Social Cohesion, Teacher Training and Ethnic Relations in Post-War Jaffna, Sri Lanka

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

2NL  Sinhala and Tamil as Second National Languages
A/L  Advanced level Qualification
EFA  Education For All
ESC  Education for Social Cohesion
GIZ  Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit/German Agency for Technical Cooperation
GoSL  Government of Sri Lanka
ISA  In-Service Advisor
LLRC  Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission
LTTE  Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MDGs  Millennium Development Goals
MoE  Ministry of Education
NCOE  National College of Education
NEC  National Education Commission
NGO  Non-Governmental Organisation
NIE  National Institute of Education
O/L  Ordinary Level Qualification
PVE  Peace and Value education
SDGs  Sustainable Development Goals
SRA  Strategic Relational Approach
TTC  Teacher Training College
UN  United Nations
UNESCO  United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF  United Nations Children’s Fund
UNHCR  United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee
UNHRC  United Nations Human Rights Council
Abstract

Seven years after the ending of the brutal civil war in Sri Lanka, the notion of social cohesion is still deficient. While previous studies have explored social cohesion in Sri Lanka, literature on teacher training in line with the goals of social cohesion are non-existent. This thesis therefore analyses the state of ethnic relations in Sri Lanka with a specific focus on the education system and teacher training in particular – essentially trying to map how teacher training can assist in formulating a more cohesive society. This, along with the 2015 election which saw a change of government built on a mandate of pluralism, provides increasing empirical relevance for this study. Theoretically this thesis has been guided by the 4R Framework (Novelli et al 2015) which is modified version of Nancy Fraser’s Social Justice Theory. Additionally, theoretical perspectives on teacher agency are guided using the Strategic Relational Approach (SRA), which aims to clarify the debate between structure and agency. The data which is critically analysed is the result of a nine-week period of fieldwork carried out in Sri Lanka. The majority of data sources take the form of qualitative semi-structured interviews with educational practitioners from the national to the local level who are involved in education for social cohesion. Furthermore, classroom observations of teacher training sessions influence the perspectives gained on teacher agency, while my fieldwork diary is the tool which has enabled me to provide a ‘thick’ description of the context in which the fieldwork was carried out in. The study found that the positive developments of increased space to discuss ethnic issues of social cohesion, which have occurred due to the change in government, are unfortunately dampened by the institutional inefficiencies in the governance of education in Sri Lanka. The system of segregated schooling, a teacher training curricula which does not include concerns of social cohesion, and a lack of advancement in pedagogical techniques result in a negative effect on teacher agency overall. This limits the transformative potential of future teachers to deliver on the notion of social cohesion. However, what came out of this research was that there are individual teachers who promote transformative views, in opposition to the structures in which they operate, and that non-formal teacher training environments have a higher potential because they are not hindered by the archaic structure of formal educational settings. The implications of this study aim to give a more complete contextual understanding of ethnic relations in post-war Sri Lanka, especially taking into consideration the impact of the change of government as of 2015. Furthermore, the findings imply that increased academic and policy attention needs to be being given to non-formal education as a source towards a more integrated ‘peaceful’ society in the future.

Keywords: Social cohesion, teacher agency, teacher training, peace education, Sri Lanka, education and conflict
1. Introduction

May 2009, marked the end of the ethnically rooted civil war between the government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Starting in 1983, the UN’s humanitarian coordination office estimates between 80,000-100,000 people were killed in the 27 years of conflict, with further estimates claiming that up to 20,000 civilians died in the final assault by the GoSL (UN 2010). Crucially, the heavy majority of the casualties being from the Tamil ethnic minority population, predominantly living in the north and east of the country. President at the time, Mahinda Rajapakse, declared the last day of the war as ‘National Victory Day’, the government of Sri Lanka along with most of the ‘Sinhalese’ population emphatically celebrated the end of conflict and the ushering in of a peaceful undivided Sri Lankan society. This is where my study would like to begin - what is the psychological impact of such devastating culmination of conflict. The research by Hoglund and Orjuela (2012) argue that, any deeper assessment of Sri Lankan society reveals strong ethno-cultural divides. Further literature (Ropers 2010 Chapman et al 2009) stresses that the conflict was the consequence of an unjustly organised political system, and only the creation of a just inclusive order will prevent future conflict.

Is this inclusive order of society the state of affairs currently? Evidence suggests not, Hellman and Rajanayagam (2010) believe that the ethnic conflict and its underlying causes have not been solved- true peace has not really returned. This aligns with the work on peace theory by Johan Galtung (1969) - his stance would argue that what exists in this post-conflict setting is ‘negative peace’. That is, where there is an absence of physical violence however the problems underlining the conflict remain. This entails an analysis of ethnic identity concerns within society which I endeavour to investigate through my research of the education system in general, with a focus on teacher training in particular.

1.1 Problem Statement

Seven years after the brutal ending of the civil war in Sri Lanka, the concept social cohesion is still defective. Additionally, the education and teacher training system remains segregated along ethno-religious and linguistic divides. Previous studies (Lopes Cardozo and Hoeks 2015) have highlighted that while there has been rhetoric from the government in supporting notions of ethnic pluralism and social cohesion, the reality has resulted in poorly implemented peace education policies along with inter-ethnic interaction in education often reduced to gestures of tokenism. What 2015 presented the country was increased optimism with a change of leadership built on the fundamentals of equality, inclusiveness and reconciliation.

Education has the potential to be the foundation of such a new united society, moreover, teachers being the central agents in delivering such a service have a vital role to play in a fragile country such as Sri Lanka. This qualitative study will delve into the government policy on teacher education promoting social cohesion as well exploring the ground level perceptions of teachers who may deliver educational practices conducive to a more integrated society. The purpose of this study is to gain a wider gauge of how the new
government is attempting to implement social cohesion in education, together with an understanding of the lived realities of future teachers and how these will fit with such government policies. While exploring how agency takes form within future teachers, the scope of this project further relates to providing a current post-regime change, empirical insight into the state of ethnic relations in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, which was one of the most harshly affected regions of the conflict.

1.2 Research Questions, justification and relevance.

This thesis-as well as analysing different forms of teacher training, will delve into the deeper social and political context of education in Jaffna, and its links to the state of ethnic relations remaining in the post-war climate. This will be done by evaluating the mechanisms of governance within the teacher education system aiming to generate information about political will and closely examining the state of teacher agency within the teacher training system. Tying up these elements by assessing both the majority and minority viewpoints, will enable a clearer response to my main research question outlined below.

Main Research Question- In the post-war context of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, how can teacher training influence teacher agency that may or may not contribute to social cohesion?

The response to this overarching question will be supplemented through the answers to my sub-questions which are respectively answered in chapters four and five for sake of coherence. The first sub-question sets the outline for this study from a macro position while the second sub-question takes an agentic localised teacher level focus.

Sub-questions-

1. A. Who are the key actors involved in the provision of teacher training in Jaffna?

   B. How is teacher training governed and what is the impact of this governance on future teachers?

2. A. How does teacher training address themes of social cohesion and does such training fit in line or in tension with the teacher’s personal identities?

   B. How do teachers see their future roles in supporting social cohesion following teacher training programmes?

My core interest is where the notions of social cohesion and a united Sri Lankan ‘citizen’ exist in the current context in which the country, as of 2014, is ranked as a middle-income nation (World Bank 2014). This exterior success, postulating progress and peace coming out of the reconstruction phase of post-conflict is what I want to critically assess. Doing this through the umbrella of education provides a strong forum to analyse the intersection
between government policy regarding reconciliation, integration of ethnic communities and teacher identities, in regards to the theme of peace education. For the sake of clarity I will follow the definition of peace education in the same respect as UNICEF - the process of promoting the knowledge, skills and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace (UNICEF 2009). Yet, it is significant to note that ‘peace education’ is a contested term in the literature (Lopes Cardozo 2008, Bar-Tal 2002, Bush and Salterelli 2000) and international consensus has been hard to come by due to the specifics of each conflict. Being aware of the limitations and ambiguities of the phrasing of peace education, especially within the Sri Lankan background is crucial to gain a balanced understanding of the term. In my research I view social cohesion as an instrumental outcome of so-called ‘peace education’.

Hoglund and Orjuela (2012) demonstrate how the war and its ending, built on fundamentals of patriotism and nationalism, led to more authoritarian forms of governance. This resistance from policy level, supported by Colenso, entails that especially within education, “discrimination and exclusion for ethnic minorities is felt on several levels: discrimination and exclusion in policy formulation, biases in resource allocation, unrepresentative governance systems, and uneven policies relating to access and inclusion, language of instruction and the content of curriculum.” (Colenso 2005: 413) The education system reflects the overall fault-lines of the ethnic and religious divisions present in society. This detrimental outline of the education structure necessitates deeper assessment of the governance mechanisms in operation to establish if or where there have or can be any improvements. This is the specific focus of sub-question 1B.

Furthermore, the study by Lopes Cardozo and Hoeks (2015) highlights how the once promising rhetoric of peace education carried by the government in the final years of the war, had lost importance on the political agenda of the post-war context. However important to note that with the change of government, as of 2016, new analysis is needed to assess whether there is a renewed political interest in the theme of peace education for social cohesion. This gap in knowledge requiring new inquisition is clarified explicitly in sub-question 2A.

The focus of sub-question 2B is solely on individual (trainee) teachers. Teachers can be seen as strategic political actors that directly contribute to and influence the perceptions of future generations about different groups of people (Lopes Cardozo 2011). Therefore, looking at teacher training, in the sense of possibly generating improved understandings of social cohesion, which may develop such ‘political actors’, I feel is an area that needs attention. Additionally, the theme of education for peace and social cohesion through teacher training is under explored in Sri Lanka (Lopes Cardozo 2008)- guiding my interest to explore how teacher training can influence the agency of teachers that may or may not develop.
In line with the ethnically segregated system of education outlined above, GIZ reports that peace education has been delivered mainly through extra-curricular activities. (GIZ 2009) Therein, develops part of my focus which looks at non-formal educational settings and the teacher training existent in such environments. This is supplemented by the lack of literature on non-formal teacher education in Sri Lanka which guides me to argue that this gap in current research needs to be explored more acutely which I hope to contribute to with this thesis. Crucial to note with me looking at teacher training in non-formal environments does not mean I am discounting formal educational settings. Moreover, formal settings have the greatest potential to reach out to citizens. My critique however, from reviewing the relevant literature, (Lopes Cardozo 2014, Davies 2011) views the rhetoric of peace education from the government in formal environments as being poorly implemented- superficially done, and not given enough importance within the curricula, let alone teacher training. Assessing both environments of training enables a clearer, more rounded picture of the current state of teacher training within the broader socio-political background of Jaffna particularly.

1.3 Introduction to Education and Conflict

The field of education and conflict is an emerging field of study which has been gaining increased global attention within the media, in the academic field and from policymakers and practitioners (Novelli and Lopes Cardozo 2008: 473). While this relationship will be explored thoroughly in the next chapter, which is my theoretical framework, I believe it is necessary to highlight the linkages now to portray the relevance of my research regarding education and conflict while placing it within the current global development context. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflect the worldwide attention paid towards education; goal 4 of the SDGs entails that all girls and boys have access to and complete, free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education. While Sri Lanka has historically performed well against international indicators of education- with Little’s (2011) study going as far as saying that, “Sri Lanka’s education is one of the most, if not the most accessible in the developing world,” (Little 2011: 502) regional disparities and challenges remain. When you add the dynamic of conflict to the equation the challenges multiply. This aligns with the international consensus and growing academic literature regarding the dialectic relationship between education and conflict. Sri Lanka, as with the majority of conflicts towards the end of the 20th century, represented what Kaldor (1998) termed ‘new wars’. Kaldor refers here to how contemporary conflict has moved away from traditional inter-state fighting regarding issues of territory or ideology and has increasingly taken the form of civil disputes within a country’s borders concerning issues of ethnic, religious or linguistic identities.

Recognising the barrier that violent conflict has on achieving international education targets such as goal 4 of the SDGs and Education for All (EFA) indicators to name a few- UNESCO’s global monitoring report of 2011 was devoted to the theme of education and armed conflict. According to the report, 42% of all out of school children live in conflict affected or post-conflict countries which they deem ‘the hidden crisis’ (EFA Global Monitoring Report
Conflict prevents students from enrolment and completion of schooling, it creates social instability and fragmentation which further fans the flames of conflict (UNESCO 2011). The negative impact of conflict on education is obvious to see, also obvious are the social benefits provided by education for the youth of a country, here demonstrated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - “Education is one of the building blocks of human development. It is not just a basic right, but a foundation for progress in other areas, including health, nutrition and the development of institutions and democracy.” (UNDP 2005: 159) My contention is that this obviousness in the benefits of education, when placed in the context of conflict, does not hold as strongly as one presumes. Davies (2005) has highlighted the difficulty in the relationship between conflict and education- both influence one another in ways that are complex, non-linear and difficult to predict. Exactly this dynamic relationship will be further analysed in chapter 2 when discussing Bush and Salterelli’s (2002) theory of the ‘two faces of education’.

1.4 Empirical (post)- conflict context

I will begin this section with a brief historical explanation of the conflict; secondly present an outline of the post-conflict context, moving onto explaining the relevance of my focus on the province of Jaffna, and finally illuminate some recent developments in the country that has implications on the themes of this research.

An explanation of the demographic make-up of Sri Lanka sets the scene for the issues addressed in this section, and moreover for this thesis. An ethnically diverse country consisting of the majority Sinhalese accounting for 74.9% of the population, living mainly in the south of the country; secondly, Sri Lankan Tamils make up 11.2%, residing predominantly in the north; thirdly, up-country Tamils descending from India tallying 4.2%; and finally, Sri Lankan Moors, commonly referred to as Muslims, account for 9.2% (Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka 2012) In addition to this, religious variations across and between ethnicities presents a complex picture- Sinhalese are predominantly Buddhist, and Tamils are predominantly of a Hindu faith, however Catholicism is embodied within certain segments of both Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups.

1.4.1 History of conflict

According to De Votta (2005), the Sinhalese and Tamil segments of the population had lived together relatively peacefully prior to, and during the colonial era which saw the British, Dutch and Portuguese all stake a claim on the island until independence in 1948. De Votta goes on to point however that towards the end of the British rule, there was a sense of favouritism towards the minority Tamils of the country. The ‘divide and rule’ tactic employed by the British, emphasized the segregation of the communities and the favouring of Tamils in regards to having better standards of education and higher socioeconomic positions compared to the Sinhalese. This outline began to change slowly but surely following independence when the Sinhalese tightened their grip of control. Each new
government following 1948 emphasized Sinhalese culture, language and religion to the
detriment of ethnic minorities who became heavily excluded (Bandarage 2012; Hogland and
Orjuela 2012).

Interestingly, and aligning with the main theme of this thesis, ethnic outbidding in regards
to education and language policy is argued by De Votta (2005) as being one of the root
causes of the conflict. Furthermore, Tamil scholars such as Ramanathapillai (2012) point
towards religious divisions between the Buddhist Sinhalese and Hindu Tamils, caste
discrimination and institutional deterioration as further exacerbating the already strained
relationship between the two ethnicities at the time. Protests and resentment from both
sides blossomed and increasingly took more violent forms (Abeyratne 2004). This
resentment led to the formation of groups frustrated with the situation at the time- the
most influential of these was led by Vellupillai Prabhakaran, and came to be known as the
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), fighting for a separate Tamil state in the north of Sri
Lanka. Following sustained anti-Tamil rioting, the conflict officially began in 1983 (Abeyratne
2004). During the war the LTTE managed to run a de facto state for many years in the north
and east of the country. They ran a functioning police force, judiciary and civil service- as
well as providing health and education services that worked in conjunction with government
services (Stokke 2006).

The social, economic and human cost of the 26-year long conflict cannot be understated.
The peak came towards the end of the conflict- giving it the unwanted title of having the
highest amount of battle-related deaths in 2008, of any other conflict in the world (Orjuela
2010). ‘Victory’ was claimed by the government of Sri Lanka over the LTTE in May 2009.

It is vital to note that this historical overview is by no means exhaustive and cannot do
justice to the complexity of the war. Instead what I hope to provide is a brief summary of
the conflict so that one can assess the current ethnic situation while keeping in mind the
broader historical outline as a point of reference.

1.4.2 Post-Conflict?

According to conservative UN figures, 20,000 civilians were allegedly killed in the final five
months of the war (Subramanian 2015). The majority of which were from Tamil
backgrounds- it is with this in mind that questions of reconciliation and social cohesion need
to be discussed. My time in Jaffna showed me that the wounds are still very fresh and real
for the people who were unfortunate enough to be trapped in the warzone during the final
months of the conflict as well as the decades previously. This bloody culmination of the war
has attracted widespread allegations of war crimes from the international community
directed at the government of Sri Lanka.

Of note here is that the government of Sri Lanka at the time was led by Mahinda Rajapakse
(2005-2015) who espoused the Sinhala Buddhist nationalist spirit- which had no intentions
of reconciling the deep wounds and differences between the Sinhalese and Tamils of the
country (De Votta 2011). In the immediate post-conflict phase there was a general trend of
militarisation of civilian governance structures, the economy and society at large (Hogland and Orjuela 2012: 90). An authoritarian and illiberal structure of governance became increasingly evident- the media was under the control of Rajapakse and violent attacks on journalists and human rights activists were not uncommon (UNHRC 2014). According to Hoglund and Orjuela (2012) the prevailing Tamil grievances following the war were suppressed by an increasingly strong state that fosters a patriotism that perceived demands for power sharing as terrorism. The peace existential following the cessation of hostilities in 2009 has been deemed (Richmond 2005) a ‘victor’s peace’. That is, peace derived from military victory which implies that a basic power asymmetry is built into the notion of peace thereby already determining the relative positions of Sinhalese and Tamils in post-war society.

The allegations made by the international humanitarian community and in particular the reaction to this from the Rajapakse regime portrays a good example of the illiberal mind-set of governance left in the wake of the war I am referring to. The 2011 UN sanctioned, ‘Report of the Secretary General’s Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka,’ outlines concerns of war crimes and human rights abuses on the part of the Sri Lankan government and military. The Rajapakse regime’s reaction to this was not only of denial but a more calculated and far reaching strategy of mobilising the masses against ‘foreign’ interference. The May Day rally of 2011 had the overarching theme of rejecting the UN report- people were bussed across the country to praise the president and ridicule the UN. Slogans read, ‘Ban Ki Moon, we don’t want you, we want our president’ (Hoglund and Orjuela 2012: 99). What this depicted was the degree of allegiance felt towards the president who ‘saved the country’. The division between those who opposed international intervention and those in favour also took an ethnicised tone, while the government and majority of the Sinhalese population felt this was an internal sovereign matter, large parts of the Tamil population felt looking globally was their only hope for answers and protection. Furthermore, the government sponsored, Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) report did not provide justice or answers to any of the before mentioned allegations. Instead it is seen by many as being set up to clear the government of any wrongdoing and it fails to take into account the grievances of the Tamil population (Crisis Group 2011). Consequently, substantial distrust between the state and the Tamil citizens of the country pervaded in the years following the war and it is this state of mistrust that is crucial to understanding the present situation.

What is of interest, and even potential hope in the current context, is the change of government that took place on 8th January 2015. In what was a surprise to most people, Maithripala Sirisena, was voted in as president bringing an end to the Rajapakse era. His coalition government won on a manifesto that promised greater transparency, and the implementation of social and economic reforms that imply equity and justice for all ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. The victory owed a lot to the minority Tamil and Muslim votes he received, it can be argued that there is a greater degree of optimism in the air since the election (Burke 2015). This declaration was continuously supported in my interviews, where the general claim was that there was increased optimism and space to talk about issues of reconciliation and social cohesion which is in stark contrast to the Rajapakse regime.
1.4.3 Why Jaffna and recent developments.

As is highlighted in my methodology chapter, the majority of my research was carried out in Jaffna, in the north and formerly heavily war-affected part of the country.

“Jaffna is the, now wrecked, would be, capital of the putative independent Tamil state of Eelam,” (Subramanian 2015). Jaffna saw some of the heaviest fighting of the conflict especially in the early years of the war- devastating the economic and social infrastructure of the region, the effects of which are still seen today. In essence, it is the historical and cultural heart of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. According to the most recent census of the district, out of the 559,619 people living in Jaffna, 559,142 are Sri Lankan Tamils- making up 99.9% of the demographic (Department of Census and Statistics 2007). This demonstrates how fundamental the area is in regards to the identity of the Tamils in the country. Furthermore, this area gave me exposure to a certain Tamil mentality like nowhere else in the country can. Jaffna is the only place that the Tamil minority, who has been marginalised for decades, can feel and potentially act like a majority. Saying that, there are still severe concerns that were confirmed by my data regarding the continued military presence in Jaffna as well as the issue of government held Tamil land which is yet to be handed back.

Recent developments have unfortunately dampened the optimism that came with the change of government in 2015 and need to be addressed here to gain a complete picture of the tensions in Jaffna presently. The textbox below is meant to present a contextual understanding of current conflicts in Jaffna- the relevance and implications of this I shall return to and discuss later in this thesis.
While I was in Jaffna carrying out my research there was an incident at the University on 16th July 2016. Fighting broke out between Tamil and Sinhalese students over the fresher’s welcome ceremony—both parties felt their respective cultural dance should be the focus of the welcome. The clash erupted at the University’s science faculty and directly after the incident the Sinhalese students were sent back to their homes in the south on buses provided by the government and the faculty was closed for the rest of the week (Colombo Telegraph 2016). Without getting into a thorough discussion of the causes of the incident I want to highlight three elements of relevance that came out of the incident that link to the overall state of ethnic relations in Jaffna and Sri Lanka moreover.

Firstly, the religious implications of the clash need to be underlined. Alongside the background of the Sinhala/Tamil ethnic conflict, the religious battle lines are drawn with almost as much distinction between Buddhism and Hinduism (Wanniarachi 2016). In Jaffna, in my day to day conversations, the topic of Buddhist statues being erected in majority Hindu areas was a common point of discussion. Furthermore, it could be sensed that there was a degree of animosity regarding this directed at the government—the fact that this religious chauvinism took place so commonly without any objection indicated the power of the Buddhist religious institution of the country.

Secondly, the media’s reaction to the incident I found to be revealing and significant. While undoubtedly it was an incident of concern in the Jaffna area—what I found strange was the increased awareness and bourgeoned forms of reporting on the issue that took place in the Colombo media. As one member of the Jaffna University student’s union pointed out—“both Sinhala and Tamil media are using it (the clash) to fan the flames of narrow minded politics,” (Kunartham 2016). What was unfortunate in the aftermath of the incident was that it seemed the media offered increased space for the views of extremists from both sides to take prevalence instead of voices calling for unity.

Finally, the Colombo Telegraph, as well as Tamil respondents from the University I spoke to pointed towards the drastic increase in admissions of Sinhala students to the University’s science faculty as being one the causes of the incident. As Pratheep Kunartham, of the student’s union states, “why have the authorities suddenly raised the number of Sinhala students admitted to the university over the years without realising that such a sudden increase may pave the way for ethnic tensions, can any of the authorities explain why Tamil and Sinhala students do not even smile at each other even when they walk past one another,” (Kunartham 2016). This account is indicative of the Tamil mentality in Jaffna, a policy of simply mixing the two ethnicities cannot work if superficially done, what is needed is a deeper assessment of the emotional make up of current relations prior to big changes in educational policy (Wanniarachi 2016). The notion of increased Sinhala admissions to the University of Jaffna was supposed to provide a multi-ethnic, cosmopolitan experience—which has now been threatened. What this incident has proved is the delicate nature of interaction between Sinhalese and Tamil youths that still exists especially in Jaffna, from a majority Tamil viewpoint.
1.5 Language

“Religion and language are the two great divider of mankind,” (Gans 2012: 12), Sri Lanka portrays one of the strongest examples of this claim. Historically, language has been a form of power and is itself a method of domination that can be used by the ruling classes. Furthermore, Davies (2011) highlights how the power that language can exert over minority or marginalised groups cannot be ignored and in fact has been a key cause of division in Sri Lankan society. The majority of conversations I had with Sinhala and Tamil community members indicated that there is not much difference between the two ethnicities - the problems lie in an inability to communicate effectively. Watson demonstrates the complexity inherent in national language, arguing that, “language can be used to bring about a sense of national unity and ethnic harmony, or it can equally be used to maintain one particular ethnic group in power, thereby exacerbating ethnic conflict,” (Watson 2007: 257).

Looking back on the history of Sri Lankan language policy it can be argued that there was an element of this domination through language from the Sinhalese majority. The roots of this trace back to the 1956 ‘Sinhala Only Act,’ whereby Sinhala replaced English as the official language- many scholars (Davies 2011, Perera 2010) have argued that this policy initiated the grievances of the Tamil population in the north of the country. However, in the present context, Sri Lanka’s language policy has become less discriminatory, Sinhala and Tamil are both recognised as the official languages; English referred to as the link language between the two major ethnic groups, as well as for external international relations (Davies 2011). Government policy, introduced in 1999, stated that children should be introduced to second national language (2NL) education from Grades 1-11. A Ministry for National Languages and Social Integration was established in 2010, thought to be the only one of its kind in the world. Additionally, recent endeavours by the government attempt to incentivise bilingualism- Sinhala civil servants, including teachers, who can speak Tamil have been promised increased salaries (NEC 2016).

This acknowledgement, from policy level, of the dynamic role language has in a society is undoubtedly a positive step. However, we are nowhere near claiming that the problems caused by language do not exist in Sri Lanka, you only need to take a look at the education system which takes such a segregated form often purely due to language barriers. Fewer than 1% of schools teach in both national languages; only 4% of schools teach in English. There is limited access to 2NL learning and the teacher education system also remains largely segregated along language lines (Davies 2011). This description is supported by the empirical findings gathered during my research that will be clarified later when analysing my data.

The view of language taken in this thesis, in relation to my research concept of social cohesion, is that an improved acceptance, understanding and ability in the ‘other’ national language will be a move towards a more cohesive society. Therefore, teacher training of 2NL
is a topic that needs specific analysis; as will be portrayed later in this thesis such an exploration raises much deeper questions regarding teacher’s personal identities and the ‘resistance’ they may feel towards learning and teaching the ‘other’ national language.

1.6 Education for Social Cohesion Policy (ESC)

Sri Lanka is one of the only countries in the world to have specific government policy on Education for Social Cohesion (ESC). Here, I want to outline what the actual policy conveys and clarify its implications to my research. This is done to avoid any confusion due to the overlapping use of the term ‘social cohesion’ and distinguish the difference from the government policy (Referred to throughout as ESC) and my interpretation based on insights from the literature I reference.

Implemented in 2008, the policy sets out seven focus areas for peace education that would help create the ‘desired Sri Lankan citizen’ (MoE 2008). These strategic areas being: curriculum, teacher education, second national language (2NL), whole school culture, integration, co-curriculum and research (MoE 2008). In the eight years since the implementation of ESC there has been a progression of research assessing its value on delivering peace education (Lopes Cardozo 2008, Hoeks 2011, Metheuver unp). Unfortunately, all these studies indicate implementation weaknesses and shortfalls in quality. The most recent study by Metheuver (2015: 98, unp), which did a complete assessment of the ESC policy in the North-Western province concludes, “ESCP implementation brings extra responsibilities for education practitioners, but since there are no extra funds, they are not encouraged to truly implement it on a school level- as a result, island wide implementation of ESCP seems to be lacking”.

My research is looking at social cohesion; however, it needs to be clarified in relation to the overall ESC policy. The distinction arises due to my focus being solely on teacher training, which is one component of the ESC policy on peace education. This is where my research diverges from the previous studies highlighted above (Lopes Cardozo 2008, Hoeks 2011, Metheuver unp). I will be assessing teacher training therefore essentially only one of the strategic areas indicated in the ESC policy, however it should be noted that I will be exploring teacher training on 2NL as well, so arguably my research can be linked to two of the components of the ESC policy.

With this distinction explained I shall now move onto my theoretical framework which is where my analysis of research findings gains wider perspectives based on current literature.
2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that underpins this thesis will be explained below. Through a critical examination of literature on the topics explored in this thesis I have outlined four particular theories which form the foundation of this study. Firstly, Bush and Salterelli’s (2002) ‘Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict’, secondly, looking at identity and ethnicity and how this feeds into the conceptualisation of social cohesion used in this thesis, thirdly, the 4R theory (Novelli et al. 2015) and finally exploring and debating what makes up teacher agency. These theories are not supposed to purely explain my findings, instead the aim is to provide the base and analytical tools to delve into my data and explore it against current debates on the thematic focus of this thesis.

2.1 Two faces of education

By utilising the influential UNICEF report by Bush and Salterelli (2002), ‘The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict’, this section will build on and investigate the complex relationship between education and conflict, which was introduced in chapter 1.3. “If it is true that education can have a socially constructive impact on intergroup relations, then it is equally evident that it can have a socially destructive impact,” (Bush and Salterelli 2002: 10). How and why this can happen is what I shall explore in this section, ultimately distinguishing that the effectiveness of a ‘more and better’ approach to education will be limited unless it is complemented by a tactic that simultaneously dismantles destructive educational practices.

The nexus between education and conflict is a core area of interest in this thesis and the work done by Bush and Salterelli provides a strong point of departure in engaging with the multiple implications an ethnic conflict has on a country’s education system. The ‘negative face’ of education which can exacerbate ethnic tension in the context of conflict is argued to take form through different mechanisms which are outlined in table 1 below. Exploring these with relevance to the case of Sri Lanka will provide a stronger understanding of what this ‘negative face’ can look like and presents a tool to examine the findings of my research on teacher training in relation to the larger theme of post-war ethnic relations. Civil war can destroy education in the most obvious sense as the fabric of society is stretched and torn. As a community is forced into survival mode, and as basic social and cultural institutions are challenged, the normal transfer of skills and knowledge from parents and teachers to children is often interrupted (Bush and Salterelli 2000: 11). The more pervasive ‘negative face’ of education in the climate of ethnic conflict however takes a more nuanced form- and interestingly from reviewing the literature on the topic, it is often linked to the state controlled educational apparatus. There is widespread recognition among scholars linked to education in post-war Sri Lanka (Davies 2005, Lopes Cardozo 2008, Hoeks 2012, Hansen-Shearer 2016 unp.) that there is an element of using education as a weapon for cultural repression. The contention here is that from the multiple layers of the educational structure- be it the ministry of education, principals or teachers- the majority culture has a
tendency to supress the language, religious practices and traditions of a minority which has the effect of maintaining inequality between groups within society.

Segregated forms of schooling are instrumental in formulating potentially warped notions of intergroup relations- Bush and Salterelli (2000) use the example of apartheid schooling in South Africa. Sri Lanka, has a similarly structured system of enrolment, however the lines of segregation are drawn along more ethno-linguistic divides. Colin Knox, (2011) in his study of cohesion within education in Northern Ireland- another country with some comparable features to Sri Lanka, highlights how such segregation has the effect of deepening the sense of ‘the other’. In this case, maintaining the ideals of difference that the Sinhalese see between themselves and the minority Tamils and Muslims of the country. This segregation provides the forum for the majority views which may have a tendency to be detrimental to those of a minority culture to spawn and expand. Crucially, this should not be taken as some natural unhindered process but needs to be looked at in a structural sense of how the educational apparatus is governed and controlled. When linked to the notions of curriculum and textbooks in Sri Lanka this argument becomes clearer.

“In Sri Lanka, the ethnic chauvinism and stereotyping that are rampant outside the classroom find their way into the classroom through textbooks,” (Bush and Salterelli 2000: 4). This assertion questions the governance processes of education in Sri Lanka- who is putting such views in the textbooks? Why is it still happening? These are questions I hope to provide clarity to in chapter four, however I believe it is useful to be aware of such issues now in order to ask questions about who should be involved in deciding what is included and excluded from teaching materials, and how teacher training should approach such concerns in curriculum.

**Table 1: The Two Faces of Education (Bush and Salterelli 2000)**

| The ‘negative face’ of education in (post) conflict settings- exacerbating ethnic conflict |
|---|---|
| The uneven distribution of education as a means of creating and preserving positions of economic, social and political privilege |
| Education as a weapon in cultural repression |
| Denial of education as a weapon of war through destruction of schools and infrastructure |
| Education as a means of manipulating history for political purposes, reinforcing hegemonic power relations |
| Education serving to diminish self-worth and encourage hate |
| Segregated education to ensure inequality, inferiority and stereotypes |
| The role of textbooks in impoverishing the imagination of children thereby inhibiting them from dealing with conflict constructively |

| The ‘positive face’ of education in (post) conflict settings- easing ethnic conflict |
|---|---|
| Political will to prevent ethnic conflict through provision of equal opportunities |
| Nurturing and sustaining an ethnically tolerant climate through de-segregation of |
To end this section of my theoretical framework I want to briefly touch on the ‘positive face’ of education in conflict - which appropriately structured policies on education can create. As outlined in table 1, several options exist which can facilitate an alleviation of tension in contexts of ethnic conflict. In an idealistic sense it would lead to an education system which would give the younger generation the skills to maintain and articulate alternative visions of the future; visions that are inclusive, tolerant, liberal, democratic and just (Bush and Salterelli 2000: 20). Supporting this ideal, in the context of Sri Lanka, Lynn Davies argues that what is needed is an education system that, firstly challenges exclusionary nationalist subjectivities through open dialogue and recognition of the politics of identity and difference; and secondly, hold the state accountable, through the respect for the rights, responsibilities and duties of civic engagement (Davies 2005: 35). I hope that by putting the topic of teacher training at the centre of these investigations of what can form the ‘positive face’ of education, will elucidate some of the structural challenges that exist as well as potential areas of strength where such a ‘positive face’ can truly be realised.

However, it must be noted that critiques of the ‘two faces’ framework (Sommers 2009, Salmi 2006) have questioned the degree of attainability of this ‘positive face’. Pointing towards the case of Rwanda, Sommers (2009: 34) portrays how, “nine years after the civil war, a quarter of all primary age children were still out school,”. While war affected regions in Sri Lanka do not have these direct exclusionary issues in education, I find there is still overlap when you consider the psychological exclusion that persists through the history curriculum and language policies as indicated above. This view is in line with Salmi’s (2006) concept of ‘alienating violence’ than can exist when dominance by one group over the educational system tends to result in skewed power relations in wider society. What this means for my study is that even though I use the ‘two faces’ framework, there is always a background understanding that the ‘positive face’ is by no means a quick fix and takes sustained work by actors within education which often takes time to show such ‘positive’ results. Furthermore, supporting the work of Smith (2009), I need to stress that the dynamic relationship between conflict and education is never, and will never be black and white - instead it will be an amalgamation of Bush and Salterelli’s (2000) ‘positive and negative faces’. The fundamental determinant at play in the two faces theory is linked to ethnic difference, hence why this now needs to be clarified next in this theoretical chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>schooling</th>
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<tr>
<td>De-segregation of the mind through greater integration and participation between communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linguistic tolerance and multi-lingual teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultivating inclusive conceptions of citizenship through the recognition of diversity in ethnicity, religion and creed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The disarming and de-politicisation of history</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education for peace programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational practice as an explicit response to state oppression</td>
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2.2 Identity, Ethnicity and Social Cohesion

Here, I shall dive into the formative links between ethnicity and identity firstly, followed by a portrayal of how this identity feeds into the concept of social cohesion which is the prevalent theme of this thesis.

2.2.1 Identity and Ethnicity

The study by Perera (1997) concluded that, “the root cause of the conflict in Sri Lanka was the lack of a formulation of a common identity and understanding of difference.” (Perera 1997: 17)

The view taken in the literature I reference (Eriksen 2002, Kapferer 1988) is that ethnicity is the fundamental component of identity formation. Ethnicity, if looked at from a wider scope as I do here, incorporates elements of religion, language and culture which are major components in the fabric of all societies. Eriksen refers to ethnicity as, “aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others as culturally distinctive,” (Eriksen 2002:5). The multiplicity of ethnicities within the Sri Lankan context is reflected in linguistic, cultural and religious variations (which are the aspects of relationships Eriksen refers to in the above statement). These play a decisive role in identity formation- essentially creating the stepping stones which stimulate ideas of dissimilarity between groups and cause imaginings between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Kapferer’s (1988) work, which was clearly influential to the views expressed by Eriksen (2002), builds on the topic of nationalism and how this fits with identity formation. This I believe has relevance to the case of Sri Lanka- particularly when you consider the widespread nationalist sentiment existing among the masses in the immediate post-war phase under the Rajapakse regime (See chapter 1.4.2). The claim made by Kapferer (1988) is that the potential power of ethnic identification is increased when an ethnic identity is linked with a nation state- this is when ethnicity becomes nationalism he argues. Kapferer asserts that historically the nationalist tendency of the Sinhalese is to view their nation as arising from a painful rite of passage where it has to fight its adversaries; the other or the enemy within. Where Kapferer’s logic has been criticised (Fearon and Laitin 2000), is his fixation on colonization and linking ethnicity too much to the historical nation state, whether this holds in the current globalised world we live in needs to be questioned. His primordial approach is not as relevant to the view taken in this thesis and is odds with my ontological approach of viewing the fluidity in social constructs such identity. However, I emphasise that the links between ethnic identification and the nation state are undoubtedly important, where I disagree with Kapferer is in his viewing this relationship as fixed.

Exploring ethnicity and therein identity formation provides relevance in understanding the psychology of what entails being Sri Lankan in the realm of a country consisting of four religions, and multiple ethnic groups cutting between them. This entails looking at the
cultural, political and economic (CPE) (Jessop 2004) determinants in the construction of identity. Moreover, for my research it requires placing education and teachers at the centre of investigations and examining the ways in which the cultural, political and economic, as distinct determinations- intersect (Robertson and Dale 2004).

### 2.2.2 Ethnicity and Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is a complicated and contested term in the literature often without a clear-cut definition (Berger-Schmitt 2000). Jenson (1998) supports this understanding and emphasises how social cohesion should be viewed as a process rather than an end state. Dekkers (2006) attempts to clarify social cohesion; he argues that the concept of social cohesion addresses the tension between individual freedom and social order from a moral point of view. Social cohesion considers consensus on fundamental social values, norms and beliefs crucial for the reproduction of social order. In a multi ethnic, multicultural country like Sri Lanka it entails that ethnic groups need to feel like they belong. "When all members of a society can exercise the same rights and privileges there is greater unity and a feeling of solidarity and comradeship which in turn induces a greater commitment towards achieving common goals,” (Aturupane 2011: 7).

The literature reviewed on social cohesion highlighted two issues, one was a more recent understanding that we as scholars need to view it more as accommodation of difference instead of a focus on pure assimilation (Aturupane 2011, Bauman 1989). Secondly, that there are challenges in measuring social cohesion that need to be addressed (Berger-Schmitt 2000, Friedkin 2004). Taking these into consideration below I shall outline a definition that provides more structure and relevance for this thesis. A clearer understanding of social cohesion can then be used as a tool to assess the outcomes of education in general, and teacher training specifically, utilised throughout this thesis.

It is important to note that a shared commitment to social practices is not pre-given in essentially any country which has a diverse demographic. In the past social cohesion was understood to be the result of the assimilation of different cultures and religions into a nation with a common language and values. However, what has been argued, especially by scholars linked to Sri Lanka (Aturupane 2011, Davies 2011), is the need to progress towards a conceptualisation that emphasises less the assimilation of different (sub)cultures into the national identity, but more towards the idea of creating space for difference within the broader national identity. This implies that all ethnic and religious groups are fully integrated and are allowed to freely practice their religion, use their language in daily activities and moreover, are accepted by each other as belonging to one nation. Education is a key instrument in the promotion of social cohesion through the transmission of knowledge and the shaping of attitudes of individuals towards diversity and change (Aturupane 2011).
Social cohesion needs to be viewed as a process instead of targeting some fixed end goal—this relates partly to the difficulty in measuring the extent of social cohesion in a group which is based on many individual subjective perspectives. Berger-Schmitt (2000) attempts to tackle this issue by providing dimensions of analysing social cohesion that take into account the variances in the individual and group duality of societies.

1. The first dimension concerns the reduction of disparities, inequalities and social exclusion
   2. The second dimension concerns the strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties. This dimension embraces all aspects which are generally also considered as the social capital of society.

(Berger-Schmitt 2011: 4)

Interestingly these dimensions align quite aptly with the accommodation (dimension 1) and assimilation (dimension 2) concepts of social cohesion discussed by Aturupane (2011). I feel that by using the dimensions of the social cohesion theory by Berger-Schmitt (2011) and tweaking them to be appropriate to the Sri Lankan context provides the strongest approach to understand social cohesion for this thesis. What I propose is that yes, the move to focus more on accommodation (dimension 1) is warranted, however in Sri Lanka there is still a case that the elements outlined in dimension 2 needs to be supported. Meaning that both dimensions provide empirical relevance in assessing how Sri Lanka is progressing towards a more cohesive and inclusive society. As put by Niens (2008), in societies where individuals bear multiple identities, crosscutting links should be created to instil transversal loyalties that go beyond community divisions. Ultimately social cohesion is a process which implies a society that is inclusive and equal—where individuals from different ethnicities feel connected to one another through a shared identity which incorporates cultural difference. This is the framework of social cohesion that will guide the rest of this thesis.

Education is responsible for the cultivation of a civilised society and helps to inculcate moral and ethical values in individuals. If used positively, it can forge a national identity which unites diverse communities, it can be an important vehicle for conveying attitudes of tolerance and values that help build a sense of national solidarity, incorporating all ethnic communities (Aturupane 2011). This line of reasoning is where I find relevance in looking at teacher training under the umbrella of social cohesion. In the same way Aturupane (2011) claims education can be an important vehicle in generating social cohesion—so can teachers. This is what this study aims to critically assess in Sri Lanka, this will be done utilising the 4R’s model developed by Novelli et al (2015) which I shall outline next.

2.3 4R’s Framework

In this section I want to bring to attention the theoretical model of the 4R’s (redistribution, recognition, representation and reconciliation) which was developed by Novelli, Lopes
Cardozo and Smith (2015), and is an expansion of Nancy Fraser’s theory of Social Justice. Without getting too deep into the theory of Social Justice, what I want to do here is demonstrate the aspects of the 4R’s model that are most relevant for my research and portray why and how I will use the model itself. Thus far, as shown in the previous section of this theoretical chapter, Social Cohesion is the process, in an idealistic sense, which Sri Lankan society should be moving towards in the post ethnic conflict context. If social cohesion is the overarching notion that I am assessing teacher training in line with or against, then the 4R’s provides the analytical tool with which I will organise and analyse my data in a more coherent form.

The normative core of Nancy Fraser’s (2005) theory on Social Justice is a ‘parity of participation.’ According to this norm, justice requires social arrangements that permit all members of society to interact with one another as equal peers. To achieve this Fraser argues for the economic remedy of redistribution of resources as well as the need for better recognition and political representation in order to tackle more socio-cultural obstacles. While my thesis still views the ‘parity of participation’ as a core foundation in delivering justice, the critiques of Fraser’s work, as well as the specific post-war context of Sri Lanka, leads me to argue that the 4R’s model- which adds the fourth R of reconciliation, is more empirically relevant for my study. Robertson and Dale (2013) highlight how Fraser over-emphasised the distribution of access in her notion of justice and thereby paid less attention to the other elements in her theory. Zwartveen and Boelens (2014 as cited in Novelli et al 2015), reflect this sentiment and argue that this over emphasis on redistribution as a means of tackling inequality fails to fully take into account the experiences and claims coming from marginalised groups in society. It is with this in mind, and even more so due to the analysis of Social Justice in conflict affected settings, that Novelli et al (2015) add the new dimension of reconciliation.

The re-arrangement of Fraser’s theory provided by Novelli et al (2015) places education at the centre of investigations on Social Justice. What I aim to do is use the same structure of the 4R framework, however instead of placing education as a whole at the centre of investigations into justice- my focal point will be teacher training. By individually assessing each ‘R’ and analysing the effect teacher training programmes have on that particular component will enable me to gauge the influence such training has on the overall ideal of a just society. It is important to note here that even though each R is defined separately below, they are in fact closely interconnected, therefore what is required for my thesis is a conceptualisation of justice that treats redistribution, recognition, representation and reconciliation as both distinct perspectives on, and dimensions of, justice. None alone are sufficient, the interplay between each component is crucial to analyse for a truer and more lasting notion of ‘peace’.

The first ‘R’, redistribution, attempts to tackle the more economic injustice of unequal distribution of resources. Fraser (1998), particularly in her earlier work, argues that participatory parity is prevented from being reached due to economic structures that deny
members of a society access to resources due to the class structures inherent in many countries. This thesis focuses a little less on this ‘R’ especially in a purely economic sense, however it is important to see that claims of redistribution can go beyond solely economic questions and can involve a redistribution of power for instance. Recognition deals with the cultural dimension of injustice—recognition involves, “status equality, equitable interaction in institutional cultural hierarchies and space for ethnic diversity” (Novelli et al 2015: 13). This idea of ‘space for ethnic diversity’ is critical to my exploration of teacher training, and if such space is ever actually afforded within teacher education environments. Representation focuses on the political implications of questions on justice. Representation necessitates the analysis of, “the (absence of) transformative politics of framing at multiple scales (global, national, local) leading to the (un)equal participation in decision or claim making processes of all citizens,” (Fraser cited in Novelli et al 2015: 13). Utilising the representation component of Social Justice is crucial in attempting to resolve disputes about ‘who’ should count as a member and ‘which’ relevant communities are incorporated in such decisions, specifically related to education. The political dimension sets the methods for resolving contests in both the economic and cultural dimensions.

The final ‘R’, reconciliation, seen as, “the process which is crucial for (post-) conflict societies to prevent a relapse into conflict and incorporates education’s role in dealing with the past, transitional justice processes, issues related to bringing communities together, processes of forgiving and healing and the broader processes of social and psycho-social healing,” (Novelli et al 2014: 12). This is what transforms Fraser’s previous conceptualisation into the 4R’s framework, and the relevance for the case of Sri Lanka is obvious. The inclusion of reconciliation provides empirical logic following on from the outline of the current context in Sri Lanka that I clarified in chapter 1.4. What I shall explore later is how teacher training deals with the notion of reconciliation- not to claim that such training will lead to reconciliation, instead taking a more nuanced approach looking at the multifaceted relationship between teacher training and the theme of reconciliation.

Before I move onto my conceptualisation of teacher agency, I want to re-emphasise the interconnectedness of the 4Rs, even though I have outlined them above individually, there is a tendency for there to be overlap between each component as you will see in my data analysis. An example can portray this feature, let’s say there is recognition of the culturally biased elements of a countrys history curriculum. This is combined with a redistribution of resources to alter the history curriculum, making it more suited to a multi-ethnic country, this might have been achieved through better representation of ethnic minorities on the board of curriculum development, thereby assisting reconciliation processes. This very basic example is incorporated simply to bear in mind how the 4R framework tends to operate in interlinked ways which is empirically depicted in chapter 5. Crucial to note with this example however is that in ‘real life’ situations, and as my data will show, it is not often the case that the R’s are simply in support of each other and sometimes trade-offs between the R’s can happen.
2.4 Teacher Agency using the Strategic Relational Approach (SRA)

For this section I shall begin by delineating the relevance of exploring teacher agency for my research, therein defining the conceptualisation of agency which will be used in this study. Finally building on the work of Lopes Cardozo (2015), I shall apply Bob Jessop’s Strategic Relational Approach (SRA) to teachers in order to gauge a more nuanced picture of their positionality within education systems and wider social structures particularly relevant for the context of Sri Lanka.

My research analyses teacher training initiatives, hence teachers are the ultimate ground level focus of this thesis. This training would entail the development or enhancement of teacher agency- regardless of if this is negative or positive in relation to the concept of social cohesion. Therefore, assessing the agency of teachers is instrumental to my study of social cohesion within Sri Lankan society and more so in enquiring what the possibilities are of teachers changing the embedded attitudes of discrimination within the younger generations in Sri Lanka. It is however crucial to note that ‘agency’ as a concept is widely debated across the social sciences (Hoeks 2012), I shall outline the definition used for this thesis below, and towards the end of this section explain why the definition I use provides analytical logic for this study.

The work of Archer (1984) defines agency as the assemblage of three interconnected components- obligations, authority and autonomy. Relating this to my study of teacher training requires analysing each component individually to determine what the implications and relevance are for overall teacher agency. Firstly, supporting the work of Archer, Vongalis-Macrow (2007) explains how, “obligations define the boundaries and limitations to teacher’s positions,” (Vongalis-Macrow 2007: 431) - teacher’s responsibilities are constrained by government regulations which increasingly see the delivery of education as a service for students structured to deliver on exam based targets primarily. The case study by Davies (2011) demonstrates how the Sri Lankan school system follows this outline in terms of the configuration of assessment and pressure to meet university entrance targets taking priority. Such arrangements do not leave much space for achieving arguably less tangible goals of social cohesion and ethnic pluralism which is what my research aims to explore.

Secondly, “authority comes from being able to acquire and teach knowledge, this exchange ensures that teachers are critical agents in the education systems,” (Vongalis-Macrow 2007: 433). This ‘authority’ when viewed in a positive sense, posits that teachers have the choice to impart the types of knowledge they feel has intrinsic value to students in line with wider social goals. However, critiques of this (Smyth and Shacklock 1998) argue that the authoritative elements of agency in teachers is often under-utilised. They point towards the fact that authority in education is limited to being recognised as the skills of teaching towards externally set student outcomes. This more negative connotation will be explored in chapter 5.
Thirdly, “autonomy relates to the capacity held by teachers to determine and pursue their own interests and make effective their demands,” (Vongalis-Macrow 2007: 433). Similar to the obligations component of agency, teacher training can potentially afford increased space of autonomy for teachers to deliver more inclusive pedagogical practices which can contribute to processes which aim to tackle Sri Lanka’s history of ethnic conflict. Furthermore, this positive suggestion of ‘autonomy’ would entail teachers being afforded the space to challenge aspects of teaching such as curricula. However, a critique, as put forward by Lawn (2005), argues that changes in the professionalization of teachers in recent decades mean they often have a limited voice in changes made on their behalf. Often the hierarchy of government, bureaucracy of education and influence of school heads decide the ‘job descriptions’ of teachers (Lawn 2005: 114). This potentially detrimental angle of autonomy is reflected on later when tying up my respondent’s data in relation to the autonomy component of agency.

Central to this understanding of teacher agency is the awareness of the context within which agency can or cannot flourish; the SRA approach allows a more complete theoretical understanding of agency for my research. The SRA attempts to engage and clarify the debate between structure and agency, it examines structure in relation to action and vice versa. “Structures are treated analytically as strategically selective in their form, content and operation; and actions are likewise treated as structurally constrained,” (Jessop 2005: 48). Jessop’s approach involved examining how a given structure may privilege some actors, some identities, some strategies, some spatial and temporal horizons over others (Jessop 2005.) Furthermore, the approach examines actors in terms of their capabilities to engage in strategic-context analysis and to reflexively reorganise structures to modify their selectivities.

I will follow the work of Lopes Cardozo (2015) in applying the SRA in analysing the agency of teachers- this enabling me to “uncover the dialectics between teacher’s perceptions and strategies on the one hand, and the broader ‘strategic selective context’ on the other,” (Lopes Cardozo 2015: 5). The SRA insists on the ontological distinctiveness of structure and agency, and develops an epistemology for exploring their complex interaction. My study looking at teacher training entails the recognition that teacher’s actions cannot be viewed in isolation to the structural context in which they operate- typically schools and classroom environments within the national education system of Sri Lanka. Action is framed by a constant engagement of actors- in this study teachers- within their environment. At the same time the model acknowledges that different individuals may have varying opportunities and constraints to do so due to their levels of access to particular strategic resources (Lopes Cardozo 2015). Recognising the dynamic interplay between agency and structure provides a clearer idea of ways in which teachers may be able to ‘break open’ traditional structures and the norms within them- in this case relating to ethnic discrimination. In this sense, as argued by Lopes Cardozo (2015) using SRA allows teacher agency to be defined as their space to manoeuvre strategically with an understanding of
structural forces at play. Crucial to note here is the converse argument in the SRA structure/agency debate; how teacher’s agency may actually be pushed back by their school, community or in this case, national teacher training policy, which represents the underlying institutional complexities in the relationship between agency and structure.

Understanding this reverse is essential when looking at my analysis later in the thesis. My definition for the theory of agency that will be used is that it is a combination of the three components (obligations, authority and autonomy) with an acknowledgement of the structural influences that affect each of the components. These components, as demonstrated above, present similarities with the ‘positive and negative faces’ of education in conflict as outlined previously in this chapter. In the context of Sri Lanka, this signifies that teachers are not always automatically in favour of reconciliation and social cohesion—“teachers can be critical, complex and perhaps troublesome agents of transformation,” (Lopes Cardozo and Hoeks 2015: 61). This complex reality of agency entails that I break it down into each component and analyse how teacher training impacts the components before examining the overall impact. This method will provide a tool with which I can truly determine the positive or negative implications of teacher training on teacher agency alongside the broader purpose of social cohesion.
3. Methodology

3.1.1 Epistemological Positioning

Building on the themes outlined in my theoretical chapter previously, Critical Realism, from a meta-theoretical level adheres most fittingly to my research and this thesis. I build on the work of Hay (2002), Jessop (2005) and Fairclough (2005) to develop a meaningful lens through which my study on teacher training and social cohesion can be better understood while genuinely grasping the variations that exist in the social world when it comes individual perceptions as portrayed in this work. Critical Realism rejects the epistemological assumptions of positivism, instead promoting the notion that multiple interpretations of reality are possible, which includes a version of reality that exists independently of our subjective observations of it (Fairclough 2005: 922). Furthermore, the understanding of Critical Realism that Jessop (2005) provides asserts that social forms pre-exist individuals and are a necessary condition of their activity- ontologically this elucidates the importance of recognising institutional structures and mechanisms of governance that influence individual action. Furthermore, Lopes Cardozo (2011) builds on the work of Jessop and distinguishes between the three domains of reality as observed from a Critical Realist perspective- arguing that this theory is a tool that should be used to explore these three domains as they occur in a certain time and place. Firstly, the domain of the ‘real’ which consists of invisible structures, causal mechanisms and powers we experience, secondly the ‘actual’ which are visible and invisible events and processes; and finally the ‘empirical’ meaning the visible observations of the previous two domains (real and actual) (Lopes Cardozo 2011: 24). Utilising this distinction has been crucial in my understanding of the subjective realities as portrayed by my respondents and in particular to concepts of teacher agency within the context of teacher training environments.

This leads on nicely to the epistemological considerations that Critical Realism takes on, namely the recognition that one cannot understand human (political) behaviour and power relations without understanding the ‘ideas’ actors hold about their environment (Lopes Cardozo 2011). This viewpoint is in line with the SRA approach highlighted in the theoretical chapter and attempts to offer a resolution to the traditionally assumed dualistic relationship between structure and agency. Essentially to move beyond misleading conceptualisations that see structure and agency as static and separate.

3.2 Research Design and Methods

My research was carried out under a purely qualitative framework, with semi-structured interviews, participant observation, my fieldwork diary and document analysis generating the data I am writing this thesis with. The interviews were my primary and most reliable source of data. This being due to the fact that these conversations generated the most in
depth views on sensitive topics due to the one on one settings the majority of them took place in. In total I conducted 23 semi-structured (individual and group) interviews with a total of 42 participants, averaging around one hour and 15 minutes each. As my research was carried out in two separate blocks - the first period in Jaffna and the end period in Colombo, this impacted upon the types of people I spoke to in these areas. Colombo was much more linked to the policy and governance side of my research on teacher training - gaining a perspective on directives supposed to be implemented and plans for the future - presenting me with the overall picture. Moreover, my time in Colombo gave me insights from the different actors involved in the provision of teacher training such as - GIZ, UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education (their respective roles explained in chapter 4.1). The interviews in Jaffna took a more community level focus, some of them were carried out with practitioners of education, including the president and principal of the two formal teacher training institutions, as well as speaking to teacher trainers, recently qualified teachers and in-service advisors. Other interviews in Jaffna venturing slightly away from the education field were carried out with a political columnist, government officials, and an organisation providing psychosocial support following the war. These interviews were done with the purpose of gaining a specific perspective on the state of ethnic relations in general and particularly to gauge the state of affairs in Jaffna in regards to topics of the war 7 years after its ending.

The semi-structured interview technique, using an interview guide consisting of open ended questions and the themes needed to be covered in the conversation, I felt was the best way to approach my respondents. This relates to the fact that it gave me a degree of flexibility to first assess how my respondent was feeling about a certain topic - whether they were more resistant to certain themes regarding religion, the war, or interethnic relations - and then decide which way to steer the conversation. Furthermore, not having a rigid structure of questions per se allowed the interviews to start in free flowing, relaxed ways which definitely strengthened the quality of data generated towards the end of the interview when my questions became more specific. Each interview I had, I developed a slightly different interview guide - albeit they still covered the same core themes, what was adjusted was in relation to each particular respondent’s precise background. In these interviews, I tended to give the respondents information about my background and position - firstly clarifying it was for my personal university research endeavours, secondly explaining my relationship to Sri Lanka having grown up there. The more interviews I did the more I realised how useful these techniques were, the first one in establishing I was not a threat in any way because as later analysed in this thesis there is still a high degree of mistrust within the Jaffna community especially in regards to the sensitive topics discussed. My relationship to Sri Lanka enabled rapport to build much quicker - there was an appreciation that I understood the context of the country and the war on a more personal level, furthermore when talking about details of the education system in Sri Lanka, there was less need to clarify otherwise vague cultural notions that were more easily understood from my position.
In general, the archaic structure and bureaucracy of the education system in Sri Lanka entails gatekeeper issues and resistance to doing research- in many of the government controlled settings (provincial departments of education, teacher training colleges, ministry of education) getting the right types of permission is a prerequisite to organising meetings. This was daunting at first especially as I was in an unfamiliar location of Jaffna without many prior contacts, however the snowball sampling methods that I took on proved to be key to the data I collected. The majority of my respondents were a result of their contact details being passed on to me by a person I had previously interviewed- yet again the rapport built in my first few interviews definitely aided the process along with probing questions during my interview trying to determine if they knew other relevant respondents they could put me in touch with. Whenever I entered school settings it was clear the principal took the role of gatekeeper, it surprised me how much power they maintained within each school, however, I did not experience any real resistance as long as I maintained the correct approach of speaking to the principal first before anyone else in the school. Furthermore, me having a business card stating my role as a researcher surprisingly went a long way in building assurances to gatekeepers such as the school principals that I was doing no harm. Stating that I was from the University of Amsterdam made my role seem more detached from the local context and thereby less threatening which was beneficial to me.

In regards to part of the focus of this thesis- teacher training, I sat in on four different classes, each for a period of two hours. One being within the formal teacher training college, and the other carried out by the STEPS institute which represented a non-formal source of teacher training. My observation notes from these sessions proved fruitful due to the visible differences in approach and methodology of training, which will be analysed more deeply in later chapters. These sessions enabled me to gain a clearer perspective on the realities of teacher training in Jaffna. Furthermore, it highlighted the discrepancies between how these training classes were spoken about in positive ways from the principals/educational authorities in charge of its delivery and the reality of the classroom dynamics. My observation of the sessions sitting at the back of the classroom enabled me to assess the subtleties in student responsiveness and the pedagogical approach used by teacher trainers which is an area of importance that I shall demonstrate later.

Throughout my fieldwork period I utilised a diary to take general notes regarding my surroundings; religious events, language, day to day conversations with tuk tuk drivers or members of the community- basically anything that I thought was remotely interesting went into my diary. Although this task was quite time consuming and in some instances irrelevant, it generated what Geertz (1973) describes as, ‘thick descriptions’. These rich descriptions emphasized the importance I gave to the contextual understanding of social behaviour- gaining a rounded picture of the state of ethnic relations in Jaffna from all available perspectives.

Qualitative document analysis was my final source of data for this thesis, a combination of documents from the Ministry of Education, GIZ and the National Education Commission
provided the basis for this analysis. This allowed me to compare the reality to the rhetoric—crucial to note that some of the documents I gained access to are still in the draft phases and are confidential so I have taken the necessary precautionary steps to maintain the trust my respondents felt when giving me access to such data. This component of my data collection process, I believe, correlates to the concept of triangulation developed by Webb et al (1966) - clearly it is more relevant to a quantitative study however I feel there is overlap that can be justified to my research. My interviews, classroom observations and field notes previously mentioned, in combination with the policy documents enabled greater confidence in my findings while emphasising the variations that exist in a social context that might not have been so clear if I did not have these multiple sources of data.

Important to note with my methods of research- due to my epistemological foundations and qualitative techniques- the concepts deployed are in congruence to Blumer’s (1954) notion of ‘sensitizing concepts’. That is, departing from the idea that my themes and topics of interest are ‘definitive’ as is the case in more quantitative studies, but taking the route that better captures the different ways specific concepts are thought about by people. “Social researchers should recognise that the concepts they use are sensitising concepts in that they provide a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical issues,” (Blumer 1954: 7) - approaching concepts in this way enables my analysis to act as a means of uncovering the variety of forms that a theme or concept can assume. This resonates clearly to my ontological views of not imposing pre-determined structures on the social world and relations existing within it.

3.3  Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Ethical considerations are of fundamental importance in all social science research, however, against the context of post-war ethnic relations, this importance cannot be understated. Prior to each interview I explained the purpose of my study in the language most familiar to the particular respondent, English and Sinhala by me, if in Tamil through my translator. This was done to make sure there was no confusion in understanding, additionally, before commencing each interview I let my participant know they are free to leave whenever they want and they are not obliged to answer questions they are not comfortable with. Informed consent is instrumental to qualitative studies such as mine, I opted for the route of verbal consent due to practical reasons. Each interview was recorded for later transcription and permission was obtained for this from each respondent as well as assurances of relevant anonymity. Whenever the participant seemed interested by my work I expressed how they can contact me if wanting to see the final results and I have prepared a brief summary document for such instances.

In this section I would like to briefly include some of the limitations that I see in my research study which also exist due to the qualitative nature of my approach. Lofland (1995: 164) warns against the sin of ‘descriptive excess’, whereby the amount of detail inhibits the analysis of data- as mentioned my fieldwork diary did consist of an amalgamation of
information. The steps to ensure attempting to solve this apparent issue relates to being as selective as possible with what ‘relevant’ data is. However, due to the nature of my study I do not think having too much descriptive contextual data is negative because that exact contextual understanding of social life in Jaffna is what I am trying to decipher, and the greater depth of contextual understanding will only aid my research. Other concerns relate to my position as a researcher and the degree to which I can separate my personal feelings and emotion from the research undertaken. This subjectivity is almost unavoidable when you consider that I do have the background of growing up in Sri Lanka, and my tools to build rapport with respondents being linked to this upbringing as previously mentioned. However, in every possible instance I did try to detach my personal feelings from the conversation so as not to influence the respondent’s answers too much, never expressing my religion or particular Sri Lankan ethnicity (Sinhalese). Furthermore, looking back on my study through the more quantitative criteria of external validity- the possibility to replicate my study, would be difficult. The fact that my research has a high degree of personal perception as a core component means that my role as a researcher influenced the data that was generated as well as the type of people I spoke to. My role influenced the decisions made and data collected undoubtedly, yet I aim to increase my validity by being transparent about the choices made throughout the analysis. My study was aimed at gaining a greater understanding of the content of teacher training and ethnic relations within a particular time and space, therefore applying solely quantitative measures of research quality does not align with the core of what this study is exploring- post-war ethnic relations.
4. Chapter Four

1. A. Who are the key actors involved in the provision of teacher training in Jaffna?

   B. How is teacher training governed and what is the impact of this governance on future teachers?

This chapter deals with both parts of my first sub-question. The aim of this chapter is to provide an explanation of the structure of teacher training in Jaffna from a macro-level perspective. The first part of this sub-question lays out the organisation of the teacher training framework in Jaffna, whereas the following component delves deeper into the mechanisms of governance and the implications of this on future teachers. Once the key actors in the field of teacher training have been defined, I will explore their perspectives and engagement in training related elements of the education structure and what exactly this entails.

4.1 Key Actors

In order to delineate the key actors in the field of teacher training in Jaffna it is necessary to clarify some distinctions, primarily the division between formal and non-formal training mechanisms. It has been argued (Malcolm et al 2002) that the distinction between the two settings is not as clear as one might assume. The literature often defines non-formal in opposition to the dominant institutional government set educational environments. However, there is often spill over between the two as my research portrayed- for instance teachers in the formal schooling system can undertake non-formal training programmes. While I assess both settings it is worth keeping in mind that formal, government controlled forms of training have the greatest potential reach on future teachers.

4.1.1 Formal Actors

With that distinction clarified I now turn my attention to the actors involved in formal teacher training. The most important institutions to note here are the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the National Institute of Education (NIE). The NIE are in charge of the pre-service teacher training, in-service teacher training, curriculum development and textbooks, whereas the MoE is much more school management, logistics, buildings and resources (I18). For my study the NIE is the most relevant and important organisation as they control the structure and curriculum of teacher education programmes. While based in Colombo, the

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2 This style of referencing will be used throughout my data analysis to refer to insights gained from interviews that were carried out. This list of anonymised respondents can be found in the appendix.
insights gained from my data showed their reach is immense and they maintain a hegemony of control on the organisation of formal teacher training. Interestingly every single one of my respondents painted the NIE in a negative light pointing towards the archaic nature of their operations. The intricacies of the structure of the NIE—insights gained from my interviews and observation notes, will be discussed later in this chapter when exploring its implications for governance and ethnic relations.

Based on the review of my data it seems fair to conclude that the NIE organises teacher training from a centralised position in a very much, top down fashion. Formal training is further broken down into pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes. Pre-service training is carried out by the National Colleges of Education (NCOE), there are 18 of these in the country which provide a two-year residential teacher education programme with a one-year internship, leading to the National Diploma in Teaching (NDT). Trainee teachers usually join these NCOE’s after finishing their A-levels. For my research the relevant NCOE was 5km outside of Jaffna town. The Jaffna NCOE was the only pre-service training institution for the Northern Province, in my interview with the president of the college he demonstrated how the population was made up of Tamils and Muslims only, there was not a single Sinhalese student in the college at the time of my research. Furthermore, the language of instruction was restricted to Tamil and English only.

In terms of in-service teacher training the stand out body in Jaffna is the Kopai Teacher Training College. Like the NCOE, this is a general two-year programme but the difference is that the trainee teachers who attend have already been appointed as teachers in schools. Teacher training colleges (TTC) admit non-graduate teachers who have completed 3 years of service in schools (NEC 2016). It came across as unusual, how teachers would be placed in schools prior to having any pedagogical training and this is an area I investigate when analysing agency in the following chapter. Currently there are 7 teacher training colleges in the country, down from 19 two decades ago (I05). A recent study I was given access to by the National Education Commission (NEC) on the professional development of teachers highlighted that there were plans to phase out these TTCs and replace them with NCOEs by 2008. However, they still function as the main providers of in-service training to non-graduate teachers (NEC 2016). This is indicative of the institutional difficulties present within the Sri Lankan education system—8 years on from legislation that signalled the closing down of these colleges, they still continue to function. In my conversations with the Principal of the Kopai College, he claimed, “politicians and other parliament members have no consideration and give no chances to innovate the training college instead they give more priority to the NCOE,” (I05) the undertones of frustration were clear. While the principal was directing his irritation here towards the politicians and the NCOE, what was more revealing was the detachment from central policy that was experienced in this training college in Jaffna. When I questioned about this phasing out of the colleges the response I received was, “it’s all talk, not much changes,” (I05).

Fieldwork diary, Conversations with GIZ (I20, I23)
While these two colleges (NCOE and Kopai College) are the only formal forms of teacher training in Jaffna it must be noted that the NIE and selected universities offer degrees in education (BEd, PGDE, MEd). These options form another route for the professional development of teachers, which future teachers from Jaffna have the option of taking, however since these are not carried out in Jaffna I feel it slightly irrelevant to go into detail about such forms in this thesis.

4.1.2 Non-Formal Actors

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, actors not guided by the official state apparatus is the definition of non-formal settings taken in this thesis. In my time in Jaffna I came across two initiatives that were carrying out training for the education of teachers. Firstly, the STEPS institute- this project was highlighted as an area needing further research in the case study on education in countries affected by conflict by Lynn Davies (2011). Secondly, Shathiham, an organisation that provides psycho-social support and counselling in the northern province.

STEPS (Steps Through English for Public Servants) uses English as a link language to teach concepts and skills in democracy, peacebuilding, social cohesion and conflict resolution. Language, as highlighted previously, is a great source of division in Sri Lankan society. So STEPS used this recognition that all three ethnicities were less resistant to learning English and this could provide a forum for different ethnicities to come together- which in formal environments, organised according to language is nearly impossible. In my discussions with the individual who pioneered this programme I understood how the mandate of ‘public servants’ was used strategically in an attempt to avoid the MoE and the difficulties of working with them. “We said let’s bypass the central ministry of education and engage the provincial ministry of education and do a real decentralisation- our mandate was peacebuilding from decentralisation. Then to reach teachers let’s say teachers are civil servants- they don’t often consider themselves to be but technically they are. Bringing the teachers into that group of civil servants had real value as they were the biggest impact,” (I18). The curriculum was organised by the British Council, “and everybody desperately wanted a British Council certificate and to learn English, so that was the big carrot and now we’ve got you and now we’re going to teach you peace education,” (I18). While not focussed on a particular subject as is done in the formal pre, and in service teacher training settings, STEPS was delivered as a content and language integrated learning programme which combines good governance and development topics with skills in critical thinking, cross cultural communication, conflict resolution and English. Analysing the impact study of the programme illuminates how teachers made the biggest progress as a result of STEPS- they show a 42% overall increase in the use of skills and knowledge from the baseline, with a higher direct transfer of knowledge and skills to their own students (GIZ PIP 2012).

Furthermore, STEPS targeted school principals as well as teachers and this was indicative of their approach of bringing together professionals from varying backgrounds looking to
eliminate the sense of hierarchy that exists in other training environments. My time spent talking to the current trainers of STEPS and observations of their classroom sessions were fruitful in the sense that they were very different in approach and methodology compared to the formal teacher training classes I observed. The methodology used at STEPS is purposefully learner centred and openly communicative in approach. The ‘students’ are referred to as ‘friends’ and there is constant encouragement to talk instead of write. The session I sat in on was the week where the class focussed on conflict resolution - interesting and relevant for the focus of my thesis was how the topic of the war was discussed. Surprising to me was how confident and unguarded the members of the class were when talking about sensitive topics relating to the conflict - this was at odds with my general understanding of life in Jaffna where there is still a degree of mistrust and insecurity present within the community, especially when discussing such topics. Presentations, another skill missing in curriculum of formal training environments, were carried out during the conflict resolution session. When questioned about how the students felt about this the head trainer reflected, “it’s quite unusual, in the first week of the course there is a bit of hesitation in making them do a presentation, they have a bit of anxiety. But later on they also start to like it and by the end of the course they all say they got a great opportunity of coming in front of others to say some words which they never did in their life before,” (I15). What I want to bring attention to here is the fact that the approach taken by STEPS is unusual and in stark contrast to formal teacher training which still has the feel of ‘chalk and talk’ as it’s methodological foundation. I will reflect back on the work of the STEPS institute in the following chapter when determining the influence different types of training has on the agency of teachers.

Shanthiham, as an organisation providing teacher training, needs to be looked at from a alternative perspective compared to formal teacher training, again because it doesn’t focus on a particular curriculum per se. Instead it works by training teacher’s in schools in the Jaffna province to be counsellors. In every school with over 300 pupils it is policy that there should be a specialist counsellor where students, teachers and parents can visit in times of mental distress (I09). In group conversations with the organisation it was highlighted how under the previous government, “they did not allow any psychosocial counselling for five years after the war,” (I10) however with the change of regime there has been increased space afforded for such counselling. These discussions further illuminated the fragile nature of peace and the mental make-up of citizens in the north of the country. Sri Lanka has the 4th highest suicide rate in the world and Killinochi district, just south of Jaffna, has the highest suicide rate of the country with 32 attempted suicides in May alone (I10). A current focus of Shanthiham is working on school drop in centres, as part of a government planned initiative which would provide, “a space for children and teachers to improve their mental health wellbeing, a centre for help,” (I10). Shathiham’s role is to identify and train teachers

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4 Observation notes from STEPS; Observation notes from Kopai College
5 Observation notes from STEPS
6 Field work diary
who have potential counselling skills, who can then be the point of contact in schools for psychosocial support. So far, five of these centres have been established in schools in the Jaffna area (I20). What my discussions with Shanthiham portrayed was the delicate nature of the psychosocial needs present currently and resulting from three decades of war in the region—particularly I will explore how such training (to be counsellors) fits with teacher’s personal identities when addressing my second sub question in the following chapter.

4.1.3 International Actors

In order to complete the full outline of actors involved in the provision of teacher training in Jaffna, international organisations and their involvement too needs to be discussed. The two that are most involved on this topic are UNICEF, and GIZ (the international development branch of the German government).

UNICEF’s operations in the field of teacher training and social cohesion are currently two fold- on one hand they work with the government on policy related activity, generating evidence and reviewing the current Education for Social Cohesion (ESC) policy, and secondly they carry out specific training workshops themselves (I21, I22). The 2016 review of the current ESC policy has been a focus of UNICEF’s operations this year, and the state of teacher training was a core component of this review. Related to working with the government UNICEF has been trying to support the NIE by strengthening the incorporation of social cohesion concepts in the primary curriculum (I22). This year they managed to change the curricula for grade 2 by bringing in an international consultant who was an expert on curriculum development, however in the future the plan is to build the capacity of the NIE to carry out such changes themselves (I22). In terms of actual training carried out by UNICEF, most relevant and recent work undertaken has been the training of In-Service Advisors (ISAs) in each zone. ISAs have the function of monitoring and evaluating teacher performance in schools (see chapter 4.2.4), my data suggested the follow up evaluation of newly graduated teachers in Sri Lanka has been poorly structured and implemented (I07, I12, I22). The training of the ISAs took place through a 3-day workshop which brought together ISAs from all 97 zones. “Training was on the themes of social cohesion, we had a consultant who gave them the knowledge of how teachers can promote these themes and give them a broad idea of social cohesion within the societal structure- to teach them how schools and teachers can play a role. We didn’t want to touch the structure of the ISA curriculum because anything to do with that is the NIEs business and they wouldn’t like the interference,” (I22). This point in particular I felt was signalling the difficulties inherent in working through the educational structure of Sri Lanka, this will be explored further when assessing the governance of training.

GIZ are the implementation partner of the German government for development cooperation purposes. They have been supporting the MoE for more than 20 years and their office is based in the Ministry itself, their programmes run on 3 year cycles and the latest extension of the current phase keeps operations going until March 2019 (I20). It was
indicated that this could potentially be the last phase of GIZ’s involvement in Sri Lankan education which raises questions for the future of who will carry out their activities (I23). “Our focus for the next three years is pretty much on pre-service training, working with the NCOEs,” (I20) additionally GIZ are attempting to improve the teaching quality and structure of 2NL (I23). These two priority areas are aided by the close relationship maintained between the government of Sri Lanka and GIZ. “We ourselves are no longer supporting the in-service training, this funding should come from the system itself. We are working with the NCOEs because there is a shortage of 2NL instructors and lecturers at the NCOE, you hardly have a person understanding what it means to teach Sinhala or Tamil. It is a tricky one because people hardly understand the issue involved, so it needs a bit of orientation of decision makers, it needs proper training, so we are involved in that. We are using the NCOEs for the transmission of issues with regard to social cohesion, reconciliation, bringing students together to at least have experience of challenging the prejudice and trust issues that exist,” (I23). Important to note with this statement I feel is, firstly, GIZ leaving the in-service training environment alone, this is arguably the result of the inefficiencies inherent in the training colleges themselves⁷, and secondly the focus on improving methodology for 2NL training. In my discussions with the coordinator of 2NL training at GIZ, he emphasized how, “the school system has no methodology awareness, they don’t even know what to teach- if I am a first language learner, my purpose for learning Tamil is different to a Sinhalese persons purpose for learning Tamil. The teacher training doesn’t acknowledge this; I might want literature skills whereas you would only want communication skills. It is not so much the fault of the training colleges but more due to the NIE. The curriculum is the issue- the mismatch is not the fault of teacher trainers,” (I23). This is the current priority area for GIZ, improving methodology and overall capacity of pre-service teacher training.

I want to briefly highlight here how GIZ were actually the main funders of the STEPS institute in their early years of operation. This demonstrates the flexible nature of their programmes which consist of work both in formal and non-formal environment- portraying how the distinction between the two settings shouldn’t be looked at as fixed. Furthermore, to end this section I want to make a point that the view of teacher training taken in this thesis is from a broader position than just viewing it purely in the sense of the teaching of a particular subject. As shown in this section it can take a variety of forms which all still lead to the professional development of future teachers, whether it be; counselling, the STEPS English programme, development of ISA evaluation techniques, 2NL teaching or methodology within the NCOEs and TTCs. What is more important for this study is how these trainings influence the concept of social cohesion. Moreover, any evaluation of such training needs to be done with the conceptualisation of social cohesion which takes into account determinants of ethnicity in identity construction, forming the backbone of such assessments.

⁷ Observation notes of Kopai college
4.2

This section addresses sub question 1B- **How is teacher training governed and what is the impact of this governance on future teachers?** For purposes of coherence and flow I will break this down further and assess the governance implications on four areas of the teacher training process. This is done in a way to match the order governance mechanisms take, from the national level as it filters down to local level.

### 4.2.1 Overall Educational Structure and Governance

Trainee teachers in Jaffna are essentially in the process of being integrated into the Sri Lankan national education system. This necessitates drawing attention to some aspects of the overall structure and governance of education as a whole which affects the roles of future teachers.

Figure 2 portrays the governance and management structure of the formal education system in Sri Lanka.

*Figure 2: (MoE 2011)*
As shown in figure 2, the national structure entails power is decentralised from the MoE over nine provincial departments, this is then further divided into 95 education zones. The district of Jaffna makes up 5 of these zones. However, even with this decentralisation, power and decision making ultimately lies at the level of the MoE and NIE\textsuperscript{8}. Local scholars (Abeyratne 2004, Perera 2002) as well as more recent international research on peace education in Sri Lanka (Lopes Cardozo and Hoeks 2011, Metheuver unp., Hansen-Shearer unp) have pointed towards the heavy focus on exams being the dominant feature of system. What my data portrayed was that teacher education, as a result of the general system, follows this same path of structure. “\textit{The system always teaches the students to be selfish, actually it is an exam oriented, competitive system, it is not a society oriented system, the same thing applies to teacher training,}” (I04). The principles of ‘chalk and talk’ teaching are reflected throughout the formal education system; dictation and memorising with the goal of passing the exam are the pervasive forms of learning for trainee teachers and students alike\textsuperscript{9}. “\textit{You can’t change a country unless you change the national exam, the national exam system is the tail that wags the dog,}” (I18) this statement coming from an individual who has spent 20 years trying to reform the Sri Lankan education system highlights that this exam focus is the crux of most deficiencies in education. Moreover, what needs to be addressed is the influence this exam focus has on the mentality of all educational practitioners and students. It breeds a culture of acceptance, asking no questions, and leaving no space for critical thinking\textsuperscript{10}. Parents, children, teachers and society as a whole are caught up in a highly-pressurised environment focussing purely on statistical achievement. In this environment, with such little attention paid towards vocational, non-exam elements of education, tackling the less quantifiable goals of social cohesion, reconciliation and critical thinking is challenging.

As mentioned in the introduction, the change in regime as of 2015 was an area of hope for the country. This topic served as a key question in my interview guides to gain an understanding of the governance implications, on education, of this change. In speaking to the head of GIZ’s education for social cohesion division he demonstrated how the, “\textit{the space for discussion has widened, however the structural elements are still the same, you still work in the same environments so you have the same issues; lack of capacity and implementation problems, management and coordination all in a top down approach. It was there before and it’s still there now, it stays highly politicised,}” (I20). Telling from this statement, and what I want to highlight are the coordination difficulties that persist due to the top-down approach that is taken. These structural impediments of educational governance in Sri Lanka were empirically portrayed earlier in this chapter when discussing the lack of direction and understanding from the principle of the Kopai TTC in relation to the government policy regarding the phasing out of the colleges. The complex system of

\textsuperscript{8} I06, I11

\textsuperscript{9} I13, I15, Classroom observation NCOE and Kopai TTC

\textsuperscript{10} I13
governance of education (figure 2), which is designed to decentralise power, was often shown to actually lead to more of a disconnection from national level to local levels. For Jaffna, this detachment was even greater due to language dynamics\textsuperscript{11}. The implications of this governance structure on teacher’s development, are in general negative due to the separation existent between the local and national levels. Perhaps most importantly, teacher education gets sucked in to the national system which is driven by a focus on output and exams. An agentic analysis of this entails heavy obligations for trainee teachers throughout the formal education system to abide by these priority areas. Increased autonomy could be a potential solution however more commonly than not this autonomy is a rarity in Sri Lanka as will be explored more deeply in chapter 5.3. “It is difficult to break out because of the attitude, the system is so competitive, so geared towards exams and loaded with content and cognitive learning, the methodology is weak,” (I20). This is the challenge for teacher training, if it is to truly support the notion of social cohesion, these obstacles will now be addressed with a closer focus on the teacher training institutes, their governance mechanisms, and the implications resulting from these.

## 4.2.2 Institutional Level (NIE, Jaffna NCOE, Kopai TTC)

Questions relating to the governance of teacher training always initiate at the NIE, this is where I shall begin this section and follow the governance implications as they trickle down from the NIE to the two training colleges at the local Jaffna level.

### NIE- A Dead Institution?

Every single respondent who was an educational practitioner pointed towards the flaws inherent in the NIE and their operations. “It is a dead institution,” (I19) “Incompetence as well as a reluctance to get out there, they don’t have any real classroom experience,” (I18) “the problem is at the ministry and NIE, academically they don’t have the people with the right qualifications- there is a knowledge gap between theory and practice,” (I23). The insights into the operational deficiencies of the NIE that I gained from my respondents additionally carried an undertone concerning the ethnic make-up of the institute. “Dysfunction, a kind of racism brought about by weird indoctrination,” (I18) unquestionably this was a bold claim, however from my time spent at the NIE, my observations did not exactly disprove this argument.

As you enter the NIE the first thing you see is a large Buddha statue\textsuperscript{13}, the staff are predominantly Sinhalese, the council board who are in charge of all functions were all Sinhalese\textsuperscript{14}. The Sinhala-Buddhist narrative holds strong within the NIE\textsuperscript{15}, one possible implication of this that came up constantly in conversations with educational actors in

\textsuperscript{11} I05

\textsuperscript{13} Fieldwork diary, observation notes from NIE

\textsuperscript{14} NIE website

\textsuperscript{15} I01
Jaffna\textsuperscript{16} was official correspondence being in Sinhalese. The first instance of this occurred during my interview with the president of the Jaffna NCOE, during our meeting he received a letter from the NIE in Colombo, however he could not understand this as it was in Sinhalese and there was no one around at the time to translate it. I understood later that this was not the policy, and actually all official correspondence to Jaffna should be in Tamil, or the link language English, however this almost trivial oversight still persists. “This is a common problem for all Tamil departments, they (the NIE) could change it very quickly, we don’t even want a Tamil letter, English would be fine cause we can understand it,” (I15) this dynamic can be viewed through the framework of the ‘negative face’ of education by Bush and Salterelli (2000). Language of official correspondence, used in this way, can be seen as a tool which promotes the cultural repression of Tamils in the north, almost signalling that they have to be able to speak the majority language to function effectively. When viewed through the lens of the 4R model this aligns with a (mis)recognition of Tamil areas on behalf of the majority population. This will be explored more acutely in chapter five, however the implications of such correspondence have the short term effect of generating frustration in the Tamil educational departments, moreover it maintains the idea of ‘difference’ between the two ethnicities.

**Jaffna Teacher Training Colleges- Centres of Excellence or an Open Prison?**

Moving onto the governance of the teacher training colleges at the local Jaffna level and the effects they have on future teachers. The fact that the teacher education curriculum and overall instruction comes from the NIE, down to the training centres in Jaffna, entails viewing these institutional bodies as interlinked instead of separate. Any discussions regarding the organisation of the teacher education system in Jaffna needs to tackle the ‘elephant in the room’ (I18) which is the issue of segregation. Segregation, which exists throughout the formal schooling system is maintained in these teacher education settings (I02). Discussions of pluralism and ideas of imparting such notions to the younger generations, through future teachers, needs to be understood in the context of basically mono-ethnic environments of teacher training in Jaffna. In reference to the 4Rs, this lack of inter-ethnic interaction is problematic- an understanding of recognition is hard to come by for these future teachers when they themselves have not had to deal with a pluralistic environment.

The governance of the Kopai TTC in particular I want to shed light on here, described by one respondent as an ‘open prison’ (I23). The archaic mechanisms of its structure influence the future roles of the teachers that are carrying out their in-service training there. “At the same time their friends are going to university, the TTC is like an open prison, they have to wear sarees, they have to live in a hostel, they cannot use their phone, it is very strict,” (I23). Such a stringent environment for learning needs to be viewed from the perspective of the trainee.

\textsuperscript{16} I02, I05, I12, I22
teachers themselves, one such respondent, who had recently (2015) graduated from the Kopai TTC highlighted how, “there is no freedom,” (I14). Furthermore, during my classroom observation of an English lesson at the Kopai TTC I asked the teacher about the procedure which meant that these trainee teachers had appointments in schools prior to receiving any pedagogical training. Her response was, “I don’t think there will be much difference because even after training they will still do the same, that’s why the children don’t improve,” (I05). The first point I want to reflect on, about this exchange, is how the head teacher refers to these trainee teachers as ‘children’. The classroom was made up of students between the ages of 21 and 26\textsuperscript{17} so treating them as ‘children’ was indicative of the authoritarian organisation of the teaching college as a whole. Analysing this from the framework of agency I defined in chapter two results in a lack of ‘autonomy’, withholding the capacity of the future teachers to determine and pursue their own interests, initially by maintaining such a strict governance approach and then by reducing them to ‘children’. Additionally, following this response, the teacher states, “that’s the thing, now I’m free to talk because I am retired (as of last week), I am not in fear of the department or anyone that’s why I am telling you this,” (I05). This brings attention to another component of agency, does ‘authority’ only really increase once a teacher leaves the grips of the formal educational apparatus? This question will be explored and dealt with in the following chapter of this thesis.

\subsection*{4.2.3 Second National Language (2NL) Governance}

As expressed in chapter 2, the operationalisation of the concept of social cohesion I use for this thesis involves taking the view that for each ethnicity learning their particular second national language will lead to a more accommodating and assimilated society. This is further supported from policy level whereby the ESC policy has 2NL as one of its seven components; therefore, the governance of 2NL teacher training has clear relevance for this study and needs to be tackled here.

Significantly, in regard to teacher training of 2NL is a heavy shortage of 2NL teachers island wide. “For the time being there are 6000 teachers needed for the country but up to now there are only 4000 available, and production per year is maximum 40-60,” (I23). Attempting to fill this gap of 2000 teachers is an area receiving governance attention currently, and it is one of GIZ’s main priority areas for this phase of their operations. My discussions around 2NL at the Jaffna NCOE demonstrated how trying to get a Sinhalese, Sinhala trainer was essential and proving difficult\textsuperscript{18}. The evidence is clear that getting taught a language by a native speaker is beneficial to a non-native speaker teaching the language in question. In Jaffna this means it would be preferable having a Sinhalese person teaching Sinhala as a second national language to Tamil students, this being due to dynamics of linguistics relating

\textsuperscript{17} Observation notes from Kopai class

\textsuperscript{18} I02
to accents and pronunciation (Lantolf 2000). At the time of my research the Jaffna NCOE had just managed to get a Sinhala teacher to come teach at the college however one week after this appointment he had got transferred to another NCOE19. When I questioned the president of the college about who carries out the Sinhala 2NL classes, he responded, “Tamil lecturers must do it, we have asked the Sinhala ones several times but they don’t want to come here,” (I02). This notion of potential ‘resistance’ of a Sinhala person coming to Jaffna will be addressed specifically in the next chapter when addressing teachers’ personal identities however what I want to note here is the difficulties that exist in 2NL teaching due to governance obstructions which haven’t managed to solve the lack of 2NL teachers.

The methodology and curriculum for 2NL teaching poses further questions relating to governance. Respondents from GIZ and UNICEF respectively claimed, “the curricula from the NIE is just nonsense,” (I21) “the national language policy is talking about communication skills, however the present school syllabus is focussing only on reading and writing, not listening and speaking, that is the problem, there is a big mismatch,” (I23). This mismatch takes further form in the organisation of textbooks, one respondent stated that trainee teachers as well as teachers already in the 2NL system, “don’t know what is required to teach a language or the methodology, if you look at the syllabus there is no difference between the textbook of the first language and second language,” (I23). The implications of such a methodology for teaching a 2NL hinders the abilities of these future teachers to deliver a pedagogy that fits with the national language policy focussing on communication for the purposes of social cohesion.

4.2.4 Governance of Monitoring and Evaluation of Teachers

When speaking to the president of the Jaffna NCOE about what happens once the trainee teachers graduate from their pre-service training his response was, “actually after studying here they are going to schools, then there is no monitoring from us, we don’t know what happened to them, we are only teaching and giving a certificate, after leaving us we don’t contact them,” (I02). Following this up during my fieldwork I understood that this role of monitoring and evaluation is that of the In-Service Advisor (ISA), interestingly one respondent demonstrated a slight contradiction in how the ISA role is organised. “ISA is an in-service advisor, it is not supposed to be a monitor but often they have a different idea, when the government developed this idea they (ISAs) were supposed to be an advisor, they are supposed to come to the NIE get a training and then they have to teach the training to other teachers, but they think they are just monitors,” (I15). This inconsistency was supported in my interview with an ISA in Jaffna as he portrayed his role very much in line with a focus on monitoring firstly, signalling that his main tool for the role is a ‘checklist’21. The lack of methodology awareness from the ISAs was highlighted in numerous discussions with educational practitioners22, “they are just going into schools and checking if teachers

19 I02
21 I07
22 I02, I07, I09, I15, I23
are finishing the curriculum - if the teacher has completed all the lessons in the term then they are the best ones, the ISAs don’t check if the students attend, no teaching methodology, everything is paper based, if the paper is good then all is fine,” (I15).

The implications of such a system entail that the overall structure of monitoring and evaluation of the recently graduated trainee teachers is not as efficient as could be if there was a greater focus on the intricacies of methodology and pedagogy. Furthermore, when looking at the monitoring through the lens of peace education specifically there is no recognition within the ISAs ‘checklist’ of such a notion. “There is no monitoring to check whether peace education is being implemented, it needs to be monitored, it has to be reported and documented properly, then the lessons learnt can be scaled up and practiced,” (I21). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, GIZ are currently carrying out a training programme for ISAs therefore at least the understanding is there that this is an area needing attention and, if successful, can entail the rhetoric of peace education can be implemented more proficiently at the ground level by teachers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-question 1</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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| A. Who are the key actors involved in the provision of teacher training in Jaffna? | - International level: GIZ and UNICEF  
- At the national formal level: NIE and MoE  
- At the local (Jaffna) formal level: NCOE and Kopai TTC  
- At the local (Jaffna) non-formal level: STEPS Institute and Shanthiham |
| B. How is teacher training governed and what is the impact of this governance on future teachers? | - The overall focus on exams and output which is the pervasive theme of general education in Sri Lanka transfers into the teacher training framework of the country  
- Top-down governance approach results in detachment between national and local level  
- Archaic methodology and structure of formal teacher training in Jaffna  
- Mismatch between curricula for 2NL and national policy which emphasizes trilingual communication  
- Weak system for monitoring and evaluation of graduate trainee teachers  
- The governance structure emphasises standardised teaching methods which leaves little room to manoeuvre for future teachers |
5. **Chapter Five**

1. A. How does formal teacher training address themes of social cohesion and does such training fit in line or in tension with the teacher’s personal identities?

B. How do teachers see their future roles in supporting social cohesion following teacher training programmes?

The approach taken in this chapter diverges from the previous one because the focus shifts from a top down perspective to bottom up, essentially concentrating on the ground level data gained from respondents and observations in Jaffna. In answering part A of this sub question I will firstly lay out how formal teacher training addresses the concept of social cohesion, secondly present a contextual understanding of teachers’ personal identities in Jaffna, this primarily meaning a Tamil viewpoint due to the ethnic make-up of Jaffna. To tie these first two sub-sections together I will use the 4Rs framework to analyse the nexus where teacher training, social cohesion and the personal identities of teachers in Jaffna come together.

### 5.1 Formal Teacher Training and Social Cohesion - What is the link?

Firstly, I want to touch back on the peace education policy of Sri Lanka (ESC) as there is relevance and overlap for this section. There has been evidence that this policy as a whole, especially under the new regime, has been progressing, albeit slowly (I22). The recent review of the ESC policy carried out by UNICEF highlighted how areas such as co-curricular activities and psycho-social support have improved. However, as mentioned previously, for this thesis, I am less interested in these other components of ESC and my focus is purely on teacher education.

Previous studies (Lopes Cardozo 2008, Hoeks 2011, Davies 2011, Metheuver 2015 unp.) indicated that concepts of peace education and social cohesion were very weakly implemented within the teacher education system. With my focus on Jaffna and the teacher training options there I hoped to see if this had changed in 2016, 8 years on from the initiation of the ESC policy. One of my first questions directed at the principle of the in-service Kopai TTC was revealing of the overall state of implementation, I asked, “*have you heard of this policy of education for social cohesion,*” his response, “*no,***” (I05). Discussions at the Jaffna pre-service NCOE showed me that, here at least, there was a recognition of the ESC policy. These conversations with the people in charge of both formal teacher training options in Jaffna illuminated two issues regarding implementation. Firstly, and already highlighted in the previous chapter, the detachment and lack of coordination from policy level to provincial/zonal level. This was supported in my conversations with the person in charge of research on ESC at UNICEF, “*ESC had just been a document, it had not reached the*
schools in the provinces at all, it was not rolled out properly and dealt with a lack of funding,” (I22). Secondly, and more complex, was an issue regarding the conceptualisation of social cohesion, my data suggested that there was a general lack of understanding as to what exactly it was supposed to mean. The assistant director of education for the northern province stated, “in this area the word (social cohesion) has not become too famous yet,” (I06), further supported by a respondent from GIZ working on ESC, “schools are doing social cohesion work because someone from the top is telling them and not because they know what it is,” (I23). The confusion that exists in the concept itself results in a tendency within education to view social cohesion as celebrating the ‘other’ ethnicities cultural and religious festivals. However, both the ESC policy as well as the conceptualisation of social cohesion I use for this thesis entails a deeper understanding and promotion of social cohesion, not simply reducing it to viewing the ‘other’. This trend unfortunately persists when looking specifically at the integration of social cohesion in formal teacher training as I will show now.

Assessing how social cohesion is addressed through the formal teacher education system necessitated a more nuanced approach because of the lack of direct training, as well as awareness, on the concept itself. Ultimately my findings showed that social cohesion is addressed in Jaffna formal teacher training settings through 2NL training and Peace and Value Education (PVE). The objectives of the programme are to develop an awareness within learners and teachers of the concepts, skills, positive attitudes and practices that are necessary for achieving mutual understanding and respect, good will and social cohesion in a multi ethnic and multicultural society (Davies 2011). While the rhetoric is positive when I asked a recent graduate teacher from the NCOE about how she teaches PVE, her response was, “what is in the textbook I teach,” (I14) this is supported by previous studies (Hoeks 2011) which indicated that the notion of PVE is strong however when looking for classroom examples of how it is carried out by teachers there are shortfalls. The subject of Civic Education carries the most prominent examples of PVE, with GIZ successfully incorporating concepts of peace into the syllabus. However, again the issues arise from the pedagogical approach taken, “in a civic education lesson they learn every single thing about civic education by heart, the curriculum, what is peace education, and then the exam tells you what you need to know by heart but this is contradictory to the idea of peace education—learning together and coming together,” (I20). The ‘harder’ concepts of conflict resolution and critical thinking relating to multiculturalism and the war were not dealt in the classroom of this recent graduate civics teacher I interviewed. This narrow interpretation of peace education and specifically the inability to practice it is not unique to Sri Lanka by any means, as demonstrated by Bekerman and Zembylas (2012) with their work relating to Israel, teachers in post-conflict societies face challenges in pedagogy of how to teach sensitive narratives of a traumatic past.

28 I08, I11
29 I02, I06, I07, I11
31 I14
The teacher training on 2NL maintains an obvious link to the idea of social cohesion, as at the heart of it, it requires a deeper connection and relationship (and recognition) of a different language, culture and ethnicity. As often came up in my interviews, “for social cohesion, language is first and foremost,” (I07) the difficulties exist due to the lack of qualified teachers- especially Sinhalese Sinhala teacher trainers for the Jaffna area as conveyed in the previous chapter. As my research did not portray any drastic changes in how peace education has been carried out in teacher education compared to previous studies I want to pay more attention to the personal identities of future teachers in Jaffna. This is more relevant because both GIZ and the NIE are currently working on how to increase the implementation of peace education in formal teacher training, and the delays that exist presently are due to structural inefficiencies which in time can hopefully change. Therefore, next I want to express the emotional make-up and perspectives of the future teachers in Jaffna to gauge how further implementation of peace education in training will be received.

It is important to note with this section that I have not spoken about non-formal teacher training and how these environments address social cohesion, this is due to the lesser reach institutes such as STEPS have in regards to the numbers of teachers trained. However, the approach STEPS uses has more direct links to social cohesion, the modules on conflict resolution and critical thinking portrayed this. In the conclusion of this thesis I shall reflect on the scope of the formal teacher education system to introduce such methodologies. I will however make reference to non-formal training when using the 4R framework later in this section because it has more potential on producing future teachers better suited to delivering on the goals of social cohesion.

5.2 Personal Identities of Future Teachers in Jaffna

This section focuses on questions regarding the aftermath of conflict and its effect on the emotional character of individuals in Jaffna. The data I draw on here comes from interviews with Tamil educational practitioners, as well as wider observations and conversations with community members from Tamil upbringings specifically from the Jaffna area. This needs to be touched on because these future teachers are first and foremost, individuals from Tamil backgrounds who have had to deal with the first-hand implications of a nearly three decade long civil war. Furthermore, the opinions portrayed here need to be seen from both a historical angle as well as the present context which can be inferred from the events indicated in textbox 1 (see page 13).

As a respondent in my group interview with Shanthiham conveyed, “in this side (Jaffna) people need time, because on a psychological level they are not settled about losing their family and everything, trauma is still a big issue that is not healed yet. These people smile

32 Observation of STEPS lesson
but they have a very strong sense of trauma - once you get them talking they start to cry or shout,” (I13). This indication of the freshness of the psychological wounds left by the war was an undertone maintained in all my discussions with Tamil respondents from Jaffna33. A political columnist from Jaffna provided an alternative title for the current situation, he denied that Sri Lanka and Jaffna was in a post-conflict period because this would entail that a solution was found for the ethnic question- instead he coined the term ‘post armed engagement period’ (I04).

This claim can arguably be given some legitimacy if looking at daily life in Jaffna34, the heavy military presence that persists in the area does not do much to ease tensions or disconnect from the memories of conflict. “The community is already scared of the government, of the organised forces, they are supposed to be the examples,” (I10), further elucidated by the manager for psychosocial support in the Provincial Ministry of Education, when expressing how in outdoor sessions she runs, “the military personnel are there with videos and cameras, their presence is always there, they always suspect something will happen, things like this make it hard for the community to trust,” (I11). Ethnic tension still persists in Jaffna, and additionally there is a culture of fear that has been built over many years which is hard to erase, this needs to be the background in which to approach ideas of implementing peace education in teacher training environments.

With making this point I want to also reflect on how this insecurity, through ethnic tension, does not only take form in the Tamil population of Jaffna. In my interview with the only Sinhalese, Sinhala 2NL teacher in all of Jaffna she demonstrated how, “when a Sinhala teacher walks on the street people don’t see her as a teacher but they think she is from the intelligence bureau or police,” further expressing how, “here we can’t wear our Kandyan Sari (typical Sinhalese type of clothing) because then those Tamil people don’t interact with us, so I dress up like the other Tamil teachers so the students don’t get scared of me,” (I17). This stresses the delicate balance from both sides of the ethnic divide, interestingly this Sinhala teacher was almost a beacon of hope during my research, she possessed an energy and determination to work in a difficult environment that I did not come across too much, this I shall return to when discussing teacher agency.

There is a recognition in Jaffna that, “this is a very crucial period in terms of development and in these times the government needs a very slow process to do things carefully otherwise it could be a problem,” (I13). The approach to incorporate peace education into teacher training more comprehensively needs to be carried out cautiously keeping in mind the delicate nature of personal identities of teachers in war affected areas like Jaffna. I will now look at the nexus between teacher training and their personal emotions using the 4R framework developed by Novelli et al (2015).

33 I(02-17)
34 Fieldwork diary
The below figure is a visual version of the 4R framework which was outlined in my theoretical chapter, it will be used to determine the contribution of teacher training towards the concept of social cohesion. Not claiming that teacher training will simply bring about social cohesion, instead analysing the multifaceted ways such training can influence the ‘process’ which is social cohesion as well as emphasising that all components of the R’s are intertwined, having the ability to show positive and negative results at the same time. This nuanced understanding of how the R’s operate is imperative to gain a more complete grasp of the nexus mentioned above.

**Table 3: 4R Framework (Novelli et al 2015)**

**5.2.1 Redistribution in Teacher Training**

As mentioned in chapter 2, redistribution is the component of the 4Rs that generally looks at inequality relating to the distribution of resources and, from a critical realist perspective, often takes a material dimension. My use of this component diverges from this economic focus instead analyses the (re)distribution of power in teacher training. In terms of Jaffna
teacher training environments, the first point I want to make is the comparison between the two formal options- the Jaffna NCOE and the Kopai TTC. With the proposed phasing out of the Kopai TTC and diversion of resources towards the pre-service NCOE, one needs to question the efficiency of the Kopai TTC in producing teachers suited to deliver pedagogical approaches conducive to peace education and social cohesion. The fact that the individual in charge of the college had no awareness of ESC is worrying and goes against the policy level desire to implement ESC at all provinces. If this desired redistribution of power (and resources) from the TTC to the NCOE is the plan it requires a quicker transfer process if the goal is improving the understanding of social cohesion within trainee teachers.

Using the analytical tool of redistribution (of power), highlights dynamics of the hierarchical power structure within education in general and teacher training in particular. This point is made regarding principals who were trained by the STEPS institute. In Sri Lanka, as in most other countries, principals are the highest form of authority within schools, however the exact level of influence they maintain has been highlighted (Davies 2011) as potentially troublesome. I learnt this first hand, in all my interviews which took place in schools, prior to meeting any teacher, I had to go to the principal’s office to gain approval, explain what I was doing and why I was there\textsuperscript{35}. The STEPS head trainer portrayed, “principals have hesitation to being in the same classroom as teachers, it’s a hierarchy problem where they don’t think superior people and normal people can work together,” (I15). Reflecting on their progress in the training further, “the headmasters were dreadful, they were the weakest students on the whole and it was really interesting to see how society was centred around these guys who were actually the weakest and they had total control over schools,” (I18). This raises doubts regarding the impact successful teacher training initiatives (on peace education) can have. If the graduate teacher, then enters an environment where the distribution of power is so skewed in favour of these principals who might not carry the same perspectives (on peace education), what does that entail? This was empirically outlined, “teachers do take the concepts we train them on board but the problem I have found is that the principal also has to understand, only then can it be implemented,” (I23) this posits a challenge that needs to be addressed within the current teacher education system. The insights I gained on this hierarchical structure implies that in order to ensure a better delivery of peace education from future teacher’s needs, either a redistribution of (absolute) power away from principals, or a more comprehensive teacher education system which targets the principals themselves delivering specific peace education training to them.

5.2.2 Recognition in Teacher Training

Recognition deals with the cultural dimension of justice, arguing for ‘status equality and equitable interaction’, between ethnic groups (Novelli et al 2008). Within teacher education, the implications of recognition I want to bring attention to are twofold. Firstly, the syllabus

\textsuperscript{35} Fieldwork diary
of civic education which delivers PVE. The training of civic education is done in relation to the textbook as previously mentioned, the problems arise in how the textbook approaches multiculturalism, instead of a promotion of common values, it takes the approach of emphasising difference\textsuperscript{36}. Knowing the culture of the ‘other’ as distinctly separate to your own culture serves to strengthen notions of a divide and is a less favourable approach in line with the goals social cohesion. However, it is positive to note that with the assistance of GIZ there has been an updated syllabus for Grade 7 Civic Education as of 2016\textsuperscript{37}. This is to be rolled out for all other grades as well which would benefit the teacher education system and students in schools alike.

When viewing teacher training in Jaffna through the lens of ‘equitable interaction’ the deficiencies are clear, the populations of all teacher training settings are essentially completely Tamil. ‘Equitable interaction’ does not occur because ‘interaction’ does not occur. The idea that it could be equitable is where the hope lies and a proper conceptualisation of social cohesion within the teacher training system, could entail that when interaction does occur it could be, ‘equitable’. This is however difficult to judge in the current framework of teacher training in Jaffna due to how mono-ethnic it is. One respondent stated, “the Sinhalese are not that keen to come here and learn Tamil, but it’s understandable you know, just as the Tamils of Jaffna aren’t keen to learn Sinhala because what is the purpose,” (I15) this ideology maintaining difference is where the challenge sits. Furthermore, for an improved notion of recognition in teacher training in Jaffna, there needs to be a situation where there is increased interaction. One way this could take shape is improved representation, which is the next component of the 4Rs I am going to explore, and this goes back to my theoretical framework when I expressed the constantly interlinked nature of the 4Rs.

\textbf{5.2.3 Representation in Teacher Training}

\textit{Representation} focuses on the political implications of justice. When looked at in relation to teacher training in Jaffna, it comes back to a question of who is making the decisions; are the views of the Tamil population of the region taken into full consideration when determining national policy on teacher education?

The common concerns that were outlined by my respondents related to the deployment policy by the central MoE. The shortage of Sinhalese 2NL teachers deployed to Tamil regions was an area of concern, as demonstrated previously, and hinders the professional development of teachers being trained in 2NL (Sinhala). One respondent reflected on such concerns, “we don’t have Sinhala speaking teachers and that’s the main issue, the appointment needs to be given by the ministry which is going very slowly and will take time,”

\textsuperscript{36} Notes from grade 6 Civic education textbook (2015)

\textsuperscript{37} http://www.edupub.gov.lk/Administrator/English/7/%20Civic%20Education%20G7%20(E)/Chapter%2003.pdf
(I07). This point was further illuminated by the president of the NCOE when he stated, “the problem is the majority people (Sinhalese) are the ones deciding no, the decision making comes from them, according to their decision we have to accept,” (I02). This brings light to concerns Fraser (2005) put forward of ‘unequal participation in claim making processes for all citizens’ which causes an obstacle to the concept of ‘parity of participation’ being reached.

It is not fair to say that there is no Tamil voice in decision making processes of education, for instance in the revision of the history textbooks of recent years the curriculum panel has consisted of many Tamil members on its board38. However, within teacher education my data did suggest that there were disconnects between central policy level and the Jaffna teacher training institutes. Furthermore, this has been a pervasive theme throughout this thesis - the structural impediments in the governance of teacher education. The way the president of the NCOE posits that they simply have to accept the decisions from the ‘majority people’ (I02) is indicative of the problems in governance. Potentially more worrying is the underlying ‘agreement’ that this is just the way it is and the ‘minority’ has no choice but to tolerate. What could assist this idea of representation is utilising the decentralised governance structure of education better (Figure 1) and allow more representative power to Tamil communities at the provincial level. Better representation of Tamil opinions on teacher education policy (for instance the recognition that Sinhalese 2NL are essential for Tamil teachers to learn Sinhala) would benefit the current state of teacher training in Jaffna. Enhanced inclusion of different ethnicities in the decision-making processes on teacher education could potentially provide the platform for transformative politics at multiple scales, and as argued by Fraser (2008) resolving concerns of representation often sets the methods for resolving contests in both the economic and cultural dimensions of the 4Rs.

5.2.4 Reconciliation in Teacher Training

As defined in my theoretical framework, one aspect of reconciliation in post-war societies is ‘bringing communities together’ (Novelli et al 2014: 12). Due to the mono-ethnic segregated forms formal teacher training takes in Jaffna I find it more beneficial to apply the R of reconciliation when assessing the non-formal training options that exist as they have greater use of the components that were used in my conceptualisation of reconciliation.

The STEPS institute approach reconciliation in an evident fashion with their module on conflict resolution39, however I want to approach reconciliation in their classroom through a slightly different method- looking at perspectives of the teachers in their class, on inter-ethnic interaction. STEPS benefits from there being both Tamils and Sinhalese is some of

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38 Hansen-Shearer 2015 unp, NEC
39 STEPS classroom observation
their classes, so there is more of a sense of ‘bringing communities together’ especially when compared to the Jaffna NCOE or Kopai TTC. However, the exact dynamics of this interaction were questioned in my discussions at STEPS. “Sometimes when we get Sinhala participant, our Tamils get a feeling that they don’t want to say things about the war, they hide themselves, they wear a mask, and we can’t blame them because they also need their security,” (I15). The conflict resolution session that I sat in on took me by surprise in the sense of how openly the class discussed issues of the war, even relating it to personal encounters of family members who had tragically been killed\(^{40}\). What this demonstrated was how directly involved with the conflict many of these trainee teachers were and how their personal identities were undeniably intertwined with the 26 year long civil war. Reflecting on this openness in conversation further with the head trainer after the class, he stated, “yes they speak openly (today) because I’m also a Tamil, and actually they thought you were form the UK, they didn’t know your link with Sinhala so they were free to talk, they use their sense because when they know there are some Sinhalese they don’t tell these things,” (I15). Firstly, this was revealing of the mistrust and insecurity built into the current idea of peace in Sri Lanka- aligning with Galtung’s (1969) notion of ‘negative peace’. Secondly, and more telling was the classroom treating me as a ‘foreigner’ and how this allowed them increased space to talk about such sensitive issues. Viewed from a deeper macro position can this be equated to the idea that the Tamils of Sri Lanka are still looking towards the international community to resolve disputes of transitional justice, are they happier to take off the ‘mask’ (I15) to anyone but the Sinhalese? It felt like these trainee teachers had a lot to say about the conflict and the notion of reconciliation, however, what is problematic is the levels of wariness that exist that prohibit these discussions happening freely between community level Sinhalese and Tamil populations. As portrayed by Bekerman and Zembylas (2012: 5), this is a somewhat common feature of post-conflict societies, it is one of the ‘landmines’ teachers from the ‘losing’ side face, what these scholars argue is need to reconceptualise identity and memory as non-dividing constructs. Reconciliation also involves, “broader processes of social and psycho-social healing,” (Novelli et al 2014: 12) when using this ‘R’ against the teacher training framework of Jaffna it can be argued that the training on counselling brings significance to reconciliation. In conversations at Shanthiham regarding teachers they have trained to be counsellors, one of the respondents put forward that, “when teachers talk with children about some traumatic stories they also get sad, so they are unable to help others,” (I10). This point was further indicated by the manager of the psychosocial resource centre at the provincial ministry of education, speaking about her personal experience as a trainer she stated, “four or five counselling teachers during trainings are not able to do the counselling because they are traumatised, so once they go to the children their trauma also comes out, it is difficult for them,” (I11). What this demonstrates is the fragility existent in teacher’s personal identities,

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\(^{40}\) STEPS classroom observation
as members of a community that was (and is) directly involved in the ethnic conflict, the psychological scars of which are still present.

Reconciliation involves tackling the historical memory of a conflict (Novelli et al 2015) in a way that is conducive to preventing a relapse of ethnic tensions in the future. Furthermore, as claimed by Clarke (2009: 361) “it involves dealing with the past, taking responsibility, and acknowledging wrongdoing”. While my findings on reconciliation and teacher training were not exactly indicative of major steps towards such a process, what they did highlight was the delicate psychological balance in teacher’s personal identities. Moreover, my data indicated that policies of peace education broadly and within teacher training in particular, may not often fit with how these Tamil teachers feel and future policy needs to take this into deeper consideration if it is truly going to deliver on social cohesion.

Following on from this I want to switch my focus to the teachers themselves, and explore how they see their (future) roles as potential agents who may or may not enable the process towards a more cohesive society.

5.3 Teachers future roles

B. How do teachers see their future roles in supporting social cohesion following teacher training programmes?

This sub question is essentially looking at the agency of trainee teachers within the teacher education system of Jaffna. As outlined in my theoretical framework this necessitates looking at the components of ‘obligations, authority and autonomy’, which make up the conceptualisation of teacher agency used in this thesis, while recognising and exploring the structural implications that impact on this ‘agency’ by using the SRA model.

Dissecting teacher agency firstly through the umbrella of obligations, which is defined as, ‘the boundaries and limitations to teacher’s positions,’ (Archer 1984) enables a clearer understanding of teacher’s positionality within the wider construct of the Sri Lankan education system. The first thing to bring attention to when querying how these trainee teachers can promote social cohesion in the future is the system in which they are obliged to function in. As explained previously this ‘system’ is one in which there is an all-encompassing focus on output and exams. “To pass the exams we must teach them the book,” (I14) was the words of one recent graduate from the Jaffna NCOE. What this entails is that it is harder for these trainee teachers to ‘see their future roles’ as anything other than delivering on what is deemed important (output and exams). As the in-service advisor (ISA) I spoke to illuminated, “in schools we usually analyse the results and look at the teachers pass percentage, so the teachers are keen to improve their pass rate,” (I07). An agentic analysis of this approach can be argued to be seen as positive because there is a countrywide ‘drive’ for (future) teachers to enhance their pass rate, however, when aligned
with delivering on themes of social cohesion this ‘drive’ becomes more detrimental due to where the priority of the system lies. Scholars relating to Sri Lanka (Davies 2011) as well as those with a more international focus (McNeil 2000, Mons 2009, Sayed et al 2016) have critiqued such an exam driven, standardised form of education. McNeil (2000), argues that such an exam based focus results in lower quality teaching and the loss of opportunity to impart wider ‘life-skills’ which would lead to longer term social benefits. Sayed et al (2016: 3) portray this trade off in relation to the case of South Africa, where the ‘affective (social) goals of education are side-lined in favour of a strategy which privileges ‘litnum’ (literacy and numeracy) goals’.

The hierarchical top-down structure of teacher training and wider education causes a regulation of individual power for future teachers. Their roles are often reduced to where they are obliged to do what they are ‘told’. As one practitioner demonstrated, “you have a large number of contact hours, often if you’re in a village school instead of those contact hours being on repeat- like I teach grade 8 chemistry, and I only have to prepare 3 classes a day cause the rest are on repeat, that doesn’t exist. I might teach from grade 5 to grade 8 all different lessons, so I don’t even prepare. I open the textbook and that’s enough, I’m not paid enough, I’m not trained, there’s no tradition of it so why bother,” (I18). Agency, in this case, is hindered and pushed back by the structure of the educational framework of the country. The boundaries and limitations of teachers actions are often drawn at the end goal of the statistical pass rate and exam results, and this unfortunate consequence of the overall institutional structure results in less space being afforded to approach social cohesion.

As shown above the obligatory pressures within the formal education system are pervasive and deep rooted. However, my data portrayed that this squeeze on teacher agency is reduced in non-formal settings and by using the concept of authority I shall now develop this argument. ‘Authority comes from being able to acquire and teach knowledge,’ (Vongalis-Macrow 2007). The STEPS institute which is the dominant form of non-formal teacher training in Jaffna, is a voluntary programme, where trainee teachers have the choice to ‘acquire’ the ‘knowledge’ the course offers. The simple fact that teachers volunteer to join the programme is beneficial to the overall notion of teacher agency, the head trainer reflected, “I’ve done some teacher training workshops externally and they just lap it up, I mean they are really desperate for anything, whether its small activities or games or anything like that,” (I15). This is indicative of the lack of options available for trainee teachers to acquire ‘different’ knowledge in the formal system. Using the model of SRA this can be related to the idea that the levels of access to particular strategic resources that teachers have, such as ‘different’ training opportunities, impacts and hampers their personal agency.

Exploiting the SRA model in analysing my empirical experience of the conflict resolution class I observed at the STEPS institute (See section 5.2.4) demonstrates the complex form agency assumes. Here I want to refer to the way the trainee teachers spoke about their
wartime experiences purely because they assumed I was a ‘foreigner’ with no links to Sri Lanka. This emphasises how individuals have ‘varying opportunities and constraints to act against structure,’ (Lopes Cardozo 2015). The structure of this classroom environment and the demographics of it being all Tamil class members allowed certain individuals an opportunity to act in a ‘strategic’ way. This demonstrates that teacher’s action is framed by a constant (and strategic) engagement with their particular environment in a specific time and space, in this instance deciding to be open about sensitive topics due to strategically deciding my presence was not a concern.

Unpacking teacher agency further using the component of *autonomy* provides a more balanced (and less pessimistic) picture in regards to how teachers see their future roles in supporting social cohesion. *Autonomy* concerns the capacity held by teachers to determine and pursue their own interests (Vongalis-Macrow 2007). The personal identities of trainee teachers in Jaffna were explored in the previous section (5.2), what was demonstrated was the fragile mentality left in the wake of ethnic conflict and also the fact that the cultural differentials across ethnicities meant that it was often ‘easier’ for Tamil teachers from Jaffna to stay in Jaffna. “Our people don’t like to go to the south,” (I12) was the wording used by one respondent portraying this feeling. Jaffna, being the heartland of the Tamil population and one of the only places where they are the majority entails Tamil teachers feel safer here, in ‘their’ land. The reverse argument holds in the same way as my data and this thesis has portrayed- Sinhala teachers do not want to come to Jaffna as exemplified by the lack of Sinhala 2NL trainers. While this is the general trend I want to go back to my conversations with the recently graduated teacher I claimed to be a beacon of hope as she was the only Sinhalese Sinhala 2NL teacher in the whole of Jaffna. “In the beginning my mother wasn’t happy about me coming to Jaffna,” (I17) signifying the personal and cultural determinants at play when teachers assess their future roles. In this case however the fact that this teacher moved to Jaffna resisting the inclinations that unfortunately exist due to being part of the ‘majority’ was inspiring. When reflecting on the difficulties of day to day life of being Sinhalese in Jaffna she stated, “when I get problems I think I’m not working for the teachers, I am here for the students,” (I17). In instances like this where a teacher has acted autonomously and pursued her own interests it is possible to envisage teachers being agents of change to deliver on the idea of social cohesion, it is just regrettable that cases like this are atypical from my experience in Jaffna.

*Autonomy* in action was empirically demonstrated in my interview with a counselling trainer who is also a history teacher in one of the main secondary schools in Jaffna. As previous studies (Hansen Shearer 2015 unp.) have highlighted, the history curriculum of Sri Lanka has been a contentious topic, often resulting in the Sinhala Buddhist narrative taking priority over Tamil history. When I quizzed this teacher on his approach to history he reflected, “because of the exams I have to teach the book but other than the exam I will teach it the way I want,” (I09). Firstly, this demonstrates the personal space to manoeuvre that can exist within the agency of teachers, trainee teachers may be able to create such space of
Autonomy later in their careers which may be at odds with the textbooks they are supposed to pay all their attention to. Secondly, by using the SRA framework this aligns with the notion that actors have capabilities to reflexively reorganise structure to modify their selectivities. The structure in this instance is the history curriculum, the job descriptions of teachers are to complete the curriculum but this account portrays that agency can exist which attempts to strategically overcome detrimental influences of structure such as a biased history curriculum. Alteration of structure too has been shown to be possible, with the history curriculum being changed in recent years (Hansen Shearer 2015 unp.) and this idea that structures are always changing (Lopes Cardozo and Shah 2013) aligns accurately with the ontological position taken in this thesis. Moreover, the fluidity of structure and agency is portrayed here, agency is not a binary concept instead it is abstract and reacts in complex ways that are influenced by individual opportunities and constraints depending on the particular environment where one ‘acts’.

What this exploration into how teachers see their future roles in supporting social cohesion has revealed is a battle between the system of output, which is the focus of the Sri Lankan education framework, and the personal strategies and identities of teachers who might want to impart themes of social cohesion. Looking at this from a meta theoretical level, it equates to the long running debate between structure and agency in general. Using the SRA model has enabled me to “uncover the dialectics between teacher’s perceptions and strategies on one hand and the broader strategic selective context on the other,” (Lopes Cardozo 2015: 5). What it has shown is that there are ‘pockets’ within the education system where teachers can act (and resist) against the institutional arrangements that their work is ‘structured’ within. Jessop’s (2005) approach, which views structures as having the ability to privilege certain actors and identities over others can be argued to be convincing if viewing how the history curriculum may be taught by a Sinhalese teacher for instance. The structures of curriculum in this instance would privilege his or her agency. Ultimately my findings regarding how teachers see their future roles in supporting social cohesion reflects more the converse argument in the SRA structure and agency debate, that is- how future teacher’s agency is actually pushed back by their school, community or educational framework. Smyth and Shacklock’s (1998), in exploring global educational norms, critique that authority in education is limited to teaching towards externally set outcomes, this argument holds more often than not when reflecting on my data from Jaffna. However, as the experiences of the Sinhala teacher portray it does not mean there is no space to manoeuvre or approach notions of social cohesion, instead these ‘pockets’ of hope show that, for some future teachers, they may see their roles opposing the structure of output and more in line with imparting views benefitting social cohesion.
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<tr>
<th>Sub-Question 2</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> How does formal teacher training address themes of social cohesion and does such training fit in line or in tension with the teacher’s personal identities?</td>
<td>• Formal teacher training addresses social cohesion through PVE and 2NL training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Firstly the fragile nature of the emotional make up of individuals (teachers) in Jaffna needs to be recognised in connection to the violent past</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Within education the distribution of power lies firmly at the feet of school principals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Mono-ethnic forms of formal teacher training entails recognition and interaction with other ethnicities suffers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Approach to policy by (Tamil) teachers is more of accepting instead of challenging decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Insecurity and fragility of teachers’ personal identities means their personal opinions may be at odds with majority determined educational policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> How do teachers see their future roles in supporting social cohesion following teacher training programmes?</td>
<td>• Obligated to deliver on output and exam based results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Authority and possibility to pursue their own interests potentially increased in non-formal settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Agents of change can exist- however it is a constant battle to overcome and act against structural influences which prioritise output</td>
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</table>
6.1 Conclusions

Main Research Question- In the post-war context of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, how can teacher training influence teacher agency that may or may not contribute to social cohesion?

Responding to the main research question of this thesis necessitates tying up the findings from both my sub questions (chapters 4 and 5), to the wider theoretical perspectives outlined at the start of this study. Chapter four was designed to set the scene for the analysis into teacher training in Jaffna by distinguishing the key actors in the field, both in formal and non-formal settings. Furthermore, this chapter took a macro outlook and delineated the governance processes of teacher training in Sri Lanka while assessing its implications on future teachers. What was portrayed was that the general trend of education in Sri Lanka, which is an all-encompassing focus on exams and output, influences and gives birth to the form teacher training assumes in Jaffna- aligning with similar priorities. Additionally, when looking at the teacher training options in Jaffna what was crucial to understand was the segregated mono-ethnic forms they took, with hardly any Sinhalese presence in formal or non-formal environments. As portrayed by Knox (2011) when discussing the case of Northern Ireland, such segregation often entails a deepening of the sense of the ‘other’. Building on the implications of segregation of education, Bush and Salterelli (2000) argue that segregation is a form which the ‘negative face’ of education can take which thereby ensures inequality, inferiority and potentially most harmfully, encourages hate. Vital in making this point is an understanding, as my findings portrayed, that this ‘hate’ can come from the minority side of the ethnic divide as well which portrays how the governance of teacher training, which maintains separation of Sinhalese and Tamil populations, has a ‘socially destructive impact’ (Bush and Salterelli 2000) when viewed from either side of the divide.

The data collected through interviews and classroom observations promoted an understanding of the general pedagogical approach taken in formal teacher training which was archaic and based on ‘chalk and talk’ methodology. This realisation, in addition to a weak monitoring and evaluation framework for graduate teachers led me to argue that agency, defined as ‘space to manoeuvre’ (Lopes Cardozo 2015), suffers when aligned with the purpose of delivering practices supporting social cohesion. Using the language of the conceptualisation of agency outlined by Vongalis-Macrow (2007), trainee teachers are obliged to function within the existing set of rules maintained by the Sri Lankan education system- there is little autonomy available to pursue different forms of knowledge due to the structure of institutions, such as the NIE, which maintain control in a rigid top down manner. Chapter four was essentially analysing how general teacher training and governance can influence teacher agency, chapter five on the other hand switches to a more bottom up perspective focussing on the teacher’s personal identities as well as exploring how the concept of social cohesion is communicated in the teacher education system.
Chapter five contributes to this thesis by exploring the second part of the main research question-the inquiry into whether teacher training ‘may or may not contribute to social cohesion’. What my findings illuminated was a distinct lack of awareness and ability to implement peace education through the teacher education curricula of Jaffna. An existing line of argument taken by myself in the introductory chapter, which is supported by Sri Lankan and international scholars (Aturupane 2011, Sayed et al 2016), is that social cohesion is an instrumental outcome of ‘peace education’. However, due to the shortfalls in direct training on social cohesion my analysis had to take a more nuanced approach through looking at training on 2NL and PVE. What the agentic focussed approach of chapter five highlighted was the fragile nature of the emotional make up of (trainee) teachers in Jaffna. This needed attention to gauge how future planned policies of social cohesion (ESC) within the teacher training framework of Sri Lanka will be received by these future teachers.

As demonstrated in chapter 5.2, the 4R framework provided a method by which I could engage in the multiple ways that teacher training impacted on notions of justice for community members from Jaffna. The distribution of power in schools was shown to be unbalanced and hierarchical in form. This entails that even if individual trainee teachers possess an agency suited to support the process of social cohesion, the lack of power they have within the structure of the school, hinders their ability to impart the fundamentals of peace education to students. A truer understanding and recognition of pluralism is difficult for trainee teachers in Jaffna when their empirical experience is mono-ethnic and segregated. Decision making and representation of the localised needs within teacher education in Jaffna takes the route of accepting decisions made in Colombo with little ability to challenge areas of concern. Reconciliation and topics of the war are avoided in the curriculum of formal teacher education. The above points demonstrate where the current structure of teacher training in Jaffna perpetuates signs of injustice, while, with a more positive outlook can portray areas to target in the future which thereby could bring Sri Lanka closer to a ‘parity of participation’ (Fraser 2005).

The information consolidated and analysed in chapters four and five enables a more thorough response to my main research question. It cannot simply be argued that teacher training will influence teacher agency in a way that will contribute to social cohesion. Yes, teacher training will impact on teacher agency, however a more balanced understanding of this is required. The agency that develops needs to be questioned against the purpose underlining social cohesion. As demonstrated, shortfalls in the conceptualisation of social cohesion and complications in governance exacerbate the limited transmission of social cohesion to trainee teachers in formal teacher training settings. What my data did suggest was the increased optimism for the future as it was evident that there is more political will towards social cohesion. However, the current governance mechanisms, and the detachment existent between national and local levels means policy does not fully trickle down to the provincial Jaffna level effectively enough.
Throughout this thesis social cohesion has been defined as a process instead of an end state which aligns with the ontological stance maintained in this study—arguing the need to view the social world in a fluid rather than fixed form. The accommodation of difference and creating space for such difference within the national identity is the fundamental hope behind the notion of social cohesion. As claimed by Niens (2008), crosscutting links should be created that go beyond community tensions. When assessing formal teacher training in Jaffna, my data showed that these links have not been developed exhaustively enough. Sayed et al (2006: 5) believe social cohesion entails, “the focus on how to balance difference with commonality, individual interest with societal imperatives, and loyalty to the state with critical forms of citizenship,” this approach to social cohesion relies on difference being destabilised and re-assembled in diverse ways. Within the Sri Lankan formal teacher training process, the obstacles to this ‘re-assembling’ taking place arise because of the lack of open dialogue and opportunities for critical debate in both the teacher training settings and wider school classroom environments. As was portrayed by my use of the SRA framework, institutions such as the NIE ultimately shape what trainee teachers, as future agents of social cohesion, experience. When the agency of these future teachers is performed in spaces that remain segregated and mono-ethnic, their future action will invariably reflect what they have experienced and been taught. As stated in my theoretical chapter, and reflecting the views of Sri Lankan scholar Aturupane (2011), teachers can be an important ‘vehicle’ in generating social cohesion. However, while exceptional cases where actors were shown to selectively (and strategically) resist structural influences do exist, they are a rarity. The more pervasive outcome of teacher training is a suffocation of agency to impart social cohesion.

Where my findings portrayed more potential was in non-formal settings such as the STEPS institute, where there is more space to manoeuvre and the methodology used is more conducive to deliver agents suited to promote social cohesion. Nevertheless, such agency will always face a battle against structure and it is the conscious, and in some instances unconscious, ‘selective strategies’ embarked by certain teachers against the structures within which their agency operates that will allow them to ‘break open’ (Lopes Cardozo 2015) traditional norms which lead to injustice and hinder the process of social cohesion.

### 6.2 Theoretical Reflections

In this section I want to return to the theories and models used in this thesis and highlight how my application of these can contribute to current debates while critiquing certain elements which did not suit my particular study. As was stated in the introduction, my study is building on and adding to the current literature (Lopes Cardozo 2008, Davies 2011, Hoeks 2011) on (peace) education in post-war Sri Lanka. The aim was to fill the gap that existed within these previous studies, as none of them focussed specifically on teacher education, furthermore with the change of government as of 2015 my study has value in determining what these recent changes mean for peace education.
In my conceptualisation of social cohesion, from a review of the literature, what was first indicated was the contested and complex nature of the term itself (Berger-Schmitt 2000). My research experience went on to empirically portray these complexities. As was shown in chapter five, there was a constant issue of misrecognition of the term and what it was supposed to mean, this was shown to be an obstacle in actually moving towards social cohesion due to a regular mismatch in understanding. My knowledge that social cohesion was difficult to conceptualise proved to be useful for my field experience as it allowed me a degree of flexibility in accepting that there was not simply one definition to go by. In regards to social cohesion itself, I cannot argue my study has brought any obvious clarity to the definition of the term, instead what it has shown practically is the embedded, contested nature of what social cohesion really is to different contexts. Moreover, I gained an understanding which critiqued my initial approach and that of (Aturupane 2011) which prioritised increased accommodation over assimilation. This understanding being, a grassroots informed range of possible interpretations of social cohesion with variances when viewed from both minority and majority groups. However, within these variances was an underlying recognition that assimilation still holds value in the current state of ethnic relations- and moving towards a united conceptualisation of what a ‘Sri Lankan’ citizen is.

The 4 R framework was designed in part to go beyond narrow ‘access’ and ‘quality’ debates prevalent in the field of education and international development (Novelli et al 2016). In this sense, it did prove a useful mechanism to uncover the multifaceted ways educational policies (on teacher training) can ease or fuel ethnic tensions. What the model benefits from is a holistic approach that gives more attention to social, cultural and structural determinants in the production of inequalities in education in contexts affected by conflict. This was especially helpful for my study because one of the focuses of this thesis was the personal identities of teachers, using the Rs in a broader sense to gauge how future teacher training policies fit with the identities of future teachers presented interesting findings. Furthermore, the use of the 4R model in exploring the structural issues of education, matches well and compliments the use of the SRA framework. Working with this combination has received previous scholarly attention (Lopes Cardozo et al 2016) and my application further demonstrates how the use of both can be a logical process of analysis in future research.

6.3 Policy Ideas?

This section brings to light some policy suggestions in relation to teacher training, peace education and social cohesion in Sri Lanka. Crucial to note these views are the opinions gained from conversations and insights from my experiences in Jaffna.

Essential for social cohesion, and prior to reflecting on the educational structure of the country, is a need to change the ‘minds’ of the population- to go beyond relationships of tokenism. Clearly, this necessitates fundamental changes in the whole cultural identity of the country but there is arguably no better place to start than education. Perhaps an
idealistic recommendation, but one stance that came up throughout my conversations is how a mixed education system would provide a strong forum for ‘equitable interaction’ (Novelli et al 2015) to occur which wouldn’t reduce multi-ethnic interaction to short term encounters of the ‘other’. Furthermore, and as argued in wider international debates on peace education (Bar-Tal 2009), a change of focus from purely written exams to testing a wider range of skills such as communicative abilities and critical thinking would aid the policy recommendation pushing for social cohesion.

Additionally, as shown in my data analysis, the curricula and methodology of both the education and teacher education system is problematic in its current form. Reflecting on my findings I find it acceptable to argue that a reformulation of curricula, to encourage togetherness instead of difference would be beneficial. This needs to be implemented alongside the practical measures, to not only bring children from different ethnicities together for individual occasions, but rather institutionalising it would support the notion of social cohesion.

However, such wholesale changes to the curricula needs to be complemented further with an improved monitoring and evaluation mechanism. The current system, especially in Jaffna, struggles on this front, if peace education is to fundamentally tackle the ethnic divides of the country, its progression needs to be monitored better and the lessons learnt need to be practiced. The development of the roles of the ISAs could be a potential route to improve the monitoring system- however this would necessitate further funding and training for them in order to improve their understanding of peace education.

A final recommendation would aim to tackle the structural governance complications exposed in chapter four. The current system is heavily supply focussed- the directives come from the NIE and MoE down to the province and then to the zones, as indicated this results in a misunderstanding of policy and detachments between national and local levels. This governance framework entails minimal decision making power (and representation) at local levels, flipping this around could facilitate a more inclusive organisation of (teacher) education policies. Of course in making this point is a recognition of the huge obstacles to any such ‘grand’ changes in governance structure but my data portrayed that the demand is there at the Jaffna level, but nobody demands it. Strengthening the coordination mechanism in a bottom up way so that the actual teacher training institutes of Jaffna can express their demands to central educational authorities would consolidate the process of social cohesion.

Regardless, any policy recommendations or changes would take time but perhaps now is the time to start. For the first time in a long time the ruling regime has the support of (and supports) the minorities in Sri Lanka. This increased space to discuss the trauma and wounds of the past needs to be fully utilised, not just by the decision makers of the nation, but more importantly by community members from all backgrounds to finally unshackle the imaginary ethnic divides that have plagued this island for the last 34 years.
Bibliography


The conceptual scheme below was designed to aid the understanding of the thematic areas explored in this thesis. Social Cohesion, as demonstrated in my theoretical chapter is better understood as a process instead of an end in itself. Furthermore, social cohesion was developed as an instrumental outcome of peace education initiatives. The organisation of the teacher training process in Jaffna exists within the wider structure of the education system of the country. This was empirically portrayed through the use of the SRA model which developed an understanding that agency operates within the structures where teachers act (and get trained). Teacher training was assessed through the use of the 4Rs framework which is portrayed above and is also affected by structural/governance influences in multifaceted ways. Additionally the agency that may develop is explored through the components of obligations, authority, autonomy and identity.

In an ideal sense, with a successfully implemented training procedure that delivers trainee teachers to become agents of peace education promoting social cohesion, the components of teacher agency would lead to the goals of peace education/inclusive society. The closest possible encounter of this in my findings may be the non-formal settings and the STEPS institute. However, crucial to note with this visual demonstration, and my more pervasive findings indicate the notion of agency being pushed back by the structures within which these trainee teachers operate. That is, the agency that
may develop through teacher training does not support the goals of peace education and thereby the process of social cohesion. The large yellow arrow at the top is demonstrating this feature whereby such teacher training processes lead to the further existence of ethnic discrimination.
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<td>17</td>
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<td>Interview</td>
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<td>Secondary School</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Founder of STEPS, International Education Consultant</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>Interview</td>
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<td>Independent</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>Interview</td>
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<td>GIZ</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>24/08/2016</td>
<td>Interview</td>
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<td>Interview</td>
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<td>26/08/2016</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>ESC Operations/2NL</td>
<td>GIZ/NIE</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- **Lecturer and Political Activist** at University of Jaffna
- **Graduate Teacher** at Secondary School
- **Head Trainer, Trainee Teachers** at STEPS Institute
- **Municipal Comissioner** at Northern Province Municipality
- **2NL Sinhala Teacher** at Secondary School
- **Founder of STEPS, International Education Consultant** at Independent
- **Ex-Minister of Higher Education** at Independent
- **Director of ESC** at GIZ
- **Education Officer** at UNICEF
- **ESC Coordinator** at UNICEF
- **ESC Operations/2NL** at GIZ/NIE
Appendix 3. Operationalization Table

This operationalization table was used in my fieldwork period as a tool to break down my thematic focus in ways that I could engage my respondents in the interviews carried out. It provided a base which informed my interview guides and outlined approaches to gain insights into social cohesion, teacher training and the state of ethnic relations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Variable</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training through Social Cohesion lens</td>
<td>Formal Teacher Training</td>
<td>The Structure of Training</td>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Approach to reconciliation and social cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fit with national curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Length of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding of different religions in the training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrative multi-ethnic approach of training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bilingual training when required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redistribution</td>
<td></td>
<td>Restrictions to access training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Funded by who</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Location of training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity for different ethnicities to take part in training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who controls the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Formal Education</td>
<td>Reconciliation</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The structure of Training</td>
<td>Approach of training to topic of war</td>
<td>Fit with national curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching of history</td>
<td>Length of training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies of coping in the training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strength of topic of ethnic integration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Understanding of different religions in the training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrative multi-ethnic approach of training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bilingual training when required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redistribution</td>
<td>Restrictions to access training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Funded by who</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of training</td>
<td>Representation</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity for different ethnicities to take part in training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who controls the content of the training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to challenge training</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reconciliation</th>
<th>Space to Manoeuvre</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approach of training to topic of war</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching of history</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strategies of coping in the training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strength of topic of ethnic integration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Agency for Social Cohesion</th>
<th>Obligations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How tightly teachers have to stick to curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hours worked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree of pressure for students to pass exams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Authority | |
|-----------| |
|           | Teachers ability to undertake new training on different topics |
|           | Classroom dynamics |
|           | School power |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Flexibility to move away from national curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to influence school curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Approach to teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Religion practiced</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Full name given at birth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Location of Family home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary language used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to speak Sinhalese</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of friends from different ethnicities</td>
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