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The Discourse of the Peace Process in the Sri Lankan Press
How the Sri Lankan press handled the Peace Process initiated by the
United National Front Government

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Abstract

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TITLE: Discourse of the Peace process in the Sri Lankan Press

PURPOSE: How the Sri Lankan press handled the Peace Process initiated by the United National Front Government. The main objective is to examine the ‘discourse effect’ in news production.

METHOD: Quantitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA)

MATERIAL: From 54 mainstream newspapers, 239 news items (news reports, news features and editorial columns) were analysed for quantitative analysis and 19 news feature articles were examined for discourse analysis.

FINDINGS: In the fertile Sri Lankan social and political context, ‘war discourse’ dominates the ‘peace discourse’, thereby overall press coverage of the peace process has become negative.

COMMENT: This thesis empirically investigates the ‘discourse of the peace process’ in the hands of the Sri Lankan press. The theoretical framework for this study is mainly articulated within the multi disciplinary field of discourse analysis, a domain of study in the humanities and social science that systematically examines the press coverage of the latest peace process in Sri Lanka, in the social and political contexts. “Context” here is taken to mean background – a set of explanatory factors that may help understand or explain the phenomenon or problem under study. (Van Dijk, 2004).

‘Discourse of the peace process in the hands of the press’ is in the sense of ‘media discourse’. Since discourses are social practices, media discourse is one of these social practices. Social practices have a cognitive dimension, namely the beliefs peoples have, such as knowledge, attitudes and ideologies. (Van Dijk, 2000, pp.35-36) Therefore, the goal here is to analyze the media discourse that has a cognitive dimension, in the contexts of social and political and thereby finding the negative and positive aspects of the press coverage in the peace process.

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Introduction

The relationship between the function of the press and the peace process is intertwined. The nature of the press coverage is an important factor in determining the fate of the peace process. It offers a lot of tangible merits and de-merits to the society concerned in terms of how *they* handle the peace process and how *they* help as a driving force to help activists and governments to raise awareness and implement the programs in order to achieve their goals.

As Gadi Wolfsfeld notes,

“Media can emphasize the benefits that peace can raise the legitimacy of groups or leaders working for peace and they can help transform images of the enemy. The media, however, can also serve as destructive agents in the process. They can emphasize the risks and dangers associated with compromise, raise the legitimacy of the opposed to concessions, and reinforce negative stereotypes of the enemy” (Wolfsfeld.G, 2001(b), p 2)

Media coverage is victim to the same systematic distortions of conflict prevention that are experienced by the society within which the media operates. In the socio-political context, the factor of ‘antagonism’ can make a great impact on peace making. The Israel-Palestine conflict is a good example of this. When a conflict is signed between the parties, the antagonist bias of the media may become counter productive. Kempf states, from the social psychological point of view, that escalated conflicts affect the rank order within a group or society. He further explains how those who are out-standing for their fighting spirit are able to gain influence. Willingness to compromise and attempts at mediation are regarded as betrayal. This process of social commitment to antagonism affects the journalists work in several ways. Since journalists are members of the society themselves, they come under pressure to adopt an antagonistic view of the conflict, in order to maintain their own social status and influence (Kempf, 2002, pp. 64-69). Sri Lankan media practice is not an exception to this common phenomenon. If we look at the history of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, the most worrying fact is the inability of the media to create a constructive momentum to the dynamics of the conflict resolution.

This social practice (media practice) can be clearly understood through the discourse of theoretical frameworks, described by well-known scholars, such as Norman Fairclough, Van Dijk and Ruth Wodak. Van Dijk’s discourse theory gives a thorough explanation with regard to the media discourse in the socio-political contexts. The theme of this study ‘the discourse

of the peace process in the hands of the Sri Lankan press' can be better understood through this discourse principle. Here, 'socio-political contexts' rely heavily on the ideological beliefs of politics. In general, tensions exist between the requirements of the peace process and the media discourse and therefore the ideal discourse to be created is challenged. The result, in the social and political context of the peace process, is that the media discourse splits into two discourses that oppose each other. One is 'war discourse' and the other is 'peace discourse'. (Kempf, 2001, pp. 1-3) The main argument in this study is, **in the fertile Sri Lankan social and political context, 'war discourse' dominates the 'peace discourse', thereby overall press coverage of the peace process has become negative.**

Commenting on the media and conflict, Thiru Kandiah says,

"In a sense, given the fact that journalists right across the world spend so much of their time describing and interpreting the behaviors of individuals and groups in conflict, this would appear to be the most proper, even natural, arena for them to operate in, home territory as it were. It seems, for instance, to be almost taken for granted that they will provide accurate, properly contextualized, non-partisan information about and reports and analyses of the conflict situations about which they write. Ideally, these would enable people to find out themselves what actually is going, or even challenge them to re-examine stereotypes and re-frame issues on the basis of better understandings of the conflict – generating factors and of the reasons that account them."
(Kandiah.T (2001, P, 4)

However, this general perception does not accurately portray real way the media works within the conflict – it is more the ideal. Deacon, Pickkering, Golding and Murdact note that, *"Expression and styles of speaking and writing cannot be hived off and treated separately from society's impress upon the production of meaning, or from the individual's communicative competence in variety of social situations and contexts."* (1999, P, 148). This study aims to understand this perception through the quantitative and textual (especially discourse) analysis.

CHAPTER -1

1.1. Nature of the conflict in Sri Lanka

There is debate over whether the Sinhalese or Tamils were the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka. But it has been accepted that both migrated from India in the 5th or 6th B.C. After the independence from England in 1948, governments began to introduce discriminatory policies against minority Tamils. (JBIC, 2003, P, 7-8)

1.1.1. Communal Crisis

Following independence, there was cynicism within the Tamil minority over the country's majority Sinhala government and fear that their rights would be denied. This was proved when the Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike won the 1956 elections after appealing to Sinhalese nationalism. His declaration that Sinhala was to be the country's official language – an act felt by Tamils to be a denigration of their own tongue – was the first in a series of steps over the following decades that appeared discriminatory to Tamils. (Bureau of South Asian Affairs, 2004)

According to a JBIC report, in 1948 Tamils were 18% of the population, but held 30% of the positions in Universities and professional jobs; the government resented the facts that Tamils were at an advantage because of their education. At that time English was the National language. Therefore by introducing Sinhala as the official language and adopting a policy denying Tamils admissions to professional education and government services, the government sought to re-address the balance. (JBIC, 2003, pp. 11-13)

Tamils also protested against government educational policies and agriculture programs that induced Sinhala farmers from the south to move to newly irrigated lands in the east. The outbreak of communal violence in 1956 continued throughout the year, consequently growing radicalization among Tamil groups was seen. (JBIC, 2003, pp. 11-13)

By the mid-1970s Tamil politicians started to move from the demand for federalism to a demand for a separate Tamil state – “Tamil Eelam” – in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, the

areas of Tamil's traditional homeland. In the 1977 election, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) won all the seats in Tamil areas on a platform of separatism. Prior to this, a strong guerilla organization, called 'Tamil Tigers' was formed in 1972. V. Prabakaran became the leader of this organization and renamed the organization as 'Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam' (LTTE). The vision of LTTE was to achieve an independent state by force. Tamil representation was ejected from the Parliament in 1978. In 1983, the death of 13 Sinhala soldiers at the hands of the LTTE unleashed the largest outburst of communal violence in the country's history. (Bureau of South Asian Affairs, 2004)

Hundreds of Tamils were killed in Colombo and elsewhere, tens of thousands were left homeless, and more than 100,000 fled to south India. The riots signaled the beginning of the ethnic conflict between the LTTE-led Sri Lankan Tamils and the government. (Chittaranjan K., 2003) The continued existence of irritation in the Sinhala community, encouraged by anti-Tamil racist propaganda which was freely disseminated, developed into the view that the Tamil desire for self-determination was a threat to the community itself and to the country. This further fuelled the July 83 violence. According to the Organization of Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka, this violence was used to meet criticism and political dissent in the country during that period. (C.R.M, 1983, P, 1)

The riots also marked the start of the LTTE's quest for a separate Tamil homeland. LTTE launched attacks in Colombo and other cities in 1990s. During this period most of the area of the North and East was controlled by the LTTE, with the government forces trying to recapture those areas. An economic ban was imposed by the government in LTTE controlled areas. Each side in the conflict accused the other of violating human rights. Two previous attempts for a cease-fire in 1989 and 1994 failed. In January 1994, the Sri Lankan Government (GOSL) and the LTTE agreed to a cessation of hostilities as a preliminary step in a government-initiated plan for peace negotiations. After 3 months, however, the LTTE accused the government of cheating in the negotiation and resumed hostilities.

Rajakarunanayake.H (2002) further points out the reason for these failure of the negotiations that,

“The growth of mutual suspicion had paved the way for breakdown in most of the previous negotiations between both parties in conflict. Lack of a mutually agreed framework between both parties, within which agreement could be reached, was observed in most of the negotiations. It was clear from the very early stages of previous negotiations that the parties were on different wavelengths, and each had divergent approaches to, and expectations from, the talks. “

The reason why the Sinhalese want to keep the country together and the reason why the Tamils want autonomy, can be understood in the next chapter under the subheading ‘Political discourse and political ideology of Sri Lanka’.

1.1.2 Current Peace Process

In December 2001, with the election of a new government (United National Party – UNP), the LTTE and government declared unilateral cease-fires. In February 2002, with the help of Norwegian government’s facilitation, the two sides agreed to a joint cease-fire accord. This paved the way for the six rounds of peace talks in foreign countries. (JBIC, 2003, pp. 4-5)

From Hottotuwa’s note,

“LTTE dropped their claim for independence. This was further clarified in the third round of peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the LTTE held from December 2 to 5 2002, at Oslo, Norway (prior to 2003, there were three rounds of talks between the two) when it was announced that a “historic agreement” would “explore a solution to end the island’s conflict founded on the principle of internal self-determination in areas of historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking peoples, based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka.”(Hottotuwa. S, 2003(a), P, 6- 7)

LTTE was not invited to an international donors’ conference held in Washington DC in April 14, 2003, as it stands designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under a 1996 US law since October, 1997. After holding six rounds of talks, the LTTE withdrew from the negotiation process in April 2003. The LTTE wrote to the Prime Minister Wickremasinghe on April 20, 2003, to state that it was suspending its participation in the peace talks temporarily, citing as its reasons – the GOSL’s non-implementation of the provisions of the ceasefire agreement on the issue of High Security Zones (HSZ) and on the normalization process and other issues as well as its exclusion from the Washington Conference. The LTTE demanded an interim administration to govern the North and East, until the final solution could be reached (Chittaranjan.K, 2003 & Hottotuwa. S, 2003, pp. 7-8).

In response to two earlier proposals for an interim administration (IA) in the North and East submitted by the GOSL, (both of which were rejected by the LTTE), the LTTE presented their long-awaited counter-proposal for an IA on October 31, 2003, to the Norwegian facilitators. This proposal was adopted by intensive consultations held by the LTTE team led by the Political leader of LTTE S.P.Tamilchelvan with constitutional and legal experts from the Sri Lankan Tamil diasporas during visits to France, Ireland and other Western countries. (Chittaranjan.K, 2003)

Chittaranjan further explain the situation that,

“Just when the worrisome counter-proposal of the LTTE called for a united approach by the Government, the country was plunged into a political crisis when President Kumaratunga sacked the Ministers of Defense, Interior and Information on November 4, 2003, and dissolved the Parliament in February and called for an election. The President justified her actions in the interests of the nation and alleged that the Prime Minister was being soft on the LTTE by allowing it to build up its military strength during the ceasefire. This Intense political rivalry threatened the peace process. In May 2004, the new UPFA government led by President Kumaratunga and the LTTE committed themselves in public and in discussions with the Norwegian facilitators to resuming the negotiation track.” (Chittaranjan.K, 2003)

Although the change of government (United People’s Freedom Alliance – UPFA) led by President Kumaratunga’s Freedom party (SLFP) with a new coalition in May 2004 has brought the peace process a stand still, both sides still continue to honor the February 2002 ceasefire.

1.2. The Press in Sri Lanka

1.2.1. Historical Context

Even though the Dutch set up the first printing press on the island in 1737 and the British published the first regular government Gazette in 1802, the first journal ‘*Colombo Journal*’ was not published until 1832 and the Observer and Commercial Advertiser were published after two years. The first Sinhala press Lankaloka began in 1860. The first Tamil newspaper *Udaya Tharakai* in 1841. Soon after this, several newspapers started to come out in Sinhala, Tamil and English languages. (ICES, 1996, P, 8)

The religious and cultural bias which controlled the function of the local language newspapers (Tamil and Sinhala) during the late 19th century continued well into the decades of 20th century. The radical newspapers of the 1930s and the 40s represent yet another strand

in the links between the media and political change in Sri Lanka during the pre-independent period. (ICES, 1996, pp. 12 &14)

The growth of the Sri Lankan press in the period after the independence as represented by the expansion of circulation of newspapers was accompanied by an increase in the number of news publications and a widening of the range of interests to which they cater. The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd (ANCL) and the Times of Ceylon Ltd. dominated the country's press. The ANCL, also known as Lake House because of its location by the Beira Lake in Colombo, has been the more dominant in the post-independence period. (ICES, 1996, pp. 20- 21)

1.2.2. Present Media situation

According to a recent report prepared by Nohrstedt.S.A, Bastian.S and Hök (2000, pp. 10-11), mainstream newspapers are presently published in Sri Lanka by one state owned company (Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited – ANCL) and seven privately owned companies. (Upali Newspapers Limited – Upali group, Wijeya Newspapers (Pvt) Limited – Wijeya group, Express Newspapers (Ceylon) Limited – Express, Sumathi Newspapers (Pvt) Limited – Sumathi, The Leader Publications (Pvt) Limited – Leader, Ravaya Publications, United Newspapers (Pvt.) Ltd.). Of these, the first three, ANCL, Upali group and Wijeya Publications are the biggest (see, circulation figures presented below). These institutions publish daily newspapers in more than one language. The state owned ANCL publishes in all three languages (Sinhala, Tamil and English) and the other two publish in Sinhala and English. It is interesting to note that it is only in the state owned ANCL that newspapers are published in all three languages.

Mainstream newspapers, their circulation and ownership by language of the publications

Sinhala Dailies	Circulation (1992/5)	Owners
Dinamina	92,141	ANCL
Lankadeepa	160,000	Wijeya group
Divayina	133,994	Upali group
Lakbima	n.a.	Sumathi

Sinhala Weeklies

Silumina	285,000	ANCL
Sri Lankadeepa	275,500	Wijeya group
Irida Divayina	252,144	Upali group
Lakbima	136,000	Sumathi
Ravaya	35,000*	

Tamil Dailies

Virakesari	42,000	Express
Tinakaran	20,024	ANCL
Mithran	n.a.	
Thinakkural	n.a.	United Newspapers

Tamil Weeklies

Virakesari	84,500	Express
Tinakaran	45,024	ANCL
Sunday Thinakkural	n.a.	United Newspapers

English Dailies

Daily News	80,034	ANCL
Times of Ceylon	125,000	Wijeya group
Daily Mirror	n.a.	Wijeya group
Island	43,969	Uplai group

English Weeklies

Sunday Observer	118,000	ANCL
Sunday Times	125,000	Wijeya group
Sunday Island	79,443	Upali group
Sunday Leader	75,000	Leader

Source: Updated from G.H.Peiris, Media in Sri Lanka: Recent Trends of Change, in *Studies on the Press in Sri Lanka* (ed.: G.H.Peiris), Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997.

* Personal communication

n.a. - Not Available. This means that the mission could not get an accurate figure for these circulation figures.

(Nohrstedt.S.A, Bastian.S and Hok, 2000, P, 11)

1.2.3. Sri Lankan Press Behavior

In Sri Lanka, there are sharp social, ethnic and gender based power differentiations. This means that the private media is controlled by small social elite of very rich and politically powerful people. In an ethnically polarized society, ethnic bias in mainstream media takes many forms and is also reflected in the ownership of media houses. (Gunasekara.L, 2003, P, 1)

Hottotuwa.S notes that, (2003(b), pp. 2-3)

“The newspaper establishment owned by Sinhalese expose majoritarian stand regardless by their language medium. There are four English News papers but all are pro-sinhala bias in varying degrees. At the same time, no News Papers in Tamil from Sinhala owned establishments. This is same for Tamil owned establishments. None of them publish any newspapers in Sinhala, although one of them used to publish a weekend newspaper in English with Tamil bias.”

In the context of the ethnic relationship, Hettige, Nohrstedt.S.A, Bastian.S and Hök (2000, pp. 7-8) mention in a report prepared for SIDA that,

“There is clear evidence to show that the media on both sides of the ethnic divide has been a promoter of the nationalist ideologies that have kept the conflict alive. This role goes back to the colonial period. The revival of nationalist sentiments was a fundamental motivation for setting up newspapers and various types of publications during the colonial period. This was especially true in the case of publications printed in Sinhala and Tamil. Colonialism was also associated with various types of negative impact on local cultures and society. Hence, right from the beginning especially newspapers published in local languages were associated with a political agenda of protecting national identities from foreign and other negative influences and of promoting ethnic nationalisms of the two (Sinhala and Tamil) communities. In a period of globalization, paradoxically enough, this role is bound to increase simultaneously with tendencies of transnational integration”.

According to Nohrstedt.S.A, Bastian.S and Hök, the ethnically partisan role of the media, which was earlier seen much more prominently in the Sinhala press, has spread through most of the media catering to the majority Sinhala community irrespective of the language in which the media operates. It has taken a much more pernicious form in the context of the ongoing war. It is argued that the media has become a problem in attaining a negotiated sustainable settlement to the conflict. Similarly on the Tamil side, over the years the media has come to reflect the more extremist Tamil nationalism promoted by the LTTE. The space for more moderate opinion advocating democratic answers to the conflict and questioning the ideology of Tamil exclusivism has shrunk. (Nohrstedt.S.A, Bastian.S & Hök, 2000, p, 8).

Media has also not been an independent observer. Partisan political struggles among the political parties vying for power in the ‘Southern’ polity have been supported by certain newspaper groups. The politics of nationalizing Associated Newspapers Limited, (Lake House) was also linked to this partisan politics. The Lake House group of newspapers, controlled by an influential political family, emerged as a powerful media institution in the post-independent period. In the years immediately after independence it established itself as a powerful voice of the establishment and status quo. Politically this meant becoming a strong supporter of the right-orientated UNP, which inherited power from the colonial administration. The newspaper group was against any form of left-oriented political activity and other political forces opposed to the UNP. Over the first 25 years after the independence all major newspapers were owned by the private sector. The nationalization of the ‘Lake house’ in 1973 resulted in the group being brought under the direct ownership and control of the government. (ICES, 1996, pp. 20-25)

Nohrstedt.S.A, Bastian.S & Hök, (2000, P, 9) note in their report,

“The media politics of Sri Lanka had a long-term effect on the media in general from which the media in Sri Lanka is still trying to come out. First, it contributed to the establishment of a highly politically partisan media culture in the country. This is still a major characteristic of the media in the country today. This partisan character and loyalty to specific political parties sometimes becomes blatant in critical moments of politics, such as during the time of elections. In this way media often becomes a tool in elite politics. Second, the nationalization of Lake House gave a powerful weapon to whatever party came to rule the country. Thus in addition to the state controlled radio and TV, the ruling party has access to the most well developed institution in the print media. Every party that has come to power after the nationalization of Lake House has used it for partisan political purposes, especially during election times.”

1.2.4. Journalism Education and Training

The majority of the estimated 2,500-3,000 journalists in Sri Lanka has limited or no professional training in adhering to basic standards. Several Universities – Kelaniya, Colombo, Aquinas and the Open University – plus the semi-autonomous Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLFI) and several private institutions offer Journalism courses or, in two cases, specialist degrees, but they almost uniformly focus on the theory of mass communications and journalism, and offer very little practical teaching and experience. Almost no Journalism is taught in Tamil anywhere. (Study of Media in the North-East of Sri Lanka, 2003, pp. 20-25)

Among the 3000 journalists, one thousand are employed by national media and two thousand by regional media. Many employees in the electronic media are not even considered as journalists, although their work includes traditional journalistic assignments.

The report prepared by Nohrstedt.S.A, Bastian.S & Høk (2002, P, 16) for SIDA, does not find journalism education in Sri Lanka satisfactory, There seems to be a variety of privately run programmes, though within the research period, the SIDA team was unable to ascertain their quality. Apart from these, a certain amount of on-the-job training takes place, although it seems to be of a rudimentary nature. The team was able to get a brief look at the programmes in the University of Kelaniya, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLFI) and Sri Lanka Television Training Institute: the report for SIDA (2002, P, 17) states,

“Most of the university programs seem to have very little opportunity for practical training. Even when they are available they are of short duration. Universities are heavily under funded and therefore do not have enough facilities and equipment to provide hands-on courses. Universities try to make use of existing media establishments for this purpose. As a result of this lack of resources the majority in the industry do not seem to think highly of the university courses”.

According to the Study of Media in the North-East of Sri Lanka, (2003, pp. 20-25), the majority of those who have taken institutional journalism training, and especially those with English language ability, seek and find employment in advertising, public relations or government communications, where the pay is markedly better. Journalism as a profession is currently poorly paid. Most current practicing journalists entered the profession with little training, and were given only rudimentary introductions to their role, on the job. Few organizations have any structured training programs in-house. A small number of working journalists have taken training abroad through international organization’s auspices. A number have attended seminars and workshops offered by international organizations. While basic training is acknowledged by most editors and managers as a major shortcoming some of them also volunteer confirmation that middle-level managerial skills are equally in need of development.

CHAPTER-2

Discourse Theory

2.1 What is Discourse?

In Oxford dictionary's definition, the term discourse is a long and serious treatment or discussion of a subject in speech or writing. The use of language in speech and writing in order to produce meaning; language that is studied, usually in order to see how the different parts of texts are connected.

Referring to Kirsten Drotner, Rigmor Argren describes about discourse that, it refers to the various signals and signs that enable people to create a coherent meaning of their world, their reality. Discourse can be seen as the boundary consisting of ex. cultural, social, political and economic backgrounds, which people unconsciously use to create meaning and understanding in their world. The activity of 'talking' is the core meaning of discourse. Discourse does not merely concern with the content of the speech activity but it focuses on how something is talked about. (Argren. R, 2004, P, 26)

2.2 Principle of the Ideology

As noted above, politics is one of the boundaries of understanding the world, can be seen as discourse. Politics is very much related to discourse as well as ideologies. Ideologies are the re-product of text and talk. Generally, ideologies are vaguely and negatively presented and defined in terms of "false consciousness". As Van Dijk defines,

"*Ideologies as a special form of social cognition shared by social groups*". He further explains

"Ideologies thus form the basis of the social representations and practices of group members, including their discourse, which at the same time serves as the means of ideological production, reproduction and challenge". (Vandijk, 2004, P, 12)

By Pointing out Scarborough, Van Dijk (2004) further mentions,

"Ideologies are personal beliefs, but shared by groups, as is also the case for grammars, socio-culturally shared knowledge, group attitudes or the belief systems or social representations of specific groups. Cognitively, ideologies are a special kind of social belief systems, stored in Long Term Memory. Socially as well as cognitively, these ideological belief systems are socially shared by the members of specific social groups or 'ideological communities'"

Normally ideology is used in negative ways, and typically refers to the rigid, misguided or partisan ideas of others: ‘we’ have the truth, and ‘they’ have ideologies. Indeed, there are no ‘personal’ or ‘individual’ ideologies are seen, but, personal or individual ‘uses’ of ideologies are embedded in societies. (Vandijk, 2001, P, 12-13)

Thus, according to Van Dijk(2001,P,13-18 &2004) ,the traditionally problematic relationship between knowledge and ideology is resolved as follows ,” General, socio-cultural knowledge, shared by an epistemic community, forms the common ground for all social representations of all (ideological) groups in that community. However, each group may develop specific group knowledge (e.g., professional, religious or political knowledge) based on the ideology of the group. This knowledge is called ‘knowledge’ within the group because it is generally shared, certified and presupposed to be ‘true’. For other groups such knowledge may of course be called ‘mere belief’, superstition or religion. In other words, beliefs that are taken for granted, commonsense, non-disputed, etc, within a community, and shared by different ideological groups, is by definition non-ideological within that community.

2.3 Political discourse and ideology

The general idea about the ideology summarized above by Van Dijk (2004) can be related to the field of politics, that is,” *for politicians, political cognition, political processes, political practices and political discourse as characterizing political groups, such as political parties, members of parliaments or social movements.*” Ideologies not only have general social functions but more specifically (also) political functions in the field of politics, Van Dijk (2004) calls them ‘political ideologies.’

‘If there is one social field that is ideological, it is that of politics.’ *Van Dijk (2004)* emphasizes. He does not see it as a surprise, because in his explanation,

“It is eminently here that different and opposed groups, power, struggle and interests are at stake. In order to be able to compete, political groups need to be ideologically conscious and organized. Few ideological groups besides political parties have ‘programs’ that formulate their ideologies explicitly, and that compete for new members or supporters on that basis. Few ideologies are as explicitly defended and contested as political ideologies. The political process is essentially an ideological process, and political cognition often simply identified with ideology.”

One thing should be kept in mind here that.” *political ideologies not only are involved in the production or understanding of political discourses and other political practices, but are also (re)produced by them.*” That is, ideologies are made ‘observable’, in the hands of discourses in the sense that, ideologies are expressed and formulated through the dynamics of the ‘discourse’ (Van Dijk, 2004)

2.4 Political situations and contexts

Van Dijk notes (2004), the relations between discourse and political ideologies are usually studied in terms of the structures of political discourse, such as the use of ‘biased’ lexical items, syntactic structures such as actives and passives, pronouns such as ‘us’ and ‘them’, metaphors or topic, arguments, implications and many other properties of discourse.

What Van Dijk defines about the ‘context structure’ and ‘mental model’ for the understanding of the discourse practice could be very important in this study, especially for the better understanding of the qualitative analysis of the newspapers. Referring to Duranti & Goodwin, (1992) Van Dijk emphasizes, ‘*Discourse should be conceptualized also in terms of its context structures.*’

In his own explanation,

” it is not sufficient to observe, for instance, that political discourse often features the well-known ‘political’ pronoun ‘we’. It is crucial to relate such use to such categories as who is speaking, when, where and with/to whom, that is, to specific aspects of the political situation. Since such political situations do not simply ‘cause’ political actors to speak in such a way, we again need a cognitive interface between such a situation and talk or text, that is, a mental model of the political situation .Such mental models define how participants experience, interpret and represent the for-them-relevant aspects of the political situation” (Van Dijk, 2004).

Here he calls the specific mental models as contexts. This is important to note, contexts are subjective participant definitions of communicative situations. They control all aspects of discourse production and comprehension.

In depth explanation of the relationship between the ‘cognitive processes’ and the ‘context structures’ and how they control the political discourse is beyond the scope of this study. However, at this point it is necessary to look at the cognitive process and the context structures concerning to the media production.

Borrowing the idea from Giddens (1991), Kandiah writes, media flies over the time and space and *'touch down on happenings and participants from the places and times in which they are immediately embedded, they transport them into every day consciousness of the recipients in their own here and now'*. Here these happenings and participants (actors) are attached to the 'past'. In view of this involvement through the 'cognitive process' the media enables the recipients to access them both through individual recall and institutionalized collective memory. (Kandiah.T, 2001, P, 26)

Kandiah (2001, 2001, P, 26) further explains,

"The process is carried out by symbolic linguistic and other means. In a manner that often appears almost ritualized, these, as it were, translate or re-articulate for the recipients the facts which lie out there beyond their immediate experience. The effect is, generally, to cause the experience or reality communicated to assume a concrete and immediate existence in the consciousness of the recipients, sometimes even to a greater degree than it might originally have had in its own situation."

What we have to understand from this explanation is, the objects communicated do not reach the recipients 'pure'. Necessarily mediated, they arrive in a somewhat altered or re-shaped, as Kandiah describes, *"reality" with simple "r" rather than capital "R", a rather than true version of it"*.

As 'context structures' control all levels of style of political discourse, such as lexical choice, pronouns, syntactic structure and other grammatical choices that depend on how situations are defined, media texts, then, do not merely literally represent in a raw form a pre-existent factual reality and then transmit it to its recipients. (Van Dijk, 2004). Kandiah (2001, P, 27), explains refereeing to Allan,

"Raw material is processed discursively, by means of linguistic and other symbols. These functions as signifiers of what is signified, but by re-presenting it, re-articulating it through the news frame in certain specific ways. The specific ways are negotiated by writer and the reader at the level of signification and representation on the basis of shared background cultural background and expectations, shared frames of reference about how the world looks like or ought to look like and so on. These shared features embody largely unconscious perceptions and understandings of the social world, which are taken to be neutral, inevitable and commonsensical true. It is not that either writer or reader fails to recognize the constructional and regulative dimension of this version. The point is that it strikes resonance with their everyday experience, unconsciousness beliefs and ideologies in a way that is particularly meaningful, and, therefore, "truthful" to them."

Deacon, Picterring ,Golidng and Murdact note that , expression and styles of speaking and writing cannot be hived off and treated separately from society's impress upon the production of meaning or from the individual's communicative competence in variety of social situations and contexts.” (1999, P, 148)

In this context if we re-call what Kandiah explained about the reality with simple 'r' rather than 'R' , we can further understand that ,

“Media texts are a form of re-constructive cultural practices which speaks the “real” or the “truth” not literally, but in a way that appeals to the readers and writer’s sense of familiarity and meaningfulness. In this way, they claim an authority. This has a basis not in the “Real” world outside of them, but in the discursive encounter between writer and reader” (Kandiah, 2001, P, 27)

2.5 Political discourse and political ideology of Sri Lanka

If political ideologies are relevant properties of political situations, namely as being shared by participants, then how are they expressed and reproduced by the structures of text and talk? Van Dijk (2004) raises the question and explains that, although there are probably political uses of discourse forms such as the use of pronouns as in-group and out-group markers, or rhetorical means of persuasion, it is likely that most ideological variations will be found at the levels of meaning.

Ideologies possess a polarized structure, which reflecting competing or conflicting group membership and categorization in in-groups and out groups. Pointing out that these structures are appeared in political attitudes, Van Dijk gives an example about the racist attitudes about immigration – and says, *“ultimately in the biased personal mental models of group members”*. When the 'content' of the discourse is polarized the cognitive processes control it. In this situation it is likely that discourse will thus also show various types of polarization. (Van Dijk, 2004)

If we look at the history of Sri Lanka, one can easily understand these features of the polarization in the context of the ideologies, promoted by the Sinhala and Tamil politicians. The problem in the case of Sri Lanka is that, since the formation of the polity for the country called as Ceylon/Sri Lanka/Ilankai, there has never been a historical opportunity for all the

people living in Sri Lanka to struggle for something common and thereby develop a common identity of Sri Lankanness. According to Sivaththambi,

“There is another matter of historical significance. The religio-communal response (of the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims) to westernization corresponded with the British government’s decision to appoint unofficial members to represent local opinion in the legislature. These appointments were done on ethnic basis. Later with the extension of the system representatives for Kandyan Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims were appointed. Thus, the entry of the British style of parliamentary democracy was through the gates of communalism. And this factor had decided the subsequent political evolution. In a country where each of the communities looked introspectively and never recognized any binding factor of unity or union, this had set a precedent that was never given up”. Ethnicity, thus, has been a factor that has conditioned political thinking in the country.”

He further says, *“We are now speaking of “national identity” in a “multiethnic” society. But let us see whether the concept of a multi-ethnic society is already a politically accepted fact within this society. The answer is a regretful.” No”*. (Sivaththambi, 1990)

The Sri Lankan conflict cannot be understood without referring to the ‘double minority complex’. That is, Sinhalese and Tamil’s perceive themselves to be minority populations under threat- the former in relation to the Tamil population in South India and the later in relation to the Sinhalese majority in Sri Lanka. This sense of being an embattled minority has fuelled competing Sinhala and Tamil nationalisms, which have become entwined with religious and cultural discourse. Referring to Tambiah, it is mentioned in the ‘Aid, Conflict and Peace building in Sri Lanka’ report (2000, P, 25) that, both draw on a mythical history, which emphasizes ancient enmities between Sinhala and Tamil Kingdoms, in spite of the evidence of a long history of ethnic accommodation.

As far as religious nationalism is concerned, contemporary political debates among Sri Lankan Buddhist monks are heavily influenced by modern Sinhala nationalist ideology. According to this ideology, which is supported both by monks and by laypeople, the former glories of the Sinhala nation are to be restored. In the view of its adherents, the Sinhala nation constituted a unified Sinhala-speaking people. This land of Sinhala unity and Buddhist glory, however, has through the centuries been invaded and devastated by Hindu Tamils, later by Christians and Muslims, and in recent times also by Tamil immigrants of Indian origin. Once independence had been wrested from the alien and decadent West in 1948, it was time once

again for the Sinhalese to claim what they held to be their rightful position as rulers of the island, and to restore Buddhism as the leading force in the country. (Frydenlund. I, 2005, P, 7)

2.51 Federal concept and Sri Lanka

When we talk about political discourse concerning the devolution of power sharing with minorities (Tamils and Muslims), the concept of the federalism also should be mentioned, because it naturally plays an important role in the efforts made to reconcile constitutionally cultural heterogeneity with political homogeneity. In addition to this, a sufficient detail on this issue is needed for the better understanding of the qualitative analysis regarding the right for self-determination of Tamils.

In the case of Sri Lanka, federalism is a long started from civilization, Sinhala Buddhist and Tamil Hindus shared different cultures they do appear to have had distinct identities. The country was ruled by Portuguese and Dutch based on the autonomy system, which had been practiced when it was colonized by them. Which has distinct identities between Sinhala and Tamil communities and the country enjoyed decentralization, where regions were independently administered based on autonomy. (Singh. A, 2001, P, xv-xx)

“The main aspect of the problem is that no satisfactory solution has yet been found to accommodate the conflicting demands of the two groups (Sinhalese and Tamils) - the majority wishing to restore its position after long years of colonial rule and a minority that wishes to reassure its continuance as a separate identity without losing the democratic rights that are to it. These conflicting demands are made within the historical situations of the process of “decolonization” within which the ensuring of both traditional identities and democratic rights are sought” .Sivaththambi says. (1990)

Before we go into the discussion about the ethnic division in Sri Lanka concerning the cultural identity and constituent creating, it would be appropriate to keep in mind the unsatisfactory function of media with regard to the ethnic issues, by understanding how precisely the discursive processes of cultural identity and constituent construction which the media carry out actually work.

Kandiah.T (2001, P, 29) has the following to say in this regard,

“The effectiveness of these processes depends, on the articulation of shared frames of reference and shared cultural knowledge and experience of the people, drawn from both their past and from

the immediate life within and around them. Of their nature, the processes tend to be exclusive and closure oriented. Even as they construct the 'self' on the basis of such shared features they simultaneously separate from that self all those who are different from it, constituting them as the 'other', who do not belong within the centre occupied by the 'self'. To be Sinhala-Buddhist is not to be Tamil-Hindu and vice versa, and it appears that for each group it is ontologically vital that it should be so. As work done in the border areas shows there is no absolute necessity that this is exactly how the groups so constituted should sacrosanctly be. But for vast numbers of people across the country, in whichever particular ways they might define their identities and however much they might interact or share with 'different' peoples as they do so, the boundaries that they cross as part of this interaction and sharing persist, performing a function of 'exclusion and incorporation' that is crucial to their sense of identity."

Therefore, when look at the function of the media within realities of a multiethnic context in terms of a dialectic created by the social, historical, cultural, political and other related issues, we understand the dynamics of the news production and the re-production.

According to Sivaththambi (1978), the ethnic division existed in the society in the past gave a permanent position of majority for the Sinhalese and permanent minority for the Tamils. This polarization based on the socio-cultural ideologies seeded and grew the ethnic rivalry. This polarization paved the way for the rejection of any appeal to the 'unity in diversity'. It in this context, Tamils founded the Federal Party (F.P.) on the two-nation theory based on the two distinct -nation theory, which we discussed in the previous chapter. This historical event increased the fears among Sinhalese about their identity.

The Tamil name of the party – Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (The party for Tamil State in Sri Lanka) revived the worst of the cultural, communal fears of the Sinhalese. The Federal Party, which in its first convention declared that ' *The Tamil speaking people in Ceylon constitute a nation distinct from that of the Sinhalese by every fundamental test of nationhood, firstly that of a separate historical past in this island as ancient and as glorious as that of the Sinhalese, secondly by the fact of their being a linguistic entity different from that of the Sinhalese...and finally by reason of their territorial habitation of definite areas which constitute over one third of this island*'. (Roberts, 2002)

People in the South saw this thing scaring in the face - the equal status of official languages - and felt that it would be gravely detrimental to the continuance and progress of the Sinhalese language; that it would almost imply the extinction of the Sinhalese language. They (the

Sinhalese) felt that the Tamil language was spoken by so many millions in other countries, (India, Malaysia etc) and possessed a much wider literature and as the Tamil speaking people had every means of propagating their literature and culture, it would have an advantage over Sinhalese which was spoken only by a few million people in this country only. Indeed, language is one of the major, aspects of ethnocentrism, because it determines the cultural identity of a group and influences the political discourse. (Sivaththambi, 1978)

2.52 Ethnic division and the ethnic division in the media

For the further understanding of the ethnic rivalry of Sri Lanka, it would be appropriate to briefly look how discourse plays an important role in the production and reproduction of prejudice and racism, because of their often subtle and symbolic nature, many forms of the racism are discursive: they are expressed, enacted and confirmed by text and talk. Especially school texts books are used by the authorities (majorities) to seed the racism on minorities to easily mobilize the masses to achieve their purposes. In this way, they acquire the mental processes, the social knowledge, the attitudes and the ideologies that control their action, interaction and dialogues with or about minorities. (Van Dijk, 1997, P, 32, 2000, P, 34)

In the Sri Lankan case, the important factor in the field of education is the 'psychological conditions' in the educational system. It is accused that, it was providing the encouragement of inter-ethnic hostility and hatred especially among Sinhala students. By referring the analysis of school texts books done by Bastian and Siriwardena ,Sivaththambi (1990) and Kandiah,2001 P, 38) point out that ,there were two separate advisory Committees, one for Sinhala and the other for Tamil. And there was no single Committee to which both the Sinhala and the Tamil texts were submitted for comparative analysis and approval. There was within the Tamil text another crisis. There was a complaint that the Tamil reader texts were highly Tamil culture oriented and were not providing adequate material for the Muslim students to identify themselves with the readers. It should be noted that the educational administration of the country had been on ethnic lines. In short, the education in this country is yet ethnically conceived and administered.

Referring to Ignatiev, Uyangoda .J (2000) explains that,

“It is not how the past dictates to the present, but how the present manipulates the past that is decisive. As positions have become more polarized, counter –discourses which emphasize accommodation and a common past, are increasingly squeezed out. Although the education system may have the potential to reduce conflict and build harmony, in its current form it reinforces ethnic and language differences.” (Aid, Conflict and Peace building in Sri Lanka, 2000, P, 25)

When people are brain washed in such a way the collective memory of the people is directed to serve the interests of their own community, as kandiah explains this is done by helping create and reinforce militant, hostilely exclusive ethnic sentiments which these groups, by helping create and reinforce militant, hostilely exclusive ethnic sentiments which these groups can exploit in their cultivation of the mass base of their position. (Kadiah, 2001, P, 38- 39)

Thus, researchers have shown that this ideological discourse much influences the media function .Emphasize ‘our’ good things. Emphasize ‘their’ bad things. De-emphasize ‘our’ bad things. De-emphasize ‘their’ good things. Sivaththambi (1978) has underlined that, the role of cross-cultural communication becomes very crucial in this context of things. In a way the problem Sri Lanka faces today is one of political homogeneity amidst cultural heterogeneity in discussing problems of inter-ethnic communication, one should avoid being simplistic.’ Ethno centrism’, the over evaluation of ones own group in comparison with other groups, especially those viewed as rivals tends to dominate the political thinking of the groups.

At this juncture of this discussion it is appropriate to re-call what we discussed in the previous chapter about the ethnic division of the media and the promotion of nationalist ideologies that have kept the conflict alive. Especially if we re-mind what Nohrstedt.S.A, Bastian.S and Hök (2000, P, 7-8) said referring to Hettige is,

“There is clear evidence to show that the media on both sides of the ethnic divide has been a promoter of the nationalist ideologies that have kept the conflict alive. This role goes back to the colonial period. The revival of nationalist sentiments was a fundamental motivation for setting up newspapers and various types of publications during the colonial period. This was especially true in the case of publications printed in Sinhala and Tamil. Colonialism was also associated with various types of negative impact on local cultures and society. Hence, right from the beginning especially newspapers published in local languages were associated with a political agenda of protecting national identities from foreign and other negative influences and of promoting ethnic nationalisms of the two (Sinhala and Tamil) communities. In a period of globalization, paradoxically enough, this role is bound to increase simultaneously with tendencies of transnational integration”.

Other important factor in handling media is ‘media exclusiveness’. This means the practice found in Sri Lanka both the print and electronic media to completely ignore and disregard what is going among other ethnic groups. According to Sivaththambi, (1990), this is very well seen in the stereotypes the media have created of the non-Sinhala groups. Also there is a sense of alienation among the non-Sinhala groups from what is considered the mainstream national events because there is no focus on them and whatever is presented is seen to be done more for the sake of doing it rather than in the spirit of doing it. This is not a result of the ethnic wars; these have been there prior to the start of the violence. This lack of shared media culture can be a barrier to the conflict resolution in Sri Lanka.

As best described by Wolfsfed (2001(b), P, 26)” *The greater the extent of shared media the more likely the news media will play a constructive role in the peace process*”. If a conflict ridden place is dominated by the shared media culture the media will work to how to resolve the problem within ‘our’ community. On the other, if there is little or no shared media the perspective is inherently ethnocentric, the media focus will be based on ‘they’ pose to’ us’.

Depending on the shared media culture exists in the society the political leaders and activists craft their message to reach their aims. According to Wolfsfed,

“Leaders employ a less extremist form of rhetoric when they find themselves talking to multiple audiences. This process may even have an influence on the ideologies of the warring groups as more moderate message become more familiar and acceptable. Those who only have to communicate with their own people, on the other hand, will emphasize sectarian loyalties in order to maintain their power base”. (2001(b), P, 26)

Generally the influence of the shared media can be more observed in the domestic conflicts than international conflicts, as the cultural, commercial and political contexts affect the writing of journalists. The concept of the shared media gets more meaning when antagonists involve in the peace process and rely on same media concerning news. (Wolfsfed, 2001(b), P, 25- 26)

Northern Ireland and Middle East peace processes are the good examples to demonstrate how the shared media culture affects the peace process. In Northern Ireland antagonists enjoyed higher level of shared media, on the other hand Israelis media crafted the news in order to

satisfy their own community, there was no motivation to deviate from the traditional journalistic practice of portraying enemy image towards the other. (Wolfsfed, 2001(b), P, 27) For a purpose of explanation these two examples will be further illustrated with Sri Lankan comparison in the qualitative analysis.

2.6 Media Discourse

People's knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, both of other elites and of ordinary citizens are the main sources of media discourse. Van Dijk emphasizes, the media do this in joint production with the other elites, primarily politicians, professionals and academics. In the freedom of expression, the media elites are ultimately responsible for the prevailing discourses of the media they control. (Van Dijk, 2000, P, 36)

In the process of forming the media discourse the most threatening factor is the bureaucracy. The system of the education existed in Sri Lanka adopted by the bureaucracy, split the media with its rigid exclusiveness, mutual antagonism, fear and hatred has taken place over the last thirty years and the personal in the professional and the administrative services are the children of this split. There is a greater potentiality for those to have an in built suspicion of the other ethnic group. (Sivaththambi, 1990)

Pointing out from Bar- Tal, (1998, 1999), Kempf explains that in societies, which have to endure intractable conflict over a long period of time, the distorted view of the conflict solidifies into societal beliefs which become part of society's ethos and motivate society members to act on behalf of the society. He further notes

“constructing positive self image, justness of own goals and own victimization, these beliefs frame societal life within a security discourse which designates peace as the ultimate desire of the society and refers to patriotism and unity as an indispensable basis on which the values of the society must be defended against a de-legitimized enemy. Still, these beliefs are not just an ideology which is imposed on society from outside or by its political leaders. They are part of the psychological infrastructure which helps society members to cope with the burdens of war; they result from a long history of experience with concrete conflicts at a high level of escalation and can be understood as a generalized interpretation of such conflicts. Once, these beliefs have emerged in a society, they provide a framework that interprets literally every interaction with the opponent as another scene in the big drama of ” good” vs. ”evil”. And once an event has been interpreted in this way, it seemingly gives proof to the stereotypes and prejudices that created this interpretation. (Kempf.W, 1999, P, 4)

2.7 Principles of propaganda

The main qualities of the propaganda are its mutability and adaptability to different cultural, social and textual environments. Possible to wage a war without an extensive political acceptance and cooperation of the people and without a badly shared feeling that the war is inevitable and socially and individually worth the eventual sacrifices. (Luoustarinen, 2002, P, 18 &34)

Benjamin Netanyahu in his speech at the Jewish Agency Assembly plenary meeting held in Israel on 24 June 2001 said,

“In the 21st century, you cannot achieve a military victory unless you achieve a political victory to accompany it; and you cannot achieve a political victory unless you achieve a victory in public opinion; and you cannot achieve a victory in public opinion unless you persuade that public that your cause is just. It doesn't make any difference if you are on the side of the angels or on the side of the devil. Anyone fighting in the international arena for public opinion must argue the justice of his cause. Hitler argued for the justice of his cause and Stalin argued for the justice of his cause. They all had propaganda machines. Whether you are right or you are wrong you must argue the justice of your cause.”

Fairclough's (2002, P, 9) idea of discursive gives better understand of the propaganda strategy of winning public opinion. He has noted,

“In every society where social action takes place, several discourses operate at the same time. Sometimes discourses reinforce each other, other times they might conflict with each other. The scholars refer to this network of discourses as 'orders of discourse. In this network of discourses, there will be dominant discourses, which are considered to be mainstream modes of creating meaning, other discourses are seen as oppositional, or alternative, or perhaps legitimizing. The orders of discourse become the arena in society where the power plays take place and manifest themselves.”

He has further mentioned that, the control practiced in society by the dominant ideology more and more is done through consent. Discourse is the favored vehicle of ideology, and therefore it is control by consent. This means that people through various institutions agree to be controlled and that they do so based on a feeling that they are part of and belong to the system.(2002,P, 9-13)

Here we see, in order to win the public opinion negative properties of the ethnic or community other and the danger the other presents to the self is expressed. This is part and partial of enemy making. This reminds us what we discussed at the beginning of this discussion in defining the ideology. If we re-call it again, generally the every day usage of the

ideologies are negative and typically refers to the rigid, misguided or partisan ideas of others. 'We' have the truth, and 'they' have ideologies. (Van Dijk, 2001, P, 12-13). This well states the ideological influences on propaganda.

As best noted by Kempf,

"Journalists usually share the beliefs of the society they belong to and in particular those societal beliefs which enables the society to cope with intractable conflict. These beliefs are not just out come of the propaganda, but the result from psychological processes that take place when ever a conflict is conceptualized as a competitive (win-lose model) rather than a cooperative (win-win model) processes (Kempf, 1999, P,10)

He (1999, P, 4) further says, it can be assumed that these beliefs can be found in any society which is engaged in intractable conflict, especially in those societies that successfully cope with it. These beliefs are far from being sufficient to win a conflict. Other conditions of military, political and economic nature must also be fulfilled. But they are necessary for enduring intractable conflict, and any wayfaring nation, therefore, tries to produce and maintain these beliefs by means of propaganda which aims at maximizing society members' willingness for war by means of persuasion.

2.8 War Discourse and Peace Discourse

When look at the war culture and the peace culture, we identify, the war culture as conflict oriented. What Kempf describes is 'dualistic thinking', which constructs an antagonism between" us" and" them", between in-group and out-group, between" good" and" evil".

Kempf explains further,

" Towards the out-group, war culture applies strategies of threat and violence and it justifies them by idealizing own rights, intentions and behavior and - at the same time - demonizing those of the opponent. Towards the in-group, war culture is based on obedience and applies strategies of (social) pressure in order to unify the society and to enforce loyalty with the own leadership. Vice versa, peace culture may be defined as a cooperative environment in which conflicts can be dealt with in the framework of a win-win model that aims at a resolution of the conflict which serves the needs of all parties involved. Peace culture is solution oriented. It is based on diversified thinking which deconstructs the antagonism. Diversified thinking is supposed to foster mutual knowledge and understanding of more sides through the highlight and respect for differences, the acknowledgement, inclusion and respect for diversity, as well as equality. Towards the out-group, peace culture is characterized by mutual respect, and it applies creative strategies in order to make conflicting needs compatible. Towards the in-group, peace culture is based on democracy, diversity and Pluralism. "(Kempf.W, 1999, P, 2)

During the Sri Lankan conflict period, Sinhala nationalist movements operated within the war culture with the support of the government in order to conceptualize the public in a competitive situation (win-lose model) . One of the good example to this is, militaristic Sinhala Buddhist nationalist movement, called ‘National Movement against Terrorism (NMAT). On January 10, 1999, the NMAT issued a national plan to defeat terrorism named “The way to defeat the Tigers”. According to this, the cause of the war was the savagery of the terrorism of the Tigers’. It proposed that, ‘to win the war for the Sinhalese, a mass national war consciousness should be built. The entire nation should be prepared for war. All nationalist political parties and organizations must form a joint front. All cultural and educational activities should be geared to contribute to the war effort.’ (Deshapriya, 2000)

According to the proposals of the NMAT the government should call a halt to all peace projects launch a propaganda campaign in support of the war. According to the National Plan of the Sinhala Veera Vidahana (SVV) which was adopted in July 1999, the Sinhala community is the decisive ethnic group in Sri Lanka. All other communities are ethnic groups living in the country of the Sinhalese. The strong verbal attacks launched against peace efforts by these groups also denigrated the proposals made by the Business community, who proposed a settlement through negotiations with the LTTE: In a statement issued in September 1999, these groups said, this section of the business community should be considered as ‘traitors’ of the nation. In this way, it was easy to campaign against the peace process to promote the war discourse in the context of the ideological beliefs, which we discussed. (Deshapriya, 2000)

As described by Kempf (1999, 7) for war discourse, truth is only raw material, and referential levels are harmonized in order to make the polarity between” us” and” them” plausible. War discourse tells stories about ” our” heroism and ”their” atrocities, it explains the conflict context as an un-resolvable antagonism, it tells stories about ”our” victories and about the roots of the antagonism and it bases ”our” values on political, historical or ethnic myths. Peace discourse needs to deconstruct this simplifying ideology by following unconditional standards of truth and making contradictions visible. Peace discourse will also tell stories about” their” suffering g and about ”our” evils, it will explore possibilities for transformation

of the conflict, it will tell stories about successful cooperation and the overcoming of antagonism, it will deconstruct myths and emphasize common values.

When Kempf describes the 'war discourse' he notes that,

“it produces a motivation logic which supports society member’s willingness for war by designating war as a wall against destruction and a bridge into a brighter future, peace discourse needs to deconstruct this motivation logic by pointing at the price of victory, on the damage to culture, economy and social relations etc. and by exploring the perspectives of peace and reconciliation. War discourse frames virtually any single event within the antagonism between ” good ” and ”evil” and thus produces a form of conflict coverage which is escalation oriented with respect to any of the four dimensions of conceptualization of the conflict, evaluation of the counterparts’ rights and goals, the evaluation of their actions, and the stimulation of emotional involvement of the audience. Peace discourse needs to deconstruct these distortions of conflict perception as well”. (Kempf, 1999, P, 7)

Sensationalism has great influence on the war discourse. Wolfsfed, 2001(b), P, 23) has noted that *“The more sensationalists the news media the more likely the news media are to play destructive role in a peace process”*. He further explains,

“The notion of sensationalism refers to the extent to which journalists feel obliged to use a melodramatic style of presentation in the construction in the construction of news stories. Sensationalist norms place a high value on emotionalism rather than reason, on entertainment rather than information, on specific events rather than long –term processes, and on personalities rather than institutions”.

Emotional news reportage easily touches the passions and this can be one of the most disturbing factors in conflict resolution. Sensationalism influences all the process of news production. Generally journalists look for the most dramatic and emotional stories, on the other photographers and video men looking for the most shocking image. In the construction of a news story drama gets priority. Layouts and graphics are modified to magnify the conflict by using emotional formats and headlines. If a journalist works in an emotional environment he is pressurized to provide news with melodrama, then only he satisfies the demand of that news source. When political leaders and groups operate in the same environment, they are also pressured to be more dramatic to maintain their power base. They have to adopt themselves depending on the environment to survive in the competition. This is part and partial of any kind of evolution. (Wolfsfed, 2001(b), P, 24-25)

Wolfsfed says, sensationalist news media have a vested interest in conflict. He gives historical examples to explain this phenomenon. A bored illustrator asked his publisher

William Randolph Hearst to come home from Cuba because ‘there will not be no war’. Then Hearst replied that ‘you furnish the pictures and I will furnish the war’. The fact here is that sensational reportage easily inflames the conflict. In Russo-Japanese war in 1904, the newspapers that carried chauvinistic and sensationalist reports gained more demand from the readers, while the newspapers that opposed the war went bankrupt. One cynical saying related to sensational journalism is, ‘if it bleeds it leads’ becomes true in this example. Quoting from the newspaper journalist Kuroiwa Ruiko, Wolfsfed writes “*Newspapers should be anti-government during peace time and chauvinistic during war time*” (2001(b), P, 25-26)

Galtung notes, modification of normal language into euphemism is one kind of psychological warfare. It could lead to physical confrontation. Even in the post conflict situation these news reports can be stated as war oriented. Such as violence oriented, propaganda oriented, victory oriented. (Galtung 2002, P, 261)

Referring to Deutsh (1970), Kempf speaks from social psychological point of view that,

”Escalated conflicts affect the rank order within a group or society. Those who are out standing for their fighting spirit, gain influence. Willingness to compromise and attempts at mediation are regarded as betrayal. This process of social commitment to antagonism affects the journalists work in several ways. Since journalists are members of the society themselves, they are under pressure to adopt an antagonistic view of the conflict in order to maintain their own social status and influence and since journalist have a strong bias towards elites , both as sources of information and as subjects of coverage, a good deal of the information on which journalists work is based, is not mere facts but facts which are already interpreted in an antagonistic way and most of the news stories about those who are on the foe front of antagonism.” (Kempf, 1999, P, 64-69)

The social beliefs which help a society to cope with the intractable conflict are not just an ideology, which is imposed on societies from outside or any its political leaders. The bitter experience along with a long history of protracted conflict make the resolution path more difficulty for transition from war culture to peace culture. As said by Kempf (2002, P, 10),

“In this situation even most powerful political leaders cannot just switch to a cooperative strategy without taking risk to loose power. As the survival of ethnic antagonism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union shows, not even totalitarian regimes have the power to do so.”

2.9 The Impact of Elite Consensus

Wolfsfeld's has found from the researches that, the level of 'political consensus' regarding the peace process is an important variable affecting news coverage. He emphasizes that, 'the greater the level of elite consensus, the more likely the news media is to play a supportive role in implementing such policies'. Positions taken by the major political parties serve as the most important indicator for the news media in these situations. (Wolfsfeld.G, 2001(a), P, 10-13 & 2001(b), P, 18-19)

Wolfsfeld (2001(a), P,12-14) says, not only the level of political elite consensus, but the level of the support of the general public also can have an impact on Media coverage, but he believes the 'public support' influence is less direct and less signification. The indirect influence comes from the fact that political leaders consider the climate of opinion when forming their own positions. His argument is,

"The greater the level of disunity among elites over the process, the greater the likelihood that the news media will make the situation worse. The media serve as the central arena for such disputes, reflecting and even playing up those divisions and thus making them especially likely to turn ugly. On the other hand, in peace processes or stages of a process those are marked by a high level of elite support, journalists will become unabashed enthusiasts and story lines will become celebratory. Those who oppose the agreements will be framed as troublemakers. A useful rule to follow in these matters is to start by looking at a particular political context, attempt to understand how political actors and journalists interact within the situation, and then examine how the resulting news stories influence the process itself. This idea, which surfaces at several, is referred to as the "politics - media cycle. Changes in the political environment lead to changes in the role of the news media that then lead to further changes in the political environment".

This process can also be understood by examining how the news media construct frames about political issues. The news media routinely employ interpretive frames as a device for providing meaning to events, and the level of consensus has a major impact on the frames they employ. Wolfsfeld (2001(a), P, 13) supports his argument by quoting from Gitlin (1980),

"Media frames, largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports. Media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual. Frames enable journalists to process large amounts of information, to assign it to cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences"

The news media construct frames in a conflict ridden society based on the information they receive by matching it into a package that is professionally useful and culturally familiar.

That is, a journalist trying to get the suitable news product by dealing between incoming information and existing media frames .These frames can be varied over time, culture, and political circumstance. If the political environment has greater level of elite consensus, one frame tends to dominate media discourse, and few questions are raised about its validity. As the level of opposition grows, alternative frames emerge, and this competition is reflected in changing media coverage. (Wolfsfeld (2001(a) P, 13)

“The lower the level of controversy among elites concerning the process itself, the more likely pro peace frames will dominate media discourse. Peace frames will be used to organize information about both successes and setbacks: Successes will lead to more optimistic coverage and setbacks will be seen as “problems” that must be solved. Here too those who oppose peace will often be treated as troublemakers, especially if they resort to violence .The news media in such cases become active agents in promoting the peace process, constantly amplifying the existing consensus.”(Wolfsfeld, 2001(b), P, 18-19)

In the case of the Northern Ireland peace process, political authorities enjoyed a higher level of elite consensus. This helped the news media to support the process. In the case of Israel, the Israeli press was more sensationalists and more ethnocentric than the news media in Northern Ireland, which also contributed to the different roles the media played and this affected the peace process. Larger numbers of journalists in Northern Ireland produced news stories for both Protestants and Catholics, forcing them to adopt a more balanced and constructive form of coverage. These journalists were also more concerned about the damaging effects sensationalist coverage might have on the conflict. (Wolfsfeld, 2001(a) P, 42-44)

The political dynamics behind the dysfunction of Israeli media is long term split in the Israeli polity over the occupied territories .Many Israelis regarded the PLO as a terrorist organization responsible for hundreds of deaths , and the opposition to Oslo was both extensive and fierce. Immediately after the initial accords were announced, the political right wing organized two of the largest demonstrations ever held in Jerusalem. Countless protest movements were organized against the agreement. It was clear from the beginning that the struggle over Oslo would be bitter. Israeli news media made the situation even more difficult. (Wolfsfeld, 2001(a) P, 21-22 & see Lonning.J, 1995)

The Sri Lankan peace process also can be considered as similar as the Israel- Palestinian conflict. Both conflicts are marked by protracted negotiations with breakthroughs and setbacks. Like in Israel, soon after the Oslo brokered ceasefire agreement with government

and the LTTE, opposition political parties and Sri Lanka's powerful Buddhist clergy organizations held many protest marches against the peace process. Protest marches were organized to highlight, in Sinhala extreme nationalists' term, the so-called "danger" to the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

Irresponsible media reportage of the peace process can be a vehicle to the sense of impotents and frustration, highlighting temporary set backs with unnecessary publicity through media might make difficult for the government, the LTTE and the activists to keep the support of the masses for the peace process.

Comparing the media coverage of Israel-Palestine and Northern Ireland conflict, Kempf comes to the conclusion that,

“Even if peace is put on the political agenda, however, the prevalence of war culture put limits on de-escalation-oriented coverage, particularly in the local media. Journalists are society members themselves, and they share the societal beliefs of their society. Moreover, their reports are not being plausible to the public, if they contradict these societal beliefs too overtly. And the dominance of the war culture resulting from the strong ideological beliefs and the propaganda mechanism, put limitations on de-escalation oriented coverage.” (1999, P, 10).

3.0 Generating the Predictions

Based on the rationale provided in discourse theory as well as literature on media behavior, two predictions can be generated. Our discussion based on the earlier researches shows that, there is a close relationship between discourse, ideology and politics. Discourse is the favored vehicle of ideology, and therefore control by consent. As journalists are members of the society, they usually share the socio, cultural and political beliefs of the society they belong to and those beliefs which enable the society to cope with intractable conflict. These beliefs are not only come from propaganda, but result from psychological processes. In this context, once a full stop is put to the war and ceasefire is signed to bring sustainable peace between warring parties through negotiation, the antagonistic bias of the media could become counter productive, in view of the dominance of the war culture over the peace culture. Consequently it is predicted that,

Hypothesis-1: In the fertile of the Sri Lankan social and a political context, ‘war discourse’ dominates the ‘peace discourse’ and there by overall press coverage will become negative in the peace process.

Hypothesis-2: Sri Lankan Press will function in terms of its own ethnic bias and also reflect the interest of the ownership concerning the peace process.

3.1 Summary

1. Ideologies are the re-product of text and talk. Generally they are vaguely and negatively presented and defined in terms of ‘false consciousnesses’. Ideologies not only have general social functions but more specifically political functions in the field of politics. Political discourse often features the well known political pronouns ‘us’ and ‘them’. Social structure is heavily influenced by these ideological beliefs.
2. Discourse is a favored vehicle of ideology and therefore control by consent. Social structure and the Discourse is mediated by, ‘context structure’ and ‘cognitive processes’. Context is an ongoing situation or background, and controls all the levels of political discourse. Cognitive process defines how participant’s experiences interpret and represent the relevant aspects. This is a continuous interaction between social structure and the discourse practice through the ‘context’ and the ‘cognitive process’, there by the society is shaped by discourse and vice versa.
3. In the case of media discourse, media texts are a form of re-constructive cultural practices. News production is done by discursively with the negotiation between the reader and the writer. In the context of the ‘peace and war’ journalism, media discourse can be divided in to two categories. One is ‘peace discourse’ and the other is ‘war discourse’.
4. In short, the factors (Ex: ‘context’ and ‘cognitive’) which determine the expression of the ‘media discourse’ (peace discourse or war discourse) can be considered as independent vectors, as these vectors are embedded in the society and cannot be easily changed by sudden decisions.
5. Apart from the discourse factors, the expression of the ‘media discourse’ also can be influenced by the factors related to the institution (Ex: Ownership and readership or the target market). These factors can be considered as dependent vectors as these

vectors are created by owners and journalists, and can be changed by the decisions. One thing should be kept clearly in mind that the both dependent and independent vectors affect and influence each other.

Note: Illustrating the literature with the Sri Lankan context, we have seen the various dimensions of the independent and dependent vectors which influence the function of the various newspapers concerning the peace process and there by, how the expression of ‘peace discourse’ and ‘war discourse’ of these newspapers is varied. In the forth coming analysis chapters, the independent vectors will be applied particularly with the brief explanation of ‘context’ (especially, political consensus) and ‘mental or cognitive’, and dependent vectors will be explained particularly with the explanation of ownership. That is, the brief theory of these vectors will be used with the support of the other theories (shared media, elite consensus and sensationalism) to explain the findings of the quantitative and qualitative analysis. Especially for the qualitative analysis, discourse theory is applied through Van Dijk’s frame work (described in the next chapter) for the Critical discourse analysis (CDA). The characters of the ‘war discourse’ and ‘peace discourse’ (described in the next chapter) classified by Wilhelm Kempf is used as a check list to identify the type of the discourse in the analysis.

CHAPTER-3

Methodology

As content analysis and textual analysis offer systematic ways of exploring the meanings of documents, both these analysis are used to examine the objectives of this study.

3.1. Content Analysis

Content analysis is an extremely directive method. It gives answers to the questions I pose in this study. In this regard, this method does not offer much opportunity to explore texts in order to develop ideas and insights. That is why; the techniques of textual analysis were used with content analysis to involve detailed and close gained work. *(Deacon.D, Pictering.M, Golding.P&Murdact.G, 1999, P, 17)*

Content analysis allows us to produce systematic descriptions of what documentary sources contain. By counting how often particular topics, themes or actors are mentioned, how much space and prominence they command and in what contexts they are presented. Content analysis provides an overview of patterns of attention. It tells us what is highlighted and what is ignored. *(Deacon.D, Pictering.M, Golding.P&Murdact.G, 1999, P, 17)*

Widely used definition of content analysis focuses on quantitative measurements. Arthur Berger says, “*content analysis is a research technique that is based on measuring the amount of something in a representative sampling of some mass-mediated popular form of art.*” *(Macnamara.J.R, 2003, P, 3)*. Kimberly Neuendorf provides the definition, “*content analysis is a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method.*” *(Neuendorf, 2002, P, 10)*

In this study ,quantitative content analysis was used to collect data about media content such as topics or issues, volume of mentions,’ messages’ determined by key words in context (KWIC). *(Macnamara.J.R, 2003, P, 5)*. Especially, the attitude of the newspapers towards the LTTE, government, opposition parties, the facilitators etc, the newspaper’s stand on the ceasefire agreement and the Oslo declaration were determined by KWIC.

The quantitative analysis was based on quantifiable facts and numbers. Graphs and tables were used for this purpose. It was also possible to record the number of articles and news published in a selected period. Computer software program SPSS was used for statistical analysis to storing data, such as coding and notations and analyzing data, including constructing tables and charts.

3.2. Textual Analysis

On the other hand textual analysis heavily relies on researchers 'readings' and interpretation of media texts, that is 'qualitative analysis.' Qualitative analysis methods applicable to analysis of media content include text analysis, narrative analysis, rhetorical analysis, discourse analysis, interpretative analysis and semiotics analysis, as well as some of the techniques such as critical analysis used in literary studies. (*Macnamara.J.R, 2003, 6*). One of the most important characteristics must be noted here is 'discourse analysis', which is appropriate in this study.

The qualitative analysis applied in this study based on discourse analytical perspective, discusses findings from the press coverage of Sri Lankan peace process. It is this qualitative analysis that made it possible to prepare a comprehensive discussion on media discourse based on the facts that unearthed from the quantitative analyses.

3.3. The Methodology Employed to Observed the Media

Units of analysis are the followings, which were featured in a sample of news papers.

1. Headlines and related news in the front page.
2. Editorial.
3. Peace process oriented articles or news features.

The coverage of the peace process under the above categories were examined. Based the analysis, it was feasible to show the endeavor made by the newspapers. The purpose of analyzing the editorial was to ensure that it is current. The need was to ensure whether the subject matter of the editorial is on peace process and current issues that are relevance to the situation and whether such issues are transparency and impartially presented.

The research concerns with regard to the quantitative analysis were addressed by coding the following details related to the ‘peace processes’.

1. The medium in which the item appeared.
2. The place where the item was positioned in the newspaper.
3. Type of the news item
4. Name of the newspapers.
5. Ownership of the newspaper
6. Publication of the year.
6. Attitude towards the government
7. Attitude towards the LTTE
8. Attitude towards the Opposition parties
8. Attitude towards the facilitators (Norway, Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and other countries support Norway’s role.
9. Attitude towards the specific facilitator
10. Stand on the ceasefire agreement
11. Stand on the way of the peace process
12. Stand on the ‘Oslo’ declaration.

Following conditions were considered in selecting the news papers.

Conditions	Reasons
1. Not being a regional or local paper, national level	<p>News Media in Sri Lanka almost functions in the capital city (Colombo). All the national level newspapers published in this city. The only exceptions to this rule are The Tamils living cities, namely Jaffna and Baticaloa.</p> <p>In Jaffna four regional (local) papers (daily) are published in Tamil language with the significant number of circulation.</p> <p>Only one regional (local) newspaper (Daily) is published in Baticaloa in Tamil language with little circulation. Even though one tabloid newspaper is published in Kilinochchi, it is totally controlled by LTTE.</p> <p>Other than these Tamil language newspapers, no regional (local) newspapers (Daily) are published in Sinhala and English languages. Therefore this study totally lacks the chance for the parallel analysis of the regional level (local) newspapers in three languages and therefore relies only on national level newspapers.</p>
2. Circulation	<p>Concentration is paid on the circulation in order to ensure the widest readership of the newspapers. It is assumed that the more the circulation of the newspaper the more the information is disseminated to the public.</p>

3. Ethno and linguistic divide.	Since this study has discourse analytical perspective, it is necessary to ensure the ethno and linguistic divide of the newspapers to analyze the dialectic of the different discourses with regard to the peace process.
4. Daily Papers.	To examine the continuous coverage of a breakthrough out or an incident with regard to the peace process.
5. Ownership of the newspapers	Sri Lankan newspapers can be divided into two categories, state and private. Even though state ownership publishes newspapers in three languages, these are totally controlled by the incumbent governments. Under the private category the ownership is divided into two parts. One is Sinhala ownership and the other is Tamil ownership. Tamil language newspapers are published from Sinhala ownership and like that no Sinhala and English language newspapers are published from Tamil ownership. These divisions in the ownership of the newspapers can contribute a lot in this study to analyze the “discursive order”.

Selected newspapers by the representative sampling method within the selection criteria mentioned above for both quantitative and qualitative analyses are given in the following table with appropriate details.

Name	Group	Ownership	Language	Frequency	Circulation.
Daily News	ANCL	State	English	Daily	80,034
Lankadepa	Wijeya	Private & Sinhala	Sinhala	Daily	275,000
The Island	Upali	Private & Sinhala	English	Daily	79,443
Divaina	Upali	Private & Sinhala	Sinhala	Daily	133,994
Virakesari	Express	Private & Tamil	Tamil	Daily	84,500
Thinakural	United	Private & Tamil	Tamil	Daily	60,000*

Sources: Re organized from G.H. Peiris, Media in Sri Lanka: Recent Trends of Change, in Studies on the press in Sri Lanka (ed: G.H. Peris), Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1997.

**: From Editors and Publishers.*

The reason why newspapers were analyzed in this study is- newspapers are the principal source of news to the masses, research in other countries indicates that newspapers often provide more in depth news contribute much to the political discourse and also are relied upon more by opinion leaders.

Even though more than 14 national level newspapers (Daily) are published in Sri Lanka, only above mentioned six newspapers were selected for this study for the following reasons.

1. It was realized that it is practically impossible to analyze several newspapers in depth within a short period of time and therefore decided to analyze six newspapers. (Two newspapers from each language)

2. For the Sinhala community, the newspaper of voice choice is overwhelmingly 'Lankadepa', which claims the attention of nearly one third of all citizens. 'Divaina' claims an additional 15% of readers, with the rest spread out among many other papers, none claiming more than about 5% of the readership. 'Lankadepa' is especially prevalent in the Western, Sabaragamuwa, and Uva provinces, where it claims 40% or more of all Sinhala. Divaina is strongest in Sabaragamuwa.

3. Among Tamils, the leading Paper is 'Virakesari', especially in the Eastern province. Up country Tamils read 'Virakesari' primarily, while Jaffna Tamils read 'Thinakural', the second largest circulation of newspaper in Tamil language. In the Northern Province and in most parts of the Southern province, 'Thinakural' is preferred.

4. For the English newspapers readers Daily Mirror, The Island and Daily News are the most preferred ones. Almost these newspapers equally share the readership and strongest in the capital city of Colombo. Therefore regardless of the readership among these newspapers it is decided to select 'Daily News' to represent state ownership and 'The Island' to represent private ownership.(Source: Re organized from Draft Final Report – Social Indicator- Centre for Policy Alternatives- 2003)

3.4. Period

Time slot for the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the newspapers was determined by the purposive sampling in order to examine the media behavior concerning the peace process over some certain period.

It is in this context of the peace process explained earlier; it was decided to analyze the press coverage in relation to the peace process over this three year period starting from the ceasefire agreement signed in 22 February 2002. Therefore the newspapers published consecutively for three days from the day after the ceasefire agreement in each year were assed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The dates are 23, 24, 25, /02/2002, 2003, and 2004. It should be stated that it was impossible to collect all the newspapers published in the above-mentioned period, as a substitute for this, the newspaper published on the previous or the next day of the missing paper was selected for the analysis. Altogether 54 newspapers were analyzed. For the quantitative analysis altogether 239 news items (news reports, feature articles and editorial columns) were analyzed and 19 news feature articles were examined for the qualitative part.

As far as qualitative analysis is concerned, the structures and processes of meanings, meaning production and interpretation had to be analyzed in depth in this study; therefore it was decided to choose systematic semantic analysis. Especially Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used based on Van Dijk's framework and the same newspapers used for the quantitative analysis were used here too.

3.5. Why Van Dijk's CDA framework?

CDA is commonly used to analyze text in the field of media research. In this process, the analyst chooses to treat the text as a social action not merely as a piece of information. The text apart from transmitting information is considered to a) be the result of the dominant ideology and b) to manifest and reinforce this dominant ideology within itself. (Sheyholislami.J, 2000, P, 1)

Usage of language in social life, and the relationship between language use and social structure are the key factors here. It is in this context of this relationship that, the term discourse becomes important. This is where Norman Fairclough's definition of discourse can be understood as an attempt to show systematic links between text (e.g. a news report), discourse practice (e.g. the process of production and consumption), and socio-cultural practice (e.g. social and cultural structures which give rise to the communicative event) (Fairclough, 1995).

This is almost similar to the Van Dijk's three factors of ideology analysis. The three factors respectively, discourse, socio-cognition, and social analysis [analysis of social structures]. Sheyholislami classifies the main difference between Fairclough's and van Dijk's approach is in the second factor (socio-cognition), which mediates between the first factor and the third factor. Van Dijk in his analysis emphasizes that social cognition and mental processes as mediating between discourse and the social. According to Fairclough this task is assumed by discourse practices, text production and consumption and heavily relies on linguistic analysis in terms of vocabulary, grammar and semantics. (Sheyholislami.J, 2000, P, 3-4)

The framework for the discourse analysis described by Van Dijk (1988) is not only the textual and structural level of media discourse but also for analysis and explanations at the production and 'reception' or comprehension level. Structural analysis in the sense, according to Van Dijk, the analysis of 'structures at various levels of description', this is not only the grammatical, phonological, morphological and semantic level but also 'higher level properties' such as coherence, overall themes and topics of news stories and the whole schematic forms and rhetorical dimensions of texts. (Van Dijk, 1988, P, 2)

Sheyholislami analyses the Van Dijk's framework that,

“Production processes in the sense van Dijk means journalistic and institutional practices of news-making and the economic and social practices which not only play important roles in the creation of media discourse but which can be explicitly related to the structures of media discourse. Van Dijk's other dimension of analysis, reception processes, involves taking into consideration the comprehension, memorization and reproduction of news information. What Van Dijk's analysis of media (1988, 1991, 1993) attempts to demonstrate is the relationships between the three levels of news text production (structure, production and comprehension processes) and their relationship with the wider social context they are embedded within. In order to identify such relationships, Van Dijk's analysis takes place at two levels: microstructure and macrostructure “(Sheyholislami.J, 2000, P, 4)

Sheyholislami(2000,P,4) further describes that the microstructure level analysis is focused on the semantic relations between propositions, syntactic, lexical and other rhetorical elements that provide coherence in the text, and other rhetorical elements such quotations, direct or indirect reporting that give factuality to the news reports.

What the priority is given in Van Dijk's (1988, P, 248) analysis of news is the analysis of macrostructure, as it connects the thematic structure of the news stories and their overall schemata. Themes and topics can be understood in the headlines and lead paragraphs. According to van Dijk, the headlines define the overall coherence or semantic, unity of discourse, and also what information readers well memorize in the news report.

One can easily catch the idea of the writers, how they see the events and perceive the world by looking at the headline and intro (first paragraph) of their writing as these express the pictures of the cognitive process of journalists. (Van Dijk, 1988, P, 248)

Summary (headline and the lead paragraph), story (situation consisting of episode and Backgrounds), and consequences (final comments and conclusions) are the building blocks of narrative pattern of a news story. According to Van Dijk (1988, P, 14-15) news schemata (news plan) are built by these building blocks. Normally the summary, the headline and the lead paragraph give the general information to the readers. Therefore the general information of a news story is easily memorized and recalled by the readers.

Therefore the methodological framework applied in this study has the following steps described by Van Dijk (1998), who believes that one who desires to make transparent such an ideological dichotomy in discourse needs to analyze discourse in this way.(Sheyholislami.J, 2000, P, 5)

- a. Examining the context of the discourse: The historical, political or social background of a conflict and its main participants.
- b. Analyzing groups, power relations and conflicts involved.
- c. Identifying positive and negative opinions about Us versus Them.
- d. Making explicit the presupposed and the implied.
- e. Examining all formal structure: lexical choice and syntactic structure, in a way that helps to (de)emphasize polarized group opinions.

We discussed in the second chapter about the dynamics of the Sri Lankan conflict in the social and political contexts with the explanation of history and ideologies. In this context, it is obvious that Van Dijk's CDA model is the most convenient framework in this study to examine the hypotheses generated earlier.

3.6. Themes and Actors of the CDA

a. Themes

Even though several issues related to the peace process were identified in the quantitative analysis, only two main topics were chosen here for the qualitative analysis as they satisfied the criteria of the study. Followings are the topics and subtopics for the analysis

1. Aspects of the ceasefire agreement.
 - a. Danger for the 'territorial integrity' of Sri Lanka. (Security concern).
 - b. Traitors of the Nation.
2. Right for self-determination of Tamils.

b. Actors

The analysis of the actors and their role was a part of this study of the discourse themes. United National Front (UNF) government, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), President Chandrika Kumaratunga, Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe Norway, Peoples Alliance (PA-main opposition party), Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP-opposition party), United People Freedom Alliance (UPFA), Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), India, Nationalist organizations, Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims were identified as the main actors in the news reports.

In this context, the media discourse was analyzed in this study to portray the media coverage in the peace process. Following model of ‘war discourse vs. peace discourse’ described by Wilhelm Kempf (2000) is applied as a ‘check list’ to examine the media discourse in this study.

	War Discourse	Peace Discourse
Main Questions	Who is the aggressor? How can he be stopped?	What are the issues? How can they be transformed?
Identification Suggestion	<p>Polarized</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - humanizes "our" political and military leaders & dehumanizes "their" political and military leaders - humanizes "our" soldiers & dehumanizes "their" soldiers - humanizes "our" victims & disregards or dehumanizes "their" victims - humanizes "our" civil population for its loyalty and sacrifice & disregards or dehumanizes "their" civil population for its nationalism - humanizes "their" anti-war opposition & disregards or dehumanizes "our" anti-war opposition 	<p>All-sided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keeps aloof from identification with Political and military leaders on any side. - keeps aloof from identification with military personnel on any side - humanizes or at least respects victims of the war on any side - humanizes or at least respects members of the civil society and keeps aloof from identification with supporters of the war on any side. -humanize at least respect those who strive for a peaceful conflict resolution any side.
Truth Orientation	<p>Truth is only raw material. & referential levels are harmonized</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tells stories about "our" heroism "their" atrocities - explains the conflict context as an un-resolvable antagonism - tells stories about the roots of antagonism and "our" victories - bases "our" values on political, historical or ethnic myths 	<p>Follows unconditional standards of truth & makes contradictions visible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tells also stories about "their" suffering and "our" evils - explores possibilities for transformation of the conflict - tells stories about successful cooperation and the overcoming of antagonism - deconstructs mythical interpretations and searches common values
Motivation Logic	Designates warfare as a wall against destruction and/or as a bridge into a brighter future	Points at the price of victory, on the damage to culture, economy and social relations etc ,and explores the perspectives for peace and reconciliation
Conflict Coverage	<p>Escalation-oriented, with respect to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conceptualization of the conflict - Evaluation of rights and goals - Evaluation of actions - Emotional involvement 	<p>De-escalation-oriented, with respect to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conceptualization of the conflict - Evaluation of rights and goals - Evaluation of actions - Emotional involvement

Arguments are supported by documentary sources, such as variety of local collections (work shop papers and seminar papers) and specialized holdings of personal papers. These sources help with three basic tasks in this research. 1. Checking what research has already been done. 2. Checking facts and figures. 3. Tracking contemporary events. (*Deacon.D, Pictering.M, Golding.P&Murdact.G, 1999, P, 19*)

3.7. Limitations of the study

1. It is realized that more than one newspapers fall under the ownership of a single organization or individual. Daily News and Dinamina newspapers are belong to Associated News paper of Ceylon Ltd (Lake House) is controlled by the state. Lankadepa and Daily Mirror belong to Wijewa News papers group. The Island and Divaina belong to Upali Newspapers (Pvt) Ltd. Even though these newspapers might reflect a bit similar behavioral patterns, Author pays more attention on linguistic and the different readership. Therefore, in some cases two news papers are selected from the same management.

2. There is an issue regarding to the ‘Muslim’ ethnicity in the conflict. Even though ‘Muslim’ ethnicity is one of the important factors in the Sri Lankan conflict, this factor is only briefly pointed out, but not examined duo to two reasons. One is, Muslim representation has not been recognized yet (as a third party) in the Sri Lankan peace process. Other one is, no mainstream newspapers are published from the ‘Muslim’ ownership. This study entirely focuses on main stream newspapers.

3. Obviously one of the other reasons why I used Van Dijk’s CDA model is, language barrier. Even though Sinhala the majority language in Sri Lanka, I cannot speak, read and write Sinhala language at all. I had to totally depend on others to translate the Sinhala texts in to English; as a result I realized the fact that it was very difficult to use the CDA based on Fairclough’s model as it heavily relies on linguistic analysis in terms of vocabulary, grammar and semantics. On the other, Van Dijk’s model perceives social cognition and mental models as mediating between discourse and the social.

In addition to this, it is practically impossible to deal with all these dimensions of the CDA in every single reportage, articles and editorials of the 54 newspapers, within a short period of research time. Therefore, this analysis could be 1. More or less informal 2. Heavily rely on Van Dijk's macrostructure (topics) 3. A summarize of most relevant cognitive and social contexts of interpretation.

4. At this point it is important to declare the possible criticism of my bias in this study. Therefore I have the following to say here, *'I was born in Jaffna -the northern city of Sri Lanka, which had been the site of ethnic conflict for the last 20 years, where I have spent almost all my life. This background and the experiences I faced in the ethnic- conflict might influence this study and therefore one could expect that I am bias or I have handled this study in one way. As I realized this possible criticism, I have tried my best to avoid subjectivity and to bring the best scientific piece'*

CHAPTER-4

4.1. Quantitative analysis

As Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society, our earlier discussion shows that press coverage of the Sri Lankan peace process varies in terms of ethnicity, language and the ownership of the media. Needless to say, when the media functions to impact on the national identity and constituency, its coverage of the peace process takes many resultant forms.

In this context, the quantitative content analysis was used to examine the behaviour of the press coverage in the peace process by collecting data about content, such as ‘topics’ or ‘issues’, ‘volume of mentions’ and ‘message’. Altogether 239 news types (news reports, news feature articles and editorial columns) were analyzed from 54 newspapers published during the selected period. This analysis was strictly based on 15 variables defined in the coding book. (See Appendix)

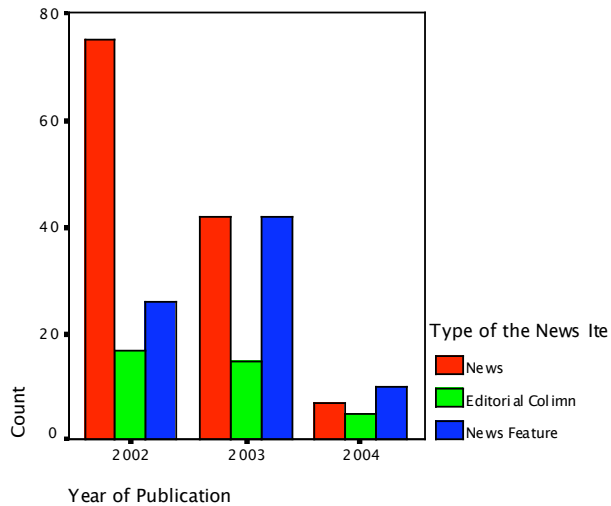
The analysis is made here particularly to assess the ‘attitude’ expressed by the Sri Lankan press towards the stakeholders of the peace process (the Government and the LTTE) and breakthroughs of the peace process, such as the ‘ceasefire agreement’ and the ‘Oslo declaration’.

4.1.1. Coverage of the Peace process

A. News Coverage in terms of years

At first it is appropriate to consider the general picture of the peace process press coverage over the 3 years after the ceasefire agreement signed on 22 February 2002. Although the press coverage of the peace process is intensive in first two years (2002 and 2003), the coverage suddenly declines in 2004. This change is seen more or less in all the newspapers. In the years 2002 and 2003, all the six newspapers show good coverage of the peace process in terms of the number of news items (Only the news items appearing on the first page and the news articles and the editorial columns published in the inside pages were counted and analyzed for this study). (Graph-1)

Graph-1: Year of Publication vs Type of the News Item



In 2004, all the newspapers regardless of language and ownership showed low intensive coverage, as it was the year of the election. Nomination day for the election had particularly low figures (23 February 2004) coverage of the peace process was almost ignored. It was observed that during the election period (23, 24, 25 February 2004), only three news items in Sinhala-owned newspapers and four news items in Tamil-owned newspapers were published on the first page.

The above results clearly show that the first priority of the news media's focus is on 'immediacy'. The press is interested in covering events, not processes. In this example, the nomination day for the election was the 'event' and it influenced the press. One thing is proved here that, like the nomination day, any other events (e.g.: ethnic violence) can easily influence the Sri Lankan press. As best said by Wolfsfeld,

"This type of influence on the media presents the public with an extremely narrow and simplistic view of what is happening and makes it difficult for leaders to promote long-term policies. A peace process is usually marked by long, difficult negotiations with occasional breakthroughs. Adopting a short term perspectives often leads to a sense of impatience and frustration. The media emphasis on this makes it difficult for governments to maintain public support for the process over a long period of time. Leaders will have little to provide journalists on a daily or even a weekly basis.

While experienced policy makers realized that negotiations take time, journalists are not in the business of waiting. (Wolfsfeld.D, 2001, P, 10)

Graph 1 showing the decline in the news coverage each year should be noted here.

Finding-1 This theoretical explanation and the example show that the Sri Lankan press is influenced by the ‘immediacy’ factor and thereby likely to play destructive role in the peace process.

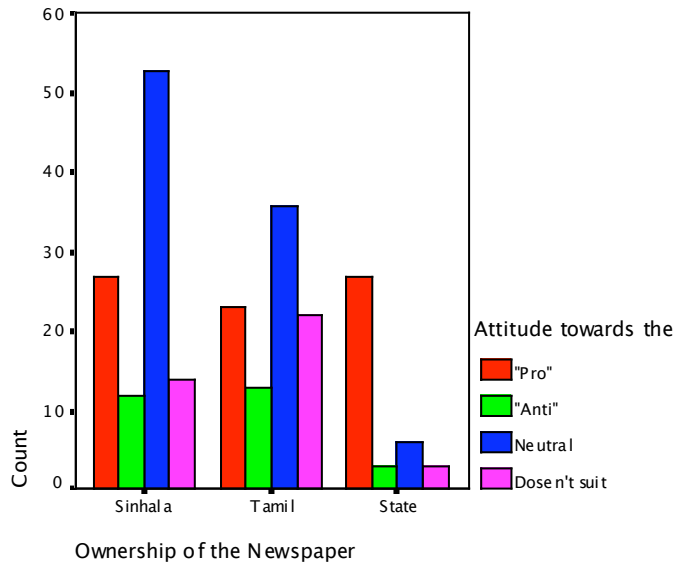
In addition to this ‘immediacy’ factor in 2004, the graph shows the decline in the coverage of the peace process in 2003 compared to 2002. The reason for this deviation is examined in the qualitative analysis.

4.1.2 Attitude toward the stakeholders

A. Attitude towards the government

Graph (2) shows how different newspaper ownership exposes different types of attitude towards the government over the three years, regarding the peace process. Generally Sinhala and Tamil-owned newspapers show a ‘neutral’ attitude towards the government, while state-owned newspapers show a ‘Pro’ attitude. Compared to the Sinhala-owned newspapers, the Tamil-owned newspapers express more ‘anti’ attitude towards the government. High level ‘pro’ attitude in the state-owned newspaper reveals how the state media is directed towards the endorsement of the incumbent government’s policies.

Graph-2: Ownership of the newspapers vs Attitude towards the Government



Although graph (2) generally shows the satisfactory ‘media attitude’ towards the government’s peace efforts, the statistics in the table (1) expose the unsatisfactory function of the press regarding the peace process. In terms of ‘news’ published in the first page in 2002 and 2003, we see the ‘pro’ and ‘neutral’ attitude towards the government in Sinhala-owned newspapers decrease, while the ‘anti’ attitude increases significantly. ‘Pro’ and ‘neutral’ attitudes decrease respectively, from 14 points to 3 and from 13 to 7, while ‘anti’ attitude increases from 1 point to 2. Attention should be paid here to the fact that, the comparison is made between 2002 and 2003, as 2004 was the year of election. This comparison will be maintained generally in the following analysis too.

In terms of ‘editorial column’ and ‘News feature’, the difference in the attitude is clearly seen. In particular, the ‘Pro’ attitude declines from 5 points to 3, while the ‘anti’ attitude increases by 8 in the feature articles. Although the ‘neutral’ attitude increases by 2, the increase in the ‘anti’ attitude by 8 makes a big difference. It should be kept in mind that among the ownership newspapers, ‘Divaina’ and ‘The Island’ newspapers expressed high levels of ‘anti’ attitude towards the government’s peace initiative.

Almost the similar behavior is observed in Tamil-owned newspapers. In terms of ‘News’, the ‘Pro’ attitude decreases from 11 points to 4. There is not much deviation in the ‘anti’ and ‘neutral’ attitudes. Both the ‘Pro’ and ‘neutral’ attitudes in the editorial column decreases

respectively from 3 to 1 and from 5 to 3, and at the same time the ‘anti’ increases by 1. In spite of the increase in ‘Pro’ by 1, the ‘neutral’ attitude does not change in the news feature articles, but the ‘not in favor’ attitude increases by 6.

When analyzing the state-owned newspapers attitude towards the government, the year ‘2004’ should be taken into consideration as the state-owned newspaper’s administration changed from being handled by the government to being handled by the President in that year. She opposed the government’s peace process. It is clear (in the table-1) that the state newspaper exposes a high level ‘Pro’ attitude in all types of the news items in 2002 and 2003. But, the opposite deviation is observed in 2004. Neither the ‘Pro’ nor the neutral attitude towards the government is observed, while the ‘Anti’ attitude is exposed in that year. Here, the ‘fragility’ and the ‘dysfunctional’ of the state media regarding the peace process is seen and ‘credibility’ and the ‘neutrality’ is also questioned.

Table-1. Attitude towards the Government by Ownership, Year & the type of the news item

Sinhala Ownership Newspapers				
Type of the News Item	Year	Pro	Anti	Neutral
News	2002	14	1	13
	2003	3	2	7
	2004			2
Editorial Column	2002	1		5
	2003		1	3
News Feature	2002	5		9
	2003	3	8	10
	2004	1		4
Tamil Ownership Newspapers				
News	2002	11		8
	2003	4		9
	2004	1	1	1
Editorial Column	2002	3		5
	2003	1	1	3
	2004		1	3
News Feature	2002	1	1	3
	2003	2	7	3
	2004		2	1
State owned newspaper				
News	2002	11		2
	2003	5		1
Editorial Column	2002	3		
	2003	3		1
	2004		1	
News Feature	2002	3		
	2003	2		2
	2004		2	

B. Attitude towards the LTTE

Now the analysis moves to examine the attitude expressed towards the ‘LTTE’ regarding the peace process. The statistics in the Graph- 3 shows the deviation among Sinhala and Tamil-owned newspapers in expressing the attitude towards the stance on the LTTE. While the Sinhala-owned newspapers express high level of ‘anti’ attitude towards the LTTE regarding the peace process, Tamil-owned newspapers express ‘0’ amount of ‘anti’ attitude. Instead they express high level ‘Pro’ attitude towards the LTTE. One thing should be mentioned here – that even though Sinhala-owned newspapers do not expose a ‘Pro’ attitude towards the LTTE, they show considerable amount of ‘neutral’ attitude towards LTTE. At the same time, the state newspaper shows significant amount of ‘Pro’ and ‘neutral’ attitudes towards the LTTE. Table-2 sheds further light on this issue for a better understanding.

Graph-3: Ownership of the newspapers vs Attitude towards the LTTE

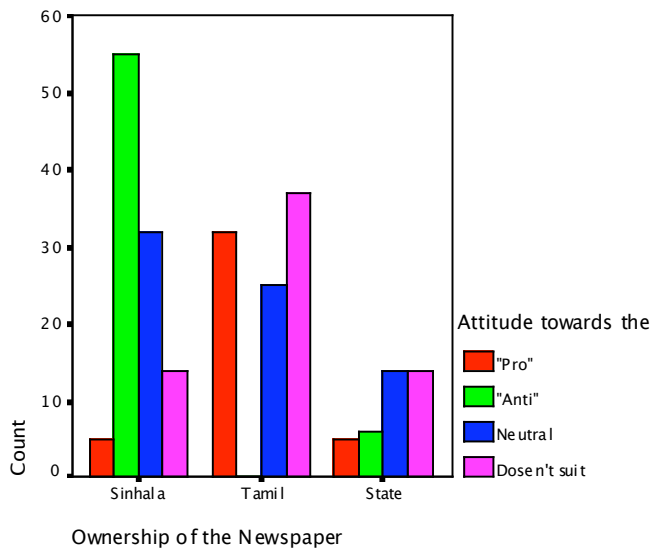


Table-2 shows how the ‘anti’ attitude towards the LTTE increases and how the ‘Pro’ and ‘neutral’ attitude towards the LTTE decreases in the Sinhala-owned newspapers each year. On the other hand, it also shows how the higher level of ‘Pro’ and ‘neutral’ attitude are maintained in the Tamil-owned newspapers every year. The ‘Pro’ attitude towards the LTTE in terms of the ‘editorial column’ in the Sinhala-owned newspapers is observed neither in 2002 nor in 2003, whilst at the same time the ‘anti’ attitude increases from 2 points to 6. Simultaneously, the ‘neutral’ attitude decreases by 4 points. In terms of the news features, the ‘pro’ attitude remains the same in 2002 and 2003, while the ‘anti’ attitude increases from 6 to 17 points. This big difference makes a significant impact in the overall negative attitude

towards the LTTE in the Sinhala-owned newspapers. In Tamil-owned newspapers, the ‘anti’ attitude towards the LTTE is seen neither in the ‘Editorial’ column’ nor the ‘news feature’. While the ‘Pro’ attitude in ‘editorial column’ remains the same, this attitude increases from 1 point to 9 in the ‘feature’ articles.

Table-2. Attitude towards the LTTE by Ownership, Year & the type of the news item

Sinhala ownership Newspapers				
Type of the News Item	Year	Pro	Anti	Neutral
News	2002	3	9	12
	2003		7	5
	2004		3	
Editorial Column	2002		2	4
	2003		6	
News Feature	2002	1	7	4
	2003	1	17	6
	2004		4	1
Tamil Ownership Newspapers				
News	2002	6		4
	2003	9		5
	2004			2
Editorial Column	2002	3		4
	2003	3		2
	2004			2
News Feature	2002	1		2
	2003	9		2
	2004	1		2
State owned Newspapers				
News	2002	2		3
	2003		2	3
Editorial Column	2002	1		2
	2003	1		2
	2004		1	
News Feature	2002	1		1
	2003		1	3
	2004		2	

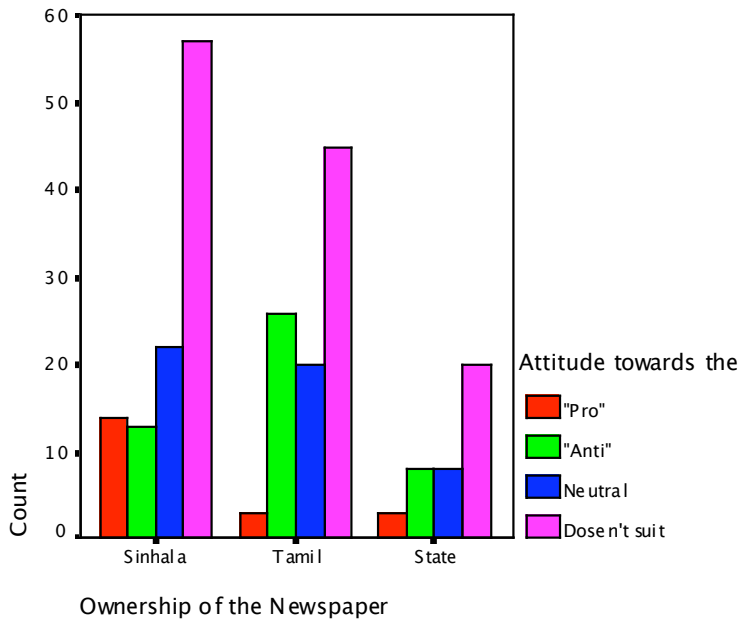
Among the Tamil-owned newspapers, Thinakkural and Virakesari express similar behavior patterns (the pro stand) towards the LTTE. But among the Sinhala-owned newspapers, a considerable difference can be observed in terms of the attitude towards the LTTE. The English language newspaper 'The Island' and the Sinhala language newspaper 'Divaina' reflect almost similar behavior patterns (totally anti stand on LTTE) while 'Lankadeepa' takes a slightly different stand .(a fairly soft or neutral stand on the LTTE, compare with The Island and Divaina).

The analysis we have done so far shows that the role of the Sri Lankan press is divided concerning the peace process, in terms of linguistics, ethnicity and ownership. If the ownership of the newspaper belongs to Sinhala community, that newspaper reflects the interest of the Sinhala people. If the ownership of the newspaper belongs to Tamils, that newspaper reflects the interest of Tamil people. When both Sinhala and English language newspapers (eg: The Island and Divaina) come from the same ownership, they reflect the interest of the ownership and thereby reflect the interest of the ethnicity of the ownership. Since no Tamil language newspapers are published from Sinhala ownership and no Sinhala and English language newspapers are published from Tamil ownership, we can generally say that the Tamil language newspapers or Tamil-owned newspapers reflect the interest of the Tamil people and Sinhala and English language newspapers or Sinhala-owned newspapers reflect the interest of Sinhala people. State-owned newspapers always reflect the interest of the incumbent government, regardless of language. We are able to reconfirm this finding from the following analysis.

C. Attitude towards the Opposition

Graph-4 shows the attitude expressed by the newspapers towards the opposition parties, (President, PA and JVP), who considerably opposed the government's peace process. Here we also see the difference in attitude expression towards the opposition in terms of ownership and the language of the newspapers. Among the Sinhala-owned newspapers, 'The Island', 'Divaina', 'Lankadeepa', and the Tamil-owned newspapers 'Thinakkural' and 'Virakesari' express high level 'anti' attitude towards the opposition parties.

Graph-4: Ownership of the newspapers vs Attitude towards the Opposition



The reason why Sinhala ownership newspapers ‘Lankadeepa’, ‘The Island’ and ‘Divaina’ take a significant ‘Pro’ and ‘neutral’ attitude can be understood in the qualitative analysis, particularly in terms of the explanation of the ‘context processes’ and the ‘mental processes’ in the qualitative analysis.

D. Attitude towards the Facilitators

How the attitude towards the facilitators is varies is portrayed in graph-5. The ‘Pro’ attitude is largely seen among the Tamil-owned newspapers and the government newspaper, ‘Daily News’, while the ‘anti’ attitude is seen among the Sinhala-owned newspapers, especially in ‘The Island’ and ‘Divaina’. This ‘anti’ attitude is particularly shown towards Norway, which plays a mediator role in the peace process. No single news item was found showing an ‘anti’ attitude in the ‘Daily News’ and ‘Virakesari’. At the same time, the Tamil newspaper ‘Thinakural’ shows antagonism towards the Indian government. The reason why some Sinhala-owned newspapers expose antagonism towards ‘Norway’ and some Tamil newspapers expose antagonism towards India can be explained in terms of the interest of their own communities (Table-3). At the time, there were two conflicting political discourses regarding Norway and India. One was that Norway’s impartiality was questioned by the

Opposition parties with regards to their facilitating role. The parties accused Norway of being the ‘Mouth piece of the LTTE’ and acting in favor of the LTTE: this created strong political debate in the country. As far as India was concerned, the Indian government was accused by some Tamil nationalists and the LTTE as acting in favor of the government and trying to oppress the Tamil liberation movement for its own interests. (See, the Island, 9.9.2004, p.1 & Chittaranjan.K, 2004) These two different ‘contexts’ (to be discussed later) played a major role in determining the attitudes towards the facilitators in these newspapers.

Graph-5: Ownership of the newspapers vs Attitude towards the Facilitators

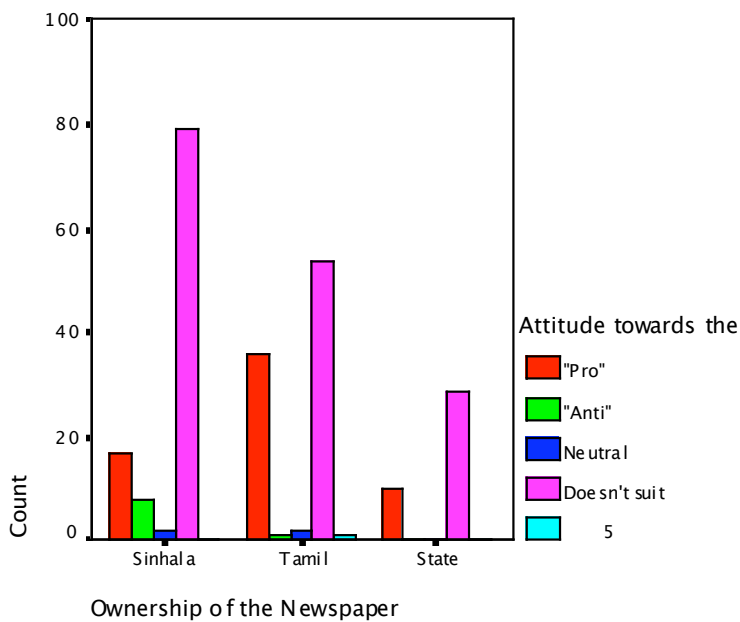


Table-3. Attitude towards the Facilitator vs Newspaper

Facilitator	Type of attitude	Name of the Newspaper			
		Lankadepa	Divaina	Vierakesari	Thinakural
Norway	In favor	2		5	4
	Not in favor	1	3		
India	Not in favor				1
SLMM	In favor			1	4
All	In favor	4		8	7
	Not in favor		1		
	Neutral		1		1

4.1.3. Stance on the Breakthroughs

A. Stance on the ceasefire agreement

Graph-6 shows how the stance on the ceasefire agreement varies among the different ownerships of the newspapers. Except 'The Island' and 'Divaina', all the other newspapers express a 'pro' stance on the ceasefire agreement signed between the government and LTTE. Table-3 shows the very high level 'pro' stance in 2002, in the eve of the ceasefire agreement. Even 'The Island' and 'Divaina' newspapers show a significant 'pro' stance in 2002.

Table-4 reveals the considerable decrease in the 'pro' stance on the ceasefire agreement in 2003 in 'Thinakural', 'Virakeasri' and 'Lankadepa'. But the decrease in the 'pro' stance does not make significant changes to the 'anti' stance seen in these newspapers' (Thinakural, Virakesari and Lankadepa) reportage; instead, it increases the 'critical' stance considerably. In 'The Island' and 'Divaina', the decrease in the 'pro' stance contributes to the increase in the 'anti' stance. The state owned 'Daily News' maintains its 'pro' stance in both years which is understandable in the light of its blind support of the incumbent government's policies. The reason behind this deviation among the newspapers will be further explained in the qualitative analysis under the sub heading of the 'aspects of the ceasefire agreement'.

Graph-6: Ownership of the newspaper vs Stand on the ceasefire agreement

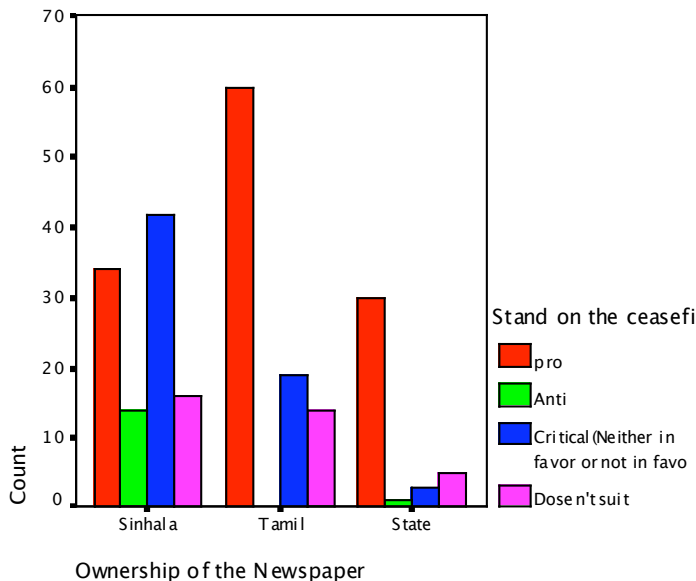


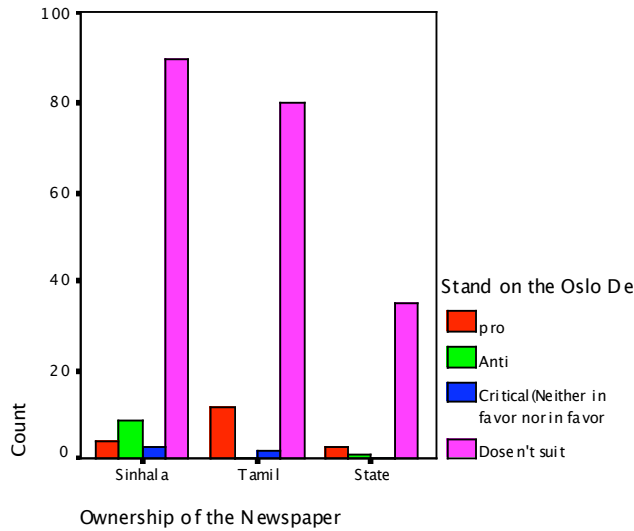
Table-4. Stand on the ceasefire agreement by newspaper and year

Year	Type of attitude	Name of the Newspaper			
		Lankadepa	Divaina	Vierakesari	Thinakural
2002	Pro	6	4	12	15
	Anti		1		
	Critical	1	8		4
2003	Pro	7		10	11
	Anti		7		
	Critical	7	6	9	3
2004	Pro	1		3	1
	Critical				1

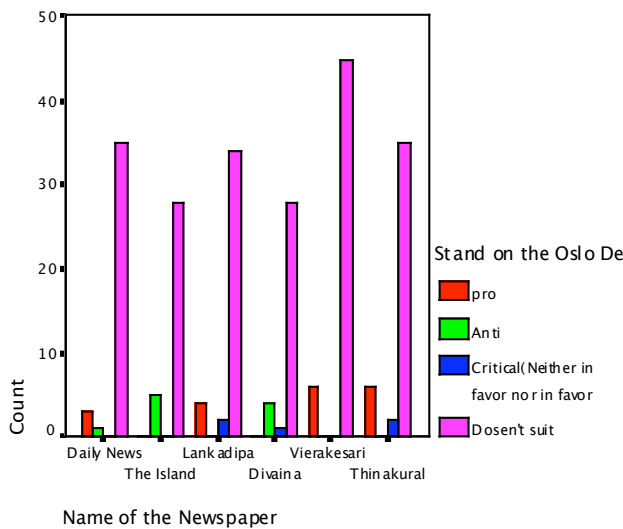
B. Stance on the Oslo Declaration

Except the Sinhala-owned newspapers ‘The Island’ and ‘Divaina’, all the other newspapers show certain amounts of ‘pro’ stance on the Oslo Declaration. Comparatively Tamil-owned newspapers expose higher levels of ‘pro’ stance on the ‘Oslo declaration.’ The anti stance is observed in ‘The Island’ and ‘Divaina’ newspapers (Graphs7&8). The reason why some of the newspapers take ‘pro’ stance and why others take an ‘anti’ or ‘critical’ stance on the peace process can be understood in terms of the qualitative analysis under the subheading of ‘ The right to self-determination of Tamils’.

Graph-7: Ownership of the newspaper vs stand on the Oslo declaration



Graph-8: Name of the newspaper vs stand on the Oslo Declaration



4.2. Discussion on quantitative analysis

This output generated under the sub-heading ‘Attitude towards the LTTE’ is confirmed by the above analysis. That is, that in an ethnically divided society, such as Sri Lanka, newspapers function in terms of their own ethnic bias and also reflect the ownership of their institutions. They compete against each other in order to achieve the conflicting demands of their own communities. This complex dialectic is seen in almost every mainstream newspaper.

In the above analysis, we analyzed number of editorial columns published in the selected period, which ensured the subject matter of the editorials were on the peace process and current issues that were relevant to the situation in the eve of the anniversary of the ceasefire agreement. We saw that, in general, editorial columns were one sided and openly represented the official position of the newspaper in terms of their own community. It is assumed that news articles intended to reflect the journalistic values of impartiality and independent neutral reporting to a higher degree. However, in reality, what we saw from the analysis was how the Sri Lankan press simply ignores this ideal concept of ‘professional journalism’.

In the case of Sri Lanka, this ideal concept is more or less a kind of promise than a reality. It is an ideal challenge for journalist in Sri Lanka, however, in most circumstances journalists do not fulfill this task and settle to fall into the stereotypes of ethnic polarization.

Finding-2- The Sri Lankan press functions in terms of its own ethnic bias and also reflects the ownership of the institution.

This finding proves our second hypothesis and shows the lack of shared media culture in Sri Lanka, which we discussed in the second chapter. In Wolfsfeld’s explanation,

” The notion of shared media refers to the extent to which antagonists engaged in a peace process receive their news from the same news organs. The extent of shared media that can reach both sides of the conflict. The greater the extent of shared media the more likely news media will play a constructive role in role in a peace process”. (Wolfsfeld, 2001(b), p. 26-27)

Here we are able to generate another finding (which will be further proved later) by integrating the second finding and the ‘shared media ‘concept.

Finding-3- As Sri Lankan press lacks the shared media culture, it is likely to play a destructive role in the peace process.

Here we further understand that how the dependent vectors (ex: ownership and ethnicity) ~~are~~ varied over time and how they affect the role of the press in the peace process.

CHAPTER-5

5. Qualitative Analysis

Now, the study moves to the next stage of the analysis through CDA to examine the discourse of the peace process in more qualitative detail. From the quantitative analysis, we have clearly seen the division of the media, especially in terms of ownership and language, over the peace process. Although several issues relating to the peace process were identified in the quantitative analysis, two further topics have been chosen here for the qualitative analysis. The first is 'aspects of the ceasefire agreement' and under this topic, two further sub-topics are discussed here. The second topic is, 'the right to self-determination of Tamils'.

Below are the topics and subtopics for the analysis

1. Aspects of the ceasefire agreement.
 - a. Danger for the 'territorial integrity' of Sri Lanka. (Security concerns).
 - b. Traitors of the Nation.
2. Right to self-determination of Tamils.

The following 19 feature articles were put under the microscope in order to examine the diagnoses identified in the quantitative analysis further. These articles were selected according to the above-mentioned topics.

The Island

1. Equanimity the best response, 23-02-2002
2. The worrying aspects of MOU, 25-02-2002
3. The many faces of Peace, 22-02-2003
4. Icing the Invader's designs, 23-02-2003
5. Time-out, truce, Ceasefire. Compende? 23-02-2003
6. UNF- Tiger Agreement, 24-02-2003

Daily News

1. Emerging from the abyss of darkness, 24-02-2002
2. Redesigning the peace process, 23-02-2003

3. Looking beyond one year of ceasefire, 22-02-2003
4. The great betrayal, 22 -02- 2004

Divaina

1. Wishing peace is not peace, 25-02-2003
2. Invaders rights and Inheritants duties, 23-02-2003
3. July 4th and February 4th, 23-02-2003
4. 704 Days for ceasefire. Prabakaran 1046, not out, 22-02-2004

Lankadeepa

1. Notes on one year ceasefire agreement, 23-02-2003
2. The way of the M.O.U and the Arguments, 22-02-2003

Virakesari

1. Is the Negotiation going to provide the solution or the legitimization of the war? 23-02-2003
2. Pessimistic elements against the MOU should be cleared, 23-02-2003

Thinakural

1. The political forces that dominate the Sinhala society do not ready to talk about Constitutional reform to bring the lasting solution, 24-02-2004
2. The danger of war on Tamils in view of the JVP's hard line stands, 25-02-2004
3. Has the one year of completion the ceasefire satisfied the expectations? 23-02-2003
4. Ceasefire agreement and the activities of the two sides, 24-02-2002
5. Self-determination and the national problem of Sri Lanka, 23-02-2002

5.1. Aspects of the ceasefire agreement

As we have seen earlier, the press coverage in terms of the aspects of the ceasefire agreement can be classified into three categories: 'Pro', 'Anti' and 'Critical'. Since this study analyses the newspapers published consecutively for three days from the date of the ceasefire agreement (i.e.: 22-25 February) over the three years (2002-2005), most of the news feature

articles discuss both the negative and positive aspects of the agreement. However, seven articles, specifically talk about the aspects of the ceasefire

A. The ‘Pro’ stance on the ceasefire agreement and expression of the ‘peace discourse’

When we look at the semantics of these news features, it is clear that most of the articles published in the *The Daily News*, *Thinakural*, *Virakesari*, and *Lankadepa* reflect a generally ‘Pro’ or positive stand towards the ceasefire agreement.

In the article “Ceasefire agreement and the activities of both sides” published two days after the agreement (24-02-2002) in the Tamil ownership newspaper *Thinakural*, the author welcomes the agreement on behalf of all communities living in Sri Lanka. He writes, “Both sides should use this opportunity to bring lasting peace in this country is the big expectation of all the people, who suffered a lot in the past due to the war.” He closely analyses the instructions given to both the sides in the agreement saying, “Although the instructions are very clear, its implementation relies on both sides’ commitment.”

A further article published on the same date in *The Daily News* “Emerging from the abyss of darkness” is another good example on this. The author creates hope among the readers by saying, “The congratulations and adulations from the major players in the world community, within hours of the signing of documents augur well for the further consolidation and enforcement of peace. International observers will find it a rewarding exercise if conditions are adhered to and skirmishes and pitfalls are avoided.” However, the author is reluctant to pin too much hope on the lasting solution. He writes, “A sudden change of heart and cooling of climes and minds would be a miracle. But any aberrations should not open the vents for a return to arms.”

The explanation of ‘context’ described by Van Dijk (2001, pp.17-18) can be used to explain this media discourse expressed in these two articles. Van Dijk says,

“People not only form mental models of the events they talk about, but also of the events they participate in, including the communicative event of which their ongoing discourse is an inherent part. That is, people subjectively represent the social situation in which they now verbally participate. These subjective mental representations of the communicative event and the current social situation as it constrains current discourse will be called context models.”

Both the articles were written in this context. When the agreement was signed there was a big celebration in the country and the people were really encouraged by the statements issued by the international community and the politicians. In particular, the statement issued by the Norwegians foreign Minister that “*A first step, an extremely important first step. Two parties will ‘commit themselves restoring normality for all the inhabitants of Sri Lanka’*” was repeated by other nations and echoed in the media. This is the ‘context’ that certainly influenced the writers of the above-described articles and contributed to this peace discourse-oriented ‘media discourse’. This is media practice influenced by the actors and actor roles. As we defined in the second chapter (in summary) this ‘context’ – an independent vector – heavily influences media practice.

Indeed, ‘peace discourse’ arises from the application of peace journalism. According to the theory of peace journalism, the phenomenon generally operates in an artificial environment. That is, the basic principle of peace journalism is based on the ‘expected outcome’ and it functions behind a hidden agenda. (Spurk.C, 2002, p.16) If we look at the newspapers, *The Daily News* and *Thinakural*, which published the above-described articles, they indeed operated from behind a hidden agenda, which promoted peace building in the of the ceasefire agreement. The reason being that, *The Daily News* is controlled by the government and always blindly supports the incumbent government’s policies .Therefore it is obvious that *The Daily News* operated behind the agenda of the government, which was to promote its peace efforts.

On the other hand, the Tamil owned newspaper *Thinakural* which represents the Tamil community, rather than existing under the control of the government, had to fall in with the style of peace journalism, because of its weaker position. This weaker position as a newspaper stemmed from, its position, like *Virakesari*, as representative of a war-weary people who in fact needed peace at that time.

But one can expect this peace-oriented phenomenon only for a short period because of the changes in the ‘context’ over time. We can test this prediction by analyzing some articles published in the newspapers after a year of the completion of the ceasefire agreement.

The article titled “Redesigning the peace process” published on 23 February 2003 in *The Daily News* analyses the merits and de-merits in a positive manner. Author starts the article by saying that, “*The first anniversary of the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement is an opportunity to collectively engage in reflecting on what challenges lie ahead to bring about a negotiated solution to the civil war.*”

He emphasizes the need to re-design the ceasefire agreement to overcome the challenges facing the country to prevent the war. Many elements of peace discourse that can be cited from this article.

On 22 February 2003, *The Daily News* published another article with the purpose of promoting peace, entitled “Looking beyond one year of ceasefire”. In this article too, the author describes the tangible merits brought by the ceasefire agreement by saying, “*One year of ceasefire has transformed the face of the country. The war that had seemingly taken on a life of its own is no more. The pitched battles that saw a thousand men perish in a single day have ended. The security barriers and watchful personnel manning them are much reduced in numbers.*”

The author uses his expertise in conflict resolution to compare the resolution approaches, which were applied by the government in its earlier peace efforts. He tries to frame the present peace effort as an ‘appropriate one’, and gives hope to the people.

The following excerpts from these two articles published in *The Daily News* are compared here with the checklist of the ‘peace discourse’ described in the method chapter.

<p>Win-win Orientation</p>	<p>“ <i>The premise upon which the Ceasefire Agreement is based is the recognition that both sides have reached military parity</i>” (<i>Daily News 23-02-2003</i>)</p> <p>“ <i>For the first time since Sri Lanka obtained independence in 1948 there will be an opportunity for a negotiated political solution to the ethnic conflict in which the interests of all the communities are met, rather than the interests</i></p>
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	<i>of only the majority community” (Daily news-22-02-2003)</i>
Emphasis on all sides	<i>“ What is required is to move away from a two party negotiations process to a multi party stakeholder dialogue and work towards building a comprehensive peace building strategy.”(Daily News 23-02-2003)</i>
Evaluation rights and intentions	<i>“ The premise upon which the Ceasefire Agreement is based is the recognition that both sides have reached military parity. The LTTE is not a defeated army. It controls territory.”</i>
Emphasis on cooperative behavior	<i>“ Among the breakthroughs in the peace process has been the agreement to explore a framework of federal governance for the country. But federalism is not the only breakthrough in the course of the year long peace process.” (The Daily News 22-02-2003)</i>
Incentives for social identification	<i>“ The role of Norway has been a key factor in the facilitation process. The most important consideration is that Norway has won the trust of both parties to the conflict.” “Scandinavian Monitors have demonstrated their neutrality” (The Daily News 23-02-2003)</i>
Motivation logic	<p><i>“ The principles that guide negotiations must be singularly focused on producing win-win solutions. No other option is acceptable.” (The Daily News 23-02-2003)</i></p> <p><i>“ Return to war, which hardly any Sri Lankan will want.”</i></p> <p><i>“ The war that had seemingly taken on a life of its own is no more.” (Daily News 22-02-2003)</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Kempf. W, 1999, p.17)</i></p>

These excerpts are evidence of peace discourse in these two articles. Authors write in a way that aims for a resolution as in the cooperative process to which the involved parties have committed. There is no chance for anybody to lose: it is a win-win situation. It is important to note here that the author emphasizes the necessity for all sides’ involvement for a successful

negotiation. As McGoldrick describes, this is a key to a co-operative or collaborative approach to the conflict. (McGoldrick, 2002, p.6)

By stating, the “Ceasefire agreement is based on the recognition that both sides have reached military parity and LTTE is a defeated army” the author makes a realistic assessment of ‘our’ actions (our recognition) in a cooperative manner. It should be mentioned that the words ‘LTTE terrorist organisation’ were not used here, rather, ‘LTTE army’. Authors interpret the role of the third party as mediating (win-win) rather than executing pressure. This is actually an incentive for social interaction (win-lose). (Kempf, 1999, p.8).

“Return to war, which hardly any Sri Lankan will want” and “The war that had seemingly taken on a life of its own is no more”, is the stimulation of emotional involvement of the author. This is a constructive way of writing, ‘we’ experience, and the emphasis on the price of victory promotes ‘our’ willingness for peace (Kempf, 1999, p.8).

As predicted, in the year 2003 too, the state owned newspaper *The Daily News* more or less operated within the peace discourse, even though the contexts changed significantly: this has been proved by the quantitative analysis. The reason behind this is, as we have already stated, ‘the hidden agenda’ of promoting peace. This will be further clarified when we analyze the article published in 2004 in the same paper – but at a time when it was controlled by the Executive President Chandirika Bandaranayke, who was totally against the peace process. In 2004, the Daily News *attacked* the peace efforts initiated by the government by condemning it as ‘the great betrayal of the nation’. The reason for this is clear: the management of this newspaper had changed.

B. The ‘Critical’ stance on the ceasefire agreement and the expression of both war and peace discourse

During the one-year period following the start of the peace process numerous changes occurred, impacting on the context models. The government and the LTTE engaged in several rounds of peace talks abroad and in Oslo, December 2002, the government and the LTTE declared that they had found a lasting solution within the principle of internal self-

determination. This solution would reflect the areas of historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking people, based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka. However, this agreement was met with opposition by many Sinhala political parties: the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (of President Chandrika Kumaratunga), Peoples' Liberation Front (or JVP), Sinhala Urumaya and Sri Lanka's powerful Buddhist clergy organizations. Protest marches were organized to highlight, in Sinhala extreme nationalists' terminology, the so-called "danger" to the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. Apart from the 'political panic' in the south, there was tension building between the government and the LTTE regarding the removal of the high security zones in Tamil areas. Several times, armed forces and LTTE cadres clashed and this was echoed by further sparring throughout the country between ethnic groups.

It is in this context that we look at the article published in the Tamil newspaper *Thinakural* on 23 February 2003, titled "Has the one year of completion the ceasefire satisfied the expectations?" The author raises a question and strongly blames the government and the armed forces for not following the ceasefire agreement. "*The Sri Lanka armed forces should have vacated all occupied houses, schools, religious places of worship and other buildings that are outside the restricted areas within the stipulated time frame in the agreement. The program in the agreement has not been honored yet,*" he says.

Another article published in the same paper on the same day titled, "Ceasefire agreement in second year" critically assesses the one-year completion of the agreement with the help of the comments from both government and the LTTE. Author highlights the phrases from the Prime Minister that "*It will take long time to find the lasting solution*" and from the Political chief of the LTTE that, "*We are not in a position to celebrate the first year of completion of the ceasefire.*"

Before going into the theoretical discussion on these excerpts from the articles, it is appropriate to consider the semantics of two further articles published in the other Tamil newspaper *Virakesari*. An article published on 23 February 2003, titled "Is the Negotiation going to provide the solution or the legitimization of the war?" discusses the earlier efforts to bring peace and especially focuses on the dishonesty of the Sinhala governments. The author

warns that, if the government does not fulfill its promises, it would definitely pave the way for war. *“What we need is the constructive measures of the government to stop the violation of the ceasefire agreement, which is often committed by the government forces. We don’t want duplicate promises, like in the past.”*

The article “Pessimistic elements against the MOU should be cleared,” appeared in the same newspaper on the same day also strongly blames the government armed forces for violating the ceasefire agreement. *“Restriction of the movements of LTTE, infiltration of army spies in to the LTTE controlled areas, attacks on civilians by government forces and high secure zones of the forces are the present’s threats to the ceasefire,”* the author writes. He reminds the actions of previous governments by mentioning that *“former president planed to destroy the LTTE in the name of peace effort. But his calculation failed. War resumed again.”* However he ends the story by saying, *“Any way, the ceasefire has saved hundreds of lives and millions of dollars .It should be implemented continuously and the elements against this agreement should be removed”*.

These four articles published in both *Thinakural* and *Virakesari* in 2003; clearly show the deviation in attitude towards the ceasefire agreement from 2002. This difference in the attitude can be clearly observed in the above graph 6 and Table 4. As we have already stated, changes in the ‘contexts’ could be one of the reasons for this deviation. As described by Van Dijk (2001, p.18), *“Context models are not ‘out there’, but ‘in here’: They are mental constructs of participants; they are individually variable interpretations of the ongoing social situation. Thus, they may be biased, feature personal opinions, and for these reasons also embody the opinions of the participants as members of group.”* We will be able to further understand this explanation by analyzing the articles, which expressed antagonism towards the ceasefire agreement. However, before that it is important to examine the ‘style of discourse’ expressed in these articles described above.

Even though these articles do not express anti-peace feeling, some characteristics of war-discourse can be identified. Particularly in the article published in *Thinakural* (23-02-2003) titled “Has the one year of completion of the ceasefire satisfied the expectations?” the author

only focuses on the violations by the government's forces against the ceasefire and blames the forces for not obeying the agreement. This is merely a condemnation of 'their' behavior and the justification of 'our' actions and underlining of 'our' correctness. Author tries to humanize 'our' soldiers (LTTE) and de-humanizes 'their' soldiers (Government forces). The other article titled "Ceasefire agreement in second year" also humanizes 'our' (LTTE) political and military leaders and de-humanizes 'their' (government) political and military leaders. These are some of the main features of the escalation-oriented coverage observed in these articles (Kempf, 1999, p.8). On the other hand some peace discourse characteristics, such as highlighting the price of victory, the damage to the economy, exploration of perspectives for peace and reconciliation – especially the role of the third parties as interpreted as mediating rather than executing pressure – are also generally observed in these four articles. The fact is, although these newspapers critically discussed the aspects of the one-year completion of the agreement, there is no doubt that they strongly supported the ceasefire in 2003. However, the deviation of their attitudes from 2002 to 2003 should be kept in mind.

In spite of the fact that Tamil-owned newspapers and the Sinhala-owned newspaper, *Lankadeepa*, supported the ceasefire agreement in 2003, the articles published in these newspapers *also* comprise considerable 'war discourse'. For instance, the article published in *Lankadeepa* on February 23, 2003, "The way of the MOU and the Arguments", analyses the success and failure of the ceasefire agreement, but raises certain amount of scepticism when the author says, "*War is a part of politics. Ceasefire is also a part of politics. Solution for this problem is also a part of politics. So, we have to measure this with the political measurer. This problem has been a wound of a beggar, because U.N.P and P.A have taken this for their beneficiary, not for the people. Peace is cheap, if it is how much.*" He criticizes not only the politicians but also the LTTE saying, "*There are so many suspicions in south regarding LTTE's activities that, whether they really work for peace or not.*" The other article published in *Lankadeepa*, "Notes on one year ceasefire agreement", also examines the negative and positive aspects of the agreement in a manner that stimulates the public. "*After one year period it seems that, the peace process peace process is stable. There could be some conflicts and problems, but the risk has been minimized. It is a political success,*" the author writes.

In addition to this, emotional involvement (sensationalism) also can be observed in these articles as well as the expression of 'war discourse'. One example is the *Virakesari* article "Pessimistic elements against the MOU should be cleared" discussed earlier. One important factor that influences the writer here is, 'cognitive processes' (mental processes). That is, "*Representations in episodic memory and may simply be identified with people's experiences. They are representations of the specific acts/events people participate in, witness or hear/read about*" (Van Dijk, 2001, p.16). As we recall from chapter two, media has the ability to fly over the boundaries of period to recall events, places and times. Even though certain events may have happened in the past and are old, the media can re-activate personal recollection and the institutional collective memory (Kandiah, T, 2001, p.26). This explains why the author here touches on several happenings and actors in the past and thereby activates the readers' episodic memory. Van Dijk believes social cognition and the mental models act as mediators between discourse and the society.

One of the possible reasons for the mixture of 'war-discourse' and 'peace-discourse' in these articles could be 'discursive order'. That is, different types of discourses consisting of elements opposing each other being brought together. Borrowing the idea from Norman Fairclough, Stig A. Nohrstedt describes the discursive order as where, "*Various discourses are usually mixed and interact with each other. Although any discourse may have a unique institutional base, e.g. media discourses, language use is often transferred from one discourse to another. In the analysis of discursive orders, attention is particularly focused on what combinations of discourses are present in the actual situation and their societal importance*" (Nohrstedt, 2004, p.3). To summarize, this section has highlighted the relationship between the 'context processes' and 'mental processes' (independent vectors) and how these processes can help to create, and influence, the 'discursive order'

C. The 'Anti' stance on the ceasefire agreement and the expression of 'war discourse'

With the above-described theoretical background, let's now analyze the articles published in the Sinhala owned newspapers (*The Island* and *Divaina*) to assess the picture of the ceasefire discourse.

In the quantitative analysis we saw that *The Island* and the *Divaina* strongly criticized the agreement and expressed ‘anti’ feeling towards the ceasefire agreement. If we look at the two articles published in *The Island* in 2002, the articles obviously raise concern over the agreement. “The worrying aspects of MOU” published in *The Island* on 25 February 2002, appeared only four days after the agreement, but the article already raises concern that the ceasefire agreement elevates the LTTE to an ‘equal’ status with the government. It says, “*The fact is that a government enters into a MOU regarding a ceasefire with a terrorist group. Prabhakaran (the LTTE leader) has won for himself this position because of the weakness of those who opposed him. And there is nothing to do about it but to chew our backsides in frustration. Given the way all terrorists’ organizations negotiate, the LTTE may try to obtain Eelam (separate state) through the negotiations.*”

The other article, “The MOU: Equanimity the best response”, published in the same newspaper on 23 February 2002, (a day after the agreement) also portrays animosity towards the LTTE and a certain amount of scepticism towards the agreement. The writer declares that, “*The attitude towards this latest agreement would be equanimity - to be neither elated nor depressed but to regard the agreement with bland passivity. If it succeeds we celebrate, if it does not we go back to square one and begin all over again.*” He further says, “*We are not signing an agreement with another sovereign state but with a terrorist group. International environment is not conducive any longer for terrorism and that the LTTE has chosen to this diplomatic course of action because of the change in the situation.*” When comparing these two articles with the pieces in the state-owned newspaper, *The Daily News*, and the Tamil-owned newspaper, *Thinakural*, (both published in 2002) much increased ‘war-discourse’ can be observed.

We discussed earlier how the ‘context’ influenced the Tamil newspaper *Thinakkural* to operate within the ‘peace discourse’ and how *The Daily News* was directed by the state administration to also operate within the ‘peace discourse’. One thing is clear, these two influence factors (independent vectors) which controlled *The Daily News* and *Thinakural* in the eve of the ceasefire agreement failed to direct the Sinhala-owned newspaper, *The Island*,

in the same direction. This is where the ‘discursive order’, that is, the various discourses which conflict with each other to achieve their targeted goals, makes a difference. A combination of the ‘counter context’ created by the opposition parties (actors in the political discourse), who expressed serious concerns about the agreement during that period, and the ‘constituency factor’, respective of the readership of the newspaper, directed the attitude of *The Island* towards ‘anti-peace’ or ‘war-discourse’.

The excerpts from the articles clearly expose the war-discourse elements. By labeling the LTTE as a ‘terrorist group’, the authors emphasize antagonism towards the other side. The agreement is interpreted (“*given the way all terrorists’ organizations negotiate, the LTTE may try to obtain Eelam (separate state) through the negotiations*”) as ‘giving in’ (zero-sum orientation). Antagonism denies ‘their’ rights and demonises of ‘their’ intentions. In addition to this, possibilities for cooperation are denied and cooperation between the conflicting parties is not taken seriously. Instead of giving an un-biased assessment of ‘their’ intentions and behavior that reduces the threat, the authors focus on ‘their’ viciousness and dangerousness. (E.g. “*Prabakaran, the LTTE leader has won for himself this position because of the weakness of those who opposed him. And there is nothing to do about it but to chew our backsides in frustration*” (25-02-2002). “*International environment is not conducive any longer for terrorism and that the LTTE has chosen to this diplomatic course of action because of the change in the situation*” (23-02-2003).)

5.1.1 The Danger to the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka (security concern or fear factor)

In the article “The worrying aspects of MOU” (The Island, 25-02-2002), the author addresses the issue of the LTTE and their threat to Sri Lanka’s territorial integrity. The author warns that, “*The Sri Lankan armed forces should be fully prepared even if the LTTE opts out the ceasefire agreement. There will be no excuse for lapses on the part of the government when the ceasefire fails. The LTTE missed winning their Eelam (separate state) in the early part of 2000 only by a whisker. If they had defeated the Sri Lankan Army in a one to one battle, they would have declared independence from Sri Lanka and the international community would have accepted it*”. He concludes the article by saying that, “*This ceasefire in my view will last*

only until the LTTE feels itself strong enough to make the final attempt to achieve Eelam (separate state). Sri Lankan armed forces also have this opportunity. If they do not do so, that is at their own peril. This is a matter of common sense". Here we should concentrate on two things: firstly, the 'mental processes' in the context of ideology, and secondly the 'security concern' or the 'fear factor'.

When we look at the 'mental processes' in the context of ideologies, it emerges that ideologies have a significant role to play in politics. Van Dijk (2004) calls them 'political ideologies'. Political discourse is conceptualized in terms of its context structures. Political discourse often features the well-known political pronoun 'we'. Here, the usage of the pronoun 'we' is related to the specific political situation. This is done by cognitive process (mental processes). These mental models are called 'contexts' (independent vectors). They influence the discourse production and comprehension (Van Dijk, 2004).

In the above two articles the 'war discourse' was framed through the 'context' which was created by the opposition parties and the Sinhala Nationalist organizations (On the day of the ceasefire agreement these parties and the organizations blasted the government for entering into a formal indefinite ceasefire agreement with, what they called terrorists). While functioning within the ongoing 'political discourse', the authors travel through the 'cognitive processes' to the past and touch on the happenings and the participants. In this shared background, cultural environment and expectations, the raw material is processed discursively, and the story is produced in a specific way, negotiated between the writer and the reader (Kandiah, 2001, p.27). Therefore in the article "The worrying aspects of MOU", the author travels back to the year 2000 and writes, "*The LTTE missed winning their Eelam (separate state) in the early part of 2000 only by a whisker. If they had defeated the Sri Lankan Army in a one to one battle, they would have declared independence from Sri Lanka and the international community would have accepted it*". In the article "The MOU: Equanimity the best response" the author recalls various bitter past incidents to show the uncertainty of the agreement. For example: "*The way they executed the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi for transgressions against their Elam is a case in point.*"

As far as the 'fear factor' is concerned in this article, by labeling the LTTE as 'terrorist' and directly saying, "*This ceasefire in my view will last only until the LTTE feels itself strong enough to make the final attempt to achieve Eelam (separate state). Sri Lankan armed forces also have this opportunity. If they do not do so, that is at their own peril. This is a matter of common sense,*" the author tries to alarm the nation with regard to the danger to the 'sovereignty' and the 'territorial integrity' of the country. Using the 'fear factor' in the media in this way can have a huge impact on the society concerned. The creation of a 'war discourse' is more often about fear: the feeling the authors are trying to provoke is 'fear'.

There is a good example in the Second World War for this. When the Russian army tried to enter Berlin, Nazi propaganda effectively used the 'fear factor' to convince the people to fight against the Russians. Even young boys and old women participated in the battle. Even though they all did not 'hate' Russians, they feared for their lives. The situation in America was similar after the September 11 attack. A fear has been created among Americans of 'others', signified by the question: "What will they do, if we don't strike first?" Even though the American people do not necessarily hate certain countries or people, the media in America wittingly or unwittingly have played in to this and led the people to develop this security concern (Hieber.L, 2003, p.10).

In this context, these two newspapers (*The Island* and *Divaina*) took the same hard-line stance in 2003, like in 2002, (more or less 'war discourse') on the ceasefire agreement, as the political discourse became more complicated and tight.

An article appeared in *Divaina* on 22 February 2003 headlined, "704 Days for ceasefire: Prabakaran 1046, not out". The author wrote the article using the statistics of the ceasefire violations, pointing out that, "*Now, we complete 704 days to tomorrow. During the period of 22-02-2002 to 15-03-2002 254 complains were registered with SLMM against the Tigers about abductions, ransom, building new bunkers, building new camps and illegal access to the state controlled area etc. When it comes to 2003, it has increased. During the one year period there are 1046 complains have been made against the Tigers by the security forces.*" This is merely a war discourse style of writing, focusing 'their' mistakes and de-humanizing

'their' soldiers. On 25 February 2003, the same newspaper published another article "Wishing peace is not peace", which says "*Wishing peace is becoming a major political theme in this country today and depending on this war they are taking the peace as a main slogan to come to power. It is a usual tradition of politics in this country.*" The author directly attacks the government's peace initiatives as 'tactics of grab-hold power'.

By looking at the headlines and the main semantics of the articles only, we are able to see the expression of 'war discourse' in *Divaina* and *The Island* in 2003. Van Dijk claims that the headlines and the lead paragraph express the most important information of the cognitive model of journalism, that is, how they perceive and construct the news event (Van Dijk, 1998, p.248).

Followings are some of the headlines of the articles that appeared in the *The Island*. "The many faces of Peace" (22-02-2003), "LTTE conspicuously silent as country celebrates ceasefire anniversary" (23-02-2003), "Time-out, truce, Ceasefire. Comprende?" (23-02-2003), "UNF-Tiger Agreement" (24-02-2003).

The article "The many faces of Peace" starts with, "*Beneath the veil of talks in foreign capitals relating to subjects ranging from human rights, rehabilitation, reconstruction to federalism with the right of self determination, lurks the true face of the LTTE with its propensity for criminal acts such as abducting children, extortion, gun running and a host of offences that are unacceptable for an entity seeking peace. UNICEF should take full responsibility for not unveiling the true face of the LTTE in respect of child recruitments.*" Here the author particularly uses UNICEF's statement regarding the child recruitment of LTTE to de-humanize the organisation. Now, it is appropriate to compare the article (discussed earlier) published in *The Daily News* in (23-02-2003) to understand the different 'discourse practices' of the different writers in different contexts models and mental models.

"*The engagement of UNICEF with regards to child soldiers and efforts to sign a protocol on this subject with LTTE is a significant achievement. The decision of the Human Rights Community to engage with the LTTE has already produced some interesting results*". This is

the excerpt from *The Daily News* regarding child soldiers. In this article the writer carefully handles this matter by emphasizing on cooperative behavior and an un-biased assessment of ‘their’ behavior. The role of the UNICEF is interpreted as ‘successful’ rather than ‘failure’. On the other hand, *The Island* article partially condemns ‘their’ (LTTE) behavior. Here the cooperation between the involved parties is not taken seriously. Although they have used the same issues, as raised by UNICEF, both writers have discursively produced two differently oriented (war-oriented and peace-oriented) stories.

In the article “LTTE conspicuously silent as country celebrates ceasefire anniversary”, the author points out that, “*The armed forces, for their part have become dangerously lax in their preparedness. In operational terms, the Sri Lanka Army is almost completely unprepared for a new conflict. In contrast, the LTTE has completed its planning for any attack, and it is most likely that, unlike on previous occasions, the initial wave of attacks would mainly be carried out by Black Tigers targeting economic installations in and around Colombo and key political leaders*”. This is again an attempt to create ‘fear’ among the public to reach some expected outcome. Another article “UNF-Tiger Agreement” too reflects the same security concerns of the Sinhalese. The author writes, “*The need for recruitment training, modernizing of our forces have been deliberately neglected in order to shift the military balance in favor of Tigers. Simultaneously everything possible has been done to strengthen and beef up the terrorist army. On no less than 12 times the terrorists have brought shiploads of weapons to replenish their armories*”. The author not only creates ‘fear’ among the public, but also attacks the government for being flexible with the LTTE. He also perceives the ‘ceasefire agreement’ as a ‘UNF-Tiger Agreement’.

The article headlined, “Time-out, truce, Ceasefire. Compende?” is built by negatively combining the comments of the opposition, diplomats and officials concerning the peace process. One official emphasizes, “*The LTTE knows that the government is not negotiating from a position of strength as there is no resource to military force to back up the negotiating effort*”. One diplomat says, “*Our elected government has no credible means to enforce its sovereignty over a totality of the territorial limits of the entity called Sri Lanka*”. As said by Allan, here the story is negotiated by the writer and the reader at the level of signification and

representation the basis of shared background, cultural background and expectation (Kandiah, 2001, p.27). In addition to this, here we see the reflection of high-level sensationalism in these articles. How the greater level of sensationalism plays destructive role in the peace process will be explained at the end of this chapter.

5.1.2. Traitors of the Nation

Often highlighted in the newspapers, is the phenomena of ‘traitors of the nation’. Let’s first look at the article published in *The Daily News* on 22 February 2004, headlined, “The great betrayal”. Here, the author starts the story by saying, “*What you are about to read is another one of the many stories in which (Prime Minister) Ranil Wickremesinghe's UNF government betrayed the people. Of course, the devious subterfuges implemented arbitrarily without telling the people were done in the name of peace. Though Ranil claimed to have obtained a mandate, or a social contract, from the people at the last elections in December 2001 what he implemented was his own unauthorized secret contract with the LTTE*”. One can easily understand the ‘opposite deviation’ of this newspaper’s stance on the government’s peace initiatives by comparing their articles in 2002 and 2003. Bearing in mind that this newspaper is totally owned by the state, explains why it supinely accepts the dominant political paradigm: when the state is at war, it supports the war without any question, when the state is at peace, it uncritically endorses the peace initiatives of the incumbent government. In 2002 and 2003 *The Daily News* was controlled by the Ranil Wickremesinghe’s government, which signed the ceasefire agreement with and held negotiations with the LTTE, thereby the newspaper blindly and uncritically endorsed the peace initiatives. We have already seen in the articles published in 2002 and 2003 how *The Daily News* exposed ‘peace discourse’ in order to promote peace.

However, the political control of *The Daily News* changed on 7 November 2003, when the executive president, who opposed the government’s peace initiatives, took over the control of the state owned media. (Sambandan.V.S, 2003) This article “The great betrayal” published on 22 February 2002 is good evidence of how the media may be used as a tool to achieve target goals by applying the political power or ownership power.

The same newspaper (*Daily News*) which in 2002 and 2003 justified Ranil Wickremesinghe's decision to lift the ban on LTTE, helped the negotiation to be successful and produced tangible benefits in the peace process – altered its stance in 2004, saying, "*Ranil took upon himself to give the LTTE respectability and recognition as liberation fighters in the international community by requesting them to lift the ban on the LTTE. Though Ranil claimed to have obtained a mandate, or a social contract, from the people at the last elections in December 2001 what he implemented was his own unauthorized secret contract with the LTTE.*"

The article that appeared in *Divaina* on 23 February 2003, "July 4th and February 4th" has the following to say about betrayers, "*If we compare our country with Thailand and Cambodia, one thing is very clear that, we have patriotic people neither in the government nor in the opposition. The people, who (government's politicians) betrayed their own country to the colonizers (Tamils), should be taught 'patriotism'.*" The *Island* article, "UNF-Tiger Agreement" states, "*It is indeed sad that several years of indefatigable efforts made by 'our' people to get the LTTE proscribed by the international community, have been reversed irrevocably by these traitors in such a short time.*" It blames not only the government politicians, but also the facilitators of the negotiation saying, "*The Norwegian peace monitors also act in cahoots with the Tigers and therefore turn a Nelsonian eye.*"

Here the third party trying to mediate in the conflict is mistrusted in the media, jeopardizing the people's perception of them. By declaring the negotiators as 'traitors', the agreement is interpreted as 'giving in' and antagonism is painted on the politicians. Apart from the writer's own background, the 'context' created by the opposition parties can be stated as one of the reasons for this type of story production. Several statements were issued against the government by the JVP and other nationalist organizations. They declared that, the Prime Minister and his government should be considered as 'traitors' of the nation. From the history books of the world, many examples can be given to this propaganda strategy of 'accusation of betrayal' by relating issues to 'national security', 'sovereignty' and 'territorial integrity'.

One example is the cold war. According to McLaughlin,

“During the cold war period there was an alternative view, ‘another source of the peace movement’. The peace movement in Britain was a broad umbrella grouping of intellectuals, politicians, the peace green common women and the ‘Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament’ (CND), most of whom were labeled as ‘extremist’ or ‘unpatriotic’ or ‘hysterical’ and ‘mad’. Ministry of Defense propaganda linked the peace movement to the extreme left and claimed that CND was directly founded by the Soviet Union with the aim of undermining the western security policy. Indeed, to express any kind of opposition and dissent against the ‘nuclear deterrent’ was to go against ‘national security’. In 1985 when Gorbachev came to power in Soviet Union and introduced Perestroika reform that began to impact upon the enemy image that ‘the enemy’ began to influence and shape its image to its own advantage by using western style management and strategies such as timing stories for maximum media exposure or creating ‘exclusive’ or ‘controversial’ media events” (McLaughlin, 2002, pp. 136-137).

5.2. The Right to self-determination of the Tamils

In Oslo in December 2002 (Perera.J, 2004), the government and the LTTE declared that they would find a lasting solution to the conflict, based on the principle of internal self-determination in areas of historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking people, anchored in a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka. The announcement was met by the parties and organizations opposed the peace process with massive protests, bringing a new dimension to the ‘political discourse’.

As we have already seen in the quantitative analysis, Tamil and Sinhala owned newspapers showed different attitudes to the ‘Oslo declaration’. *The Island* and *Divaina* exposed ‘anti’ feelings towards it, while the other Sinhala newspaper *Lankadepa* took a ‘neutral’ stance. Although *Lankadepa* took a neutral stance on the ‘Oslo declaration’, it exposed considerable cynicism towards the self-determination of Tamils in its articles. On the other hand, the Tamil newspapers *Thinakural* and *Virakesari* took a ‘pro’ stance on the declaration, based on Prabakaran’s expectation of a federal structure. On the eve of the ‘Oslo declaration’, Prabakaran in his annual Heroes day speech on 27 November 2002 said, *“The objective of our struggle is a Tamil homeland, Tamil nationality and Tamil right to self determination”*.

However, hard-line Sinhala newspapers expressed severe concerns over Prabhakaran's expectations of a federal structure. They considered Prabhakaran's expectation of self-determination as equal to Eelam (a separate state).

In *The Island* newspaper's article, "UNF-Tiger Agreement" (24-02-2003), the author states that, "*the terrorists have on the contrary acted right along with unremitting resolve to achieve Eelam*" and used the excerpt from Prabhakaran's annual Heroes day speech to give life to the article on this issue. Another article published in *The Island* on 23 February 2003, titled "Icing the Invader's designs" reflects strong cynicism towards the 'Oslo declaration'. The author writes, "*The international community has accepted the Tamil Nationhood and the right of self-rule. That is why Balasingam (the LTTE's political advisor) is able to say 'our leader has very clearly stated that self-rule should be given to us under a federal set up, or we will go for a separate state. Balasingham knows that the 'scientific base' for Tamil Nationhood is already embedded. The baseline of his invasion plan is already secured. Only those who have no knowledge of history, culture or geography can be appeasers working on behalf of invaders.*" It further argues that there is no reason to call the North and East Tamil, traditional homeland and therefore, there is no reason to withdraw the forces from the North and East according to the ceasefire agreement.

Before going into the theoretical explanation of this self-determination issue, let's look at another excerpt from *Divaina* that appeared on 23 February 2003, headlined, "Invaders rights and Inheritants Duties", which says, "*Today we have to talk only about one thing that is, how to chase the Tamil Invaders from our inheritance land. There is no right to talk about the rights for the invaders in any way. If some one wants to talk about the rights, they should talk about the rights about the Buddhists Sinhalese, their Language and rights towards their inheritance and civilizations*". The author further talks about the history of the Sri Lanka and how Sinhalese came to Sri Lanka and how they developed the country with no reference to the Tamil heritage or input into the country.

The above excerpts from the articles, which expose racism, are reminiscent of the ideology theory, discussed in chapter two. Discourse plays a significant role in the production and the

reproduction of prejudice and racism. Particularly, because of their nature, many forms of the news racism are discursive (Van Dijk, 1997, p.34). When Sri Lankan political discourse is discussed with regards to the devolution of power sharing with minorities, the concept of federalism is central. According to Sivaththambi (1990),

“The Sinhalese wishing to restore their position after long years of colonial rule and the Tamils wishing to reassure their continuance as a separate identity without losing the democratic rights that are attached to it. These conflicting demands are made within the historical situations of the process of ‘decolonization’ within which ensuring of both traditional identities and democratic rights are sought”.

Here, the conflicting demands in the context of the ideologies promoted by the Sinhala and Tamil politicians and their impact on the function of the media are clearly highlighted. Sivaththambi (1990) explains the function of the media within the realities of a multi context in terms of a dialectic created by the social, historical, cultural and political background. The discussion in the second chapter shows how the ideological discourses influence the media function, especially with regards to the role of mental processes.

Another good example can be given from an article published in the Tamil-owned newspaper *Thinakural* on 24 February 2004, to explain how ideological discourse influences the media through the ‘mental processes’. The article titled, “The political forces that dominate the Sinhala society are not ready to talk about constitutional reform to bring the lasting solution” says that, *“The concept that the Sri Lankan Tamils are ‘distinguishing race’ was not created by LTTE, it has long history. Like Sinhalese, Tamils have long history; distinguished culture and traditional homeland. This was the political declaration of the Federal party of Tamils”.* The author further says, *“Tamils are a separate ‘race’ is the fact, which had not been accepted among the Sinhalese, because they could not go beyond the explanation that Tamils are the ethnic minority race. After 20 years of military struggle, the Tamil nationalist political movement has come to the stage that is understood as ‘internal self-determination’. This could not be understood by most of the Sinhala nationalist intellectuals, like the Sinhala politicians. Tamil nationalist movement is evolving to the stage of ‘two races, two governments’ should be realized by the thinkers, who thinks seriously about the political evolution of Sri Lanka”.*

While thinking within the ongoing ‘context processes’ (e.g. Prabakaran’s heroes day speech about Tamil’s self-determination) the author travels back to 1960s and 1970s through the cognitive process to touch on the ‘Federal parties declaration’ and the ‘Thimphu principles’. The Federal Party’s principle was, *“The Tamil speaking people in Ceylon constitute a nation distinct from that of the Sinhalese by every fundamental test of nationhood, firstly that of a separate historical past in this Island as ancient and as glorious as that of Sinhalese, secondly by the fact of their being a linguistic entity different from that of the Sinhalese and finally by reason of their territorial habitation of definite areas which constitute over one third of this Island”*. That explains why he is able to write; *“Tamil nationalist movement is evolving to the stage of ‘two races’,” two governments’ should be realized”* (Roberts.M, 2002).

Another article, “Self-determination and the national problem of Sri Lanka” appearing in *Thinakural* on 23 February 2002, talks about the theory and the history of the self-determination. The writer says, *“The colonization of the Tamil homeland by Sinhalese settlers is part of a deliberate policy aimed at the denying the identity of the Tamil people. From the time Sri Lanka got independence, the Tamils have been systematically brutalized, marginalized from the political process and subjected to gross discrimination and persecution”*. In a further article published on 25 February 2004 by the same newspaper, “The war danger on Tamils in view of the JVP’s hard line stand”, the author writes the story based on the PA-JVP’s election manifestation, saying, *“The manifestation of the PA-JVP clearly shows the interest of Sinhalese to determine the fate of Tamils at their will. But Sinhala community or the neighboring country cannot determine Tamil’s fate. This is a reality of today.”*

5.3. Discussion

These excerpts from the articles demonstrate how the Sri Lankan media determines the ‘media discourse’ in the context of the people’s knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, both of elites and the ordinary citizens. It is also obvious that the production and the re-production of the Sinhala, Tamil and State-owned media is influenced by the identity and constituency-creating dynamics, within which they function. That is, Sinhala-owned media wishing to

restore its ethnic position after long years of colonial rule and Tamil-owned media tries to reassure its ethnic group's continuance as a separate identity without losing the democratic rights that are attached to it. In Sri Lanka, in ethnic and socio-cultural terms, there is a 'constituency factor' clearly seen in operation, especially in the highly language restricted print media. Different language based media tends to cater to the social, cultural, political and other interests of their own specific linguistic communities. (Gunasegara.L, 2002)

The articles and the news reports examined in the analyses show how, beyond any doubt, 'peace discourse' is dominated by 'war discourse' in the fertile Sri Lankan social and political contexts. Even though a certain amount of 'peace discourse' is observed, 'war-discourse' easily dominates. Our findings from the quantitative analysis also support this. This partially proves our first hypothesis, generated in chapter 3 that, 'In the fertile Sri Lankan social and political contexts, war discourse dominates the peace discourse and thereby overall press coverage of the peace process has become negative. The finding-3 generated in the quantitative analysis gives significant strength to this hypothesis. We will be further able to confirm the argument from the following theoretical discussion on how overall press coverage becomes negative in the peace process, coupled with the higher level of sensationalism, lack of shared media and lower level of political consensus regarding the peace process.

One important factor we identified from these all articles is sensationalism linked to the dominance of war discourse. It is obvious in all the newspapers analyzed in this study that they express higher levels of sensationalism for the sake of the interest of their own community. As we have discussed earlier the ideological beliefs contribute significantly to this issue.

Wolfsfeld (2001(b), p.22) has noted that,

"The nature of the political environment determines what is culturally acceptable and the media environment can be defined as the aggregate of professional belief, norms, and routines that journalists employ in the construction of news stories. These definitions vary over time and culture and this is one of the reasons why the news media in political processes also varies."

In democratic countries, politicians normally exert relatively little control over the media, especially during peace time. As a democratic country, Sri Lanka should demonstrate this phenomenon too; however, since the start of the war the authorities have imposed censorship on the media. Our quantitative analysis has showed how the media – except the government-owned media – reveals a negative attitude towards the government regarding the peace process.

In this context, Wolfsfeld (2001(b), p. 22) emphasizes two important factors of the media environment, which affect the function of the press,

“The degree to which sensationalism has a major foothold in the news media and the extent to which antagonists in a conflict share the same news media.” He further says, *“These two factors push in opposite directions. A greater level of sensationalism will increase the likelihood of the media playing a destructive role in a peace process while an increase in the amount of shared media will have exactly the reverse effect.”*

We can further understand this argument by looking at Israel-Palestine and Northern Ireland peace processes. In the case of Northern Ireland, the news media more or less played a positive role in the ‘Good Friday’ agreement peace process, echoing the nature of the political environment. As discussed in chapter two, the political environment in Northern Ireland was marked by a large degree of elite consensus in support of the agreement and relatively little sensationalism. This created a good environment for more positive media function and therefore the media was able to promote the peace process (Wolfsfeld (2001(a), p.30).

Conversely, in the case of Israel-Palestine, many of the opponents to the Oslo peace process blasted the Rabin government for never having been given the mandate to recognize the PLO or to give up territories. Political parties in Israel were completely divided over Oslo. As we discussed, the differences in consensus among the elite political are especially likely to have an impact on the news media. Lack of shared media culture and the greater level of sensationalism played destructive role in the Oslo-brokered peace process in Israel. Not only the low level of political consensus, but low level of public support also contributed to the negative role of the media in the peace process. While the Northern Ireland peace process gained 75% of the political support, Israel got 51-55% of the political support. In terms of the

public support, Northern Ireland got 56-73% of the support, but Israel gained only 32-44% (Wolfsfeld, 2001(a), pp. 24-25)

In the Sri Lankan case, political and public support regarding the peace process was almost similar to the Israeli situation. There was low level consensus regarding the peace process. The Government could not come to a compromise with the opposition parties for a bi-partisan approach, and even failed to reach a compromise with the President. The Knowledge-Attitudes-Practices survey on the Sri Lankan peace process conducted by Social Indicator Centre for Policy Alternatives in 2003 clearly shows this. The study concluded that:

Sri Lankans are divided on the peace process. They are divided on how far they are willing to compromise for the sake of peace, and they are divided regarding their readiness to protest a peace agreement they consider to be unfair. Ethnic differences in attitudes towards the peace process loom predictably large. The great majority of Sinhala people opposed most peace proposals while the great majority of Tamils, Up-country Tamils and Muslims supported the majority of the peace proposals. In all, 67% of Tamils and 64% of Muslims were Activist supporters of the peace proposals. Most of the rest were passive supporters. A substantial majority (64%) of Sinhala people opposed virtually all of the peace proposals. Opposition to the peace process was strongest in the JVP and Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). Government concerns about ‘selling’ a peace agreement to United National Party (UNP; which handled the peace process) supporters appeared exaggerated. (KAPS, 2003, p.9)

Now, when we recall what we saw in the quantitative analysis, we understand the parallel journey between the ownership of the newspapers in terms of their attitude towards the peace process and people of Sri Lanka’s attitude towards the peace efforts. When the majority of Sinhala people opposed the peace proposals, the Sinhala ownership of the newspapers also reflected certain amount of ‘anti’ attitude towards the peace proposals. When the majority of the Tamil people supported the peace proposals the Tamil ownership of the newspapers expressed a ‘pro’ stance towards the peace process. These patterns highlight the dynamics of the discourse in news production. Not only is the ‘function of the media’ influenced by the public discourse, but ‘public discourse’ is also influenced by the function of the media. When

we recall the issues discussed earlier, we see that discourse is the main source of people's knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, both in the case of elites and ordinary citizens. Media exert control over and are influenced by such discourse in joint production with the other elites, primary politicians, professionals and academics (Van Dijk, 200, p.6).

In Fairclough's explanation (2002, p.8), the relation between discourse and society is anything but mechanical; instead he describes it as dialectical. A continuous interaction takes place, where society is shaped by discourse as well as sets the boundaries for it. Discourse at the same time constantly influences and shapes society.

According to the KAPS survey, overall two thirds of Sri Lankans embraced multiple proposals for peace. Like the Tamil people, most of the Sinhala people also wanted a peace agreement, but opposition to the peace agreement was against the concept of 'asymmetrical federalism'. That is, many respondents who supported federalism opposed asymmetric federalism. This is vice versa among Tamil people. (KAPS, 2003, pp.23-15) This difference in the public support for the 'peace agreement' and 'asymmetrical peace agreement' was also seen in our newspaper analysis. From the analysis, especially from the qualitative analysis we saw, how the Sinhala-owned and the Tamil-owned newspapers interpreted the 'Oslo declaration' in order to satisfy their own community's interest. Although both Sinhala and Tamil ownership of the newspapers differ in terms of the 'degree' of the devolution of power they want, they generally expressed considerable 'support' towards the peace agreement by supporting the ceasefire agreement and the 'Oslo declaration'. (Graphs 5, 6&7, Table 4 and the sub heading 'Right for self-determination of Tamils'). That is, the 'Pro' attitude towards the peace – the 'will' of the majority of the Sri Lankans – was generally reflected in the media.

CHAPTER-5

Conclusion, Recommendations and Future Implications

In the context of social, cultural and political ideological beliefs, the combined political, public and media environment influences news production. The nature of the public and political environment is important as journalists tend to reflect and reinforce the existing climate of opinion. The nature of the media environment is important because it influences the framing of norms and routines of news production. As stated by Van Dijk, (2001, p.2) since discourses are social practices, media discourse is one of these social practices. Here the raw material for news production is produced discursively with negotiation between the writer and the reader on the basis of the 'context' and 'mental' models.

Through both quantitative content analysis and the qualitative discourse analysis, this study has proved that 'in the fertile Sri Lankan social and political context, 'war discourse' dominates the 'peace discourse' and thereby a higher level of sensationalism is seen in the press. In addition to the higher level of sensationalism and the other forces of the 'war discourse', the lack of shared media and the lower level of political consensus lead the Sri Lankan press to play a destructive role in the peace process.

So, now we have diagnosed the problem and considered how this diagnosis affects the media role in promoting the peace in Sri Lanka. To summaries, two main factors were identified leading us to this diagnosis in this study.

- The first is the 'discourse' factor – this can be seen as the independent vector.
- The second is the 'institutional' factor – the dependent vector.

We discussed how the 'discourse' factor influences the journalistic work in the context of ideological beliefs and thereby directs the Sri Lankan press towards a destructive role in the peace process. We also discussed how the 'institutional' factor, particularly the ownership and the ethnic bias of the media, directs the Sri Lankan press in the same direction.

When we consider how to remedy this complaint, we realize the importance of the media's *own* involvement and intervention in breaking this vicious cycle. So, what kind of intervention is appropriate? There is a possibility that the so-called 'peace journalism' is a suitable remedy. In Galtung's words:

"Journalism tries to depolarize by showing the black and white of all sides, and to de-escalate by highlighting peace and conflict resolution as much as violence. Changing discourse within which something is thought, spoken of and acted upon is a very powerful approach. This journalism stands for truth as opposed to propaganda and lies, 'truthful journalism'. Truth aspect holds for all sides, just like exploration of the conflict formation and giving voice to all". (Galtung, 2002, p. 262)

We also have seen from the analysis, how the government-owned newspaper, the Daily News, had operated within the peace discourse and how soon after the ceasefire agreement, the Tamil ownership newspapers and some Sinhala ownership newspapers also expressed 'peace discourse'. But, in the second and the third year of the peace process, all, except the government newspapers, deviated from the 'peace discourse' and started to function by reflecting the divisions, stereotypes and rhetoric that were building in the society. Only the government owned 'Daily News' functioned within the 'peace discourse' as the government's intention was to promote peace – until the President took control. What Christoph Spurk and Ross Howard say about peace journalism is matched here. That is, that the basic principle of peace journalism is an 'indented' outcome program where the exploration is taken in a determined direction – but where people's participation is ignored. (Spurk.C, 2002, p.16; Howard.R, 2003, p.5). In short, we can say peace is *imposed* upon the people by peace journalism, rather than *creating* the peace within the society. There is likely to be a danger when the peace is imposed upon people. If the audience feels the message is forced upon them, it is highly unlikely they will be receptive to it as it is presented as a kind of top-down communication.

In this communication the masses are not allowed to make decisions. It is not helpful to cultivate peace either just from the community to state level or only from the state level to the community, because of its refusal to acknowledge people's participation; it works towards an already determined outcome. However, it remains that the intention here is for the betterment of the people. As Ross Howard (Howard. R, 2003, p.4) says, peace journalism could be a good instrument to promote peace in the short term. To support this, we also have seen from

the analysis how the peace discourse worked the period soon after the ceasefire agreement, (in some of the newspapers) at least for a short period. Therefore **the first recommendation here is: peace journalism can be used to promote peace in Sri Lanka by dominating the ‘war discourse’ at least in the short term.** This would certainly help peace activists and the government to raise awareness and implement programs on this issue.

However as we have seen, promoting peace in the short term is totally insufficient in achieving a sustainable peace. Even though it helps in the short term, peace discourse might result in detrimental side effects in the long term. The problems we diagnosed in this study cannot be easily cured in the short term with the help of peace journalism alone.

In the context of cultivating peace from the community to state level *and* from the state level to the community, media has to particularly deal at the community level.

To create a healthy and sustainable peace the root causes for the problem we diagnosed should be removed. Effective media strategy incorporate with the civil society can help to create peace discourse from the bottom to top and it can make an impact in shaping the mindset of the masses towards sustainable peace. The possible option to this is psychologically empowering the grassroots people through professional journalism or traditional journalism. As best said by Ross Howard,

“Regular professional journalism in a conflict environment opens channels for communication, educates people, builds confidence, frames conflicts, and humanizes normal unintended outcomes of good reporting, where it is allowed to flourish. These are also the tools and objectives which professional conflict mediators intentionally use, often less publicly.”(2003, p. 4).

He further states that professional journalism can be an instrument of conflict resolution, when the information it presents is reliable, respects human rights and represents diverse views. It is a kind of media that reduces conflict and fosters human security. This is to establish a sector that provides free flow of information ensuring citizens have the opportunity to make responsible informed choices about their future as well as to provide a watchdog function.

But, we have seen from our analysis that this is an ideal concept, more a kind of promise than a reality in Sri Lanka. (See the findings: 2 and 3). As Deshapriya, (2003) noted, “*War and peace reportage in Sri Lanka was a value laden exercise, in which journalists perpetuated old notions incompatible with fair reporting*”. However he says, “*Perceptions can be changed, if the correct steps are strenuously taken*”. Therefore, changing the perceptions of journalists in a positive manner should be the first step in creating a new media culture in Sri Lanka. This would be the right path towards the media taking a constructive role in the peace process and building national reconciliation.

Indeed, a lot can be remedied by professionalism – either by changing the perceptions of journalists or by building their commitment to reporting the truth and acting in a responsible manner. Through proper education (e.g.: true history of the country, propaganda and discourse theories) and training, journalists will better understand the environment in which they work and how they are influenced (i.e.: by discourse factors and institutional factors) to play a negative role in promoting peace. However, this is a huge task: we have already seen in chapter two the tremendous need for proper training and education to upgrade journalistic professionalism in Sri Lanka.

Therefore the second recommendation here is, to take correct steps to upgrade media professionalism through appropriate education and training. This should be determined through discussion, consultation and debate with experts and the relevant authorities.

In addition to this, we have seen in chapter two that Sri Lankan professional journalism is more or less top-down communication. The Sri Lankan media is also almost completely based in Colombo (the capital) – everything is capital-centric and seen as occurring at and being imposed by the national level.

What we need here is to create a two-way peace dialogue both from the community level to state level and state level to community level through the development of a media which deals at and with the local level. We should encourage and enable the community and state to start speaking to each other. For media intervention to be successful local partnership is crucial. To be successful,

there should be a community identity in any media intervention. As best described by Melkote and Kandath (2001, pp, 195)

“To empower individuals and communities at the grassroots, so that they may enter and participate meaningfully in the main stream of the political and economic process in their societies. This calls for grassroots organizing and communicative social action on the part of the power, women, minorities and others who have been consistently and increasingly marginalized in the process of social change”.

They emphasize the necessity of the community media for the empowerment of grassroots people.

Empowerment is a process that enables the individual or community to face better the ravages of continuous social change. According to Fawcett and Seekings, (2001, p.200) DSC professionals have an important role to play in development co-operation in a post conflict situation.

Especially with regard to peace building, we need such a media to go out and raise awareness about capacity building of local community to enter into debate and dialogue in a constructive and effective manner. There are many examples of ‘community media-based’ peace building activities in practice, such as the soap operas in Afghanistan, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, where a moral of peaceable relations and co-operation between ethnic groups and nonviolent conflict resolution is embedded – or those in Macedonia, where the goal is to teach cultural understanding and promote notions of non-violent and conflict resolution to children etc. (IMPACS, 2003, pp.81-82). Unfortunately, Sri Lanka lacks such media to inform and shape the public opinion at the community level.

This concept and practice is best emphasized by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan,

“By giving voice and visibility to all people – including and especially the poor, the marginalized and members of minorities-the media can help remedy the inequalities, the corruption, the ethnic tensions and the human rights abuses that form the root causes of so many conflict”(Annan.K, 2003, p.7)

Therefore **the final recommendation to promote peace from community level to state level and the state level to community level in Sri Lanka is to strengthen the community media structure.** Local non-governmental organizations could start the initiatives. If the

‘peace desire’ was generated at local level, that would impact on politicians to really work for the resolution of the conflict with greater political consensus. Further, with a greater level of political consensus regarding the peace process, the demands for the shared media culture and ‘peace discourse’ might rise. Peace in every person’s mind is the peace for the country.

Future Research Implications

1. Finding-1. The quantitative analysis shows that the Sri Lankan Press is influenced by the ‘immediacy’ factor and thereby likely to play a destructive role in the peace process. This finding was generated by examining only one example (Nomination day for the election). But how this immediacy factor affects the Press role in the peace process has to be examined by other examples such as ethnic violence, political changes, natural disasters etc. If future research supports the above finding with more examples, then we could be able to say that Sri Lankan Press is influenced by the ‘immediacy’ factor and thereby plays destructive role in the peace process.
2. Our analysis is also shaded by the fact that the practice of the peace journalism is a kind of top-down communication and thereby unlikely to play a very high level constructive role in promoting peace. However, we contend here that peace journalism can be a good conflict resolution tool in the short-term. This prediction has to be further proved by research, particularly through proper evaluation and impact assessment.
3. We considered in our discussion the various dimensions of the independent vectors (discourse factors – context and mental) and dependent vectors (institutional factors – ownership and readership or ‘the target market’). We argued that these vectors are responsible for the various functions of the newspapers in the peace process and thereby, how the ‘peace discourse’ and ‘war discourse’ of these newspapers is expressed. We discussed how the independent vectors influence the journalistic work in the context of ideological beliefs and thereby, like the dependent vectors, direct the Sri Lankan press towards their current destructive role in the peace process. Therefore, as our findings generally show that these two vectors work for the same direction, it could give fruitful results if the following were analyzed theoretically and empirically.

- A. What would happen if the dependent vectors (institutional factors- eg: ownership) worked in a positive direction towards the peace process, while the independent vectors (context and mental) worked in a negative direction? Could that be considered a kind of peace journalism?
- B. What are the other factors that could affect the role of dependent and independent vectors in determining the peace discourse and war discourse?

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Appendix 1

Coding Schedule

Variable 1 – Item/article number (each article has a unique identity number)
(001-999)

Variable 2 – Name of the Newspaper

1. Daily News
2. The Island
3. Lankadepa
4. Divaina
5. Vierakesari
6. Thinakural

Variable 3 – Language of the Newspaper

1. Sinhala
2. Tamil
3. English

Variable 4 – Ownership of the Newspaper

1. Sinhala (Private)
2. Tamil (private)
3. State

Variable 5 – Year of the Publication

1. 2002
2. 2003
3. 2004

Variable 6 – Type of News Item

1. News
2. Editorial Column
3. News feature

Variable 7 – Page of the News Item

1. Front Page
2. Inside Page

Variable 8 – Attitude towards the Government

1. In favor
2. Not in favor
3. Neutral

Variable 9 – Attitude towards the LTTE

1. In favor
2. Not in favor
3. Neutral

Variable 10 – Attitude towards the Opposition parties

1. In favor
2. Not in favor
3. Neutral

Variable 11 – Attitude towards the facilitators (Norway, Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLLM) and the countries, which support Norway’s role)

1. In favor
2. Not in favor
3. Neutral

Variable 12 – Attitude (var. 11) towards the specific facilitator

1. Norway
2. India
3. SLMM

Variable 13 – Stance on the Ceasefire Agreement

1. Pro
2. Anti
3. Critical (Neither in favor nor not in favor)

Variable 14 – Stance on the way of the peace process

1. Pro
2. Anti
3. Critical (Neither in favor nor not in favor)

Variable 15 – Stance on the ‘Oslo declaration’

1. Pro
2. Anti
3. Critical (Neither in favor nor not in favor)