful Relationships and Constraining Ties

The transformative role of the secretariat was closely linked to its interactions and relationships with relevant actors in the peace process and political context. Whereas the significance of the secretariat's functions and their contribution to conflict transformation changed over time, SCOPP's lines of interaction appear notably constant.

In the following, the secretariat's interactions with the most relevant actors according to the interview findings are described. Using figure 4.6 to visualise the interactions, a complex picture emerges for SCOPP:
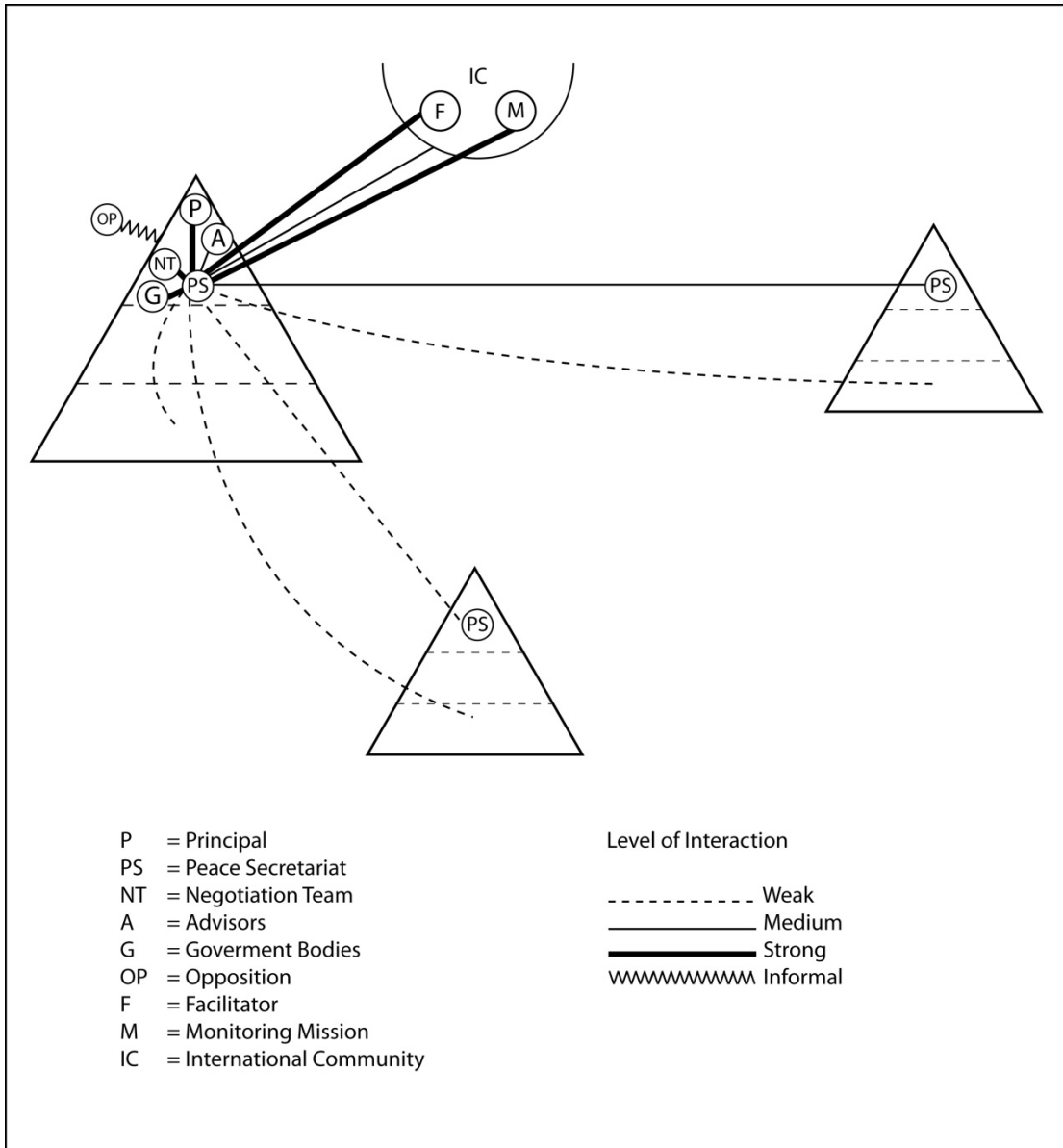
Figure 5.6: Interactions of SCOPP

The most important relationship of an agent is that with the principal, or in this case the various principals in the course of time: at first Prime Minister Wickremasinghe, then President Kumaratunga and President Rajapaksa. While the secretariat thus entertained formally close relationships with its principals, the relationships varied in terms of working arrangements and were also informed by the interaction with and sometimes intermediation of other advisors to the principal. Altogether, the secretariat showed a high level of interaction with the various principals and a medium level of interactions with their advisors at all times.

During the initial period in early 2002, oversight was difficult to manage for the prime minister and his secretary, and the secretariat suffered from a three-fold split among the actors involved in the negotiations. The entanglement with the different political fractions contributed to a mostly introverted focus of the secretariat, which had to be careful to serve the negotiation efforts without disturbing the volatile power arrangements.[346]

First, the secretariat was subjected to the divisions in the administration resulting from the co-habitation arrangement between the prime minister and president. Secretary General Bernard Goonetilleke was part of a 'Group of Five', close confidants of Prime Minister Wickremasinghe meeting weekly to serve as an informal clearinghouse and advisory committee (Interview 22; Weerakoon 2004). It was, however, disconnected from the executive president who disowned the peace process.[347] The prime minister and president faced "basic differences of policy, behavior and styles of management … and rather than collaboration there was opposition, competition and alienation" (Weerakoon 2004, p.368), bridged only by Foreign Minister Kardirgamar due to his personal connections. Public bodies such as SCOPP considered it impossible to bridge the divide (Interview 12, 29).

Second, the negotiating team was led by G.L. Peiris, an academic and politician who as a former close confidante of the president had been involved in her previous peace efforts in 2000 but fell out with her later that year and crossed over to the prime minis-

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[346] External observers as a result often described the secretariat in the early years as mostly catering to the administration without much visibility to the wider public or track 2 actors (Interview 1, 9, 19). During the later stages of the peace process, the situation of SCOPP changed in light of different sets of political advisors and lines of command within the respective administrations.

[347] This group replaced to a certain extent the nearly defunct National Security Council, which was chaired by the president in her position as head of the executive and commander in chief of the armed forces. From this resulted the highly problematic disconnect between president and defence secretary (Interview 24, 29; Fernando 2008).

ter's party (Interview 9; Peiris 2009, pp.61-63).[348] SCOPP, however, did not have close ties with Minister Peiris since it was established and overseen by the 'second man' and reported trouble-shooter of the prime minister, Milinda Moragoda. He reportedly was not "on talking terms" with the chief negotiator and brought "his own people" into SCOPP (Interview 9, 14, 22, 24; Jayawardana 2009, p.97).[349] Although collaborating formally, the chief negotiator was seen by some as distanced from SCOPP and as trying to reduce SCOPP's functions to logistical ones (Interview 1, 9, 24). He further-more established his own group of advisors, partly from his Ministry of Constitutional Affairs and National Integration and partly from civil society (Interview 1, 7, 14, 19, 24; Jayawardana 2009, p.97).[350] This distance left SCOPP with a weakened mandate and little decision-making power on how to approach sensitive issues such as the contro-versial import of radio equipment for the LTTE that the secretariat had to facilitate, or the coordination of the military's vacating of schools and public buildings in the North (Fernando 2008).[351]

Third, SCOPP in the first years had to share work and position with another body that the prime minister's administration had established in order to assist the peace pro-cess and the wider humanitarian and development tasks. The so-called Office of the Commissioner General for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation, known as the 'Triple-R' Office, was established in parallel to the secretariat and also under supervi-

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[348] The ensuing drama can be only understood by looking back at 2000, when the prime minister, then in opposition, inhibited the President's efforts at constitutional reform and her draft proposal was literally burned by opposition members on the floor of Parliament. Looking further into the past, the same opposi-tion had confronted the president's father already in 1957 (Weerakoon 2004, p.338). In 2002 ethnic out-bidding continued when the chief negotiator himself successfully insisted that the negotiating team should not be a bipartisan team as requested by the President (Peiris 2009, p.63; Interview 12, 22, 24, 29). As a result, the negotiating team consisted of the chief negotiator, the UNF politician and Minister Milinda Moragoda, Muslim politician and coalition partner Rauf Hakeem, and the SG of SCOPP, Bernard Goonetilleke.

[349] It was explained that among others the first secretary general of SCOPP was an associate of Minister Moragoda and shared his less moderate and security-oriented views on the peace process.

[350] The support structure within the Ministry was developed later into the National Integration Programme Unit (NIPU).

[351] While former SCOPP staff recognised their specific role and contribution in the setting, to outside ob-servers, it generally, perhaps with the exception of the period under Dhanapala, appeared as if SCOPP's advice supplemented that of other actors (Interview 28). For example, advisors to the Prime Minister mostly drafted the government's proposals on interim arrangements, and the response to the ISGA was discussed among advisors to negotiation team leader Peiris. SCOPP would provide an input if requested, but it was not in the lead in these activities (Interview 29).

sion of the prime minister's office. It was headed by the secretary to the prime minister, Bradman Weerakoon, an experienced senior public servant responsible for all matters concerning the humanitarian and 'normalisation' efforts that accompanied the peace talks (Interview 14, 22, 29; Weerakoon 2004, pp.334-341). Public servants working within the respective units described the collaboration as unproblematic (Interview 22, 29), whereas third-party actors and outside observers pointed to confusion due to mission overlap and different approaches towards the LTTE that might have complicated the government's approach (Interview 1, 14).[352]

This short description points to the initial entanglement of SCOPP as "Ranil [Wickremasinghe]'s people" (Interview 21) within the government's administration and the political factions involved in the peace negotiations. The focus of its work during the period of peace talks was directed inwards in order to serve the government's negotiation efforts.

Under President Kumaratunga, the situation was less complicated although outsiders also remembered overlapping mandates, e.g., between SCOPP and the President's Office, which also called for peace process-related discussions (Interview 19). The president was closely involved and reviewed minutes of SCOPP meetings personally. As mentioned before, SCOPP also saw a consolidation of its formal structures and more advisory involvement in strategic decision-making (Interview 23, 24, 25). Dhanapala was part of a small advisory team of the president with three other advisors who worked together closely and with great confidentiality (Interview 1, 23, 25, 30).[353]

Under President Rajapakse the peace secretariat reportedly did not receive much interest in the beginning but was 'up-graded' after several months without a secretary general, albeit with a different strategic role and less involvement of the principal (Interview 1, 23). Initially overseen by the president's secretary, SCOPP SG Palitha Kohona developed a relatively close relationship to President Rajapaksa and was involved in central decisions about the course of the peace process and the turn to war (Interview 4). He, however, did not spend much time at SCOPP or give the secretariat

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[352] While, for example, the 'Triple R' Office was responsible for the coordination of the donor needs assessment in preparation for the international donor conference in 2003, SCOPP was represented in SIHRN, the related sub-committee of the peace talks (Interview 14).

[353] An example used by interviewees to explain this confidentiality and the trust the oresident had in the SCOPP SG was the negotiation of the P-TOMS, which was led by Dhanapala and kept confidential for months (Interview 30).

clear guidance.[354] As a result, the secretariat felt left out when, for example, a newly established office under the Ministry of Defence with the illustrative title Media Centre for National Security took over press releases on conflict-related matters, new staff was brought into play at the secretariat and the mandate became increasingly blurred (Interview 25, 29). The already increased power of the military under Kumaratunga now outweighed the political approach and it was felt that SCOPP staff had to 'parrot' their views despite at times disagreeing.[355] After SG Wijesinha took over in June 2007, the situation for SCOPP changed again. While the SG was seen as less involved in the power circles of the Rajapaksa government (Interview 1, 23), he helped the secretariat to 'reclaim territory' in terms of functions and visibility.

In sum, it appears that SCOPP had strong relationships with the principals, their advisors and the negotiating teams, as shown in the above graph. This is also reflected in SCOPP's particular role among other government bodies on Track 1. The initial cabinet decision to establish a peace secretariat vested the secretariat in the early years with specific powers but also an onus to 'get things done', e.g., to accelerate consultation processes and solve bureaucratic problems on an operational level (Interview 23; Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p.40).

An exception appeared to be the rather distant relationship with the Ministry of Defence, that was aligned with the president and did not share the moderate approach towards negotiations (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, pp.65-73). [356] Since the then defence secretary, however, was one of the confidantes of the prime minister, SCOPP mostly engaged with the secretary and did not see a role for itself in aligning the military actors (Interview 24, 29). This points to a bigger concern of some interviewees who felt that strategising and coordination altogether were a weak point of the early negotiating team; decision-making took place mostly in bilateral consultation with the prime minister but lacked a shared vision (Interview 22). While SCOPP appeared to be well aware of the resulting weaknesses, it did not feel empowered to do anything

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[354] Before the 2006 talks, one interviewee noted that the request for preparation came from Nivard Cabraal, who in 2006 became the governor of the Central Bank.

[355] One example was government involvement with the Karuna group.

[356] This proved to be problematic since military representations during the peace talks and in sub-committees by others than the defence secretary did not follow the overall negotiation strategy and antagonised the LTTE (Rainford & Sathkunanathan 2009, p.64; Interview 22, 24). Others, however, noted that the allegedly antagonising, chauvinistic language of the military was merely an excuse for the LTTE, which did not want to discuss matters of decommissioning (Interview 29).

about it for several reasons. One of them can be found in the influence of other interest groups in the relationship between principal and agent.

While SCOPP at all times had a strong interaction with the political leadership, its relevance and enactment of its mandate varied and depended as well on the influence of other stakeholders, or interest groups, on the principal and within the conflict party. The difficult co-habitation situation in 2002 and 2003 between the prime minister and president and its effects on SCOPP were discussed above and present a particular constellation. Another challenge consisted in dealing with the Sinhalese nationalist and Buddhist opposition to the peace process. This opposition is shown in figure 5.6 with an informal influence on the interactions of the peace secretariat, with the political party JVP playing a particular role. While changing political alliances, the JVP consistently played an oppositional role, even when being part of a government coalition.

One example of its influence can be found in SCOPP's situation when the JVP was part of President Kumaratunga's governing coalition. In late 2004 SG Dhanapala prepared suggestions for a final political solution through constitutional reform and issued an official government statement on the occasion of the third anniversary of the ceasefire agreement in February 2005. The coalition partner JVP, claiming not to have been consulted appropriately, objected to the constructive approach and publicly attacked the peace secretariat and its SG for the alleged independent stance (Interview 30; also The Sunday Times 2005). This incident shows the level of control that the JVP as a coalition partner exerted on public bodies through various means ranging from media attacks to intimidation of public servants. As one interviewee confided, the secretariat, being perceived by the JVP as a 'peace advocate', at times felt threatened by the strong JVP influence in the public sector.[357] Given the mostly antagonising and even hostile behaviour towards all actors involved in the peace process, the opposition is placed outside the conflict party's triangle in the above figure.

The at times intimidating conduct of political debate explains why SCOPP did not engage more in intra-party information and consensus building despite realising the need for such activities (Jayasekera 2009, p.74). These were seen as political tasks of the principals that did not give SCOPP a mandate to intervene. Rather, it was felt that the 'political games' could not be countered by any communication strategy or con-

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[357] This explanation, however, needs to be complemented with another argument: SCOPP saw itself as part of the public service of a centralised government where there is no space for independent activity. The ever-looming power and regime change due to upcoming elections or weak government coalitions reduced that space even more since "public servants are not interested in upsetting the potential next boss" (Interview 33). The discussion will return to the argument of public service identity later.

sensus building platform (Interview 29).[358] In addition there was a protection argument: given the political climate it was important for public servants not to be exposed, and at all levels they sought protection through aligning with political leadership (Interview 29, 30).

As a result, SCOPP engaged in relatively small ways in intra-party communication and consultations with other tracks within its own constituency both during President Kumaratunga's time and even after political alliances changed again and the JVP was satisfied with the new course of the Rajapaksa government towards the LTTE. Whereas the NACPR effort in 2004 had collapsed with the tsunami, later activities tended to focus on aligning support and increasingly on muting dissent rather than forming consent. The arrows towards the other tracks in the intra-party triangle above are thus shown in weak strength: while there was a certain amount of activity it did not seem to deal with the lacking intra-party consensus.

This leads to inter-party interactions and the relationships with the other peace secretariats. Here, the peace secretariat saw itself and also was seen by outside observers as a *primus inter pares* given its affiliation with the government. While the interactions with the LTTE peace secretariat in sum are shown above with a medium strength (albeit significant reduction towards the end), the interaction with the Peace Secretariat for Muslims is comparatively weaker (but also more consistent over time).

Regarding the relationship with the LTTE peace secretariat, two levels of interaction can be identified during the early years of the peace talks. While official communication was channelled through the Norwegian facilitators and the peace secretariats hardly met officially without the facilitators and without an official mandate, there were close informal and even cordial, friendly relationships among the staff members on both sides (Interview 22, 23, 24, 29; Uyangoda 2002, p.56). The prime minister encouraged this relationship and confidence building, which came in the context of other agreed 'normalisation' measures, e.g., dismantling of road checkpoints and deproscribing the LTTE. Trusted staff members were encouraged to entertain informal contacts with the LTTE in order to create a human interface between the government and LTTE (Interview 22; Weerakoon 2004, pp.338-339). SCOPP staff at the time noted, however, that while personal relationships developed in a friendly manner, the contact was not used on either side in order to touch upon substantive issues, com-

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[358] Weerakoon adds to this a different assessment of the potential of intra-party consensus: the administration felt it was futile to explain the approach to "those determined to be spoilers" (2004, pp.340 and 379).

pare notes or to prepare the agenda of talks (Interview 29). Outsiders also felt that the more relevant official direct contact between government officials and the LTTE did not involve the peace secretariat but, for example, the defence secretary or the prime minister's secretary (Interview 1, 22; Fernando 2008).

After the breakdown of the peace talks in 2003, contact was reduced to official interaction with Norwegian facilitation and the SLMM (Interview 29). One exception was found in a workshop on child recruitment in which both peace secretariats were involved and held a joint opening ceremony for a reintegration home for former recruits. In hindsight, some former staff felt that similar occasions were not used sufficiently and presented missed opportunities for bridge building (Interview 29).

Instead, the stalemate led to deterioration of the relationship; and under the new leadership in 2004, the formerly cordial SCOPP refused to see itself as equal counterparts with the LTTE peace secretariat (Interview 23, 25). Apart from a cordial visit of the LTTE secretariat's head after Dhanapala was nominated secretary general of SCOPP there were no further personal encounters (Interview 30). On field visits, the new SG did not meet the LTTE directly and the trips were not used to convey messages (Interview 25, 30). This frozen relationship, however, was briefly reactivated after the tsunami hit Sri Lanka, as described in section 1.3.2. After the P-TOMS stalled, the brief period of rapprochement between the secretariats ended (Interview 25).

An enhanced sensitivity regarding the asymmetry of the relationship between the conflict parties added to the frustrated relationship. While the beginning of the peace process saw an effort by the government to 'normalise' the relationship, to decrease the asymmetry and to reduce the isolation of the LTTE, this strategy changed under President Kumaratunga for various reasons. While the peace talks had already stalled and ceasefire violations increased, her government also found the ceasefire agreement with its accommodating approach towards the LTTE, and the previous approach towards the peace process in general, flawed (Interview 22, 30). In addition, her conflict strategy was informed by her previous failed peace efforts and her personal experiences. The LTTE had attempted to assassinate the president in December 1999.

Options for communication, even through alternative channels, were kept open nevertheless. The discussions at the One-Text-Initiative, an institutionalised Track 1.5 dialogue and problem-solving programme, were still used as a conduit at a lower staff level (Interview 21). In addition, during Dhanapala's tenure a well-remembered telephone hotline between the two secretariats was established since there were no offi-

cial occasions to meet.[359] While not used given the political climate that did not allow for direct contact, it was considered useful in case of an emergency (Interview 30). Later, during the years of war, Secretary General Wijesinha tried to use the phone connection to make contact directly, but communication could not be established. While it was not clear if technical problems prevented the calls, reported efforts to organise direct meetings through the Norwegian ambassador and the SLMM were refused by the LTTE (Interview 3, 23, 27; CALD 2007).

At this time, however, the attitude and behaviour towards the LTTE had changed profoundly. SCOPP found it difficult to understand why members of civil society and the international community did not realise that the LTTE "were not the movement that they made people believe they were", and refused comparisons between the LTTE, which it considered a terrorist organisation, and other non-state actors such as the ANC or IRA (Interview 23). For some, distinct turning points in the relationship and the strategies of both sides were the 2006 'boycott' of the humanitarian talks by the LTTE and the Mavil Aru battle; afterwards, former SCOPP staff felt that negotiations had become impossible (Interview 4). Others noted that they changed their personal stance after the assassination of Foreign Minister Kadirgamar in August 2005 or that of SCOPP Deputy Ketesh Loganathan in August 2006 (Interview 25).

In comparison, the interaction with the Peace Secretariat for Muslims did not see such changes and was naturally less emotionalised and rather reserved given the government's understanding to represent the Muslim community in the peace process.[360] Some former staff described the relationship as ambivalent, since on one hand the secretariat, in SCOPP's view, did not represent all Muslims and they therefore did not want to validate the PSM's claim to do so, or to get involved in the highly politicised debate on Muslim representation (Interview 29). On the other hand, staff felt that the, in principle, good relationship was pointless since there was no continuity and impact in PSM's work (Interview 21). Except for interaction resulting from the tsunami relief work and, indirectly, the P-TOMS negotiation, most interviewees did not remember details of interaction during the different time periods (Interview 25).[361] This is true

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[359] During the earlier period such a phone hotline was not deemed necessary since staff would rather use a mobile phone directly (Interview 29).

[360] There was, however, a notion that SCOPP could not have represented the Muslim community since SCOPP did not have sufficient numbers of Muslim staff (Interview 23).

[361] The Muslim position with regards to P-TOMS was mostly presented by Muslim politicians who were consulted by the president.

even during the last period under SG Wijesinha, which saw a dedicated contact point for PSM within SCOPP (Interview 23, 27). Altogether, contacts with the PSM were seen as useful in order to access information about the situation of Muslim communities and to compare differing perspectives on conflict-related issues (Interview 23).

In sum, it appears noteworthy that inter-party dialogue and bridge building, even through civil society consultation, hardly played a role in the interpretation of SCOPP's functions during the different time periods under review (Interview 16, 25). While the relationships with the peace secretariats can be clearly traced in the interviews, there is hardly any mention of outreach to the constituencies of the other conflict parties, as if commonly not considered part of the secretariat's tasks. Deviations from this perspective can be found in interviews with third-party actors and donors (Interview 3, 20, 22); and concrete examples of Track 3 engagement in the war-affected areas show that SCOPP interacted with Tamil and Muslim communities on the ground (Interview 23, 25). Given the mission statement of SCOPP (SCOPP n.d.) as acting in the interest of all people and citizens in Sri Lanka, this is a noteworthy finding.

Another notable observation was the lack of references to SCOPP's relationship with the Norwegian facilitator and the SLMM. Since most of the interactions with the LTTE were channelled through the facilitators, the secretariat especially in the early period must have been in almost daily contact with the Norwegian team. During 2002-2005, meetings of the Norwegian chief facilitator Solheim with SCOPP entailed strategic discussions specifically (Interview 25). After the 2006 talks failed and the government engaged the LTTE in warfare, the relationship became significantly weaker and meetings with SCOPP rare. Altogether, these interactions were comparatively little mentioned and not described in their character despite their high relevance, perhaps because they were seen as self-explanatory.

Likewise, the SLMM was a constant interaction partner with a view to reporting CFA monitoring and coordination issues. During the course of time, the relationship changed in two ways. First, it was affected when the SLMM head changed and successors could not build the same trustful relationship as the first monitoring chief. Second, the interpretation of the SLMM mandate was affected by increasing hostilities between the negotiating parties and became less trustful (Interview 29). Given the close contacts throughout all time periods, both interactions are shown in the above graph with a strong line, and the SLMM is added as an independent actor.

One more actor should be added to the figure on the basis of the functions described earlier: SCOPP was the government's entry point for all diplomatic engagement and

foreign visitors with an interest in the peace process. While some third-party actors described the interaction as a formality without substantial strategic relevance to their engagement in the peace process, SCOPP was the main conduit for briefing and consulting the international diplomatic and donor community (Interview 30). Thus, the graph above shows the international community as one additional actor connected to SCOPP with a strong interaction line.[362]

What do the interactions reveal about SCOPP's agency, its space to define and reframe its mandate as perceived necessary in the context of the peace process? As some interviewees noted, the close relationship with the principal as well as the dependence of the principal on other interest groups impacted on the agency of the secretariat. With a view to these interest groups' power, it appears that the political situation and the stability of the respective government coalitions influenced the space of manoeuvre of the administration.

Another determining factor can be found in the negotiation and conflict strategy of the different governments. The turn from peace process to warfare brought with it not only increasing militarisation, and thus a weakened political approach, but also the streamlining of government voices and shrinking space for dissent. A particular influence can be identified in the conduct of the government as a state actor vis-à-vis the non-state conflict party. The asymmetry of the violent conflict determined the conflict strategies of each side and their interaction.

In sum, the rules of interaction, e.g., with a view to raising an independent view point or to engage the political leadership in conflict issues as perceived necessary, appear similarly restrictive at different times of the peace process for different reasons.

It is important to note, however, that many staff did not complain about this limitation of independence and agency despite their personal commitment towards a negotiated settlement and their reservations about a military solution. It appears as if they considered the limitations and the conduct of activities against their personal preference to be a natural part of their work, as being part of the rules of engagement and interaction. Thus, they did not object although they repeatedly explained that they were aware at the time that a different course of action could have had an impact on the peace process. How can this behaviour be explained?

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[362] While the international community is obviously not one homogenous body, the interview material does not provide insights for further differentiation.

5.5 SCOPP's Varying Scope for Agency

The previous discussion showed that SCOPP was guided by instructions of its principals and relatively explicit mandates and defined functions. It also showed that other actors had an influence on SCOPP's enactment of its mandate. While SCOPP at first sight appears to have been dominated by the respective principal's decisions and the influence of other interest groups and appears to have had rather limited agency, this is not necessarily the case.

Findings regarding the design of SCOPP's mandate suggest that SCOPP had a say in the decision-making process and helped define its own mandate. The first draft concept for establishing SCOPP was written by its designated first Secretary General Bernard Goonetilleke while still serving as ambassador to China (Goonetilleke 2009, p.13). The idea and concept were influenced by Minister Moragoda and staff members based on inspiration from other peace processes in Northern Ireland and South Africa (Interview 14).

Later changes in the mandate, as well as its structure and working procedures, which were described above, were initiated mostly within the secretariat and led to adjustments of the functions, which appeared meaningful within the political context. Moments of adaptation coincided with changes in the negotiation strategy under a new government regime or a change in the conflict dynamics. As outlined above, regime change involved a change in the secretariat's leadership with the new heads bringing in their own perspectives and priorities, e.g., an interest in learning from other conflict situations or a stronger focus on international relations. Particularly when President Kumaratunga took over and formed her own approach towards negotiations with the LTTE, this led to significant change for SCOPP. Before SG Dhanapala joined the secretariat, mandate and strategy were discussed and adjusted and led to changes in the secretariat's structure, procedures and work areas (Interview 1, 25, 30).

Whereas the secretariat to a significant extent designed its own mandate, it always saw its role in the second row and left the political decision to its principal. Despite its relative freedom to contemplate new approaches and discuss strategy internally, the secretariat was aware of the given limitations with a view to its principal's interests and inclination to accept advise. While dissent with political strategies was expressed internally, it was not acted upon. Staff neither questioned nor breached their mandate:

they simply "could not do anything about it" (Interview 25). Examples of this behaviour of silent dissent concern relatively significant events during all phases of the peace process such as the government's strategy of dealing with the Karuna split from the LTTE (Interview 30), the delay of political decision-making on P-TOMS (Interview 25), and the way of conducting the APRC process (Interview 3, 21).[363]

The following aspects are relevant in order to understand SCOPP's agency. Like the interactions, the level of agency appears to be constant in the course of time. At all times, SCOPP was part of a government apparatus and not a political player. It thus followed the same constant rules of interaction with political actors and other government bodies as well as with civil society. Beyond this consistency, interviews reveal different ways of interpreting the rules and the mandate over time. These appeared to have been influenced by internal, organisational aspects of SCOPP, which either appear to change over time or have different impact at various points.

SCOPP was established as an executive agency for a specific purpose and guided by public sector codes of conduct and mentality (Interview 12, 18). The resulting criticism from some parts in civil society was known to SCOPP; but the secretariat preferred to appear placid or legalistic while enacting the rules of bureaucracy and diplomacy rather than to create a stir (Interview 29).[364] Furthermore, the relationship with the principal and the negotiating team were defined according to these rules, only foreseeing one-way top-down communication and not allowing for active feedback or dissenting debate. During the initial time, the work culture close to the prime minister was also strongly influenced by extreme time pressure and a leadership approach that prioritised action above analysis. This put the secretariat in the back seat with little initiative but a lot of activities to implement (Interview 25, 29, 33).

The personnel of SCOPP in general were recruited from both the public and private sectors and included people in such different professions as diplomacy, economics, law and communications (SCOPP n.d.). Initially, diplomats dominated the staff of SCOPP, but under Dhanapala more experts for the different work areas were recruited outside the diplomatic corps (Interview 4, 21, 30). The leadership of SCOPP

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[363] With regards to the APC/APRC process, some former staff believe that they were not asked to play a more central role because there was no political will behind the initiative and thus no interest in giving SCOPP the opportunity to make it work (Interview 21, 25).

[364] Outside observers and particularly civil society organisations engaged in peace and human rights issues were rather critical of SCOPP and did not appreciate SCOPP's role after the talks stalled, or felt that 'they did not do much' beyond their monitoring function (Interview 1, 5, 9).

remained mostly in the hands of diplomats with the exception of the last SG. This is meaningful for reading the relevance of SCOPP: it reflects the strong orientation of SCOPP towards the international community as a relevant interlocutor during the peace process, and an understanding that the secretariat would facilitate negotiation activities and represent its principal's viewpoints rather than shape them (Interview 24, 25); the focus was on transmission instead of transformation (Interview 22).[365]

In the views of some, the work and lifestyle of diplomats reportedly added to a rather detached view and lack of engagement. SCOPP was present in meetings and work-shops either to represent the government view or remain a quiet observer represented through lower-level staff without a mandate to speak. Thus, SCOPP was seen by some as a one-man show with a strong public presence of the respective secretary general (Interview 18). At the same time, the respective work and leadership style of the SG influenced the secretariat's approach as a whole: in the beginning the secretariat was very careful about protocol and only later found its own voice (Interview 23, 31).[366] After 2006, the connection to the diplomatic service was significantly reduced (Interview 4). This change coincided with regime change and again a change in the government's conflict strategy.

In addition, staff recruitment in the beginning appeared to be guided strongly by politi-cal considerations, at times against other relevant considerations.[367] Political alignment was considered an important factor for trustful working relationships. It must also have been relevant in order to 'survive' the politically complicated situation of 2002 and the split within the negotiating team.

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[365] Contributing to this attitude, the predominant culture of 'not talking back' directly and not taking re-sponsibility was mentioned. One explanation for the preference to talk indirectly through a messenger rather than airing dissent directly was said to be found in Sinhalese history and experiences of dealing with the colonial powers (Interview 22).

[366] This trends coincides with changes in the peace process: it could be argued that during the peace talks there was a stronger need for protocol and only later, when the process unravelled, scope for new tasks and work styles emerged.

[367] During the first eight months of SCOPP's existence, the SG also served as ambassador to China and travelled between both posts (Interview 22). During his absence, the ambassador to Thailand helped out and represented SCOPP in official meetings (Interview 29). Some felt that the choice of staff also did not correspond in terms of the required social skills for communication and confidence building (Interview 22), while critics of this perspective noted that the more open-minded and communicative staff was at times influenced and instrumentalised by the LTTE (Interview 24).

Aside from political alignment, professionalism was considered important. Increasingly, staff was recruited outside the public sector; lawyers and journalists added different profiles and expertise to the team (Interview 30). In addition, expertise on human rights and conflict resolution was sought (Interview 1, 21).[368] Staff recruited at later stages of the peace process also included academics and persons close to civil society who had divergent viewpoints on politics and the dynamics of the peace process (Interview 25). This widened the scope of perspectives represented within SCOPP.

While leading to a different image of the organisation, it also contributed to a cultural change within and gave the secretariat self-esteem and a certain sense of empowerment.[369] The 'elitist' role seemed to allow for marginally more space for independent and critical thinking compared to other parts of government administration. At the same time, the appointed secretaries and their deputies brought in new staff they knew and trusted from earlier work relations (Interview 25), which points to a continued relevance of political alignment and trustful relationships.

Another aspect of staff selection concerns ethnicity. While SCOPP was originally staffed mostly with Sinhalese personnel, it later included representatives of other communities (Interview 24).[370] Most noteworthy in this regard was the nomination of Kethesh Loganathan as deputy SG of SCOPP in March 2006. He was recruited because of his personal background as a well-known civil society voice, former Tamil political activist and member of a militant LTTE-rival group (Jeyaraj 2006), his understanding of the Tamil mindset and his critical position towards the LTTE (Interview 1, 6, 9).

In this context, the reportedly singular moment occurred in which SCOPP developed its own profile in an internal restrategising process going beyond the existing mandate. Deputy SG Loganathan joined after several months of uncertainty regarding

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[368] Before, staff did not receive extra training for the particular tasks in the negotiating and peace process (Interview 18, 24).

[369] This understanding of a strengthened role was also expressed by Dhanapala with regards to negotiation tactics, "I personally find that this process of negotiating peace in the glare of publicity – in Geneva or wherever else – is not necessarily the best way forward. I'm not proposing that talks be held secretly, but I think it's a task for the technocrats to undertake – under the guidance, of course, of their political masters" (Dhanapala 2007a, n.pag.).

[370] Initially, SCOPP's mostly Sinhalese staff contributed to the image of a 'Sinhalese peace secretariat' in contrast to a mistakenly 'Tamil peace secretariat' and a Muslim peace secretariat (Interview 24).

SCOPP's mandate and leadership (Interview 31).[371] According to former staff, he inspired internal debate and critical thinking, created new contacts and working relationships for SCOPP and opened new areas of work, e.g., on topics such as peace education and dissemination of peace and conflict transformation-related literature. Shortly before his assassination, SCOPP held an important meeting with other ministries in order to coordinate their contributions towards peacebuilding. His idea was to work on a strategy going beyond the crafting of a political solution through the APRC process and to engage with some of the larger structural impediments for a political solution (Interview 25). While the recruitment of an outstanding personality and expert such as Loganathan brought a new impulse to SCOPP's work, some voices also felt that the organisation should have set closer limitations on the emerging agency.[372]

The source for the new momentum was seen in the strong values and ethical considerations that drove the deputy SG's personal commitment to peace. It needs to be noted, however, that this new level of agency for SCOPP was in line with the political leadership's strategy and that SCOPP's principals were in accord with the new initiative. The recruitment of Loganathan was intentional and served the government well. The idea was to reach out towards Tamil communities with a critical stance towards the LTTE and make particular use of Loganathan's standing within the Tamil diaspora and expertise (Interview 1, 9, 25). This new venture towards peace, however, soon found an end, both for SCOPP and the country. When the new SG Kohona met the Norwegian special envoy for secret discussions in Barcelona in early May 2006, he agreed to a sequenced negotiation effort that was not sanctioned by his political leadership (Sørbø et al. 2011, p.58; Jansz 2006; US Embassy 2006). At the end of July,

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[371] While at this time the new SG Palitha Kohona was appointed as well, interviewees attributed the change process mostly to the recruitment of Loganathan.

[372] This point was made in particular with a view to the personal signatures of press statements, which became a trademark both of Loganathan and of SG Wijesinha. It was felt that the organisation should not have given space for personalised statements in order to protect personnel as well as the reputation of the organisation (Interview 23).

Loganathan was killed shortly after releasing a particularly critical and emotional press statement regarding the LTTE's departure from the talks in Oslo in June 2006, compared for example to the measured response to the LTTE's stalling of the peace talks in April 2003 (Interview 3, 6, 9, 23; SCOPP 2003, 2006a). While his assassins remain unidentified, most observers attribute it to the LTTE, which had a strong record of killing Tamil 'collaborators' (Interview 3, 9) and would have objected to the government's move towards engaging and perhaps even representing Tamil views (Interview 1, 6). The LTTE, however, neither accepted nor rejected the accusation of killing Loganathan, which took place on the first anniversary of the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kardigamar (Jeyaraj 2006).

the Mavil Aru battle began, Loganathan was killed in August 2006, and in October the repeated efforts to hold talks between the government and the LTTE collapsed. Both parties started to engage in unofficial warfare.

The newly empowered agency of SCOPP continued despite the changed strategy. The little hope within SCOPP for a revitalisation of the peace process with the LTTE succumbed to an increasingly hostile stance towards the LTTE and advocates of peace talks, and eventually many SCOPP staff embraced the overall war strategy.[373] Some felt that defeating the LTTE was the only option and subscribed to SCOPP's transformation towards a propaganda apparatus, a 'war secretariat', since "there was no one to make peace with" (Interview 23).[374] Other functions appeared to become posterior to supporting the war strategy. This new perspective and role did not find the consent of all staff. Some of those committed to the previous peace process and earlier values and work ethics found the new approach distressing and eventually left the organisation (Interview 25, 29). Others identified new opportunities for SCOPP to contribute to peacebuilding and reconciliation at the community level and increased their focus on grassroots engagement, e.g., after the 'liberation of the East' in 2007 (SCOPP 2009). This increasing aspect of SCOPP's functions was meant to continue beyond the war in some of the staff's views and was seen, besides the search for a political solution, as an important task in order to build lasting peace.[375]

Nevertheless, SCOPP was closed down briefly after the war ended. Those interviewees who confided their insights into the dynamics of that time, felt that the principal did not consult SCOPP on this decision. Staff had developed plans for a new mandate that saw SCOPP in a strengthened role, e.g., coordinating the rehabilitation and reconstruction effort (SCOPP 2009, p.2). They were submitted to superiors but appar-

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[373] Former staff remembered the mixed feelings when preparing for the talks and some were 'taking bets' on whether the talks would take place at all; nevertheless, they recalled working 'night and day' to prepare the negotiating team (Interview 25, 29).

[374] There were, however, also concerns about the communication strategy since it was felt that the confrontational approach, especially towards peacebuilding actors, would have barred SCOPP from being involved in any future peace effort (Interview 23). Others noted that this approach after some time went beyond the principal's mandate and that SCOPP was 'overdoing' it.

[375] Cues for these new functions were seen in an All Party Conference on Development and Reconciliation, which met on July 2, 2009 and on invitation of the president brought together 23 political parties represented in Parliament including all relevant Tamil parties and the TNA. The conference, foreseen to meet on a monthly basis, was not continued, since the emerging allegations against the government on war crimes took too much attention (Interview 27).

ently no feedback was received. This puts the question of mandate, and agency, in a different light and an interpretation will be offered in the next section.

Aspects of the organisational identity influenced the agency of the peace secretariat similar to the earlier described structural influences, e.g., the changes in negotiation and conflict strategy, the time pressure and work load in times of regime change and particularly at the beginning of the peace process, or the influence of the asymmetric relationship of the conflict actors and the type of violent conflict altogether.

In the beginning, the secretariat's self-perception (and that of its staff) was strongly influenced both by political alignment with its leadership and the rules of diplomacy and bureaucracy. Later on, a growing sense of professionalism was added and helped maintain a sense of distinction from other public bodies. During these times, staff expressed on several occasions and under different leadership dissent from the respective principal's decisions. This dissent, however, was not acted upon. Rather it appeared that a self-understanding of submission prevailed. This should, however, not be interpreted as weakness or servile subordination but rather as prudence of a servant who identifies itself with its original mandate as a secretary: to assist the principal.

During the later years, dissent with the principal was not expressed. Unlike earlier times, staff consisted to a greater degree of non-public servants who were less bound to rules of bureaucracy. Given the different backgrounds of staff, there appeared to be also a lesser level of alignment with professional standards of diplomacy and alignment with government policies. How then can the lack of dissent be explained?

Whereas outside observers might point to the general atmosphere of suppression of opposition and criticism as well as censorship and self-censorship during times of war, former staff described a high level of identification, not only with its principal but also with the principal's strategy. The secretariat seemed to agree with the war strategy, but rather than seeing itself as a 'war secretariat' only, identified new areas of activity in parallel to and beyond the military strategy. While the killing of Deputy Director Loganathan and the commencing warfare stifled emerging initiatives towards a more transformative role in 2006, the secretariat's sudden end after the war thus came as another, and this time terminal, shock to its understanding of agency.

5.6   A Token for Peace – Symbolic Reading of SCOPP

The earlier description of SCOPP's functions focused on the operative tasks of the secretariat. There is, however, a more intangible purpose of the organisation, expressed in its symbolic function. This does not imply that the operative functions were a façade. Rather, the symbolic function complements the operative function in giving activities or the even the organisation as a whole a meaning. The principal communicated a message through the establishment of the agency.

In the case of SCOPP, this message concerned the commitment of the government to the peace process. In creating a specific government body as secretariat and in committing financial resources and personnel to it, the government displayed its ownership and sincerity in the peace effort. The secretariat was housed in the twin towers of Colombo's World Trade Center, a prime office and business location.[376] Alluding to previous peace processes that went undocumented and were less coordinated, the prime minister also made it clear in his letter to the Norwegian prime minister that he 'means business' (Gooneratne 2007, p.4). As described above, SCOPP was part of a comprehensive approach of institutionalising the peace process.

The continuation of SCOPP's existence beyond the stalemate of 2003 can be understood in the context of the continuation of the Norwegian facilitation mandate. Despite disagreement with the previous course, President Kumaratunga maintained both as a token of the persisting commitment to a peaceful, political solution to domestic but even more to international audiences. Probably for the same reason, SCOPP continued to exist beyond the presidential elections in 2005 and the failed humanitarian talks in 2006. By then, SCOPP had developed a distinct organisational identity and a mandate comprising several functions useful for the government despite the reduced involvement in efforts related to peace talks and the original mandate of the secretariat. At the same time, however, observers also felt that there was not an option to close SCOPP if it were less useful. SCOPP was still regarded as important to appease the international community and for the government to not appear as the first of the two parties to abandon the peace process. The closure of SCOPP at this point would have been a signal of this (Interview 7).

At the beginning of official warfare, indicated by the abrogation of the ceasefire agreement in early January 2008, the message of commitment to the peace process

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[376] In 2007 the secretariat was moved to prime office space at the international convention hall of Colombo, which also houses a centre for international studies.

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became obsolete and the secretariat was no longer required to monitor ceasefire violations (Interview 9, 21). The focus of the secretariat thereafter was seen to be more on other tasks related to the SG's role as secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights.

When SCOPP closed in mid-2009, this reportedly came as a surprise both to observers and staff members; the decision appeared to be ad hoc and not communicated properly (Interview 21). Staff felt that there were a lot of activities that should continue beyond the war and that a coordination and focal point for the reconciliation efforts of the government would be needed (Interview 3, 7, 23, 27, 29).

These interviewees did not identify the post-war situation with a post-conflict situation, and thus the secretariat in their view still had a role to play. Coordination efforts around rehabilitation, reconstruction and nation building, however, were delegated to other government bodies that were seen to be closer to the president and his office, although the secretariat would have been a good starting point to build more lasting government structures following, for example, the Nepalese Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation (Interview 23).

Pointing in this direction, the last Secretary General of SCOPP was appointed as presidential adviser on reconciliation, albeit without institutional support. Some staff continued to serve the government in similar functions in line ministries, others returned to previous occupations in civil society or academia. SCOPP's office was closed, and although additional time was given to document work and consolidate the archives, at the time of the interviews in 2010 the existence and further maintenance of the archives as part of the National Archives was not certain (Interview 21, 27, 29).[377]

Since many of the functions were continued under different roofs, it appears that these functions were still valued and not considered redundant. Redundancy thus seems not to be the reason for closure. An alternative explanation might be found in the symbolism of closure. The final publication of SCOPP underlines this view stating that, "while the closure is appropriate in symbolic terms, much of the work that we have been doing must continue in one form or another" (SCOPP 2009, p.1).

Since the peace secretariat was established in the context of the ceasefire and the peace talks, it was seen as not required after the victory. Noting that "we outgrew our-

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[377] At the time of finalising the research in early 2012, there were indications that the files are stored at the National Archives and are in the process of being recorded.

selves … since there was no more peace process" (Interview 23), one interpretation goes back to the earlier implied parity of status between the government and the LTTE peace secretariats, which had given a legitimacy to the LTTE of which nobody wanted to be reminded. Another interpretation was that the secretariat's function as a propaganda instrument and 'war monger', to rebut allegations against the government and explain the war strategy, was no longer desired (Interview 27) and might have turned into a political liability (Interview 23).

Another observer also noted that after the war many government bodies saw changes in title, removing any reference to conflict and peace, the North and East of the country, or ethnicity (Interview 12). Mandates were reformulated and functions regrouped, leading to a new division of labour between ministries and government departments and making some obsolete. Other observers read this as a more far-reaching change in direction and interpreted the closure of SCOPP as a sign of a political direction that did not include peace, reconciliation or a political solution to the conflict. According to them, the government "has signalled its lack of interest in pursuing a political solution to the ethnic crisis. It has indicated that it doesn't have use for a Peace Secretariat" (Ramachandran 2009b, n.pag, citing an anonymous political analyst).

Beyond the secretariat's closure, symbolic meaning can also be found in some of its activities or their limitations.[378] One particular example is the influence of the JVP on the secretariat. As described earlier, nationalist chauvinistic opposition to the peace process can be considered as one of the most relevant stumbling blocks of peace efforts on the side of the Sinhalese community and the majoritarian Sri Lankan governments. As shown above, its effect was also felt on the peace secretariat and its staff, when new initiatives were effectively blocked by scandalising them, or when staff was more or less explicitly cautioned that their activities in furthering peace efforts were not liked and closely watched. The secretariat in such instances can be seen as a mirror of its principal's limitations and lack of political will to engage constructively with dissent.[379]

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[378] The killing of Kethesh Loganathan, either by the LTTE or others, presents a particular example of structural limitation.

[379] It can be safely stated that its experiences stand for the experiences of other government bodies. As Rainford and Sathkunanathan (2009, p.2) note about the sub-committees created during the peace talks in 2002 and 2003, they were "creatures of the peace process and therefore vulnerable to (its) wider dynamics", and since they were elements of the bureaucracy, they were also at "the mercy of a hierarchical and restrictive system". Despite other intentions, these organisations became politicised and basically ineffective.

5.7 SCOPP's Agency In a Nutshell

Summing up the case study of SCOPP is not an easy task given the many facets of the organisation's agency, its potential and limitations. Grasping the complexity of the findings ultimately leads to simplification of the argument. Nevertheless, a summary is in order.

The peace secretariat appeared to be a relevant instrument to support its different principals' changing strategies and thereby follow the political 'masters' as a secretariat has to do, albeit at times in silent dissent. Interview findings do not indicate that there would have been potential for changing the overall course of the peace process, and it seems that trying to do so was not in line with the self-understanding of the secretariat. The secretariat nevertheless contributed significantly to negotiation and conflict management in several ways, as mandated by its principals in the early periods. On some occasions, it enabled change and contributed to transformation, albeit not always in an ameliorative way. It later became a strong tool for communication as well as for development of new government initiatives towards dealing with the violent conflict, looking for entry points for integration and reconciliation.

The secretariat contributed to conflict transformation in various ways, as outlined above. While it appears that staff at times would have liked to do 'more' and proved its initiative on some occasions, structural circumstances and aspects of its own identity limited agency. Influential aspects of organisation identity were political alignment, identification with the principal, and professionalism in public and diplomatic service. Factors of structural influence on the secretariat's agency were found in the asymmetry of the relationship with the LTTE as well as the changing peace and conflict dynamics over time, in particular the LTTE's symbolic acts of violence found in assassinations and assassination attempts. A particularly strong structural influence was found in the JVP's resistance to any peace effort and approach towards power sharing with the LTTE. This influence, and the lack of political engagement with this so-called spoiler potential, paralysed SCOPP and the peace process.

Besides its operative functions, SCOPP served an important communicative, symbolic function through its sheer existence and maintenance: it was seen as a token of the government's commitment to peace. Just as much as its agency was limited by politics, however, the peace effort was spoiled by politics.[380] In its limitations, the secre-

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[380] This simplifies the complexity of the peace process and both conflict parties' decision to go to war.

tariat thus mirrored its principal, just as its potential for promoting peace was limited – the initial good intentions could not be met and the reality of Sri Lankan politics in the end outweighed any effort of independent agency.

Chapter 6   Friendly Face, Gatekeeper and Building Block for Tamil Eelam – Analysis of the Findings on the Peace Secretariat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

The LTTE was commonly described as one of the "most feared, fanatic and ruthless" and "seemingly indestructible" armed groups (Swamy 2010, p.xvii). It was different from other non-state armed groups in military, economic and organisational regards. For more than 25 years, the LTTE engaged the government of Sri Lanka in warfare and repeated, but eventually unsuccessful, peace negotiations. Although the Sri Lankan ethno-political conflict is well researched and the LTTE provided much allure, for example to investigate its use of suicide attacks (Bloom 2005), not much is known about the LTTE's internal organisation. Thus, the LTTE to a certain extent remained an enigmatic organisation. Whereas its peace secretariat was mainly used to give the LTTE a face and a bureaucratic, accessible structure for the peace process of 2002, much of its work nevertheless remains opaque.

Organised like the previous chapter, chapter 6 first offers a short introduction to the peace secretariat within the context of the LTTE as a non-state armed group and its overall organisation, since this provides a defining structural context for the peace secretariat.[381] Second, the functions of the peace secretariat are discussed and in the third section, these are connected to the secretariat's contributions to conflict trans-formation. As with the government's secretariat, these contributions, and the peace secretariat's agency, can only be understood in the context of its interactions both within the LTTE and with outsiders, and of its identity. This will be further examined in sections 6.4 and 6.5. The sixth section offers an interpretation of the symbolism of the peace secretariat, which in some parts resembles that of the government's secretariat and in others differs due to the organisation's nature and interests. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings.

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[381] As usual in academic and journalistic literature, this research uses the *noms de guerre* generally adopted by the LTTE cadres although some of them at the time of writing have taken on a new, civilian identity. Also, the author applies English spelling of the Tamil names.

6.1   Introduction to the LTTE Peace Secretariat

Whether one describes the LTTE as a non-state armed group, a rebel group, a liberation movement or a terrorist group depends on the analytical, political and ideological perspective (Nadarajah & Sriskandarajah 2005; Policzer 2005). This research sides with the description of the LTTE as primarily a military actor that employed different violent tactics including terrorist techniques, but also sought political legitimacy on local, regional and international grounds and developed a certain political sophistication for a non-state armed group, as Philipson (2011, p.107) notes.[382] Despite its strategic interest in political legitimacy for its quest of an independent Tamil state (*Tamil Eelam*), the overall character of the LTTE always remained that of a military organisation; and within its two-tiered structure, the political wing was subservient to the military leadership (Orjuela 2009; Philipson 2011; Swamy 2003).[383]

The organisation was established in the early 1970s as a reflection of increasing militancy among Tamil youth who were frustrated with the so far unsuccessful political debate about minority rights, the freedom of language and power sharing, and thus sought separatism and anti-state violence as an answer (Balasingham 2004; Tambiah 1986; Wilson 2000).[384] Initially evolving out of a militant student movement, the LTTE developed from a small underground group of young rebels operating in secrecy[385]

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[382] While never contesting elections, the LTTE shaped Sri Lanka's political agenda through its dominant influence on the electorate in the LTTE-controlled areas, which for example led to the defeat of Ranil Wickremasinghe in the presidential election of 2005 (Jeyaraj 2005), as well as through intimidation and violent manipulation of Tamil parties that contested the LTTE predominance (Human Rights Watch 2003). The LTTE entertained a close relationship with the Tamil National Alliance, which was formed in 2001 out of various Tamil political parties and movements with a partly militant history and was widely seen as a political surrogate for the LTTE (Höglund 2005, p.164; Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008).

[383] There are of course other perspectives that see the LTTE as a revolutionary political movement, as for example Nadarajah and Vimalarajah describe by using quotes from the LTTE's political programme (2008, pp.24-25).

[384] The LTTE was formed in 1972 under the name of the 'Tamil New Tigers' and was renamed in 1976 as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, after a significant convention of political parties in May 1976 in Vaddukodai, Jaffna, called for the creation of an independent homeland (Balasingham 2004, pp.25-27).

[385] Although operational from its establishment in 1972 onwards, the organisation claimed responsibility for violence first in 1978 (Balasingham 2004, p.26). Later, the organisation's policy towards responsibility for acts of violence changed given its efforts to not appear as a terrorist organisation (Bloom 2005, p.68; Stack-O'Connor 2007, pp.54-55). Many of the atrocities that were allegedly committed by the LTTE were not claimed by the organisation, although in a few high-profile cases the organisation later indirectly or directly apologised, e.g., for the assassination of Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi.

into one of the most sophisticated non-state armed groups worldwide, which engaged in conventional warfare as well as in insurgent and terrorist methods with separate infantry, navy and air force, dedicated units for suicide attacks and a widespread net of intelligence that spanned the LTTE-controlled territory and its population (Institute for Conflict Management 2011). The total number of LTTE cadres at its peak in the years 2003-2004 was estimated to be about 18,000. An estimated two thirds of this number were said to have been recruited after the ceasefire of 2002, and a large number were considered to be underage and/or forced recruits (Human Rights Watch 2008). Women made up a large group of the LTTE fighters and were organised in separate combat, intelligence, political and administrative units (Balasingham 1993; Stack-O'Connor 2007).[386]

Both with regards to the state as declared enemy and within its own constituency, violent strategies were predominant in order to achieve the organisations' objectives and consolidate its predominance among Tamil militant groups and political formations, resulting in a comparatively high number of ceasefire violations even during the time of peace talks (Höglund 2005). Also with a view to internal dissent, the organisation maintained a strict and military approach penalising criticism, dissident and treason (regarding the defection of the eastern leader Karuna see International Crisis Group (2006); in general Lilja (2010); Swamy (2003, pp. 241-248); University Teachers for Human Rights (2005b)). While involving during the time of the peace talks an increasing number of civilian volunteers and advisors from the Tamil diaspora, the core of the LTTE personnel, even within the political wing, were trained military cadres (Philipson 2011, p.107). Strict military rule governed all parts of LTTE activities and covered also personal life, e.g., through rules on the marriage of cadres (Stack-O'Connor 2007).

In the course of the violent conflict with the government and in light of human rights violations and assassinations of several political leaders, the LTTE was banned or proscribed as a terrorist organisation by various countries that host significant Tamil diaspora groups and where the organisation had a support infrastructure.[387] The pro-

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[386] The influence of the parallel women's wing that cut across political and military structures at all levels is difficult to determine (McBroom 2010). While the LTTE presented it as independent and empowered to take decisions, observers felt that this was not credible since female cadres were mostly silent and appeared as subordinate to their male counterparts. An exception was the head of the Women's Political Wing, Thamilini (Interview 16).

[387] The factions of this support base and its relevance for the LTTE are discussed in detail in Fuglerud (1999) and Human Rights Watch (2006). See also the publications and case studies based on work of the Berghof Peace Support with the Tamil diaspora under

scription created both a financial and reputational burden for the organisation that, despite its coercive practices, sought legitimacy for its secessionist state-building project. As pointed out in section 1.3.1, the LTTE engaged in its own state-building effort in an attempt to establish a de-facto state before eventual peace agreements might come to a political solution; at the same time, the state-building project aimed at the international community to make a case for 'earned sovereignty' (Williams & Pecci 2004; for an outline of LTTE activities with this intention see Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008, pp.36-37).

To this end, the LTTE after the departure of the Indian peacekeeping mission in 1990 began to establish a parallel civil administration within the territory under its control (Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008). This administration included a police force, law courts, postal services, banks and other services, and according to Stokke (2006) presented elements of a nascent state in form of social welfare and economic development infrastructure alongside the LTTE's security and intelligence apparatus.[388] The latter fulfilled several functions with regards to external and internal security and is seen in connection with the LTTE judicial system as both an authoritarian guarantor of the rule of law in a war-torn society and a coercive instrument to maintain LTTE hegemony (Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008; Stokke 2006, pp.1026-1028).

One part of this emerging administration that profited significantly from the years of ceasefire from 2002 onwards is considered to be the political wing of the LTTE. Borne out of an unsuccessful effort to establish a political party in the early 1990s, the political wing was established with local branch offices in LTTE-controlled areas and a 'headquarters' that was first located in Jaffna and in 1995 moved to Kilinochchi (Balasingham 2001 cited in Brun 2008, pp.407-408). Whereas other observers regard the political wing as subservient to the military command, Stokke finds in the internal developments after 2002 a "partial shift from military to political means, with a promi-

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http://www.berghof-peacesupport.org/activities/sri-lanka/#diaspora_dialogues.

[388] Stokke's account, for which the fieldwork was facilitated by the LTTE peace secretariat (Stokke 2006, p.1037) has led to controversial debate (Fuglerud 2009; Sarvananthan 2007; Stokke 2007) despite the author's explicit comment on the authoritarian character of the emerging infrastructure and the need for the LTTE "to accept political pluralism, human rights and democracy" (Stokke 2006, p.1024). Criticism, however, already springs from acknowledging the LTTE's statebuilding efforts, which were considered as undermining the Sri Lankan government's sovereignity, as the controversy over a former World Bank country representative's alleged statement regarding LTTE's 'kind of unofficial state' shows (Stokke 2006, p.1038).

nent position for the LTTE political wing" (Stokke 2006, p.1022).[389] This has to be seen in the context of the negotiations period and the momentarily stalled warfare.[390] The negotiations and the resulting requirements to prepare for them, to coordinate humanitarian and development work and to deal with human rights issues led to an expansion of the political wing structure. After 2002 a Political Affairs Committee, Planning and Development Secretariat and Human Rights Secretariat for the North and East were established as well as political offices within government-controlled areas (Orjuela 2009, p.259). Part of this expansion included the establishment of the peace secretariat as support structure for the peace talks and as a counterpart to the government's peace secretariat. As will be seen in the course of this chapter, this structure played a key role during the years of its existence – not only with regards to the peace process but to the LTTE's interest in representing its nascent statehood.

In the course of the last war, however, the peace secretariat's expertise on political issues became less relevant and it was increasingly used to propagandise the human suffering in the LTTE-controlled areas on an international level. After 2006 its counterparts at SCOPP lost contact with the secretariat (Interview 29). At the same time, travel bans and the proscription of the LTTE in the EU and Canada as well as increasingly difficult travel from and to the LTTE-controlled areas pushed the LTTE into increasing isolation and further reduced the peace secretariat's role.

6.2   The Secretariat's Functions: Clear Priorities but Decreasing Significance

The LTTE Peace Secretariat was officially opened on January 14, 2003 as an executive office of the political wing of the LTTE, although it had functioned earlier. According to information on its earlier website[391], the objectives of the LTTE PS were as follows:

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[389] It should be noted that Stokke was not alone, as several third-party actors were engaging the LTTE in order to enhance the potential for political transformation.

[390] One observer nevertheless noted that the political wing's role did not necessarily weaken when the decision towards a return to war was taken. Its relevance for the statebuilding project remained unchanged (Interview 33).

[391] The earlier website www.llteps.org did not operate from early 2009 and internal documents regarding the peace secretariat are not publicly available. Some content of the website can, however, be retrieved

- "To ensure Ceasefire Agreement is maintained;

- To promote peace and involve the people in seeking a lasting peace;

- To monitor Human Rights violations and resolve disputes;

- Co-ordinate all political affairs and legal matters;

- To enhance the humanitarian and reconciliation work;

- Maintain relationship with Foreign Embassies, Agencies, International Political Organisations and Tamil Diaspora;

- Co-ordinate Resettlement, Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Development work in association with kindred organization".[392]

Other functions of the secretariat included: to care for war victims, rehabilitate combatants and coordinate the work of the committees of political and constitutional affairs. A human rights unit within the secretariat was intended to "promote and defend the citizen's rights and to impart knowledge on Human rights to the wider population" (LTTE PS 2004, p.2).[393]

Some observers, however, suggest caution with regards to the relevance of such formal statements since they might cater more to the interests of an international audience than have validity within the LTTE (Interview 2). A Tamil press article on the event of the military destruction of the secretariat's offices, however, cites the above outline of functions and particularly highlights the relevance of the interaction with the Norwegian facilitators and the international community (TNS 2008).

Interviewees asked about the peace secretariat's functions presented the following picture:

Communication with a focus on international contacts and the secretarial services to facilitate the negotiations, international travel and transport within Sri Lanka clearly

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from an online archive of websites on peace and human rights in Sri Lanka under http://sitesatrisksl.wordpress.com/category/ltte-peace-secretariat/.

[392] This refers to the Planning and Development Secretariat (PDS) that operated in parallel to the PS within the political wing.

[393] Later, the Northeast Secretariat on Human Rights (NESOHR) was established in July 2004, and it is not clear if it replaced or was identical to the human rights unit mentioned in the document. NESOHR functioned as an intermediary between international human rights organisations and the LTTE, and the local population and LTTE (Stokke 2006). Unlike other organisations within the context of LTTE-kindred organisations, civil society leaders from the North headed NESOHR (Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008, p.47).

dominated; capacity building and implementation functions were used selectively and strategically. Inter-party facilitation was relatively low except for engagement with the government on the interim administration proposals and ISGA and, more importantly, the post-tsunami negotiations.[394]

Notably, all functions initially outlined were maintained and there were no new additions or adaptations during the secretariat's existence. Comparing these trends with the changes of SCOPP's functions, the peace secretariat did not have 'to look for work' after the talks broke down (Interview 32); its functions in the realm of rehabilitation, development and humanitarian activities continued and even increased in the aftermath of the tsunami. Similarly, the tasks of international relations, representation and communication continued to be crucial and were upheld until the final days of war in May 2009, although slightly reduced through legal travel bans and technical communication problems as a result of warfare.[395]

The findings can be summarised in the following figure:

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[394] While the peace secretariat was established only towards the end of the 2002/2003 talks, its secretary general participated in the talks before the formal establishment of the secretariat. Some interviewees therefore saw the peace secretariat as having a stronger facilitating role.

[395] When the peace secretariat's website was stopped after the capture of the secretariat's location in Kilinochchi, a new website was set up in March 2009 by the new LTTE Department of International Relations abroad. First posts are from March 24, 2009, the last from July 21, 2009, downloaded from http://sitesatrisksl.wordpress.com/.
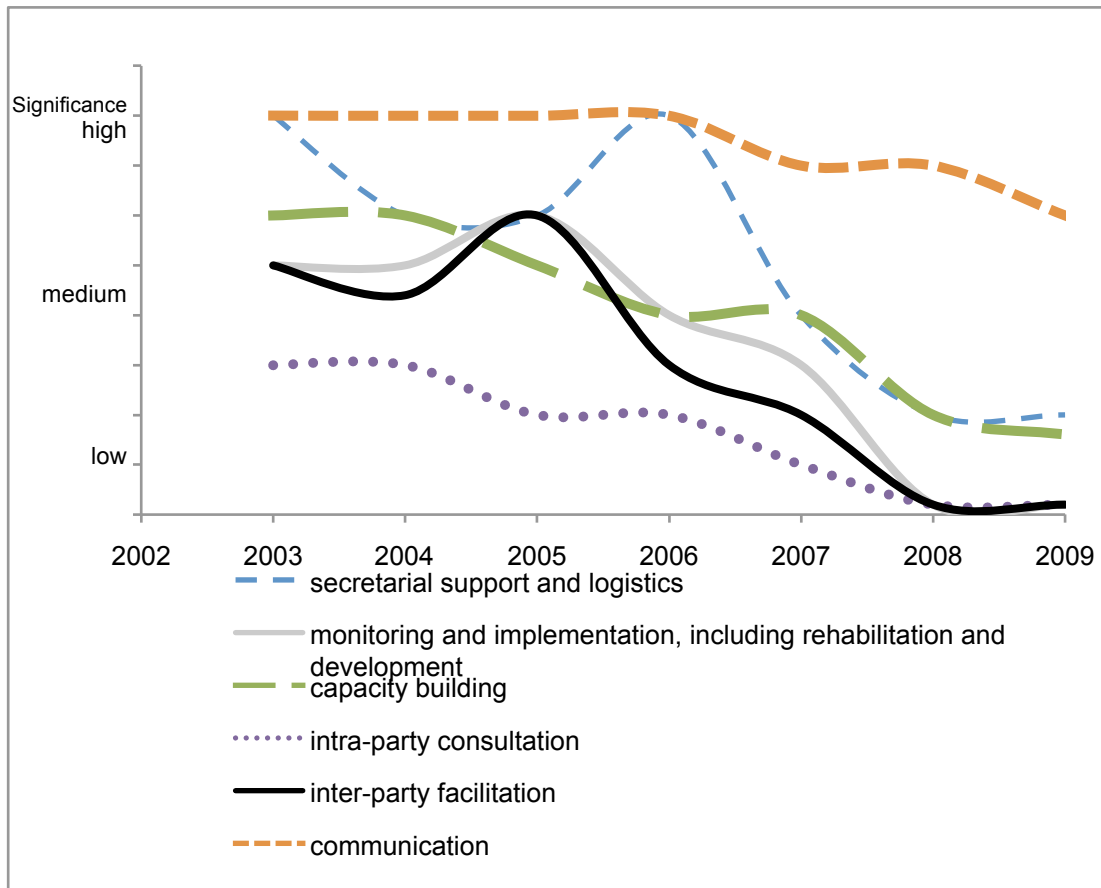
Figure 6.1: Significance of the LTTE peace secretariat functions[396]

Since the trends of all functions are relatively consistent and the LTTE peace secretariat did not undergo the same changes in staff and oversight as SCOPP, the following detailed discussion centres on the functions rather than on the timeline.

Of outstanding significance in the eyes of the interviewees was communication with the international community (Interview 2, 3, 4, 33). The peace secretariat, as 'executive office' for the superordinate political wing (Fernando 2009, p.285), gave the LTTE a 'civilised face'. In a unique way, the secretariat gave access to the organisation and presented the only legitimate communication partner with regards to the peace process outside the negotiation delegation. From the perspective of the LTTE, it is important to understand the two-fold aim of such an entry point that served as a gatekeeper at the same time, controlling the influence and communication with the outside world as much as the messages that were passed on to the organisation and to the leadership (Interview 2, 4). The latter aspect is discussed in more detail below.

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[396] The functions are shown from 2003 when the office was opened, but the secretariat's head Puleedevan was already active in the second half of 2002.

Regarding international communication, the peace secretariat served as a reception desk, a travel agent and a communication and media center. Particular relevant communication channels were:

– contacts of the secretary head (or his deputy) with international representatives in meetings in the LTTE-controlled area, in Colombo or via travel abroad;

– the facilitation of international delegation visits to the LTTE as well as study tours of the LTTE abroad; and

– the release of press statements and the peace secretariat's website.

The LTTE's positions were disseminated through a wide network of publicity and propaganda actors in more than 50 countries (Institute for Conflict Management 2011) in order to raise international attention and create legitimacy for the Tamil cause, as well as to raise support among its constituencies abroad.[397] The peace secretariat's task within this network appeared to be to liaise with the international diplomatic and donor community as well as with international civil society (Interview 2, 5, 9, 33). To a limited extent, it also engaged with the Tamil diaspora (Interview 1, 2, 33).[398] Here, the role of the peace secretariat was apparently to engage them in the peace process and to 'sell' the political approach to the hardliners abroad.

While the function comprised communication and consultation with all stakeholders, the LTTE focused the peace secretariat's attention on international relationships; communication was hardly directed towards the Tamil or other communities in Sri Lanka and rarely comprised consultative purposes, except for those with diaspora communities and a few selected 'international' advisors (Interview 1, 26, 28). Consul-

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[397] The peace secretariat, however, was only one of several communication channels of the LTTE, which were well coordinated and coherent. Its own director for media and communications, who later was appointed as the spokesperson for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, worked beside the LTTE's media spokesman.

[398] It should be noted that propaganda was always used in combination with patronage, intimidation and strict rule in order to ensure support of the population in the areas under its control and, albeit to a more limited extent, also with a view to the diaspora communities (Human Rights Watch 2008). Brun (2008) describes the censorship practices and predominance of LTTE propaganda noted in interviews with young people in LTTE-controlled areas during the years of 2002-2005; the interviewees were careful not to openly express dissent with the organisation (similarly Orjuela 2009). In this light, the activities of the peace secretariat need to be considered as part of a strategic mix of coercive and other tactics in order to secure the LTTE's interests and position. This mix of strategies and tactics is, however, true for other warring conflict parties as well.

tations within the constituency concentrated mostly on a number of sympathetic diaspora members who provided the LTTE with specific expertise, e.g., on legal or economic matters, and served as 'international advisors'. Some of them were closely involved in the peace negotiations and travelled to Kilinochchi; others were consulted abroad.

Dealing with the domestic Tamil audience was the task of other units within the LTTE and followed different principles. Here, cohesive measures played a stronger role and communication was mostly unilateral, involving little feedback. The interaction, or consultation, with local civil society organisations, e.g., student groups or NGOs, was again organised by other parts of the LTTE; the peace secretariat did not have a role in consultation, or rather aligning the support, of local civil society (Interview 26, 32; Orjuela 2009). This is not surprising since the LTTE did not constructively engage with alternative viewpoints within the Tamil community and, as said before, was long known for the assassination and disappearance of Tamil opponents (Lilja 2010; Ropers 2010; Swamy 2003, 2010).[399] Intra-party dialogue including dissenting voices, therefore, was hardly mentioned by interviewees. One source noted, however, that anti-LTTE Tamil intellectuals, often from the diaspora, were invited for consultations with the LTTE during the time of the peace talks. At that time, the LTTE peace secretariat's head reportedly also engaged with some of the moderately critical Tamil media within the LTTE-controlled areas and encouraged them to do their work. Puleedevan's approach at that time was to invite constructive criticism that might help the LTTE to grow into its new tasks and political ambitions (Interview 34).

While apparently reluctant in the initial stages to use the externally funded secretariat services for their own interests, the peace secretariat later copied SCOPP's use of the secretariat as a propaganda tool and posted more information on its website than the initial CFA monitoring results and leader's speeches (Interview 2; Fernando 2009 on human rights reports by the LTTE).[400] Especially during the later part of the peace process, the LTTE used the peace secretariat and other communication channels to present itself and the Tamil people as victims in order to garner international support (Tashlitsky 2008).[401] After the killing of the head of the political wing, Thamilselvan, the

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[399] Orjuela notes that after 2002 opportunities for Tamil dissent increased and the LTTE was challenged to a certain extent. Thus, the LTTE was forced to counter the possible weakening of the Tamil unity and restrict freedoms further (Orjuela 2009, p.264).

[400] This reluctance was explained by the organisation's concern about donor perceptions.

[401] While the website in the beginning presented the secretariat as a host and partner for foreign diplomats and mainly displayed policy statements, the focus later shifted to coverage of the state's human

communicative role of the peace secretariat and its secretary general further increased (Interview 4, 26). The secretariat's relevance as a communication channel increased further with the listing of the LTTE as a banned organisation, which restricted its members' international movements and the opportunities of the LTTE for international engagement. In parallel, the LTTE as part of its return to a military strategy restricted international contacts to the channel of the peace secretariat (Interview 1, 3, 4).

International communication related to an important task of the secretariat not outlined in the above list: fundraising. The secretary general of the LTTE secretariat and his staff used the opportunity of international travel to hold meetings with the diaspora and international donor agencies and to raise funds for the rehabilitation of the LTTE-controlled areas. While presenting the needs of the Tamil people, this also helped the LTTE raise support for building *Tamil Eelam* structures (Interview 1, 26). This is discussed in more detail in section 6.6, which deals with the symbolic relevance of the peace secretariat.

Another significant function concerns secretarial support and logistics of the peace process. The beginning of the peace negotiations led to an immense increase of international travel to Kilinochchi as well as from the LTTE abroad; both were facilitated by the peace secretariat (Interview 2, 33). This presented perhaps one of the key reasons for the LTTE to agree to the establishment of a peace secretariat. The initial trips were strongly assisted by the Norwegian facilitator, since LTTE cadres were not experienced with the logistical requirements of its negotiating team travelling abroad (Interview 33). Given the increasing isolation of the LTTE, the function's significance reduced towards the end of the peace process and the war.

The peace secretariat used international contacts and trips not only for canvassing support and fundraising but also for improving its expertise on peace process-related matters. Thus, a well-noted function of the peace secretariat comprised capacity building for its negotiation preparations and its strategic reflections (Interview 1, 3, 4, 24). This function consisted of capacity building for the peace secretariat and other parts of the political wing, e.g., through participation in study tours and seminars abroad and in Sri Lanka, as well as of capacity building for other parts of the decision-making structures within the LTTE (Interview 1, 2, 4). The LTTE was seen by observers as invest-

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rights violations; this coincided with the LTTE's listing and its increasing condemnation for human rights violations by the international community and thus its failure in representing the Tamil people and an alternative to the Sri Lankan state (Tashlitsky 2008, p.64).

ing strongly in enhancing its expertise on diverse political and conceptual issues related to the peace process and made strategic use of the many offers of third-party assistance (Interview 31, 32); it sent several of its political staff to attend university courses on conflict resolution, for example, and established a library with relevant content in its office premises. International literature on conflict resolution and on Sri Lankan history was translated into Tamil, and the LTTE was eager to understand and adopt the technical jargon of peacebuilding and development assistance (Interview 2).

With a view to the peace secretariat's advisory services for decision-making and their involvement in the development of political positions and proposals, different views are found. While some interviewees saw the Political Affairs Committee and external advisors as having leading roles (Interview 2, 9), others note the active role of the secretariat in directing the input of external advisors and formulating positions (Interview 3, 4, 31). Its advice, however, could not be offered unsolicited but only to meet a demand by the leadership. Both capacity building and advisory services decreased significantly when the military strategy gained priority.

Interestingly, interviewees hardly mentioned the function of the CFA monitoring as part of the activities of the LTTE PS. While this function demanded a dominant part of the government's secretarial resources, it did not feature strongly in the impressions of the LTTE secretariat's activities. One interviewee pointed out the secretariat's effectiveness as a focal point for ceasefire monitoring, being well prepared to speak in meetings and efficient at liaising with and feeding results back into the LTTE structures (Interview 33). Another noted that the peace secretariat used the political offices established under the Political Affairs Committee in all mayor towns in the North and East for accessing information on the ground situation and for facilitating the interaction between the fighting troops and the government (Interview 24, 34). These officers, being part of the local monitoring committees established with the SLMM, intervened when, for example, LTTE political cadres were seen wearing military accessories such as their belts, which was considered a ceasefire violation. The peace secretariat head and the head of the political wing facilitated contact with the SLMM and government counterparts on the national level (Interview 34; Sørbø et al. 2011, p.97).

The function of monitoring and implementation was nevertheless presented as significant in above figure 6.1, since it also included the implementation of the rehabilitation and development activities agreed in the ceasefire agreement and the peace talks. The peace secretariat took a central role in the facilitation of some of the activities. Initially, the Planning and Development Secretariat was installed for this purpose and implemented many of the activities (Burke & Mulakala 2011). This unit became de-

funct later and the peace secretariat gained a stronger role. Its contribution in this function, however, declined towards the end of the time period under discussion since international proscription made LTTE involvement in rehabilitation and development work impossible, and such work succumbed generally to the military activities in LTTE-controlled areas.

Inter-party facilitation was presented as a relatively insignificant function by most interviewees. While both the LTTE PS and SCOPP were key actors in the P-TOMS negotiations, the LTTE did not use the peace secretariat predominantly for its official interaction with the government, but rather gave more space to the head of the political wing, Thamilselvan. The peace secretariat, however, played a stronger role on the informal and working level. Similarly, the relationship between the LTTE PS and Muslim communities was of less significance, and the facilitation of contact or even dialogue with them played a relatively small role in LTTE peace secretariat functions. The limited relevance of this function can be explained by several factors that are discussed in section 6.4 on interactions.

Reflecting on the reasons why the LTTE engaged in inter-party facilitation at all through its peace secretariat after the breakdown of the official Track 1 negotiations, interviewees argued that the possibility of accessing international funds and support after the tsunami must have outweighed the LTTE's reluctance to engage. In addition, the engagement was seen as an opportunity for international recognition for constructive behaviour during the consultation (Interview 3). Here, as when presenting the ISGA proposal, the LTTE was understood to be trying to 'prove a point' that it could engage constructively, whereas the Sri Lankan state would not do so (as in the case of the reluctant response to the ISGA proposal and the reaction of the president) or stand by its commitments (as in the case of the signed P-TOMS agreement that was stopped from being implemented by a Supreme Court order).

Bringing the descriptions of the peace secretariat's functions into one picture, the following emerges:

Secretarial services + logistics

Capacity building

Communication   consultation

Facilitation

296
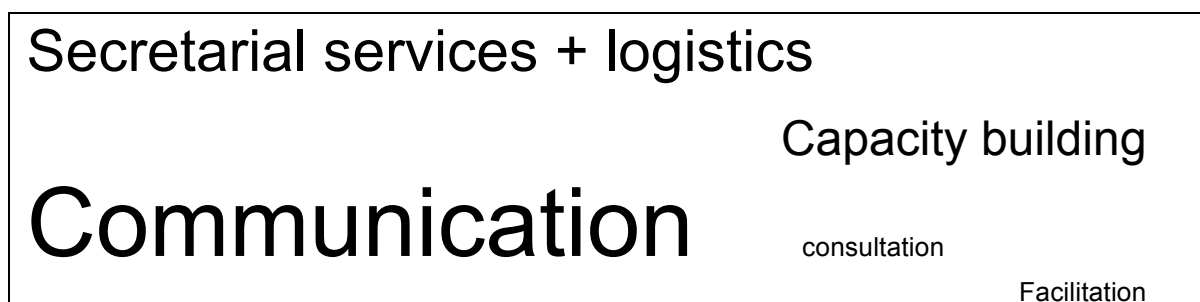
Implementation	monitoring

Figure 6.2: Overall significance of functions of the LTTE peace secretariat

It should be noted again that this visualisation is based on the interpretation of the qualitative interview results regarding the importance of the secretariat's functions. Two observations can be made: first, the importance of the functions of the LTTE peace secretariat differed from those of the functions of SCOPP. Communication clearly outranked the other functions but focused on an international audience and hardly involved consultation. Secretarial services, implementation of agreement results and capacity building appear similarly important. Second, the variation of assigned importance of the functions between the most and the least important ones appears wider than in the respective graph of the SCOPP functions. Altogether, it needs to be remembered that their significance reduced towards the end of the research period, whereas the secretariat was considered relevant until the very end.

The next section looks at the reasons for this finding and discusses the contributions of the functions to conflict transformation as explained by the interviewees.

6.3 Clear Messages with Mixed Outcomes – Communication and Other Contributions to Conflict Transformation

Similar to the findings about SCOPP's contributions to conflict transformation, the same disclaimers and introductory remarks are in order when analysing the transformative contributions of the LTTE peace secretariat. Again, there is little evidence in the interview material that directly points to proven or perceived conflict transformation; and again, no interview partner named a particular type of conflict transformation and related it to activities of the secretariat. Interviewees, however, implicitly mentioned several kinds of transformative contributions. In their descriptions of the functions, they also made clear that the peace secretariat was considered very efficient and effective in doing its work, e.g., when sending out press releases or situation updates after the tsunami, or with regards to positioning political messages (Interview 1, 21); this was also repeatedly stated by former staff of the government secretariat who felt that the LTTE was much more clear in communicating its stance on the peace process.

Unlike the interview results concerning SCOPP, interviewees were very clear about the relevance of the secretariat's contribution to the overall peace process although that relevance might not relate to any particular category or type of conflict transformation. Remarkably, these overall contributions did not concern the short-term results of conflict management that were highlighted with regards to SCOPP and its contribution to de-escalation. Rather, with regards to the LTTE the overall relevance related to the long-term aspirations of transforming the non-state armed group into a political actor. While overall and in hindsight proven to be unsuccessful, the interviewees were nevertheless certain that the peace secretariat at least for a limited time contributed to changing the LTTE. Unfortunately, these transformations did not aim at democratisation only, they were not irreversible, and the LTTE did not follow the path of political transformation desired by some.

The following discussion will relate the secretariat's functions to types of conflict transformation and afterwards consider the overarching transformative effect mentioned above. The following figure shows the transformative contributions of the peace secretariat's functions:
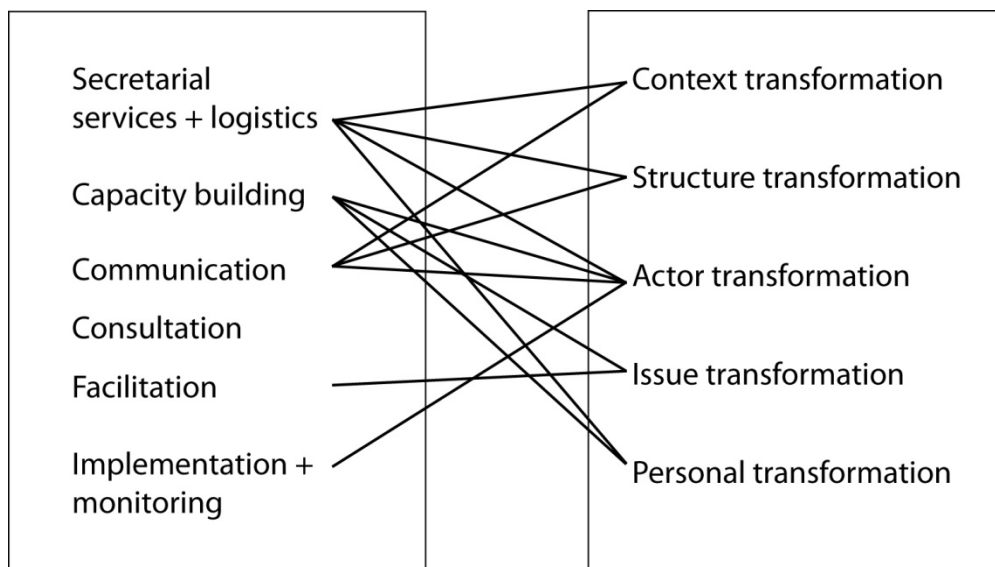
Figure 6.3: The LTTE peace secretariat's contribution to conflict transformation connected to functions

Since communication with international audiences and secretarial services and support of logistics of the peace process were closely linked, and since the same cadres involved in these functions also participated in capacity building, it appears difficult to attribute effects to their individual transformative contributions on personal and actor transformations.

Communication and secretarial services both had an influence on the context directly and indirectly, contributed to actor transformation and structure transformation. The peace secretariat was instrumental in hosting visitors and relating to journalists (in collaboration with the media unit) as well as with researchers, peacebuilding practitioners and other outsiders. Several interviewees noted the impact that personal encounters with key LTTE cadres had on individuals. Particularly the head of the peace secretariat and the political wing were considered the 'right recruitment choices' to engage with foreign interlocutors. Puleedevan enjoyed meeting and discussing political issues; he was described as conversant and able to relate to political topics outside the quest for *Tamil Eelam*; and more importantly, he was seen as a representative of the LTTE who spoke freely rather than convey official statements (Interview 1, 3; Swamy 2010 on the aspect of 'artificial conversations'). The LTTE reportedly considered this a crucial aspect of transforming its relationships with the international community in light of the proscription by India and the US, and in light of the constant efforts by the government to delegitimise and criticise the LTTE (Interview 33).[402]

In addition to the influence on international visitors, this function had unintended consequences on the southern actor and through this on the relationship between the conflict parties, as described in section 5.3. This in turn eventually affected the power balance between the conflict parties adversely, resulted in increased tension between the conflict parties and eventually led to withdrawal of the international actors and isolation of the LTTE, due to its increasing violence and the resulting sanctions. Indirectly, thus, the effort to create good relations with the international community led to its opposite.

One well-known example is the official meals hosted by the LTTE where lobster and jumbo prawns were offered to important foreign visitors such as the Norwegian facilitators or Japanese delegations (The Sunday Times 2003). Even years after the end of the peace talks, these invitations raised criticism among Singhalese observers who suspected favouritism for the LTTE (Dayasiri 2011).[403] Another example is the article of Stokke (2006), documenting the efforts of the LTTE to establish a state-like admin-

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[402] Another facet of deliberate reputation building was the employment of female cadres, particularly as suicide bombers, which helped to popularise the LTTE and featured, for example, in fashion magazines (McBroom (2010) referring to an article by Goodwin (2008); Stack-O'Connor 2007).

[403] While often rather modest in nature (Interview 1), these meals were interpreted in several ways in the southern media, which alluded to corruption of both the international and the LTTE partakers. The criticism of indulgence among political cadres and participants of the peace talks is discussed below in more detail.

istration. His research, as mentioned earlier, was criticised for being supported by the LTTE peace secretariat (Fuglerud 2009; Sarvananthan 2007; Stokke 2007).

These effects can be depicted in the form of reinforcing feedback loops, as shown below in figure 6.4. These present a simplification of the complex interactions within the conflict system but help to show that the unintended consequences of the engagement with the international community by the LTTE may well have contributed to the LTTE's later isolation:

Increasing tension between government and LTTE = structure transformation

Engagement of the LTTE with international community

Increasing isolation of the LTTE = actor transformation

Change of international opinions on the LTTE = context transformation

Increasing alignment between government and nationalist actors in the South = actor transformation

Opening of LTTE perspectives and capacity building = personal, actor transformation

Suspicion of international bias towards the LTTE among Sinhalese stakeholders and concerns about impartiality of facilitator = structure transformation

Figure 6.4: Systemic feedback between types of conflict transformation based on LTTE peace secretariat's engagement with the international community

While encounters such as the one referred to above reportedly impressed those dealing with the LTTE, it is not clear to what extent they also contributed to actor and per-

sonal transformation among the LTTE.[404] Some of the cadres who interacted closely with external supporters, third-party interveners and diplomats showed, according to the observations of some interviewees, a change in attitude and partly also behaviour. This was stated regarding Puleedevan, and one example referred to the conduct of the P-TOMS talks in 2005 (Interview 12). But at the same time, personal interests coincided: Puleedevan's role within the LTTE was limited to a non-combat position due to earlier injuries (Interview 4). A return to war would have meant a personal loss of position. And while appearing open-minded and genuine in discussions about the peace talks to some, others noted that the peace secretariat's head did not offer any thinking other than that of *Tamil Eelam* as a prerequisite to any other steps of political reform (Interview 1, 2, 3, 4, 26).[405]

Referring to the function of capacity building, observers noted the uniqueness of the peace secretariat's dedication to improving the non-state armed group's capacities for negotiation, and the importance that the secretariat had within the LTTE due to its access to international resources and expertise (Interview 2, 33). This was relevant regarding building the personal capacities and skills of the secretariat staff in order to fulfil its functions, and capacity building of the LTTE in general. With regards to the latter, the secretariat had a facilitative role, enabling access to international resource persons beyond the LTTE's international network and thus widening LTTE perspectives (Interview 1, 33). This can be accounted for as personal, actor or issue transformation; however, interviewees hardly offered any examples of transformations in connection with specific capacity-building activities.

With regards to some of the study trips abroad, observers noted that their duration might have been too short to affect change. But even local and more continued capacity building faced constraints when touching upon core beliefs and loyalty to the LTTE (Interview 4). This points also to a limitation of transformative effects within the overall actor LTTE. While individuals might experience personal transformation, they could not enact these in the collective authoritarian context of the LTTE (Interview 2, 3). Therefore, the contribution of capacity building to personal and actor transformation has to be questioned.

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[404] It should also be noted that in the beginning of the peace talks, the overall hopeful atmosphere influenced the LTTE in general. Their strict codes of conduct were eased significantly, introducing, e.g., more liberal LTTE rules for marriage (Interview 33).

[405] One observer also noted that the apparently free speech of Puleedevan was orchestrated.

With regards to advisory services and formulation of political proposals, concrete incidents show that the peace secretariat had a transformative role to play. Particular examples were the development of the ISGA proposals and the negotiation of the P-TOMS.[406] Although both were unsuccessful with a view to revitalising the peace talks, they can be described as a contribution to the issue transformation and perhaps even as an actor transformation. The ISGA proposals, developed by the LTTE as a response to the – in their view – unsatisfying proposals of the government towards an interim administration, presented a unique instance of the LTTE actively and independently formulating a suggestion for political compromise. It renounced the organisation's regular demand for independence and asked for regional autonomy instead (Interview 1, 31). Although generally credited by observers and media to external legal advisors, the peace secretariat and political wing were, according to first-hand information of one interviewee, instrumental in guiding and using the advisors' expertise.

Another aspect of advisory services was the readiness of the LTTE to bring in diaspora members as consultants and short-term support for various tasks, e.g., IT and communication. These activities, supported by some third parties and donors, contributed to an initial opening and exposure to international ideas and were seen as part of the civilisation project of the LTTE, as well as a normalisation of daily life in the LTTE-controlled areas, e.g., through the opening of an internet café in Kilinochchi (Interview 1). Again, however, adverse unintended effects were noted; the increasing inflow of diaspora to the LTTE controlled areas after the beginning of the peace talks reportedly encouraged hardliner views and the strive for secession rather than help expose the LTTE to more open-minded worldviews and a challenge to its strategy (Sørbø et al. 2011, p.86).

Particularly sceptical views were presented regarding intra-party consultation through the peace secretariat and donor efforts to encourage LTTE interactions with civil society by means of peacebuilding activities, except the use of Tamil consultants (Interview 33). Referring to the LTTE's common orchestration of civil society activities in its controlled areas, the organisation did not have a pluralistic mindset that allowed for multi-track approaches. According to LTTE thinking, this was simply not required (Interview 32). Thus, the peace secretariat hardly engaged in this potential work area

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[406] With a view to the changing political positions of the LTTE in the course of the peace talks, one needs to note that four out of the six rounds of talks in 2002-2003 took place before the secretariat was actually established. In particular, the famous meeting in Oslo in December 2002 and the agreement to the 'Oslo formula', which can be understood as at least a short-term issue transformation, cannot be related to the agency of the peace secretariat.

and as a result did not contribute directly to actor transformation with a view to its constituency. On the contrary, it needs to be noted that it was not able, or willing, to counterbalance the overall alienation and suppression of moderate and anti-LTTE Tamil voices by the LTTE. Earlier mentioned efforts to invite moderate voices for constructive criticism often faltered given their reluctance to engage with the LTTE (Interview 34).

Considering the overall systemic effects, this particular lack of transformation was a missed opportunity for the LTTE and its agenda of winning international support for its cause, since it contributed to a cooling of international relations and increased criticism by the international community of the LTTE with regards to intra-party violence.[407]

Similar to the interpretation of intra-party interactions, interviewees provided a critical understanding of inter-party facilitation and its contribution to conflict transformation. While outsiders placed high expectations on the peace secretariat to liaise constructively with its counterparts in the South and thus to potentially contribute to personal, actor and structure transformation by a change of hearts and bridge building, this function was de facto hardly used. The rigid rules for interaction with the other side, which are discussed in more detail in the next section, ruled out the secretariat's use as a backchannel in times of crisis (Interview 33).[408] This presented another missed opportunity for conflict transformation: when the ISGA proposal was presented, the peace secretariat was not used as a backchannel to inform the government secretariat in advance and thus prepare ground for true consultation (Interview 31). Similarly, Puleedevan did not see a role for himself to at least speak privately to his counterpart Kohona during the failed Oslo talks in 2006 (Interview 16).

As with SCOPP, an exception regarding the LTTE peace secretariat's potential role in inter-party dialogue facilitation is found in the negotiation process on post-tsunami assistance. Another example of a potential gesture of conciliation is found in an impromptu meeting of the peace secretariats' heads after Dhanapala took over SCOPP in 2004. Initiated by Puleedevan, the courtesy call raised attention and hopes for revitalised engagement despite lacking substantive discussions. As one observer noted, "news stories called the meeting an icebreaker. Even close associates of Dhanapala admit at the time that considering the fact that the LTTE has stopped attending meetings with the army in the east, it was a good confidence building measure. 'At least

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[407] In addition, it added legitimacy to the criticism of the government and southern actors.

[408] The only occurrence of a backchannel refers to personal meetings between the negotiation leaders in London.

the two got to meet each other,' they said" (Perera 2004, n.pag.). At the time of research, however, the interviewees did not mention such past actions.

With regards to the implementation function, interviewees expressed a more optimistic view on transformative contributions. They noted the relevance of the sub-committees established during the peace talks, particularly that of SIHRN, with a view to actor transformation. The sub-committees increased the influence of peace secretariat and other political wing staff within the LTTE by bringing in funding for development and rehabilitation projects. One interviewee felt that the representatives must have enjoyed the meetings for that reason and would have regretted their early suspension (Interview 29). Most interviewees, however, noted that this transformation was short-lived since the overall power balance within the LTTE stayed with the military command. This, of course, was an overall trend within both conflict parties.

Considering the overall contribution of the LTTE peace secretariat, reference to specific transformative effects appears mostly related to capacity building and implementation. Most transformative effects, however, appeared to be short-lived and, given the elimination of the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the eradication of its state-building efforts and the level of destruction of infrastructure, development and rehabilitation efforts in the North and East, non-existant at the time of writing. Tracing the effects of former capacity building efforts on personal transformation appears nearly impossible in the post-war situation, which finds virtually all peace secretariat staff dead, imprisoned or adopting a new existence, and at times a new identity, in exile.

Thus, the following figure presents an incomplete picture of the transformative contributions of the LTTE peace secretariat:

Context transformation

Structure transformation

Actor transformation

Personal transformation   Issue transformation
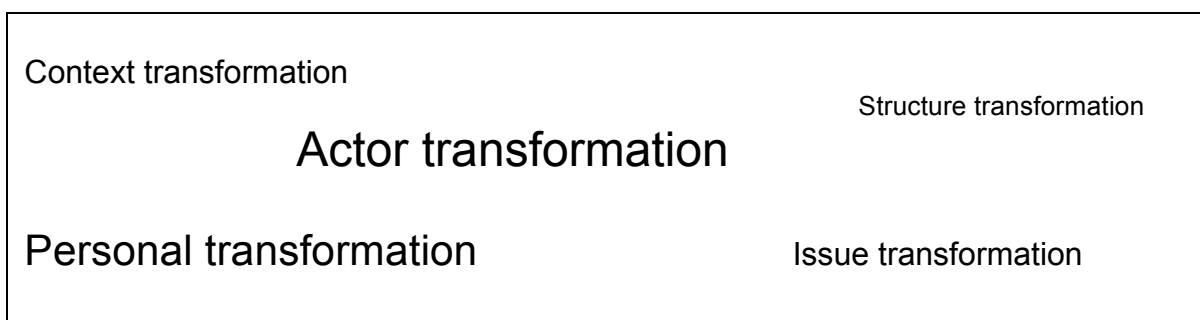
Figure 6.5: Overall significance of contributions to types of conflict transformation of the LTTE peace secretariat

As mentioned at the outset of this section, many of the interviewees did not attribute the overall, and perhaps most significant, transformative contribution of the peace secretariat to a specific function but to the secretariat's sheer existence. The establishment of a peace secretariat marked a transformative moment in the stakeholders' development, a cornerstone in international representation and recognition as well as in their efforts towards statebuilding (Interview 33). The effects of the secretariat's establishment towards conflict transformation are less clear.

First, it contributed to actor transformation. The existence of the peace secretariat added additional weight to the emergence of administrative structures; it strengthened the organisational width, i.e., the diversity of the tasks, of the political wing, and introduced a permanent and accessible address and contact point for the Sri Lankan government, international community and other interested individuals who wished to interact with the LTTE on matters related to the peace process. Therefore, the existence of the peace secretariat 'normalised' outsider interactions with the non-state armed group and made them, to a certain extent, similar to interactions with SCOPP, which also served as port of call for foreign visitors and third-party actors involved in peacebuilding.

In addition, some argue, the secretariat influenced the structural relationship between the conflict parties. This can be explained both through direct and indirect transformative effects. An indirect influence on the power relations can be explained with the change in international perceptions, which at least for a certain period of the peace process considered the LTTE accessible and willing to transform. This change of context was mentioned earlier: members of the international community were impressed by the LTTE's image of being an efficient, professional actor with an aspect of stateliness.[409]

At the same time, the existence of the peace secretariat produced a change of structure since it affected the power relations between the conflict parties. Both could interact directly and on equal footing. Encounters between the peace secretariats in official and unofficial contexts showed that their representatives related to each other with relative ease and an understanding of parity (Interview 3, 29). Such understanding of this structural transformation as reducing the asymmetry between the negotiating parties, however, appears to depend on perspective, or rhetoric. While international observers and third-party actors, particularly those involved in supporting the establish-

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[409] It should be noted that government officials shared this view, acknowledging, for example, a higher level of preparation for the peace talks (Interview 21, 25, 29; Rainford & Satkunanathan 2009).

ment of the peace secretariats, interpreted the changed relationship as less asymmetrical, voices from the conflict parties themselves negated such effect vehemently.[410] The discussion in the following section shows how the parties denied this potential for transformation.

Finally, it needs to be noted that the earlier discussed pejorative effects on the southern constituencies would probably have outbalanced the potential ameliorative effects of the establishment of the peace secretariat. The empirical material, however, does not allow for a more detailed analysis of the systemic effects.

Two considerations should be noted with regards to the overall picture. First, the attitudinal and behavioural changes among the international community were not caused by the establishment of the peace secretariat alone but related to the overall changes in conduct of the LTTE, expressed among other factors in language used by the leader in his speeches, performance during the peace talks, the role of the political wing and the containment of human rights and ceasefire violations. Moreover, they need to be seen in light of an optimistic assessment of the enfolding peace process in 2002.

Second, it is relevant to note that interviewees reflected on the ambivalence of support to the peace secretariat. While third-party interventions aimed at transforming the LTTE by means of supporting the peace secretariat, the LTTE used the same channel, the peace secretariat, as an agent to convert those interventions towards its own agenda. The actors promoting a transformative approach through strengthening the peace secretariat were certainly aware of this risk. They, however, felt that this risk could not be avoided when attempting transformation of either conflict party.

Following this approach, they were also aware that the instrumentality of the peace secretariat in contributing to conflict transformation could only be influenced to a limited extent through external assistance: the agency of the peace secretariat crucially depended on its direct organisational environment, which was beyond their control. Thus, to understand the contributions to conflict transformation, the interactions and rules of engagement of the peace secretariat are considered in the next section.

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[410] This is particularly the case for the LTTE peace secretariat; it is argued, often with ideological impetus, that the LTTE did not have the intention of being on equal footing with the majoritarian state (Interview 2, 32).

6.4 Interactions of a Gatekeeper: Standing outside the Gate or Carrying an All Access Pass?

Most interviewees described the peace secretariat's role with the international community and outsiders as one of a gatekeeper and communicator. The LTTE identified its own peace secretariat, SCOPP and the Peace Secretariat for Muslims as partners in "constant dialogue". In addition, the secretariat was meant to serve as a voice and a "reception centre for receiving Foreign Dignitaries, Ambassadors, International Guests, Political Leaders, Government of Sri-Lanka's Representatives and International Non Governmental Organisations" (LTTE PS 2004, p.2).

Less is known about the secretariat's role inside the LTTE, lines of communication or interaction in the negotiating team. Was the secretariat kept outside the gate, or did it – metaphorically speaking – carry an 'all access pass' allowing unlimited access to the relevant actors and decision makers within the LTTE? In order to understand the contributions of the LTTE peace secretariat to the peace negotiations and to conflict transformation, it is important to consider its place within the LTTE as a whole, within the political wing, and within the negotiation team.

The interactions with these different actors can be visualised as follows:
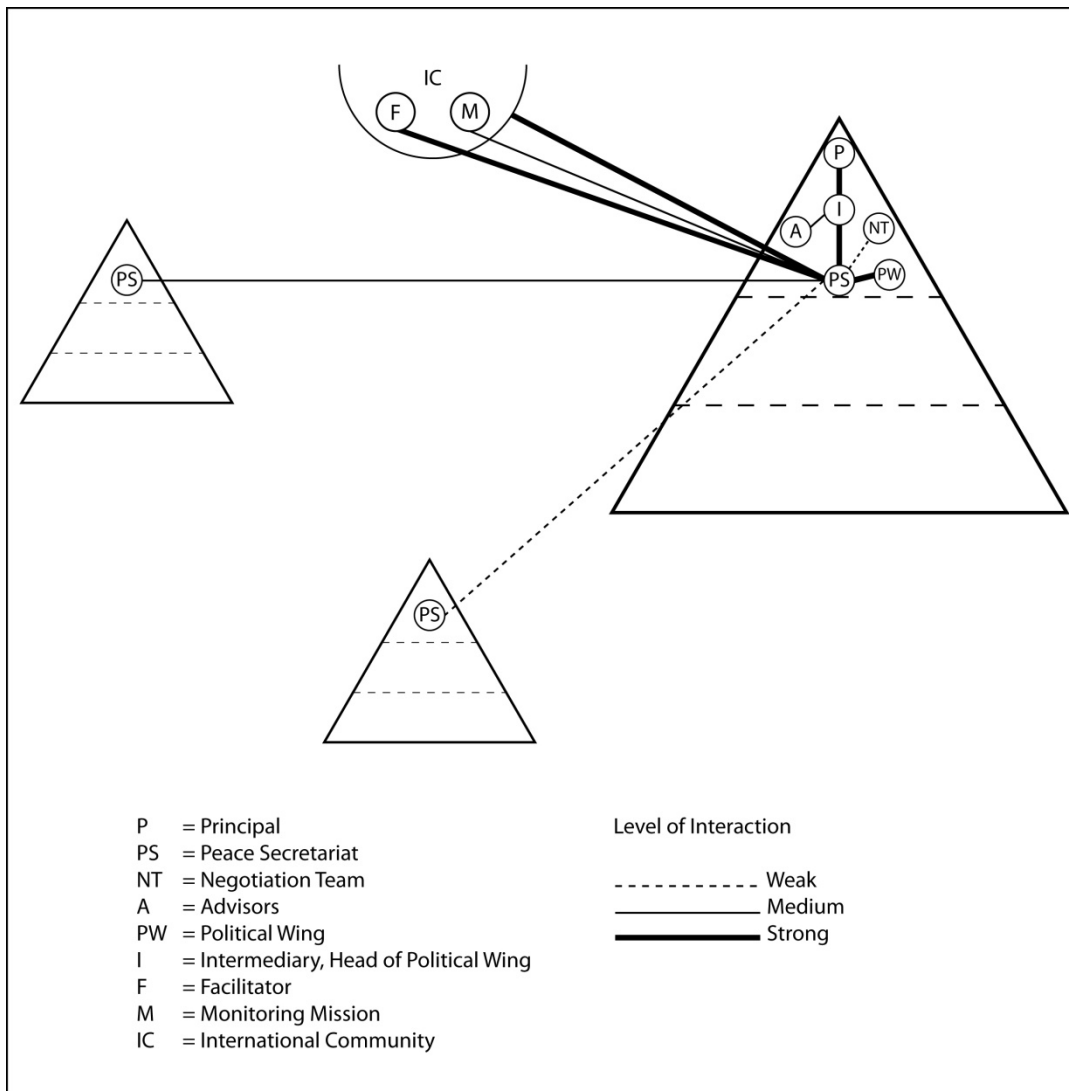
Figure 6.6: Interactions of the LTTE peace secretariat

Given the strong focus of the peace secretariat on international communication, the interactions with the Norwegian facilitator, the SLMM and the international community as a whole are presented on a high level.[411] The interactions with the Norwegian facilitators and the SLMM were on a high level, since the peace secretariat served as the official contact point and even facilitated Norwegian contact with Thamilselvan (Interview 33). Being established with the assistance of Norwegian funding, the peace secretariat upheld a particularly close connection with the facilitators. Especially in the

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[411] Clustering the international community as one homogenous unit is not accurate given the very different positions of countries banning the LTTE as a terrorist organisation and thus prohibiting its representatives from engaging with the organisation, versus those that supported the LTTE's participation in the peace process actively. A differentiation of these interactions, however, goes beyond the scope of this research.

beginning, this support involved very practical concerns, e.g., assisting with hotel reservations. With the stalemate and return to war, the Norwegian position as supporter of the LTTE organisation, however, became increasingly isolated and problematic (Sørbø et al. 2011). The character of the interactions with the international community at large are discussed in detail in section 6.5, which looks at the identity of the LTTE's political administration; the following will focus on the internal interactions and the relationships with the other peace secretariats.

The LTTE is widely seen as an authoritarian structure commanded from the top level. Regarding the relationship of the secretariat with the LTTE leadership, most observers considered it to have only limited contact and direct influence on the LTTE leadership. This marks a significant difference from the relationship of SCOPP to the heads of government and can be explained by the LTTE peace secretariat's subordinate role within the political wing that, as mentioned before, was itself subordinate to the military command (Lilja 2010, p.139).

According to the self-description of 2004, the secretariat reported directly through Secretary General, Puleedevan, to the head of the political wing, Thamilselvan, and only through him to the LTTE leader (LTTE PS 2004; Interview 3, 5, 9, 30).[412] Thamilselvan, however, would also delegate tasks and representative or coordinating functions to the peace secretariat (Interview 33). Consequently, the level of his interaction, as well as that of the political wing, with the peace secretariat was considered to be strong. While Prabhakaran in his all-dominating role as the LTTE supreme leader can be described as the principal of the secretariat, he interacted with the secretariat through Thamilselvan as an intermediary who had commanding and supervising powers.[413]

Describing the division of labour between the political wing and the peace secretariat, one observer saw Thamilselvan in a role comparable to a minister who took part in

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[412] Lilja's network analysis of the LTTE structure shows the peace secretariat as relatively isolated (Lilja 2010, p.139); in a personal email communication in June 2010 she, however, acknowledged that a stronger connection between the peace secretariat and the political affairs committee should be added.

[413] Initially, and prior to the establishment of the peace secretariat, a stronger role was given to chief negotiator Balasingham, but after his disagreement with Prabhakaran over the Oslo formula, he was sidelined and Thamilselvan increasingly took his place (Interview 9). Balasingham's influence ceased after he agreed at the third round of talks in December 2002 in Oslo, allegedly without Prabhakaran's consultation, to the so-called Oslo formula, i.e., to explore options for a federal solution (Swamy 2010, p.xxxviii; Interview 10). He later regained the leader's confidence and led the negotiating team until the first round of the Geneva talks in February 2006.

top-level strategic decisions, while the peace secretariat served as one specific branch of the administration preparing and implementing those decisions, e.g., an embassy under a foreign ministry (Interview 33).[414] The responsibilities of the political wing, however, were much wider than those of the peace secretariat and also concerned interior matters and questions concerning livelihoods within the LTTE-controlled areas, metaphorically embracing a large part of a cabinet of ministers.

The peace secretariat's interactions within the LTTE were mainly limited to the political wing and were indicated as being strong. In addition to the direct contacts with its head, the peace secretariat mainly interacted with other units of the political wing dealing with peace process-related matters, i.e. the Planning and Development Secretariat,[415] Political Affairs Committee, Constitutional Affairs Committee and Human Rights Unit.

The negotiation team played a special role in this context. The chief negotiator was Anton Balasingham, who was also the LTTE's chief ideologue and involved in all negotiation efforts of the LTTE since the Thimphu talks in Bhutan in 1985. In addition, Tamilselvan as head of the political wing, Adele Balasingham as secretary and Karuna as military representative were part of the team.[416] Prabhakaran selected the team members; and all relevant interactions between negotiators and the non-negotiating leadership were based on personal relationship with Prabhakaran (Lilja 2010, p.136).[417] Within this arrangement, Balasingham had particular responsibilities

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[414] This contradicts a description by SG Puleedevan who in an interview in 2006 saw the secretariat as an "embryonic Tamil Eelam Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in charge of diplomatic relations" (Orjuela 2009, p.259). This description, however, aimed more at alluding to the nascent LTTE administration, while the interviewee quoted here attempted to describe the hierarchy of the LTTE entities. Further exploiting the state metaphor, Prabhakaran was introduced at a press conference in 2002 as "the President and Prime Minister of Tamil Eelam" (Orjuela 2009, p.258).

[415] The PDS was established in 2004, initially to assist relief and rehabilitation work after the crippling of the sub-committee SIHRN, which was dedicated to this work. Later the PDS also was instrumental in supporting tsunami relief work (Stokke 2006).

[416] Official documentation of the six sessions of the peace talks can be found under the Norwegian facilitator's website http://www.norway.lk/Embassy/Peace-Process/peace/peace/ and under SCOPP's former website http://www.peaceinsrilanka.org/negotiations.

[417] Lilja's finding, however, is contradicted to a certain extent by interviewees of this research who, discussing the gender balance of the negotiating team, found that Thamilini, the head of the female political wing, before each round of negotiations would convey issues to another female team member (Adele Balasingham, the wife of the chief negotiator and secretary of the team) instead of participating herself (Interview 16).

and liberties: at least in the beginning Balasingham took decisions regarding the strategy of negotiations and conduct towards the international community (Interview 1). He served as the only contact point for the LTTE during the CFA negotiations and the prenegotiation preparation phase, and was said to have an important influence on the LTTE leader regarding the initiation of the peace talks and the formulation of negotiation positions (Lilja 2010, p.137). [418] His death (after long illness) in December 2006 was said to have further reduced the potential for a political solution (Liyanage 2006).

The relationship of the LTTE peace secretariat with the negotiation team was of a assisting nature. Described mostly as logistical and bureaucratic support (Interview 1, 24, 33), it seems not to have played a significant role in facilitating or coordinating contacts between the negotiation team and the LTTE leadership (Lilja 2010, p.137). The peace secretariat mostly played an observing role in the actual negotiations (Fernando 2008, p.741); and as mentioned before, preparatory input for negotiations was delivered by the secretariat on request only, and there was no scope for the secretariat to present material or make suggestions to the leadership pro-actively (Interview 31). Therefore, the interaction level between peace secretariat and negotiation team was considered to be medium.

While many observers felt that the international, and mostly diaspora, advisors of the LTTE had a strong influence and played a key role in developing the political perspective of the LTTE, their interaction with the peace secretariat and the line of command remained unclear to many. A few observers suggested, however, that the head of the political wing took the lead and directed the international input (Interview 1, 31). The interaction is thus indicated here with a medium level between the political wing and the advisors but no direct interaction with the peace secretariat, although there would have been contacts (see also Lilja's cautious analysis (2010)). Interview 9 also suggested that advisors had a representative role in showcasing the expertise and professionalism of the LTTE network without always making an actual advisory contribution.

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[418] While the LTTE leadership is commonly identified with its founder and most prominent public figure, Velupillai Prabhakaran, there was also a central governing committee. Political strategies were apparently developed in a small circle involving the LTTE leader and the chief political strategist, Anton Balasingham. He was, however, the only civilian in the organisation, which led to a level of mistrust (Interview 9). In addition, he lived in London and travelled to Sri Lanka only in a limited manner due to bad health (Lilja 2010).

While the LTTE-internal interactions of the peace secretariat appeared to be relatively stable over time, its external interactions depended on the dynamics of the peace process and the overall negotiation and conflict strategy of the LTTE.

In order to understand the relationship among the peace secretariats, one needs to remember that the peace secretariat was established one year after SCOPP and only shortly before the stalemate of the peace talks. In the meantime, Thamilselvan had established a working relationship with the government's negotiators, and SCOPP and Puleedevan assisted him. After 2003, as noted before, Thamilselvan continued to play a central role in many regards and the Sri Lankan government addressed official letters to the LTTE to him rather than to the peace secretariat. Moreover, the official interaction with the government delegation was mostly channelled through the Norwegian facilitators, and during the peace talks the Norwegians also used the chief negotiator and his office in London as entry points.

The following explanations for the less prominent role of the LTTE peace secretariat can be established. First, the well-established communication channel was maintained since it had proved to serve for mutually satisfying interactions (e.g., direct meetings between SCOPP SG Goonetilleke and Thamilselvan in 2002 to sort out transport issues (Uyangoda 2002, p.56)).

Second, Thamilselvan ranked higher than Puleedevan and was therefore considered the more relevant and influential contact point for the Sri Lankan government (Interview 30). From an LTTE perspective, this was read as the government not wanting to recognise the LTTE peace secretariat on equal footing (Interview 32). An independent interaction between the peace secretariats was reportedly avoided since it would have signalled parity.[419] In the LTTE's eyes, the diplomatic staff in particular maintained the latter distinction and asymmetry. Most notable to the LTTE was the reserved attitude of the first secretary general of SCOPP who made close interaction impossible for the LTTE, "even if he behaved appropriately in the meeting room of course" (Interview 32).

This condition, however, was not interpreted by the LTTE as an individual's position informing the performance of the peace secretariat. Rather, it was seen as a reflection of the principal's stance, which sanctioned the agent's behaviour. For example, the 'foot-dragging' of SCOPP in the context of sub-committee sessions was considered as "continuation of a political war through the peace process rather than a genuine prob-

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[419] In addition, a third-party actor noted that the highly dynamic context of the negotiations did not allow for an independent peace secretariat interaction anyway (Interview 33).

lem-solving effort" (Interview 32). In the LTTE's view, this perception simply underlined that it was impossible to come to a political solution with the Sri Lankan government.

Nevertheless, the secretary general of the LTTE peace secretariat personally maintained cordial relationships with his counterparts at the peace secretariat, but even more so higher-ranking government officials, in particular the secretary to then Prime Minister Wickremasinghe, Bradman Weerakoon, which could help sort out logistical and other practical problems (Interview 24, 26). Particularly during the initial period, the LTTE encouraged some level of trust building with government officials despite deeply mistrusting the government (Interview 22, 24). While the peace talks were still on track and Puleedevan was allowed to travel freely in government-controlled areas, he visited SCOPP without prior notice (Interview 29).[420] Likewise, other staff maintained informal relationships, and "outside the negotiation room, people were friendly, chatting and having coffee, exchanging phone numbers" (Interview 33). Later, these contacts, however, were not used to maintain good relationships between the conflict parties; and under the following governments, no new relationships were formed.

Did the LTTE from its perspective aim for a more symmetrical relationship? While insiders and some close observers denied this, since it would have implied that the LTTE compared itself with the Sri Lankan state, others saw the overall set-up of the peace talks as an effort towards creating parity of status for the sake of increasing the chances of a political settlement. This was particularly true regarding the preconditions for the talks (and in particular the deproscription) and the negotiation design and the support offered to the LTTE by the Norwegian facilitators and others (Interview 1, 2, 32, 33; Sørbø et al. 2011).

From a tactical perspective, both sides considered it unwise to complement, but perhaps also disturb, the Track 1 activities with further contacts and independent interactions between the peace secretariats; both needed to control their negotiation positions and the personal relationships between the individuals involved in the respective negotiation teams (Interview 33). As is discussed below in more detail, for the LTTE this requirement was essential for its sustenance. Thus, an unofficial Track 1.5 engagement between the conflict parties through the One-Text-Initiative, which had es-

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[420] Some reciprocated with cordiality and trust. With a view to SCOPP's intelligence about its counterpart, one interviewee noted that "we would not know what influence [they] had, it was unknown to us and we also did not probe into it since it was the general atmosphere not to ask questions and it was also in their culture not to talk and give away inside information, so we respected that".

tablished a specific working group for the peace secretariats, saw only a nominated observer on the side of the LTTE peace secretariat who did not have any mandate to speak for the LTTE. When the security situation became aggravated during 2007, this representation was withdrawn from Colombo (Interview 7).

Visibility and practical concerns played a relevant role in these considerations. Consistency on Track 1 appeared crucial when the talks broke down. The LTTE peace secretariat was forbidden official interaction with the government after the LTTE's decision to suspend peace talks in April 2003 (Interview 1, 16; Jayasekera 2009). Such an embargo was reiterated when the talks in 2006 broke down (Interview 21). On the other hand, working relations on the ground were maintained after 2003 (Interview 9). As long as they were useful and not visible on a political or strategic level, contacts were allowed. Perhaps this also explains the courtesy visit of the LTTE secretariat's secretary general to the newly appointed SG Dhanapala in July 2004, which was seen by some observers as a confidence-building measure (Perera 2004).

The interactions with the Peace Secretariat for Muslims were different: they followed a clear strategy of non-engagement with an – in the LTTE's eyes – subordinate conflict actor (Interview 2, 29, 32, 33). The LTTE did not want to have a third conflict party in the negotiations and saw its role as sole representative of the Tamil minority questioned by an independent representation for the Muslim communities. Tactically, it responded to respective requests by referring to the government's negotiation team comprising Muslim representatives or later by demanding from the Muslim peace secretariat a consistent position within their constituency in order to 'gain' the right to be involved in future talks (Interview 33).[421] Formally, it objected to any gesture of recognition of the Muslim representation, e.g., when refusing a separate signature of a Muslim representative on the P-TOMS document (Interview 15, 30).

The LTTE also delegated the interaction with Muslim political parties to the Tamil political party closest to the LTTE, the TNA (Interview 2). Apart from a few symbolic interventions of the LTTE leadership, i.e., the meeting with Muslim political leader Hakeem and a public apology by Prabhakaran for the mass eviction of Muslims from Jaffna, engagement took place mostly at ground level between local Mosque federations and local LTTE offices and commanders (Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008).

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[421] As evidence for the first view it was noted that the Muslim Minister Rauf Hakeem only spoke during the peace talks when Muslim issues were concerned and that another Muslim aide of the negotiation team took his seat during his absence.

From the PSM's perspective, the relationship was seen as equally strained. Staff reportedly did not see a reason for meeting with the LTTE PS, which they considered as targeting the international audience and not as important within the LTTE. The interaction with the LTTE was left to the political leadership of the Muslim political parties (Interview 8).

In sum, the interactions of the peace secretariat present a clear place of the secretariat within the hierarchy and network of the LTTE as well as a strongly controlled approach towards the outside world. While not being left outside the gate as a gatekeeper only, the secretariat had only limited access to, and say with the top leadership. This, however, did not mean that its interactions with outsiders were meaningless; here, the secretariat was in a central position although its counterparts at times belittled its role.

In order to understand its role within the LTTE better, a further look behind the scenes is useful. The following section presents the admittedly limited insights into the LTTE: only a few interviewees had insights into the LTTE. The following builds on their statements and secondary sources from literature and the media. The findings, however, help illustrate the limited agency of the LTTE PS.

6.5 Following Orders or Being Aligned – Limited Scope for Agency

To outsiders, the secretariat was mostly represented by its "jolly, bespectacled" Secretary General Puleedevan (Colvin 2009, n.pag.). Many sources described the appropriate and intentional selection of Puleedevan as a representative of the LTTE secretariat. Along similar lines, it was explained that a female cadre served as deputy since "the world demanded women" (Interview 16). The presentation towards the outside world appeared to be orchestrated and followed a strict protocol when managing outside contacts, receiving visits and making public statements.

Similarly, Thamilselvan with his "smiling, conciliatory" face reportedly removed on trips abroad or when meeting foreigners the cyanide capsule which served as an "emblem of Tiger fanaticism" and was "to be consumed in the event of capture" (Farrell 2007,

n.p.).[422] Inside the LTTE, however, the capsule was put back in its place around his neck and Thamilselvan presented himself as "tight-lipped, absorbent of others' views, and reverting back to Prabhakaran for decision making" (Lilja 2010, p.145; Interview 9).

It thus appears relevant to understand the Janus face of the peace secretariat: how did it look inside the secretariat?

Given his charming personality and reported communication skills, Puleedevan was seen as a good 'salesman', albeit without executive powers and hardly any scope to take independent decisions (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 24, 30, 33).[423] With regards to his personal convictions, some believed that he was genuine in his efforts to support the peace process, that he preferred a negotiated settlement and was thus considered a moderate force within the LTTE (Interview 1, 4, 34).

Beyond Secretary General Puleedevan and his deputy, the secretariat consisted of several departments within "a linear vertical hierarchy" (LTTE PS 2004, p.2; similar Interview 3, 30). They engaged in different operational functions concerning planning and strategy, project management, human resources, communications and media, data and statistics, finance and administration. In addition, there were dedicated officers dealing with human rights and humanitarian work and a district liaison officer (LTTE PS 2004, p.23). In March 2004, one year after its establishment, the personnel of the peace secretariat reportedly consisted of 34 members who were supported by volunteers, seconded personnel and temporary staff. Given the reported overstretch of the organisation, an organisational reform was planned and vacancies for additional staff were identified (LTTE PS 2004, p.2).

One interviewee explained that this formal organisational structure was one way of understanding the peace secretariat. Alternatively, the organisation could also be described as a matrix structure where cadres with specific skills served different units at the same time, being loaned from one to the other for specific purposes or dividing

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[422] Colvin's description of the secretariat's head is quoted from her famous article that explained her interactions with him and another political leader when facilitating their fatal attempt to surrender to government troops in May 2009. Farrell authored an obituary for Thamilselvan in the UK newspaper *The Guardian*.

[423] The anecdotal account of Bloom highlights the allure of Puleedevan: "He answered my questions, not always truthfully, but ever charming and with a smile. As my escort and I left, I could not believe how gracious and amiable they had all been. I remarked how friendly everyone was and asked the guard, 'Is he [Puleedevan] a killer?' The guard smiled: 'Oh yeah" (2003, n.pag.).

their time between units. In addition, informal horizontal connections between units were actively used by cadres to help each other and to access information or expertise on certain topics. This networking reportedly built on the movement spirit among the comrades-in-arms; in addition it made it difficult to assess most cadres' real position within the LTTE (Interview 33).[424]

The cadres were mainly described to be junior, intelligent cadres with proficiency in the English language but without much influence (Interview 2, 4), although some observers cautioned that the junior appearance was deliberately misinterpreted in the government's propaganda to make the secretariat appear irrelevant within the LTTE (Interview 32), and that the LTTE used the peace secretariat to educate and train its potential future leadership staff (Interview 2).[425] Thus, the cadres might not have had much influence, but were nevertheless important to the LTTE. The LTTE needed cadres capable of working on political issues and had a high interest in training selected cadres (Interview 1, 33).[426] This capacity building, like other opportunities for outside contacts and trips abroad, however, also presented a threat to the LTTE.

Staff of the peace secretariat were selected carefully because of the exposure to external contacts. This exposure contained several risks: Streamlining and controlling the LTTE's external appearance became more difficult once outside contacts increased (Interview 2, 3, 4); the LTTE in addition was concerned about the security of cadres, e.g., when leaving LTTE-controlled areas. At the same time, the exposure of relatively inexperienced and young cadres to outsiders was risky with a view to defection or treachery (Interview 29) and needed to be controlled. In addition, the LTTE did not wish to expose the 'true decision makers' publicly.

The LTTE's coercive strategy towards its supporters and cadres mostly ensured that the LTTE identity dominated personal beliefs and identity aspects. Thus, despite being of a significant organisational size and endowed with access to external world-

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[424] Observers noted that this tactic compensated for the lack of skills and expertise relevant for the political work of the LTTE.

[425] A similar misperception was the lack of English proficiency, which was derived from the LTTE's frequent use of translators. This was reportedly a tactic of gaining time in meetings and interviews (Interview 32, similar finding in Interview 31).

[426] That the political capacity was relatively weak within the LTTE became clear with the natural death of chief negotiator Balasingham in 2006 and the killing of Thamilselvan in 2007. Both incidents reduced the political capacities of the LTTE and the power of the political wing within the LTTE significantly. This invites for speculation on how the peace process would have played out if Balasingham had been able to live healthily in the LTTE-controlled areas (Interview 16).

views and expertise, the secretariat reportedly did not develop its own organisational culture or viewpoint (Interview 4). Loyalty with the LTTE and its leadership was considered the foremost identity trait.

Most interviewees, however, felt that the peace secretariat was not forced to do so, that its agency was not limited by the principal. Rather, several interviewees cautioned that despite his friendly demeanour, Puleedevan did not deviate in his position from that of the LTTE leadership. The peace secretariat strongly identified with its principal's objectives and strategy and thus as a matter of principle followed its orders (Interview 3, 30). While the secretariat in the case mentioned above used indirect influence through outsiders to bring political proposals to the LTTE leader's attention, it appeared not to have questioned the general strategy of the LTTE with regards to achieving its objective of a separate state.

For example, the events of 2006 that had a strong impact on SCOPP's agency, hardly played a role in the LTTE PS. The renewed efforts towards ceasefire talks concerned from the LTTE's perspective concerned the disarmament of the Karuna faction (Interview 4). The LTTE's strategy towards the talks was predetermined and could not be influenced by capacity building and advice from otherwise trusted third parties (Interview 4, 16). The peace secretariat was in full agreement with the LTTE's military approach and later the strategy of heading for a humanitarian catastrophe (Interview 4).

Two incidents, however, raise doubt with regards to the peace secretariat head's alignment. In June 2008 the Ministry of Defence issued a statement about the arrest of Puleedevan by LTTE intelligence following accusations of treachery (Ministry of Defence 2008). According to some sources, the head of the peace secretariat was accused of leaking vital information about LTTE leadership movements that might have contributed to the killing of Thamilselvan (Asian Tribune 2008). While most analysts connected the allegations to internal power struggles and Puleedevan later dismissed them as government propaganda (Interview 34; Tamil Guardian 2008), they point to the general possibility of taking coercive measures against the LTTE peace secretariat and the potential of dissent between its head and the LTTE leadership. They also underline the existence of different viewpoints and camps within the LTTE (Interview 3, 10, 12).[427]

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[427] Different 'camps' were identified in the more moderate voices and thinkers among members of the political wing and the peace secretariat as well as Anton Balasingham himself, and hardliners such as the head of intelligence and even the LTTE leader himself (Interview 1, 3, 4, 10, 12). While evidence for this distinction was found by interviewees regarding LTTE involvement in dialogue activities, official and unof-

Towards the end of the war in early 2009, Puleedevan according to some sources wanted to leave the war zone but was ordered by the LTTE leadership to stay until the end of the war (Interview 1, 4).[428] Whether he was forced to stay or subjected himself to the leadership's orders remains unclear.

Practically, the peace secretariat was involved in facilitating humanitarian assistance until the end (Interview 33). Strategically, Puleedevan's role was to be present in order to maintain international contacts with a view to possible interventions or later a surrender, assuming that well-known LTTE interlocutors in non-combat positions, and those strongly supported by the international community, might stand a better chance to survive (Interview 2).[429] But even, as some observers noted, his killing was a calculated risk and made sense to the LTTE, given the international attention and condemnation that the incident raised. In the LTTE's ideology, he was one of their *māvīrar*, or 'great heroes', who gave their lives for the cause (Hellman-Rajanayagam 2005; Roberts 2008).[430]

This takes the analysis towards the importance of symbolism. While the following cannot cover the extensive literature on symbolism used by the organisation, the section focuses on the symbolic meaning and use of the LTTE peace secretariat.

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ficial statements and private encounters, others cautioned that these role differences might have been orchestrated and that individuals would not have the potential to transform totalitarian structures (Interview 2, 4, 30).

[428] Both the head of the peace secretariat and the political wing stayed in the war zone until the end: it was allegedly intended that they negotiate international support and international intervention, or alternatively the safe exit of the LTTE leadership (Interview 4).

[429] In January 2009, Selvarasa Pathmanathan (Kumaran Pathmanathan or simply KP) was nominated by Prabhakaran as a late replacement to Balasingham in charge of international relations, coordinating international contacts and allegedly also negotiating the LTTE leadership's exit from Sri Lanka during the last days of the war in 2009 (Ramachandran 2009b).

[430] The LTTE peace secretariat's Secretary General Puleedevan was killed on May 18, 2009 together with the then political head of the LTTE and a senior military LTTE leader after negotiating their surrender and allegedly waving a white flag. The so-called 'white flag incident' remains contested by the Sri Lankan armed forces and is a subject of the so-called Darusman Report, which was prepared by an expert panel of the UN Secretary General to examine concerns of accountability for war crimes in Sri Lanka (United Nations 2011).

6.6 Towards Tamil Eelam by Peaceful Means? Complicated Symbolism of the LTTE Peace Secretariat

Most of the LTTE's symbolism aimed at supporting its claim to represent the Tamil people, warrior ideology, understanding of sacrifice for the cause, the ensuing hero mentality and the victimisation of the Tamil people (Hellman-Rajanayagam 1994, 2005; Roberts 2008, 2010; Schalk 2007). In addition, the peace secretariat was an element of another symbolic message: the establishment of a state-like, externally accessible and 'civilian' administration with the aim to build *Tamil Eelam* (Interview 9, 33; Sarvananthan 2007).

Since this message was directed mostly at the international community and less towards the Tamil constituency, it used a symbolic language accessible to its mostly Western recipients (rather than the often religious and cultural codes accessible to Tamil Hindus) and, together with other units of the political wing, provided observers with supposed evidence supporting the self-proclaimed statehood and the image of an approachable and 'friendly, open-minded and reform-oriented' LTTE.[431]

Following this reading and the earlier discussed intention of external parties to help increase parity of status for the sake of the negotiations, it appears counterintuitive that the LTTE peace secretariat was officially established with a significant delay after the government's unit. Already in 2002, Puleedevan was the coordinator within the political wing.[432] Interviewees offered several interpretations to explain this fact and a mix of reasons appears to apply. These considerations show the complex strategic deliberations of a non-state armed group 'going public'.

The LTTE initially was reluctant to establish an additional structure supporting the peace process and agreed to do so only with some delay (Interview 1, 2). The 'official' reason referred to the sophisticated logistical requirements for the peace talks (Interview 4, 33). Only after the first rounds of talks did the LTTE realise that it required additional, practical support beyond the Political Affairs Committee (Interview 1, 4, 33). It then probably took some time to negotiate the technical modalities with the Norwegian

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[431] Here, it is relevant to keep in mind that the LTTE before the establishment of the secretariat could only be approached through third parties (Interview 2).

[432] Correspondence between SCOPP and the LTTE points to inconsistencies with regards to the LTTE titles for Puleedevan and his office. Already in October 2002, there is reference to a postal address for the peace secretariat in Kilinochchi, while one month later Puleedevan was referred to as the deputy leader of the political wing (Interview 29).

facilitators who had to involve the Sri Lankan government authorities. All sides needed to assess the risk of potential misuse of the structure and the required assistance to establish a peace secretariat (Interview 9). Not only the external supporters and the Sri Lankan government, for obvious reasons, but also the LTTE itself was careful in considering the agreement. For the international community, the concern about abuse of funding and other ways of support for an organisation proscribed in some donor countries as a terrorist organisation made support difficult. But this concern might in the end have had counterproductive effects, as some observers opined "the international community's reluctance to support institution-building in the areas under LTTE control limited the scope for the consolidation of effective governance and, thus, democratic accountability in those areas" (Nadarajah & Vimalarajah 2008, p.19).

For the LTTE, the peace secretariat was an additional structure to be considered in its tight hierarchy, which required a high level of internal control given the risk of infiltration from outsiders and the risk of undue exposure of cadres to foreign values, lifestyles and possibly damaging information (Interview 1). The transformative contributions outlined above, and particularly some of the unintended ones, support this assessment.

The facilities of the peace secretariat, funded with foreign support and meant to display the accessibility and professionalism of the organisation, were criticised by the local population and observers who felt that the air-conditioned office of the peace secretariat, the vehicles and other equipment alienated the secretariat from the rest of the organisation and the population (Interview 2). Since these amenities were mainly funded by the Norwegian facilitators, they also raised concern among different constituencies: LTTE hardliners and Tamil Eelam supporters worried about corruption of the LTTE's positions in the peace negotiations, whereas the government and southern constituencies saw the facilities as further evidence of an alleged LTTE bias of the Norwegian facilitators (Bandarage 2008; Sørbø et al. 2011).

Two potential benefits, however, outweighed the risks. After observing the government's practical use of its peace secretariat and understanding its symbolic value as a token of commitment to peace, the LTTE realised how the peace secretariat could be useful for its communicative purposes (Interview 1, 2). Moreover, after being approached by the international community, it realised that the secretariat provided access to international assistance and could be used as a potential entry point for fu-

ture funding in other political and development-oriented areas, and, even more importantly, for garnering legitimacy (Interview 2, 20, 24, 26).[433]

While for the government the symbolic value of SCOPP mostly lay in displaying its commitment to peace, the LTTE peace secretariat was also strongly used to symbolise the organisation's professionalism. The secretariat in a very practical way demonstrated the LTTE's administrative capacities, which prior to 2001 were hardly visible to actors outside the LTTE-controlled areas and led many observers to see the LTTE only through the personification of Prabhakaran (Interview 26, 32).

From the LTTE's perspective, the peace secretariat helped to respond to the need to explain 'its reality', which the state tried to portray as "small, marginal and fringe-like" and to reach out to the international community despite the government preventing high-level contacts, e.g., a meeting of UN SG Kofi Annan with the LTTE leader (Interview 32). Through its very existence, the secretariat thus helped to counter some of the government's propaganda.

While it therefore was useful for the LTTE to present a secretariat with parity of status to the government's secretariat (Interview 1), the LTTE was at the same time wary about the peace secretariats interacting, since it was crucial for it to be received by the government's top hierarchy. In the beginning, the LTTE avoided delegating interactions with the government to its peace secretariat, since it did not want to interact with lower bureaucracy levels on the government side (Interview 2, 32). Into this deliberation also played the ideological concern, as mentioned before, not to appear as aspiring to be equal to a state that was violating the rights of the Tamil community.

In the end, however, the peace secretariat neither stood for a nascent state or the commitment of the LTTE to a peaceful, negotiated political solution. As with the government's organisation, it had turned into a 'war secretariat' propagating the LTTE's views and a 'loudspeaker' crying out the government's human rights violations and the suffering of the Tamil people inflicted by the war, without reflecting the LTTE's very own contribution to this suffering. The peace secretariat's symbolic value as a former token for peace still helped with that task, lending it a voice heard by the international community and perhaps also additional credibility in the eyes of some observers (Interview 4, 26).[434] Unlike SCOPP, the LTTE secretariat did not attack the interna-

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[433] Later the LTTE was disappointed that the expected flow of funding did not take place (Interview 26).

[434] Following such an interpretation, the government tried to silence this loudspeaker by targeting the peace secretariat militarily in October 2008. Already in 2007, Orjuela notes, "the government forces had

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tional community. While criticising the government, it rather appealed to the world out-side to help the Tamil people. Ultimately, the LTTE's increasingly desperate hope to inspire an international intervention in the war, however, was shattered.

The peace secretariat's symbolic power continued beyond its existence: after the cap-ture of Kilinochchi in January 2009, the PS office was found to have been emptied of documents and any trace of its former role. On New Year's eve 2011, however, the pro-LTTE news website Tamilnet published documentation of the peace secretariat that was prepared for the talks in 2006 on various issues concerning the ceasefire, human rights violations and the humanitarian situation in the LTTE-controlled areas. Commenting on the quality of the documents, the article noted that the "documents not only offer a reference point of study of what transpired during the CFA period, they also reflect on the political acumen of Pirapaharan's LTTE in dealing with local and global issues in a manner consistent with a properly functioning state apparatus" (Tamil Guardian 2011).[435]

6.7 The LTTE Peace Secretariat's Agency in a Nutshell

Summing up the findings on the LTTE peace secretariat and comparing them to the findings on SCOPP, it appears that interviewees had more to say on the symbolic rel-evance of the peace secretariat than on its operative transformative contributions. Interviewees in addition reflected relatively more on the unintended consequences of supporting the LTTE's peace secretariat; they questioned the organisation's commit-ment to a political solution and thus the genuine role of the peace secretariat.

This does not necessarily imply a lesser transformative contribution on the side of the LTTE peace secretariat in comparison to its government counterpart; the lack of in-sight of many interviewees into the internal structure of the LTTE and the peace secretariat's daily activities and routines as well as the fundamental asymmetry be-tween state and non-state actors also need to be considered. Thus, a summary of the transformative contributions needs to be read in conjunction with these qualifying re-marks.

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purposely targeted and killed Tamilchelvam [which] signalled their unwillingness to seek a negotiated end to the war" (2009, pp.260). In this quote, a different spelling of Thamilselvan's name is used.

[435] Pirapaharan refers to LTTE leader Prabhakaran, here spelled in Tamil using the Latin alphabet.

The interviewees pointed to various contributions to actor, issue or context transformations that mostly came into effect through personal changes in individuals, and appeared to affect the organisational level of the LTTE and overall conflict dynamics to a lesser extent. This is explained both by the controlling, totalitarian influence of the LTTE itself and the counteracting effects that these transformations had on other parts of the conflict system. This unintended effect was observed regarding the different functions of the peace secretariat and its organisational characteristics that stood out from the war-shattered environment, e.g., the facilities of the secretariat, foreign trips and expensive suits of the negotiation team. In the end, these unintended effects weakened the moderate forces within the LTTE and strengthened the hardliners on both sides. At the same time, it needs to be remembered that the LTTE peace secretariat was described as a professional and effective organisation that stood out from its military environment and matched or – in the view of some observers – even outdid the government secretariat's efficiency.

While the government secretariat underwent several changes in leadership and oversight, the principal and his control remained constant in the case of the LTTE peace secretariat. Thus a clear and consistent mandate was easier to maintain, but the interview results also point to the lesser potential for strategy debate and revision of objectives. The authoritarian organisation allowed little space for dissent and thus also did not have to engage with political opposition in the same way as the government.

In addition, the reality behind the peace secretariat's official 'civil face' remains opaque to a certain extent. Interviewees wondered if some aspects of the peace secretariat also served as a Potemkin village: did, for example, the constructive demeanour of the LTTE peace secretariat at the P-TOMS negotiations point to a real opportunity for revitalisation of the peace process, or did the LTTE merely use any opportunity to impress its global audience?

Finally, and in parentheses, there was also an alternative reading by a small minority of observers that should not be ignored: the LTTE had to instigate a return to hostilities since the power of moderates within the organisation was rising and in the longer run would have weakened the call for secession and led to compromise. The hardliners could not afford a longer peace process in light of the political, social and economic transformation process that came with the peace process and brought with it exposure to daily life outside the Vanni and an alternative reality outside the clutches of the LTTE's authoritarian regime. Since the same observers considered Puleedevan and others in the political wing as moderates, this scenario would imply a different agency of moderate voices within the LTTE and its constituency than outlined here.

Chapter 7   The Uphill Struggle for Status and Representation of the 'Muslim Voice' – Analysis of Findings on the Peace Secretariat for Muslims

The third peace secretariat presents a specific case since its principals were not involved as an independent negotiating party in the peace talks of 2002 and 2003. Also, it was established only at the end of 2004 and saw a further delay of its peace process-related work due to the tsunami. These conditions limited the scope of activity of the secretariat and its role in the peace process. At the same time, they did not limit its relevance in the Muslim communities' quest for political recognition and for an independent voice in the peace process and beyond. Moreover, and differently from the other two secretariats, the Peace Secretariat for Muslims is still in existence at the time of research. During the period of interviews, it underwent a restrategising process and at the time of writing (February 2012) had changed its name to 'Peace Muslims'. The period after July 2009, however, is not a subject of this research.

The following discussion will show how far its functions, interactions and identity resembled or differed from those of the other peace secretariats and how this peace secretariat contributed to conflict transformation. The structure of the text follows that of the previous two chapters, beginning with a short introduction on background, then considering functions, contributions to conflict transformation, interactions and identity, each in a section. The chapter concludes with the discussion of symbolic agency and a summary.

7.1   Introduction to the Peace Secretariat for Muslims

The Peace Secretariat for Muslims, or PSM, was established in December 2004 after the formal peace talks of 2002-2003 had been stalled for more than a year. The quest to install a representation of the Muslim claim to participate in the peace process, however, started much earlier and explains why the peace secretariat was seen as a breakthrough of recognition for Muslim concerns related to the ethno-political conflict and the peace process. Uyangoda even suggests a third contesting state-formation project that can be identified in the Muslim efforts to respond to the other two state-

formation projects of the Sinhalese and Tamils and the perceived alienation from the other communities (2007, 2011).[436]

As briefly outlined in chapter 1, the Muslim communities form the second minority group in Sri Lanka, following the Tamil communities. Earlier often considered as part of the Tamil community, several political, religious and cultural influences contributed to the formation of a Muslim identity based on their common religion rather than language or history (Haniffa 2007; Mayilvaganan 2008). Like the other ethnic groups, the Muslim communities are heterogeneous in social, economic, geographic and political regards, resulting in different needs.

Political articulation was initially channelled through the mainstream political channels of the Sinhalese and Tamil communities including Muslim participation in the early Tamil nationalist militancy (Lewer & Ismail 2011).[437] Only with the establishment of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) in the mid-1980s did the community establish a political voice and began to air its concerns with a view to minority issues and the ethno-political conflict (Faaiz 2009). Later the party split, and, partly due to the peace process of 2002 and the ensuing political dynamics, the articulation of divergent grievances and political strategies became more differentiated (Lewer & Ismael 2011).[438]

The confrontation between the political concerns and interests of the two minority groups played a catalytic role in this process: Muslim distinctiveness was reinforced

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[436] There is, however, no agreement within the Muslim community since some parts, and particularly Colombo-based business and political elites, profit until today from coalitions with Sinhalese mainstream parties (McGilvray & Raheem 2007; Wagner 1990). Given the disparities and disagreements within the Muslim population, this text refers to them as plural communities. The same heterogeneity is, of course, true for the Sinhalese and Tamil populations, albeit less reflected in the respective peace secretariat designs of the government and the LTTE.

[437] In the beginning of anti-government protests led by Tamils, many Muslims participated and also initially joined ranks when the struggle became militant. They left the movement, however, when the LTTE initiated violence against Muslims in the North and expelled the Muslim population from Jaffna in 1990 (Swamy 2010, p.lxviii).

[438] The SLMC or Sri Lanka Muslim Congress is the largest political party with a Muslim identity affiliation in Sri Lanka. It was established in 1981 by a small group of eastern political actors under the leadership of Mohammed H.M. Ashraff. When Ashraff died in an accident in September 2000, he left behind the idea to form a multiethnic political party that would forego identity politics. The then deputy leader, Rauf Hakeem, assumed SLMC leadership. Due to internal dissent and power struggle, Ashraff's widow took over leadership of a dissident group that formed the National Unity Alliance (NUA) and operated in close alliance with the SLFP.

with the creation of a Muslim political party in 1981 in response to Tamil political party development. Increasing tensions between Tamils and Muslims in the East and the LTTE's claim to a Tamil homeland eventually led to the expulsion of about 70.000 northern Muslims by the LTTE in the aftermath of the IPKF's departure in 1990, causing grievances until today.

Muslim involvement in the peace process prior to 2002 was insignificant. Farook (2009) outlines how the Muslim minority was sidelined in the earlier peace talks between the government and various militant groups in the Thimphu talks in 1985 and later in the several peace efforts between the government and the LTTE. Likewise, Muslim concerns were not heard with regards to legislation that concerned their habitat, especially the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The situation of exclusion changed to a certain extent with the CFA and the peace negotiations in 2002, since the SLMC had been instrumental in bringing the new cohabitation government to power.

A seemingly uniting factor among the Muslim communities was therefore the call for representation in the peace process. Even before the beginning of the peace talks in 2002 the request for Muslim representation in the peace talks was made, albeit without success. The ceasefire agreement recognised the Muslim community as a stakeholder but not as a direct party to the conflict, thus the community was not granted an independent delegation to the peace talks.

As is discussed in more detail below, the two negotiating parties were not interested for different tactical reasons to have a third negotiating party at the table. Thus, it was only during the fourth round of talks that the two parties, probably due to international requests and pressure from the SLMC on the government coalition, vaguely agreed to invite a Muslim delegation at a later time if required for the discussion of Muslim concerns. According to a former SCOPP staff member, the matter was "successfully being shelved" and thus "solved" (Gooneratne 2007, pp.57-59).

After the stalemate of the talks in 2003, the agreement to include a Muslim delegation in principle was upheld on several occasions, e.g., during a parliamentary debate in October 2003[439] and in preparation for the CFA-related talks in 2006, but again the delegation did not materialise under the different governments. Observers criticise the Norwegian facilitators for not pressing the negotiating parties to allow a Muslim dele-

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[439] Here, the then Foreign Minister Kardirgamar and close ally of the president spoke for an independent delegation (Parliament of Sri Lanka 2003).

gation from the beginning of peace talks in 2002 (McGilvray & Raheem 2007, pp.32-36; Interview 10, 13, 18).[440]

Despite this setback, Muslim actors in political and civil society considered a peace secretariat necessary in light of the exchange of government proposals for an interim administration for the North and East and the responding ISGA proposal of the LTTE. Both excluded Muslim concerns or representation (International Crisis Group 2007, p.10). The government's proposal, however, offered the Muslim coalition party SLMC the opportunity to submit a separate proposal; and the LTTE's proposal suggested that the Muslims "have the right to participate in the formulation of their role in the ISGA" (McGilvray & Raheem 2007, p.37). In addition, there were concerns of further 'ethnic cleansing' and violence against Muslim populations, since the CFA in the community's view did not consider sufficiently the security of civilians, their private property and their livelihood activities (Faaiz 2009). The Muslim community feared both the LTTE's atrocities and the government's increasingly violent responses and its allegedly wilful ignorance of Sinhalese-Muslim tension (Farook 2009; Nuhman 2007; Raheem 2006).

Lacking an independent delegation to the talks, the establishment of a peace secretariat in parallel to those of the government and the LTTE was widely regarded as a step in the direction of separate representation and parity of status.[441] Several activities facilitated the establishment of the peace secretariat: civil society organisations discussed the situation of the Muslim communities in the conflict context and prepared notes addressing the government negotiation delegation (Interview 8, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19). Track 2 dialogue workshops deliberated ideas for a Muslim resource centre in order to build the community's capacities to find its own positions and prepare for

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[440] According to McGilvray and Raheem (2007, p.37) it should be noted, however, that one of the progress benchmarks for the peace process formulated by the donors for the Tokyo Donor Conference in June 2003 concerned the inclusion of a Muslim delegation to the peace talks.

[441] Earlier attempts to establish such a structure went largely unrecognised. First in early 2003, a Muslim Peace Unit was located in the office of Prime Minister Wickremasinghe with an academic as head of the unit and a strong SLMC affiliation. In parallel, there were suggestions to establish a Muslim unit within SCOPP (Interview 8). Later, the SLMC ran a separate secretariat in conjunction with its constitutional affairs committee but, being a unilateral initiative, it lacked legitimacy to represent the Muslim community at large (Farook 2009, p.210; Interview 18). The efforts also suffered from the stalemate of the official peace talks in 2003, the political ripples in the South caused by the LTTE's ISGA proposal and the SLMC shifting to the opposition after parliamentary elections in 2004 (Interview 11, 13, 15, 18, 19). Notably, most interviewees, even those with close connections to the Muslim communities, do not remember these early efforts in detail.

eventual inputs to the negotiations (Interview 19). In 2004 the One-Text-Initiative, an institutionalised track 1.5 dialogue and problem-solving programme for political parties with an interest in the peace process, picked up the idea of the resource centre and established a working group to discuss the Muslim dimension of the peace process (Interview 1, 17, 19). The so-called Muslim Peace Process Sub-Committee decided to explore the establishment of an inclusive peace secretariat comprising members of the two main Muslim political parties. Out of this unofficial Track 1.5 exercise the Peace Secretariat for Muslims was created.[442]

7.2   Resource Centre and Dialogue Platform – Functions of the PSM

The leaders of the two political parties Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), Rauf Hakeem, and National Unity Alliance (NUA), Ms. Ferial Ashraff, signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the formation of the PSM on December 15, 2004.

According to a self-description, the PSM was "a pro-active institution that is being developed:

> (a) to function as a forum for dialogue and interaction among all Muslim parties and interest groups in relation to the peace process;
>
> (b) to work towards a coordinated position for Muslims in the negotiating process and in the implementation of the CFA;
>
> (c) to function as a resource center that will assess the condition of Muslim communities and respond quickly and effectively to any contingencies that may arise" (PSM n.d.).

In addition, a concept paper notes the importance of the peace secretariat to serve as a "resource center, research and analysis body and an advisory forum" as well as "a window and a gateway to the national and international society" (PSM 2004 Annexure A, pp.2-3).

Due to the delayed establishment and the lack of representation at the talks, the mandate of the secretariat deviated from that of its counterparts. The main focus was on preparing a common Muslim position on issues concerning peace negotiations, and

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[442] The idea developed momentum when a UNDP project suggested assistance for a Muslim peace secretariat similar to the assistance extended to the government and LTTE secretariats (Interview 15, 17, 18; Farook 2009).

on consensus building among the diverse and at times controversial views of the different Muslim communities. It also reaffirmed the commitment to a political settlement.

The objectives declared according to the Memorandum of Understanding (PSM 2004, p.2) read as follows:

> "a) Formulate policy, conduct research and analysis on issues that are of vital importance to the Muslim community in respect of the peace process;
>
> b) Act as a resource center and an advisory forum in respect of the peace process and the implementation and monitoring of the Ceasefire Agreements [sic];
>
> c) Provide capacity building and training programmes for Muslim participants in the peace process;
>
> d) Prepare frameworks on peace building and constitutional principles that would satisfy the aspirations of the Muslims and build consensus among major stakeholders;
>
> e) Facilitate consensus building among Muslim political parties and political formations with a view to develop cohesive response on vital issues;
>
> f) Study and report on issues pertaining to concerns expressed by the Muslims in respect of the peace process, devolution of power, unit of devolution, implementation of the CFA, response of the Muslims with regard to interim arrangements, rehabilitation, development, reconstruction and any other relevant matter;
>
> g) Ensure a rapid and comprehensive responses [sic], in terms of security, relief and rehabilitation and other relevant aspects, to contingencies affecting Muslim communities;
>
> h) Study and report on the right of return of all Muslims who are forcibly evicted;
>
> i) Develop and maintain formal and in-formal working relationships with SCOPP, the LTTE Peace Secretariat, the Norwegian facilitators, and the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission to protect and secure the peace process".

This outline of objectives was reframed and reduced in 2006 by excluding the aspects mentioned under items c, h and I, in the context of a strategising exercise. The objectives thereafter read:

"The Secretariat to facilitate consensus building among Muslim political parties and other stakeholders with a view to develop cohesive response on vital issues affecting the Muslim community. The declared objects of the PSM are to-

a) Formulate policy, conduct research and analysis on issues that are of vital importance to the Muslim community in respect of the peace process

b) Act as a resource center and an advisory in respect of the peace process and the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreements.

c) Prepare frameworks on peace building and constitutional principles that would satisfy the aspirations of the Muslims and build consensus among major stakeholders

d) Facilitate consensus building among Muslim political parties with a view to develop cohesive response on vital issues.

e) Study and report on issues pertaining to concerns expressed by the Muslims in respect of devolution of power, unit of devolution, implementation of the CFA, response of the Muslims with regard to the proposals of the LTTE on the establishment of ISGA and RRR matters.

f) Ensure a rapid and comprehensive response, in terms of security, relief and rehabilitation and other relevant aspects, to contingencies affecting Muslim communities" (PSM n.d.)".

Thus, the central functions of PSM remained part of its objectives and can be depicted with their changing levels of significance as follows:

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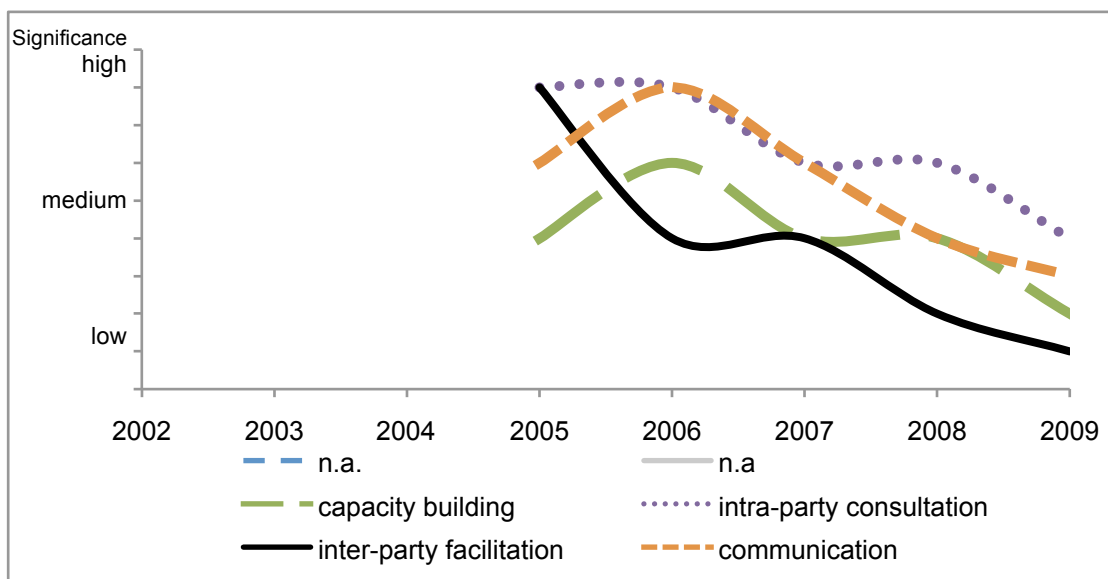
Figure 7.1: Significance of PSM functions

Given the particularities of PSM, the functions only started in the middle of the timeline and did not include the secretarial and logistical support and the implementation and monitoring functions of the two other peace secretariats.[443] Instead, the focus of the Muslim peace secretariat was on intra-party consultation and consensus building, on capacity building and advisory services for the secretariat's principals. Since all functions show similar trends in their significance, the following description is organised along functional areas.

The original idea of a resource centre strongly informed the establishment and start of activities strongly, it placed emphasis on capacity building and communication (Interview 1, 8, 19). Given the lack of information and knowledge within the Sri Lankan society on Muslim concerns and grievances, the foremost task was seen as collecting and disseminating relevant information and providing it to Muslim and other multipliers (Interview 1, 13, 19). For this purpose, the secretariat drew on the expertise of researchers and civil society members collaborating with the One-Text-Initiative and also developed its own resource pool (Interview 13, 19, 28).

The peace secretariat improved its own expertise and skills and sought international advice through the international resource person visits as well as several study tours and participation in seminars in Sri Lanka and abroad on topics related to the peace process, in particular to power sharing (Interview 19; author's observations).

Hand in hand with the work of the resource centre went intra-party consultation and consensus building in order to arrive at shared positions that could be presented in future peace talks. Given the highly heterogeneous perspectives and needs of the Muslim communities, this presented a significant but also difficult task. With the help of professional third-party facilitation and often using international resource persons, Track 1.5 and 2 dialogues were organised in a regular manner (Interview 15, 18, 19). The PSM served as a platform for dialogue among the different Muslim communities, and at times with other stakeholders represented by civil society organisations and

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[443] The PSM's objectives referred to the ceasefire agreement, and the secretariat also gathered data with regards to ceasefire violations concerning Muslim populations; these activities were not part of a regular monitoring activity in standing arrangements as between the two other secretariats. The data was fed into recommendations for the Muslim political leadership and shared with SCOPP on an informal and irregular basis.

NGOs involved in peacebuilding on Track 2 or at times by parliamentarians when conducting Track 1.5 seminars and discussions.

This function built on the establishment of regional peace secretariat offices where local and regional dialogues were organised and contributed to consensus building and resolution of local issues and inter-communal dissent. Insights from the local discussions were presented on the national level thus helping to build consensus on the foundation of Track 3 dialogues (Interview 8, 18). Here, inter-party facilitation played a significant role as well.

In addition to intra-party communication, the idea of advocating for inclusion of Muslim positions in the political process became stronger, thus increasing efforts to reach out to the international community (Interview 8). The PSM maintained contacts with several of the key donors engaged in peacebuilding as well as with members of the diplomatic community involved in the peace process. Initially and often through the contacts established within the One-Text-Initiative and the support of the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies, Sri Lanka Office, the peace secretariat irregularly briefed the diplomatic and donor community on Muslim concerns in the peace process (Interview 1; author's observations). It also received funding and capacity building support from Norwegian and other bilateral donors as well as UNDP. These donor relationships were used to advocate for and helped to increase awareness on Muslim concerns (Interview 1, 15, 18, 19, 33).

This function and inter-party facilitation were excluded from the later list of objectives, partly reflecting the assessment that after 2006 no more peace talks would take place and partly displaying a stronger focus on providing information and policy input to the political leaders rather than engaging with the international community and other actors directly. The latter reflects also tensions within the Muslim communities that will be discussed in more detail in section 7.4.

In general, all functions show a descending trend in terms of significance. This is explained by the shrinking space for political debate on peace process-related issues during the years of increasing violence, breakdown of the ceasefire and war (Interview 17, 28). The communication between the two other peace secretariats had stopped officially before the establishment of the PSM and saw only brief moments of revitalisation in the context of the P-TOMS negotiations in 2005 and of the humanitarian talks in 2006.

Similarly, the appetite of the Muslim communities for intra-party consensus building decreased towards the end of the peace process. While being aware that Muslim

concerns were relevant also during the time of warfare, the dialogue process at Track 1.5 and 2 was reportedly seen as less relevant as compared to Track 1 high-level interactions 'required to get things done' in the political environment of the time (Interview 11, 17).

This trend is also reflected in other Track 1.5 and 2 dialogue and capacity building activities. Since PSM mainly used the international advisors and experts invited through the One-Text-Initiative for its capacity building exercises, these activities were similarly reduced (Timberman 2007).

Showing the relative significance of the different functions of PSM, the graph below indicates that intra-party consultation played the most significant role to the interviewees. Again, the picture differs from those for the other two peace secretariats given the more limited functions and later start of work.

Capacity building

Communication

Consultation

Facilitation
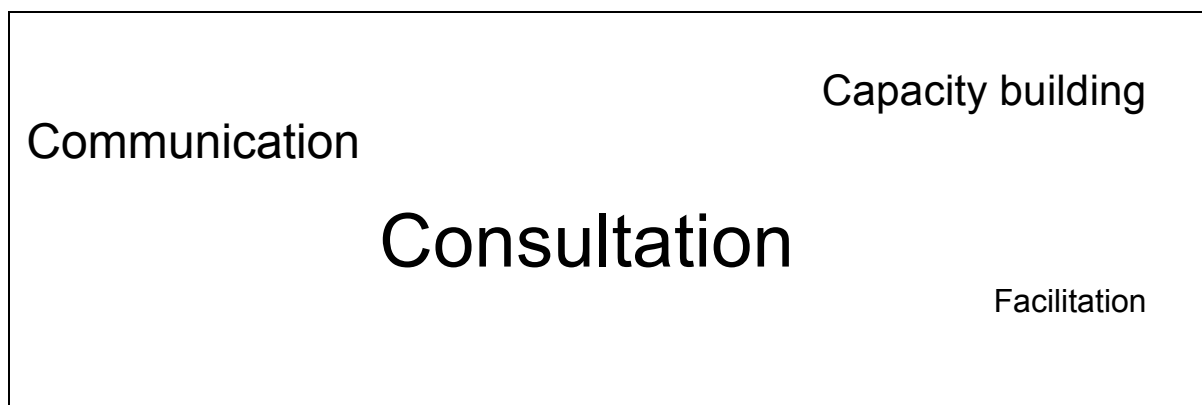
Figure 7.2: Overall significance of functions of PSM

Regarding the overall trend of decreasing significance and the following discussion of transformative contributions of the peace secretariat, it should also be noted that the interviewees' perceptions were influenced by three factors.

First, several months before the interviews, media reports highlighted concerns about the peace secretariat's effectiveness as well as allegations about financial misappropriation (The Sunday Times 2009a, 2009b). While these were not topics of the research, they clearly had an impact on the interviewees' opinions and informed their statements about the secretariat's work. Moreover, some of the governance and staff recruitment decisions within the national secretariat's structure were questioned pub-

licly (Farook 2009). These were discussed in several of the interviews regarding organisational identity and leadership of the peace secretariat.

Second, during the time of research, PSM underwent a major reflection and restrategising process in order to find a new role and approach to its objectives in the post-war situation (Interview 11, 13, 17). While interviewees with close association to PSM displayed an optimistic attitude towards this process, they were also aware of more sceptical views in their environment. The idea of continued consensus building and advocacy for Muslim concerns in a future PSM, albeit with a different name, implied that they saw the previous efforts as worthwhile, whereas at the same time they felt that they had to defend these views in an overall critical environment with reduced political space for minority concerns.

Third, in mid-February 2010 one of the two political party leaders instrumental in the establishment of PSM joined the president's political party, the SLFP. Ferial Ashraff explained publicly that this did not imply the end of her political party NUA and that the time was ripe for less community- and identity-driven politics (Rizwie 2010). The move nevertheless took place in the context of the post-war consolidation of the current political regime, which had serious consequences for minority concerns and a multi-ethnic identity of Sri Lanka (Raheem 2010). PSM insiders, however, were not ready to reflect on the implications of these political changes in the context of the interviews.

This limited strategic reflection in the interviews and the difficult political context affect the following section on transformative contributions of the peace secretariat, which is built on interview findings that often show either a particularly critical or an overly optimistic picture.[444]

7.3 Building Intra-party Consensus and Other Efforts towards Conflict Transformation

Given the difficult context of the research on PSM, the researcher expected the interviews to offer only a few insights on transformative contributions of the PSM. Unlike the findings on the other two secretariats, however, the interviews on PSM's role in the peace process did offer explicit references to transformative results. These can be

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[444] It should be noted here that a significant number of interviewees did not have any insights to offer on the PSM, or were reluctant to share them at the time of research.

explained by the significantly different role of PSM compared to its counterparts that did not engage in intra-party consensus building (Interview 1, 4).

Altogether, the following picture of the overall transformative contributions emerges:

Structure transformation

Actor transformation

Issue transformation

Personal transformation
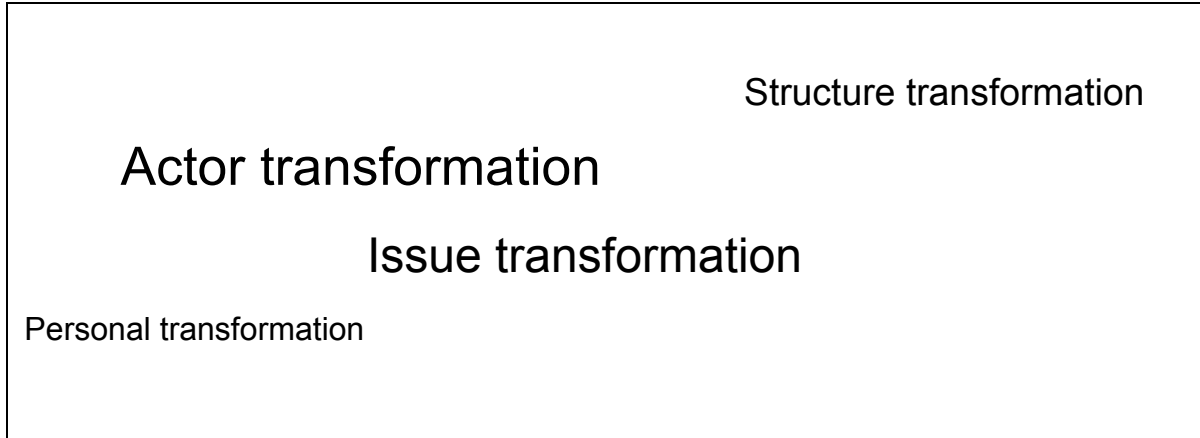
Figure 7.3: Overall significance of contributions to types of conflict transformation of PSM

The following describes the types of conflict transformation in detail and relates them to the diverse functions of the Muslim peace secretariat.

At the core of the transformative effects of the secretariat was consultation and consensus building among the Muslim communities (Interview 4, 8). The discussion and reflection of Muslim concerns in circles of different Muslim stakeholders, often from different Tracks and often using international resource persons and experts, resulted in a clarification of political views and demands, contributing to issue transformation among the Muslim political actors (Interview 1, 19). In addition, the more reflected and elaborate political positions increased the confidence among Muslim political representatives to present these viewpoints based on a solid foundation built in a consultative process (Interview 1, 15). The consultations also widened the democratic space within the Muslim political parties through the exposure of alternative views and the debates with representatives from other parts of Sri Lanka (Interview 19). The political leaders actually listened to their agent's views and recommendations, albeit while taking other political considerations into account. This effect was described as actor transformation.

These effects, however, did not realise their full potential since the PSM did not manage to include other Muslim stakeholders beyond workshop participation. As is discussed in more detail in the following section on interactions, the limited inclusiveness was repeatedly criticised by Muslim political actors and civil society, donors and inter-

national resource persons, but to no avail. Accordingly, notes a report on the situation of the Muslims in the peace process, "the Muslim Peace Secretariat should also be playing a role as a common body for all Muslims but its achievements have been undermined by the perception among some Muslims that it is representative in effect of only two parties, the SLMC and the NUA" (ICG 2007, p.11).

Another concern referred to the limited capacity of the national secretariat to integrate the diverse regional perspectives into one coherent national position. While consensus building and coordination was easier on the regional level given more homogeneous political interests and contexts, the national level was not seen as sufficiently strong to accommodate the diversity of positions (Interview 8, 18). An example was given: reportedly the government enforced Sinhalese admission to the Southeastern University, which was considered as mostly Muslim. Regional Muslim stakeholders were upset but were not in agreement on how to react, e.g., to expel the Sinhalese or to accept them. The regional forum of the secretariat provided a space for clarification and development of a response based on co-existence. The national level could have taken up Muslim issues of higher education at large but failed to do so.

A second transformative contribution was seen in representation and communication of Muslim fears, concerns and needs in the peace process. The PSM essentially gave Muslim communities a voice outside of the political parties. Although the secretariat could not replace a separate Muslim delegation to peace talks, it contributed significantly to a representation of Muslim viewpoints through the following activities (Interview 7) and to a certain extent even replaced the presence in Track 1 negotiations (Interview 1):

− meetings with the Norwegian facilitators, the donor co-chairs and representatives of the negotiating parties, including the peace secretariats (Interview 15);

− written interventions in preparation for the humanitarian talks in 2006 and through briefing the Muslim member of the government delegation, Ferial Ashraff (Interview 11, 13);

− meetings and briefings for domestic civil society and international diplomatic and donor representatives;

− participation in Track 1.5 dialogue activities and interaction with other political stakeholders in this context.

These activities again increased confidence within the Muslim communities to present their political interests and needs (Interview 1) and thus contributed to actor transfor-

mation. With regards to the political consultation concerning the P-TOMS arrangement and communicating Muslim concerns to the government and LTTE, the PSM contributed also to issue transformation.

Going beyond their particular political interests, interviewees in close affiliation with the secretariat recognised their own potential in serving as bridge builders among the minority communities or among the conflict parties in general (Interview 1, 13, 15, 17). The intra-consultation process often raised attention to the question of how the Muslim community should engage in the peace process and how far they could take on a constructive, facilitating role, since they as a community would benefit from a political agreement between the two main conflict parties (Interview 1, 15, author's observations). Some also felt that the PSM could have been a bridge between the two other peace secretariats since it was less restricted in its mandate and role (Interview 17, 18), although this role was not realised. While these reflections presented personal and actor transformations, they also pointed to the potential of structure transformation between the other conflict parties.

Mixed transformative effects are found in the capacity building function. On one hand, it contributed, when going hand in hand with consultation processes, to actor and issue transformation. This is particularly true for the use of international resource persons in the context of PSM's activities. On the other hand, PSM sent its own staff, political party representatives and other Muslim opinion leaders for topical seminars and study tours. Assessing the effectiveness of these activities goes beyond the question of this research. It should be noted here, however, that interviewees did not mention any contributions of these activities to personal, issue or actor transformation.

While the PSM was not involved in the official ceasefire monitoring process, it attempted to contribute to its improvement by suggesting to SCOPP and other actors a differentiation of data reflecting Muslim concerns (Interview 13). While this suggestion did not materialise due to the already high level of tension between the main conflict parties and the failed efforts to discuss ceasefire-related concerns in 2006, it nevertheless points to another potential for issue transformation.

Altogether, interviewees noted PSM's difficulties in working in the context of increasing violence and after the abrogation of the ceasefire agreement. Discussions on the situation in the East where a large Muslim population lives became particularly contentious, given the alleged collaboration of the government's armed forces with paramilitary groups (Interview 8, 17). In addition, planned activities on power sharing were cancelled since the PSM found it increasingly difficult to position itself politically (Inter-

view 17). Not only did the political climate become hostile to any deliberations on power sharing; the PSM was not in a position to consult its constituency and engage the other conflict parties on vital issues concerning Muslim communities living in the East. These communities, but apparently as well the PSM itself, were 'caught in the crossfire', as a report of the International Crisis Group on their situation was titled (ICG 2007).

The increasingly volatile and violent context reportedly impacted on the PSM's readiness to engage in political debate. In 2005 it was strongly involved in the discussion on post-tsunami relief arrangements and represented Muslim concerns with regards to the planned P-TOMS agreement, for example in a meeting with the president herself (Interview 11).[445] This one incident of active inter-party facilitation was considered a successful intervention of the PSM, although the P-TOMS process failed. Initially a breakthrough agreement was reached with the president, which allowed for separate Muslim representation on different tiers of the planned P-TOMS administrative structure. This represented a structure transformation. That these structures never came into effect was beyond the secretariat's control.

In hindsight, PSM's main and more lasting contribution with regards to the tsunami, however, was seen in establishing help desks in the East and in liaising with the government and donor agencies as well as with the LTTE peace secretariat regarding the ground situation (Interview 13, 15).

While working behind the scenes in 2005 was still possible, the PSM became less inclined to do so in the following years. When the government started the national consultation process on constitutional reforms with the APRC, the PSM participated together with civil society organisations in Track 2 dialogue activities on the topic but did not play an active role on Track 1.5 or 1 (Interview 8). This can be explained by both the increasingly difficult political situation as well as by the political competition between the two political parties governing the PSM. The interactions guiding and limiting the PSM's transformative contributions are discussed in the next section.

Summing up the transformative contributions of the operative functions of the secretariat, the following picture emerges:

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[445] The political limelight, however, was captured by SLMC political leader Hakeem who made unilateral statements without consulting PSM partner NUA (Farook 2009, pp. 213-214).
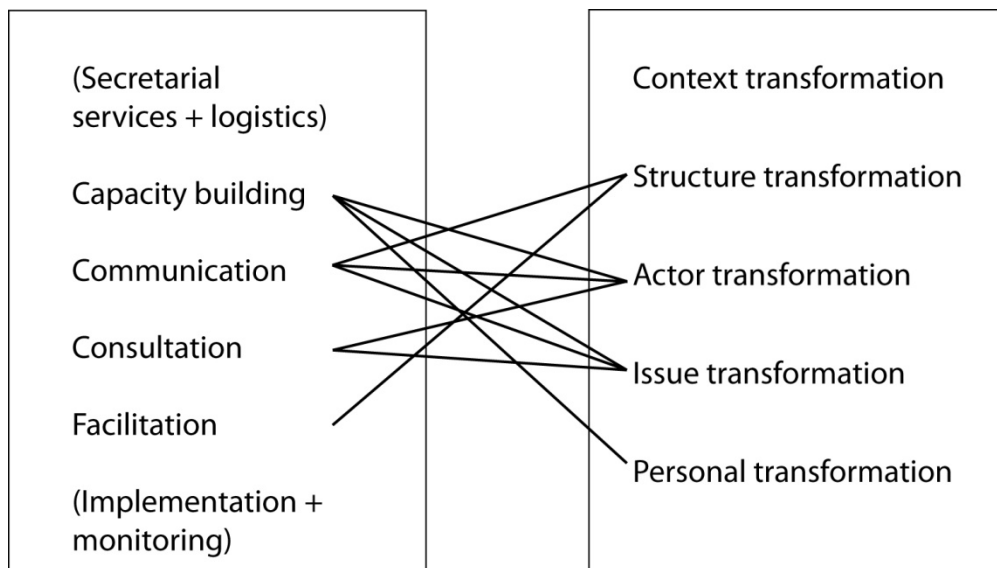
Figure 7.4: PSM's contribution to conflict transformation connected to functions

Similar to the other peace secretariats, many of the Muslim peace secretariat's achievements were outdone by the failed peace process and the war. Political space has narrowed and left less opportunity for Muslim representatives to represent minority concerns although these might be based on a community consensus. Increased awareness and expertise among Muslim representatives on constitutional and power sharing concerns was confronted with reduced opportunities to engage the government. Nevertheless, several interviewees considered the mere existence of the peace secretariat an irreversible transformation of the political landscape in Sri Lanka (Interview 1, 13, 15, 17, 19). Similar to the other peace secretariats, the PSM played a symbolic role: it represented the political aspirations of a conflict stakeholder so far largely ignored in previous peace processes. It also contributed to the sophistication of the Sri Lankan polity and society regarding understanding Muslim marginalisation (Interview 13). This underscores the PSM's contribution to structure transformation through its communication and inter-party facilitation functions.

Furthermore, some noted the relevance of the secretariat in moderating rising Muslim aspirations both with regards to a potential militarisation of Muslim groups, particularly in the East, as well as to a potential radicalisation of Islamic groups. Both point to actor transformation, or rather PSM's contribution to the prevention of pejorative actor transformation. It offered a political and secular channel for Muslim stakeholders to engage with each other outside the mosque (Interview 13), and to engage with the

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conflict stakeholders without taking up arms themselves.[446] The latter effect has particular relevance since the argument against, or the threat of, militarisation has been made repeatedly by Muslim political leaders in their claim for independent representation at the negotiation table and in their criticism of using the bilateral ceasefire agreement as the starting point for the peace talks.[447]

With regards to the religious aspect, the Muslim peace secretariat had the potential to engage the different religious communities as well as diverse viewpoints within the Muslim community on the ground level. Some observers pointed out that there could have been more activities since the secretariat "gained acceptance, they even wanted intervention and support where we were not prepared" (Interview 8, 17, 18). While there are other bodies on the national level with the ability to engage the Muslim community such as the Muslim Council of Sri Lanka, the regional-level structures were unique in the Sri Lankan context (Interview 8, 18).

The downside of the emergence, or 'coming of age', of a stakeholder in the ethno-political conflict and peace process of Sri Lanka is that it contributes to the manifestation of the ethnic and racial aspect of this very conflict. Some observers considered the Muslim peace secretariat a successful model for intra-party consultation and consensus building that should serve as a model for similar structures serving the other stakeholders in the form of a Sinhalese and a Tamil peace secretariat (Interview 1, 14). Others, however, considered it a mistake to further the ethnic divide among the stakeholders and to advocate representation of interests based on identity traits rather than on commonalities among the stakeholders. The PSM in this thinking was a mistake since its purpose was to promote Muslim interests and not, for example, all minority interests (Interview 24). Since it lacked inter-party facilitation opportunities, it only furthered the ethnicisation of perspectives without building consensus among the communities.

It cannot be ruled out that the presentation of needs and interests along ethnic markers contributed to increasing confrontation among the stakeholders, or among the minority groups, depicted in figure 7.5. The feedback loop starts with the strengthening of the Muslim voice, shows the resulting ethnicisation of perspectives and further

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[446] The potential for a militarisation of Muslim communities in the East has been discussed repeatedly in the course of the conflict and during different periods of warfare (McGilvray & Raheem 2007, pp. 41-44).

[447] This points to the common dilemma of rewarding militancy when engaging exclusively with armed groups in negotiations and excluding other non-armed stakeholders.

marginalisation of minorities, which in turn leads to a perceived need for a stronger Muslim representation.

Marginalisation of minorities / further confrontation = structure transformation

Strengthening of Muslim voice through intra-party consensus building = actor transformation

Ethnicisation of perspectives due to lack of inter-party facilitation = issue transformation
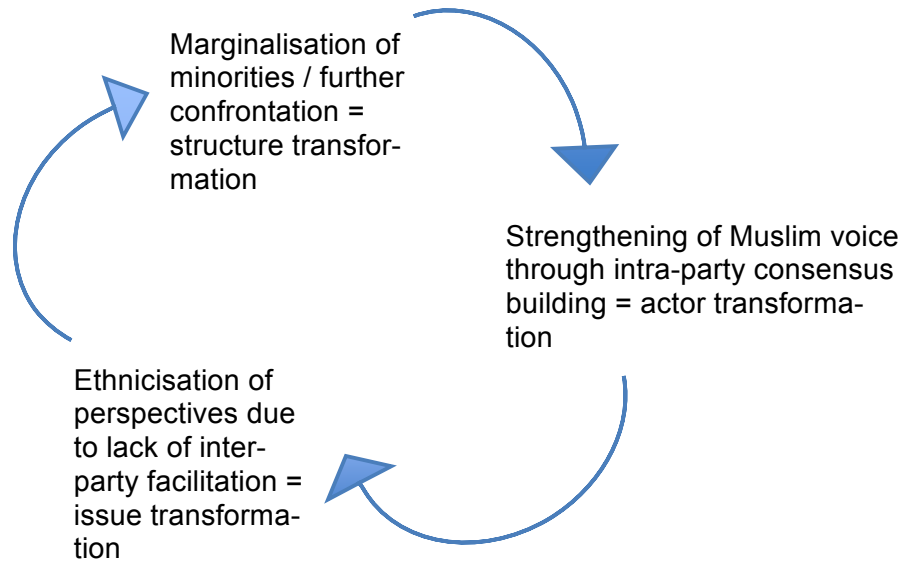
Figure 7.5: Systemic feedback between types of conflict transformation based on PSM's strengthening of a Muslim voice

Such a potential unintended effect on the overall conflict system raises questions for the future establishment and mandate of such support structures and calls for balancing activities to increase the organisation's potential as a bridge-builder between the stakeholders.

Altogether, the discussion of the transformative contributions of the PSM shows the well-intended efforts of those involved in establishing the secretariat. At the same time, it shows the difficulties in mandating a politically aligned support structure to step outside the shadows of its principals and engage, or even challenge, the intricate power relationships on which it is built. The next section discusses the complicated interactions of the secretariat in more detail.

7.4 Playing Safe among the 'Big Shots' – Interactions of PSM

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the two main Muslim political party leaders who established the PSM were in political competition and looked back at a difficult relationship (Interview 1, 15). This difficult arrangement resulted from external conditionality: in order to obtain support from donors and the international community, at least two parties were to be represented (Interview 18).[448] In addition, earlier efforts of the SLMC to establish a Muslim resource centre on its own had faltered and created openness for a different approach in order to support the SLMC party leader in his participation in the peace talks on behalf of the government delegation.

Thus, within the context of the One-Text-Initiative, careful deliberations began to establish a good rapport between the party representatives, and the convenor of the dialogue group on Muslim concerns was designated to be secretary general of the nascent organisation. This selection took into consideration his relationships with the Muslim political parties and the then prime minister's administration and the president (Interview 17). Building on his even-handed reputation and credibility among all stakeholders, he invited the NUA to join an independent, non-partisan and inclusive peace secretariat (Interview 11, 15; Farook 2009, p.212). This coalition, however, was a difficult one and led to a complicated relationship with the government, since the political strategies of both PSM members differed and they took turns being in opposition and changing their alliances (Interview 15).

At the same time, the two political principals had an understanding not to politicise the structure and to refrain from political use of the secretariat (Interview 8, 18). This agreement was effective but left the PSM nevertheless in limbo with a view to political statements and activities, which could be seen as critical of the government position (Interview 19). The lack of guidance and the secretariat's strategies of dealing with it are discussed in more detail in section 7.5.

The PSM was also left in limbo regarding a wider participation of Muslim actors beyond the two political parties, as expressed in the mandate. There was an internal understanding that all Muslim voices should be brought together to represent the

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[448] According to one source, SCOPP had requested a broader representation but was convinced by third-party actors to reduce their expectations.

common concerns in the peace process and that the bilateral agreement was a starting point only (Interview 15). The governance structure of the secretariat, however, was never widened beyond the two parties, leaving out several other Muslim political actors and civil society activists. The party-aligned board representatives, entertaining a high level of interaction with their respective principals, did not encourage the PSM staff to take further action despite the agreed mandate. This led to constant criticism from some of the excluded actors who wished for deeper involvement beyond participation in PSM workshops and meetings.[449]

Interviewees gave different explanations about why this involvement never took place. While some felt that there was initially a lack of communication explaining the bilateral initiative and the future plans for expansion, which upset the other Muslim actors, others thought that there was never a genuine intention for expansion in the first place. Requests of other Muslim political parties to become board members when joining the activities of the PSM were refused by the SLMC and NUA. This was explained by political competition and the history of Muslim political parties being mostly breakaways from the SLMC, while the latter still claimed that it represented 70% of the Muslim population. In addition, Muslim members of Parliament from mainstream parties such as the SLFP asked for official representation (Interview 15, 17; Farook 2009).[450] The SLMC's role as representative of Muslim interests was questioned in spite of the party's predominance in the electorate (McGilvray & Raheem 2007, p.38).[451]

The strained intra-community relationships and the lack of inclusion not only complicated PSM's interactions but also weakened the Muslim community at large. While

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[449] This criticism was carried forward by third-party actors, international resource persons and some of the donors of PSM, which eventually considered a funding stop for this reason (Interview 1, author's observations; Farook 2009, pp. 215-219).

[450] The relationships between these actors had been affected by earlier efforts of the SLMC to be recognised as the 'sole representative' of the Muslim communities, similar to the LTTE's status. Reportedly, SLMC leader Hakeem had written to LTTE leader Prabhakaran in this regard prior to the signing of the CFA (Farook 2009, p.185). Hakeem also met with Prabhakaran on his own in April 2002 in Kilinochchi despite requests of a group of 'Muslim Parliamentarians for Peace' to be included. The group's disgruntlement was increased when Hakeem after the meeting released a joint statement with the LTTE without consultation of the group that asked for stronger representation of southern and northern Muslims rather than Hakeem's focus on the East (Interview 15; Farook 2009). The parliamentarian's group eventually dissolved.

[451] Hakeem would later be part of the government's negotiating team but the question of his role remained opaque, given reported earlier agreements between him and the LTTE that he would represent the Muslim community (Gooneratne 2007, p.55).

both the government and LTTE continuously sidelined the community, some note that, "the lack of a united [Muslim] front has been used by many in the negotiations to downplay Muslim demands for a separate delegation. It has certainly weakened the Muslims' case for more political recognition" (International Crisis Group 2007, p.11; Interview 1, 17, 19).

Despite this criticism, the level of interaction with Muslim actors on the other tracks should be considered as on a medium level and thus stronger than those of SCOPP with its constituency. In addition, the level of interaction on Track 3 among Muslim actors is considered high, the level of interaction with Sinhalese and Tamil grassroots constituencies medium. This is thanks to the regional office structure that supported and supplemented the peace secretariat's national-level activities.

Concerning PSM's outreach to actors outside the Muslim communities, its main counterparts were to be found among the other peace secretariats and their respective counterparts, international and domestic third-party actors such as the One-Text-Initiative and the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies that assisted its establishment, the Norwegian facilitator and the SLMM, and other members of the international community (PSM 2004).

In this context, it should be noted again that the secretariat's interactions were initially dominated by dealing with the tsunami and its aftermath for the affected Muslim population. While PSM later turned its attention to other matters, the initial phase of establishing working relations and structures was certainly overshadowed by the tsunami disaster. This could explain the lack of formal arrangements for regular interaction between the peace secretariats. The interaction level with both peace secretariats is considered weak.

PSM and SCOPP mostly met through the respective sub-committee at the One-Text-Initiative, which had a strong connection with the PSM but much less interactions with the other peace secretariats. Apart from these meetings, PSM entertained mainly informal and ad hoc communication with SCOPP, often based on personal contacts (Interview 13, 15, 17, 18, 30).

Again, the relationship of PSM with its counterparts was informed by the principals' engagement with the other political stakeholders. The initial position of the government was that the SLMC leader as a party representative was part of the government delegation and did not represent Muslim views independently. The government's practice of nominating one member of its delegation with a Muslim background and thus 'representing' the community continued with the CFA talks in Geneva

in February 2006. There it was NUA leader Ferial Ashraff, then a cabinet minister and government coalition partner. In the government's view this was sufficient to represent legitimate Muslim concerns (Interview 7; Gooneratne 2007, p.55). Thus, there was a notion that a separate peace secretariat outside of SCOPP was de facto unnecessary (Interview 8, 30).

This perspective later changed when during 2006 SCOPP Deputy SG Kethesh Loganathan brought his personal commitment to Muslim minority representation to work and developed more formal links with the PSM in local initiatives and through participation in workshops and discussions at the national level (Interview 13). Later on, the PSM was invited to attend weekly CFA meetings at SCOPP (Interview 8). While some Muslim actors considered this development a chance to take minority concerns forward, others were more cautious and feared to strengthen the government's position, or to be subjugated. The increasingly volatile situation in the East and the shrinking space for political dissent added to the PSM's uneasy relationship with SCOPP.

Similarly, the interactions with the LTTE peace secretariat were strained. The initial meeting between Prabhakaran and Hakeem did not see a follow up and the Muslim politicians found it difficult to gain access to the LTTE. Thus, attempts to improve the Muslim-LTTE relationship at the top level and to present Muslim concerns independently before and during the time of the peace talks failed, since significant promises by the LTTE to cater to Muslim grievances and needs in the LTTE-controlled areas were not kept (Mohideen 2006; International Crisis Group 2007).[452] In addition, the LTTE was seen as focussing on the international and Track 1 level only, having no interest in Track 2 dialogue (Interview 13, 18).

Thus, Muslim observers saw no way of constructive engagement with the LTTE peace secretariat (Interview 8, 15). A cordial meeting with the LTTE peace secretariat in Colombo in February 2005 did not see a continuation, since the LTTE stopped the direct engagement and the PSM failed to arrange for a visit in return. Several efforts

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[452] At the second round of peace talks in Thailand, the LTTE announced that it would return land and property to Muslim owners in the North and East, albeit without implementing the decision (Mohideen 2006). Later efforts in 2003 to improve relationships on a regional level and with civil society engagement led to the establishment of zonal committees between the LTTE and Muslims in the Eastern Province (McGilvray & Raheem 2007; Mohideen 2006).

to make contact in writing and through contact persons were turned down using security reasons as an excuse (Interview 17).[453]

The difficult interaction with the LTTE was based on its lack of recognition of Muslim concerns and, more importantly, the refusal of an independent representation at peace talks. PSM considered its agreement to Muslim representation during the fourth round of peace talks, and later again during the first round of talks in Geneva in 2006 (Liyanage 2008), as a tactic to delay the representation, as it allegedly "did not want to take Muslims on board before they had everything sorted out, that's why they also did not want to meet PSM" (Interview 17).

Adding to the rejection and feeling of marginalisation among the Muslim actors was the notion that the Norwegian facilitators did not want to 'rock the boat' once an agreement for talks between the warring conflict parties was reached (Interview 7).[454] While some observers saw the facilitators as being part of a 'conspiracy' against the Muslim stakeholder (and the funding for the PSM as a strategy of containment to silence further requests for equal representation), others recognised the difficulty of 'outsiders' understanding the Muslim position, or that of maintaining momentum between the two protagonists while introducing a third stakeholder to the table, or to an 'additional table' in a more differentiated negotiation arrangement (Interview 1, 10, 13, 18, 28, 33).[455]

In sum, the PSM entertained an ambivalent relationship with the Norwegian facilitators, on the one hand deeply depending on their support and on the other hand being

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[453] One observer noted that the PSM's leaking of information about one unofficial meeting between the two peace secretariats had angered the LTTE, which felt that it could not trust the Muslim counterparts. This allegation was founded in a deeper lack of trust between both sides (Interview 11).

[454] This argument was often explained by the incident prior to the CFA signature where the SLMC leader was reportedly shown a draft of the CFA but was told that his concerns could not be incorporated since the government and the LTTE had already agreed on the draft. Allegedly the prime minister intervened and some of the concerns were considered (Interview 17; Faaiz 2009, pp.114-115).

[455] Others added that fingers should also be pointed at the Muslim communities themselves, since there was not sufficient public interest among them outside the established Track 2 and 1.5-dialogue setting of the One-Text-Initiative, thus dismissing the requests as the marginal agenda of a selected few who neither reached out sufficiently to their own constituency nor to the other stakeholders (Interview 13, 15). Accordingly, an ICG report summarises that "the Muslim community failed to make more headway in asserting its rights during the peace process largely because both the government and the LTTE viewed its concerns as a side-issue. But the case for an independent delegation was also undermined by disputes among Muslim political leaders that undermined their ability to present a strong and united case to the two main parties" (ICG 2007 p.11).

dissatisfied with the facilitators' role with regards to their own agenda. Other than the government and the LTTE secretariats, PSM's interaction with the facilitator was on a medium level. Given the later establishment and lack of involvement in the peace talks, the quality of the relationship was also different.

The interaction with other donors and members of the international community was of medium level as well. Dominated by donor-recipient relationships, the peace secretariat entertained regular contact with several representatives of bilateral and multilateral donors, often in connection with the One-Text-Initiative.

Figure 7.6 summarises the interactions of the PSM. Varying from the visualisations of the other secretariats' interactions, the unofficial channel of the One-Text-Initiative played a strong role in facilitating the inter-party interactions of the PSM. Also different from the other scenarios was the presence of the regional offices that directly linked the secretariat to Track 3 and to the grassroots level of the Tamil and Sinhalese constituencies.
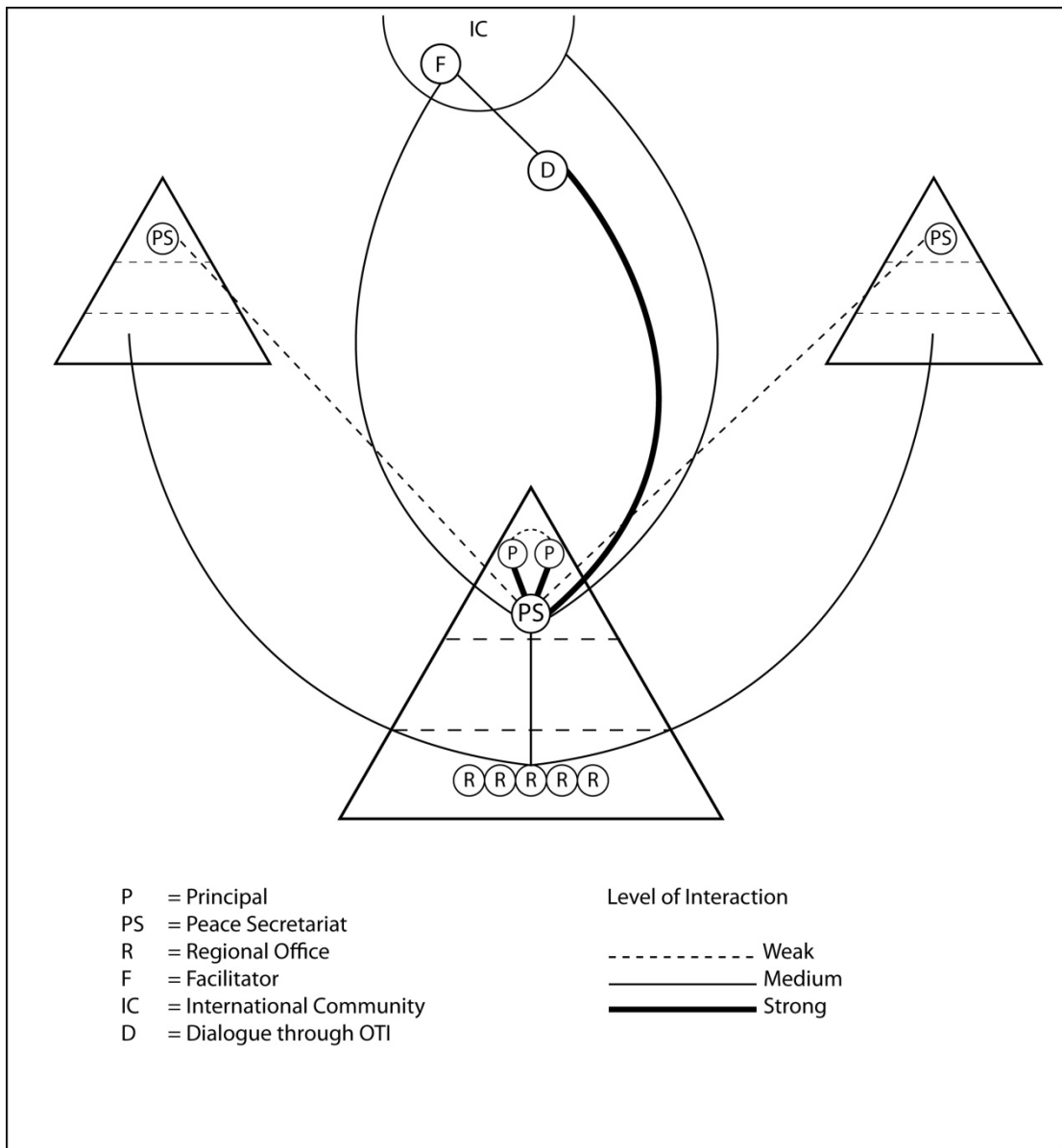
Figure 7.6: Interactions of PSM

The figure, however, does not show the peculiarity of the two principals who had their representatives on the Board of PSM overseeing the secretary general's and the staff's work.

In order to understand the ambiguity of the PSM towards the crucial question of encouraging deeper relationships with other Muslim stakeholders, a look behind the scenes and inside the organisation of the PSM is helpful. The following section discusses aspects of organisational identity and agency of the peace secretariat.

7.5 'Between Two Stools', at Least — PSM's Agency and Identity

Given the special arrangement between the two political parties establishing and guiding the peace secretariat, it differed from its counterparts in terms of governance and organisational structure. Most observers acknowledged the intricate relationships between the political parties and the resulting difficulties of the PSM, which essentially found itself 'between two stools' – serving its formal mandate and objectives to provide an inclusive platform for all Muslim stakeholders and serving the implicit but not-so-hidden agenda of its principals to use the secretariat for its own purposes. A closer look at the organisational structure and identity of the PSM complements this picture and adds a new dimension: the interests of the agent PSM, or its key staff.

While the external actors involved in the establishment of the PSM attempted to ensure that the mandate would be followed and identified a secretary general who would be seen as impartial and inclusive, the two political principals maintained a close political grip on the secretariat through their steering board representatives. At the same time, however, the involvement of the political principals was reduced to representation and general strategic direction without going into detail on the agent's performance. It appears from the interviews that they often were not briefed in depth about outcomes of the PSM work, nor did they get involved in organisational questions regarding the secretariat or show particular efforts in controlling the organisation's performance. While some observers interpreted this lacuna as a lack of political will to intervene, others also considered a lack of expertise in managing and overseeing the organisation and ensuring its competence (Interview 10, 15, 18, 19, 30). Instead of stronger involvement, the principals largely delegated the task of 'running' the PSM to their respective political party representatives who formed the Board of Directors.

The bipartisan approach and the relative distance between principal and agent was reflected in the organisational structure of the peace secretariat, which was overseen by a board of directors and national steering committee, and managed by an executive committee. The latter consisted of a secretary general and four directors for human relations, planning and development, communications and media, and finance and administration.

To make matters more complex, some of the latter management positions were initially held by board members, who thus found themselves in a double role, basically

overseeing and steering their own work.[456] Staff recruitment to these positions happened in consensus between the two stakeholder parties and with a view to balanced representation. Nevertheless, the secretariat was created to be an "independent body" (PSM 2004 Annexure A, p.2) and particular efforts went into recruiting an impartial person as secretary general who would be acceptable to all Muslim communities and respectabed by other communities (Interview 15).

Secretary General Javid Yusuf represented such a figure with his background as a diplomat and an attorney-at-law and close relations to the then president. His profile lent the secretariat a diplomatic stature and impartiality since he was neither aligned with the SLMC nor NUA. In light of internal problems and frustrations over PSM's failure to build a common Muslim platform beyond the two political parties SLMC and NUA, he eventually resigned in mid-2006 (Farook 2009; McGilvray & Raheem 2007, p.31[457]). His successor, an influential political activist and researcher from the eastern Muslim community, M.I.M. Mohideen, left for similar reasons (Interview 1, 13, 15, 19; author's observations; Farook 2009, p.222).[458] Leaving the details aside, the relevant finding for this research is the continuously difficult search for common ground even within the organisation.

The double role of the board directors implied that most oversight and management positions were part-time occupations while the respective persons had additional responsibilities outside the PSM. Forming an organisational identity was thus not easy. It was further complicated by the unique regional structure that complemented the national secretariat. These five regional offices were located in areas of significant Muslim populations and interests. Three regional offices were located in the east (Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara), two along the western coast (Puttalam and Colombo), one on the southern coast (Galle), and one in the centre (Kandy). This provided the Muslim communities with an infrastructure to respond to local tensions, mitigate conflict, support community conciliation efforts, and communicate between

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[456] While this arrangement was repeatedly criticised and suggestions for changes were offered from different third-party actors and donor representatives, the organisational structure remained unchanged for a long time. Two secretary generals of the PSM named the concerns related to this arrangement as reasons for their resignation, or ending of contract Farook 2009).

[457] The latter refer to a later date in 2007 when Yusuf resigned from his position as board member.

[458] Interviewees expressed controversy regarding the conditions of departure of the second secretary general (see also Farook 2009; Sunday Times 2009a, 2009b). In 2008 another former diplomat, Nagoorpitchai Sikkander, took over the post of director general.

Colombo and the periphery (International Crisis Group 2007, p.11).[459] There was notably no representation in the North.[460]

While thus covering the largest part of Muslim habitats, the diversity among the regional offices was significant and building a shared understanding among them incorporated the central challenge of the PSM into its organisational structure. Observers, however, felt that the consensus-building approach of the PSM's function as platform for its constituency was not appropriate to deal with management issues within the organisation (Interview 1, 19).

Questions regarding overall organisational culture and identity mostly refer to capacity-building activities. The training of all staff was a continuous concern in order to maintain the quality of work despite high staff turnover at the regional level. In addition, the facilitation role required particular skills and most staff did not have experience, even if otherwise qualified and endowed with local leadership roles and good networks (Interview 13, 28). For other activities, e.g., publications and national workshops, the secretariat used the capacities of Muslim researchers and academics working on the issues. Nevertheless, training needs were highlighted with regards to staff at the national level as well. Reportedly, training for national-level staff was particularly relevant given the high level of political exposure.

It was noted that staff experienced difficulties in finding their own role and voice in the micro-political environment of the two-party arrangement, as well as in the macro-political context that did not encourage taking political positions. This was even more problematic since the Muslim community at large was forced to develop its own position in a situation of political turmoil and internal power struggle after the death of political leader Ashraff in 2000 (Interview 13, 19). These descriptions of former staff and observers point to a high level of insecurity and uncertainty.

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[459] Their task was to implement activities planned at the national level, to collect information at the local level relevant for national-level policy issues, and to facilitate dialogue and problem solving at the community level (Interview 8, 18).

[460] In light of the lack of alternative voices and with a view to the lack of presence in the North and representation of northern Muslims, the then minister of Resettlement and Disaster Relief established an additional peace secretariat in the North in August 2007 and thus undermined the efforts of the PSM (Farook 2009, pp.223-224). According to observers, this secretariat's activities were unclear and it was seen as an expression of party rivalries between the SLMC and another renegade political party established in 2008, the All Ceylon Muslim Congress (ACMC). It nevertheless led to confusion since it insisted on meeting international visitors and had the support of the government (Interview 28).

The lack of internal rules and regulations, e.g., how to represent the PSM, left its staff in limbo when its own views did not correspond with those of the political principals. At the same time, the lack of internal regulations led to difficulties with regards to accountability of the organisation and further frustration among its stakeholders who felt misrepresented and did not trust the intentions of the secretariat (Interview 13, 15, 17, 19).

Bringing these different aspects together, it appears that the secretariat did not develop its own organisational identity but rather consisted of identity fragments of its different principals, stakeholders and managing staff. Given the critical and at times contradictory accounts of many interviewees and the silence of a large portion of interviewees who felt that they could not comment at all, it remains difficult to establish the agency of the secretariat, or to explain it. While surely having the potential to play a relevant role in the peace process and during the years of war, the secretariat did not manage to fill its foreseen mandate. The only way of agency left to the secretary generals who wanted to achieve more was to leave the organisation.

Was it a lack of political will, flawed recruitment and management decisions, the lack of resources and skilled staff, the difficult timing of the secretariat's establishment, or the political context altogether? Or was it a mix of all these factors? Given the uncertainty and insecurity of the political context, one also needs to consider if a differently governed and managed secretariat could have achieved more.

The interview findings show that the agency of the secretariat and its eager staff could not be strengthened through external assistance. The overall strong influence of its establishing supporters and donors, particularly the One-Text-Initiative, was expressed in many of the details of the organisation's internal life. This support helped the secretariat on the one hand to develop a presence and unique role in its appearance to outsiders but on the other hand left a vacuum regarding internal workings of the secretariat and strengthening its contribution beyond the matter of representation. While crucial concerns of the Muslim communities were addressed in the secretariat's seminars and publications, the secretariat did not manage to carry these forward to the political decision makers and make Muslim voices sufficiently heard. Whereas capacity building and external expertise were funded and provided by donors and third-party supporters, this assistance (and the later criticism and restraint) did not add up (and were partly resisted), and thus did not succeed in supporting the secretariat to become a more effective agent.

The focus on presentation was expressed to a certain extent in the physical presence of the peace secretariat: the initial efforts of establishing a secretariat took place in the prime minister's office. The internationally funded PSM moved to a representative building next door to the One-Text-Initiative, which it initially could hardly fill with life given its few national staff and limited operational capacities. When funding became scarce (for both OTI and the PSM), the secretariat moved to another neighbourhood and later shared more modest office space with another project of the donor funding the regional offices.

This symbolic interpretation of the physical presentation points to the discussion of the symbolism and meaning of the Peace Secretariat for Muslims: what did it stand for beyond its actual operative functions?

7.6   Milestone or 'Much Ado About Nothing'? Symbolism of the Peace Secretariat for Muslims

The very different views of the interviewees regarding the Peace Secretariat for Muslims can be best summarised in the title of this section.

For one group, the secretariat represented a milestone in the Muslim communities' efforts to make their voice heard as a minority group in the political process. The PSM's contribution to this quest went (and still goes) far beyond the peace process and the idea to use the secretariat as a stepping stone towards an independent delegation to the peace talks. According to these views, the very existence of the PSM led to an unprecedented level of political recognition that cannot be taken away from the Muslim political stakeholders. It brought the Muslim communities together and created a sense of unity among them. The PSM thus contributed to and stands for social and political change.

The second group understood the concern for political recognition and thus agreed with the view that the PSM played a significant role in the peace process. At the same time, this perspective reduced the PSM's relevance to representing just this quest for recognition without true transformation. They saw the use of international experts in seminars, the establishment of offices and networks and the secretariat altogether solely as efforts to symbolise the presence of the Muslim stakeholder, while failing to truly change the political scene in Sri Lanka or help address minority issues more successfully in the context of majoritarian politics. Rather than creating true unity among the Muslim actors, it was a 'negative' unity built on the fear of losing ground in the political struggle in Colombo, as well as at times on the existential fears of the

Muslim communities in the war zone (Interview 9). In addition, rather than changing Sri Lankan politics by, for example, building a platform with Tamil actors that felt not represented by the LTTE, the secretariat with its ethnicity-focused mandate contributed to perpetuating the divide among the different ethnic minority groups (Interview 9). From this perspective, Muslim concerns remained marginalised and the secretariat has, despite creating some level of excitement and fomenting competition among political actors, not changed the overall political scenario.

At the time of writing in early 2012, the peace secretariat carries on its activities with a slightly adjusted mandate. While now calling its website Peace Muslims, the organisation after the restrategising process still refers to itself as the peace secretariat, although "the time of the peace secretariat is over" and despite the realisation that the old name would hinder acceptance by other political parties (Interview 13, 17).

The old issues, concerns and fears, for example concerning land, language, minority rights and constitutional reform, are still very relevant to the Muslim communities and thus a platform for further consensus building appears necessary. How to do this in a different way and with more inclusivity remains an open question. Some observers pointed to a depoliticisation of agency, to more inclusive arrangements among the principals, to retreating to civil society and Track 2. Some also pointed to a new generation of political leaders or politically thinking civil society leaders.

7.7   The Agency of PSM in a Nutshell

The International Crisis Group summed up the situation of the PSM with the following words that would also suit as a summary of this chapter. Its report noted in 2007 that,

> one major breakthrough for the Muslim community during the peace process was the creation of a Muslim Peace Secretariat. Both the government and the LTTE established similar institutions to take the lead in negotiations. Their institutions are now largely moribund, with little prospect of new talks in the near future. The Muslim Peace Secretariat, however, has played a useful role in developing political ideas among community activists and providing much needed infrastructure for Muslim approaches to the conflict, but it has also been beset by internal differences and party politics and has found it difficult to act as a unifying body (ICG 2007, p.11).

Given the later start and the role of its principals in the peace process, the PSM received a mandate and carried out operative functions different from those of its counterparts. It was also influenced more by third-party actors, which assisted its establishment, helped frame its mandate and funded its work.

Similar to the other two secretariats, it focused on communication and capacity building. Unlike the others, it had a much stronger role in intra-party consultation. Similar to the other two secretariats, its transformative contributions were mostly in the area of actor and issue transformation, but it had less impact on personal and more impact on structure transformations than the other two. These differences can be explained by the different role and design of the secretariat, which at the same time contributed to its internal difficulties.

The PSM was the only secretariat that embraced the diversity of its constituency by engaging more than one political actor as its principal, thus making its organisation and guidance more complicated. Due to its political alignment, dissent between principals and their representatives within the secretariat appeared not to occur, but the disapproval and change of the secretary generals pointed to dissent between the management and the principals.

Moreover, it should also be noted that it was the only secretariat that established a substantial regional structure, thus lending more grounding and relevance to its constituency. This is particularly relevant since it exposed the PSM to another level of insecurity: the secretariat not only faced political uncertainty and decreasing space for dissent in Colombo but also had to confront a high level of insecurity in the LTTE-controlled areas before and after their 'liberation' by government troops.

In this difficult political and security context, the PSM contributed to conflict transformation through its various functions addressing issues, actors and structure of the violent conflict. It also contributed to personal transformations, thus laying the foundation for potential further transformational change in society and polity. Some observers saw the secretariat as a change agent for its contribution to making the community's position and need for representation known; others commended the work of some of the regional offices.

In hindsight, some interviewees felt that the Muslim actors placed their stakes too high with the request for equal representation in the peace talks and that they should have asked for less in order to get involved at all. Perhaps then they could have made use of their unique position: "we were not part of the violent conflict but we are part of the

solution" (Interview 8, 17). Thus, once again the peace secretariat mirrors the situation of its principals and their constituency.

Chapter 8 Summary of the Empirical Findings: Essential Transformative Contributions with Further Potential

After three detailed portraits of the three peace secretariats and the analysis of their various contributions to conflict transformation, it appears difficult to bring the findings together, and many interviewees pointed out that the peace secretariats did not have much, or even anything, in common. Any comparison would not lead to relevant findings since they were established at different times under different conditions, by different kinds of actors, and had different functions and purposes. They were indeed very different, but that does not affect the relevance of the findings.

This chapter will argue that despite the incomparability between the three organisations and their origins, there are similarities in their contributions to conflict transformation and overall role in the peace process. These similarities can be explained by the secretariats' agency, emergence and limitations.

In developing this argument, the chapter summarises the three previous chapters and prepares the ground for answering the research questions: what is the contribution of peace secretariats in the peace process in general and to conflict transformation in particular? How can their contributions and possible limitations be explained?

It will be argued that the three secretariats provided essential contributions to the peace negotiations, the peace process and to conflict transformation, while at the same time displaying a potential for further contributions if some of their limitations were addressed. In some situations, the secretariats could be regarded as change agents.

The chapter starts with a discussion of the functions and mandates in relation to their principals' strategies; it then turns to the contributions to conflict transformation and the peace process. The third and the fourth sections summarise the explanations for these findings found in the rules for interaction of the secretariats and the identity of the organisations. The fifth section reflects on some of the findings and discusses options of dealing with the peace secretariat's situation and of increasing their agency. Finally, the chapter is summarised in the sixth section.

8.1 Implementation of Mandates and Other Purposes

The three peace secretariats differed in their mandates and in the functions assigned to them, although the assigned formal positions as secretariats for the negotiating parties, or an aspiring future negotiation party, are identical. While SCOPP and the LTTE peace secretariat focused strongly on their secretarial and logistical functions, the Muslim peace secretariat did not have this function. Whereas SCOPP and the LTTE peace secretariat did not engage significantly in intra-party consultation, this was the most significant function of the PSM. At the same time, all three were active in capacity building and communication, in particular towards international audiences, highlighting this function beyond its anticipated relevance.[461] With a view to the capacity building and advisory functions, it appears notable that the focus was often on skills related to conflict resolution and negotiations or on content and issues related to the peace negotiations. Strategic analysis and planning as well as assessment of the peace process appeared less prominent. All three secretariats were not significantly active in inter-party facilitation.

The latter is of particular interest given the view that the peace secretariats supported the peace talks between the conflict parties. Inter-party dialogue and bridge building played a less relevant role in the interviewees' assessment than assumed by the author. This can be explained by the strong dependence of the peace talks on Track 1, the high volatility of the peace process, the asymmetry between the conflict parties, and the political tensions in the South that did not invite political exposure. The relatively successful negotiations on the tsunami-relief mechanism conducted by the peace secretariats, however, indicate that they could have had a more active, independent role in negotiations.

Less surprising is the lack of priority for intra-party consensus building at SCOPP and the LTTE peace secretariat. This can be explained by the strategies that both parties adopted to deal with dissent within their constituencies: while the parties in the South practiced 'ethnic outbidding' (Bush 2003; DeVotta 2002), the LTTE resorted to what could be called 'violence outbidding' (Lilja 2010; Ropers 2010). While consensus

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[461] In chapter 2, the functions of peace secretariats were developed on the basis of literature findings, and consultation and communication were summarised as one function, assuming it referred mostly to domestic and intra-party audiences. The findings for the three peace secretariats in Sri Lanka invite further distinction between intra-party consultation, domestic communication and communication with the international community. This will be highlighted in chapter 9.

building was one of the main purposes of the PSM, it was de facto obstructed by the exclusive membership and lack of inclusiveness in the PSM structure itself.

According to the views of the interviewees, all peace secretariats' functions showed varying significance over time. While SCOPP's mandate was formally adjusted with each change of principal, the LTTE peace secretariat remained unchanged. The PSM's mandate and objectives remained largely unchanged as well, despite a revision of strategy. Besides the manifestation of the mandates on websites or other formal documents, there appeared to be a more informal form of guidance for the peace secretariats, which led to the changing significance of operative functions. For none of the peace secretariats, however, was it very clear how this guidance was given and if the principals engaged in particular forms of strategy formulation.[462]

Besides the operative functions, the peace secretariats fulfilled another purpose that can be seen in conjunction with their activities but went beyond them and became manifest through their mere existence. All three secretariats remained active during the time of increasing tensions and also after the official end of the peace process when the ceasefire agreement was abrogated. Towards the end, however, neither SCOPP nor the LTTE structure was seen as a peace secretariat but rather as 'war secretariats'.

In general, SCOPP represented the government's commitment to peace, the LTTE peace secretariat symbolised the administrative and political capacities of the LTTE's state-formation project, and the Peace Secretariat for the Muslims stood for the aspiration of an independent representation at future peace talks and signalled the preparedness of the Muslim stakeholders to be part of the peace process. In the case of the LTTE and the Muslim secretariats, they also displayed their stakeholders' legitimacy and recognition, particularly with a view to the international community. This explains the continuation of the PSM and also resonates with the closure of SCOPP: officially there was no further recognition of the government's endeavours to achieve peace, despite former staff realising a potential role for the secretariat in the post-war situation.

Thus, each peace secretariat stood for a symbolic meaning more or less intentionally designed by their principals. While SCOPP's symbolic meaning evolved first as a token for peace, and later for increasing hostility towards international involvement and

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[462] An exception is the period of SCOPP under SG Dhanapala. Interviewees referred to regular strategy meetings, but otherwise the direction for the secretariats appears to have been given in a more ad hoc, implicit manner.

for war strategy, the LTTE' peace secretariat was from the start intended as an intermediary to the international community. In addition, it can be assumed that the LTTE intended it to serve as an example of the capacity of the political wing and its aspired nascent statehood.

As the Muslim peace secretariat shows in particular, the peace secretariats not only signified the agenda of the conflict parties but also represented the conflict parties' position towards the peace process. Just as the Muslim parties could not find a unified role in the peace process, their secretariat failed to a large extent in finding its role and voice – but continues to search for it. The LTTE's peace secretariat head remained until the end of the war at the side his leadership in order to provide access to the international community, but his contacts could neither save him personally nor change the course of the war. Like the rest of the formerly LTTE-controlled area, the former peace secretariat office is now under military occupation by the government. And finally, SCOPP was closed shortly after the war "in recognition of the new situation in the country. … Sri Lanka is at peace", as its final publication announced (SCOPP 2009, p.1).

In this sense, the peace secretariats served as mirrors of their conflict parties rather than transformation agents of themselves or of the peace process altogether.

Nevertheless many interviewees highlighted the overall significance of the peace secretariats and their unique contributions. The following section discusses what these contributions entailed.

8.2   Contributions to the Peace Process and Conflict Transformation

As mentioned earlier, there is very little evidence of the transformative results of the peace secretariats' activities, and many interviewees found it difficult to reflect on these. In light of the military end of the peace process, earlier transformative efforts were often considered obsolete; there appeared (wrongfully) to be no further demand for negotiation skills or expertise on power-sharing. In addition, SCOPP's activities in particular often required the collaboration with other government authorities, and the implementation of suggestions was beyond SCOPP's control.

Nevertheless, most interviewees – independent of their level of involvement with the secretariats – regarded the contributions of the secretariats and their functions as es-

sential for the negotiations and the peace process. The following resumes the most relevant arguments.

The peace secretariats in themselves presented unique efforts to improve the conflict parties' performance in the peace process and negotiations. In the case of the government, earlier negotiations were described as often being illprepared or based on ad hoc agendas. Reportedly, there existed no archive of the minutes and supporting documents of previous peace talks prior to the establishment of the secretariat. In addition, observers commended the influence of the peace secretariat on the monitoring of ceasefire violations and found a de-escalating effect in the civilian nature of SCOPP and its interaction with the military actors. Reportedly, SCOPP in the early stage of the peace process reduced the difficulty in handling data and thus contributed to a reduction of potentially escalatory effects in dealing with ceasefire violations.

In the case of the LTTE PS, it gave its government counterparts, the negotiators, Norwegian facilitators and international community access to the LTTE and thus presented an unparalleled opening of the LTTE to the world outside the LTTE-controlled areas, its alternative ideas and eventually its challenges for the authoritarian and secessionist LTTE ideology. It also contributed to capacity building and empowerment of the political wing within the organisation, which prior to the peace process did not exist in the same form.

In the case of the PSM, it not only represented a stepping stone towards an independent Muslim delegation to future peace talks but also demarcated the relevance of the Muslim communities as a political stakeholder in the ethno-political conflict in an unprecedented manner. As some observers argued, Muslim concerns and needs cannot be ignored anymore in authentic future political dialogue and peace processes. Thus, for both the LTTE as well as the Muslim communities the very existence of the peace secretariats marked a transformative moment in the stakeholder's development.

In addition, the peace secretariats could be seen as a long-term structural form of capacity building for all three stakeholders, since they made expertise and skills available to each stakeholder that previously were not accessible internally. Given the end of the peace process and the war, it remains to be seen if these resources will be made accessible in the future.

Besides the concrete outcomes of activities such as the coordination of ceasefire monitoring or supporting the logistical aspects of negotiation teams travelling and receiving international visitors, these efforts had more far-reaching transformative ef-

fects, e.g., on the context of the peace talks or the relationship between the conflict parties. In addition, functions such as capacity building and intra-party consultation affected actor, issue and structure transformations, albeit not always with lasting effects. This section will not summarise the manifold transformative effects discussed in the previous three chapters. Rather, it offers three observations that help qualify the findings of the research.

First, it needs to be noted that the research considered ameliorative as well as pejorative transformative effects, as the example of SCOPP's communication with the international community shows. While communication was seen as a highly significant function of SCOPP and had various transformative effects, it did not contribute to the peace process constructively. This assessment, however, depends on perspective: whereas some saw the overly critical publications as demonising the enemy, the international community and civil society organisations active in peacebuilding, others regarded the criticism as legitimate and necessary in order to counteract biases and allegations against the government. In order to understand the transformative contribution it is thus necessary to distinguish between the personal views of interviewees and an examination of transformative effects from a third-party perspective invested in the principles of non-violent conflict transformation.

Second, the level of significance of functions does not imply the same level of relevance for the promotion of the peace process and conflict transformation. For example, the relatively low significance of the facilitation function of the three secretariats meets with relevant transformative, although short-lived, effects in issue, personal, actor and structural changes. The highly significant secretarial services of the peace secretariats for their negotiation teams did not have transformative effects beyond the symbolic representation of a commitment to peace and readiness for talks. Thus, it appears difficult to deduct simple recommendations. For example, would a stronger emphasis of the inter-party facilitation function have led to more relevance of the peace secretariats in the peace process? Would it have contributed to changing the conflict dynamics? These questions cannot be answered from the interview material.

Third, many of the functions show transformative effects that counteracted others or had reinforcing effects with actions of other stakeholders in the overall conflict system. The previous chapters presented several examples based on interview findings but did not explore the entirety of systemic effects. Altogether, all peace secretariats show unintended pejorative transformative effects, for example on issues, actors or structure when seen in the context of the overall conflict system. While this phenomenon is common to most interactions in a conflict system, it reminds of the importance of a

systemic understanding of conflict transformation where changes are non-linear and not insulated from other processes.

Of particular relevance in this regard is the asymmetry between the conflict parties and the question of whether the peace secretariats contributed to structure transformation by levelling the playing field for the peace negotiations and by reducing asymmetry. While the establishment of one peace secretariat for each negotiating party signalled a certain level of parity, or in the case of the PSM the aspiration of parity, the conflict parties contested this notion for political and ideological reasons. From the LTTE's perspective, a comparison with the state structures was considered illogical since the organisation wanted to separate itself from the regime. At the same time, however, it aimed at recognition and legitimacy. From the government's perspective, the notion of equality of status was simply unacceptable, although it endured it quietly at the time of the 2002/2003 peace talks.

The explanation of a former SCOPP staff offered further insights into the early phase: parity of status was not a problem for the then administration. The real problem was that the Norwegian facilitators spoke too much of parity, which upset the southern nationalist constituency. The Norwegians, however, according to this viewpoint, felt that they had to convey the message of parity of status to the LTTE.

At the same time, the consideration of inter-party parity raised concerns regarding the intra-party power constellation. Both the LTTE among the Tamil stakeholders as well as the SLMC among the Muslim communities considered themselves as sole representatives of their constituency. While the LTTE referred to the ceasefire agreement and the following bilateral peace talks as recognising its status as sole representative and sought legitimacy for its claim from the negotiation design, other Tamil political actors were forced to either align themselves with the government or considered themselves as unrepresented. With a view to Muslim representation, the SLMC was denied the status of sole representative. The Muslim political parties involved in the PSM were forced to accept wider inclusion of Muslim actors at least formally in the mandate of the secretariat and consecutively neglected the full implementation of its mandate. From the perspective of other Muslim actors, the PSM sought representative status that was contested by other Muslim political actors and led to the establishment of an additional peace secretariat for the northern Muslims. From a systemic perspective, the question of parity of status and representation thus raised concerns, since the minority secretariats perpetuated the same exclusion and marginalisation among the minority communities that they criticised in the asymmetric power constellation between the majority and the minorities. Some observers also raised the ques-

tion of whether the PSM should have challenged the idea of ethnicity-based representation and established a platform for Muslim and Tamil actors outside LTTE representation.

Eventually, SCOPP became the secretariat of one dominant voice among the southern stakeholders and was seen by some as ethnically aligned. Being the government's secretariat and part of the public service, it had a mandate to represent and engage with all communities represented by the government. In the context of political competition and patronage, it became increasingly aligned with the interests of the dominant, nationalist political forces in government, and as a result was dubbed by some observers as the 'Sinhalese' peace secretariat in parallel to its Muslim and Tamil counterparts that likewise lacked representativeness and inclusion.

Interview findings reveal that staff from all peace secretariats at times would have liked to play different, more transformative roles. Their personal considerations, however, did not influence their views on the mandates or make them question it. As a result, the secretariat's transformative contribution depended on the intentions of the principal. If a transformative contribution was meant to take place, it had to be in line with the principal's agenda. If not, the potential for transformative contributions was not realised even if staff members would have liked to play a more pro-active role.

8.3   Dominance of Principals and Their Strategies

The previous chapters illuminate how the peace secretariats depended on their principals. In all cases, the principals decided on the establishment and mandated the organisation in accordance with overall strategy concerning the peace process. While the establishment of the PSM saw a stronger influence of third-party actors and donors who funded the establishment and activities of the secretariat, the LTTE's secretariat and SCOPP were reportedly established without significant external consultation and advice despite their reliance on external funding (which was restricted to the initial phase in SCOPP's case).

While the mandates of the LTTE PS and the PSM remained nearly unchanged, the mandate of the government's secretariat was adapted several times. The moments of adaptations occurred either at turning points in the conflict/peace process or due to

political changes (elections). In the case of SCOPP, regime change also led to changes in the secretariat's leadership.

The negotiation and conflict strategies of the principals informed the mandate of secretarial assistance. The secretariats were fitted into the landscape of other relevant actors and support structures of the principal, e.g., the prime minister's or president's office or the political wing of the LTTE. Despite their coordinating role stated in their mandates, the secretariats were rarely in the lead regarding the peace process but needed to consult with other entities that at times had more power within the conflict party.

The rules of engagement with these entities within the conflict party and with other stakeholders were hardly outlined explicitly to the secretariats but followed the overall strategy and codes of conduct of the principal. There also appeared to be no specific control mechanism or explicit form of supervision with which the principals ensured that the agencies delivered their agreed tasks without deviating from the mandate. Thus, the principals' views of the other conflict parties, for example, informed the relationships among the peace secretariats and left little room for independent engagement or personal relationships. This became particularly obvious when violence escalated and the stalemate prohibited the negotiating parties from engaging. A more relaxed situation was found during the early phase of the peace talks when delegation members at the talks entertained informal personal contacts and some of the peace secretariat staff interacted in a cordial manner. This, however, did not present an exception from the rule: the development of cordial relationships was part of the strategy of both the government and the LTTE.

Two aspects appeared to have informed the principals' strategies in particular: the dynamics of the peace process and the influence of other political interest groups on the principal's power. The dynamics of the peace talks (or their suspension), the level of hostilities and tension between the negotiating parties influenced the use of the peace secretariats as one of various instruments of engaging in the peace process. When the talks showed promising outcomes in the beginning, the peace secretariats were used differently than during later stages. When the peace process turned into war, the peace secretariats were not abandoned but their use was again adjusted towards the changed strategy of the principal. In the process of strategy formation and implementation, other political, security and economic interests and concerns had to be considered and at times reduced the potential utility of the peace secretariats.

Within the complex set of determinants, the peace and conflict-related interests of other political stakeholders within their respective constituencies were of particular importance to the principals. The concepts of ethnic and violent outbidding have been discussed earlier, and they represent different strategies of the principals to engage with their competitors. Thus, the nationalist Buddhist interest groups in the South were of particular relevance for SCOPP. Given the first principal's strategy of sidelining them, SCOPP saw no space for engaging the hardliners in the peace process. Later, the same hardliners became part of the government coalition and informed the conflict strategy of the successive principals significantly. For PSM, the uncertainty of changing political alliances was a specific concern. For the LTTE PS, this aspect had a more indirect influence: given the LTTE's general suppressive 'approach' towards dissent within the Tamil community, the peace secretariat did not have many options to engage the community but rather had to deal with the LTTE's negative reputation and criticism arising from the various forms of repression.

Altogether, the principals' use of the peace secretariats did not necessarily reflect the needs of the peace process; eventually they all considered their overall political survival or maintenance of power of highest priority. This became obvious in various instances where the peace secretariats were used in ways that did not correspond with strategising from a conflict transformation perspective but that did reflect other priorities of the principals. One example was the avoidance of using SCOPP to actively facilitate intra-party consultation in the early stages of the peace process, when the difficult co-habitation arrangement limited the administration's scope for political inclusivity. Rather, as some opined, the secretariat was used to reign in moderate opposition through representation in SCOPP staff. Another example was the use of the LTTE PS and its trips abroad for fundraising among diaspora members and perhaps other activities outside its mandate. While none of the interviewees mentioned these as a concern, there were allegations at that time that the LTTE misused the opportunities both for 'road shows' to visit the international diplomatic community (US Embassy 2005) and for organising fundraising events that involved key personnel of the political wing (Jayasekara 2007).

While the principals perhaps had a clear understanding of their priorities, the peace secretariat staff at times experienced the contradictions between those 'other interests' and their mandate as a dilemma. Notably, interviewees highlighted this aspect with reference to the head of the LTTE PS. He reportedly mentioned the particular challenge of representing the principal's standpoint while at the same time facing expectations of the international community to contribute to the transformation of this

very standpoint. Torn between different role expectations, it often remained unclear where the secretariat staff itself stood. This leads over to the question of identity and agency.

8.4   Secretarial Identities and Agency

Essentially, it did not matter which personal views the secretariat staff in any of the peace secretariats held. In some cases, it was not even clear to interviewees which views the key staff of the secretariats personally had on peace-related issues, and former staff were rather surprised to be asked about their personal or team collective potential to change the role of their secretariat and make pro-active suggestions to their principals concerning new activities or changes in strategy.

As the three cases of this research show, the secretariat staff acted in alignment with the principal's agenda. This was the case because either their individual preferences and their intentions with regards to conflict transformation matched those of the principals, or they did not influence the performance of the secretariat and its role in the peace process.

Interviewees saw the main explanation for the well-aligned performance of the secretariats in the particular traits, or organisational identity, of the secretariats. Mostly these related to the organisational context, e.g., the authoritarian character of the LTTE leadership, the political alignment and system of patronage in the public service and the political party system in Sri Lanka. The relevance of the organisational traits compared to the influence of its leaders was underlined by the observation that the secretariats showed relatively consistent organisational identities despite leadership changes at SCOPP and PSM.[463]

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[463] While the staff of SCOPP showed relatively high fluctuation, the staff of the other two secretariats remained relatively stable throughout their existence. SCOPP's leadership changed with each new government; and the PSM had two leadership changes due to internal reasons.

The following highlights two facets of identity-related determinants that appear common in the peace secretariats: the identification with the principal's position and the professionalism of the staff.[464]

With regards to the first aspect, all three secretariats recruited staff within their constituencies and encouraged or even enforced identification with the principals and their strategy. When the government changed, the leadership of SCOPP did as well. When the heads of PSM dissented with the strategies of the political principals, they left or had to leave. Dissent within the LTTE was strongly sanctioned.

Given these different levels of alignment, the scope for agency varied according to the type of principal. SCOPP's performance showed repeatedly that there was at least a limited scope for agency, e.g., when at times offering political advice or proposing activities. Former staff reported that there were a lot of internal discussions, albeit without much consequence. The mandate, however, was adapted throughout the peace process and the staff had a role in these deliberations. Within the context of the LTTE, staff reflection and the proactive development of proposals towards the LTTE leadership appeared more difficult and required supporting strategies, e.g., using third parties to facilitate proposals or create 'artificial' demand for the peace secretariat's advice.

The manner in which the peace secretariats enacted their agency was informed by their understanding of professionalism within their organisational contexts. Thus, the secretariat staff limited themselves to their mandate since they considered themselves professional members of their organisation. They 'knew' when to speak out or when to refrain from doing so; they 'knew' how to perform according to the code of conduct of their environment. For example, SCOPP staff considered themselves part of the bureaucracy and therefore in their own view should not intervene in political tasks. LTTE PS members were aware of the 'political correctness' and suitability of third-party suggestions and criticism, e.g., regarding human rights violations, and thus were probably filtering the messages conveyed to their leadership.

The combination of these identity traits and the structural aspects of the peace process, e.g., the conflict dynamics or the political volatility, informed the agency of the peace secretariats. As mentioned earlier, these aspects limited the potential of the peace secretariats to perform beyond their mandate and at times even limited the ex-

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[464] Professionalism here does not refer to certain skills of a trade or profession, or the efficiency measured by external standards. It rather points to the quality of performance expected by the principal and the standards of performance set within the organisational context.

tent to which the mandate was filled, e.g., in the case of intra-party consultation as functions of SCOPP and PSM.

Again, SCOPP staff did not concentrate more on intra-party consensus building while being well aware of the need for it. Likewise, the PSM staff kept a low profile when not sure how to position themselves politically but still were able to continue with other activities. Enacting their agency in other areas of the mandate, the peace secretariats contributed to conflict transformation and conflict management as outlined above.

While these examples point to limitations, it is important to note that organisational identity, foremost, has an enabling quality. From the secretariats' and their principals' perspective, organisational identity enabled them to do their work, i.e., to perform agency in the first place. This is relevant with a view to their acceptance by both the principal and by other political stakeholders with influence over the principal.

First, without their strong identification and sense of professionalism none of the secretariats would have become functional. Given the significant political risks of their work, they would have been closed down or replaced by their principals in case of substantial 'misbehaviour'. The organisational identity presented a significant element of the trustful relationship between principal and agent. Central to the secretariats' functioning was trust and confidence of the principals that the secretariats would not only adhere to the mandate but also not deviate from political positions and tactics of the principal in the negotiations and the overall peace process.

Second, their organisational identity gave the peace secretariats legitimacy to engage with other stakeholders involved in the peace process on behalf of their principals. SCOPP was entitled to ask line ministries for implementation of policy guidance; the PSM was allowed to contact government bodies and engage with political stakeholders relevant to their principals; and the LTTE PS was seen as the legitimate representation and entry point to contact the LTTE leadership.

Organisational identity as well as the legitimacy and responsibility linked to it replaced the principal's supervision. As mentioned before, there were no obvious control mechanisms to check on the performance and guide the secretariats, but the principals appeared to rely on the secretariat staff to 'control themselves'. This seemed to work well since there were hardly any examples of behaviour deviating from the mandate and the 'unwritten rules' of performance. Potential sanctions for deviation from the mandate must have been known and depended on the characteristics of the agent's organisational environment, among other factors.

The instance of the LTTE's chief negotiator overstepping his limits and agreeing to the so-called Oslo formula without previous consent from the LTTE leader is one example in which the principal can be seen as sanctioning the misuse of agency. Reportedly, the principal showed a strong negative reaction and his relationship with the chief negotiator cum chief ideologue of the LTTE was strained for a substantial amount of time. Other examples are found in the LTTE peace secretariat's head alleged arrest, and in the disagreement of the two earlier heads of the Muslim peace secretariat with their mandates.

Another example points to sanctions by political interest groups, as in the case of the before-mentioned SCOPP statement on the occasion of the third anniversary of the CFA, which was not agreed with all political stakeholders prior to publication. The example, described in section 5.4, shows not the principal herself but one of her coalition partners and the then most powerful political interest group sanctioning agency.

These examples and the overall discussion show how closely interlinked the relationship between principals, peace secretariats and political stakeholders were. Agency of the secretariats thus did not depend solely on the mandate as defined by the principal but also on the influence of other political stakeholders and interest groups, the conflict context and the organisational identity of each secretariat. The following section deals with the interviewees' approaches towards explaining these entanglements and discusses ideas of observers on how to deal with the complexity regarding increasing the level of agency.

8.5 Increasing the Level of Agency

For many interviewees the situation of the peace secretariats appeared as tied to structural conditions, the mandate and its limitations, and the relationship with the principal and other stakeholders to such an extent that rethinking their agency was impossible.[465] For many, the situation appeared too perplexing to allow for alternative models; and questions concerning ideal types of peace secretariats in ideal models of

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[465] This is partly due to a notable lack of insight into the internal processes of the peace secretariats; see in addition the methodological considerations in section 1.4.

peace processes or concerning concrete measures for improvement often went un-answered. Many noticed in addition that the role of the peace secretariats had not been considered sufficiently.

Those interviewees who answered the questions and offered suggestions on how to establish peace secretariats 'the next time', or in another scenario, referred to a number of aspects that are discussed below. Among these interviewees were a high proportion of donors and third-party actors who supported the peace secretariats and helped their establishment; thus this discussion is coloured by a relatively technical perspective. Altogether, it appears noteworthy that most ideas imply increasing the level of agency of the peace secretariats, empowering them and giving them a different role in the overall setting. The ideas concern capacity building, adjustments of mandate, inclusiveness of the principal, and the establishment of complementary structures to support central secretariat functions.

Several interviewees referred to capacity building for the peace secretariats as a way to increase their agency. This capacity building, however, needed to focus on strategic issues as well as planning and management capacities rather than on providing topical expertise on constitutional questions or skills regarding negotiations. The difficulty with more strategic capacity and even institution building, however, was that it built on the peace secretariat's involvement in strategic decision-making. It required reflection of their role and influence, their interactions within the conflict party and potential obstacles towards enacting their new strategic capacities. It also required discussing the mandate of the secretariats, which was influenced by a variety of different concerns and agendas. In short, it would call for second- and third-order learning, questioning strategies, objectives and their underlying assumptions and values.

External supporters found it difficult to engage in these areas since they saw the strategic decision processes of the conflict parties as internal and highly political processes to which they did not have access or in which they did not wish to be involved for various reasons. At the same time, some observers realised the dilemma that the same peace secretariats that could not receive capacity building in these areas were expected to improve the strategic and reflective capacities of their respective principals. While this difficulty was acknowledged for all peace secretariats due to their operation in a highly sensitive environment and volatile political process and due to the particular political culture in Sri Lanka, the situation of the LTTE PS was seen as slightly different. Here, interviewees had particular doubts whether capacity building would contribute to extending agency of the secretariat given the authoritarian and

repressive nature of the non-state armed group that would not allow independent strategic thinking.

The next suggestion concerns the increase of agency via the mandate. While some observers noted that the mandates of SCOPP and the LTTE PS were formulated in the context of the highly dynamic peace process in 2002 and early 2003, they realised that this process was perhaps too ad hoc and 'on the go'. Some also noted that the authors of the mandates did not sufficiently consider experiences from other peace processes. Thus, the mandate marginalised such essential functions as intra-party consensus building.

The problem with the mandates of the peace secretariats in this research did not concern their comprehensiveness; they included a wide variety of functions and at times appeared to rather overwhelm the capacities of the secretariats. The issue in the eyes of the interviewees was more that some of the functions deserved more attention than given by the secretariats, and more importantly by their principals. Since the secretariat staff was aware of the shortcomings, a mandate including more independence might have helped to give the staff the required space to 'do their job'. In some cases, as pointed out for the communication function of SCOPP in the early phase, there were insufficient personnel to develop more activities.

Another example is the resilience of the secretariat functions against the volatility of the official peace talks. Several observers pointed out that the peace secretariats were bound to the Track 1 process and their interaction was stopped when the talks stalled. This proved a missed opportunity for confidence and bridge-building in the eyes of many, who suggested endowing the secretariat with more sustainable functions that were less affected by rapid changes in the conflict dynamics.

This shows that besides a comprehensive mandate the necessary commitment or political willingness of the principal to encourage and support secretariat performance from the start is a prerequisite for increasing agency. Third-party actors who tried to encourage, for example, more inter-party exchange among the peace secretariats indicated that such encouragement without the explicit blessing of the principal did not make a difference in the inter-party relations. In addition, the findings suggest that it was difficult to change a mandate. Once a mandate is in place and the organisation started to perform accordingly, it seemed difficult to change the organisation's path. Third-party efforts to encourage more inclusiveness of the PSM after its establishment failed, and the bipartisan reign over the secretariat and its resources was not given up.

This concern points to a particular problem: the inclusiveness of the principal. None of the peace secretariats in this research engaged their suggested constituency despite the principals' claims to be the sole representative of their people or, in the case of the government, to represent the overall population. Therefore, many suggestions pointed to increasing the level of representation and to making the peace secretariats more inclusive.

The most far-reaching suggestion resolved the bilateral relationship between principal and agent. Here, rather than establishing one peace secretariat for each negotiating party, the idea was to create a common peace secretariat for all parties. As some interviewees noted, the original idea of some actors advising the peace negotiations was to have only one shared secretariat, and some referred to the example of the South African peace process and its joint support structures. Such a joint support structure was seen as a symbol for the parties' commitment to the peace process and their readiness to engage with each other with a notion of parity and partnership.

Unfortunately, the idea of a joint structure did not reflect sufficiently the reality of the Sri Lankan conflict context and thus did not materialise. The conflict parties preferred separate support structures with limited outreach to the other side and limited contribution to bridge building. The level of mistrust between the conflict parties was just too high to imagine anything more collaborative, as the difficult experience of the joint sub-committees during the peace talks showed. In other conflict contexts, more inclusiveness, however, might be possible.

Several of the above suggestions, however, collide with one of the key characteristics of the peace secretariats. Their close relationship with the principal limited their agency through the alignment and identification necessary to gain their principals' trust in the first place. This made it difficult or impossible to 'think out of the box' and act beyond the 'master's voice' of the principals, for example, in order to establish back-channels between the conflict parties when the talks broke down.

Since the alignment and identification appeared to be a given, suggestions and support efforts focused on creating complementary structures. There were several efforts to complement the peace secretariats' work, e.g., through specific working groups at Track 1.5 that brought the peace secretariats together, or through dialogue accompanying the peace talks and providing an opportunity for public participation and intra-party consultation. The participation of the peace secretariats and their principals in these endeavours, however, was not strong due to several reasons. It was not always

clear if their understanding of such multi-track approaches was sufficient or if they believed that the tracks could work in parallel and did not require their contribution.

Moreover, some suggested that separate brainstorming units, or think tanks, should have been established in order to take over some of the functions of the peace secretariats with regards to strategic analysis, planning and proactive policy advice. Likewise, a collaboration with others acting as mediators between the parties could have increased the peace secretariats' contribution to inter-party facilitation. Endowing these organisations and intermediaries with more independence than the peace secretariats would have given them more scope for agency in certain support areas and left the role of the peace secretariats in the more secretarial and representative functions, as required, closely aligned with their principals. While this might have been an option during the beginning of the peace talks, later it became clear that the political environment in the South as well as the nature of the LTTE would have not allowed for such level of free-thinking and collaboration.

Altogether, the three cases in this research show an ambivalent picture of the external support that was used to establish the peace secretariats. While donor assistance made possible the existence and maintenance of the peace secretariats it did not appear to look into the details of the organisational capacities and limitations. From the interviews with third-party actors it transpired that reflection on the peace secretariats, their potential and limitations as well as the possible unintended consequences of the support to the organisations did not have priority among those involved in peace promotion. It needs to be noted, however, that this research did not aim at an evaluation of the support for the secretariats and thus cannot expect interview responses towards this end.

A particular challenge was the support for the LTTE secretariat, which although agreed by the government presented difficulties for several of the third-party actors. While many voices called for engagement with the non-state armed group in order to assist its political transformation, not many were willing to engage. The complications of the Norwegian facilitation in a double and triple role as de facto ceasefire monitor and donor to the conflict parties were described at length in the evaluation of the Norwegian involvement (Sørbø et al. 2011). It becomes clear from the findings in that evaluation as well as from this research that funding and capacity building for non-state armed groups require a comprehensive strategy, division of labour with other third-party actors and a conflict-sensitive information and communication policy.

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8.6 Preliminary Conclusions

In conclusion, this summary shows that the three peace secretariats despite their specific differences and general incomparability show many commonalities that help to answer the research questions.

The peace secretariats played a central and essential role in the peace process and contributed significantly to conflict transformation. These contributions could have been more far-reaching but the secretariats' agency was limited both by the political context and conflict dynamics as well as by organisational characteristics. Towards the end of the time period and towards the end of the war, the activities of all peace secretariats were reduced significantly and contributed less to conflict transformation.

The three secretariats were defined by their mandates and their relationship with their principals and other interest groups that influenced the principals. They engaged with their respective organisational environments and counterparts according to their mandates and the unwritten rules of their principals, guided by their principals' negotiation and conflict strategies.

The peace secretariats enacted their agency in interplay with these conditions. Their organisational identity had a crucial role in aligning themselves to their principals' preferences, thus 'reducing' their own agency to the enactment of their secretarial, serving role. Despite the partly authoritarian environment, this behaviour did not necessarily imply submission to pressure. The identification with the principals and a particular understanding of professionalism contributed to the secretariats' prioritising of the principals' goals. The secretariats or their staff as a collective did not appear to have independent goals that they tried to implement in the context or besides their mandates.

While this appeared to be an essential characteristic of a 'good' peace secretariat, some interviewees also recognised a problem, or a limitation, of the secretariats' potential for conflict transformation. The three peace secretariats contributed in their specific ways to conflict transformation and supported the peace process in accord with their mandate but at times saw further opportunities for engagement beyond their mandate, or for alternative ways of implementing their mandate. Realising these opportunities might have further contributed to conflict transformation, but the secretariats did not 'challenge' their mandates or the strategies of their principals.

In this sense, one could argue that a more 'proactive' agency of the peace secretariats might have been desirable from a perspective of constructive conflict transformation, or a more liberal mandate and greater independence of the peace secretariats could have increased their transformative contributions, e.g., in the areas of intra-party consensus building or inter-party facilitation.

Altogether, there were several options to increase the level of agency of the peace secretariats. At the same time, it needs to be cautioned that the peace secretariats alone would not have altered the overall conflict dynamics and could not have been the single change maker. They, however, could have been part of a wider peace infrastructure and played a central role in it, rather than becoming symbols of the faltering peace process and the other agendas of their principals, which sustained the peace secretariats beyond the peace talks.

At the same time, such a supposition remains speculative in light of the systemic linkages and the unintended consequences of some of the secretariats' actions shown in the previous chapters. For example, a secretariat with greater liberties to interpret its mandate and to suggest adjustments where it saw fit might be seen as less aligned with its principal and thus appear less useful for communication and representation purposes. Perhaps it would then not have served as a secretariat in the original sense anymore.

It becomes clear from the findings of this research that the peace secretariats required the proximity and alignment with their principals as key characteristics in order to serve their purpose and in order to carry a strong symbolic meaning that went beyond their specific functions. Any 'more transformative' orientation of their mandate would have needed the consent of the principals, which in turn would have needed more planning and preparation of the establishment of the secretariats, more strategic reflection on the secretariats' objectives and a closer monitoring of their achievements in order to adjust their mandates according to the peace process requirements.

In the given organisational context and culture of the peace secretariats at hand as well as in the given peace process, its conflict dynamics and its manifold forms of external interventions and support, this strategic consideration and preparation did not take place, and thus the peace secretariats appear not to have contributed to conflict transformation to their full potential. These findings point to relevant lessons for other peace processes.

The following chapter will reflect on the findings from a theoretical perspective and review the conceptual framework used to analyse and present the empirical findings. Here, the systemic linkages between the functions and transformative contributions will find entry. Moreover, these considerations will be reflected in the final chapter that outlines further research questions.

Part IV: Synthesis and Conclusions

Chapter 9 Understanding Peace Secretariats – Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

The previous chapter served to summarised the case study-related findings and answered the research questions regarding the peace secretariat's contributions towards conflict transformation and their limitations. This chapter takes a step back towards a more abstract level of reflection and returns to the theoretical chapters and the explanations for the empirical findings sought in theory in order to consider their suitability and validity.

As discussed earlier, the process of this research followed an inductive design. While the conceptual framework was developed after most of the interviews had taken place and the general gist of the findings was known; the detailed analysis of the empirical findings had not been undertaken. The theoretical literature was reviewed and the conceptual framework was developed with the analytical task in mind. After the analysis of the data and the drawing of conclusions for the three case studies, this chapter returns to the framework.

This chapter will discuss in detail the assumptions and the conceptual framework and suggest improvement or revision where necessary. It will also revisit some of the literature. In light of the methodological restrictions and the representative limitations of the case studies, the conceptual framework cannot be validated beyond these three cases. Chapter 10 will point out recommendations for further research in order to do so.

This chapter consists of four sections: the first one reviews the definition and understanding of peace secretariats developed in this research; it also discusses the first two assumptions. The second section goes back to the mandate and the role of the principal in the establishment of the peace secretariat. Here, the third assumption is reviewed. Thereafter, the third section looks at assumption 4 and argues that the potential and limitations of peace secretariats can be explained by the conceptual framework. Finally, the discussion returns to the starting point and motivation of the research and thus closes the circle regarding options for supporting peace secretariats.

9.1 Peace Secretariats and Their Functions

Building on the scarce literature on peace secretariats, the theoretical chapters developed a working definition for such organisations, named peace secretariats or otherwise, since there was no clear understanding of their purpose. Building on the empirical case studies of this research, the definition remains valid; the three peace secretariats can be described with the definition as follows:

> *A peace secretariat is a unit within a larger organisation or an independent organisation that has been established by and is closely affiliated with at least one of the conflict parties. This agent implements a mandate with the purpose of supporting the party with services relating to the negotiation, dialogue or mediation process or the implementation of process results before, during or after official peace talks.*

The findings of this study suggest that peace secretariats are mostly affiliated with only one of the conflict parties, as was the case for the three secretariats in Sri Lanka. This appears particularly true if secretariats are used before and during peace talks, as shared support structures require a certain level of trust between the conflict parties gained only at a later stage of peace processes. As the experience of the South African peace process shows, the common secretariats and peace committees there were products of many years of trust building through secret negotiations, the 'talks about talks', and a fundamental agreement about process and issues (Marks 2000; Turton 2010).

Thus, peace secretariats established before, during or after negotiations take different forms. If maintained throughout the process beyond a peace agreement, they change form and adapt to new roles and purposes, as the experience of the former peace secretariat and today's Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction in Nepal shows (Thapa 2007). The cases in this research show relatively little change in the design (due to the design's symbolic relevance; see further discussion below); only their functions were adjusted to the changing situation.

While literature points to the relevance of early and comprehensive preparations for peace talks in a prenegotiation phase, the case of SCOPP shows that this preparation can be ad hoc and the establishment of the peace secretariat does not have priority among the principal's concerns. For different reasons, the LTTE PS was established even later. In hindsight, many observers felt that the secretariats could have had a stronger role if established earlier. The findings, however, also show that the under-

standing of the secretariats' role initially was not clear and had to develop in the course of the peace talks. While awareness of their potential contribution can be increased, political considerations and other priorities in many cases lead to reduced attention on establishing support structures. As seen in the case of the LTTE PS and its late establishment, these considerations might lead to a transition phase when a nascent peace secretariat is not yet officially established but its designated head is already active. Such a transition period offers the opportunity to reflect on intended mandate and functions.

The functions of peace secretariats were described earlier, building on negotiation literature and case studies (see section 2.3.3). Reviewing the empirical findings, these operative functions remain mostly valid and can be summarised as follows with slight variations and elaboration. At the end of this list, one additional function is suggested based on the findings here: it concerns strategic analysis, planning and advice.

Secretarial functions are central and extend to providing secretarial, administrative, logistical and other supportive services during peace negotiations. Of particular relevance are note taking, archiving of documents and travel arrangements both for the negotiating teams, if negotiations take place abroad, and for incoming international visitors.

Capacity-building functions serve to provide information (e.g., on other peace processes) and advisory services (e.g., through preparing proposals and background material for negotiations) to the negotiators or the principals of the peace secretariats. Often in collaboration with third-party actors, peace secretariats help build individual and collective capacities of the conflict party representatives relevant to the overall peace process, e.g., through improving negotiation skills. According to the findings here, this function is performed mostly 'on demand', but peace secretariats in other situations might take a more proactive role that includes the initiation of proposals and tactics. Other advisors might complement the secretariats' services regarding political proposals and have more influence on the content, while the secretariats facilitate the capacity-building process.

Communication is another key function of peace secretariats and includes a wide array of activities from preparation of speeches to press releases, background material for the media and active communication about the peace process through peace secretariat staff. The case studies, and in particular the government one, show that this function is extremely relevant in order to secure public commitment to the peace process and requires more resources than the secretariat may be able to provide.

One reason is that peace secretariats engage with different audiences and direct a significant amount of their resources towards the international community. Thus, communication should be differentiated according to the most relevant audiences in each particular situation and seen separately from intra-party consultation.

Intra-party consultation goes beyond information sharing within the conflict party's constituency and involves key stakeholders and civil society through diverse forums and approaches. Ideally, the consultation function contributes to building intra-party consensus, but as the case studies in this research indicate this function depends crucially on the principal's negotiation strategy and overall commitment to participatory decision-making. In the context of the Sri Lankan political culture, this function is therefore relatively weak, and government efforts often have a more symbolic character than actual influence on the process.

Inter-party facilitation functions serve to support the formal or informal interaction between the conflict parties. The cases in this research show little activity in this area and their activities mostly extend to interaction in the context of Track 1 activities during 2002/2003 and 2006, as well as to more independent activities during the talks on P-TOMS and their role in the sub-committees during 2002/2003. Informal contacts and confidence building are stopped when tensions increase. Little reference is made to crisis management and the secretariats do not serve as backchannels between the conflict parties. Interaction between the secretariats is mostly related to the following function.

Implementation functions concern the implementation of agreements reached in the negotiations and extend both to their monitoring (e.g., the monitoring of ceasefire violations or the resettlement of IDPs) or the facilitation of the implementation, e.g., of transport arrangements, the opening of roads and supply of goods to war-affected zones. In other cases, the function might also involve steering of particular political and societal processes as part of the overall peace process (during and after negotiations), e.g., on truth and reconciliation, human rights documentation, or compensation of victims, but this aspect does not apply to the cases at hand. An exception are SCOPP activities regarding reintegration of IDPs in the East after the areas has been regained militarily from LTTE control.

Strategic analysis and planning functions are mostly missing in the descriptions of the peace secretariats in this research. At the same time, former staff and observers noted the lack of such capacities. It is therefore suggested to add this function here specifically. The function can concern the early exploration and analysis of communi-

cation and signals between the conflict parties; it can extend to strategic planning in preparation for and during the peace talks, and to the facilitation of joint reflection within the negotiating team. The focus of this function is a facilitative one: the peace secretariats can use additional advisors and topic experts but their responsibility is to ensure strategic foresight and the consideration of alternative scenarios in planning.

While such a list of functions helps understand the variety of tasks and roles that peace secretariats can shoulder, the empirical research shows that these official functions have to be read with caution, and, as some sources noted, might be a facade more than an accurate description. One the one hand, these formalised functions are not all that the peace secretariats do or represent; on the other hand, the manner of conducting the functions matters.

In addition to the operative functions, peace secretariats might have significant symbolic functions, e.g., symbolising the commitment of conflict parties to the peace effort. A peace secretariat's existence represents a genuine interest in peace. Höglund and Svensson (2003) note the signal of de-escalation and increased trustworthiness of the process at the early stage. Other organisation literature points to the importance of non-verbal communication and creation of meaning through organisations and to the ambivalence of symbolic messages. The case studies of this research show a variety of possible and changing messages that can be conveyed with the symbol peace.

Besides symbolising a commitment to peace, the other powerful symbolic meaning of peace secretariats, either joint or separate structures for each of the conflict parties, lies in signalling a status of parity between state and non-state armed groups. In this research, this signal was relevant for both the LTTE and the Muslim communities, which considered the peace secretariat as a step towards representation in peace talks and a means to a kind of parity in the 'second row'. This is supported by literature that finds armed groups at times valuing symmetry achieved through the sheer performance of negotiations to be as important as the substance of the issues under negotiation. In the negotiation context, they use forms of state-like representation as means for seeking legitimacy internationally and at the same time the international contacts strengthen the armed group's domestic role (Söderberg-Kovacs 2007).

Turning to the other aspect highlighted, as discussed in detail earlier, the manner of implementation matters more than the formal description. The example of intra-party consultation by the government and the Muslim peace secretariat is useful in explaining this finding. While the latter formally was meant to do just that, some parts of the

Muslim communities did not feel represented and wished for more inclusion. The government secretariat realised the great need for consultation and consensus building but did not see a mandate for it to engage, given the highly politicised environment. Another example is the distortion of the communication function, which turned the government and the LTTE peace secretariats into caricatures of themselves and led to the sarcastic label of 'war secretariats'.

This leads to the first assumption, which can be confirmed as developed earlier:

Peace secretariats have the potential to be change agents for conflict transformation.

Building on the motivational background of this research, the first assumption expresses the expectations and concerns regarding the potential role of peace secretariats from an outsider perspective that is informed by constructive engagement for conflict transformation. Third-party actors and donors funding the secretariats considered their support as efforts to strengthen inter-party relationships and trust building, as contributions to decrease asymmetry of the parties, which was considered detrimental to the peace negotiations, as enhancing the representation of stakeholders in the peace process, and as support for the parties' preparation for and participation in the peace talks (section 1.3). The last argument is of particular relevance to the non-state armed group.

This is certainly a different perspective from that of the peace secretariats that were established to support the peace negotiations. In this regard, the peace secretariats played a central role, and most interviewees felt that they were irreplaceable at the time of the peace talks. Their existence continued beyond the peace talks and the later efforts to revitalise the peace process, and throughout the war. As was confirmed by the principals of the warring parties, both sides – on request of the Norwegian facilitators – explained their continued interest in external facilitation and explicitly wanted to keep the option for engagement through the peace secretariats open. For this purpose, they asked the Norwegians to continue support for the LTTE peace secretariat beyond 2006 (Sørbø et al. 2011, p. 62). While these statements have to be read in the context of other strategic interests and the symbolism of maintaining the

structure, they also point to a certain level of significance of the peace secretariats' support of the negotiation and peace process.

Given their focus on negotiations, former staff did not describe themselves in the interviews necessarily as change agents in the overall peace process or as engaging in transformative activities. Yet, the mission statements and mandates of the secretariats included elements that pointed towards such engagement, and interviewees outlined various activities that could be interpreted as contributions to conflict transformation.

Thus, the first assumption can be confirmed. It is important to note here, however, that being a change agent in the context of violent conflict does not necessarily mean being the actual driver, or prime mover, of a change process, as classic management literature assumes (Weick & Quinn 1999), but having an enabling role in the wider process (Mitchell 2005).

Each of the cases in this research presents a different organisational background and thus offers new insights regarding the potential transformative contributions of negotiation support organisations.

The situation of the government secretariat offers specific insights into the limitations of individual agency through the contractual relationship between the agent and principal and the organisational identity of the agent. These mechanisms are discussed below.

The non-state armed group case is of interest as some of the interview findings pointed to transformative contributions, but also questioned this in light of the movement's overall strategic conduct during the peace process and the strong negative reactions that the support for and engagement with the peace secretariat triggered. Thus, this case is of particular interest in terms of systemic considerations and invites study on the unintended consequences of support to non-state armed groups.

A particular case is the role of the Peace Secretariat for Muslims, which played a transformative role for the community and appeared in the eyes of some observers as a 'game changer' in terms of the recognition of Muslim concerns and needs. Whereas the Muslim secretariat did not change the actual outcome of the peace efforts, it had a relevant role in representing the Muslim community and its legitimate claim to be heard in the peace process.

Altogether, the empirical findings confirm the first assumption. At the same time, they underline the cautious assessment highlighting a *potential* of the support organisa-

tions. This potential was limited, and the cases help understand the limitations that are rooted both in the context and the organisational characteristics of the peace secretariats. The third and fourth assumptions consider these limitations and are discussed below. First, however, the reasons for the transformative potential are considered in more detail.

The potential for transformative contributions lies in the particular role of the peace secretariats in the negotiation process and their position among the actors involved in the negotiations. This is highlighted in the second assumption that is also confirmed by the case studies:

> *Peace secretariats hold a particular position within and between the negotiating parties that implies a potentially significant influence on the negotiation process as well as on conflict transformation.*

The peace secretariats in this research, indeed, held a particular position that was close to the negotiators and the principals of each conflict party, gave them power over other actors involved in the negotiation and wider peace process (e.g., other government departments), and made them an access point for the international community and third-party actors, and a representative and coordination desk for the peace effort within their constituencies. Their particular role vis-à-vis the other negotiating party was reflected in another symbol: the direct telephone connection that was installed between the peace secretariats of the government and the LTTE.

This central position and the resulting different roles that the secretariats enacted towards the different audiences made them subject to diverse expectations that at times led to role conflict. The empirical findings resonate well with literature about negotiations and role conflicts and confirm these models (Druckman 1977; Putnam 1988). Whereas Putnam's model of the two-level game originally concerned international negotiations between democratic governments, it also helps understand the dynamics of intra-state conflict and negotiations between a government and a non-state actor.

Central in the two-level game is the tension between the role expectations arising from the negotiator's engagement with the other negotiating party and from the building of consensus for negotiation positions within a negotiator's own constituency. Negotiators, however, are not single individuals but a team that collectively faces role

conflicts. Together, they perform roles of boundary spanning among their own constituencies, other negotiation parties and other stakeholders (Iklé 1964). Due to the diverse expectations of these audiences, role conflict arises (Friedman & Podolny 1992).

As the case studies show, these role conflicts affect the support structure of negotiators as well. The peace secretariats, for example, experienced difficulties in maintaining a constructive and at times friendly relationship with their counterparts when tensions increased and the peace talks stalled. This can be explained by the conflicting expectations that they are confronted with. The peace secretariats needed to remain safely on the 'side' of their respective conflict parties; they could not afford to be seen as being friendly with their counterparts from the other side. This would have led to a loss of credibility in their in-group and reduced their effectiveness in consensus building within their own constituency (Kelman 2007).

The empirical research here, however, adds complexity to the duality assumed in the negotiation models as well as to the duality of the contract model between principal and agent, which is discussed in the next section. The duality of the negotiator roles was complicated by a number of additional actors.

One addition was the multi-faceted dissent within the in-group, the lack of intra-party consensus. As the findings for SCOPP and the Muslim peace secretariat show, political stakeholders within a constituency did not agree about the negotiation strategy and their needs and fears, and thus should have been involved in the search for intra-party consensus. This lack of consensus could have been found within the peace secretariat and the negotiation teams, complicating the search for consensus in light of the political power struggle. The government's strategy in 2002 and 2003 shows how both nationalist and mainstream opposition were sidelined, and eventually contributed to the failure of the peace process.

The peace secretariat had no role in engaging with these marginalised positions; dealing with intra-party political conflict was left to its principal. This focus became clear regarding the activities of the sub-committees installed in the course of the 2002/2003 peace talks: joint problem-solving was not the key priority of the actors involved in the committees. Thus, the support structures, except perhaps the short-lived Sub-Committee on gender Issues, could not contribute to setting a precedent for cooperation among the conflict parties (Fortna 2004; Kriesberg & Dayton 2009).

At the same time, the peace secretariats were meant to contribute to confidence and relationship building between the conflict parties, which appeared unacceptable to

parts of their in-groups. The government and the LTTE peace secretariats showed different approaches towards dealing with these tensions. Both, however, focused on one role and gave priority to gaining power and maintaining their intra-group position. This weakened their contribution to strengthening the inter-party relationship, which in turn was at the centre of expectations of third-party actors that supported the peace secretariats financially and otherwise.

These third-party actors, international and domestic, added their own expectations. As shown in the case studies, the peace secretariats engaged with many of them in facilitation and dialogue efforts, capacity building and other activities.

Literature suggests that negotiators develop different coping strategies for dealing with role conflicts; one of them consists in division of labour among negotiating teams. This helps the actors deal with the different expectations and increases their effectiveness. It appears that the three peace secretariats had some division of labour between principals, peace secretariats and negotiators, but that this was not used effectively to engage with different audiences.

All peace secretariats appeared to follow a vertical division of labour, in which the more sensitive political and strategic questions were left to the principals or the negotiators and the peace secretariats remained in the 'second row'. Following the political priorities, intra-party consensus building and engagement with Tracks 2 and 3 were neglected. This points to opportunities for improvement and a differentiation of roles among the multiplicity of actors involved in the peace process, in particular on the government side.[466]

Notably, the LTTE peace secretariat's principal played a different role: while the principals of the government and the Muslim peace secretariat engaged actively with diverse audiences and had a direct connection with the peace secretariat, the LTTE leadership remained elusive, hardly engaged in person with outsiders and delegated much of the secretariat's oversight and guidance to the head of the political wing. As a result, the political wing and the peace secretariat represented the leadership in the 'first row' as Prabhakaran avoided exposure.

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[466] It also calls for more attention on strategic analysis, since the missed opportunities are not the mistake of the peace secretariats alone. It instead reveals a collective misreading of the political situation in the South and a too narrow understanding of the conflict system, which cannot be reduced to the conflict line between the government and the LTTE. Both the negotiation strategies of the government and the facilitator did not engage comprehensively with the complexity of the conflict system (Sørbø et al. 2011).

Altogether, the cases displayed a differentiation of negotiation roles, and the peace secretariats had designated roles in each setting. This designation took place via their mandate and was decided to a large extent by the principals.

9.2 The Mandate and the Role of the Principals

The literature discussion and resulting conceptual framework regard the mandate as the peace secretariats' heart – it makes the organisation work and gives it direction. The mandate, however, does not 'fall from the sky'; rather it is based on the negotiation and wider conflict strategy of the principals.

The organisation theory literature in addition suggested that the principals do not decide on their own but that there are other actors to be considered, and that the peace secretariats have an active role in interpreting and implementing the mandate according to their interests. Given the specific situation of the strong external support for the peace process, the support of third-party actors was included as well. The third assumption thus posits as follows:

> *The mandate of peace secretariats as support structures for negotiations is defined by the negotiators, based on their respective strategies as well as on third-party advice, and is interpreted and implemented by the peace secretariats.*

This assumption is not fully confirmed by the three empirical cases. While the first part (determination of mandate by principals according to their strategic direction) can be confirmed by the findings, the second one (influence of third-party actors, interpretation by secretariat) is less evident in the empirical material. Following the observations in this research in which third-party actors had limited influence on the mandate and the peace secretariats did not interpret the mandate according to their own interest, the assumption could be reframed as:

> *The mandate of peace secretariats as support structures for negotiation is defined by their principals based on the respective negotiation and political strategies, and is implemented by the peace secretariats.*

This, however, does not exclude the possibility that peace secretariats and third-party actors in other situations have a stronger influence. The explanation of this research's findings first turns to the principal-agent relationship.

The principal-agent relationship in this research is understood as being based on a contract between the two actors (see section 3.2.1). While the principal mandates and controls the agent's performance, the agent performs and informs the principal. Both do so according to their own interests and agendas, which are assumed to be not identical: the principals delegate functions and the agent interprets them. At this point, theory expects the agent's shirking behaviour: since his own interests dominate, he will attempt to deviate from the mandate. Literature offers different approaches for principals to deal with this agency loss, but also diverse explanations for cases in which no agency loss occurs.

What do the empirical findings say? The three cases do not show agency loss, i.e., the divergence of principal's interest and agent's behaviour. In other words, the agents do not interpret the mandate according to their own interests. Two explanations found in literature apply: in many instances described in the previous chapters, the interests of principals and agents seemed to converge. But even if interests differ, agents might place organisational interests above their own, understanding their role as servants, as stewards of their principals (Davis et al. 1997).

In all cases, the mandate and organisational design was strongly guided by the principals. Since these principals were actually not the negotiators but the overall leaders or heads of parties, the assumption is reframed accordingly.[467] The principals oversaw both the negotiators and their support organisations. The dominance of the principal in strategic decision-making, however, was relative to the organisational background of the peace secretariat. Thus, the conceptual framework suited the cases in different ways.

The government secretariat in its main features confirmed Moe's model of political bureaucracy and was most suitably represented by the conceptual framework (Moe 1995). The authority of the principal was limited by elections; the political contract between the respective principal and other political stakeholders led to an additional control structure for the agent, albeit an implicit and informal one. As a consequence of the political compromise, the design of the agent was not strictly based on efficiency

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[467] In the case of the government, the secretariat was under the direct command of the prime minister or president; in the case of the LTTE, it came under the LTTE leader but the head of the political wing served as intermediary.

criteria but reflected political interests: this shows in particular in the complicated arrangements of SCOPP in the initial phase, but also in the bipartisan design of the PSM. The latter was basically 'owned' by the two political principals and they controlled the secretariat through its governance structure whereas other Muslim stakeholders contested this ownership.

In comparison, the LTTE principal leadership dominated and controlled the peace secretariat like all other parts of the organisation. This last case resembles the political bureaucracy model least since both political control of the principal by the agent and its scope for contract determination was lowest.

At the same time the relevance of Moe's model even for the government secretariat was reduced since the description of the political culture in Moe's model does not suit the one in Sri Lanka. The competition for political power followed other rules and was strongly influenced by political patronage and violence, which left the secretariat in a much weaker role and reduced the agent's power, e.g., to negotiate the contract with the principal and the other political stakeholders. Since the peace process was highly politicised, the actor in the second row preferred not to 'stick its neck out'.

This limited scope for agency and the options for the peace secretariat to adopt a proactive role, e.g., as transformative change agent, as long as the principal did not assign such a role. Likewise, the options of the peace secretariat serving the non-state armed group were limited when it came to negotiating its mandate with the principal.

Another relevant difference from the theory-based framework concerns the form of contract between principal and agent, which was not as formalised as foreseen in Moe's model (which considers mostly legislative contract design for big government agencies) and hardly negotiated as between two business partners as foreseen in the classic principal-agent contract (Jensen & Meckling 1976; Arrow 1985). Rather, the principal delegated functions and the agent implemented without questioning. In addition, the official versions of the mandate appeared 'pro forma' and, as some observers suggested, written for the international audience.

This can be understood in the context of volatile peace talks where the parties were pressed for time and overwhelmed with the complexity of issues (Bloomfield & Reilly 1998, p.25). The question of a support structure was not at the centre of their concerns and topics such as division of labour and roles, opportunities to involve other tracks, etc., did not rank high in priority. The situation of the 2002 talks was particularly complex since a new administration had just come to power and envisaged a wide-ranging reform process. The lack of joint discussion and some form of agree-

ment on the mandate nevertheless decreased opportunity for reflection, increased uncertainty for the organisation and altogether reduced the scope for agency.

At the same time it appears noteworthy that the peace secretariats did not underlie explicit control mechanisms of the principal that help to ensure that they act according to their mandate. The explanation is found in the relationship between principal and agent, which was based on a high level of identification. As a result, the stewardship model discussed in chapter 3 appears particularly helpful to understand the behaviour of both the principals and the agents and explains the reduced relevance of a formalised contract (Davis et al. 1997; Shapiro 2005).

The staff reflections within SCOPP support this argument: secretariat staff discussed alternative ways to engage but did not object to the strategic direction of the principal. The interpretation of the mandate by the secretariat thus followed unwritten rules of alignment. Furthermore, many staff members identified strongly with the implicit directions and interests of the principal and thus reduced their own subjective experience of dissent. Those staff members that felt too alienated from the principal's direction left the organisation.

The heads of the secretariats played a particular role in this service arrangement since they maintained most of the interactions with the principals and presented the peace secretariats' work to the principals. They were also represented in the negotiation teams of the conflict parties. The secretary generals were chosen and nominated with particular care by the principals and enjoyed a high level of trust. While not always politically aligned with them, the principal relied on their services and confidentiality. One of the secretary generals described his assignment literally as a "stewardship of the peace secretariat" (Dhanapala 2007, p.1).

If stewardship theory can be confirmed as an explaining model for peace secretariats and similar support organisations, this should be considered when designing peace secretariats. Stewardship theory for example finds that stewards fulfil their mandate most effectively when given substantial freedom to use their expertise (Donaldson & Davis 1991). Returning to the understanding of different levels of learning introduced in section 3.4.1, such freedom allows for learning of second and third order. The agent is then empowered to contribute to improving policies and strategies.

Similar to findings in organisation theory, this is also confirmed in negotiation studies: if the peace secretariats have freedom and flexibility, e.g., to explore alternative negotiation strategies, without increasing their authority for commitment to any solution,

they widen their principals' strategic choices (Babbitt 1999). The discussion will return to the argument of creating enabling conditions for agency in section 9.4.

The second part of the discussion of the third assumption concerns the influence of third-party assistance and other stakeholders. Regarding the latter, Moe's understanding of interest group influence on political bureaucracy is useful but requires differentiation in the light of the circumstances of non-western democracies as well and of violent and repressive, militarised political cultures.

The visualisation of the peace secretariat interactions (in figures 5.6, 6.6 and 7.6) shows the complexity and diversity of the cases. The powerful mainstream opposition posed particular challenges for the government during the early stages of the peace process. Interest groups, or stakeholders, such as the nationalist Sinhalese actors influenced the course of the peace process and the role of the government peace secretariat in various ways. Looking at the two other secretariats, this influence is less clear. The principals and decision makers within the PSM could to a large extent circumvent participation of additional Muslim stakeholders; and the LTTE excluded alternative voices to the largest extent in repressive and violent ways (Lilja 2010). Addressing this issue in the context of capacity building and negotiation support presents a crucial challenge for mediators and other third-party actors.

The input from third parties, although involved in capacity building and in the case of the Norwegian facilitators in funding the secretariats' core expenses and functioning, was relatively small, and interviewees appeared to consider only in hindsight that a stronger and more strategically oriented support could have strengthened the secretariats' agency. Once the mandates were set, they changed only in small ways and were adjusted only incrementally in light of evolving requirements and changing conflict dynamics. The organisations and their general organisational structure and procedures remained relatively consistent, although changes in leadership in the government secretariat led to adaptation of the organisation. It is therefore argued here that the consideration of establishing peace secretariats as support organisations for peace negotiations should be included in the repertoire of those third-party actors that support the preparation of peace talks and are involved in prenegotiation activities (Harris & Reilly 1998; Walton 2011).

One reason for lack of consideration of the design and strategic role of the secretariats was again found in the time pressure of the talks. In addition, third-party actors feared that a too detailed discussion of staff selection and political strategic orientation

might be perceived as undue interference. With a view to engaging the LTTE peace secretariat, the reputational risk of appearing biased and in support of the 'terrorists' increased the reluctance to engage (Sørbø et al. 2011). The strongest role of third-party actors was seen in the establishment of the PSM, but even here political considerations of the principals overruled the suggestions of supporters. Early agreement with the principals with regards to the extent of advice and capacity building appears necessary and should not avoid strategic concerns.

Altogether, the peace secretariats experienced – albeit without resistance – a limitation of their agency, i.e., capacity to act independently and at their own volition. This leads to the discussion of the determinants of this limitation. The theoretical literature and the findings of the interviews suggest a combination of structural determinants and organisational characteristics.

9.3 Potential and Limitations of Agency

From the start of this research, the peace secretariats' performance was assumed to be influenced by context-related and internal, organisational factors. In the course of the theoretical discussion, the fourth assumption was refined with two additions:

> *Both external context-related factors and internal organisational characteristics determine the organisation's contributions to conflict transformation.*
>
> *4a. Context-related factors encompass the form of government, the type of violent conflict and the conflict phase.*
>
> *4b. Internal characteristics are expressed in the organisation's identity that can be described with traits such as proximity to the principal, political alignment/ identification, professionalism and access to resources.*

The findings of this research confirm this understanding and resonate well with the relevant literature. The discussion considers first the context conditions, then the organisational characteristics and finally returns to the distinction of structure and identity as guiding agency.

The discussion of the context determinants is complicated by the fact that the case studies all refer to the same conflict case. Thus, there is no variation of form of government or type of conflict. Only the conflict phase as a determining factor can be examined since the changing conflict dynamics in the course of the eight years under observation reflect well in the agency of the peace secretariats. The change in terms of levels of confrontation, atrocities, mistrust, breakdown of communication and isolation between and within groups, and opportunities for (re-) engagement between the groups influenced the peace secretariats' behaviour to a large extent.

The form of government and the conflict type remained stable despite changes in government and in the conflict dynamics. Their influence can be mostly observed in the reasons for establishing and assigning the peace secretariats with particular functions and in the manner in which the peace secretariats interacted. The form of government in addition influenced the organisational identity of the peace secretariats, e.g., in form of political patronage or bureaucratic procedure.

This effect shows clearly in some of the transformative efforts of the peace secretariats, in particular those aiming at personal transformation. The rigidity of the organisational environment, for example of the LTTE, did not allow for transformative agency of individual cadres who felt inspired after a workshop on peacebuilding and reflected on their identity. Literature confirms such findings: the search for alternative routes and new options for conflict transformation is often limited by "institutionalised rigidities" in the political and administrative decision-making apparatus (Kelman 2007, p. 87). These are shaped, in the context of protracted conflict, by prevailing conflict norms and in situations of escalation tend to resort to those actions and policies that best suit their established routines and norms rather than explore less developed alternatives that could be seen as questioning loyalties.

Another example shows the relevance of the conflict type. The government in 2002 entered the peace talks with a constructive and – as some would criticise overly – appeasing strategy that included the willingness to level the playing field and engage with the LTTE. This involved support to the LTTE in terms of capacity building and even the acceptance of financial assistance in order to establish the peace secretariat. Wide parts of the general public were in favour of a peace process and ignored the details of the process. Nevertheless, this phase of rapprochement was marred by the mistrust of many, and eventually mental models deeply rooted in intractable ethno-political conflict dominated the relationship between the conflict parties. These mental models prescribed societal norms on how to conduct conflict and how to engage with the adversary. They were sustained by enemy images that were rooted in

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collective needs and fears and deeply entrenched in the conflict parties' perspectives on history and justice (Kaufman 2006). Dealing with such images and norms was complicated by the fact that the conflict parties commonly used them to mobilise the support of their constituency and thus could not fully dismiss them (Earle 2011; Tashlitsky 2008).

While this aspect is well researched in the literature of social movements and armed groups, the need for mobilising support holds true for state actors as well. Thus, these norms are reflected in the 'rational' realm of tactical and strategic choices, negotiation approaches or in public communication of peace efforts, which is often perceived as propaganda. The silencing of dissent leads to further conformity of views and thus the reduction of options for conflict transformation: here the earlier described concepts of ethnic outbidding and violent outbidding as dominant strategies of the principals of the peace secretariats have to be kept in mind.

Altogether, the context-related determinants played a significant role in defining the mandate and the rules of engagement of the peace secretariats. On all sides, transformative engagement was reduced when tensions increased and the violent conflict escalated. 'Group-think' processes as well as psychological stress in situations of crisis limited the exploration of transformative action instead of perpetuation of escalatory action (Druckman 2006). This does not refer to political leaders only; it limits the opportunity for transformation from within critically. Whereas it seems understandable that decision-makers in crisis situations have insufficient time and resources to personally get involved in the search for innovative ideas for conflict resolution, such a role ideally could be seen for support structures. Thinking out of the box, as seen before, was not part of the mandate, or rather the self-perception of any of the peace secretariats in this research.

Since the mandates, however, were less explicit and formalised than commonly assumed in literature, the peace secretariats had other ways of knowing their limits. As the cases here suggest, they were intrinsic to them. They were part of their organisational identity. Transformative behaviour implies a different organisational identity – we can do this, because this is who we are (Whetten et al. 2009).

This leads to the second part of the assumption on the organisational characteristics and highlights the following identity traits as defining organisational identity: proximity to the principal, political alignment/ identification, professionalism and access to resources.

Organisational identity was introduced in the theoretical chapter as a concept explaining the differences, or perhaps the similarities, in behaviour of the peace secretariats. As the case studies show, agency was enacted and limited in similar ways on the basis of above determinants. At the same time, these determinants also explain the variation of levels of agency among the case studies.

The government secretariat SCOPP showed the strongest agency, as it appeared to have relatively more freedom to engage the principal, ask questions and supply suggestions. How can this relative higher scope for agency be explained? The reasons notably lead back to the same determinants that explain similarity.

First, good rapport and trustful relationships between the heads of the secretariats and their respective principals contributed to the relative higher scope for agency as compared to other agencies but also served as an assurance against agency discretion (Calvert et al. 1989). All principals knew 'their' heads of the peace secretariats personally; they often had worked together previously. This allowed for proximity to otherwise often less accessible leaders. This aspect was less relevant for the LTTE than for the Muslim and government secretariats.

Second, political alignment and identification with the strategies of the principal are considered key features of organisational design in political contexts (Lupia 2001; Shapiro 2005). They were found in all peace secretariats and in particular with their key staff. Whereas this aspect contributed to the before-mentioned closeness and was a key feature of stewardship arrangements, it also reduced agency, since it reduced the scope for alternative thinking and dissent. Although found in all three secretariats, this feature appeared to be less prominent in the government secretariat where alternative thinking took place internally. Such reflection and other expressions of agency were limited nevertheless, and further reduced at times of political insecurity and when leadership changes took place, e.g., in the transition period after the presidential elections in 2005. Both at SCOPP and at the PSM, dissenting staff left. The latter was not an option for LTTE cadres, or at least not a comfortable one. Dissent thus was not expressed openly and observers questioned the extent to which alternative thinking was possible with the organisation.

Third, professionalism played a significant role in the self-perception of all three secretariats and was a source of pride. This was also expressed in the hand selection of staff for the secretariats. As noted before, this trait was not based on an objective definition but rather the understanding of the respective staff regarding which features of their work quality and ethics were considered to be professional standards. While

this applied to the bureaucratic standards of the government secretariat, such features were less prominent in the LTTE and the Muslim peace secretariats. Whether this trait increased the level of agency was unclear and depended on the job description. Whereas some saw their role as providing expertise on a certain issue and left political analysis to the principal, others saw their role as provider of political analysis and were inclined to make proactive proposals. With the exception of the PSM, the former personnel did not describe themselves as contributing to conflict transformation since they did not see it as part of their job. Professionalism did not include conflict transformation expertise.

Finally, access to resources was considered a distinctive organisational identity trait that determines agency. The financial and personnel resources, office premises, equipment, vehicles and other aspects counted as the resources, and all three cases need to be considered as well-resourced as compared to other units within their organisational contexts. This last trait, however, appears hardly to have affected agency directly, although some former staff of secretariats mentioned the lack of staff as a reason, for example, not to engage more in communication. The effect appeared to be of a more indirect nature and ambivalent, since it depended on external perceptions. On the one hand, agency was encouraged when colleagues or other organisations respected the secretariat's status, which among other aspects depended on its access to resources. On the other hand, it raised criticism from the public and civil society organisations and might have contributed to a reduced engagement with those audiences.

Another element of the resource factor was the aspiration of access to resources through the peace secretariat, as in the case of the LTTE. As described earlier, the peace secretariat played a central role in relationship building with the international community and served the LTTE's statebuilding project. While this appeared as a calculated risk in the government's negotiation strategy of 2002, it latter became one of the central criticisms of those actors opposing negotiations with the LTTE.

In sum, the findings on access to resources resonate well with the earlier discussion of unintended consequences of support for peace secretariats and the systemic linkages between different secretarial functions. They also provide food for thought on questions of external assistance in peace negotiations, which are discussed in section 9.4.

Altogether, the findings on organisational identity define the scope for agential behaviour and its limitations. Thus, organisational identity can be seen as the motivating or restraining force, or driver, for transformational agency. At the same time, the context determinants appear to 'set the stage', to define the framework conditions of agential engagement in the form of the political system, the type of violent conflict and the interests and fears of the stakeholders, as well as the level of escalation.

Notably, these two elements seem to be determined by two different, albeit overlapping, fields: organisation theory and psychology play a dominant role in explaining the identity aspect; political science and particular conflict and peace studies often focus on the contextual, structural side. The literature most useful for this research concerns concepts and theories in which both fields meet, e.g., in the combination of organisation theory and political science in Moe's theory of public bureaucracy (1984, 1995, 1997), in Putnam's two-level game (1988), and in Kelman and other work on social-psychological dimensions of violent conflict (1999, 2007).

This research argues that both elements need to be seen together as determining the agency of the peace secretariats as described in the conceptual framework that combines the different fields of research and literature. Both need to be combined in order to realistically understand the limitations and optimistically explore the potential of support structures that have strong contractual ties with a political principal.[468] The key to do so lies in the contract that manages the boundaries between the principal, the agent and their environment. Will then a different, more transformative contract make the agent more transformative? Can external supporters for example encourage a more far-reaching mandate and thus enhance transformative contributions? As this research shows, it is not that easy. The mandate of the PSM might have included intra-party consensus building but its activities to do so were nevertheless limited due to its organisational identity.

This points to the particularly prominent role of identity in the conceptual framework. In explicitly differentiating between identity and structure, this conceptual framework deviates significantly from structuration literature that subsumes all agency determining and enabling factors under structure, which in turn is enacted and transformed by agency.

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[468] This is, for example, confirmed in an evaluation of the Track 1.5 dialogue process of the One-Text-Initiative, which found the initiative's impact limited by context, e.g., the absence of a robust Track 1 process and the top-down nature of decision-making in Sri Lanka, as well as organisational identity and design (Timberman 2007, pp.2-3).

Differentiating between those aspects of structure that appear to be relatively 'external' to agential actors, e.g., the conflict phase, and those that can be described as relatively 'internal', e.g., the level of identification with the principal, might deviate from standard literature, but serves the analytical and conceptual purpose of this research (see the earlier mentioned similar discussion about internal organisational /external societal structure, e.g., in Child 1997; Pemberton 2000). Here, it is argued that the differentiation does not concern the organisational structure and the structure 'beyond', but rather between the 'objective', contextual structure and the relatively more 'subjective' identity. This resembles a distinction of external and internal structures, the latter referring to those structures within the agent (Stones 2005).

This appears feasible since the individual can accept or reject many aspects of ascribed identity and form a self-concept (Erikson 1980; Marcia 1966). Just as an individual actor chooses to be who she is, an organisation forms its own identity. Identity in a concept of self-definition can be determined to a certain extent by the very individuals and organisations whom and which it defines.[469] This differentiation between a role assumed by an individual in an organisation on the basis of social constitution, and the role taken up by an individual on the basis of self-reflection and choice, allows for transformation (Wendt 1992).

At the same time, the conceptual framework meets its limits where it tries to distinguish too clearly between structural and identity-related determinants. This is, for example, the case where the conceptual framework attempts to integrate functions into identity and rules for interaction into structure. These appear as artificial differentiations: mandate and functions might as well be seen as conditions set by the principals rather than defined by the agent; on the other hand the agent might bring identity aspects into the interpretation of interaction rules.

Leaving aside the question of identity versus structure, identity deserves a prominent place in the conceptual framework since it is a powerful explanation of the agency of change agents. Whereas circumstances might play a role in making a change agent successful, change agents mostly choose their transformative role. It is part of their self-concept to enable change around them.

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[469] This argument acknowledges the fact that some aspects of identity are more difficult to choose or reject individually. In the context of violent conflict, both the in-group and out-group often ascribe identity traits such as ethnicity with little scope for the individual to choose (see the constructionist-positivist debate between Jabri and Mitchell in Bloomfield et al. (2006)).

This agential orientation can be explained with psychological concepts of motivation, e.g., the concept of self-actualisation (Maslow 1970). Such an explanation transpires from self-descriptions of insider mediators and embedded third parties used in conflict transformation literature to describe the outstanding potential of certain individuals to be change agents within their own communities (Mason 2009). Their potential is rooted in their own personal experiences and their dedication to empathise and respect all sides alike independent of their affiliation with one side or the other.[470] This attitude towards their work and mission lets these individuals "assimilate their work into the identity into the self, i.e., work actually becomes part of the self part of the individual's definition of himself" (Maslow 1998, p.1). Whereas individuals working in the peace secretariats might well have been motivated by self-actualising needs as well, their attitudes towards constructive conflict transformation differed from those of insider mediators. The concept thus helps understand why the peace secretariats in this research could not be such insider mediators.

While the motivational explanation resonates well with stewardship theory (Davis et al. 1997), the transformative agency of the secretariats remained limited due to other aspects of their stewardship identity that appeared to overrule self-actualisation and the willingness to engage constructively: identification with the principal's strategy, professionalism and political alignment. Thus, only in the initial phase could the government peace secretariat entertain cordial relations with their LTTE counterpart. When tensions increased and the government's strategy became more cautious, the space for constructive engagement decreased.

The peace secretariats' potential to serve as an insider mediator or go-between for the conflict parties was therefore limited. Although they might have contributed to conflict transformation and showed a potential to serve as a change agent, in particular within their constituency, their identity was too strongly connected to their principals' interests and they could not step out of their own shadow.

This points to the importance of designing organisational identity. If a negotiation support organisation is intended to contribute to conflict transformation, the transformative potential has to be anchored in its organisational identity and the mandate, since these will affect the rules and resources of the organisation. The following section discusses options for supporting peace secretariats towards this transformative direction.

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[470] Case studies of insider mediators show that being part of one conflict party does not automatically rule out mediative engagement; some serve as negotiators at the same time as acting as insider mediators (Mason 2009).

9.4 Options for Supporting Peace Secretariats

This discussion returns to the original motivation of the research. The author investigated the role of the peace secretariats in the peace negotiations of 2002/2003 and the following years in order to understand the potential and limitations of these organisations for conflict transformation. In doing so, she indirectly examined the expectations and the efforts of her previous employer and other third-party actors in helping establish and build the capacities of these negotiation support organisations. Whereas this research is neither an evaluation of the assistance to the peace secretariats nor of the secretariats' performance during the peace process, several of the findings point to questions and recommendations that should be considered when supporting peace secretariats or similar negotiation support organisations.

These considerations are based on the assumption that third-party actors, e.g., facilitators, dialogue organisers, donors and diplomatic missions supporting peace talks, wish to support the negotiating parties beyond the basic improvement of secretarial facilities that concern telecommunication and IT access, resources to organise transport for negotiating teams, and skills in minute taking and archiving of documentation. This is not to say that these secretarial functions are not important; on the contrary, this research shows that most interviewees considered them as crucial for the negotiation process.

Third-party actors often intend to strengthen capacities that go beyond these facilities: they wish to contribute to de-escalation of violence, increasing contact between the parties, and improvement of relationships for the sake of the negotiations. Moreover, they often aim at enhancing all parties' readiness for talks and at creating a certain parity of status among the negotiating parties by means of capacity building and institution building. Some third-party actors hope that the support organisations will contribute to wider change within their constituencies, e.g., by engaging the wider public in the peace process or by consulting stakeholders relevant for the progress of the talks. Some of these contributions, however, are based on assumptions that the beneficiaries do not share.

With a view to supporting non-state armed groups in negotiations, the ambivalence of capacity building is often particularly clear. On the one hand, the capacity builder has to assume the readiness for transformational change that will come along with the

peace process, and on the other hand, she has to monitor and ensure that this change will indeed take place. This points to a wider risk that support for conflict transformation has to consider: the largest part of the transformational process is beyond the control of the third-party actors supporting the process.

This points to the foremost observation that should be considered if supporting peace secretariats: that external support despite significant financial resources has a very limited influence on the complex conflict system and its dynamics. Indeed, the third-party actors interviewed in this research did not have a strong role in the design and capacity building for the peace secretariats despite their strong financial investment. Rather, the conflict parties established the organisations to a large extent 'on their own'.

Thus, while being useful for third-party actors as well, these reflections address mainly the potential principals, leaders and staff of negotiation support organisations. They have a dominant role in designing the organisations while often lacking the resources or time to reflect on their options.

As this research shows, the design of the peace secretariats was based on the conflict parties' immediate requirements in the peace talks; and although there is evidence of reference to other countries' and peace processes' experiences, the conflict parties or the third parties supporting them did not study the design options in detail.

In addition, this research points to the importance of the design phase. The initial decisions on the organisational mandate, process and structure will inform the establishment and to a large extent also the lifetime of the organisation in spite of later adjustments. Of particular relevance are expectations that are formed by key stakeholders based upon their initial perceptions of the organisations; these expectations will contribute to the partly inevitable role conflicts but also to the reputation of the organisation as a symbol for its party's commitment to the peace process.

Addressing practitioners rather than an academic audience, the following is formulated in practical language and avoids references. The suggestions, however, build on the argument developed in this research.

1. Consider support organisations for negotiations right from the start. Most negotiating teams will require support during the process. The design and establishment should take place early in the prenegotiation phase since the secretariats can play a supportive role during negotiation preparations.

Make the establishment and design of support structures a topic in the 'talks about talks' between the negotiating parties. Use the opportunity for a reflection on creating additional communication channels outside the negotiators. Consider crisis management and emergency communication channels.

If possible, consider the option of sharing some functions of secretariats, e.g., transport arrangements, organisation of press releases after talks and capacity building. The further the sharing of support resources goes, the more it can contribute to trust building between the negotiating parties. Sharing support resources, however, needs to be regarded as a function of trust between the conflict parties and the pressure on them from intra-party opposition to the peace process.

2. Cover all relevant work functions. The functions of peace secretariats can cover a variety of areas in secretarial tasks, capacity building, communication, intra-party consultation, inter-party facilitation, monitoring and implementation of negotiation results.

Ensure that all relevant aspects are covered, either by the secretariat or other support structures, and are resourced sufficiently. If, for example, intra-party consultation is delegated to third-party actors or civil society on Track 2, ensure adequate involvement and feedback of the negotiation team and its support structures in order to encourage commitment of the negotiating party and ownership of the stakeholders consulted.

Develop a clear understanding of priorities based on conflict and risk analysis and monitor changes in the conflict dynamics. Not all functions appear relevant at all negotiation stages; thus functions of support organisations should be adjusted. Analysis and monitoring should be explicit tasks of support organisations; they can consult with a wide array of outside organisations, e.g., think tanks and lower track organisations, while ensuring confidentiality of strategy discussion. This ensures sound information sharing and widens the scope for alternative strategies.

Develop a clear division of labour and line of communication if multiple support organisations are involved in the negotiations and the wider peace process. The arrangement should be based on the needs of the negotiation process and the different role requirements of those engaging with different audiences within and outside the conflict party. This is particularly important if support organisations cannot rely on established bureaucratic structures and routines.

3. Increase the level of empowerment of support organisations. If peace secretariats are established on the premise of close affiliation and alignment with their principal, they can be entrusted and empowered with strategic tasks that strengthen the principal's basis for decision making. The more empowered support organisations are, the better use they can make of their expertise and resources in the best interest of the principal.

A particular potential lies in brainstorming and alternative scenario thinking as well as informal intra- and inter-party consultation, since they can engage with different viewpoints without making a political commitment.

Ensure smooth transitions when core staff are exchanged or when regime changes take place and affect changes of the principal. While the negotiations may be continued later or stopped, the support organisations can continue to support the peace process and provide valuable organisational memory.

4. Think beyond the immediate peace talks and ensure continuation during periods of stalemate and after a peace agreement.

In the case of a stalemate and breakdown of official communication, support organisations have the potential to maintain a more informal channel of communication with the other negotiating parties, which, for example, could allow for submitting offers for re-engagement or testing new proposals. They can also ensure that the monitoring and implementation of agreements is continued.

After a peace agreement has been reached, negotiation support usually ceases to exist and the facilitators withdraw after a short time. Maintaining the support organisations for at least a certain period of transition ensures continuity and gives structure to the newly emerging post-war scenario. Support organisations mandated to engage in monitoring and implementation functions often need to continue their work or hand over functions to new organisations.

If support organisations are maintained, their organisational design will have to reflect the new modalities, e.g., of power sharing among the agreement partners.

5. Pay attention to the organisational design. This aspect has many facets, but most importantly it concerns two, at times conflicting, demands: confidentiality versus inclusivity.

Support organisations need to be considered as confidential partners and service providers of their principals. They are often closely aligned and identify with them. This limits the potential for inclusiveness in their actions as well as in their design. As much as possible, the organisational design should reflect political coalitions and alliances among negotiating parties. If relevant stakeholders cannot be represented in the support organisation, working arrangements and consultation mechanisms can contribute to creating a sense of inclusion and participation.

Another important aspect concerns the linkages between tracks. Negotiation support organisations are commonly found on Track 1 as they accompany official peace negotiations. The lack of capacity and the political culture often lead to a neglect of other societal levels and thus the wider public is marginalised. Addressing this problem, outreach of support organisations can be extended to the other tracks through integrated field offices that contribute to some of the communication, consultation and facilitation functions. Instead of institutionalised links, the support organisation can also organise activities on the other tracks or work with dedicated partner organisations.

Outreach and integration of alternative perspectives can be enhanced through a good mix in staff recruitment that involves loyal insiders and confidantes of the principal and coalition partners as well as experts on negotiation topics, and staff with strategic and negotiation skills and a readiness to engage in conflict resolution. While topical expertise can be found externally, the secretariat needs to provide direction in the formulation and implementation of the negotiation strategy.

If there is an expectation of the peace secretariat to go beyond negotiation support and to contribute to conflict transformation, this needs to be reflected in staff qualifications. Once staff show readiness to listen and question their own positions as well as empathy and respect for the others' needs and fears, their potential to engage constructively towards conflict transformation increases.

6. Consider the symbolic message of peace support structures. This concerns the signalling function of support organisations that often are seen as a metaphor for their principal's peace commitment. Their establishment, maintenance and closure symbolises commitment, and a resourceful organisation implies that the principal is ready to invest in peace. Those who feel alienated and marginalised in the peace ef-

fort, however, might read the symbol differently, and as a result the symbol has an unintended, antagonising effect on these audiences.

Other symbolic messages that may be conveyed in aspects of organisational design or the title of the organisation concern the parity of status of conflict parties and the representation of marginalised stakeholders.

At times, the establishment of a support organisation may also reveal other interests of the principal; in the case of non-state armed groups it often signals legitimacy of the conflict party as a negotiation partner as well as international recognition (through contacts with the facilitators and other members of the international community).

7. Strengthen the reflective and strategic capacities of support organisations. This is both a question of mandate and assignment of functions and of capacity building. Both staff with bureaucratic background and military cadres often lack experience in strategic reflection and, even more importantly, in challenging their superior's thinking. Exploring their potential proactive agency should therefore involve a reflection of their role and the expectations that are placed upon them. Often, it might be useful if the principal participates in the exploration, and principal and agent can discuss their relationship. Capacity building to peace secretariats should entail the encouragement of communicative and strategic skills and techniques.

It needs to be noted, that such capacity building and a frank discussion of subordinate relationships will encounter cultural and hierarchical limitations. It appears, however, to be a prerequisite for transformative action of such organisations that otherwise are considered as serving their principal's directions without question.

8. Embed peace secretariats in a peace infrastructure. Negotiation support organisations alone will be overwhelmed by the complexity of tasks involved in the negotiation process, let alone the wider peace process. Create linkages with other tracks and coordinate with other peace support actors on the domestic and international levels in order to increase their effectiveness and allow them to focus on core functions.

While support organisations on Track 1 will be often seen in a coordinating or guiding role, there are functions that can also be delegated to structures on the other tracks or to those working in parallel on Track 1. Their interactions should be guided by systemic thinking, considering synergies and unintended consequences of actions alike.

In fragile environments, domestic ownership should be encouraged as much as possible.

Civil society organisations often play a complementary and critical role accompanying the peace process and at times pointing out shortcomings and challenges. All actors should encourage constructive engagement and see their different roles as complementary rather than in black-and-white terms as condoning or condemning. Acting together as parts of a peace infrastructure, these organisations inform the political culture.

9. Coordinate support activities among third-party actors and develop a division of labour. This helps to provide more effective assistance and to avoid role conflict for the third-party actors**.** The latter is particularly relevant with a view to strengthening different functions such as mediation and facilitation, monitoring and capacity building.

Such coordination, or third-party assistance in general, often faces criticism of interventionism or a lack of respect towards state sovereignty. Transparency of the third-party actors and public commitment of the negotiating parties' principals are central preconditions for engagement, while bearing in mind that peace negotiations at times also involve secret and non-public activities.

Moreover, increase understanding between third-party actors that work with multiple or all parties and those that work with one conflict party. Both are needed and information sharing and coordination can increase synergies, or avoid missing relevant needs. Confidentiality about content of discussions, however, needs to be considered as an important concern of conflict parties since capacity building will touch upon sensitive information.

10. Consider risks of engagement and do not refrain from analysing the power and interests of conflict parties and stakeholders.

Institution building requires political realism in order to understand and take into account secondary interests, hidden agendas, politicisation and rent-seeking activities by political and functionary elites who can be found among all conflict parties. Awareness of these considerations is key for building effective organisations.

Likewise, third-party actors should engage with stakeholders in clarifying their own interests and agendas of engagement since a lack of transparency or a collision of interests will be used by opponents, or 'spoilers', to the peace process to undermine

and sabotage third-party engagement. Tools such as do-no-harm analysis and other conflict sensitivity and risk assessment need to be applied to Track 1 engagement in the same way as to other peacebuilding activities.

Peace secretariats and similar support structures have a strong symbolic role; they can signal commitment to peace or can carry less constructive messages. Third-party supporters need to consider the different stakeholders' perceptions and their own position within the complex conflict system. Constant monitoring of systemic feedback helps to see the overall picture.

Chapter 10 Theoretical Contextualisation, Suggestions for Further Research and Epilogue

This dissertation set out to answer questions that arose from practical experience. It discussed the contributions of the peace secretariats as organisations for negotiation support to the peace process and conflict transformation in Sri Lanka. It also looked behind these contributions with the aim to explain the organisations' potential and limitations. The previous chapters presented the empirical findings and answered the research questions. While the ninth chapter discussed the research questions and assumptions on the basis of the three Sri Lankan cases, it also offered insights that went beyond these concrete cases.

This chapter turns away from the findings and presents a discussion of the research from a bird's eye view. First, the main contributions of the research to theory development are summarised and recommendations for further research offered. Second, observations about the research process follow; and finally, a personal reflection concludes the chapter.

10.1 Contributions to Theory Development and Recommendations for Further Research

As noted in the introductory chapter, the objective of this research was not to develop formal theory but to theorise. Rather than trying to predict the behaviour of organisations such as peace secretariats the intention was to generate a working understand-

ing of them. Also, the methodological approach did not aim to provide for comparative research, and the results of the research remain without generalisation.

Thus, it might well be that peace secretariats in other negotiation and peace processes show different agential behaviour and invite a revision of the conceptual framework developed here. Nevertheless, this research can be seen as a building block contributing to further theory development, as George and Bennett argue for the case study approach (2005). To develop theory further, comparative research is required as a next step to test the assumptions and enhance the conceptual framework.

Besides the answers to the research questions, which were discussed in detail in the previous chapter, this research offers several additional contributions to theory development, which are outlined in the following. At the same time, many of these insights and observations are not conclusive and require further research. The following thus includes recommendations for further research in order to consolidate the contributions to theory development. Given the interdisciplinary character of the research, various areas of study are addressed.

First, the research investigates the conceptual disconnect between peace negotiations and conflict transformation. Both build on bodies of literature and concepts that do not often overlap despite coinciding in terms of timing and engaging to some extent the same actors. The peace secretariats are found at the intersection of these bodies of literature and research into their organisational behaviour enriches the understanding of both areas: it foremost shows that the actors in negotiations and conflict transformation might be the same; the role expectations that they experience in the negotiation context, however, may differ from those that set the scene for conflict transformation actors, and particular those of embedded third-party actors. This invites a more differentiated analysis of actors and their interests in peace processes than often found in literature. Besides developing categories of spoilers, hardliners, moderates and peace supporters, a differentiation of the various audiences and their agendas appears helpful.

Moreover, the experiences of the Sri Lankan peace process point in particular to the relevance of the parties excluded from the talks: their insufficient consultation deepened intra-party divisions and led, among other reasons, to a failure of the peace talks. This calls for a reconsideration of a regularly applied negotiation principle that focuses on the moderates of both parties: if the hardliners remain excluded, agreement between the moderates is not sustainable. Since it is not always possible to bring all stakeholders to the table, a better understanding of process design in nego-

tiations and its necessary connection to multi-track diplomacy is relevant. Different negotiation tables can be arranged, and negotiation and dialogue on different tracks can complement each other. Moreover, conflict sensitivity with a view to unintended consequences of support activities is needed – concerning both peacebuilding as well as peacemaking and negotiation support.

With a view to negotiations literature, the research bears witness to the difficulties of intra-party consensus building, a prerequisite for a peaceful agreement between conflict parties and a crucial ingredient to peace negotiations processes. Negotiation literature dealing with the balance between inter-party negotiation and representation of intra-party positions mostly focuses on a single negotiator position, but literature concerning labour contract negotiations and commercial negotiations considers negotiating teams and their division of labour in more detail. Bringing an understanding of negotiating teams to the context of intra-state peace negotiations, the research illustrates their division of labour, role conflicts and their interaction with principals and support structure.

Again, differentiation adds insights. With a view to the duality or two-level approaches in literature, this research points to an additional level that should be considered in highly internationalised conflict scenarios: interaction with the facilitators and other external third-party actors adds a third level to the intra- and inter-party relations. In the Sri Lankan situation, this led to the paradox of the stakeholders spending more time addressing international audiences than one another (Loganathan 2004; Goodhand et al. 2005). This scenario is likely to be relevant in other intra-state negotiations with non-state armed groups that are highly concerned about questions of legitimacy and international recognition.

In addition, the research calls for more attention to the preparations of negotiations and the seemingly 'technical details' of the prenegotiation phase. While a different outlook of the peace secretariats certainly would not have changed the overall outcome of the peace process, they could have used more strategic support and capacity building to improve their services to their principals. It can also not be ruled out that in other conflict contexts such support organisations might play a more transformative role. Thus, a more in-depth consideration of their establishment during prenegotiation appears helpful. Given some of the unintended consequences of the peace secretariats' functions and the design of the support structure, this dissertation also underlines the call of other authors for a 'do no harm' analysis of interventions before and during peace mediation efforts (Sørbø et al. 2011, p.135).

With a view to conflict transformation concepts, literature offers various categorisations of transformation types, or transformers in Miall's wording (2004), but does not often make the effort to differentiate transformative effects along these or other categories in order to develop a more fine-tuned understanding of the transformative process. Here, this research presents a detailed discussion, highlighting the difficulties in identifying and categorising transformative effects that at times overlap, counteract or enhance each other.

Consequently, systemic effects need to be considered in the analysis of conflict transformation effects. Besides the consideration of feedback loops between concrete transformative activities, their symbolic dimension needs to be considered in a systemic way. The symbolic meaning of the peace secretariats presented a particular finding that appears to receive little attention in conflict transformation literature. At home in the field of organisation studies, the analysis of organisational symbolism might be of interest to further the understanding of political actors and their agendas in transformation processes. This would complement constructivist readings of conflict transformation (Bernshausen & Bonacker 2011) and add to socio-psychological approaches such as Kaufman's theory of symbolic politics that explains ethnic violence with the mobilising symbolic power of group myths (2006b).

In addition, more insights on engaging 'insider-partials' and inspiring 'embedded third parties' should be sought. This research points to the dominating agendas of the principals of the conflict parties; given such a situation, how can the transformative potential in agents be strengthened? How can the principals be addressed in order to increase their interest in establishing transformative agents in the first place? How can their mandates to agents be inspired by the notion of 'enlightened self-interest', foregoing their short-term interests and engaging in integrative problem-solving with the other party? This connects to wider questions motivating conflict transformation studies.

Considering organisation theories, the dissertation highlights the need for further development of principal-agent theory. In the conceptual framework developed here, the theory proves to be suitable only in a limited way for non-western, non-democratic contexts. Authors such as Moe, who adapted the contract model to bureaucratic contexts in a western environment, noted this concern (Moe 1990), but organisation theorists have not responded to the call to develop alternative models in significant ways (Fukuyama 2004). Chapter 9 describes how the political context in the case studies at hand differs from Moe's assumptions and thus suggests a differentiation of the model according to political culture, e.g., in order to capture the influence of political patron-

age on agential power in negotiating the contract with the principal. Comparative studies of principal-agent relationships in different contexts would be useful to explore differences and commonalities.

Finally, agency theory is enriched by the distinction between identity, agency and structure. While certainly not revolutionising Giddens' structuration theory, this author suggests taking a closer look at the relevance of identity, both as ascribed by society and thus a 'structural force' and as attributed and thus defined by the agent itself and thus as an 'agential power'. This is particularly relevant in the context of violent, identity-based conflict where identity plays a significantly more important and at times fatal role than in other situations. As other authors have pointed out, social identity is plural and through its multiplicity of rules and schemas allows for agency (e.g., Whittington 1992). Understanding the limitations and the potential of different sets of identity traits in persons or organisations for their agency appears crucial for actors that are expected – or hoped – to contribute to large-scale social transformation processes.

Of particular interest might be the concept of organisational identity. It brings to attention the different layers of identity in the organisation that can be found in its members and its purpose, its relationships with other organisations and the system in which it is embedded. Reminding of Dugan's nested paradigm of conflict foci (1996), which describes the systemic connection between conflict issues, relationships, the wider subsystem and the overall conflict system, the concept of organisational identity illustrates the need for systemic intervention on different levels of organisation when addressing identity and agency. Moreover, with its roots in management literature and application in organisational change processes the concept offers opportunities for intervention design. The concept, for example, can be used when planning and assisting institution building for support structures since it invites self-reflection and points to avenues of potential identity transformation. This leads to the practical value of the research.

In addition to theory development, the dissertation contributes to the further development of practice concepts. Again, practitioner literature does not consider the establishment of support structures in peace negotiations in a significant way. In peace-building and conflict transformation literature, there is growing interest in so-called infrastructures for peace but the conceptualisation of these is in its initial stage (Hopp-Nishanka 2012). The dissertation offers valuable insight in both arenas through its observations about the establishment of and assistance to the peace secretariats (see section 9.4).

For the purpose of developing such concepts further, the attempts to visualise the explanations of agency are particularly useful, e.g., the interactions graphs that show the differences between the three peace secretariats. These point to further potential in developing analysis and policy tools for both conflict transformation as well as negotiation and mediation.

A specific idea for further research and development concerns the role of think tanks and similar policy advice organisations in peace processes and peace negotiations. The findings in this research point to the need for such advice, but at the same time political leaders appear to fear the possible homemade creation of dissent which would come with a mandate for 'thinking out of the box'. Yet, the need for such a role in peace processes exists and often cannot be answered by international or domestic third party actors; in order to receive sufficient trust from the respective in-group of each conflict party, such think tanks have to be 'on their team' – even more if the conflict party is a non-state armed group. Such think tanks resonate well with similar suggestions to create opportunities for creativity and problem solving during peace negotiations, e.g., Kelman's call for "occasional 'time-out' periods, when negotiators can engage in a non-committal, off-the-record process of brainstorming and exchange of ideas" (Kelman 1996, p.110). More research on the role of think tanks and identification of success stories is needed in order to show that these organisations have sufficient access and influence with their leadership.

Finally, the dissertation confronted challenges that concern the methodologies of doing qualitative research in post-war settings. More psychological insights into different emotional reactions of interview partners would be useful to assist the researcher in interpreting the interview results. While some interview partners appeared distant or seemed to hardly remember anything, others actively engaged in reframing past events and conflict dynamics. In light of a difficult military ending to the war, alternative opinions to the earlier, the failed peace process appeared charged with mistrust. The earlier perceived possibility of a successful peace process was sometimes denied and this affected, for example, individual readings of such contentious issues as the parity of status between the parties. This brings to attention the analysis of interests of interviewees who not only offered their memories and observations regarding past events, but added an interpretation based on their personal agendas.

Additional research might be required to shed more light and inform future research design. Besides, such research would also be of benefit to the field of conflict transformation in order to assist third-party practitioners with debriefing and dealing with

their own experiences in failing peace processes that see renewed violence and human rights violations.

10.2 Reconsidering the Research Process

At the end of a research process, a look back on the route taken resembles a review of a journey taken in the past. Was the process a success and in which terms? Which are the most remarkable insights, and would an alternative route have led to different ones? Were there surprises and unexpected moments?

The research process led to answering the research questions and thus can be considered successful. Looking back, the main findings regarding the contributions of the peace secretariats and the conditions of the secretariats' agency appear not surprising. The surprises, or unexpected insights of the research, lie in the details: in the symbolic relevance and meaning of the organisations, in the systemic feedback of different transformative effects and their unintended consequences, and in the relatively small contribution of third-party assistance that otherwise played a strong role in the peace process of 2002 and the following years.

These findings appear relevant and highlight a bigger picture than the original research questions intended: they reveal the complex connections of actors and actions within a conflict system; they illustrate the fragile power balance and the influence of stakeholders excluded from the peace talks. And although not a focus of the research, the findings cannot ignore the ambivalent effects of the internationalisation of a peace process.

Could these insights have been achieved in a different way? Clearly only a qualitative approach could have been used. The researcher, given the obviousness of the main findings, wondered at times if a longer explorative phase, a concentration of the research focus and a deductive approach towards a revised research question would have been suitable. It would have led to more concise and focused results, perhaps more clear-cut answers to less complex questions. This, however, would have reduced the scope of additional insights enumerated here. In particular, the reflection of the systemic dimension and the unintended consequences of support to the peace secretariats might have remained unrevealed.

The open search at the beginning of the research also led to the consideration of a wide body of literature from different disciplines. The research turned to be of inter-disciplinary nature, which proved adequate for the focus of interest.

The disadvantage of the inductive approach, however, is that it results in a complexity of observations, which is difficult to capture in a written record, contributes to a very long text and which makes those clear-cut findings impossible. On the contrary, the outcome of the research is to a certain extent that there are no easy answers. In addition, the inductive approach took several iterations between empirical research and theory search. These appeared at times difficult to document and certainly prolonged the search for answers. The author attempted to capture the iterations but acknowledges that these affect the readability of the dissertation.

The empirical material provided a challenge given the context of the cases. While the findings altogether present a sound reflection of the three cases, throughout the research process the author was concerned with balancing the data quality in terms of depth and density of description of the three case studies. In hindsight, the case study selection, however, was confirmed since the author could use her detailed knowledge of the context and some of the cases, as well as access to resource persons who provided high quality in interview findings, in order to understand the organisational and situational intricacies that each case presented.

This, lastly, helped to engage interviewees in a difficult situation with a topic seen by many political stakeholders as contentious. In such a context, silence, mistrust and blame often dominated the general atmosphere. The interview situation in the years 2010 and 2011 was crucially different from the time when the peace secretariats were first installed. Bringing back the memories of those earlier, very different days was at times a challenge, as was the contextualisation of the peace secretariats in their different times of activity. Both the interviewees' situation during these times and at the time of the interview needed to be considered.

Altogether, the researcher realises that her particular situation helped the research process in various ways that would not have been possible for researchers with a different background. At the same time, the case study selection and the methodological choice presented particular challenges to the research. In the end, these choices and the journey of research altogether are closely connected to the original motivation of the research.

10.3 Epilogue

A coffee shop in Colombo at the end of March 2012:

The researcher meets with one of the interviewees who agreed to read parts of the dissertation and comment on the description of the peace secretariats. The conversation, however, mostly circles around recent international events concerning Sri Lanka and reactions of the Sri Lankan polity.

A few days earlier, a US-sponsored resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Council had been passed, which urges the Sri Lankan government to investigate allegations of human rights violations during the last phases of the war against the LTTE in 2009. This led to an outcry among Sri Lankan government politicians who once again condemned international interference in Sri Lanka's sovereignty and threatened local journalists and human rights activists who contributed to the resolution with background information for being traitors to the motherland.

The government claimed that its priority would be the implementation of the recommendations of its own investigations that are summarised in the report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, which had been presented to the government in November 2011. This report, while calling for devolution and demilitarisation of the former war zone, among other recommendations, dismissed allegations that Sri Lankan troops deliberately targeted civilians during the last phase of the war.

Human rights activists on the contrary argued that this was the case and called for war crimes investigations against the government's top leadership. Alleged evidence was presented not only in a 2011 report of an experts panel of the UN Secretary General but also in two documentaries aired by the UK TV station Channel 4, which received international attention and found a highly divided audience in Sri Lanka.

Against this background, the peace secretariats' activities, the earliest now ten years ago, appear to lie long in the past. That does not mean that they were futile. How they will contribute to the future of Sri Lanka, however, remains to be seen. Will the Peace Secretariat for Muslims continue to exist and contribute to consensus building and the representation of minority concerns? Will the earlier efforts of SCOPP to prepare the grounds for reconciliation, which are being continued by its last secretary general in his position as presidential advisor on reconciliation, bear fruit in a climate of repression and majoritarian authoritarianism, as many see it? And finally, what will happen to the aspirations of political transformation that continue to be expressed by parts of the Tamil polity? Will these find channels of constructive engagement or, as feared by

many again, lead to another era of violent resistance and militancy fuelled by new grievances due to the government's alleged 'Sinhalisation' and militarisation of former LTTE-controlled areas?

Will in such a tragic scenario, perhaps after another 10 years' time, the archives of the government's secretariat have to be opened again to inform yet another new round of peace talks, and will the lessons learned of the last peace process then be used by a new peace secretariat?

Annexes

Annex 1.1: Map of Sri Lanka
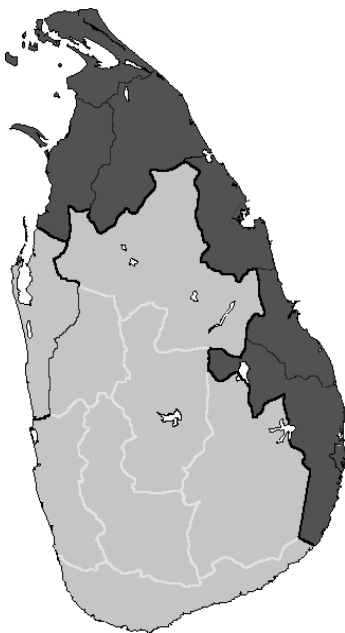
While the above map shows provinces and cities of Sri Lanka, the map below shows the territorial claims of Tamil Eelam according to the Vaddukodai resolution of 1976. Other claims include parts of the North Western Province with the city Puttalam or parts of Tamil habitats in the country inner provinces.

Sources:

http://www.mapsofworld.com/sri-lanka/srilanka_states_and_city_map.gif

http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_Eelam

Annex 1.2: Research stages and timeline

Stage 1: research design and empirical research (July 2009 – December 2010)

July 2009 – February 2010[471]: Framing of research questions and initial assumptions based on initial literature review

March – December 2010: First phase of data collection: development and testing of interview guides and conducting of 34 interviews; parallel documentation and coding of material, theorising and memo writing of first ideas to conceptualise findings, revisions in interviews

November – December 2010: Presentation and discussion of preliminary findings and first conceptual ideas in context of PhD colloquium and with other dissertation candidates

Stage 2: literature research and revision of the conceptual framework (January – June 2011)

December 2010 – June 2011: Literature research on peace secretariats, negotiation support and conflict transformation; identification of relevant theoretical concepts to explain the central findings, writing of theory chapters and iterative development of conceptual framework, parallel revisions of assumptions

July – August 2011: Revision of chapters in part 1

Stage 3: synthesis of the empirical findings and conceptual framework (September 2011 – March 2012)

September – December 2011: Writing of empirical analysis, parallel second phase of additional interviews to fill gaps in findings and to contact interview partners not available at earlier phase

January – March 2012: Synthesis

Stage 4: editing and proofreading (April – July 2012)

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[471] This period also includes a four-months break.

Annex 1.3: List of interview partners

Altogether 34 interviews were conducted. Interview partners are made anonymous for several reasons but are listed here according to their categorisation; interview partners can fit into several of the four categories:

- Insiders: staff of the peace secretariats, mostly in middle and top-management levels

- Partners: staff in organisational units of conflict parties that cooperated with the peace secretariat, e.g., staff of other government departments or from civil society (for example, as members of boards and working groups)

- Observers: academic and civil society members who have a good knowledge of the peace secretariats' activities in the overall context of the peace process

- Third-party actors: donors to the peace secretariats and other (domestic or international) third-party actors who supported or collaborated with the secretariats for different purposes, e.g., facilitation or capacity building

Insiders	Partners	Observers	Third-party actors
13	8	9	10

1.	Observer, Third party	01.04.2010, 12.04.2010, 20.04.2010
2.	Third party, Observer	06.04.2010
3.	Third party	22.04.2010
4.	Third party	14.05.2010
5.	Third party	28.05.2010
6.	Partner	10.06.2010
7.	Observer	11.06.2010
8.	Insider	15.06.2010
9.	Observer	15.06.2010
10.	Observer, Partner	16.06.2010
11	Insider	17.06.2010

12.	Partner	23.06.2010
13.	Insider	23.06.2010
14.	Partner	01.07.2010
15.	Insider	01.07.2010
16.	Observer, Partner	05.07.2010
17.	Insider	05.07.2010, additional information in February 2012
18.	Insider, Third party	08.07.2010
19.	Third party	12.07.2010
20.	Third party	12.07.2010
21.	Insider	14.07.2010
22.	Partner	16.07.2010
23.	Insider	20.07.2010
24.	Partner	28.07.2010
25.	Insider	05.08.2010
26.	Observer	27.08.2010
27.	Insider	06.09.2010
28.	Observer, Partner	14.09.2010
29.	Insider	30.09.2010, 08.03.2012
30.	Insider	07.10.2010
31.	Third party	15.10.2010
32.	Insider	17.11.2010
33.	Third party	14.12.2010, additional information in February 2012
34.	Observer	Email communication January/February 2012

Annex 1.4: Semi-structured interview guide

Semi-structured interview guides were developed for the four categories of interview partners. They differ, however, only in language and the order and priority of questions. The example below concerns interviews with 'insiders', i.e., the staff of peace secretariats.

1. Explanation of interview, introduction to myself and topic – appreciation not evaluation, confidentiality, do not mention my assumptions; permission to record

2. Establishing the connection/relationship of interviewee with PS – position, period of involvement, activities before and afterwards?

3. Description of PS – depending on involvement of interviewee

   Info about establishment: Reasons? Initiative? Did you follow any suggestions? External examples?

   Organisational characteristics, number of staff, office

   Objectives, goals and strategies according to mandate

   Functions – first speak freely, then elaborate along list of functions:

   (support services (admin, logistics, secretariat) - info sharing and communication, public participation – coordination and consultation with stakeholders – information, advice, capacity building – dialogue and mediation – difficult communication/ back channel – political proposals or debates – facilitate processes – monitoring implementation)

   Mandate and decision-taking, relationship with stakeholder representatives, funders

   Role and interaction with other peace secretariats and other units – what was the role of the PS (driver, service provider, facilitator, obstacle, etc.), link to other tracks

   Funding – sources, accountability and funder's influence on mandate and functions

   Culture of the PS – ask for values, behaviour and routines, beliefs, opinions, relationships, rules; particularly ask for/point to PS' view of self and other stakeholders

4. Timeline: relate the history of PS along conflict history, windows of opportunity, turning points. Then clarify who took decisions? What brought about change? How much was PS influenced by external events/by internal processes?

5. Explore understanding of effectiveness – according to the official understanding, the public perception and personal view; if necessary go back to no. 3 and differentiate along timeline
   – effectiveness in mandated functions
   – contribution to CT and peace process (ask for own definition; later point to communication/contact; point towards CT types (Miall: context – structure – actors – issues – personal)

   in order to understand better:

   o if there were problems, what would have been required to make PS achieve its goals? Distinguish between internal and external factors – inside and outside the PS
   o Imagination: In another ideal peace process, what could have been the PS' role? What would have needed to be different?
   o What would have needed to stay the same so this scenario would not be realised?

   (If interviewee was involved as staff: would you personally have liked to do different things, or things differently?)

6. Appreciation – any other thoughts or questions of interviewee, thanks

Annex 1.5: Coding scheme for interviews

Interview recordings were coded following this scheme and clustered accordingly.

Establishment: process of, reasons for, initiators of

Mandate: form of, process of mandating, control of, revisions in, objectives, strategies

Structure: internal/organisational, hierarchical issues within, governance, informal relationships, office space, connection with other units, connections to local level/ other tracks

Staff: selection, capacities and skills, professional background, further qualification and training, career concerns, role of external advisors, culture, team concerns, self views, views of other peace secretariats, views of observers, perceived differences from rest of party environment (internal or external)

Functions (operational and symbolic (intended): priorities, changes in, relevance for the conflict party, problems and weaknesses

Inter-party contact and kinds of collaboration with other peace secretariats: communication, cooperation, facilitated, spontaneous/personal initiatives

Role of organisation: role of specific persons/positions, views of own conflict party, views of other parties, views of observers, relationship with negotiators, power

Time line of events and PS activities: 2002/3 talks, ISGA proposal, 2004 elections and search for new approach, tsunami/P-TOMS, 2006 ceasefire talks, APRC, proscription of LTTE, conduct of war, efforts in ending war, killing of Puleedevan, after declaration of victory, closure of SCOPP

Achievements: concerning mandate (effectiveness), concerning performance (efficiency), symbolic meaning (achieved, not necessarily intended), examples of specific changes achieved (impact)

External support: funding, capacity building, procedures, other requirements

Alternative scenarios: title, missing functions, options for improvement, radically different solutions

**Annex 1.6: Presentation of empirical findings at the end of first stage of re-
search**

The following material consists of three documents that were presented on the occa-
sion of a PhD colloquium on December 8, 2010 in Berlin under supervision of Prof. Dr.
Dr. Giessmann.

**The contribution of institutionalised dialogue and negotiation
support structures to conflict transformation.
The case of the peace secretariats in Sri Lanka
(working title)**

Discussion of preliminary empirical results and first ideas for modeling

December 8, 2010

Research assumptions:

1. While institutionalised negotiation support structures are not sufficient
   for explaining the success, or failure, of the peace process, they can con-
   tribute to conflict transformation.
2. Both external context-related factors and internal organisational charac-
   teristics determine the organisation's contributions.
3. The organisational characteristics can be influenced through external as-
   sistance, e.g., through capacity building.

Research questions:

- Which functions do peace secretariats as support structures for negotia-
  tions have in the peace process and to what extent do they contribute to
  conflict transformation?
- How can their contributions and possible limitations be explained?

Peace secretariats are institutionalised support structures that have been established and
are mandated by at least one of the conflict parties before or during official peace talks
with the intention of supporting the parties and the peace process.

Their functions comprise:

- Secretarial, logistical, administrative and advisory support for negotiations (incl.
  capacity building for conflict parties);
- Communication and public participation;
- Facilitation of dialogue and mediation;
- Implementation of negotiation results (incl. monitoring of ceasefire violations).

The following presents a short summary of preliminary empirical findings that are the foundation for modeling (see two draft models that explain the interactions of the peace secretariats as well as the determinants of the PS agency):

Functions of peace secretariats

1. Official functions of the PS are defined in mandates and goals and depend on the negotiation strategy.
2. They include various tasks of negotiations support, secretarial tasks and support for monitoring the ceasefire agreement.
3. Findings on the relevance of the different functions of the PS seem to vary for each PS (SCOPP: facilitating the monitoring of the CFA, coordination, later propaganda machine; LTTE PS: communication with international community ("foreign ministry"); PSM: consensus building and representation).
4. Inter-party dialogue and bridge building plays a less relevant role in the interviewees' assessment than assumed. This is mainly explained by the restrictive mandate and the dependence on track 1. The successful negotiations of a tsunami-relief mechanism by the PS indicate that they could have had a more active, independent role in negotiations.
5. Besides the official functions, the PS also serve symbolic functions: they represent commitment to peace (government); they signal recognition of the legitimacy of the party's claim to be part of the peace process (Muslims); they signal establishment of bureaucratic and state-like structures (LTTE).

Limitations in transformative contribution

6. There is only very little evidence regarding to transformative activities; however, all interviewees consider the contributions of the PS and their functions as essential for the negotiations and the peace process.
7. Achievements of the PS that are mentioned by staff interviewees and observers are not so much in the area of conflict transformation but more in those of conflict management and negotiation support.
8. Contribution to conflict transformation is difficult for interviewees to report; it is not something associated with the PS. Questions regarding a lasting impact of transformative activities are overshadowed by the military end of the war, efforts are considered obsolete. Moreover, SCOPP seems to have initiated activities but implementation often depended on other parts of the administration.
9. Interviews with PS staff (SCOPP, PSM) reveal that they personally and as a team would have liked to play different, more transformative roles, however, proactive moves towards expansion of the mandate were not considered by them.
10. Reasons why the mandate could not be expanded (or, in some parts, implemented) differ: SCOPP staff considered themselves part of the bureaucracy and therefore should not intervene in political tasks. PSM felt that the political climate was too tense and the organisation could not risk political exposure.

Agency

11. Principals (politicians, leaders) decide on the mandate (all 3).
12. Principals depend on political interest groups that inform their conflict parties' positions (for SCOPP and PSM, for LTTE to limited extent).
13. The mandate (as well as the negotiation strategy altogether) depends on political context (regime type, governance) and conflict context (conflict type and phase) (valid for all 3).
14. While the mandate of the Muslim and LTTE PS remained static, the mandate of the government's PS was adapted.

15. Moments of adaptation (as well as change of negotiation strategy) are either turning points in the conflict/peace process or political changes (elections) (for SCOPP). In the case of SCOPP, regime changes also led to changes in the PS' secretariat.
16. PS leadership influences efficacy and efficiency and organisational culture, but only to a minor extent the level of strategic direction (SCOPP, PSM).
17. PS organisational cultures depend on their organisational environment (SCOPP bureaucracy, LTTE NSAG striving for statebuilding, PSM political party) but are strongly influenced by the conflict context.
18. PS experience contradicting expectations of their diverse audiences (principal, other agencies serving the principal, interest groups, international community, donors) as a dilemma.
19. Especially expectations of transformation and representation of principal's position were ambivalent, could not do both at the same time (all 3).
20. Expectations of outsiders (civil society, domestic and international peace supporters, partly donors) that the PS should go beyond their mandate and help transformation did not consider mandate and role of PS sufficiently/did not "understand" the loyalty of the PS towards their principal (especially for SCOPP and PSM, partly for LTTE).

Meaning of the PS

21. The set-up of one PS for each negotiating party signals parity/equal structure (or in PSM case, its aspiration), but the parties contest this interpretation for political/rhetorical reasons (SCOPP, LTTE).
22. The relevance of the PS' existence goes beyond their actual functions; they symbolise commitment to peace (and in the case of LTTE bureaucratisation and "statebuilding") and thus were maintained even after the end of talks.
23. When communication from both PS of the govt. and the LTTE turned increasingly aggressive and accusatory, observers from media and civil society started to call SCOPP and later both organisations "war secretariats".
24. The ending of each PS' existence (or in the case of PSM the continuation) represents/symbolises the outcome of the process for the party (SCOPP not required anymore as there is peace, LTTE PS destroyed/'disappeared', PSM still trying to find its role).
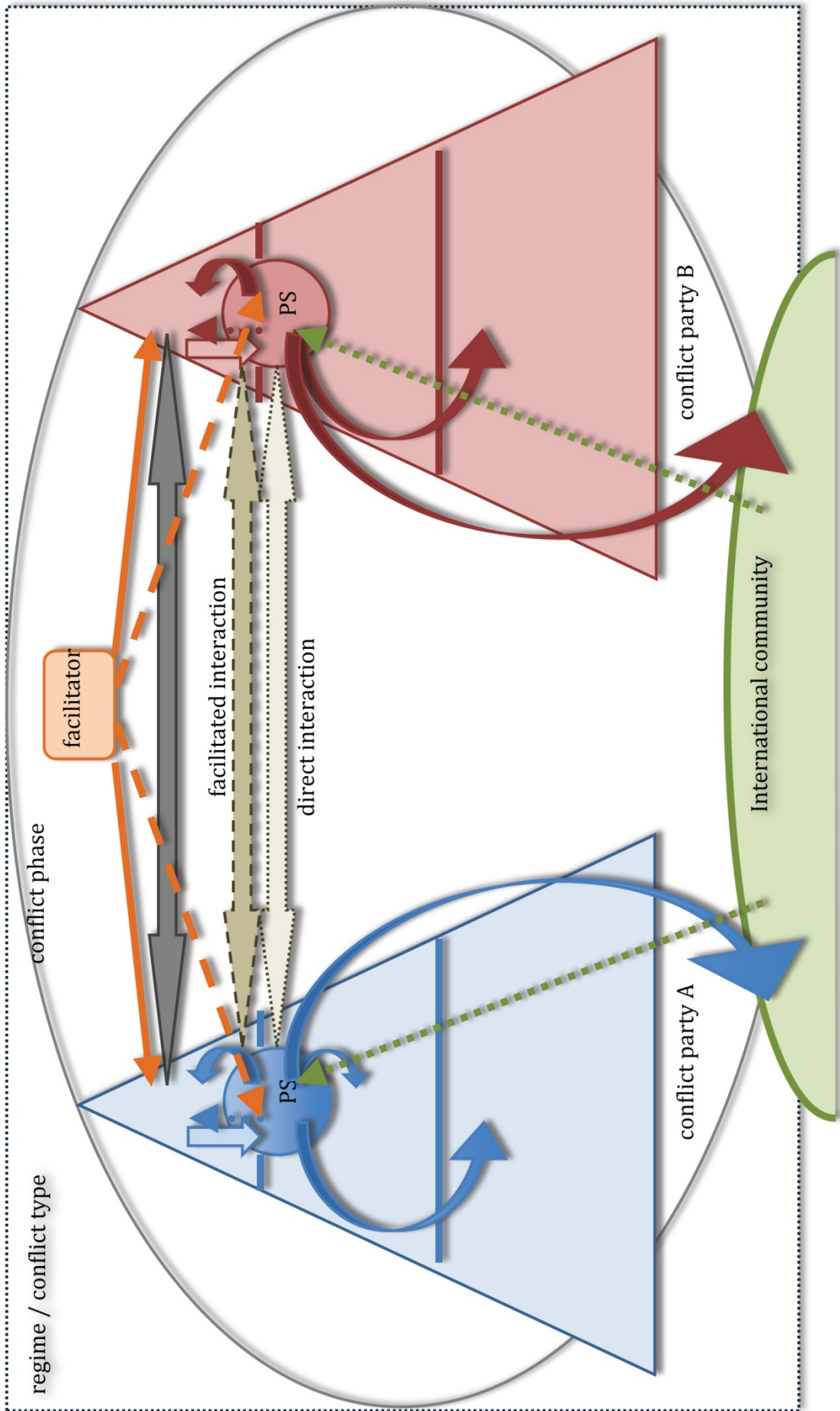25. PS serve as a mirror of the respective conflict party rather than a transformation gear.

Draft model: Interactions of peace secretariats

This model explains the interaction of peace secretariats (for technical reasons only two) with each other as well as with their interest groups. Their interaction is situated in the conflict context and conflict phase as well as in the regime type. These determinants are further illustrated in the second model. The focus here is on the interaction:

1. the peace secretariats' interaction largely depended on track 1 negotiations and Norwegian facilitation, they hardly interacted independently although the example of the tsunami-relief negotiations indicates that they could have done more;
2. the interaction with track 1 was lopsided, the PS followed their mandates and offered various services (thicker arrow from PS to track 1) but did not influence their mandates or the track 1 process significantly (thinner dashed arrow);
3. the peace secretariats' main interaction happened with their respective track 3 audiences and the international community, they engaged less with track 2 and, if so, it was perceived often as not genuine;
4. the international community supported the PS financially and through capacity building but did not influence their mandates or strategies;
5. according to my information, the facilitator funded the PS (the one of the govt. only for a limited period) and influenced their initial mandates to a certain extent (needs further clarification).

The model can serve, as in this case, for analytical purposes as well as for prescriptive ones, if one wishes to understand and influence the interaction as a contribution to multi-track diplomacy.
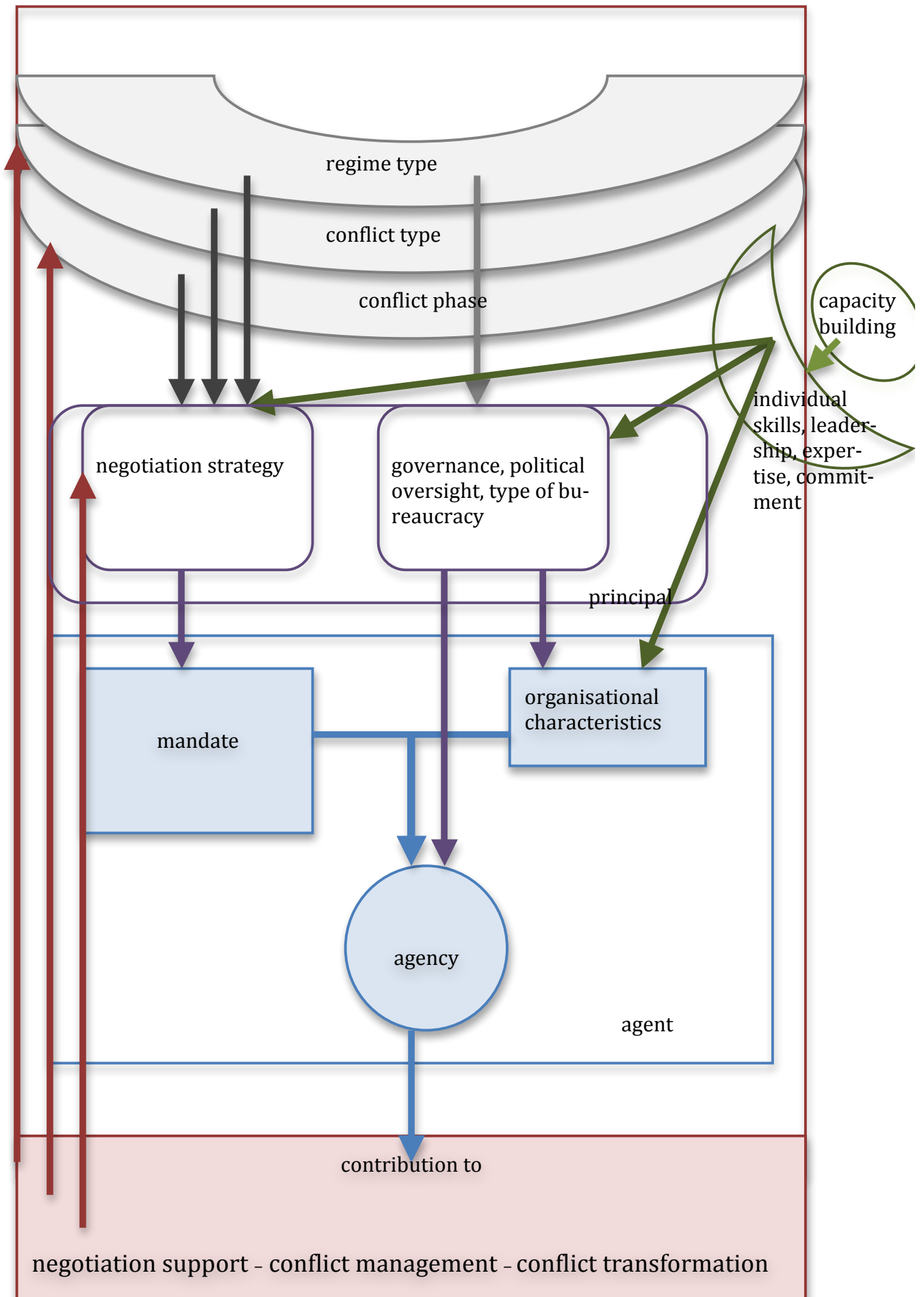
regime / conflict type

conflict phase

facilitator

facilitated interaction

direct interaction

PS

PS

conflict party B

conflict party A

International community

Draft model: Determinants of peace secretariat's agency

This model explains the determinants of the peace secretariat's agency. The determinants can be found in the environment of the peace secretariat (context and principal) as well as within the organisation (the agent):

1. the principal decides the mandate based on the negotiation strategy which is influenced by the conflict phase, the conflict type and the regime type (the behaviour of the other conflict party is subsumed under conflict type for structural aspects and under conflict phase for situative aspects);
2. the peace secretariat influences its agency through organisational characteristics, e.g., organisational culture, leadership, skills and expertise. These aspects are less influential than the mandate (smaller box);
3. the principal's characteristics, e.g., its form of governance or style of bureaucracy, has an impact on the agency directly and indirectly (via the organizational characteristics of the PS).
4. Individual skills and expertise as well as commitment to peace and conflict transformation influence both the principal as well as the agent. They can be strengthened through external support (other factors that influence commitment to peace, e.g., intimidation by opponents, can be subsumed under regime type or conflict type). For technical reasons, other interest groups that influence the principal and also maintain direct relationships with the peace secretariat are not visualised in this model.
5. Depending on its agency, the PS contributes to conflict transformation, conflict management or supports the negotiation. This has an impact on negotiation strategy, conflict phase and conflict type.

regime type

conflict type

conflict phase

capacity building

individual skills, leader-ship, exper-tise, commit-ment

negotiation strategy

governance, political oversight, type of bu-reaucracy

principal

mandate

organisational characteristics

agency

agent

contribution to

negotiation support – conflict management – conflict transformation

Annex 2:   Timeline of Relevant Events with a View to the Peace Secretariats in Sri Lanka

5 Dec 2001	Ranil Wickremasinghe's United National Party (UNP) and its coalition partners win parliamentary elections based on which Wickremasinghe becomes prime minister in co-habitation with President Kumaratunga's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP)'s coalition
19 Dec 2001	LTTE announces unilateral 30-day ceasefire that was reciprocated by the government
6 Feb 2002	Establishment of the government's Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP) with approval of the Cabinet of Ministers
22 Feb 2002	Signing of the Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE including the agreement to establish the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission
Aug 2002	Sri Lankan government de-proscribes LTTE
16-18 Sept 2002	Six rounds of talks begin with first round in Thailand, the head of SCOPP and of the LTTE's political wing, and later also of LTTE PS, participate
2-5 Dec 2002	Negotiating parties during third round of talks agree on 'Oslo formula' to explore power sharing
15 Dec 2002	Opening of SIHRN Secretariat in Kilinochchi
6-9 Jan 2003	Fourth round of talks, parties agree to have an independent Muslim delegation in future talks
14 Jan 2003	Opening of LTTE Peace Secretariat in Kilinochchi as an executive office of the political wing of the LTTE
21 April 2003	LTTE chief negotiator Balasingham ends peace talks with written letter to PM Wickremasinghe; head of LTTE political wing writes to SCOPP SG to stop SIHRN meetings
May-July 2003	Government presents proposals for interim administration
8-9 June 2003	International Donor Conference in Tokyo
21 Oct 2003	Adjournment motion in Sri Lankan Parliament on Muslim representation in future peace negotiations
31 Oct 2003	LTTE sends proposal for Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA)
4 Nov 2003	President takes over three key ministries from Wickremasinghe administration, prime minister in turn hands over peace process to president
March 2004	LTTE experiences break away of Karuna faction
2 April 2004	Parliamentary election, the president's coalition wins and forms government with the JVP, consequently Goonetilleke as SG of SCOPP leaves
1 June 2004	Jayantha Dhanapala is appointed as SG of SCOPP
15 Dec 2004	MOU on establishing the Peace Secretariat for Muslims is signed

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26 Dec 2004	Tsunami hits Sri Lankan coast
21 June 2005	Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS) is signed
15 July 2005	Supreme Court rules that certain aspects of P-TOMS are unconstitutional
12 Aug 2005	Foreign Minister Lakshman Kardigamar is killled
Sept 2005	EU releases travel ban on LTTE
19 Nov 2005	Mahinda Rajapaksa is sworn in as president
30 Nov 2005	Dhanapala resigns from post of SG of SCOPP
Feb 2006	Government and LTTE meet for talks on CFA in Geneva
March 2006	Ketheshwaran Loganathan joins SCOPP as Deputy SG of SCOPP
April 2006	Palitha Kohona is appointed as SG of SCOPP
May 2006	EU lists LTTE as terrorist organisation
June 2006	All Party Representative Committee (APRC) is established in order to develop a power sharing consensus
June 2006	Talks in Oslo cancelled at the last minute by LTTE
July 2006	Yavid Jusuf resigns from post of secretary general of the Peace Secretariat for Muslims
26 July 2006	LTTE blocks sluice gates of river Mavil Aru in eastern Sri Lanka, the ensuing battle with government troops marks renewal of war
12 Aug 2006	Ketheshwaran Loganathan is killed, allegedly by the LTTE
Oct 2006	Government and LTTE meet in Geneva but negotiations collapse after one day
Jan 2007	Palitha Kohona is appointed permanent secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and leaves SCOPP
June 2007	Rajiva Wijesinha is appointed SG of SCOPP, C.S. Poolokasingham is Deputy SG
Oct 2007	SG M.I.M. Mohideen leaves Peace Secretariat for Muslims
3 Jan 2008	CFA officially abrogated by government of Sri Lanka
2 Oct 2008	LTTE PS office is destroyed
18 May 2009	Head of LTTE PS, Puleedevan, is killed
May 2009	President declares end of war and victory over LTTE
31 July 2009	SCOPP is closed

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