MEDIA FRAMING OF THE SRI LANKAN CIVIL WAR

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ABSTRACT

THESIS: Media Framing of the Sri Lankan Civil War

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The Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) fought with the Sri Lankan government for more than three decades for a separate state for Tamil speaking people in Sri Lanka. The war had significant social, political and economic impacts on Sri Lanka. This study analyzed the types of media framing strategies used by *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers in reporting the war. The study employed Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) media framing devices as the theoretical framework. The findings revealed that the newspapers' framing of the war supported and promoted the dominant Sinhala Buddhist standpoint on the war.

Key Words*:* Framing, War, Terrorism, Media, News

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I was born in Sri Lanka, two years after the civil war between the Sri Lankan government forces and the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) began in 1983. I can still remember how I cried when my father told me he was transferred to a police station in the war-torn area. I had seen the destruction of the war from media since my childhood. Every day I read the newspaper hoping that no story would be reported about the area where my father was employed. When I was a kid, I collected newspaper articles and photos reported on war, as Sri Lankan military forces were heroes in my life. I knew they were fighting with the LTTE. But I did not know why they were fighting with each other. Later, I realized that the LTTE soldiers were also brothers from my country who were fighting for a separate state for the Tamil-speaking people. However, none of my family members, friends, or even the newspaper, informed me that there were compelling reasons for the Tamil youth to fight for their rights.

I worked as a trainee journalist with the Associated Press Sri Lanka in May 2009. I interviewed people in Colombo city on the day after the LTTE leader was killed by the government forces. Newspaper sellers were having their best business ever. People could not wait until they got their turn to buy a newspaper. Somehow I managed to buy one. The front-page of the newspaper was filled with a large picture of the slain LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran. People were dancing in the streets with national flags. I could not hear anything due to the noise of the celebratory firecrackers. According to my memory, it was the second most joyful day in recent Sri Lankan history, after the cricket world cup victory in 1996. Some people cooked milk rice on the streets and shared it with each other. Looking at the many graphic photographs depicted, and being trained as a journalist, I could not help wondering at the time whether or not it was ethical for a newspaper to publish a story with such bloody photos. I also

wondered why newspapers seemed to report the last few days of the war like final few overs[1] in a cricket match. Now, as a scholar exploring rhetorical criticism, I am prompted to combine my journalistic background with my burgeoning interest in rhetoric to study this last stage of the war between the Sri Lankan government forces and the LTTE through a media framing lens.

Rationale

In this study, I examine the framing strategies that were used by two leading Sri Lankan newspapers in reporting the final few weeks of conflict between the Sri Lankan government forces and the LTTE. This study is significant for several reasons. Even though there have been several studies on media framing in news media (e.g., De la Brosse, 2003; Evans, 2010; Galandar 2012; Glazier & Boydstun, 2012; Golčevski, Engelhardt & Boomgaarden, 2013; Kothari, 2010; Narayana & Kapur, 2011; Steuter & Wills, 2010), there has been only one study conducted, which examines media framing of the Sri Lankan civil war (Neumann & Fahmy, 2012). Neumann and Fahmy (2012) conducted a war/peace framing analysis of the 2009 visual coverage of the Sri Lankan civil war in Western newswires. Although they conducted a visual framing analysis of the Sri Lankan conflict, their study focused on the *Western* media coverage. The scholarly contribution of my study is that I examine framing of the *Sri Lankan* media during the war.

Amarasingam (2015) claims that the war in Sri Lanka was one of the most brutal conflicts in recent memory. He further states that the last 10 days of the conflict were a period of intense shelling, resulting in massive civilian suffering. Although there have been several studies on media and the Sri Lankan civil war in general (e.g., Kandaiah, 2001; Lee, 2010; Thiranagama, 2011; Ubayasiri, 2012; Ubayasiri & Brandy, 2003), most of these studies focused on media

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[1] In the sport of cricket, an "over" is a set of six balls bowled to the batsman from one end of a cricket pitch.

freedom depicting particular incidents occurring in the three decade-long war. For example,

Ubayasiri and Brandy (2003) examined mainstream Sinhala-language media reporting of the

LTTE attack on the Temple of the Tooth Relic. There is a scholarly dearth in the research

focused on media reporting during the final stage of the war between the Sri Lankan government

forces and the LTTE. This study contributes to the scholarship by examining media reporting of

the Sri Lankan civil war, which is one of the most significant military conflicts in the world

(Voorde, 2005).

Media Framing is an ideal way to examine how journalists frame events according to the

social, political and cultural agendas of the media. It helps readers to understand the nuances of

the strategies used by the media to frame events. One of the significant aspects of this study is

that it used media framing to examine how journalists from Sinhala Buddhist dominated media

coverage in Sri Lanka to frame the incidents which took place during the last few weeks of the

war.

The three decade long war had significant social, cultural, economic and political impact

on Sri Lanka. Even though all the ethnic communities in the county were affected by the war, the

war related discussion was dominated by the newspapers owned by Sinhala elites in the south.

There is a critical need to examine how the media owned by the dominant Sinhala elites framed

the war and specifically how newspapers were used as a tool for the propagation of war.

Sri Lanka has a long history of using violence to suppress its rather large media complex

(Natarajan, 2012). [2] This happens through a multifaceted and indirect relationship between the

government, state-owned media, and mostly privately-held media companies. According to

Boronow (2013), the litany of attacks on journalists critical of former President Mahinda

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[2] Although Sri Lanka is a country with a population of only 21 million people, there are over a dozen newspapers, approximately three dozen TV channels and more than 40 radio stations (Natarajan, 2012).

Rajapaksa's administration justifies their fear that speaking out against the Government will result in reprisals. Perhaps the most prominent examples of such attacks are the 2009 assassination of Lasantha Wickrematunge, the editor of the *Sunday Leader*, and the 2010 disappearance of Prageeth Ekneligoda, a journalist and cartoonist for *Lankae News.* Indeed, the Committee to Protect Journalists (2010) states that 25 journalists were killed in Sri Lanka between 1992 and 2009. Most of these killings took place between 2004 and 2009 during the height of the Sri Lankan civil war. There have been serious allegations against the Sri Lankan government for not allowing journalists to engage in true and fair reporting (International Media Support, 2005).

As Natarajan (2012) notes, the private sector owns a significant number of media institutions in Sri Lanka, with the primary balance of ownership resting with the business elites in the Singhalese south. I examine the media reporting of *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers to identify the framing strategies they used in war coverage. *The Island* is owned by a Sinhala Buddhist business family in the south. There are strong political connections between Sinhala Buddhist media ownership and the government. Cheran (2009) observes that Nimal Welgama, who was appointed Chairman of Sri Lanka Telecom by President Rajapaksa and is brother to the Minister of Transport, is the CEO of the *Upali Newspapers Private Limited,* which publish four newspapers including *The Island*. On the other hand, even though the *Daily Mirror* is also owned by a Sinhala Buddhist family, it has not been criticized or identified as a newspaper representing Sinhala Buddhist ideology, as has been *The Island.* My study provides insight into the very complex Sri Lankan media landscape and the behavior of the media owned by the Sinhalese business class during a time when alternative voices were suppressed.

Although Sri Lanka is a small island nation, it is socially, culturally and politically significant in the South Asian Region (De Silva, 1987). The conflict between the government forces and the LTTE had a significant impact in regional politics, especially in neighboring India. This study may be useful for future scholars who plan to study media reporting of conflicts in the South Asia.

As disciplines, communication studies and media studies in Sri Lanka are in the developing stage. Only three universities offer graduate programs in these fields and all those programs are conducted in Sinhala language. Most research done by media and communication scholars living in Sri Lanka is published in the Sinhala language. A very low number of media and communication research on the Sri Lankan context is published internationally. This study provides the opportunity to better establish the disciplines of communication studies and media studies in Sri Lanka, and also provides the opportunity for scholars around the world to get a better understanding of the media reporting of the Sri Lankan civil war.

Overview

In chapter two, I provide readers with context for the study by giving a brief overview of Sri Lanka with key information on geographical, social, political and cultural factors. Second, I discuss relevant literature related to the roots of the ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese people and the LTTE. Third, I review literature on the emergence and the development of the LTTE as a militant group in Sri Lanka. Finally, I discuss the final stage of the war with an emphasis on the significant events taking place during the last five weeks. In chapter three, I provide an explanation of media framing and discuss some significant studies on media framing—focusing in particular on those studies which examine media framing of wars. Then I explain Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) work on media framing devices, which serves as the

theoretical framework of this study. In chapter four, I analyze media framing strategies used by *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers with the application of Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) theoretical framework. In chapter five, I provide a summary of the analysis and research findings. Then I explain research contributions, implications and limitations. Finally, I discuss future directions for research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to examine the types of media framing used by *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* as they reported on the conflict between the Sri Lankan government forces and the LTTE. This section will first provide a brief geographical, social, and cultural overview of Sri Lanka. Then, roots of the ethnic conflict will be discussed under four main themes. The next section will explain the emergence and the development of the LTTE as a militant group in Sri Lanka. The final section will describe the significant events taking place during the final stage of the war between the government forces and the LTTE.

A Brief Overview of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island nation located about 31 kilometers off the south eastern coast of India. It is a multi-ethnic country with a population of 21 million people and it has a total area of 65,610 kilometers with 64,740 kilometers of land and 870 kilometers of water. The country is officially named in the constitution as the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and it was known as Ceylon during the British colonization. The largest ethnic group on the island is the Sinhalese, who comprise around 74% of the total population. The Tamil community comprises 15% of Sri Lanka's population (this includes 11% Sri Lankan Tamils and 4% Indian Tamils who were brought to the country to work in tea plantations during the British colonial period). Muslims constitute of 9% of the total population and Veddas[3] and numerous ethnic groups of Indians, Africans and Chinese comprise the remaining population (Sri Lanka Census Department, 2012).

There is a clear religious division among the several ethnic communities living in the country. According to the Sri Lankan Census and Statistics Survey (2009), Buddhism is the

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[3] Veddas are the indigenous people of Sri Lanka.

dominant religion, as the majority of Sinhala people are followers. The majority of Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils are Hindus. Muslims comprise 9.7% percent of the population, while Christians account for 7.55 % of the population (this number includes Burgers and a minority of Tamils and Sinhalas).

Even though it is a small island nation, Sri Lanka is one of the 25 "bio diversity hotspots" in the world (Conservation International, 2014). Sri Lanka is famous for its waterfalls, rainforests and mountains. Sri Lanka has a proud historical tradition for its agricultural economy and paddy cultivation is the main occupation for the people living in the rural areas of the country. Agriculture is the most important sector of the Sri Lankan economy and the major plantation crops of tea, rubber, and coconuts continue to figure prominently in the economy of Sri Lanka (Nations Encyclopedia, 2010). The country is one of the main tea exporters in the world and their brand "Ceylon Tea" is a leading international tea product. According to the World Tea Council (2013), in 2012, Sri Lanka exported 340 million kilograms of tea, the third highest by volume behind Kenya and China. Tourism is a major economic driver in the country, given that Sri Lanka is famous for its beaches and historical sites such as Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, and Sigiriya. Indeed, Sri Lanka's diverse combination of fine beaches, world class historical sites, wildlife resources, hospitable people, tropical climate and its relatively compact area ensure it is a destination well-suited for tourism and recreation activities at the local/regional level (Tisdel & Bandara (2004).

Roots of the Ethnic Conflict

The armed conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) started in 1983. The main objective of the LTTE military struggle was to create a separate state in the northern and eastern parts of the country for the ethnic Tamils. The armed conflict between these two parties continued for nearly three decades until the LTTE was defeated by government military forces in 2009. It is quite important to understand historical, socio cultural and economic factors, which paved the way for an insurgency among the Tamil youth to fight for a monoethnic independent state. Perera (1991) identifies four key themes which help us to more fully understand the ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. They include: 1) Interpretation of the past, 2) Politics of language, 3) Politics of education, 4) Militarization of ethnic conflict. I use Perera's themes to organize this portion of the literature review.

Interpretations of the past: The Sinhalese People

According to the chronicle Mahawansa,[4] which is written in Pali[5] language, the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka were Yaksha and Nagas. The Mahawansa asserts that Sinhalese history started when prince Vijaya arrived in 543 BCE from North India. The mythical story in the Mahawansa claims that Vijaya was born to princess Sinhasivali as a result of her relationship with a lion. The meaning of the word "Sinhala" is "the blood of the lion." One cannot forget these mythical narratives in Sinhala history, as popular Sinhala nationalist ideology identifies

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[4] The Mahawansa is thousands of years old. Periodically revised by Buddhist monks, the Mahawansa has detailed the Sri Lankan people for 2500 years. It has no analogous text in Western culture. Scholars debate vigorously about whether the Mahawansa is cultural myth or historical fact.

[5] The Pali language derived from India. It is the language in which all the Buddhist texts were written.

Sinhalese as "the people of the lions," even in the contemporary context. The Sri Lankan national flag portrays a sword carrying lion, which symbolizes the power of the Sinhala people.

Perera (1991) claims that, "at the level of popular perception, Sinhalas believe that they belong to a superior ethnic group called 'Aryans[6]' who trace their descent from northern parts of India" (p. 12). He further states that the perceived North Indian and Aryan ancestry of Sinhalas is a fundamental component in the Sinhala origin myth and a cornerstone in their popular perception of themselves. "The *Bhikkus or monks* who compiled the Mahawansa attached religious significance to Vijaya's arrival on the Island as an indication that the Sinhalese people, as the descendants of Vijaya, were destined by divine will to protect and foster Buddhism in Sri Lanka" (Smith, 1979, p. 56). Prominent Sinhalese historians emphasize that the Buddhist clergy perpetuated this myth to make it widely accepted (De Silva, 1987). Historians have argued that the historical narrative of the Mahawansa primarily promotes Sinhala Buddhist fundamentalism by claiming that Sinhala Buddhists have been the superiors of the nation since its civilization. "The Sinhalese are suffering from the 'Mahawansa complex,' something similar to the 'chosen people complex' of the Jews. It is this complex that has made the Sinhala people so chauvinistic" (Bartheloemouz & De Silva, 1998, p. 5).

Obeysekere (1989) states that such "myths are also an expression of the self-perceived historical role of the Sinhalese as a nation" (p. 32). He further argues that this Sinhalese-Buddhist identity was used effectively in ancient times to fight the Tamil-speaking "Saivite[7] unbelievers" from South India. The scholarly discourse on the historical narrative of the Mahawansa suggests that the Sinhala identity is something which is rhetorically framed and

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[6] Aryans, branch of the Indo-European people that migrated to the Indian subcontinent in prehistoric times. The Indo-Europeans originated in Central Asia, in the area of the Caspian Sea. The Asian Aryan concept is different from the Aryan race in 20th century Germany.

[7] Saivism is a widely followed sect of Hinduism, which reveres the God Shiva as the Supreme Being.

developed through historical chronicles rather than true archeological findings. Even though

Sinhalese are the major ethnic community in Sri Lanka, Tambiah (1986) claims that "the

Sinhalese manifest the feature of a majority with a minority complex that is partly the product of

Sri Lanka's minuscule size, territorially and demographically, and the nature of the exchange

with India" (p. 45). Based on Tambiah's observations, it can be argued that Sinhalese have

always lived with the suspicion that their survival is in danger due to other ethnic communities

such as Tamils and Muslims.

Interpretations of the past: The Tamil People

Popular Tamil nationalist historiography claims that Tamils came to Sri Lanka from the

great Indian civilizations of Mohenjo–daro and Harappaa well before the arrival of Sinhalese

(Cheran, 2009). For example, leading Tamil scholar Ponnambalam (1998) claims that Tamils

were the ancestors of Sri Lanka and that later, Buddhist and Pali scriptures created an "ascriptive

cleavage" among the Tamil people and divided the island into Sinhalese and Tamils. His

conclusion is that even the Sinhalese were derived from the Tamil people. Tamils identify their

ancestors as "Dravidians" contrary to the "Aryan" concept of the Sinhalese.

Manogaran (1987) claims that there is a strong possibility that Yakshas and Nagas[8] were

the original Tamil-speaking inhabitants of Sri Lanka (p. 54). These views are completely

contradictory to those offered by some Sinhala Buddhist scholars such as Nalin De Silva and

Harischandra Wijethunga, who strongly believe that the Sinhala people were the first inhabitants

in Sri Lanka. Although the Mahawansa does not make any reference to the origin and

development of Tamil settlements in Sri Lanka, based on a historical analysis of the Tamil

language, Omvendt (1984) argues that Tamil speaking Dravidians likely came to the island at the

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[8] The Naga people appear until the third century BCE as a distinct group in the early Sri Lankan chronicles, as well as early Tamil literary works. The Naga people were snake-worshipers.

same time as the Sinhalese. Omvendt further states that the origin of the Dravidian group of languages can be traced to the formerly wide-spread Megalithic culture that existed in peninsular India and Sri Lanka prior to 700 B.C. This historical perspective has been accepted by some South Indian historians who believe that Yakshas and Nagas were the ancestors of Tamil-speaking Dravidians who belonged to an earlier colony of settlers that migrated from South India to Sri Lanka (Kandaiah, 2001).

Interpretation of the past is a strong ideological tool used by the both the Sinhala and Tamils to promote their nationalist views. Both of these perspectives are supported by intellectuals who represent their respective party's interests. The polarization of historians' views based on their ethnic identities has made it quite difficult for scholars to get a clear explanation of the ethnic history in Sri Lanka. However, perhaps a more balanced and critical approach to the history of the Sinhalese and the Tamil people can come from the field of archeology. For example, based on his archeological research, Bandaranaike (1989) argues that neither the Sinhalese nor the Tamil historical perspectives can be taken as definite history, as their historical claims are replete with inaccuracies. Bandaranaike's major argument is that it is difficult to see these two ethnic communities as two distinct groups as it is highly likely that there were strong relationships among people living in a small island like Sri Lanka. Based on this critical historical analysis, it can be concluded that both popular Sinhala and Tamil historical foundations are based on mythical rhetorical stories, which function to enhance each group's relative greatness over the other.

Politics of Language

Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) achieved dominion status when it gained independence from Britain in 1948 following a peaceful political movement directed by Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim leaders. However, the unity among Sinhalese and Tamil leaders did not continue for a long time. The first victory of Sinhala nationalist forces in the post-independent Sri Lanka was marked by the resounding victory of S.W.R.D Bandaranaike. He won the election in 1956 and became the Prime Minister, primarily as a result of the political support he received from the Sinhala Buddhist movement. De Silva (1987) states that the victory of Bandaranaike meant actual independence for Sinhala Buddhists. De Silva, who is a leading figure in Sinhala nationalist scholarship, further claims that the Sinhala majority would have become the political minority if Bandaranaike had been defeated in the election. Dewasiri (2008) argues that Bandaranaike's victory marked a clear political division between Sinhalese and Tamils, which paved the way for the armed conflict in 1983. One of the major political decisions of the Bandaranaike government was to make Sinhala the official language rather than English. There was a strong demand for the "Sinhala only" act from the Sinhala Buddhist movement, as they did not want to accept English as the official language. "The Sinhala only theme was used effectively to garner the backing of the Sinhala-educated rural people who aspired to share the political and economic power of the country but who were excluded because of the emphasis placed on English language" (Manogaran, 1987, p. 43). Sinhala politicians also convinced the Sinhalese electorate that the Tamils had acquired more than their fair share of the jobs and that the only way to reduce the Tamils' advantage was to make Sinhala the official language. Even though there was a consensus during the colonial period between Sinhala and Tamil leaders to

use both native languages in the post -independent era, it was breached by the Bandaranaike government when they implemented the "Sinhala only" act.

Tamils were quick to criticize Bandaranaike's "Sinhala only" act because making Sinhala the official language effectively limited education and economic opportunities for the Tamil people. Although the "Sinhala only" act reduced Western political control, it also reduced Tamils' political control, and was widely viewed as a direct political effort taken by the government to hand over all administrative powers in Sri Lanka to the Sinhala community (Manogaran, 1987).

Samarasinghe and Samarasinghe (1997) observe that "the Bandaranaike government also tried to boost the image of the vernacular (Sinhala) teachers, Ayurveda doctors, and others associated with the local, especially Sinhalese culture" (p. 17). The government's decision to make Sinhala the official language helped to promote Sinhala Buddhist cultural values throughout the country. As Arumugam (2015) notes,

> By having relegated English as well as Tamil to an inferior position in education, the "patriots" of Sinhala-only deprived the masses, particularly Tamil youths, of the opportunity of absorbing contemporary learning and knowledge. Such deprivation created a network of social imbalances, which only deepened pre-existing ethnic differences. (p. 144)

Bandaranaike later admitted his political incorrectness and signed an agreement with Tamil party leader S. J. V Chelavanayagam. The Bandaranaike–Chelvanayagam pact was signed to give social and political powers to Tamils and settle their grievances (Thangaraja, 1995). Chelvanayagam stressed that he wanted a federal governing body in the northern and eastern parts of the country during his initial discussions with Prime Minister Bandaranaike (Thambaiah,

1986). However, the agreement could not be implemented because Prime Minister Bandaranaike was assassinated by a Buddhist monk in 1959. A few days after his death, the media reported that the assassination was committed by a Sinhala Buddhist group who opposed Bandaranaike's decision to sign the agreement with Tamil leaders.

Politics of Education

Sri Lanka is one of the leading nations in education in the South Asian region and the 98% literacy rate proves its very high standard. Sri Lanka has a free education system in which the government is responsible for providing education from primary schooling through to the university level. Historically, education was the only opportunity for the Tamils to move up the social ladder and they were successful in achieving their goals by entering universities and getting higher positions in the government in the early twentieth century (Manogaran, 1987). For example, by the time Sri Lanka achieved independence in 1948, Tamils constituted over 30% of government services admissions, which was substantially larger than their proportion in the general population. It is widely recognized that Sri Lankan Tamils—particularly those in the Jaffna district—have a long tradition of investment in education (Ponnambalam, 1998).

Until 1971, individuals entered universities on the basis of competitive examinations conducted at the national level and marks were given on a uniform basis. There was no ethnic basis for the university admission process and well-qualified people entered universities irrespective of their socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. However, in 1971, the newly elected government, having reviewed the reasons behind the relative success of Tamil students in gaining admission to universities, especially in the natural sciences, implemented a system of differential quotas and cut-off marks based primarily on medium of education. In effect, the

government set a lower qualifying mark for Sinhala students "so that a politically acceptable proportion of Sinhalese students could be admitted to the university" (De Silva, 1981, p. 87).

Nissan (1996) criticizes this move, as it resulted in tough competitions among Sinhala students and their Tamil-speaking counterparts, who had to score more than Sinhala-speaking students to enter university. According to Wilson and Chandrakanthan (1998) with the "final straw" of "standardization" in university admissions, it became clear that the Tamils had lost the education and employment opportunities which had conditioned their commitment to a unitary Sri Lanka in the first place. Many scholars have argued that these education reforms had a negative impact on large numbers of young Tamils as they came to the conclusion that their socio-economic aspirations could only be fulfilled within a separate Tamil state.

These politically motivated education reforms had an adverse impact on the higher education of the Tamils, who had been facing several social and economic issues since independence had been declared. The Tamil representation in the science-based disciplines fell from 35.3% in 1970 to 19% in 1975. Even though language-based admission was changed with a much better plan in 1977 by the United National Party government, it was not powerful enough to change the mindsets of the Tamil people, who believe that they were being marginalized by dominant Sinhala Buddhists.

Militarization of Ethnic Conflict

The Tamil youth were not happy with education reforms and other political decisions, which limited their participation in the social, political and cultural realms in the Sri Lankan society. Hoole (1990) claims that the failure of parliamentary politics and the entrenchment of ethnic politics, which led to frustration among Tamil youth, eventually prompted some of these youth to organize themselves into armed groups for the ostensible purpose of seeking

independence from Sinhala domination. In the early stages of the Tamil military struggle there

were several militant groups in the north instead of one powerful militant group (Cheran, 2009).

Cheran also states that the multiplication of the militants into several groups was a clear

indication of their growing reputation. As he notes, between 1976 and 1987, five major groups

dominated the militant politics of Sri Lanka: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, (LTTE), the

Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), the Eelam Revolutionary Organization

(EROS), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) and People's Liberation Organization of

Tamil Eelam. (PLOTE). However, by 1986, the LTTE had systematically eliminated all other

groups, becoming the one and only militant group (Cheran, 2009).

The story of the LTTE

The LTTE was founded in 1976 by a group of Tamil youth in northern parts of Sri Lanka.

From the beginning, their purpose was to fight for a separate Tamil nation. The LTTE identified

their movement as a freedom struggle to liberate Tamils from the dominant Sinhalese

community. The LTTE appointed Velupillai Prabhakaran as their leader and his only ambition

was to create the Eelam (an independent nation for Tamil people). According to the LTTE's

mission statement,

> [The LTTE's] political program aims at securing the right to self-determination of the
>
> Tamil people. The right to self-determination is the cardinal principle upon which the
>
> Tamil struggle for political independence is based. The LTTE is committed to the
>
> position that the Tamils constitute themselves as a people or a nation and have a
>
> homeland, the historically constituted habitation of the Tamils, a well-defined contiguous
>
> territory embracing the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Since the Tamils have a
>
> homeland, a distinct language and culture, a unique economic life and a lengthy history

extending to over three thousand years, they possess all the characteristics of a nation or a people. (1999, p. 2)

The LTTE carried out their first attack against government forces in the summer of 1983 by killing 13 soldiers. Dissanayake (1983) explains how the Sri Lankan government used this attack for their political gains by bringing the dead bodies of the soldiers to the capital city of Colombo. Sinhalese people reacted by killing hundreds of Tamils and burning their houses in the Sinhala-dominated areas. Kandaiah (2001) states that the riots of July - August 1983 caused such worldwide revulsion against Sri Lankan citizens and brought so much international sympathy to the Tamils that this act of militancy acquired a justification. The Sri Lankan governments' inability to protect Tamil people from the riots gave a feeling to Tamils that military struggle was the only solution and that the LTTE was their prime savior. Since the riots in 1983, the LTTE started their guerilla-style fighting against the Sri Lankan army and the civilians from the Sinhala community. A noteworthy development during this period was the "liberation" of certain "zones" by the LTTE and the establishment of parallel Tamil administrations in "liberated areas." One of the most notable of these was Jaffna, a city in the northern region of Sri Lanka. Since 1983, Colombo had slowly lost control over Jaffna, where there was a total collapse of civilian administration (Venkatramani, 1987). Gradually the LTTE started using guerilla tactics to kill anyone whom they viewed as a barrier to their struggle. They even killed prominent Tamil leaders such as Alfred Thangarajah Duraiappah for seeking a political solution within the parliamentary system for the Tamil problem. Actions such as these led Mahindapala (2004) to label the LTTE as one of the world's deadliest and most successful terrorist organizations.

The LTTE first came to the negotiating table at Thimpu in 1985, owing to Indian pressure, even as Tamil militants imposed a three-day strike in Jaffna to protest against the talks.

When they were at a crucial stage in the talks, on 22 August 1985, Tamil representatives walked out of the talks claiming that the government was not sincere in its negotiations. Two decades later, in 1997, the LTTE refused the devolution package offered by President Chandrika Kumarathunga, which promised the best deal possible for the Tamils. "Considerable autonomy was promised to the regions, and 'equality of status' was accorded to the Tamil and Sinhala languages" (Somasundram & Peiris, 2000, p. 15). Even though the Sri Lankan government made several attempts to discuss the situation with the LTTE and to come up with a peaceful solution, the LTTE always walked out of the discussion and initiated military attacks against the government and the Sinhalese people.

On 21 May 1991, the LTTE used a suicide bomber to assassinate Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, at an election rally in India. Since then, LTTE suicide bombers have killed Sri Lankan president Premadasa (l May 1993) and Presidential candidate Gamini issanayake (23 October 1995). This tactic has also been used by the LTTE to attack army convoys and to overrun army bases. For example, in the assault on the Jaffna fort in the early 1990s, the LTTE used a 14 year-old soldier wrapped in explosives to defeat a 200-strong garrison and capture the fort. The LTTE also used this tactic in January of 1996 to indiscriminately truck bomb the Central Bank on President's street in Colombo. Over 100 civilians were killed and more than 1,000 injured (Kandaiah, 2001). The suicide attacks and recruitment of child and female soldiers made LTTE as one of the most brutal terrorist organizations in the world (Keerawella, 2012).

The Final Stages of the War

The United National Party (UNP) government, which came to power in 2001, decided to find a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem. Additionally, the September 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S. had a significant impact on the Sri Lankan conflict because of the international demand

that terrorism be addressed (Uyangoda, 2007). Specifically, Uyangoda claims that the LTTE began to declare their willingness to explore measures for a peaceful settlement following the United States and other Western countries' decision to support the Sri Lankan government as part of their "War on Terror" campaign.

In February 2002, the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and agreed to a permanent ceasefire. The Norwegian government served as the mediator between the two parties. A larger round of peace talks began in Thailand in October 2002, followed by several rounds of discussions in Norway, Germany and Japan. During the talks, the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE agreed to the principle of a federal solution and the LTTE dropped their long-standing demand for a separate state (Waduge, 2012). Even though the LTTE claimed that they would agree on a political solution instead of a separate homeland for Tamils, Sinhala nationalist parties in the south protested the peace talks, claiming that the government was trying to give the control of northern and eastern parts of the countries to the Tamils.

The UNP lost the 2004 general election and the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) came to power. Dewasiri (2008) argues that that the UPFA consisted of political parties that strongly believed in a military solution for the ethnic problem. In 2005, the UPFA presidential candidate Mahinda Rajapaksha became the President, defeating the UNP leader Ranil Wickramasighe, who was instrumental in initiating the earlier ceasefire between the two parties. However, Keerawella (2012) claims that during Rajapaksa's presidency, the ceasefire was in name only and military action continued. Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, a Tamil who was critical of the LTTE, was assassinated at his home on 12 August 2005, allegedly by an LTTE sniper (BBC news, 2005). Even though the LTTE did not take

responsibility for killing the foreign minister, the incident led the international community to look at the LTTE as a terrorist group which needed to be stopped using military measures.

The speedy escalation of violence reached the level of full-scale war once again after the Mavil Aru[9] battle in August 2006. The Mavil Aru incident can be identified as the symbolic beginning to the final stage of the war between the two parties. Bandara (2013) argues that President Rajapaksha's political views were in line with the dominant Sinhala Buddhist ideology and that the Mavil Aru incident provided him with the ideal opportunity to engage in all-out war against the LTTE, given demands from the Sinhala nationalists to seize Mavil Aru from LTTE control. Members of the Sinhala nationalist party marched from Colombo to the Mavil Aru area demanding the LTTE to give Mavil Aru back to the government. Finally, the Rajapaksha government used military forces to capture the waterway. The mainstream media in the south reported this as a major victory for the Sri Lankan government. However, some critics argue that the LTTE had to take some military measures during the ceasefire due to the political tactics of the Sri Lankan government. Gowrinathan and Mampilly (2009) claim that the relations between the two "belligerents" deteriorated when allegations were made against the Sri Lankan government for supposedly blocking important lines of communication, supplies, and relief goods from the Tamils.

The Sri Lankan government continued military operations in the Eastern province after capturing Mavil Aru from the LTTE. After capturing the LTTE controlled areas in the Eastern Province, the government forces started attacking LTTE strongholds in the Northern Province. In January 2009, government troops captured the Northern town of Kilinochchi, held for ten years

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[9] Mavil Aru is a waterway which provides water to farmers in the North. The LTTE captured this in 2005 and terminated the water supply. The government had to use the army to fight against LTTE cadres who were taking control of the place.

by the LTTE as their administrative headquarters (BBC, 2009). In the face of the advancing Sri

Lankan forces, the territory held by the LTTE in the Vanni area contracted rapidly, and was

confined to a narrow strip of land in the Mullaitivu district. "Finally the total military collapse of

the LTTE, with the total annihilation of its leadership in the final battle at the Nanthikadal lagoon

in May 2009 marked the dramatic end of nearly three decades of armed struggle" (Keerawella,

2012, p. 5). On 17 May, 2009, the LTTE forces surrendered after their leader, Velulpillai

Prabhakaran, was killed in a cross fire. This finally led President Rajapaksa to announce the

official end of the war. The Sri Lankan media focus was primarily on government soldiers'

march towards the victory during the last couple of weeks of the war. However, the international

media reported that thousands of civilians were killed by both parties. For example, the BBC

reported that 6,500 civilians may have been killed and another 14,000 wounded between January

2009 and April 2009.The war victory was celebrated for a few weeks in the country and the

Sinhala nationalist groups claimed it as the second independence of the nation.[10] The general

public of Sri Lanka took to the streets to celebrate the end of the decades-long war. Streets were

filled with joyous scenes of celebration and the leaders too, hailed the end of the bloodshed.[11]

The government named May 19 of every year as the "victory day" for war victory

commemoration.

Ubayasiri (2012) observes that the celebrations in the Sinhala-dominated South were over

overshadowed by claims of what international observers called a civilian blood bath. The United

Nations claimed that about 7,000 civilians may have been killed in three months of fighting. The

international media reported that more than 300,000 civilians in the crossfire were forced to trek

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[10] Sri Lanka gained independence from Great Britain in 1948.
[11] "Archbishop congratulates Armed forces on the conclusion of war." Defence.lk. 18 May 2009.

to "safety" across one of the deadliest battlefronts in south Asia. In later weeks the BBC (2011) reported that that the death toll had tipped 20,000 civilians.

International organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch criticized the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE for deliberately putting civilians at risk to pursue military objectives. However, the Sri Lankan government rejected allegations of war crimes. In a June 2010 speech, President Rajapaksa insisted that his soldiers did not kill a single civilian. "Our troops carried a gun in one hand and a copy of the human rights charter in the other," the president said. Sutirtho (2010) reports that the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed a three-member panel of experts to advise him on whether war crimes were committed in the final stages of the civil war. Some of the major findings of the war crimes committee include: 1) that the Sri Lankan military used large-scale and widespread shelling, causing large numbers of civilian deaths; 2) that the LTTE kept as hostages 330,000 civilians who were fleeing the shelling and trapped in an ever decreasing area; 3) that the Sri Lankan government tried to intimidate and silence the media and other critics of the war using a variety of threats and actions; and 4) that the Sri Lankan military shelled the UN hub, food distribution lines and Red Cross ships coming to rescue the wounded and their relatives.

In October 2009, the U.S. State Department submitted a detailed report to Congress' Committees on Appropriations about incidents that happened during the final months of the conflict in Sri Lanka The report detailed allegations that: 1) the majority of shelling into the Safe Zone was from Sri Lankan government forces; 2) the government forces carried out shelling during a 48-hour "ceasefire"; and 3) the government forces unlawfully killed captives and combatants seeking to surrender (Report to Congress on Incidents During the Recent Conflict in Sri Lanka, 2009). Since 2009, the United Nations has demanded that the Sri

Lankan government undergo an international inquiry on alleged human rights violations during the last stage of the civil war. Talpahewa (2015) observes that the UPFA government did not initially agree to work with the UN because the United Nation's primary function was to interfere politically, and force Western interests on Sri-Lanka. Essentially, their non-cooperation helped the UPFA maintain their popularity among the majority Sinhala Buddhist community. President Rajapaksha was defeated in the 2014 presidential election by Maithripala Sirisena, who promised a broader alliance representing several Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim parties. The new government reacted positively to the UN's demands and agreed to conduct a domestic inquiry to examine alleged war crimes. It has been six years since the end of the military conflict between the two parties. But still the UN and political superpowers like the U.S. and the U.K. governments demand an examination of alleged war crimes. This is a clear indication of the significance of the events that took place throughout the war, and especially during the last couple of weeks of the war.

Now that I have provided the reader with information about Sri Lanka, information about the factors leading up to the Sri Lankan civil war, and a brief history of that war, I will focus on the methodology I used to study how two prominent Sri Lankan news outlets, *the Island*, and the *Daily Mirror*, framed key events during the final two weeks of that war [May 4, 2009 to May 26, 2009]. This inquiry is articulated in two research questions:

RQ 1: What types of media framing strategies have been used by *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers to report the conflict between the government forces and the LTTE?

RQ 2: What are the symbolic implications that may follow from these media framing strategies?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

The research questions guiding my inquiry is as follows:

RQ 1: What types of media framing strategies have been used by *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers to report the conflict between the Sri Lankan government forces and the LTTE?

RQ 2: What are the symbolic implications that may follow from these media framing strategies?

In this chapter I first describe the rhetorical artifacts, which are *The Island and* the *Daily Mirror*. Next, I discuss the concept of media framing. Finally, I will provide an explanation of media framing devices, and the particular theoretical framework I use in my analysis.

Rhetorical Artifacts

To analyze media framing of the Sri Lankan civil war, I focus on news articles published in *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers. *The Island* is one of the leading national newspapers published in Sri Lanka. It is a publication of the *Upali Newspapers Private Limited,* which publish newspapers in both Sinhala and English languages. *The Island* is the second most circulated English language newspaper in the nation, with an average daily circulation of 70,000 (Newspaper Circulation Report, 2009). Scholars have argued that *The Island* newspaper supports Sinhala nationalist ideology through its news and current affairs articles. For example, Amunugama (1992) claims that *The Island* and *Divaina*[12] newspapers take an avowedly pro-Sinhala attitude in their selection of news and features, editorials and selection of photographs. The *Daily Mirror* is a daily English-language newspaper published in Colombo, Sri Lanka, by

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[12] Divaina is the leading Sinhala language newspaper published by the Upali Newspapers Private Limited.

Wijeya Newspapers. According to Banargee and Logan (2008) Wijeya Newspapers is the largest privately owned media company in Sri Lanka, which publishes a number of national newspapers and magazines. Formerly known as Wijeya Publications Limited, WNL was founded in 1979 by Ranjith Wijewardene, son of media mogul D. R. Wijewardena.

In this study, I examined media framing strategies of the articles published in *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers during the five weeks of the conflict: April 19 to May 26, 2009. I selected this time period for analysis because both national and international media gave prominence to the significant events that took place during that time. For example, the killing of the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, and 6,500 civilian deaths as claimed by the United Nations and President Mahinda Rajapaksha's official announcement of the war victory were just two of the major incidents occurring during this period. Ubayasiri (2012) stated that last few days of the Sri Lankan civil war marked some of the most violent moments in the recent war history at the global level. As a result, the Sri Lankan mainstream media was dominated with war-related content.

Framing

Definitions

Erving Goffman (1974) was the first scholar to identify and define characteristics and functioning of frames in society. He claimed that individuals interpret events through reliance on frameworks, each of which allows them to "locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms (p. 21). Gamson and Modigliani (1987) provided a more nuanced definition of frames by identifying them as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a

connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue" (p. 3).

Entman (1993) highlighted the need for the incorporation of framing as a theoretical foundation for the academic study of communication. Entman's conceptualization of framing was directly focused on media framing. Specifically, he identified framing as a cognitive theoretical model for how information presented in media influences the way people see the world. As Entman noted, frames in a text are "manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords or stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" (p. 52). Reese, Gandy and Grant (2001) developed Entman's work on framing by defining frames as "[t]he organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to structure the social world" (p. 11). Fornaciari (2012) argued that framing theory is based on the idea that there are different angles from which to look at an issue and the media can present reality from different perspectives and emphasize implications for multiple values. D'Angelo and Kuyper (2010) stated that "Media frames act to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies" (p. 301). If a frame engages in any of these acts, it has the ability to persuade an audience and result in real world effects.

Framing research

Scholars in a wide variety of disciplines have used framing quite extensively as a theoretical foundation in their research. Framing was first used in the study of sociology (e.g., Goffman, 1974) and later used as a theoretical approach in economics (e.g., Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), linguistics (e.g., Tannen, 1993), social-movements research (e.g., Snow & Benford, 1988), policy research (e.g., Schon & Rein, 1996), communication studies (e.g.,

Tuchman, 1978), political communication (e.g., Gitlin, 1980), public relations research (e.g.,

Hallahan, 1999), and health communication (e.g., Rothman & Salovey, 1997). Indeed, Bryant

and Miron (2004), after a review of major mass communication journals, claimed that framing

has been the most frequently used theory since the beginning of the 21st century. Riffe (2010)

also identified framing as one of the most fertile areas of current research in journalism and mass

communication. Although the multidisciplinary nature of framing theory has expanded the

theoretical scope of the concept, according to Scheufele (1999) it has also led to numerous, often

incompatible, definitions. This has caused some degree of frustration in terms of its applications.

Scholars in different disciplines have used framing as a theory (e.g., Price & Tewksbury, 1997;

Scheufele, 1999), an approach (e.g., McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Pan & Kosicki, 1993), an

analytical technique (Enders, 2004), and a paradigm (Entman, 1993). Some researchers have

used more than one term to describe framing. For examples, Reese (2001) called framing both an

approach and a paradigm.

Media Framing

Despite the variance in conceptualizations of framing, media makers understand that

media play an important role in the process by which people develop a view of the world (Gitlin,

1980). Therefore, media makers apply a range of persistent frames, and as such they possibly

control the number of alternatives that are available to the receivers when they are constructing

social reality (McCullagh, 2002; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Potter, 1996; Reese, Gandy & Grant,

2001). Media framing research can be broadly divided in two main categories: Studies

examining audience frames and studies examining media frames. Audience framing examines

how individuals interpret, perceive and organize events and issues. (e.g., Brewer, 2002; de

Vreese, 2005). According to Fortunato (2005) audience members play a significant role in the

process of framing, noting that, "Framing includes the messages that the audience actually has the potential to see, hear, read, or click onto—the messages that are given exposure by a mass media organization that the audience has the opportunity to retrieve" (p. 4).

Media framing research, which focuses on how issues are covered and presented in the media (Andsager & Powers, 2001; Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; de Vreese, Peter & Semetko., 2001), is the most frequently studied category of framing research in communication and media studies. Moreover, media framing research often focuses on news media. As D'Angelo & Kupers (2010) argue, "News is easily the most prominent discursive site in which communication researchers strive to understand what framing is and how framing works. There have been significant numbers of news framing studies published over last few decades (e.g., McCombs, 1992; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Vreese, 2005). For example, Pan and Kosicki conducted a news framing study of an antiabortion rally held in Wichita, Kansas, arguing that news articles framed the anti-abortion activists as wanting to overturn the established law and also as a group of religious fanatics. As these examples demonstrate and according to Reese (2004), much research on news framing is situated within the subfield of political communication. In particular, the majority of the framing research focuses on how politicians, government officials and the elites in a given society use journalists to communicate their preferred meanings of events and issues. Duaoi's (2014) study of Canadian newspapers' reporting of protests in 2010 G20 summit provides an example of how news framing surrounding a political event may differ depending on the potential political views of journalists, media owners and the political elite. The G20 summit in Canada became the largest security operation in Canadian history, as there were violent conflicts between the police and anti- capitalist protesters. According to the Toronto Star (2010), 97 officers and 39 protesters were injured, and at least 40 shops were vandalized, constituting at

least $ 750,000 worth of damage. The Canadian newspaper coverage of the event was dominated by images of burning police cruisers and police rounding up potential suspects and incarcerating them in makeshift prisons. The study found that the "news representation indicated an overwhelmingly negative portrayal of the G20 protesters, a very positive depiction of the police, and neutral depiction of world leaders and officials attending the summit" (Duaoi, 2014, p 23). He further claimed that ideological affiliation of newspapers still mattered in the framing of the anti-corporate globalization movement.

In another example, Bowen (2015) conducted a framing analysis of the news reported on the Rodney King incident and recent events that occurred in Ferguson, Missouri. He compared media coverage of both events and found similarities in the way media framed them, even though they occurred during two different decades. Interestingly, words like "outrage," "skepticism," and "controversy" were used in reporting both the events. The researchers argue those words played a significant role in framing the event according to the dominant discourse in society, which focused on doubt, uncertainty, and lack of trust of law enforcement organizations.

Framing war in the media

Roach (1993) argued that media coverage on topics such as war and peace is especially influential because the public cannot rely solely on personal information or interpersonal communication. As Smith (2005) observed, war is not just something that elites decide to do with the help of public relations techniques. Rather, they make use of pre-existing cultural resources, codes, and genres of interpretation to mobilize support and legitimize military action. News is the ideal tool for the political elite to strategically disseminate war and conflict information to get public support for military actions through framing. Academic discussions surrounding America's "war on terror" campaign provide excellent examples of how this works.

For instance, Lewis and Reese (2009) examined war on terror newspaper coverage in the U.S. media and found that the war on terror frame was internalized by the US press, and that framing played a key role in post 9/11 era to maintain public support for the military measures taken by the US government to combat terrorism. Ryan (2004) analyzed editorials from the U.S.' ten largest newspapers during the war on terror mission in 2001 and found that media did not explore, analyze, evaluate, and publicize alternative strategies and ideas as they followed the Bush administration's framing of the war. According to Ryan, President Bush successfully framed the world as "polar opposites" and for the most part, newspapers transmitted those dominant frames.

According to Nacos (2002) the introduction of terrorism, terrorists and terror within political communication has also attracted researchers' interest in the strategic dimension of framing. For example, terrorists conduct bombings and shootings not only to harm their immediate victims, but also to gain widespread media attention. Picard (1986) argued that media's reporting on terrorism provides a boost to terrorists by publicizing both their message of fear and their political demands. In contrast, Stohl (2008) examined news articles from 2005 and 2006 in leading U.S. and U.K. newspapers and found that media coverage of terrorist incidents actually supported governments by framing coverage in the language of government counterterrorism agendas.

Nacos argued that "media are put into positions where they can "magnify" or "minimize" these kinds of acts and their perpetrators, or, of course, they can provide coverage that avoids either one of those extremes" (p. 221). Nacos observed however, that media always gives prominence to terrorist activities, which results in the loss of newsworthiness and over familiarity of the conflict.

Framing studies on terrorist conflicts have focused more on international media reporting of the events. For example, Satti (2015) examined the framing of the Islamic State (ISIS) on Al Jazeera and BBC English websites and found that both media institutions indicated the aggressive nature of ISIS by covering such crimes against humanity that were committed and the desire for peace and religious tolerance that are often lacking during war time. The study further revealed that Al Jazeera and BBC have typically framed ISIS as an aggressive entity with fundamentalist tendencies, whose main agenda centers on fighting against those who stand in its way. Satti also suggested that the coalition forces are similarly framed as having an aggressive nature, although this aggressiveness is warranted, since they are "the forces of good fighting against evil" (p. 24). In another study, Papacharissi, Maria and Oliveira (2008) examined the frames used by several newspapers based in the United States and the United Kingdom in reporting the shooting down of the Iran Air 655 as a terrorist event. They found that the "U.S. papers engaged in more episodic coverage and the U.K. papers in more thematic coverage of terrorism and terrorism-related events" (p. 12).

According to Vladisavljević (2015) academic studies on the media coverage of conflicts focuses mainly on wars between states, and to a lesser extent on civil wars and extreme violence. He further claimed that "wars between and within states are episodic, sensational and emotionally charged events that involve conflict and provide dramatic images and are thus aligned to the logic of news media operation. They are also highly culturally resonant and trigger emotions of patriotism and nationalism, especially when 'our' side is involved in conflict." (p. 7).

There has been an increase in civil wars and internal conflicts in countries around the world in the last few decades. Civil wars have been considerably longer than inter-state wars,

have unfolded in 73 states, and have produced a far greater number of refugees (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). The limited number of studies which have examined news framing of civil wars have been dominated by the analysis of international news representation. The Rwandan civil war is one of the few civil wars in which a number of scholars looked at the framing of domestic news coverage (e.g., Kellow and Steeves, 1998; Melvern, 2004). According to Melvern (2004) "pro-government media supplied listeners with ideas that pushed them to simultaneously fear, hate and dehumanise members of the minority group and thus conditioned, facilitated and legitimised violence and served as an instrument of mobilisation for genocide" (p. 12).

Theoretical Approach: Media Framing Devices

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) stated that frames work as a "central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is an issue" (p. 157). Gamson and Modigliani looked at news frames from a constructivist approach and argued that news stories are reconstructed or deconstructed with particular intentions. Gamson and Modigliani argued specifically that "that media discourse can be conceived of as a set of interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue. A package has an internal structure. At its core is a central organizing idea, or frame, for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue" (p. 3). They referred to this as "media packages" and identified five framing devices which come under such media packages. These include metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). In this study, I employ Gamson and Modigliani's theoretical framework of framing devices (with the exception of visual images) to examine how *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers framed the final period of the Sri Lankan civil war. Visual images were not selected for the current analysis because the archives from which I took these were themselves photocopied. Thus, the quality of the images was in many cases, quite

poor. Additionally, I could not make original color copies of newspapers because no such technology was available to me. Given these factors, I decided not to analyze the visual images.

Metaphors. According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), metaphors are one of the main framing devices used by journalists to frame issues in order to provide a different perspective or strengthen dominant views on social and political events. According to Burke (1989) a metaphor is "a device for seeing something in terms of something else" (p. 503). Sontag (1989) describes metaphor as "saying a thing is or is like something it is not" (p. 93). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that "metaphors are conceptualized as emotive symbols that can be used to define the object of discussion and to set the scope of it" (p. 132). Richards (1936) outlines two distinct parts of metaphors: The tenor and the vehicle. In a metaphor, the tenor functions as the subject to which characteristics are ascribed. The vehicle is the object(s) from which characteristics are borrowed. Take the following metaphor as a simple, illustrative example: "My sister-in-law Maggie is like a bull in a china shop when it comes to discussing politics!" Here, the tenor is Maggie. The vehicle is "a bull in a china shop" (a big and clumsy barnyard animal located in a place where delicate glassware is on display). If the listener is familiar with bulls and china shops, they can deduce that Maggie is socially clumsy and tactless when discussing such "delicate" issues as politics. As this example suggests, metaphors can simplify complex situations, influence emotionality and even cause evasion from reality. Journalists necessarily and inevitably offer a particular representation of reality with the use of metaphors, by framing events in particular ways (e.g., Gamson & Modigliani 1987; Fowler 1996; Van Gorp 2005).

Catchphrases. Another main feature in news framing includes "catchphrases." According to Van Djik (1993), journalists often use these in headlines or in "pull quotes" (an abbreviated quotation that is "pulled" from the main text of a news story and featured in large,

distinctive font to grab readers' attention. Such catchphrases can be subjective definitions of the situation, which influence the interpretation made by the readers.

Exemplars. Exemplars are quite common in news stories. They function by comparing previous events with the current issues and contexts. Exemplars can be an effective tool for journalists to frame issues because they give the impression to the audience that they are reading an objective news story. The use of exemplars is quite common in war reporting as it helps the media to frame current events by comparing with what happened in previous occasions. Previous media framing studies which focused on the use of exemplars as a framing device have demonstrated that key events could change the criteria of the news selection [e.g., Brosius & Eps (1995); and Kepplinger & Habermeier (1995)].

Depictions. The ways in which persons and events are described in words and images (including metaphors) in the media can affect the attribution by the reader of certain characteristics to these persons or events. These depictions can frame issues according to the agenda of the media institution. The reader can tie in these depictions and expressions with some causal connections between parties involved in a conflict situation.

Previous studies have used Gamson and Modigliani's framing devices as a theoretical framework in news framing research [(e.g., Ju (2007); Van Gorp, (2005)]. For example, Van Gorp (2005) examined media frames used by the Belgian press to represent the issue of asylum, refugees and illegal immigration. Applying Gamson and Modigliani's framing devices, he identified the specific ways in which newspapers used metaphors, catchphrases, depictions, exemplars and visual images to provide a negative picture about immigrants. Van Gorp found that metaphors such as floods and waves were used to frame immigrants as a threat while catchphrases such as "illegal" and "dangerous" were also used in the Belgian press. Additionally,

Van Gorp demonstrated how media depicted immigrants as lazy individuals and used exemplars to show the problems caused by immigrants in other European countries.

Data Gathering Procedures

My study focused on the last two weeks of the conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. I selected articles from *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers from April 19, 2009 to May 26, 2009. There is no digital archive of both the newspapers online. Therefore, I travelled to Colombo on December 23, 2015 to collect physical copies of these newspaper articles from the Department of National Archives in Sri Lanka. I searched and made copies of the front pages of *The Island and* the *Daily Mirror* newspapers. I focused only on war-related stories. If the front page news article led to another page, I copied the entire article. I selected front page articles because typically, the most significant political and social events get published on the front page. For example, it is a common practice in Sri Lanka for newscasters to actually read newspaper headlines during morning television broadcasts.

Data Analysis Procedures

First, I selected and photocopied 37 newspaper front pages from *The Island* and from the *Daily Mirror*, marking all stories which had any reference to the Sri Lankan war. During the initial coding process, I used a code book in which the titles of selected articles were written alongside with the date of the publication. I then went through the articles again to categorize them based on their primary focus. For example, articles were categorized depending on how they portrayed the government military forces, The LTTE, civilians and other parties involved in the conflict. In this initial categorization, I kept the newspapers separate. Then I identified overarching themes from both the newspapers and looked for dominant common themes which emerged from both the newspapers. At the initial level I found seven major themes common in

both the newspapers. They are: Sri Lankan government as the savior for Tamils, War as Liberation, West as enemy, and war for peace, LTTE is inhumane, LTTE as cowards and war victory as a miracle. Then, I re-categorized these themes, narrowing them down to three overarching themes (most of which had subthemes). After identifying the three main frames, I carefully examined each news article according to Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) framing devices to see the specific ways *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* used metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars and depictions in their framing of the Sri Lankan civil war.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTERPRETATION

I have analyzed news articles that appeared in *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers from April 19 to May 26, 2009, which relate to the Sri Lankan civil war. Specifically, I have explored the metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, and depictions (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) used by these two newspapers to frame readers' perceptions about the Sri Lankan civil war. I have identified three primary frames. These include: The "LTTE is merciless" frame, the "enemies" frame, and the "valorizing the war" frame. In the following, I will discuss these primary frames, including the sub themes that emerged under each major frame.

The LTTE is Merciless

According to Edelman (1988), in a conflict, one's opponent is often characterized as one to whom "evil traits, intentions, or actions can be attributed" (p. 87). Several scholars (e.g., Peek, 2003; Pintak, 2008; Said, 1981) have highlighted how the media often frame one group in a conflict situation as ruthless in order to support the dominant political ideology. During the period of my analysis, both *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* framed the LTTE as a merciless group who was the main threat to the Sri Lankan government and to the public. Four clear subthemes are apparent in these newspapers' framing of the LTTE as merciless: 1) the LTTE as cruel and vicious, and 2) dehumanization of the LTTE.

The LTTE as cruel and vicious. The construction of the opponent as a "cruel and vicious other" is a strong framing strategy often used by the media to support the dominant political ideology (Steuter & Wills, 2010). Representation of the adversary as merciless and brutal is a particularly common feature in the media coverage of war (Reese & Lewis, 2009). The media coverage of the LTTE in *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* from April 19, 2009 to May

16, 2009 clearly indicated this pattern. For example, although the LTTE called themselves "freedom fighters" for Tamil people, the majority of Sri Lankans referred to them as "terrorists." During this time, the headlines in *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* supported this dominant view, portraying both the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and the LTTE organization as particularly cruel and vicious. For example, one headline proclaimed, "Torture chamber supervised by Prabhakaran found" (*The Island*, May 22, 2009, p. 1). Even though there was no evidence presented in the news story to establish that the chamber was indeed used to torture LTTE's enemies, or that it was personally supervised by Prabhakaran, the catchphrase "torture chamber" was used in the headline to highlight the LTTE leader's cruelty. On the same day, the *Daily Mirror* presented the story likening Prabhakaran to Hitler using the headline, "Army captured a Hitler model torture chamber operated by the LTTE leader" (p. 1). Although it is a fact that the LTTE had tortured war prisoners, there was no evidence in the accompanying story to suggest that Prabhakaran used gas or other chemicals in the torture chamber, as did the Nazis. However, by linking Parabhakaran to the Nazis and/or Hitler through these catchphrases, both *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* framed the LTTE as having similar tyrannical and fascist motives as the Nazi movement.

Newspapers reported prominently on the killing of Prabhakaran in the last week of the war. Not surprisingly, the reports framed Prabhakaran and his followers as cruel and vicious. In one particular example, *The Island*'s headline (May 19, 2009) characterized the LTTE as "Butchers Slaughtered" (p. 1), while the article itself compared the LTTE forces to "barbaric" terrorists, whose acts had "claimed tens of thousands of lives in this country" (p. 1). In this example, the "butcher" metaphor in the headline portrays the cruel and vicious nature of the LTTE, while the description in the article itself, metaphorically frames the LTTE as barbarians.

And, although the catchphrase "slaughtered" to describe the acts/outcome of the Sri Lankan government forces against the LTTE leadership (instead of more neutral terms such as "killed" or "destroyed") carries a very violent connotation, the article framed it as the only way that the military could stop a "barbaric" organization like the LTTE. The term "slaughtered" also invokes irony, demonstrating that the tables had been turned and that the cruel and vicious LTTE enemy forces ended up on the receiving end of violence that they themselves had been meting out for so long.

The *Island* and the *Daily Mirror* not only used metaphors and catchphrases to depict Prabhakaran as cruel and vicious, but they also used them to depict him as mentally ill. For example, when Prabhakaran and the remaining cadres were surrounded by the Sri Lankan military forces during the last couple of weeks of the war, *The Island* (May 5, 2009) characterized Prabhakaran as "the megalomaniac killer [who] is cornered with the army poised to either capture or destroy him and his fellow criminals" (p. 1). In this example, the term "megalomaniac killer" paints Prabhakaran as a ruthless murderer who has delusions of power, while his fellow soldiers are depicted as lawless criminals. In another example, *The Island* (May 9, 2009) published an editorial describing LTTE attacks on Tamil civilians who tried to cross over to the Sri Lankan government-controlled areas during the final battle. The editorial noted that, "Prabhakaran proved that he was no liberator but a homicidal maniac masquerading as a messiah" (p. 1). In this context, the metaphor "homicidal maniac" implies that Prabhakaran as a fanatic who has assumed the false identity of a savior in order to kill innocent civilians who had placed their trust in him.

Although the international media reported that the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government forces were *both* responsible for hundreds of civilian deaths due to heavily shelling in the final

battle (BBC, 2009), *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* reported only the LTTE attacks framing the cruelty and viciousness of the LTTE specifically against innocent civilians. For example, *The Island* (May 16, 2009) reported that, "Civilians flee tiger terror. Two three year olds die in LTTE shelling." (p. 1). This story, which claimed that the LTTE conducted a series of shell attacks when civilians were trying to flee into government-controlled areas, also used accounts of previous LTTE shell attacks as exemplars to illustrate that the LTTE had carried out such attacks in the past against children and women: "This was very similar to LTTE's brutal shelling targeting a primary school in 2007" (p. 1). The historical exemplar used in the story implies the claim that that the LTTE was a merciless organization, which had a record of targeting innocent civilians.

The framing portrays the mercilessness of the LTTE by highlighting that the LTTE killed not only Sinhalese, but that they also killed innocent Tamil children who tried to leave their authority. For example, a headline appearing in *The Island* (May 17, 2009) announced, "Over 17 escapees killed in suicide attacks" (p. 1). Similarly, a headline in the *Daily Mirror* (May 16, 2009) proclaims, "LTTE took desperate measures in final hours. Forcibly recruited children, parents who opposed were attacked" (*Daily Mirror*, May 16, 2009, p. 1). In both of these catchphrases, the LTTE were framed as resorting to cruelty and abuse of innocents, given their own desperation.

Another news article used an exemplar to remind readers of the LTTE's past attacks and actions in order to frame them as merciless. For example, as part of an article reporting that LTTE supporters attempted to attack the Chinese embassy (China is a strong ally of the Sri Lankan government), *The Island* (May 12, 2009) noted that, "on a previous occasion the LTTE supporters 'beheaded' the Sri Jawaharlal Nehru statue put up in the Westminster council close to

India house" (p. 1). The selection of the "Nehru beheading story" as an exemplar to characterize the LTTE in light of the more current "Chinese embassy" event carries great symbolic weight because Sri Jawaharlal Nehru (whose likeness the statue portrayed) was the first Prime Minister in India and most Sri Lankan citizens respect him as a great politician. *The Island*'s May 12, 2009 account served to remind readers about LTTE's previous attack on the Nehru statue, claiming that it was not the first time the LTTE and its supporters conducted such attacks. In addition to the exemplar, this account uses a number of words that personify the statue and thus, frame the LTTE as causing harm to a human. For example, the word "beheading" refers to a form of execution in which a person or group cuts off the head of another human being. In this news story, the use of the word "beheading" instead of "destroying" implies that the LTTE is actually harming a living human being—a far more barbaric act than simply defacing a statue.

Dehumanizing the LTTE. The second subtheme emerging in the "LTTE as merciless" frame is "dehumanizing the LTTE." Dehumanization involves the denial of full humanness to others, and/or rhetorically excluding them from the human species (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2000; Haslam, Loughnan, & Kashima, 2008). According to Opotow (1990) Dehumanization is an extreme reaction to members of other groups, removing them from the same types of considerations that surround our treatment of other humans. Haslam et al. (2008) suggest that an important method which people may use to deny others full humanness is to describe them in ways suggesting that they have not risen above their animal origins and are thus, less than human. The dehumanization of the LTTE was evident through two prevalent metaphors used by accounts in *The Island*: The LTTE as animals and the LTTE as monsters.

The LTTE as animals. Animal metaphors were used frequently by *The Island* newspaper to simultaneously dehumanize the LTTE and to frame them as a merciless

group. Metaphors are a key strategy in conveying ideology (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Schmidt, 2005). And, as Kövecses (2002) argues, animal behavior is often used to describe human behavior. Further, Leach (1964) suggests that animal names are used to address people—in primarily uncomplimentary ways. The uncomplimentary portrayal of the LTTE as a group of animals was evident both in terms of *The Island*'s coverage of LTTE characteristics and in terms of how *The Island* reported the LTTE's actions against others.

The non-complimentary use of animal metaphors to illustrate the characteristics of the LTTE was particularly common in the headlines and editorials of *The Island* during the final period of the war. Metaphors like "'fraidy cat," (*The Island*, May 12, 2009, p. 1) suggest that the LTTE forces were cowards. In a similar example, *The Island* (May 12, 2009) carried a news story titled "Losing tigers acting like foxes" to frame the LTTE as cowardly and as using sly, underhanded tactics to defeat government military forces. Indeed, the story claimed that the LTTE was hiding and planning secret attacks like "cunning foxes," in comparison to past attacks in which they had exhibited more direct, brave attacks. Excerpts depicting the LTTE as, "killer pets of the West" (*The Island*, May 12, 2009, p. 1) framed them as out of control or irrational, while excerpts proclaiming that the LTTE were "[a]cting like evil spiders to make Sri Lanka a bloodbath" (*The Island,* May 14, 2009, p. 1), framed them as poisonous and deadly. Additionally, by pointing out that the LTTE were "pets of the West," one of the implications of the use of this metaphor is that the Western forces are supporting the LTTE (a notion more carefully described below).

Related metaphors such as "hunt," (*The Island*, May 4, 2009, p. 1) "trap" (*The Island*, May 11, 2009, p. 1) and "net" (*The Island*, May 13, 2009, p. 1) revealed that—like an animal—

the LTTE was trying to escape government military forces without facing the opposition. Rather, they were described as if they were being tracked down, or "flushed out and driven from cover" (Steuter & Wills, 2010, p. 27) by the more powerful and resolute Sri Lankan government.

      The LTTE as monsters. The monster reference can be seen from early Sri Lankan historical literature. Gunawardena (1989) claims that in Sinhalese culture, monsters were represented as inhumane creatures who lack merits from past lives due to cruel and sinful work. The monster metaphor was prevalent in the media framing of the LTTE during the period of my analysis. For example, the *Daily Mirror* (May 16, 2009) used the monster metaphor to portray certain characteristics of the LTTE leader Prabhakaran and its troops, reporting that, "only a monster like Prabhakran can order his cadres to kill innocent Tamils who are fleeing to government controlled areas" (p. 2). In this excerpt we see Prabhakran depicted as someone with inhumane characteristics who can achieve his goals only by killing innocent people. A significant feature of this quotation is that it describes Prabhakran as a monster not only for Sinhalese people, but also for the Tamils with whom he had been fighting for a separate state. The quotation can be viewed then as a strategic way to provide a negative picture about the LTTE leader to the Tamil people.

The monster metaphor followed Prabhakran through to his death. For example, he was killed by the Sri Lankan military forces during the last week of the battle. However, instead of reporting merely that Prabhakran had been killed, *The Island* (May 19, 2009) published the story with the following headline: "A monster laid to rest" (p. 1). The accompanying article (which invoked the "monster" metaphor four times and included a subsection entitled "the life of a monster," outlining important events in Prabhakran's life), proclaimed that the people need not worry anymore about a monster that killed thousands of civilians around the country. People

want to get rid of the monster when it threatens their lives by its actions. In this case, *The Island* used the public perception of a monster quite well by claiming that killing the merciless monster was the only option left for the government forces to save lives of the innocent civilians.

Not surprisingly, the media framing of Prabhakaran changed from a monster to a ghost after his death. For example, *The Island* (May 12, 2009) warned that, "Prabhakaran might come as ghost" (p. 1). Buddhism is the dominant religion in Sri Lanka and according to Buddhist teachings, one's actions or karma in this life will decide the nature of one's life after death. If one does good things on Earth, one may be reborn as a human. However, if one does evil things on Earth, one may reborn as an animal or have a non-human existence. This implies that Prabhakaran, as a future ghost, may pay a steep penalty in the afterlife for his evil deeds on Earth. In short, he will not have a rebirth as a proper human being and may only be a ghost.

Enemies

The second major frame emerging in the analysis is "enemies." This frame is divided into two sub categories: 1) The LTTE as enemy, and 2) the west as enemy.

The LTTE as the enemy. Both *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* portrayed the LTTE as the major enemy and the primary threat to the Sri Lankan people, as well as to other civilized countries around the world. The enemy portrayal of the LTTE is mainly focused on its leader Prabhakaran. It can be argued that the media used Prabhakaran as a synecdoche for the LTTE. According to White (1999) Synecdoche is a literal device in which a part of a phenomenon is used to represent its whole or vice versa. Depicting political enemies as weak and dishonorable is a common feature in media framing, as was shown by Rettberg and Gajjala (2015), who recognized this framing tactic during post 9/11 conflict coverage in the U.S. media, finding that the U.S. media framed Al- Qaeda as a weak and dishonorable group who were unsuccessful in

challenging the U.S. government. Similarly, both *The Island* and *Daily Mirror* portrayed

Prabhakaran and his LTTE cadres as a weak and dishonorable group who betrayed their own

Tamil people. For example, *The Island* (May 21, 2009, p. 1) claimed that:

> The LTTE was "principally responsible for the loss of civilian life during the final phase
>
> of the armed conflict through their actions, which included taking 300,000 to 330,000
>
> civilian hostages, implementing a strategy of killing Tamil civilians to suit their military
>
> aims, using civilians as a strategic human buffer leading to considerable loss of civilian
>
> life.

As we see in this passage the LTTE were framed as "principally responsible" for having

used innocent civilians as "human buffer[s]" to protect their own lives and disguising themselves

as civilians to carry out suicide attacks against the Sri Lankan Army. In another example, the

Daily Mirror (May 25, 2009) reported that the "LTTE took desperate measures in the final hours

by forcibly recruiting children and parents who opposed were attacked" (p. 1).

In other stories, Prabhakaran was specifically depicted as a selfish and hypocritical

leader. For example, the *Daily Mirror* (May 25, 2009) referred to his house as a "Kingdom" (p.

1). In another example, *The Island* (May 6, 2009) reported that "Photographic evidence has

surfaced that Prabhakaran led a comfortable life with his family entertaining visitors and

spending time with his children" (p. 1). These stories juxtaposed Prabhakaran's lavish lifestyle

with the difficult circumstances of the Tamils living in the Northern and Eastern parts of the

country. For example, the *Daily Mirror* (May 14, 2009) presented the story of the Sinhalese

Army capturing Prabhakaran's "Kingdom" with quotations from civilians who fled from LTTE

controlled areas to the government area. One Tamil father noted that, "Prabhakaran forcibly

recruited my children to the LTTE. We were living like animals with no facilities, but he lived like a king. He betrayed us" (p. 6).

Media stories also frame Prabhakaran as a coward, carrying a number of accounts claiming that he and his family took every measure to flee the country during the final battle. For example, *The Island* reported "Daya Master claims Prabhakaran has a submarine at the ready" (May 6, 2009, p. 1). In another example, *The Island* (May 4, 2009) reported that "UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) used in frantic search for fleeing ambulance carrying terrorists, LTTE sacrifices over 100 cadres to facilitate leaders' 'escape'" (p. 1). *The Island* (May 5, 2009) also reported that "Prabakaran has been described as a good strategist in some quarters but, in our book, he is only a shameless coward-else he won't hide behind innocent men, women and children" (p. 1). The essence of these stories is that Prabhakaran and other LTTE leaders tried to escape the Sri Lankan government forces by using civilians as a human shield and even betrayed its own members for their survival. For example, The *Daily Mirror* (May 19, 2009, p. 1), reported his "escape story" in the following way:

> Having killed thousands of people and driven a similar number of his brainwashed cadres to suicide in vain, Prabhakaran, the self-identified warlord, together with a group of his trusted lieutenants including his son, died a violent death at the hands of army, while fleeing the battlefront.

The above story is interesting because it frames the LTTE members as weak people who can be guided to believe anything or to behave irrationally for a fruitless cause. Further, the depiction of the LTTE leader as a "warlord" is interesting because it is preceded by the phrase "self-identified, essentially framing Prabhakaran as a fake. Finally, the passage frames Prabhakaran as a coward who fled the fighting. Finally, this quotation from *The Island* (May 21,

2009) emphasizes that Prabhakaran "is in hiding just like the pro-Indian puppet militia, the Tamil National Alliance" (p. 1). In this account, Prabhakaran is depicted as engaging in the cowardly act of "hiding. Additionally, the "puppet" metaphor symbolizes that Prabhakaran and his forces do not operate according to their own agenda. Rather, it implies that they are weak and operate according to the will of some Western countries and the Tamil National Alliance.

The West as the enemy. The second major theme of the "enemy" frame involves *The Island*'s and the *Daily Mirror*'s portrayal of the West as an enemy, specifically claiming that many Western governments did not support the efforts of the Sri Lankan government to combat what they perceived to be terrorism from LTTE forces. For example, *The Island* (May 4, 2009) carried the headline "Tails exposed - British foreign secretary David Milliband and French foreign minister Bernand Kouchner. . . have undertaken a diabolical mission to save, on a flimsy pretext, a bunch of separatist terrorists being pursued" (p. 1). The use of the catchphrase "flimsy pretext" conveys the message that the British and the French governments made insubstantial excuses to save the LTTE. Additionally, the metaphor "tails exposed" suggests that the British and French foreign ministers' association with the Tigers was devious, and that bringing their guile to light caused embarrassment for them. The same article directly alleges that British and French foreign ministers engaged in a surreptitious mission to support a terrorist organization:

> It was reported that several high level meetings took place in London with the
> participation of British diplomats and Tamil diaspora members to come up with a
> strategic plan to pressure other countries to impose sanctions on the Sri Lankan
> government if they continue with the war. (*The Island*, May 4, 2009, p. 1)

The Island (April 27, 2009) used catchphrases like "diplomatic terrorism" and "propaganda cronies" (p. 1), and "[W]estern colonizers" (April 28, 2009, p. 1) to frame the west

as an enemy when several Western countries (The U.S., The U.K., France, Norway and Germany) requested that the Sri Lankan government stop using heavy artillery shelling during the last stage of the battle. By using these catchphrases, *The Island* portrayed this request as a move by the Western countries to support the LTTE. "Victory over diplomatic terrorism" appeared again in *The Island* on May 22, 2009, when the paper challenged the strength of the decades-long diplomatic relationships the Sri Lankan government had with these Western countries. The use of the term "[W]estern colonizers" is particularly significant because it compared current political actions of the West on Sri Lanka with those that occurred during the colonization era—a period of time when members of many Western countries were seen as erasing Sri Lankan identity and exploiting Sri Lanka for their own gain. This is evident in the story "Lankan envoy lashes out at Western 'colonizers' over UN emergency session" (*The Island*, May 27, 2009, p. 1). The story reported that the Sri Lankan ambassador to the U.S. critiqued some Western countries for supporting a resolution against Sri Lanka. The notable characteristic of the article is that instead of naming the countries or identifying them as "the West" or "Europe," they were framed as Western "colonizers." The catchphrase "propaganda cronies" highlighted a negative picture of international organizations and other parties who supported the West's political decisions against the Sri Lankan government. For example, "Regrettably, some countries and their propaganda cronies do not seem to have taken kindly to Sri Lanka's historic victory over terrorism" (*The Island*, May 24, 2009, p. 1). The article claims that the west and their "propaganda cronies" were not happy for Sri Lanka's victory over "terrorism" and that they were working together to take the county backward. The catchphrase "propaganda cronies" is also a way of framing friends of the Western nations as enemies.

The reporting of the alleged human rights violations of the Sri Lankan civil war provides more excellent examples of how the media framed the west as an "enemy." The United Nations and the US state department claimed that there were serious human rights violations, which occurred during the last two weeks of the Sri Lankan civil war. For example, the BBC (2009) reported that there were eyewitnesses of a shooting done by the government forces on a group of LTTE cadres who were pleading to surrender to the government. However, these human rights violations were framed in the Sri Lankan media in a completely different manner. For example, *The Island* (May 22, 2009) reported that the alleged human rights violations were a political strategy of the West to punish Sri Lankan political leaders and the military with an international human rights inquiry, as is evidenced in this passage:

Nothing explains why the world has come to be plagued by terrorism more than what is going on in Geneva, where the West has ganged up against Sri Lanka in a bid to spoil her victory over the world's most ruthless terrorist group. The outcome of yesterday's human rights campaign was not known at the time this comment was written. Whatever it may be, no one will ever be able to bring the LTTE back to life. (p. 1)

The use of the metaphor "ganged up" frames the claim to appear that all the Western countries have formed an unfair alliance against Sri Lanka, further highlighting the need to see the West as a common enemy. The article then argues that this enemy alliance is trying to "spoil" the country. That is a strategic way of saying that everything is going well at the moment and there is a need to save the country from these Western spoilers, who would thwart the Sri Lankan government from bringing "the world's most ruthless terrorist group" to justice.

Interestingly, most of the stories appearing in *The Island* critiquing the human rights mission of the West were backed only with evidence from Sri Lankan officials. For example, in this article from May 27, 2009, *The Island* reported:

A special session of the UN human rights council is due Tuesday in Geneva where Denmark and Britain are leading a vocal and sustained drive to pin down Sri Lanka. This follows the deaths of thousands – according to UN statistics in the heavy fighting the past few months between the Sri Lankan military and the LTTE (p. 1).

The only visible source in the above news story was a quotation from the Sri Lankan ambassador to the UN and there were several instances in the article it was reported as "*The Island* learnt," or "informed sources said" without disclosing the source. However, no information was presented from the side of the UN or the West, who were in the other side of the story. Underrepresentation of information could be identified as a tactical move of *The Island* to sustain their enemy status by denying them voice in the story.

Even though the term "the West" seems to frame *all* Western countries as an enemy to Sri Lanka, there are a few Western countries which were specifically highlighted as "enemies" in news articles. Those are the U.S., the U.K., Norway, Germany and France. For example, in the following headline from the *Daily Mirror* (May 21, 2009), the diplomatic decisions taken by the U.S. government on the Sri Lankan conflict were reported as direct threats to the sovereignty of Sri Lanka: "American ambassador's statement is a threat to national security" (the *Daily Mirror*, May 21, 2009 p. 1). It is also highlighted that the U.S. government forced other countries and international organizations such as the United Nations and International Monetary Fund to directly and indirectly take measures to stop the war. For example, *The Island* (May 20, 2009) reported that "Now U.S. threatens to block IMF loan facility – The Barack Obama administration

has warned that it would block a USD 1.9 billion IMF loan facility sought by the Rajapaksha [Sri Lanka's president] administration" (p. 1).

The Norwegian government's involvement in the Sri Lankan conflict goes back to 2002 when they became negotiators of the peace agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. However, the involvement of the Norwegian government in the Sri Lankan conflict was critiqued severely by Sinhala Buddhist nationalist parties in Sri Lanka, who interpreted Norwegian involvement as an effort to divide Sri Lanka to pave the way for a separate state for the LTTE. This dominant Sinhala Buddhist discourse on Norway is visible especially in *The Island* coverage. Specifically, *The Island* (May 18, 2009) carried an editorial entitled, "Norway's moment of shame," which claimed that Norway's mission was to support the LTTE to achieve their military goals. As a passage in the editorial notes:

> Sunday's dastardly terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan Embassy in Oslo has demonstrated the ghastly extent of infiltration by LTTE terrorists of the so-called advanced democracies sheltering a gallimaufry of criminal outfits from the four corners of the world. (p. 1)

In this passage, *The Island* depicts the above-mentioned LTTE attack as "dastardly," and includes the catchphrase "ghastly" to further frame the LTTE as a dangerous group with deep-reaching abilities to harm other governments. Of particular interest however, is the use of the catchphrase "so-called advanced democracies" to present the Western democracies who supported the LTTE as artificial and hypocritical, and as supporting groups of criminals who would do harm to Sri Lankan citizens. Additionally, by depicting the West as "sheltering a gallimaufry of criminal outfits from the four corners of the world," the article implies that the West provides cover to many arbitrary dangerous groups.

In the following example, *The Island* (May 14, 2009) frames Norway as a Western enemy by depicting them as having double standards. "On the one hand, they award the Nobel peace prize. On the other hand, they support a terrorist group like the LTTE" (p. 1). Norway was not the only Western power who was framed as having double standards. As *The Island*, May 8, 2009 claims, "No amount of terrorism against Sri Lankan missions abroad will help Prabhakaran and his fellow terrorists escape. However, Sunday's attack portends trouble for the so-called five star democracies which have become havens for terrorists" (p. 1). In this account, the West, as a monolithic entity, is depicted as a safe haven for terrorists, even though terrorism has become a threat to those same Western nations. Again, catchphrases such as "so- called five star democracies" were used in this article in a rather mocking, ironic manner to critique Western countries for acting inconsistently with their own democratic values.

Both the U.S. and the U.K. were specifically framed as enemies to Sri Lanka. For example, on May 28, 2009, *The Island* reported that:

> [I]t's like someone turned on the kitchen light late at night, and the cockroaches started scurrying. "We finally got them out where we can find them and kill them." This was how thousands of defenseless combatants offering to surrender were butchered in a war. Was that crime committed in the recently concluded Sri Lanka's war on terror? No! It is a graphic description of how the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. and British troops massacred Iraqi soldiers after the latter had given up fighting in the first Persian Gulf War" (p. 1).

In this exemplar (which provided readers with a historical precedent for accepting their claim), *The Island* uses the metaphor of cockroaches scurrying at a light to depict the killing of innocent/surrendering combatants in a war, and also compares the US and British armies' "butchering" of Iraqi soldiers to what happened in the final stage of the Sri Lankan civil war.

Valorizing the War

      Both *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* contributed significantly to providing a positive picture about the Sri Lankan government's military forces and to validate the military actions they took against the LTTE. Sri Lanka is a country that has given the foremost place to Buddhism in its constitution. According to Buddhist philosophy (which has been the spiritual center of Sri Lanka for two millennia), hatred ceases through love alone. However, the media representation of the war is quite paradoxical to this philosophy. For example, both newspapers justified President Mahinda Rajpaksa's decision to embark on all-out war against the LTTE. As I will demonstrate in the following, these media outlets created a war mentality among Sinhala citizens—and particularly among Sinhala Buddhists. I will discuss the "valorization of the war" in terms of two sub themes: 1) War as a humanitarian mission and 2) Sri Lankan military forces as heroes.

      War as a humanitarian mission. The main objective of the LTTE struggle was to create a separate state for ethnic Tamils. According to Cheran (2009), since the independence in 1948, the Sri Lankan government failed to take adequate measures to provide social and political rights for the Tamil people. As Cheran argues, Sri Lankan government actions marginalized Tamils from the political sphere. However, during the last stage of the war, the media often depicted the Sri Lankan government as responsible for conducting a humanitarian mission to safeguard the lives of Tamil people. To provide some context: Thousands of civilians were trapped in the no fire zone when there was intense fighting between the Army and the LTTE during the last weeks of the war. Civilians had no other option but to flee to the Sri Lankan government-controlled areas as the Sri Lankan Army captured more and more LTTE strongholds. When Tamils in the LTTE areas crossed over to the Sri Lankan side, the *Daily Mirror* (May 17, 2009) reported that

these Tamil civilians "had faith in the Sri Lankan government" (p. 1). Another example of the media framing the event as "humanitarian" can be seen in the *Daily Mirror*'s (May 24, 2009) account, which reported that, "Sri Lanka has given shelter to more than 800,000 IDPs" [13] (p. 1). Several headlines appeared in both the newspapers to show how well the government welcomed Tamils who fled from the other side. For example, *The Island* (May 21, 2009) used the catchphrase, "More welfare villages for displaced" (p. 1). The *Daily Mirror* (May 14, 2009) also reported that "Yesterday, the troops smashed the LTTE defenses in the 'civilian safety zone' enabling over 35,000 men, women and children to move to safety in the government held areas" (p. 1).

The *Island*'s and the *Daily Mirror*'s depiction of the conflict as a "humanitarian mission" instead of a civil war served a number of important functions, including persuading the Sri Lankan citizens to donate financial resources to the cause. This is evidenced from the report appearing in the *Daily Mirror* (May 2, 2009) announcing that, "[d]efense ministry requests public to donate to the humanitarian mission fund to help families of the soldiers (p. 2). In another example, *The Island* (May 19, 2009) reported that "The Sri Lankan army has done the civilized world proud by undertaking probably the biggest ever rescue operation in the world to save tens of thousands civilians taken hostage by a terrorist outfit banned in many countries" (p. 1). The "rescue" metaphor is a strong framing strategy to suggest that the Sri Lankan Army are redeemers of the nation, whose mission is not just to eradicate LTTE terrorism, but also to save civilian lives. It is interesting how terms such as "fighting," "destroying." and "capturing" are replaced with the "rescue" metaphor, which portrayed the Sri Lankan Army as doing noble work, rather than fighting a war. In this account, *The Island* depicted the war as the biggest

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[13] IDP's are internally displaced people as a result of heavy fighting between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.

humanitarian mission in the world, despite reports from the BBC (2009) that the Sri Lankan government forces killed the LTTE leaders as they attempted to surrender to the government during the last two days of the war.

Both the newspapers claimed wide support for the "humanitarian mission" from Sri Lankan society. For example, *The Island* (May 6, 2009) reported on a, "[r]eligious ceremony held to invoke heroes participated in the humanitarian mission" (p. 1). The metaphor "humanitarian mission" functions in the story to help Sri Lankan citizens reconcile the differences between the Sri Lankan army's military actions and their deeply-held Buddhist philosophies.

Sri Lankan military forces as heroes. The representation of the Sri Lankan military forces was completely different from the way LTTE was depicted in both *The Island* and in the *Daily Mirror*. As explained earlier, animal and monster metaphors were used to illustrate the evil nature of the LTTE. In sharp contrast, the government military were portrayed as heroes. For example, *The Island* (May 23, 2009) reported that they were heroes not only for the Sinhalese, but also for the Tamils. The metaphorical use of the term "hero" is a strong linguistic strategy used to support the dominant Sinhala Buddhist war narrative. For example, "Heroes welcomed," *The Island*, May 21, 2009, p.) and "Heroic mission by the military" were some of the headlines (*Daily Mirror*, May 20, 2009, p. 1) which praised the government military as heroes. The heroism of the military was depicted with stories about courageous and fearless attacks they carried out against the LTTE. For example, *The Island* (May 8, 2009) noted that, "[t]he Army has fought fiercely to overturn LTTE - built earth bunds both West and East of the A 9 road since the operations in March 2007" (p. 1).

It is quite interesting how the newspapers once again invoked an exemplar from the past to depict a very heroic picture of those government soldiers who were currently involved in the civil war. Specifically, Sri Lankans had fought for independence against the British colonial rulers in 1818 and 1848. Even though those struggles were unsuccessful at the time, those missions forced the British colonizers to grant Sri Lanka independence in 1948. There were several newspaper reports comparing the 1818 and 1848 Sri Lankan rebellions to the current civil war. For example, an editorial appearing in *The Island* (May 12, 2009) reported that, "[g]overnment forces are getting closer and closer to eradicating terrorism from the country. This is a heroic mission and should be identified as the second independence struggle after 1848" (p. 1). This story implies that government forces were engaged in a heroic mission, as well as the notion that they are bringing back independence to the country.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the types of media framing used by two of the primary newspapers in Sri Lanka (*The Island* and the *Daily Mirror*) during the last stage of Sri Lankan civil war. In this chapter, I provide a summary of research findings. Additionally, I examine study's implications, contributions and limitations. Finally, I will discuss directions for future research.

Summary

The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

RQ 1: What types of media framing strategies have been used by *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers to report the conflict between the government forces and the LTTE?

RQ 2: What are the symbolic implications that may follow from these media framing strategies?

To answer these questions, I examined news articles that appeared in t*he Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers from April 19 to May 26, 2009, using Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) media framing devices as the theoretical framework.

The study revealed that both newspapers used metaphors, catchphrases, depictions and exemplars in such way which supported the dominant Sinhala Buddhist ideological standpoints that: 1) there was no ethnic problem in Sri Lanka, and 2) the LTTE was a terrorist group that needed to be destroyed by the government military forces. The Sinhala Buddhist movements like "Manel mal wyaparaya" (National Patriotic Movement), Thastra wirodee jathika wyaaparaya (National movement against terrorism) played a key role in setting the war agenda and

maintaining it among the Sinhala majority (DeVotta, 2011). There are significant similarities on how these nationalistic organizations interpreted war compared to the selected newspapers.

The study identified three major frames, which were used by *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* to frame the war in order to support the dominant view about the war in Sri Lanka. These are: 1) The LTTE as merciless, 2) Enemies and 3) Valorizing the war.

Both newspapers not only reported the activities of *the LTTE as merciless*, but they also portrayed the idea that it was the most brutal and ruthless terrorist organization in the world. The framing of the LTTE as merciless was discussed under the two sub themes in the analysis: 1) The LTTE as cruel and vicious, and 2) Dehumanizing the LTTE. The papers' framing of the LTTE as cruel and vicious was not surprising, as it is quite common for the mainstream media to frame a "terrorist" group as cruel and vicious when they fight with a sovereign state or with the major ethnic group. For example, scholars have identified similar patterns of reporting in Western media's framing of Al Qaeda as a vicious origination (e.g., Blauvelt, 2008; Yousof, 2013). This was evident in *The Island* and the *Daily mirror* news reporting, which used metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars and depictions to frame the LTTE as cruel and vicious. As the second subtheme reveals, metaphors and depictions of the LTTE leaders and membership as monsters and as animals was a strategic way for the papers (especially *The Island*) to illustrate that the LTTE cadres do not have the qualities to be considered "human."

The Island and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers used the *enemy* frame to characterize not only the LTTE, but also the international community. The analysis revealed that there are significant differences in the way the media framed the attitudes and behaviors of the LTTE versus the attitudes and behaviors of the Sri Lankan government's military forces. Specifically, both papers framed the LTTE as enemies while the Sri Lankan government's military forces

were portrayed as allies to the nation. The analysis also found that the papers portrayed the

LTTE as enemies of Tamil people, which appears to be a strategic way to distance Tamils from

the LTTE in order to persuade Tamils to view the conflict in a way that is more consistent with

the Sri Lankan government's perspective. The final subtheme in the *enemy* frame was the *West*

as enemy. Both papers (especially *The Island*) supported the dominant Sinhala Buddhist view by

claiming that the Western countries wanted to support the LTTE, which eventually would pave

the way for an Eelam state.

     The final theme emerging in the analysis was *valorizing the war*. This theme revealed

that the papers not only justified the military actions against the LTTE, but portrayed military

actions against the LTTE as a sacred mission to safeguard Sri Lanka. Indeed, the papers used the

term "humanitarian mission" instead of "war" when describing the conflict. This was a strong

ideological tactic used by both papers to give the impression to the public that the government

military was engaged in a more superior cause rather than fighting a war. Following this, Sri

Lankan military were depicted as heroes whose valiant actions were highlighted with the use of

catchphrases and exemplars.

     Overall, this study found that *The Island* and the *Daily Mirror* newspapers used media

framing devices such as metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars and depictions to support the

dominant Sinhala Buddhist ideology which demanded the eradication of the LTTE from Sri

Lankan soil. Based on the analysis, it could be argued that the papers' framing of the conflict had

an impact on getting public support to the war, which eventually led to the defeat of the LTTE.

Contributions/Implications

     This study contributes to the scholarly community in Sri Lanka by providing new

empirical data to the communication and media disciplines in Sri Lanka. Although it has been

five decades since these disciplines were introduced into the university system in Sri Lanka, these disciplines are undeveloped and there remains a lack of in-depth, empirical research about media topics. This study, which followed a systematic and well-established methodology, contributes to the Sri Lankan communication and media scholarship.

This study also contributes to what scholars in the international community understand about the Sri Lankan civil war. Even though the war occurred over many decades, there have only been a handful of studies which examined media reporting of the conflict. Additionally, most of those studies were conducted in Sinhalese language and thus, they are not accessible to international scholars. This study allows the opportunity for international scholars to have a nuanced understanding of the role media played during the Sri Lankan war.

This study also contributes to knowledge among Sri Lankan citizens regarding their own media. Historically, there has been little space for alterative views--especially during the last stage of the war--due to both governments' and the LTTE's influence on journalists, political leaders and civil society leaders. While the end of the war and the political changes taking place on January, 8, 2015[14], provided a news space for people to express their views freely in a more democratic manner compared to the past, Sri Lanka still remains in the lowest category in the global press freedom index (Global Press Freedom index, 2016). There is an ongoing debate in Sri Lanka about media bias, media freedom and citizens' right to information. This study provides a very particular platform from which Sri Lankans citizens involved in the discussion can debate future policy level changes that need to be adopted by both the media and the government to ensure more press freedoms in Sri Lanka.

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[14] Then President Mahinda Rajapaksha went for an election for his third term by abolishing the two term limitation in the constitution. However, he was defeated in the election by Maithripala Sirisena who contested as the common opposition candidate with the support of several political parties and civil society organizations.

Finally, this study contributes to an ongoing discussion among Sri Lankan citizens about national harmony and reconciliation. As the study reveals, media play a significant role in shaping public perceptions. Understandings generated from this study could create a bridge between two communities who were enemies for decades. It is important to learn from those mistakes and develop a media culture in which all ethnic groups and communities are represented more fairly.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. First, it is difficult to get an overall understanding on media framing of Sri Lanka's civil war by focusing only on five weeks of the final stage of the war. Although the five-week time period of study provided a manageable data set that was practical for the current analysis, the conflict occurred over the course of three decades. Thus, the study is limited in terms of providing a holistic understanding of how the media framed the entire series of events.

Another limitation of this study was it only focused on English language newspapers. The Sinhalese majority get their news from Sinhalese newspapers, which have the largest circulation compared to English and Tamil newspapers. Thus, the focus on two English language newspapers limited the opportunity to see how the leading Sinhala language newspapers framed the war.

Additionally, most of the articles which were selected for this study did not carry the names of the writers. Only a very limited number of articles published with a byline. It would have been quiet instructive to follow how certain journalists report war compared to others. But it is not possible due to these practical constraints.

Even though the study used media framing devices as the theoretical framework, it did not use visual images, which is an important component of media framing (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), and would have provided more insights in to the types of framing used by both papers. However, I did not have access to original newspaper copies for the analysis, and thus had to make photo copies of the selected newspapers from existing copies in the national archive in Sri Lanka. As color photo copying service is not available there, all the pictures were copied in black and white. And, in many cases, these images were unclear. Thus, I decided not to analyze these visual images.

This study looked only at the print media reporting of the Sri Lankan civil war. However, television and radio outlets also played a key role in reporting the war, often from the battlefield. Additionally, the use of social media platforms was emerging in Sri Lanka at this time. As this study is focused only on print media, it limits the opportunity to get more comprehensive understanding of how various types of media reported on the war.

Directions for Future Research

There are many possible directions for further research related to examining media reporting of the Sri Lankan civil war. First, researchers should comparatively examine war reporting of Sinhala, Tamil and English newspapers. Differences in how Tamil, Sinhala language, and English language newspapers frame the same events would no doubt reveal important insights about the various perspectives.

Scholars should also look at how other forms of media reported the war in Sri Lanka. For example, it would be important to see how television and radio outlets reported on the war—especially during the last few weeks. They also need to examine how war related information is shared and discussed on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

Additionally, scholars need to examine how the Sri Lankan media reporting of the war changed over a time period of three decades. There have been several regime changes in the country and such studies would be useful to identify how the political ideology of different regimes influenced media reporting of the war.

Scholars should also examine international media's framing of Sri Lankan civil war. It is important to understand how the media in the countries like the U.S. and the U.K., which each had diplomatic disagreements with the Rajapaksa regime reported war compared to the media in countries like China and Russia, which were supportive to the Sri Lankan government.

Finally, scholars should examine how other terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS were framed in the media compared to the LTTE. That will be an interesting study to understand how social, political and cultural factors in the geographical locations where terrorists being operated could influence media reporting.

Lion flags gradually disappeared from houses, government offices and vehicles. Time went fast. The A-9 road, which connects the Northern and Eastern parts of the country to the South, was opened. The government announced that people could now visit war-torn areas, which had been controlled by the LTTE for decades. People started going on pilgrimages to these areas. My mom, who is still thrilled about the military triumph over terrorism, planned a trip to visit the Northern part of the country. I had mixed feelings about the journey. I was excited because I had never been to that area before. But on the other hand, how could I have fun seeing all the hospitals and schools which were bombed? Did I want to take a selfie at the slain LTTE leader's house? Probably not. But I had no other choice but to take that post war trip with my mom. "Has the war really ended?" I questioned myself. I saw military uniforms everywhere. But it was only government soldiers. We stopped at a restaurant on our way to have

lunch. Even the restaurant was run by soldiers. I heard my mom saying to them, "you guys were the heroes." I am sure she must have given a huge tip to them. I saw people taking pictures next to coconut trees, which were almost destroyed by shell attacks. Then I saw a group of military officials destroying a cemetery which was used by the LTTE to bury their soldiers. All of this post war scenery was enjoyed by Sinhala Buddhist pilgrims. The LTTE did so many brutal things. They were terrorists. But what about Tamil people? The Tamil people never had social, political and cultural issues, according to our media.

The war ended.

Thousands died.

Media moguls gained profit reporting it.

Nobody, except for a few Tamil politicians talk about Tamil rights now. The future may not be as nice as some of those pilgrims may think.

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APPENDIX: Example of Artifact

Paper- The Island

Date – 5/20/2009

Author- Shamindra Ferdinando

Title - Butchers slaughtered

Butchers slaughtered

- P'karan,son,Pottu Amman,Soosai,Nadesan,Pulithewan *et al* killed

- UAV used in frantic search for fleeing ambulance carrying terrorists

- LTTE sacrifices over 100 cadres to facilitate leaders 'escape'

The Sri Lankan Army in the early hours of yesterday (May 18) thwarted an attempt by LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, his son Charles Anthony and several other senior cadres to escape in two vehicles, including a seized army ambulance, killing them all.

The army had fired at the speeding vehicles, military sources said. Among the dead were LTTE intelligence wing leader Pottu Amman, sear tiger leader Soosai, S.Pulidevan, head of the so called Peace Secretariate, Nadesan,Political wing leader and Ramesh.

The daring escape bid was made amidst a two pronged assault LTTE suicide cadres launched on the 53 and 59 divisions at 1.30 a.m on Sunday authoritative sources said that as the army battled the lagoon borne attackers, the LTTE leaders had slipped into the government held area and seized the vehicles. The LTTE had sacrificed about 100 cadres to facilitate Prabhakaran's escape.