



Peace Education Studies and Post-Conflict Sri Lanka

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Peace Education Studies and Post-Conflict Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Peace education is educational instruction focusing on a pupil's sense of community, civic duty and cooperation. Peace education scholars hypothesize that it offers a way to foster peace and reconciliation in countries and regions coping with the aftermath of conflict. Peace education is a dynamic field of research that has gained increased attention in academia over the last four decades. One of the main propositions that scholars have investigated in this field is the possible relationship between education and the success of post-conflict development and reconciliation measures.

The conflict in Sri Lanka was a decades-long armed conflict that was often described both as an ethnic conflict and as a civil war. While the warring parties were indeed of different ethnic groups, a closer examination of the conflict reveals that the tension between the ethnic groups stemmed from competition over economic and political resources and power as a legacy of 'divide and rule' policies set in place by a colonial ruler. After Sri Lanka gained independence from the British Empire, there was a struggle to revise the political structure that led to violent conflict. This conflict officially ended in 2009 at which time there was a renewed focus on reconstruction and reconciliation efforts that could include peace education.

In this thesis, I analyze peace education studies with specific consideration given to three primary aspects of the implementation of a peace education program in post-conflict Sri Lanka, which include examining the appropriate agent and timing of

implementation as well as the viability of such a program given the ongoing tension relating to ethnic and linguistic differences.

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I.

Introduction

The shift in the nature of conflict that took place from the end of the Second World War into the Cold War and then unto the present day has led scholars to ask new questions in their research about the best ways to foster peace and reconciliation in the aftermath of conflicts. There has been a need to reconsider the most-appropriate way to foster peace and reconciliation.

Peace Education

Peace education scholars, especially, posit that education focusing on a pupil's sense of community, civic duty and cooperation may be the best way to foster peace and reconciliation in countries and regions coping with the aftermath of conflict. Testing this discipline-wide hypothesis by investigating the applicability of peace education theory to particular conflicts throughout the world will help scholars to have a greater understanding of the practical application of peace education programs.

Peace education is a dynamic field of research that has gained increased attention in academia over the last four decades. One of the main propositions that scholars have investigated in this field is the possible relationship between education and the success of post-conflict development and reconciliation measures. The academic fields of education, conflict studies, and development are each multi-faceted; within the field of education alone there are many issues to consider analytically, including a pupil's access to

education, quality of education, teacher-training, curriculum, and safety. When the fields of education, conflict studies, and development are brought together in the context of a peace education study, the possible areas for research increase exponentially. Each of these areas for research demand to be investigated for insights that may then be applied to any number of post-conflict situations throughout the world, but they also need to be investigated in some relationship to each other. To produce a context for research that highlights the different issues yet also permits engaging them in combination with each other, it is particularly helpful to focus on these issues as they appear concretely in a specific setting. Sri Lanka is one country in which a conflict has been studied by peace education scholars with such aims of practical understanding and potential for general application.

The conflict in Sri Lanka is generally described as an ethnic conflict. While the warring parties were indeed of different ethnic groups, a closer examination of the conflict reveals that the tension between the ethnic groups stemmed from competition over economic and political resources and power as a legacy of ‘divide and rule’ policies set in place by a colonial ruler. After Sri Lanka gained independence from the British Empire, its citizenry inherited a system of governance as well as institutions of state that had previously benefitted a particular minority population, the Sri Lankan Tamils (who are considered in Sri Lanka to be distinct from “Indian Tamils” living in Sri Lanka at the time of independence; more on this distinction will be introduced below). Many groups played a part in the struggle to revise the political structure after independence. These groups were divided and motivated not only by ethnic interests, but also on the basis of religion, language, and social class. As probably could have been foreseen, some of the

reform measures instituted by the government had unwanted consequences. For example, attempts at reforming Sri Lanka's education policies to give greater access to higher education and government for monolingual speakers of Sinhala were quickly perceived as changing long-standing relations between ethnic groups within Sri Lanka for the worse.

Given the clear role that education policies played in first changing and then in the breakdown of ethnic relations in Sri Lanka, the possible role that education might be able to play in rebuilding those relations has been of special interest to peace education scholars.

The examination of peace education studies in this thesis will focus on the following questions to consider the extent to which peace education programs can generate positive change in Sri Lanka and in effect undo the damage that earlier education policies had wrought:

1. What kind of educational institution is the most appropriate to administer a peace education program, the Sri Lankan government or something run by NGOs?
2. Is Sri Lanka, at the present moment, in an appropriate stage of reconstruction/reconciliation to implement a peace education program successfully?
3. Will the persistence of ethnic and linguistic differences in Sri Lanka end up blocking the implementation of a peace education program?

As we go forward in this thesis, however, it is important to keep in mind that this investigation of peace education efforts in Sri Lanka given the particular considerations

for the role of governments and NGOs, timing of implementation, and the cohesive implementation of peace education curriculum in a pluralist nation is pursued as an aid to the understanding not only of how peace education could be implemented under the existing circumstances in Sri Lanka, but also more generally to other places that have suffered ethnic conflict.

Background of the Problem

The Sri Lankan population was 20.28 million people in 2011, which can be taken as a baseline for its present population.¹ The Sinhala and Tamil populations constitute the two largest ethnic groups in Sri Lanka.² For the majority of the last century, the Sinhalas have been approximately 70% of the population.³ Over the last ninety years, the Tamils have comprised an estimated 15.5%-26% of the total Sri Lankan population.⁴ Within Sri Lanka it is routine to distinguish between “Sri Lankan Tamils” (also referred to as Ceylon Tamils) and the “Indian Tamil” population. The latter was largely brought to Sri Lanka from India when it was a British colony as immigrant and migrant labor to be agricultural laborers on tea plantations. For the majority of the last century, Sri Lankan Tamils consistently represented approximately 11% of the overall Sri Lankan population. The Indian Tamil population, however, has not remained constant, dwindling from a height of 15.4% in 1931 to approximately 5% in 2001, largely because of international agreements to repatriate them to India and because of Sri Lanka’s refugee problem during the war.⁵ Although both Indian Tamils and Sri Lankan Tamils speak the Tamil language, the castes, cultural life, and economic conditions of the two groups differ significantly; therefore, the interests of each Tamil group rarely align on social or political issues, even

though they share a common language.

While there was a long history in pre-colonial Sri Lanka of these groups peacefully coexisting in a pluralistic society,⁶ such harmonious cohabitation did not carry through the 20th century. Instead, the island of Sri Lanka was consumed by a fiercely-waged conflict that spanned into the 21st century. Each ethnic group has viewed and labeled the conflict consistently in a self-interested and self-justified manner. Even the simple need to describe the conflict, whether as a terrorist insurgency, or a campaign for self-determination cannot be done without revealing one's political leanings and often one's ethnic identity.

As already noted, the protracted conflict in Sri Lanka has sometimes been described as an ethnic war in which ethnic groups are fighting over territory based on ethnic and religious divisions. However, to fully understand the implications of the peace education studies and how they might apply to post-conflict Sri Lanka, one must look to more nuanced investigations of the situation and attempt to grasp how the groups interacted with one another as well as with the system of power before, during, and after the transition from colonialism to a parliamentary democracy. The crux of the ethnic conflict originated at the same time as (and largely due to) Sri Lanka's transition from colonial rule to a parliamentary democracy.

From Colonial Sri Lanka to Independence

The conflict among ethnic groups in modern Sri Lanka was prefigured by the interaction among these groups during colonial rule prior to Sri Lankan independence in 1948. The British were the last of three European powers to rule Sri Lanka as a colony,

and like the Portuguese and Dutch before them, the British exploited Sri Lanka's human and material resources for their profit, especially through spice production, and tea and coffee plantations. There was resistance to this on the part of the island's inhabitants. During the failed Kandyan Uprising of 1817 the Kandyan elite tried to reclaim land that had been ceded to the British in 1815. Acting upon one of the recommendations from the Colebrooke-Cameron Commission, in 1833 the British divided the island into new districts to secure their rule and prevent future uprisings. The lines dividing these new territories had no bearing on the preexisting divisions of ethno-religious communities. Instead, the British rulers purposely drew the lines to the new administrative districts across such ethnically homogenous territories to weaken the former Kandyan stronghold.⁷

The British colonial rulers exacerbated tensions among these ethnic and religious communities further by policies that they implemented from the nineteenth century onward. The Tamil minority enjoyed a much larger presence in the colonial government than their actual numbers would have predicted, even when Tamil migrant workers from India were counted the same as indigenous Tamil persons to be represented in the governing body. The resulting sentiment of such over-representation within the Tamil community was one that emphasized both the need to hold onto the social, economic, and political positions that had been gained and also a defense of the legitimacy of such gains. Conversely, the resulting sentiment of such over-representation of Tamils for the Sinhala community was one of resentment and self-understanding that some wrong had been done unjustly to them, a wrong which also explained their current unsatisfactory social, economic, and political positions in the country. In this respect, the Sinhala majority

could seem to be markedly more dissatisfied with the colonial government than Sri Lankan Tamils. The visible social, economic, and political disparities between the two groups fueled a Sinhala nationalism movement that began before independence but grew in significance after independence. The Sinhala nationalist movement, in turn, generated a Tamil nationalist movement very shortly after independence.⁸

The formal road to independence started in 1944 when the British appointed a commission to draft a constitution for Sri Lanka. This commission identified ethnic relations as a significant potential point of conflict.⁹ When it became clear that the British were working with the Sri Lankan political elite to move toward independence, politicians representing the Tamil minority and Sinhala majority began lobbying the British for favor or special protection within the new structures of governance. Fearing a severe loss of influence within the governing body, fearing even a tyranny of the majority, the Tamil politician G.G. Ponnambalam travelled to London, from where Sri Lanka was ruled, on several occasions to implore the British parliament to preserve the current colonial structure of governance and cease all moves toward granting Sri Lanka its full independence.¹⁰

Having identified ethnic tension as a possible point of conflict, the drafters of the new constitution thought they were crafting it to defend the linguistic and religious rights of ethnic groups.¹¹ For the short remainder of the British rule, the Constitution of 1945 safeguarded ethnic interests largely by protecting minority languages while continuing the use of English in the activities of the state. Independence was formally granted to Sri Lanka on February 4, 1948 with the earlier Constitution continuing to be in place.

Education Policies and Ethnic Divide

The colonial education system consisted only in small part of missionary schools that offered instruction in the English medium. While these missionary schools were responsible for instructing a very limited percentage of the population, the enrollment in these educational facilities was dominated by the elite “Ceylon” Tamil community. Access to missionary schools was severely limited by the schools’ locations and pupils’ social class. Nira Wickramasinghe emphasized the role of the missionary schools in the Sri Lankan education system from the late nineteenth century onward by affirming that the missionary schools “had a virtual monopoly of the education of the elite.”¹²

In contrast to English language instruction, 88% of pupils received a vernacular education in 1911.¹³ This vernacular education, however, only provided the most basic instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic.¹⁴ Overall literacy flourished throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, particularly in 1921 when literacy became a measure for Sri Lankan suffrage.¹⁵ The voting population increased from just over 3,000 in 1917 to nearly 190,000 in 1924.¹⁶

During the same time period in which the British were moving toward granting independence, Sri Lankan politicians and leaders had already begun to attempt to correct the clear imbalance of educational opportunity within the colonial educational system. The State Council endorsed policies beginning in the 1930s that were aimed at opening up the education system to the underprivileged.¹⁷ Nationalization of education was undertaken shortly after independence to try to compensate for the colonial educational policies that favored particular classes, notably elite groups, but in effect also favored certain ethnicities and languages. Language policies became an important part of the

nationalization attempt to transform the Sri Lankan education system from what it had been in the British colonial system.

In 1956, after a highly-contentious and emotive political campaign, which resulted in the election of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike as Prime Minister, Sinhala was made the official language of the state through the Sinhala Only Act. At the same time, Swabhasha, or monolingualism, was implemented in education whereby lessons were to be taught in the students' mother-tongues. Students were no longer required to learn English as a 'link language' nor were they given opportunities in schools to become proficient in all the main languages spoken on the Island. While the change was intended to compensate for the colonial favoritism toward the English medium of instruction, it effectively segregated schools on ethnic lines. Moreover, access to English language instruction had previously favored the minority Tamil population. Although the goal of Swabhasha policy in education was to increase access to education across ethnic and class lines, as was to be expected, it also exacerbated ethnic tensions because the policy put the Tamil-speaking minority at a disadvantage for professional employment in the public sphere as the Sinhala Only Act required that public employees be proficient in the Sinhalese language.¹⁸ Increasingly the effects of the education policy were felt with more immediacy in the Tamil communities. Even if the policy enabled greater access to education in a local language for Tamil speakers just as much as for Sinhala speaker, Tamil-speaking youth subsequently encountered more difficulty in securing employment because Sinhala had been made the country's official language.

Interestingly, while the Sinhala Only Act and Swabhasha policies attempted to correct perceived colonial biases in favor of the Tamil minority population, especially

those who were educated in English at the colonial schools, these policies were incapable of changing the continuing effects of colonial rule in the new nation. This can be seen in the Sinhala population's earning more university admission places but overwhelmingly studying in the areas of social studies and humanities, because science, medical and law courses required English proficiency, in which the Tamil population still had a continuing advantage.¹⁹ Careers in scientific and professional fields were also generally more lucrative than those in the public sector or in employment open to those who had studied in the social studies and humanities fields. It could be argued, with the benefit of hindsight, that had the government implemented policies by which English instruction was bolstered in Sinhala areas that it would have helped both the Sinhala population compensate for colonial policies but also it would have helped the Sri Lankan social cohesion as there would be less of a divide between the two ethnic populations based on educational and professional access.

During this period of time the global appeal of socialism was officially embraced in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka renamed itself as a "Democratic Socialist Republic" in 1972, with a new constitution. The People's Liberation Front (Janatha Vimukhti Peramuna, or JVP) was founded in 1965 with the aim of implementing a socialist revolution.²⁰ Their popularity grew with the university students and university-age youth whose aspirations for social mobility had been betrayed by the education policies then in use. The relations between ethnic minority and majority groups also became more strained during this period of time. The majority Sinhala were still trying to compensate for the colonial policies that had favored the Tamil minority. The Sinhala youth expected that the Sinhala politicians now in power would be able to easily compensate for previous

disenfranchisement. However, what they found was that the policies implemented did not fully address nor did they correct the issues that they had with the education system. The Tamil minority was still favored in educational and professional advancement because of their proficiency in the English language. The Tamil minority, however, were upset because they largely felt that the Sinhala majority was specifically targeting the Tamils and taking away many of the opportunities to which they had grown accustomed under colonial rule.

Beginning in 1971, University admissions were regulated by a kind of affirmative action system. Initially, the affirmative action quota system was based on language (which was also closely tied to ethnicity). The introduction of this regulation was another attempt to compensate for policies that were implemented under colonial rule and had previously benefitted the Tamil minority. Under the new language based affirmative action policy known as “standardization” it was necessary for Tamil students to score higher marks than their fellow Sinhala students to earn a place at university, resulting in great displeasure by the Tamil population and politicians;²¹ though, the actual effect that it had on Tamil university admissions was not as great as had been intended due to the percentage of Tamil applicants. With the introduction of this quota system it was clearly recognized that the rural students (Tamil or Sinhala) were disadvantaged because they did not have access to the same quality education enjoyed by urban students. This further marginalized the Tamil-speaking community.

In 1974 a revised affirmative action policy was implemented based on a district quota system. This was aimed at addressing the previous policy failure based solely on language that put the rural students (primarily concerned with the rural Sinhala students)

at a great disadvantage.²² Language-based standardization was abandoned in 1977. In 1978 a new Republican Constitution was passed. Nira Wickramasinghe details how it was that often, despite how it afforded protection to its citizens and residents for “equality before the law and protection of the law for all citizens irrespective of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion and place of birth,” these important ideals were often ignored by the government.²³

Educational access policies serve as a clear example of favoritism that can be attributed to (and sometimes blamed on) the ruling party by both the Sinhala and Tamil ethnic groups. Educational opportunities afforded to each ethnic group based on language policy, admission standards, or allocation of funding are tied to the pupils’ educational advancement and career potential. In the context of a contentious struggle between ethnic groups, a debate over curriculum is much more than an argument over whether an educator should use a higher priced text over a cheaper version; instead, such a dispute is a symbol of the larger struggle in society between ethnic groups for equality. Birgitte Sørensen articulates this view by stating: “The debates and struggles about education are tied to issues of social justice, recognition, self-determination, and solidarity.”²⁴

Education is a unique social service that provides for the future well-being of the citizenry. Educational advancement, career opportunities, and socio-economic status are all tied to one’s access to and quality of education. S. Sandarasegaram and M. Karunanithy attest to the powerful role of education in transforming one’s life in their book *Facets of Sri Lankan Education* in which they write: “Education potentially offers the most important institutional means for improving the quality of human capital.”²⁵ Therefore, when one group believes that they are being denied this social service based

on their ethnic association, they will blame the other party (which in effect, represents the majority ethnic group) in power.

After the conflict became an armed struggle in the late 1970s the focus shifted from access to political power, social services, and education to the armed struggle that was disrupting the Sri Lankans' lives and safety on the island. But after the armed conflict officially ended in 2009 with a Sri Lankan government military victory over the LTTE (Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam), renewed interest in reconstruction and reconciliation efforts came to the attention of the people. Given the history that educational access policies played in fueling the tension between ethnic groups, issues about education are, not surprisingly, at the forefront of reconciliation efforts in post-conflict Sri Lanka.

Reconciliation versus Social Cohesion

Reconciliation can be a confusing term when comparing studies on development and conflict as the term is often used by different authors with different meanings. The confusion stems largely from the fact that “reconciliation is a complex term” that is used to describe “both a *goal* – something to achieve – and a *process* – a means to achieve that goal.”²⁶ In the framework of a discussion on Sri Lanka, the use of the term “reconciliation” can be even more confusing as there may be reconciliation efforts described among many different actors (persons, organizations, groups, etc.). While I hope that the content of the discussion and the context of the use should make the meaning of the term clear in different instances, I do want to state that I will not use the terms “reconciliation” and “social cohesion” interchangeably.

Social cohesion is defined in a World Bank study titled, “The Promotion of Social Cohesion Through Education in Sri Lanka” as “‘the shared values and commitment to a society’ by all its members.”²⁷ Further, the report goes on to state that a modern understanding of social cohesion includes not only assimilation by diverse cultures and religions into a nation with a common language and values, but also accommodation for those diverse cultures and religious groups to “freely practice their religion and use their language in daily activities.”²⁸ Peter Colenso describes social cohesion in his study, “Education and Social Cohesion: Developing a Framework for Education Sector Reform in Sri Lanka” as a term to include “social capital, civic and political participation, general trust and trust in institutions, ethnic harmony, persona and national security and peace.”²⁹

My examination of peace education efforts in Sri Lanka in this thesis focuses on the preconditions for and potential effect that peace education could have on social cohesion among the ethnic and political groups within the country. Many of the authors of the studies considered here use the terms “reconciliation” and “social cohesion” both with their traditional and separate definitions as noted above while some meld the two terms together whereby “reconciliation” refers mainly to a harmonious coexistence of all parties within a country without specifically attributing that harmony to the accomplishment of all of the political and economic reparations necessary to fully redress the core issues that led to conflict.

Inquiry

The following examination of studies on the Sri Lankan education system as it has navigated the end and immediate aftermath of the decades-long conflict will provide an understanding and framework of the problems facing the Sri Lankan education system with respect to the successful implementation of a peace education program, the projected success or failure of any peace education program, and how a peace education program may affect social cohesion in Sri Lanka. These questions will be examined in the context of three major themes, or questions:

- 1) Who is the best agent to implement a peace education program?
- 2) When is the best time to implement a peace education program?
- 3) Will ethnic considerations and linguistic policies in course curriculum derail the implementation of a peace education program?

II.

The Agent of Change

Who is the best agent to implement a peace-education program? The appropriate entity to implement aid or development programs in developing or post-conflict states has long been debated within the development community. The nature of the program and the needs of the communities to be served by these programs vary so much that there are as many answers to this question as there are potential programs to be implemented. A government would generally want to be the agent responsible for implementing the program(s) to bolster legitimacy of the ruling party/government, engender good will from the program recipients, and be in control of the funds apportioned to implement the program(s). In turn, NGOs or even state-sponsored aid agencies might naturally want to be the agent responsible for implementing the program(s) to utilize their special knowledge and experience in the areas of development, encourage program participation from the citizens who may mistrust the government (particularly in the case of post-conflict states), and ensure that all citizens are afforded equal access to the program benefits.

Aid or development programs may be funded by grants or loans from international organizations, in which case the government would generally want to control the funding and disburse the funds as it sees fit. Proponents of allowing locally administered programs highlight the ability of the government to keep more program funding within the country. Critics of government-administered programs point to

incidents of corruption, graft, and cronyism that deflect funds away from those intended to receive the benefits. Suspicion of corruption, of course, could be among the factors influencing the distrust of government by citizens. The citizenry may not trust the motives of the government to implement aid or development programs fairly, and this is particularly so in post-conflict contexts in which the government is among the previously-warring parties.

The extent to which any of these factors help to determine the appropriate agent to implement aid or development programs in post-conflict contexts as well as in developing nations more generally depends heavily on the circumstances in each situation. The intervention of a crisis-management NGO after a flood may be welcomed by the locals and government alike whereas the intervention of a political or religion-based NGO may be met with skepticism on the part of the locals or the government.

In Sri Lanka, there is free access to primary school education. It seems obvious, then, that the government is in a prime position to run the program of peace education in its schools that already exist. Many of the studies that query the government's capacity to effectively implement such a program already presuppose that the government is logistically more capable of doing so, and they focus on the other aspects that would prevent the government from successfully implementing a peace education program. I will begin to look at some of these studies now in turn.

Sørensen – The Politics of Citizenship and Difference in Sri Lankan Schools

Birgitte Refslund Sørensen's study titled, "The Politics of Citizenship and Difference in Sri Lankan Schools" published in *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* touches

upon the importance of the free provision of primary education services in Sri Lanka. Sorensen delves into the meaning of citizenship in an anthropological way rather than in the more traditional state-centered political way. This anthropological understanding of citizenship resonates with the idea of social cohesion as the goal of peace education or “citizenship education” as it can also be described. Her primary research was conducted in five Tamil medium schools (grades 6-13) in Northwestern Sri Lanka. Sørensen obtained her information through

“questionnaires and focus group interviews with teachers and pupils, individual interviews with educational officers and principals, group interviews with representatives of school development societies and old pupils’ associations, thematic workshops, photo and essays assignments with smaller groups of pupils, participation in public school events, and ... casual conversations with pupils.”³⁰

Sørensen notes the importance to the state of being able to provide education as a fundamental social welfare program by stating, “the authority and legitimacy of the Sri Lankan state is today highly dependent on its provision of welfare to its citizens, and the population claims a principled right to development.”³¹ The implementation of a peace education program is a secondary concern to those in the minority areas where funding and maintaining the basic necessities of the education system as a whole have been arguably yet to be met. In her study, Sørensen observed and interviewed participants in minority schools who were able to show her the degree to which the facilities were lacking in material and personnel resources. She further identifies the way that improperly funding specific educational facilities in minority schools is “as powerful a communication about the nature of the Sri Lankan nation-state as is its presence through flags, anthems, and textbooks, which is typically in focus in studies of education and nation-building.”³²

A participant in Sorensen's study refers to the possible involvement of NGOs by stating, "even when the assistance of NGOs is considerable, they can only help with buildings and our material needs. The real problem here is teaching and the lack of teachers, and only the government can – and should – solve that" (interview, 6 March 2006).³³ It is implied in the emphasis of this quote that the government *must* be the agent of change in the view of this participant. Sørensen notes that a sentiment often repeated in her conversations with participants was that they want the government to redress the issues in their educational system. Sørensen suggests that these often repeated "accounts of schools in a deplorable state could also be interpreted as unassuming, but insistent claims for recognition and inclusion in the political and moral national community as citizens with equal rights and opportunities."³⁴ An NGO may be able to pay for and oversee the physical repair of any dilapidated school facilities, but they cannot give minorities the sense of recognition and inclusion that these citizens need to have.

Sorensen indirectly draws the connection that for the government to be successful at implementing a program of peace education, its first crucial task is to ensure that the education system is properly funded, staffed, and maintained throughout all areas of Sri Lanka. This is a problem that the government alone can address. To show that it is serious about implementing a peace education curriculum to foster social cohesion among all groups in Sri Lanka, the government must first address problems and challenges in the funding and maintenance of educational facilities in minority areas as well as in majority and privileged areas. Otherwise, the minority population needs only to point to a school where this curriculum is being taught while there are not enough instructors, desks, textbooks, etc. to show that the government has failed in the provision

of welfare to its minority citizens and that those minority citizens are not properly recognized or included.

Stokke – Building the Tamil Eelam State: Emerging State Institutions and Forms of Governance in LTTE-Controlled Areas in Sri Lanka

Kristian Stokke, currently a faculty member at University of Oslo in the Department of Sociology and Human Geography, details the burgeoning second state that formed within Sri Lanka during the conflict in areas controlled by the LTTE in an article “Building the Tamil Eelam State: Emerging State Institutions and Forms of Governance in LTTE-Controlled Areas in Sri Lanka” in *Third World Quarterly*. The background to Stokke’s article is that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or LTTE, had shifted their focus from military action to political action beginning with the 2002 round of peace negotiations, in which the LTTE engaged with the government.³⁵ Stokke approaches his study of the developing local municipality in the context of the Sri Lankan conflict with a sociological perspective. He examines the “core state functions” as prescribed by Rolf Schwarz of the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, Switzerland of “welfare, security, representation”³⁶ in the context of Sri Lanka. Specifically, Stokke indicates that the LTTE clearly emphasized security in their administration of this region; however, Stokke also acknowledges that security is a necessary precondition for welfare and political participation.³⁷ The importance of welfare, in turn, is that it “reduces conflicts” while political representation allows for non-violent resolution of conflicts.³⁸

Additionally, Stokke references Dan Smith’s study for the Evaluation Department of the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs entitled, “Towards a Strategic

Framework for Peacebuilding: Getting Their Act Together” for a breakdown of four main dimensions of peacebuilding, which Stokke argues all translate “into systematically addressing functional state failures in regard to these state functions.”³⁹ The legacy of the failure of the Sri Lankan state to carry out the core state functions (security, welfare and political representation) adequately on behalf of its Tamil minority needed to be addressed by the then-burgeoning LTTE controlled municipality if they were to succeed in establishing a successful second state within Sri Lanka. Interestingly, Stokke highlights the LTTE’s understanding of that concept in pointing toward their tacit cooperation with the Sri Lankan central government’s civil administration governing the educational system. “This is presented as a conscious strategy, emanating from the realization that the Tamil civilian population was in need of state services and would be ill-served by a total onslaught on the state apparatus,”⁴⁰ as Stokke writes, on the basis of a personal conversation with S. Puleedevan, the Secretary General of the LTTE Peace Secretariat.

Much of Stokke’s study is now dated, but at the time when he posited the theory that the LTTE administered state emerging in the Tamil north was moving toward a separate democratic government it was astute. However, a major theme in Stokke’s study that is still highly relevant toward evaluating the most appropriate agent of administering a peace education program echoes that of Birgitte Sørensen’s work. Stokke’s study also highlights the same area in Northern Sri Lanka, a minority Tamil area, where Sørensen conducted the majority of her primary research. Both echo the same sentiment that the government is expected to administer the welfare programs on behalf of its citizens and that a failure to do so is seen as a fundamental breakdown of governance. Having NGOs

administer a major education program could easily be perceived as a failure on the part of the government to properly provide such welfare for its citizens. Additionally, given that sentiments of such a failure led to a further perception that increasing marginalization was a basic cause of the conflict, it would be important to find ways to avoid a resurgence of those attitudes among minority citizens.

Stokke was an academic in Norway, and it is unclear the extent to which the Norwegian Government's participation in the peace process from 2002 onward may have affected any aspect of his study. The Norwegian government was subsequently accused of supporting the LTTE by the Sri Lankan Government (UNRIC). Studies such as Stokke's publication that are highly critical of the Sri Lankan Government's ability to govern effectively throughout Sri Lanka could have contributed to such an accusation. While Brigitte Sørensen published her study out of the University of Copenhagen, and not Norway, perhaps the cultural similarities and institutional connections between Norway and Denmark (in contrast to the differences between both Scandinavian/Nordic countries and Sri Lanka) contributed to the Sri Lankan Government's sentiment that the Norwegians were in support of the LTTE during the peace process.

Sandarasegaram & Karunanithy – Facets of Sri Lankan Education

Sandarasegaram and Karunanithy were both at the University of Colombo when they compiled a collection of their articles on various themes that had been written "from time to time" and acknowledged the limitations of their work due to the unsystematic way that the original articles were produced. Although their articles were produced on separate occasions, Sandarasegaram and Karunanithy intended the

compilation, taken as a whole, to “deal with an analysis of the role of education in promoting social transformation and economic development.”⁴¹ The authors write from the perspective of educators. Their focus is mainly on the nature of education, the state of education in Sri Lanka, and the importance of education in Sri Lankan civil society. Their articles generally have a focus on Sri Lanka, though some are primarily centered around educational concepts and only briefly touch upon their relation to Sri Lanka.

Sandarasegaram and Karunanithy, for example, write about the concept that “schools may also be expected to serve as agencies for social transformation or social reform,” however, their explicit prescription for change within Sri Lanka is far overshadowed by the power attributed to education in being used to “build a new social order.”⁴² They merely prescribe that a policy of affirmative action should be implemented to redress the exclusion of the Indian Tamils and groups previously excluded from employment to overcome past disabilities.⁴³ In the context of conflict-ridden Sri Lanka even such a prescription could be considered controversial, depending on when it was authored and by whom. From their names, it seems that Sandarasegaram and Karunanithy are both Tamils, but without knowing the exact time period in which each article or chapter was written, it is impossible to know whether the lack of specific political recommendations was done for the purpose of maintaining an apolitical standpoint, thereby protecting the authors’ careers or even their lives, given the politics of violence that was normal in Sri Lanka during and after the war, or for the focus of the article to remain on the educational theory and not get swept up with the political disagreement.

Sandarasegaram and Karunanithy focus solely on the state as the administrator of the educational system. There are chapters to discuss the value of bureaucracy in the

educational system and one in which the trend for decentralization throughout several educational systems in the West (mainly the United States, Canada and Europe) is traced to see how it has affected each system. The authors' focus on the involvement of NGOs in education in Sri Lanka is mainly limited to a chapter on teacher education. While there is no direct discussion of administering a program of peace education and whether that could or should be done by the government or an NGO, Sandarasegaram and Karunanithy note the role of teachers in "tasks related to development."⁴⁴ Specifically, the authors write:

Sri Lankan schools and teachers are being entrusted with several tasks related to development: whenever new social problems are identified, they are discussed at length and solutions are suggested. One of the easiest suggestions is that there should be some provision in the school curriculum to make some awareness among school children about the newly identified problems. Four million school children in our country are somewhat a group of captive audience and they do not have any power over matters, knowledge and attitudes that are decided by elders to be inculcated among those innocent children who attend schools simply at the insistence of their parents. It is only an assumption that elders, curriculum developers and bureaucrats are capable of deciding policy matters related to what should be learnt by children.⁴⁵

The implications of Sandarasegaram and Karunanithy's attitude on curriculum development will be discussed below. Here, at this point, I want to consider Sandarasegaram and Karunanithy's assumption that development issues affecting the country could be examined within the (government-administered) school system as four million Sri Lankan youth are a "captive audience"⁴⁶ within the school system. The authors highlight the magnitude of the reach of the Sri Lankan Government to potentially all school children to caution against any ill-developed curriculum that serves the needs or goals of the parents, elders, curriculum developers, or bureaucrats more than those of

school children.

The World Bank – The Promotion of Social Cohesion through Education in Sri Lanka

A World Bank publication entitled, “The Promotion of Social Cohesion through Education in Sri Lanka” was authored by Harsha Aturupane and Damaris Wikramanayake. Harsha Aturupane is a Lead Education Specialist in the World Bank and is also the Human Development Coordinator for Sri Lanka for the World Bank. He has studied and written extensively about many aspects of Sri Lankan education in this official capacity. Damaris Wikramanayake was a consultant to the World Bank for this publication. She focused on education in Sri Lanka in her research to obtain her Ph.D. in Education from the University of Sydney where she authored a thesis “focusing on education policy and planning in Sri Lanka, in the context of economic globalization.”⁴⁷ The World Bank’s report is a review of the importance of education for promoting social cohesion, an evaluation of efforts that have been made, and a prescription for additional changes.

Most telling of the World Bank’s view on the prospective involvement of NGOs in using peace education to achieve social cohesion is that the report does not address them at all. The report focuses solely on the government efforts to address social cohesion through the educational sector. The report makes note of the efforts that had already been put in place at the time of publication and addresses the program shortcomings that should be addressed by the government. For example, the report mentions the formation of the Social Cohesion and Peace Education Unit in the Ministry of Education and describes it as a “vital unit in the quest to create social cohesion in

education” but one that appears to lack “autonomy for its own activities or the coordination of activities outside its unit.”⁴⁸ The report’s discussion of changes to the curriculum that are necessary to best implement a peace education program address curriculum at government schools. For the World Bank in a study on peace education in Sri Lanka to completely leave out the potential influence or impact of NGO efforts in the area could mean that the report finds their potential as negligible compared to that the government school system could have.

The report could neglect to point specifically toward the involvement of NGOs in the goal of promoting social cohesion in Sri Lanka through education due to the fact that the World Bank had been intentionally engaging NGOs in development missions since the 1990s.⁴⁹ However, in the context of this study on Sri Lanka, it is my belief that the report does not prescribe any specific participation of NGOs because it expects that the Sri Lankan Government already had put in place an extensive educational infrastructure and awareness of the problem that made it possible to address the issue of social cohesion within the existing educational system.

Ministry of Education – Education Sector Development Framework and Programme

(ESDFP) (2012-2016)

The Sri Lankan Ministry of Education published an extensive overview of their plans to revitalize the Sri Lankan educational system from 2012 through 2016 for the purpose of “improving [the] learning environment of primary and secondary schools in Sri Lanka.”⁵⁰ This report highlights the sheer magnitude of the Sri Lankan educational system and apparatus. NGO involvement and implementation of a peace education

curriculum would be much smaller in nature, and therefore have a much smaller impact, even if it were successfully implemented. The government's reach and bureaucratic apparatus could enable an extensive dissemination of a single, cohesive peace education program throughout the country. Even if decentralization were to gain popularity, as Sandarasegaram and Karunanithy note that it might, the Ministry of Education would still be able to require the existence of a peace education program for local school districts to obtain funding. The existence and magnitude of the current Sri Lankan government educational system puts it in a prime and unique position to be the leader in peace education efforts throughout Sri Lanka.

Concluding Thoughts

All of the studies considered here address the issue of whether the government or NGOs would be the most appropriate agent to implement a peace education program and they all echo the same conclusion, although some address this issue more directly than others. The government educational system has its failings for sure, and particularly so in the delivery of high-quality educational services in minority areas, and that such failings both cause and reinforce a sense of disconnection between the citizens in these areas and the government. However, the conclusions drawn in these studies also support the view that the government is in a prime position to be the agent to deliver on the citizens' expectation of this social welfare. Not only do the citizens expect that educational services will and should be delivered by the government, but these same citizens feel that a failure to do so would create the same marginalization and segregation that generated conflict within Sri Lanka. It thus seems more than obvious that for the government to be

the agent of change is both preferable and necessary to keep the country moving closer toward reconciliation and social cohesion.

III.

The State of Reconstruction and Reconciliation

When is the best time to implement a program of peace education? The implementation of a peace education program with the aim to foster social cohesion could do just the opposite if conditions for peace are unstable and renewed conflict still likely. The studies examined in this section will focus on the conditions for reconstruction and reconciliation in Sri Lanka with a concern to see not only how both would affect any implementation of a peace education program, but how the implementation of a peace education program could, in turn, affect the state of reconstruction and reconciliation process. Peace education scholars often point to the benefits of such programs; however, when the education system plays a part in the devolution of relations between warring parties, changes to that system must be approached with great caution and care.

Sri Lanka's conflict ended in 2009 with a military defeat of the LTTE by the security and military forces of the Sri Lankan Government. Sri Lanka then "entered an uncertain phase of post-civil war political reconstruction," in which there was no war, but it was not always clear that there was peace.⁵¹ Immediately after the cessation of violence, international actors focused on peace-building efforts in Sri Lanka which included: "(a) early resettlement of displaced Tamil civilians in and outside of refugee camps; (b) provisions for speedy humanitarian aid to civilians with international assistance, participation, and monitoring; and (c) implementation of devolution."⁵²

International actors also pressed the Sri Lankan government to transfer power away from the center to “hopefully prevent the possible re-emergence of violent Tamil ethnonationalism and ensure minority rights.”⁵³ Then then-US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton appealed to the then-Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa for “‘political reconciliation’ and ‘speedy resettlement of nearly 300,000 displaced Tamil civilians’” in addition to “the need for ‘post-conflict power-sharing’ with Tamils.”⁵⁴

A presidential election in early 2015 saw a democratic change in power from a regime that fought many aspects of reconciliation to that of President Maitripala Sirisena, who sometimes seems to be more open to some reconciliation measures. Upon being sworn in, President Sirisena then appointed Ranil Wickremesinghe as the Prime Minister. Just a few short months after President Sirisena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe began governing in their respective positions, they helped to orchestrate the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution. The 19th Amendment repealed the 18th Amendment and divested the supreme powers of the presidency established in the 18th Amendment to a Constitutional Council.

After years of criticism by the international community and calls for investigations and tribunals surrounding human rights abuses during the conflict, in September 2015 Sri Lanka “agreed to set up a special tribunal with the participation of Commonwealth and foreign judges, defense lawyers, prosecutors, and investigators to try cases of war crimes and other human rights violations that had occurred between 2002 and 2011.”⁵⁵ Under President Sirisena, the government shifted Sri Lankan economic goals from the construction that led growth in previous years to reforms that included investment in education and health along with increased public wages and salaries.⁵⁶ Sri

Lanka is making strides at strengthening its economy all the while making slower progress at reconciliation efforts that address the grievances of minorities for abuses during the war and their primary complaints that led to the conflict. Given the current state of reconstruction and reconciliation efforts, through the following studies one can help to evaluate whether Sri Lanka is in the appropriate stage to implement peace education.

Nicolai and Triplehorn – The Role of Education in Protecting Children in Conflict

In their study titled, “The Role of Education in Protecting Children in Conflict,” Susan Nicolai and Carl Triplehorn investigate the connections between education and the “wider protection needs of children it assists.”⁵⁷ (A). Nicolai is a development researcher and the head of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), an independent think tank in the United Kingdom working in the areas of international development and humanitarian issues. She has previously worked with the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General (UN SRSG) on Children and Armed Conflict, Save the Children, the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Triplehorn describes himself as an “Independent Education Management Professional.”⁵⁸ He specializes in emergency education and is a Youth in Development Specialist currently working with the Peace Corps.

Nicolai and Triplehorn argue that understanding the role that education may play in protecting children in conflict zones is crucial if education is to be used as a tool of protection. The authors’ focus on the delivery of educational services in the midst of

conflict is obviously no longer relevant to the circumstances in Sri Lanka since the cessation of violence, however, there are still important aspects of their investigation that can be applied to the current framework of the Sri Lankan educational system post-conflict and the implementation of peace education studies. The authors' identification of the protective aspects of education and how crucial these parts of the educational system are for children highlight the importance of the provision of these educational services to all segments across Sri Lankan society.

It is important to emphasize Nicolai and Triplehorn's belief that education can have such a positive impact on children during a conflict that it is imperative for full educational services to be made available to all children in Sri Lanka immediately, especially given the barriers that had prevented the government from doing so during the conflict are no longer a factor. As Brigitte Sørensen and Kristian Stokke each found in their respective research studies previously discussed, the delivery of educational services to all children by the Sri Lankan government is viewed as a vital welfare provision. There is no sense in delaying the full provision of educational services while the government makes the determination of what peace education program upon which it may embark. The provision of comprehensive educational services to all children throughout Sri Lanka is just as important as the implementation of peace education curriculum development. The government needs to continue the parallel process to develop the curriculum and to implement a peace education program while also troubleshooting the logistical barriers to providing equal access to full educational services in all areas (funding, teacher training, etc.).

Davies and Talbot – Learning in Conflict and Postconflict Contexts

In a guest editorial entitled, “Learning in Conflict and Postconflict Contexts,” Lynn Davies and Christopher Talbot give an overview to some of the crucial themes within the articles to follow on the subjects of education in developing countries or post-conflict situations. Davies is a researcher on international education and currently holds a position as Emeritus Professor of International Education in the Centre for International Education and Research at the University of Birmingham, U.K. Talbot is also a researcher on international education and focuses on education in emergencies. He has been affiliated with and conducted research for organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNESCO through their International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) division, and co-founded the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA).

The most notable theme Davies and Talbot discuss is the importance of learning and education for children in post-conflict situations along with the identity of the learner. The authors point to the emphasis in studies on education post-conflict that emphasize the importance of schooling in restoring normality. They argue that the conclusion often obtained within these studies that just getting the children back into school and re-establishing the routine of schooling as being enough for the recovery of children who have lived through conflict is an oversimplification. Davies and Talbot emphasize that “what is learned is crucial to rehabilitation and reconstruction,”⁵⁹ however, they also state “schooling for these learners provides hope for the future,”⁶⁰ an indication that while they prefer a carefully crafted curriculum to aid in the rehabilitation

and reconstruction efforts, the act of learning itself is a hopeful path forward for children.

The hope that they have in mind ties in with the second theme of their compilation, that of the student's identity as a learner. Davies and Talbot highlight the importance to the students of being able to identify themselves as "learners" as having membership in "the club of learners" that would follow from this sense of themselves.⁶¹ The authors Nicolai and Triplehorn also touched upon the very same notion that a pupil's identity as a student and learner is important. The hope for the future that can exist when one engages in a program of study can make the individual and their family feel that they are making strides at putting the conflict behind them and focusing on the potential for the future. Davies and Talbot caution, however, that identity and membership "is highly complex in divided societies."⁶² As happened in Sri Lanka, division in a plural society can lead to political conflict and violence, even war. Participation in the educational experience, no matter what state the educational program may be in, could be beneficial for the learner. However, the Davies and Talbot caution that "any attempts at 'inclusive education' must take into account the long histories of political and cultural division or hostility and how these affect the continued struggles for identity formation and stability of learners."⁶³ They go further to state, "Inclusive education programs can become battlegrounds for political loyalties or large population groups."⁶⁴

In the case of Sri Lanka, the authors' cautions seem to have been at least partially heeded by the Sri Lankan Government as the Ministry of Education has addressed the need for cultural sensitivity as part of the formation of an educational curriculum that is able to suit the needs of the entire population. It is also important for the government to understand that the provision of educational resources, and particularly the unequal

provision of educational resources, has the potential to create division and “inclusive education” the site of battle that Davies and Talbot warn against. If the government is to move forward with a centralized curriculum and provision of educational resources, it must ensure that neither the curriculum nor the provision of resources create “inclusive” (or exclusive) education programs.

Malhotra and Liyanage – Long-Term Effects of Peace Workshops in Protracted Conflicts

Deepak Malhotra and Sumanasiri Liyanage published a study, entitled, “Long-Term Effects of Peace Workshops in Protracted Conflicts” that examines the success of a peace workshop in Sri Lanka conducted in 2001 by the NGO National Integration Program Unit (NIPU). Malhotra and Liyanage’s study was conducted a year later to investigate the long-term effects the workshop may have had on the participants. Deepak Malhotra is the Eli Goldston Professor of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School. He has written extensively on conflict management, dispute resolution, and negotiation. Sumanasiri Liyanage is an associate professor in the Department of Economics and Statistics at the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka. He has written a wide range of research publications on the Sri Lankan conflict and peace process, as well as numerous opinion pieces in the press of Sri Lanka.

The male and female participants in Malhotra and Liyanage’s study ranged in age from eighteen to twenty-one and had been “nominated by the schools in their local district on the basis of perceived leadership ability and involvement in their respective communities” to be allowed to attend the peace workshop.⁶⁵ Once there, the attendees “participated in camp activities that included mini-lectures, peace workshops, creative

activities, a cultural show, and tours of multiethnic villages.”⁶⁶ In the authors’ examination of the success of the workshop, they surveyed three groups of young people.

Malhotra and Liyanage describe the three categories of groups as follows:

“(1) those who had attended the peace workshops one year prior to our study (“workshop participants” [WP]), (2) those who came from the same schools as WPs and had been nominated to attend the workshops one year prior to our study but had not been able to participate due to budget cuts that year (“nonparticipants” [NP]), and (3) those students who were demographically similar to the other two groups, except that their schools were not involved in nominating students to the workshops (“nonparticipants from nonparticipating schools” [NP-NP]).⁶⁷

This design gave Malhotra and Liyanage two separate control groups against whom they could measure the attitudes of the workshop participants to gauge the workshops’ efficacy.

The survey data was collected by anonymous questionnaires from the participants of the three groups described above, all of whom were paid for their participation. Upon examining the results, Malhotra and Liyanage conclude that there was a marked difference in the attitudes toward and charitable financial contributions given to ‘other’ ethnic groups on behalf of the workshop participants than that of the other two groups (NPs and NP-NPs). Malhotra and Liyanage determine that the difference among the responses is strong enough to confirm their hypothesis that there is a causal relationship between the more empathetic attitudes of the peace workshop program participants toward ‘other’ ethnic groups and that this added empathy led to more financial contributions being made on behalf of children of the “other” ethnic group.

Malhotra and Liyanage’s examination not only reinforces the potential benefit that peace education could be expected to have for Sri Lanka, but it sheds light on this

examination of when peace education can be most effectively implemented. The workshop examined in the study was conducted in 2001, in the midst of the conflict. The follow-up survey that was then conducted to gauge the attitudes of participants and non-participants alike was also conducted in 2002, while the conflict and the wounds from the conflict were still very fresh in everyone's mind. The study was conducted at a time in which the 2002 ceasefire agreement had just been established. This in itself may have generated an overall optimism among participants in their responses; however, that should not have disrupted the study's final results as the effects of the ceasefire would have been felt among all responding participants from those who attended the peace workshop to the two separate control groups also being questioned.

Despite the rawness of the protracted conflict, the peace education workshop attendees demonstrated markedly increased empathy over that of the non-participants. Given the success of the NIPU administered program during the conflict, the potential for success in implementing a peace education program is even stronger after the cessation of violent conflict.

Cardozo – Sri Lanka: in Peace or in Pieces? A Critical Approach to Peace Education in
Sri Lanka

Mieke T.A. Lopes Cardozo wrote the article, "Sri Lanka: in Peace or in Pieces? A Critical Approach to Peace Education in Sri Lanka" in 2008 during her tenure at the Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands; she is currently an assistant professor at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research. Her study analyzes the impact that peace education

had in Sri Lanka around the time of publication (2008), which was some years before the cessation of violence. Cardozo evaluates the impact that peace education had not only on building peace and fostering social cohesion, but also the impact that it had on exacerbating tensions that led to violence. While the conflict has officially ended since publication of her study, the examination remains particularly notable in that Cardozo determines that “several initiatives demonstrating the positive face of education can be found” in her examination while the conflict was still ongoing.⁶⁸ She also points to several factors where “issues relating to the negative side of education” exacerbated tensions. These issues, such as the medium of instruction and content of social science textbooks, will be evaluated in the section regarding ethnic and linguistic considerations for implementation of peace education curriculum below.

Cardozo finds in her examination that peace education “cannot succeed on its own, and needs to be incorporated in a broader multilevel process of peacebuilding that addresses structural inequalities and root causes of conflict.”⁶⁹ This notion of peace education as one pillar in a broader peacebuilding structure is one that the author later reiterates in her follow-up study on peace education in Sri Lanka titled, “Losing ground: a critical analysis of teachers’ agency for peacebuilding education in Sri Lanka.”⁷⁰ For the evaluation of whether Sri Lanka is at the appropriate stage in its post-conflict journey toward reconstruction and reconciliation to implement a peace education program, the most important aspect of both of Cardozo’s studies is her assertion that the implementation of a peace education program is always a fluid construct. One need not wait until all other matters of reconciliation and reconstruction are settled before a peace education program can be implemented initially. Moreover, Cardozo prescribes

‘peacebuilding education’ (the term that she uses to describes the more comprehensive approach that is inclusive of “the whole curriculum, the school environment and the wider social and political structures in society”)⁷¹ as one remedy that can contribute to a structural transformation.

Concluding Thoughts

The studies considered above all contribute to the analysis and understanding of when to implement a peace education program in different ways. Nicolai and Triplehorn emphasize the importance of education to children in conflict and emergencies. Davies and Talbot echo that same emphasis in describing the impact that recognizing oneself as a learner, a student, can have for the school children in forming their identity. Malhotra and Liyanage investigate and point toward the success of a peace workshop conducted *during* the conflict in Sri Lanka. Cardozo underscores the role that peace education plays as one part of peacebuilding efforts and how all peacebuilding efforts can and should progress simultaneously.

Sri Lanka has moved past open conflict and its government is now actively working toward securing the peace with various reconciliation and reconstruction measures. By state policy and by constitutional directive, education is a vital welfare service to be provided to all school aged children in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government is working toward doing so effectively in all areas. This effort is crucial to allow children from all ethnic, religious, and socio-economic groups in Sri Lanka to be able to form a common identity as learners, an identity that is supported equally among all groups by the Sri Lankan government. As a nation, however, Sri Lanka still needs to

redress the grievances of many groups, and these are often the very same grievances that contributed toward the decades long protracted conflict. However, the implementation of a peace education curriculum in addition to the provision of fully funded and quality educational services throughout the country could go far in aiding the progress that Sri Lanka is making toward doing just that.

IV.

Ethnic and Linguistic Considerations for Implementation of Peace Education Curriculum

Will ethnic considerations and linguistic policies in course curriculum derail the implementation of a peace education program? As noted above, the politics of language in Sri Lanka played a major contributing part in antagonizing minority and majority groups in Sri Lanka in the lead up to, during, and after the conflict. Historically (pre-globalization), the official language in which the government would conduct business dictated what language would be desirable for economic advancement. Since Sri Lanka obtained independence its attempts to remedy the initial disenfranchisement of groups within Sri Lanka based upon language have been problematic. Each attempt to remedy discrimination has brought about unintended consequences that left one group or another feeling further out in the cold. The official language policy changes of the government repeatedly affected the medium of instruction in schools throughout Sri Lanka. Additionally, the language of instruction often had an impact on university admissions. Students who were instructed in their native languages would flourish if that was the chosen language for an admissions test or course of study within the university, while other students would struggle if they had only minimal exposure to another language in which they were to be examined or instructed at the university level. These policies then continued to have very real impacts on employment, unemployment and underemployment in Sri Lanka throughout the decades long conflict.

The Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) produced a report in

2011 after investigating many aspects of the conflict, including the integral role of language in the reconciliation process. The report states that “The proper implementation of the language policy and ensuring trilingual (Sinhala, Tamil and English) fluency of future generations becomes vitally important. A tri-lingual education will allow children from very young days to get to understand each other.”⁷² The LLRC further notes that “The Commission therefore welcomes the Government initiative for a trilingual nation by the year 2020. To this end the necessary budgetary provisions must be made available on a priority basis for teacher training and staffing.”⁷³ To achieve that goal, the committee recommended that the Official Languages Commission should have branches in every province to be “accessible to rural citizenry.”⁷⁴

In addition to language policy, the politics of implementing a fair and cohesive curriculum on Sri Lankan history has been controversial, particularly after the end of the conflict. Course textbooks need to identify the origins of the conflict, describe each group’s grievances, and chronicle the events during the conflict to educate children, all the while not leaving out, understating, overstating or oversimplifying any of these matters. There has been wide criticism of texts and course materials that were distributed by the Sri Lankan government during and after the conflict as being unfair and presenting a one-sided version of the conflict that whitewashes the part the government played and minimizes minority grievances. The studies examined below all touch upon the relevance of curriculum reform in the wake of Sri Lankan reconciliation and reconstruction. Their analyses contribute to this examination of whether the multilingual and multiethnic nature of the Sri Lankan educational system will prevent the successful implementation of a peace education program.

The authors Lal Perera, Swarna Wijetunge and A.S. Balasooriya published their study in a collection titled *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, edited by Sobhi Tawil and Alexandra Harley. Professors Lal Perera and Swarna Wijetunge were both on the faculty at the University of Colombo at the time of publication and both have served as directors of the university's National Education Research and Evaluation Centre (NEREC). Mr. A.S. Balasooriya was a former Chief Project Officer of the Sri Lankan National Institute of Education and a Senior Lecturer in the Lyceum Academy for Teacher Education, Nugegoda, at the time of publication. The authors compiled their study by accessing “printed documents that present different analyses of the incidents” in order to “obtain and present a comprehensive and balanced record, and to analyze the events that have taken place in the country in the past twenty-five years with respect to ethnic and other conflicts.”⁷⁵ Additionally, they conducted interviews with “relevant persons and authorities” regarding curriculum changes to influence social cohesion and peace in Sri Lanka.⁷⁶

Perera, Wijetunge and Balasooriya describe the curriculum review and reform process through the Sri Lankan Education Publications Department (EPD) in which evaluation boards and technical committees evaluate draft manuscripts. These evaluation boards were adopted in January 2003. The board looks to the following when evaluating the “sensitivity guidelines”:

- To what extent does the book portray persons and events in an objective way?
- Are all groups represented in a way that is fair to them and their beliefs?

- Is the material likely to promote harmony and understanding, or could it evoke fear and hostility?⁷⁷

The reforms undertaken by the Ministry of Education at the same time included the implementation of “life competencies” education that replaced the course of “life skills”. The curriculum of the life competencies subject is analogous to what many in the United States or Europe refer to as a civics course. Perera, Wijetunge and Balasooriya indicate that the course was “initiated in the context of a generalized concern for social cohesion and national integration, but was not consciously formulated or implemented to effect such change.”⁷⁸ The authors fault the program with many deficiencies. Since the time of publication, the Ministry of Education has addressed some of these faults, including the (then) absence of a students’ handbook/textbook on the subject. See below regarding current course texts.

Perera, Wijetunge and Balasooriya highlight the importance of teaching both Tamil and Sinhala languages to all students and offering multiple courses available to all students in both Tamil and Sinhala. They articulate that the system cannot supply the staff needed to not only teach both languages during the compulsory subjects (grades six through ten) to all students as language courses, but to offer all electives in all schools (language courses in the “other” language for grades ten and eleven).⁷⁹ As such, Perera, Wijetunge and Balasooriya criticize the government for relying too much on English as a “link language” to bring together Sinhala and Tamil speakers.

Punchi – Resistance towards the Language of Globalisation: The Case of Sri Lanka

Lakshman Punchi’s publication, “Resistance towards the Language of

Globalisation: The Case of Sri Lanka” investigates the relationship between the language used as the medium of instruction in Sri Lankan schools and Sri Lanka’s movement toward globalization. At the time of publication Lakshman Punchi was affiliated with the Institute for Educational Research, Norway. Punchi champions the effect that moving toward a vernacular education in Sri Lanka in the 1950s had on literacy and education rates. He points to the movement as a necessary shift in moving away from the colonial English instruction into languages in which poorer Sri Lankans could engage the educational system. Punchi makes the argument that the push to change the Sri Lankan educational system at the time of publication (2001) towards a more English-centered system was done as a result of and for the sake of globalization. Punchi counters claims that a more English-centered educational system would prepare pupils for the modern globalized economy. Rather, he argues that doing so would merely create a new elite class of pupils who had access to the English language instruction but who would still be unable to communicate and fully function in Sri Lanka without knowing the “other” Sri Lankan language (Tamil or Sinhala).

Punchi’s argument that English language instruction is being pushed on Sri Lanka by the large forces of globalization (including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and other international actors, as well as broad economic systems) is intriguing, but obviously missing a major aspect of analysis when it comes to language use and language policy in Sri Lanka. To analyze language policy in the Sri Lankan educational sector without including how that policy has been influenced by the politics of the conflict in Sri Lanka is like analyzing the global war on terror without mentioning the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States. Punchi prescribes that Sri Lankan education

should continue to be conducted in the predominant local languages, combined with an emphasis on teaching the “other” Sri Lankan language (Sinhala in Tamil areas and Tamil in Sinhala areas) as a second language so that Sri Lankans can effectively communicate with one another. He claims that promoting instruction in English as a link language between the two groups would only result in creating “two thin groups, namely the English Educated Tamils and English educated Sinhalese.”⁸⁰

Punchi points toward the Sri Lankan government’s inability to effectuate proper English language instruction throughout the country, thereby creating new classes of people who were able to access such effective instruction because of their social position and their personal resources. The challenge with this reasoning is that it opposes instruction in English due to the predicted unequal distribution of educational resources, which is a non sequitur. While the unequal distribution of educational resources would and does affect the pupil’s capability of learning in English, it would also affect the pupil’s capability of learning in Sinhala or Tamil. Further, Punchi points toward the disjointed curriculum in English that was taught at primary schools, secondary schools, professional courses, and universities. The government has made a strong effort through the Ministry of Education to create a single cohesive curriculum that will be available to all students in the three languages recognized in Sri Lanka (English, Sinhala, and Tamil). See below regarding current course texts.

Punchi’s promotion of education in local languages may largely miss the context of modern Sri Lanka in the world today. Globalization is happening, and this has to be acknowledged. Insisting upon instruction in only the Sinhala or Tamil mediums may leave the Sri Lankan student wholly unprepared for the impact that globalization has on

the Sri Lankan economy, especially as the government and businesses are constantly making efforts to make Sri Lanka fully integrated into the global economy. Additionally, the lack of analysis of the political influence that language policy has on post-conflict Sri Lanka shows that this prescription for language policy in Sri Lanka may be short-sighted and even ideologically driven.

Wickrema and Colenso – Respect for Diversity in Educational Publication: The Sri
Lankan Experience

Ariya Wickrema and Peter Colenso's study titled, "Respect for Diversity in Educational Publication – The Sri Lankan Experience," covers issues of bias with the course texts within the Sri Lankan educational system. Ariya Wickrema was a National Consultant with the Educational Publications Department at the time of publication. Peter Colenso was an education specialist with the World Bank, Colombo at the time of publication. He is currently the Education Executive Director with Children's Investment Fund Foundation. Prior to joining CIFF he worked for the UK's Department for International Development as Head of the Human Development Department.

Wickrema and Colenso review the importance of addressing bias in educational publications in Sri Lanka by compiling information on the complaints of bias and reforms aimed at correcting these problems. The complaints of bias vary from content within the educational materials such as "distortion of facts and distortion of history" and "grammatical, spelling and factual errors" to "criticisms of the textbook production process" including a lack of diversity among authors of textbooks and the dominance of texts that are written in Sinhala and then translated into Tamil.⁸¹ These complaints were

to be addressed by the formation of boards to monitor and rectify bias. Wickrema and Colenso chronicle the attempts at redressing the faults in the educational publication system by these organizations, noting their shortcomings and lack of effectiveness, when appropriate. Overall, the notable conclusions the authors extol are:

1) Bias in educational texts should be addressed swiftly by “highly respected educationists and professionals.”⁸²

2) Such intervention should be conducted not entirely by the Sri Lankan government as “government organizations lack the flexibility and the sensitivity needed to respond efficiently to issues of this nature” and “political patronage could do more harm than good [as] Sri Lankan politics alienates one group no matter how good the cause is.”⁸³

3) Bias should be addressed in a systematic and not reactionary way. “The perception of the movement as only reacting to minority demands and criticism will negate its image.”⁸⁴

4) The dialogue surrounding reforms on the basis of “respect for diversity” should be driven by the perception that they are being conducted on the basis of equality and not as a “magnanimous gesture by the majority.”⁸⁵

Wickrema and Colenso’s recommendations provide a solid base from which the Sri Lankan government could move forward with a curriculum reform that possibly could be supported by all social groups within Sri Lanka. These reforms themselves would help to create greater social cohesion through the use of unbiased texts that are written by and for all groups within Sri Lanka. The formation of an entity responsible for monitoring textbooks would also be instrumental in the successful implementation of peace

education efforts in Sri Lanka. In fact, the review of textbooks “by panels of scholars and researchers from all the different ethnic and religious groups in the country” was part of the “Pathway for the Future” prescribed for Sri Lanka by the World Bank.⁸⁶

The Educational Publications Department – Life Competencies and Citizenship Education

The Educational Publications Department has course texts accessible through their website for courses in English, Sinhala, and Tamil. The texts available in English cover English language instruction for grades three through five and all other course subjects for grades six through eleven. The course texts available in Sinhala and Tamil cover grades one through eleven.⁸⁷ The Educational Publications Department’s website has materials for the course now titled “Life Competencies and Citizenship Education” in grades six through nine. For the students who have reached grade ten, the civics education becomes more scholarly and includes chapters on “1) Democratic Governance, 2) Decentralisation and Devolution, 3) The Multicultural Society, 4) Economic Systems and Economic Relations, and 5) Conflict Resolution in a Democr Society [*sic*].”⁸⁸ For grade eleven students, civic education in 2016 includes chapters on “1) Law and Justice, 2) Various Strata of the Government, 3) Human Rights & Duties, 4) Environmental Problems and Sustainable Development, and 5) International Relations.”⁸⁹

Concluding Thoughts

The Government of Sri Lanka is in a very precarious position when handling the issue of curriculum reform due to the sensitive nature of issues that address concerns by

ethnic/linguistic groups and concerns about economic injustices that cut across ethnic lines. An overarching policy implemented from the central Ministry of Education has the potential to offend many different interest groups in Sri Lanka. Based upon the examinations of the publications above, it is clear that several policy recommendations are reiterated when it comes to the area of curriculum reform. The path forward for reform as prescribed by the group of authors considered in this thesis is one that includes an organization with the expertise, organizational ability, and authority to review, revise, and distribute educational materials to the pupils in the Sri Lankan educational system, in other words, the Government of Sri Lanka. Further, it is clear from an analysis of their work that reforming the Sri Lankan educational system so that it is most conducive to promote social cohesion will necessitate several other factors.

First, the government needs to identify and fully fund schools in need of additional resources. There should not be accusations of certain schools getting better funding, better teachers, better materials, etc. thereby creating different classes of citizens on the basis of their access to education. Second, the government needs to involve outside (non-governmental) bodies for review and assistance with curriculum development and reform bias in textbooks and course materials. Third, there should be a body poised to investigate and advise on matters relating to any perceived or real bias in matters relating to access to education (including language of instruction) or quality of education. This organization, which should be separate from the state and other NGOs involved in education, should ensure that the voices of community leaders, educationalists, teachers, pupils, politicians, and scholars can all be heard on general issues and particular matters.

As noted, the government of Sri Lanka has already moved forward with the

implementation of a citizenship education curriculum in place of the previous ‘civics’ curriculum. These efforts would also be subject to the recommendations above with respect to any curriculum reform necessary to promote cultural sensitivity and social cohesion.

V.

Conclusion

There are many problems within the Sri Lankan educational system that make the implementation of a peace education program for the purpose of achieving greater social cohesion seem like an unattainable goal at the present time. When these problems are analyzed individually, however, remedying them seems more manageable. Moreover, in spite of such problems, there is a tremendous sense of optimism in the field of peace education. It seems as though even in reading harshly critical studies the sentiment that the system just has not found the right path *yet* exists to compel the reader to believe that it is still possible to achieve social cohesion through peace education programs.

The studies examined in the first theme repeat a common supposition that education as a critical social welfare program must be administered by the state. It is not only expected that the state will do so, but that they should do so in a fair and equal manner. A failure to administer an educational system, and do so well, will necessarily lead to the feeling on the part of the citizen that their government as a whole cannot fulfill their role as the provider of welfare. Should they attribute malfeasance to that failure to provide, it could lead to the feeling of marginalization, discrimination, and segregation. These sentiments were strong contributory factors to the conflict in Sri Lanka.

The provision of educational services in Sri Lanka by the government must be administered in a manner that is viewed as fair and equal. The distribution of resources cannot differ based upon population density, religious, or ethnic make-up. Both Brigitte Sørensen and Kristian Stokke highlight the feeling of those living in the northern region

that the government provides unequal educational resources. The government has made recent efforts to increase the standards of educational services in the more remote regions. The work of NGOs in administering peace education programs can also have success and should not be discounted, as seen in Malhotra and Liyanage's work. However, the vast scale of implementing a national program is logistically best handled by the apparatus already in place with the Sri Lankan government education system.

When answering the question posited in the second theme (when is the best time to implement a peace education program?) the advertising slogan "the time is now" comes to mind. Indeed, the time is *always now*. The studies that champion the importance of administering educational programs to children in time of conflict, while not currently relevant in Sri Lanka given the cessation of armed conflict, extol the importance of providing children with an education whether they have been displaced by conflict or are physically secure in their homes amidst political uncertainty. The provision of educational services to children at all stages of conflict, reconstruction, and reconciliation is a well-accepted principle in the development community. Merely participating in the educational system gives the students from all ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds a common identity as learners that unites them, even in a small way. Given the educational apparatus would then be supplying the students with course curriculum, it is a natural extension for that course curriculum to include peace education.

Malhotra and Liyanage evaluate the efficacy of a peace education workshop conducted *during* the conflict and assert that it was successful in imparting a greater sense of empathy among participants for the "other" Sri Lankan ethnic group. This success is a great example of the effect that a peace education curriculum could have on

social cohesion in Sri Lanka. This example supports the decision on the part of the Sri Lankan government to move forward with the implementation of a peace education curriculum (under the descriptor of citizenship education or “Life Competencies and Citizenship Education”). Implementing this curriculum within the Sri Lankan educational system in the current state should not negatively impact social cohesion. Should the results of the peace education workshop be reflected in a larger life competencies and citizenship education curriculum through the Sri Lankan educational system, the potential ways in which an increased sense of empathy for the “other” Sri Lankan ethnic groups could extend to democratic support among the majority community for government efforts to redress grievances of minority communities could reshape the overall reconciliation efforts within Sri Lanka.

Lastly, the studies and curriculum reforms examined in the last theme answer the question, will ethnic considerations and linguistic policies in course curriculum derail the implementation of a peace education program. The Sri Lankan educational system as a whole must work to balance the needs of a pluralistic society. The acknowledgement on the part of the Sri Lankan government that there is a need for an apparatus to correct for biases in the educational curriculum, along with the initial formation of a board to review and revise said biases is encouraging. The same apparatus may be used if there were to be complaints surrounding the peace education curriculum itself as being biased toward any ethnic, linguistic, or socio-economic group within Sri Lanka. It is understood that ethnic considerations and linguistic policies have the potential for flaring tensions among groups in Sri Lanka should there be a real or perceived bias in the curriculum. With the vigilance of the Sri Lankan government and others involved in the Sri Lankan educational system,

these concerns will not derail the implementation of a peace education program.

A major overarching theme among many studies of the Sri Lankan education system and peace education is that of the need for reform. That being said, the same studies that point out the flaws in the Sri Lankan education system do not discount the potential for the system to correct these problems and move forward with a comprehensive peace education program to aid in fostering social cohesion throughout Sri Lanka. This prescription for change can be viewed as a valuable tool not only for the Sri Lankan government as they navigate the path toward reconciliation, but for any number of other countries as they embark upon a similar course toward peace and reconciliation. Further, some of these studies can serve as a cautionary tool for countries that, while not plagued with a violent conflict such as that seen in Sri Lanka, are struggling with the same challenges that Sri Lanka faced before, during or after the outbreak of violence.

For example, in Brigitte Sørensen's study titled, "The Politics of Citizenship and Difference in Sri Lankan Schools" she examines the possible effect that peace education could have on social cohesion in Sri Lanka given the conflict and state of the education system in the latter stages of the conflict (2008). It is not only important to note that the participants identify the provision of adequate educational facilities and services as a path forward, but Sørensen finds the unequal provision of said educational services to be an important factor in the outbreak of conflict.⁹⁰ For many countries facing obstacles while trying to navigate the same challenges faced by Sri Lanka in forming and fostering social cohesion in a pluralist society, the example of what Sri Lanka did before and during the conflict is a prime illustration of what *not* to do.

The United States and many European nations are currently facing challenges trying to foster social cohesion among their citizens with generations-long roots in these countries and those who immigrated and settled in these countries more recently. For example, the provision of educational services in languages other than the official language of the state is at issue in many areas within the United States. A pupil's ability to wear religious coverings is at issue in France. The unequal or inadequate funding for educational services in urban areas (those traditionally housing racial, ethnic and/or religious minorities) is a recurring problem in many nations. The extent to which these countries should change their educational systems to foster social cohesion among these groups is a contested issue politically and socially. Those in a position of power within the educational system and supporting communities in any country facing issues of social cohesion should heed the warning echoed by the authors of the studies reviewed above in how the educational policies in Sri Lanka contributed to the breakdown of social cohesion and how they are attempting to remedy the situation by implementing reforms.

Beyond the general warning, of which Sri Lanka serves as an example, in how educational policies can contribute to the breakdown in social cohesion, the studies contained within this thesis can serve as a greater example of how peace education may be applied in other similar conflict or post-conflict situations. For any nation with a similarly existing and widespread government education system, the studies suggesting that the Sri Lankan government be the most appropriate agent to implement a peace education curriculum would be of interest. For any nation experiencing a similar conflict wondering when is the appropriate time to make changes to their educational system to implement a peace education curriculum, the studies suggesting that education is a vital

service for children in conflict and that lessons to impart empathy and foster social cohesion can be effective even *during* conflict would be of interest. For any nation concerned that ethnic considerations and linguistic policies could derail the implementation of a peace education program, the studies suggesting that the provision of educational resources and openness for outside (non-governmental) review and assistance with curriculum development and reform would be of interest.

The ways in which Sri Lanka created committees to hear and to address the grievances of all members of their community serves as an excellent example for countries navigating the path forward after violent conflict who similarly struggle with social cohesion in a pluralistic society. Furthermore, the successes and failures that Sri Lanka has experienced in the aftermath of conflict at implementing reform measures also serve as an example for these countries. Sri Lanka serves as a positive role model for the possibility that peace education can be effectively implemented to foster social cohesion. Ongoing study of the Sri Lankan government's effort to implement a peace education program through their national curriculum is vital to assess not only the efficacy of the Sri Lankan program, but also to evaluate the potential application of the program in other conflict and post conflict situations.

VI.

List of Abbreviations Used in Citations

GoSL (Government of Sri Lanka): Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

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