Chapter One  
Theoretical Framework  

Introduction  

‘Research’ in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge. Research can be defined as a systematic and scientific search for pertinent information on specific topic. In order to substantiate a statement of research, application of theory is implicit and indispensable. Thus, theory provides the rudimentary source from which statement of a research can flourish and attested. For the present study, the parameters of international relations theory will be explored to establish the research statement.

In the present debate on the theory of International Relations, much attention has been paid to the concept of ‘broadening and deepening aspect’ of ‘international security’. This process of ‘broadening and deepening’ was especially evident with the emergence of the new states and with the proliferation of their defence and security related issues. In addition to the ‘broadening and deepening of security’, the field has also been challenged on one key assumption: ‘power and security equates to security’, perfectly at par with the Realist paradigm. It is interesting to note here that this ‘broadening and deepening’ of security studies is a development of particular relevance to those interested in the security of the Third World States. The field of security study employed the theoretical categories and analytical tools developed to examine defence and security issues, specifically not only at the great powers, but also at small states level too.

The state has been traditionally the unit of analysis to be secured-the referent object of security—but it is not the only referent object. Today, therefore, scholars are raising apprehensions about the nature of ‘security’ itself, thereby opening serious debates about international system itself, or, indeed, societies within states such as
ethnic groups. This systemic paradigm shift from the ‘state-centric to individual-centric security’ is indeed the order of the day, since insecurity considerations also arise from environmental degradation, economic collapse, societal upheaval, political illegitimacy or ethnic tensions. The last factor is the focus of attention of this research in the context of a small state-Sri Lanka.

It is evident that the literature on ‘small states national insecurity dilemma’ is generally ‘Euro-centric’ in nature since it heavily relies on the Western experience in understanding and application of national security policy. The conceptual proliferation extended only to the ‘military statecraft’, whereby only military implication of an issue used to be explored. With the advent of academic efforts, who or what is to be secured or for that matter ‘the referent object of security’ became the centre of further debate. In the case of Sri Lanka, the small island nation-state started her journey of independence with a ‘state-centric approach’ towards security, with a unitary role-back of political unification in 1958. That in itself has shifted the security focus into the ‘other-centric’ one with the emergence of resistance from the Tamil minority culminating into a secessionist movement under the banner of its militant outfit the LTTE. Today, with the end of the civil war, the biggest question will be whether Sri Lanka will be able to accommodate the modern approach of the ‘security dilemma’, and how the political elite will successfully approach an ‘all-centric’ nation-building.

Further the ‘Euro-centric’ literatures have focused chiefly on the military dimension of the security concept evident only in meeting the ‘external threats to the state’. Hence, most scholars have underestimated the salience and impact of internal factors, which badly affects the national security well-being of small states. In this
broader context, this thesis intends to examine the various dimensions of small states insecurity dilemma and analyse subsequently the theoretical and practical issues.

The thematic bifurcation of the theoretical chapter is as follows:

- Conceptualization of Insecurity Dilemma
- Insecurity Dilemmas of Small States
- Ethnic Conflict and Insecurity Dilemma of Small States
- Concept of Insecurity Dilemma by Brian L. Job

1.1 Conceptualization of Insecurity Dilemma

Contrary to the traditional retrospective of “security of nation-states”, one of the most important issues that states in general, and small states in particular face is ‘insecurity’. Because of their vulnerability, weak military strength, as well as lack of resources, almost since inception, these types of states face the ‘dilemma of how to find security guarantees for their existence’.¹ By and large, the insecurity dilemma is common to all the state; big or small, strong or weak and rich or poor.

What exists is not a “security dilemma” in the traditional sense, but instead an “insecurity dilemmas”, in which national security, defined as ‘regime security’ by state authorities, becomes pitted against the incompatible demands of ethnic, social, and religious forces. However, ‘security dilemma’ has always been accused of creating/raising the immediate imminent risk of war between sovereign states. With the end of the Cold war, security dilemma is in decline, since the inter-state war is no longer as supreme a concern as the intra-war security agenda. With the surge of the new states in the international system, new dilemmas have emerged, and those in particular reference to the small-states/weak states loom greater risk and associated

value dilemma. The insecurity dilemma poses a looming risk of violent domestic conflict in weak states.

1.1.1. Realists Perspective of Insecurity Dilemma

The Realist perspective of insecurity dilemma came into fore in the eve of the WW-II, with ‘state’ as the core unit, and where the main emphasis was on ‘protecting the state sovereignty and territorial integrity from an external military threat’. With the end of the Cold War and the military standoff between the superpowers, scholars have challenged the assumptions underlying security studies. Realist argument on national insecurity is based on the source of a given state’s source of security to the insecurity perception of another state or simply the insecurity of another state. In this border context, Arnold Wolfers described the concept of national security as ‘an ambiguous symbol’.² According to Norman J. Padelford, the most universal sources of insecurity are ‘fear of war and its consequences’. He further analysed that the concept of insecurity also springs out from the past wars, which tends to feed upon themselves. Thus, he stated that having been endangered from a given direction in the past, it is easy for a nation to believe that it will be threatened again in the future.³ In keeping with the normative turn in international relations theory, the assumptions of Realism that had underpinned the national security debates of the Cold War have been subjected to re-evaluation. One such approach is known as the ‘critical security studies’ (CSS). The newer approaches of security studies thus, underpinned the Realist paradigm of ‘state-centralism’. With the publication of the Human Development Report from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994, the conceptual restructuring of the Realist perspective have been completed

with the addition of ‘human security’, which in the long-run have thrown off the ‘all-consuming element of military matters’. The apparent fallacy of the Realist perspective of ‘state-centric’ security becomes even more marked, according to Mohammed Ayoob, because of the present international milieu in which the third world elites are trying to state and nation build; he refers to this as the ‘third world’s security predicament’. The elite in the decolonized states of the Third World found themselves at the early stage of state making and nation building with a territorial entity that had contentious borders, and a population of different ethnic groups that did not necessarily see themselves as part of that given state. In such a situation, the ‘security dilemma’ became more complex, and that has exactly happened in the case of Sri Lanka. Be that what it may, security has evolved to become an all-encompassing saga, where the Realist discernment of ‘state security’ can only be achieved ‘in conjunction with and not at the expense of human security’. In the post-civil war Sri Lanka, this proposition is highly relevant.

Of late the term ‘security dilemma emerged as a new ideologue for which John H. Herz can be credited with his first use in Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma, way back in 1950. However, while it is Herz who is accredited with coining the term, the ‘grandfather’ of the security dilemma is the British historian Herbert Butterfield. Published in the same decade as Herz’s monograph, Butterfield’s History and Human Relations highlights the key to understanding the security dilemma as a tragedy. In the case of Sri Lanka, the security or insecurity

---

6 For more details see, Herbert Butterfield (1951), History and Human Relations, London: Collins Publishers.
dilemma emanating from the threat of the LTTE has turned into a ‘tragedy’ at the cost of Human Security, both during the ongoing crisis, and even after the end of it.

The insecurity dilemma, according to Herz, constitutes an intractable feature of human life in the condition of anarchy, especially within the field of international relations. His formulation contains the common observation that ‘rising spirals of power’ are associated with ‘falling spirals of insecurity’. In the case of Sri Lanka, the ‘rising spirals of power’ between the political elite and the insurgent group (read LTTE) is directly associated with the ‘falling spirals of insecurity’, both for the island nation and for the civil population. In the work of both Butterfield and Herz, the key to understanding how such a tragedy can occur is ‘uncertainty’. Butterfield describes the uncertainty that decision makers can face in trying to determine others’ intentions. ‘Uncertainty’ of the territorial integrity at one point of time, ‘uncertainty’ of the survival of the political elite, and the ‘uncertainty’ of the civil population per say, all contributed immensely to the overall insecurity dilemma of Sri Lanka.

As Norman J. Padelford demonstrated that the degree of insecurity felt by states varies with ‘circumstances, time, and place’. When a powerful aggressive force is operative in the international scene, states feel a larger measure of insecurity than when world affairs are relatively stable; and their attitudes are affected by their own degree of strength, as well as by their geographical positions and their relations with other states. During the period of the Cold War, the most universal source of insecurity was the fear of war among the great powers and its spill over effects on the smaller states. However, in the case of Sri Lanka, it is only after the end of the Cold War that the menace of the LTTE was brought into the concern and focus of the international powers. Further, the concept of insecurity did provide a dominating

---

strand of security analysis, one that tended to equate “security with the absence of a military threat or with the protection of the nation [state] from external overthrow or attack.” It presupposes that threats arising from outside a state are somehow more dangerous to its security than threats that arise within the state. In the case of Sri Lanka, it is but the threats arising from within the state became more prominent than the other.

In the environment in which international relations are developed, states tend to be fearful of each other because of misperceptions and mutual misunderstandings. Thus, as Robert Jervis demonstrated that security becomes one of the main priorities of states. In other words, all countries try to gain security, obtain military superiority, and improve one’s own security status by increasing military expenditure. Since an arms race like the one experienced during the Cold War is an everlasting concern, the military superiority of a state tends to be surpassed by others’ military building-up efforts. In sum, the security dilemma describes a situation in which war can occur between two or more participants where none of those involved desired such an outcome.

In addition to all these, in their argument on insecurity dilemma, Booth and Wheeler analyse that there are three broad logics, namely the ‘fatalist, the mitigator, and the transcender’. The fatalist logic of insecurity is based on the notion that because the search for security is primordial, the nature of relations between states

---

and other entities is essentially competitive.\textsuperscript{15} This perspective suggests that, as the world is a dangerous place with aggressive enemies, insecurity is an inescapable feature of international politics. Thus, even if states are driven by defensive concerns, they invariably fear attack by other states.\textsuperscript{16} Rather than risk such unilateral vulnerability, states will instead act like aggressive revisionists to safeguard their own security.

The mitigator logic of insecurity suggests that cooperation between states in anarchy is possible, if only on a narrowly defined basis. Booth and Wheeler argued that anarchy informed by the processes, institutions and norms of society will bring a degree of predictable order, which in turn will bring a degree of security to the political units concerned. The mitigator logic also accepts that the human nature may be flawed, and that the anarchical international system cannot be escaped, but its proponents nevertheless argue that the most dangerous features of the struggle between nations and states, such as arms racing, crises and war-can be ameliorated.\textsuperscript{17} Nonetheless, Booth and Wheeler underlined that the mitigator logic of insecurity also shares some elements of the fatalist logic of insecurity. Although institutions and norms may rein in security competition and arms racing for a given period of time, such arrangements may collapse in the future, leading to a renewal of security competition.

Moreover, Booth and Wheeler argued that the transcender logic is based on the notion that ‘insecurity, including that deriving from the security dilemma, can be escaped if human society reforms or re-invents the structures and processes within

which it lives, globally.’

Although this perspective acknowledges the problems of conflict and insecurity, it also rejects the notion that conflict is the result of intrinsic characteristics of human nature that are predisposed toward aggression. Instead, the transcender logic suggests that conflict in world politics is the result of the assumptions by human beings that they exist in a ‘world politics based on conflict and suspicion’. At the same time, the transcender logic allows for human agency. Human beings are capable of learning from the mistakes of history and thus reforming international politics. In sum, the realists’ perspective of national security represents the traditional understanding of insecurity, to include puzzles of the protection of territory and citizens from external threats.

The fatalist and the mitigator ideology can be understood from the international perspective where insecurity dilemma culminates to stockpiling of arms, especially the nuclear ones. That proposition in itself does not directly apply or having relevance to the Sri Lankan scenario. However, in an indirect sense, the inflow of illegal arms and ammunitions to the banned militant outfit of Sri Lanka, the LTTE is related to the end of the Cold War and the corollary stockpiling of arms by the superpower and their blocs. The transcender’ logic apparently can be related to the Sri Lankan scenario, since it is the ‘suspicion of the human beings’ that has been responsible for bringing down the natural fabric of security.

1. 1. 2. Neo-Realists Perspective of Insecurity Dilemma

Given the inversion of the accepted conception of the classical insecurity dilemma, it is not surprising that the intra-state insecurity dilemma has received little

19 Ibid , p. 16.
attention in the orthodox security studies literature.\textsuperscript{21} Although originally conceived with inter-state relations very firmly in mind, since the end of the Cold War in particular there has been an increasing tendency among many writers towards utilizing the insecurity dilemma in terms of the intra-state level of analysis. Moreover, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, such a shift has, to a great extent, come from the neorealist; from those writers who had previously been reluctant to grant intra-state relations any prominent role on the international relations stage.\textsuperscript{22} For the purpose of the present study, intra-state insecurity dilemma is of utmost importance since that is the only way to explain the incidents chronologically.

Over the past decades, states have faced serious domestic fragmentation, regional and international tensions. Hence, the perpetuation of insecurity and instability has weakened the strength and position of states. In this context, the discourse on the dilemma of national insecurity has assumed much importance for states.\textsuperscript{23} That simply attests the contestation of the critical security studies, and many others like them.

The unique insecurity dilemma facing small states is largely a function of the ‘structural conditions’ of their existence. Small states does lack the most fundamental of state attribute, namely, effective institutions, a monopoly on the instruments of violence and consensus on the idea of the state. All these attest the fact that the lack of nation-building, or the incompetence of the political elite of nation-building has led to the insecurity dilemma of the small states, as has been blatantly evident in the case of

Sri Lanka. Consequently, incomplete or quasi-states face numerous challenges to their authority from powerful domestic actors.\textsuperscript{24} In order to understand how this condition of insecurity arises in the first place, the primary structural characteristics of states and the nature of internal security threats they face needs to be examined. There are different theories about the causes of state insecurity. Taken together, those theories deal with how conditions of insecurity evolve and persist, despite international assistance.

According to Caroline Thomas, states are conscious of the need to make themselves secure. They are insecure domestically and vulnerable to the external constraints and incentives. The process of foreign loyalty to the state is still at an early stage in many cases. Political, economic and social structures are weak and often inflexible. The problem of internal insecurity makes the problem of external insecurity all the more acute, and vice versa. These different dimensions of insecurity feed off one another.\textsuperscript{25} Further, apart from internal factors of states, their lack of control over the external environment has great implications for their ability to control the domestic political, economic, social and military domain.\textsuperscript{26}

The roots of insecurity of states during the Cold War period were to be found in “weak” structures of the state that emerged from the process of decolonisation. In other words, structures that lacked a close fit between the state’s territorial dimensions and its ethnic and societal composition. The concept of national security is of limited utility in explaining this security predicament. As Steinbach suggests, “the concept of ‘nation’, introduced by colonial powers or by small elites who saw in it the

\textsuperscript{25} Caroline Thomas (1987), \textit{In Search for Security: The Third World in International Relations}, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 04
prerequisite for the fulfilment of their own political aspirations, materialized in a way which went against territorial, ethnic, religious, geographical or culto-historical traditions”.27 As a result, to quote Mohammed Ayoob, most Third World states emerged without a “capacity to ensure the habitual identification of their inhabitants with the post-colonial structures that have emerged within colonially-dictated boundaries”.28 The most common outcome of this was, and continues to be, conflict about national identity. In this regard, Robert Jervis points out that states usually try to increase their security by building-up their arms.29 Thus, most states hope to use those arms both in the defensive purposes and offensive purposes in order to eradicate insecurity situation.30 Continuing the hope of using arms, thus, the military expenditure of most small developing states are greater than their social expenditure, which costs their human development index. As Al-Mashat demonstrate, competition of defence spending between the states largely causes for arising insecurity dilemma within the states.31 In this context the high human development index of pre-ethnic tension phase of Sri Lanka indicate the legitimacy of this statement.

In 1980s, Barry Buzan casts his discussion as an exploration of the concept of insecurity. His analysis entwines his conceptual analysis with the empirical observations. The key element in Buzan’s work was to broaden the security agenda so as to involve five sectors rather than deal only with one of the five which is the traditional focus. To this, Buzan added political, economic, societal, military and

ecological security sector. Buzan presents plausible arguments for the empirical proposition that security at the individual level is related to security at the level of the intra-state. He examines the interaction between different levels of analysis leading to constructive re-definitions of the concept of insecurity. His contribution is the recognition of the relationship between various actors in term of insecurity, particularly the ambiguity in terms of the relationship between states and individuals. In this regard, he emphasized that ‘for perhaps a majority of the world’s people threats from the state are among the major source of insecurity in their lives’. Thus Buzan reveals that the state is not simply a provider of security but a source of insecurity too. To Buzan, thus, the individual citizen faces threats either directly or indirectly from the state too. Further he insists that security cannot be isolated for treatment at any single level. However, it gives the impression that this is conceptually impossible rather than simply an unwise research strategy. His justification for mixing conceptual and empirical analysis is that the search for a referent object of security goes hand-in-hand with that for its necessary conditions.

Bill McSweeney uses the term ‘Copenhagen School’ to refer to this pioneering work conducted by Barry Buzan and others on the ‘broadening and deepening of security’. It was the ‘Copenhagen School’, which has introduced ‘society’ as a ‘referent object’ (read societal security) to complement the state. The ‘Copenhagen School’ also addressed the question of what is and is not a security issue, and this work has become known in popular parlance as ‘securitization’. Buzan also coined the term ‘security complex’, which refers to a particular region where the

interdependence between the states is sufficiently intense that their natural security concerns cannot be analyzed or resolved separately from others within the region. This argument of Barry Buzan is relevant for the present research. Interdependence of states of South Asia is of extreme importance while analyzing the security or insecurity dilemma of small states of Sri Lanka. However, the British colonial powers have broken the natural alignment of this region, by creating independent nation-states with the Union of India being the largest and the most stable. The sheer size and the extent of population along with rich divergent political elite of India have indeed created a ‘security dilemma’ for the neighbouring small states. No doubt a fact that the development of India, and her global presence along with a relatively free society surpassed her neighbours beyond imagination, thereby strengthening the apprehension. Thus, it was anticipated that the security problems or dilemmas of the neighbouring states of India will also be resolved overtly or covertly. In the case of Sri Lanka, the covert logistical assistance of India to the Government of Sri Lanka in the downfall of LTTE has but attested the statement that security complex of a given region needs to be addressed wholly.

Further, Abdul-Monem M. Al-Mashat analyses that national insecurity poses serious dilemmas. His work deals with more than territorial defence. Like Barry Buzan analysis, it is about the physical, social, and psychological quality of the life of the society, both in the internal settings and within the regional and international systems. In this broader context, Al-Mashat reveals that scarce resources, poverty, the need for modernization and lack of institution building, popular demand for a voice in government, expectations for respect and personal dignity, the need for international

---

cooperation, and a nation’s involvement in domestic, regional, and international conflict are some of the elements of the insecurity dilemma.\textsuperscript{38} Moreover, he emphasizes that resource scarcity, underdevelopment, and lack of domestic cohesion and international cooperation are the ‘heart of security’. Economic development and well-being are closely linked not only because a semblance of security and stability is a prerequisite for successful economic development but also because it is also generally understood that economic development can contribute to national security.\textsuperscript{39}

Al-Mashat’s argument is same as Dietrich Fischer’s argument on non-military threats, which are much more intimately linked to the security predicament.\textsuperscript{40} As mentioned earlier, national insecurity as articulated by Western policy-makers in the immediate post-World War II period was primarily concerned with war-prevention. The role of non-military threats did not constitute part of the agenda of national insecurity. Further, in his broader argument, Joseph J. Romm analyses that the dominant understanding of insecurity resists the inclusion of non-military phenomena in the security studies agenda.\textsuperscript{41} A good example is Stephen Walt’s survey of the field, which clearly rejects the inclusion of such phenomena as pollution, disease, child abuse, or economic recessions into security studies, because this would destroy the intellectual coherence. Walt also argues that “the fact that other hazards exist does not mean that the danger of war has been eliminated”.\textsuperscript{42} The vulnerability of states to resource, ecological and other trans-national threats is compounded by their lack of material, human and institutional capacity to deal with these problems. Thus, as

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{39} - \textit{Ibid} -, pp. 39-56.
\end{flushleft}
Caroline Thomas analyses that security does not simply refer to the military dimension, as is often assumed in the Western discussions of the concept.  

Mohammed Ayoob, who applies Buzan’s ideas to the Third World, is one of most prominent scholars on insecurity studies. In his argument, Ayoob concerns mainly with the internal sources of insecurity dilemma. But he does not mean that external threats are totally absent. Further he reveals that the ‘combination’ of internal and external sources of threat to the state structures, and particularly to their regimes, is quite often heavily weighted in favour of internal sources. Ayoob’s definition on insecurity differs from traditional realists. His argument is similar to Edward E. Azar and Chung In-Moon’s commitments on insecurity.

The concept of ‘weak states’ was introduced again by Barry Buzan or the Copenhagen School in his book ‘People, States and Fear’. For these weak and underdeveloped countries, both inter-state and intra-state conflict is the result of their comparatively early stages of state-building, and the usurpation of democratic rights by their political elite. In this context, the concept of legitimacy seems to be inherent in Ayoob’s analysis of the state-building process. Therefore, like the Realists, Ayoob uses the state as his referent object, but unlike most Realists, he stresses that internal threats can be as immediate and fatal to existing regimes as the possibility of

---

external invasions. In explaining the insecurity resulting from the state and nation-building process, Ayoob thus, rightly emphasizes the role of diversity. Further he accepts that the diversity is the result of numerous cleavages, such as ethnic, religious, linguistic, regional, economic, ideological and political. These cleavages, if not addressed at the right time, and from the right perspective, can precipitate the insecurity dilemma within the state, as has happened in the case of Sri Lanka. The omission of acceptance of diversity in the role of nation-building by the political elite has indeed made Sri Lanka pay heavily through the long civil war with the secessionist group.

In addition to all these, there are several theoretical perspectives and arguments on the plausible causes of ethnic conflict within a state. Scholars view ethnicity as an exceptionally strong affiliation that charges inter-ethnic interactions with the potential for violence. Believers in ancient group hatred argue that ethnic conflict is rooted in old sources of enmity, unequal semi-feudal society, economic disparities, discrimination, ethnic and caste stratification and deep-seated poverty as well as memories of past atrocities that make violence hard to avoid. Proponents of ‘primordial sociality theory’ argue that the strength of kinship ties promotes altruism in favour of the genetic evolution of the group. ‘Fear’ is also the central theme of the theory of ethnic security dilemma, which suggests that territorial intermingling and mutual vulnerability exacerbate assurance problems that may lead to preventive

51 For more details see, Urmila Phadnis and Rajat Ganguly (2001), Ethnicity and Nation-Building in South Asia, New Delhi: Sage Publishers.
wars by ethnic minorities who want to secede to increase their security.\textsuperscript{54} Modernization may also cause conflict as economic and social change can accelerate and intensify group competition for the available scarce resources.\textsuperscript{55} This explanation may be particularly relevant where class cleavages and ethnic cleavages overlap. Finally, ethnic conflict may be the result of mobilization of ethnic groups by ethnic entrepreneurs or elites pursuing private interests and capitalizing on the availability of ethnic networks. Elites may also socially construct ethnic identities or reinforce racial, religious, or linguistic cleavages\textsuperscript{56} in such a way as to produce new sources of friction and conflict.

In the case of Sri Lanka, ‘\textit{memories of past atrocities}’ and economic disparity along the ethnic lines have initially played the role in fragmenting the social fabric of the island nation. Coupled with that, the politicized polarization has not only united the majority Sinhalese faction, but also has been able to unite them under a common religio-political banner, with an inflicting sense of minority-like panic. On the other hand, the kinship ties of the Tamil minority with those from the Indian mainland has created the untoward allegiance of both the groups, transcending borders, which affected heavily the process of assimilation in the case of Sri Lankan Tamils.

1. 2. Insecurity Dilemmas of Small States

By definition small states are those with small populations, land area, production levels, wealth, and military capabilities.\textsuperscript{57} The general patterns of small

\textsuperscript{55} Samuel P. Huntington (1968), \textit{Political Order in Changing Societies}, London: Yale University, p. 05.
states insecurities are compounded by the particular instability of the governments. Governments in small states will have serious concerns about domestic threats to their own authority.\textsuperscript{58} It is interesting to note here that most of the small-states suffer from the ‘usurpation of state representation by a few of the groups that constitutes the population of the state’. Thus, the institutions of the state and the bureaucracy only extend to the peripheral communities, which in itself create the threat to the traditional power holders of the communities. This fact, in itself is relevant in the case of Sri Lanka, where the elite state-making approach (by the Sinhalese Majority community) created a paradoxical effect of creating resistance (by the Tamil minority community) to the regime in power (constituted by the Sinhalese majority population). These threats can also take many forms including military coups, guerrilla movements, secessionist movements, mass uprisings\textsuperscript{59}, as has been envisaged in the case of Sri Lanka through the formation of the political unit of the Tamil minority and later transformation of it into a secessionist guerrilla resistance by the LTTE. Most small states exhibit a lack of consensus on the basic rules of political accommodation, power-sharing and governance.

‘Regime-creation’ and ‘regime-maintenance’ is often a product of violent societal struggles, governed by no stable constitutional framework, and is directly related to ‘legitimacy’. The narrow base of small states regimes and the associated various challenges to their survival affected the way in which national security policy is articulated and pursued.\textsuperscript{60} Often the regime in power struggles to consolidate their legitimacy by neglecting ‘nation-building processes’. This has been evident in the case


of Sri Lanka, where the citizens were arguably not necessarily loyal and willing to support state policies of creating a monolithic unitary state. The issue of regime and state legitimacy thus, laid in the heart of the Third World security problems. Thus, in such a milieu, the regime’s instinct for self-preservation often took precedence over the security interests of the society or the nation. In his argument on the insecurity dilemma of small states, Alford articulates following three important points. 61

1. Non-crisis security dilemmas
2. Internal security dilemmas
3. External security dilemmas

Alford has focused his critical attention with ‘non-crisis insecurity conditions’. To substitute this argument, Ernest Muteba and Joseph J. Therattil emphasize that in their weak position, small states are unable to train their own security forces. 62 Hence, they will need and they are looking for the assistance from the outside powers either by training abroad certain key members of the security forces or by training in place by means of training teams. 63 Corollary, outside powers can also provide physical security in terms of guards, bodyguards, and technical advice. More so, when there is security problem, states will have to request appropriate arms, information, and intelligence from outside powers. Thus, their military weakness made them politically and diplomatically weak. 64 In addition to this, Alford reveals that there is a growing problem of management of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of small states in general and island micro-states in particular and the prevention of illegal operation including fishing, smuggling or drug-running. Moreover, he has pointed out that those

---

vulnerable small states demand assistance from outside powers. Often, that may put the small-state in a vulnerable situation, as has happened in the case of Sri Lanka, where assistance in terms of arms and ammunitions from PRC, has come with the cost of Chinese security base in Hambantota, South-east Sri Lanka.

On the other hand where the state is small, its physical base may be well-defined to constitute a clear object of national insecurity. But its ideas and institutions are internally contested by various groups and so it undermines the security and stability of state. Hence it is more appropriate to view security in small states “in terms of the contending groups, organisations and individuals, as the prime objects of security.”\(^\text{65}\) Thus, socio-political cohesion is one of the most important determining factors of the security of the small states. A common feature of small states is that there is a high level of concern with internal threats which endanger the security of society and states as a whole. In these states, the lack of proper political and social consensus on vital domestic issues opens the society to various threats of internal subversion, conflict and violence, which undermine the security of the state. In this regards, Alford emphasizes that the external armed support could quickly be needed. Moreover, he suggests “if there is a single external military power under obligation to stiffen a regime, it might be better to use that power in the short run”.\(^\text{66}\)

In addition to this, Jonathan Alford examines the external threats to small states. Revolutions, insurgencies and ethnic separatist movements frequently spill over across national boundaries to fuel discord with neighbours. Ethnic minorities fighting the dominant elite rarely honour state boundaries, often seeking sanctuary in neighbouring states where the regime and population might be more sympathetic to their cause. Small states are more vulnerable to foreign intervention, as outside


powers could take advantage of their domestic strife to advance their economic and ideological interests.\textsuperscript{67} In his argument, Alford stated that there is no reason for worry much about external threats to the security of most small states of the world. When there is large war, great powers at war will seek to take or to defend small states if it is in their strategic interests.\textsuperscript{68} But the author has pointed out that there are external threats to small states from regional neighbours. Thus, security dilemma of small state need to be structurally studied taking into consideration the immediate region as a unit component.

Similarly, Alford also emphasized that external security problem of small states can be manageable. But the domestic crisis of small states can not be easily cope up with. Moreover, because of their weakness and small position, these states are unlikely to provide much or even any of the logistics, training, intelligence, and infrastructure normally associated with internal and external security. This is perhaps comparatively the greater danger that the small states face in all its complexity.

Because the socio-political cohesion within a state largely determine the security environment of a state, small states face an endemic security problem on account of internal problems like social divisions, political fragmentation and domestic turmoil. Hence in all these states, there is a lack of convergence of state and society, and as a results division of identities and loyalties within the state occurs, which in its turn jeopardise the process of nation-building, as has happened in the case of Sri Lanka, where acculturation occurred by the overriding national identity of the Sinhala Buddhists supplementing the ethnic identity of the Tamils, Muslims, etc. Consequently in the absence of national unity and integrity, the state becomes vulnerable to both internal and external threats. In this context national security can

\textsuperscript{68} For similar interpretation see, Annette Baker Fox (1959), \textit{Op. Cit.}, pp. 02-03.
not be viewed without considering the internal structure of the state which largely determines its external security environment.

1. 3. Ethnic Conflict and Insecurity Dilemma of Small States

The creation of colonial states rarely resulted in the creation of a single nation-state but rather territorial entity with many ethnic groups within it. Thus, ethnic conflict as a feature of a state is a post-WW-II phenomenon, and has been, since then, remained one of the primary sources of insecurity within states. It accentuated by degree and dimension since the end of the Cold War, and the end of the super-power era. Not surprisingly, as of year 2005, 17 of all major armed conflict were intra-state based on ethnicity.\(^{69}\) The first writer to utilize the insecurity dilemma as an explanation for ethnic conflict was Barry R. Posen.\(^ {70}\) The basis of Posen’s argument is that insecurity dilemmas within states can occur when conditions are similar to those between states in the international system.\(^ {71}\) In this way, he claims that the collapse of multi-ethnic states can profitably be viewed as a problem of emerging ethnic conflict.\(^ {72}\) The causes of ethnic conflict are grounded in the religious and ethnic divides of the societies, the government’s lack of respect for basic human rights, corruption, lack of efficient administration, poor infrastructures and weak national coherence.\(^ {73}\)

In a nutshell, the absence of an effective central government means that various groups within the state (ethnic, national, religious) are forced to provide their own security. Thus, it becomes a ‘self-help situation’ much like that in the

---

\(^{69}\) See, SIPRI Year Book (2006), London: Oxford University Press, Appendix 2A.  
international system. In much the same way, in more recent times, Stuart Kaufman in his writings argued that the insecurity dilemma and ethnic conflict should not apply to contending ethnic groups within a state, because they rarely find themselves in a situation of complete anarchy. Anarchy can be approximated, however, if ethnic groups effectively challenge the governments’ legitimacy and control over its territory. Thus, challenge to the central government, coupled with the question of legitimacy has again become the main theme of ‘insecurity dilemma’. In the case of Sri Lanka, concern over ethnic identity has made the Tamil secessionist group challenge the GOSL.

In two articles, Kaufman elaborated the divided the ethnic conflict into two types:

1. Cases of mass-led conflict and
2. Cases of elite-led conflict.

In understanding this approach, determining the existence of either benign or malign intent becomes important. In the mass-led cases hostilities emerge spontaneously. Thus, mass-led conflicts are inflicted with uncertainty and mistrust, which lead both sides to misperceive the others’ as a threat. By contrast, in elite-led conflicts the goal of the groups’ leaders is to harm the other. In this way, Kaufman seeks to set up a clear distinction between the ‘role of the people and the role of their leaders’.

In most of the small states, the relationship between the national insecurity dilemma and ethnic conflict can be approached through the study of ethnic-nationalism. This approach assists in understanding the internal dynamics, like social

---

and political cleavages within the state, which causes internal conflicts and violence opening up threats to security. Broadly there is, thus, nexus between the security and ethnic nationalism of the state as ‘ethnic nationalism plays a vital role in the origins, composition, and character of the state’.\(^{77}\) In this context, ethnic nationalism has an important role in the mobilisation of groups in the society. Broadly, ethnic nationalism as a facet of political expression and solidarity is expressed or crystallized by various nationalities in their common search for security and stability in the society.\(^{78}\) Thus, it can be said that establishment of ‘shared norms and values’ is crucial for the creation of a nation-state. The referent object, therefore, for ethnic security problems is ‘identity’. Identity security lies at the heart of the Copenhagen School’s notion of societal security, and it is particularly useful in understanding the dynamics behind ethnic security problems. In the case of Sri Lanka, the Tamil minority did not have the ‘shared norms and values’, and they suffered from ‘identity crisis’, especially after the imposition of Sinhalese.

Debates centring the fundamental nature of collective ethnic identification feature variations on two general themes (a) primordial and (b) structural. Implied in the primordial perspective is an emphasis on an instrumental view of ethnic ties.\(^{79}\) Rather, these ties are seen as ends in themselves shaped by forces other than material self-interest; they are persistent and resist the homogenization predicted by convergence and modernization theorists. The essence of these ties “is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it in the subconscious

---


conviction of its members from all other people in the most vital way.”

These bonds stem from “immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them ... from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language or even a dialect of a language and following particular social practice.”

According to structuralism, the ethnic identity results instead from objective inter-group differences in the distribution of economic resources and authority. Implied here is rational choice and self-interest, that ethnic ties are means to certain ends and that the boundaries of ethnic groups are changeable. Neither primordial nor structural would deny the obvious variations in the intensity of identification and in the potential for nationalist movements cross-culturally and over time. For the ethnic tension of Sri Lanka, both the primordial and structural was prevalent, since the Tamil minority expressed both kinship and objection to resource sharing.

The rise of ethnic nationalism leading to ethnic conflicts within the state has serious dimensions for small states. In this context, the idea of state nationalism has a positive role to play in small states in aggregation of group interests and common needs in the society. Though there is an exhaustive literature relating to the concepts of nation, state and nationalism, but it lacks a coherent analysis in small states context.

Ethnic nationalism in small states began as a negative force in response to the colonial domination of the alien power. Hence, nationalism that accompanied the de-
The colonization process was not the positive unity of a coherent group but the negative one of common opposition to the foreign rule. This was manifested in the later developments as various ethnic groups entered into conflict, while competing for the socio-economic largesse of the state.\textsuperscript{84} So, in the underdeveloped states of Asia, the nature of society in the presence of different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups produced sub-national forces led to the ethnic conflicts within the state.

The process of modernisation unfolds related social changes, in the nature of ethnic consciousness and group solidarity within the society. This paves the way for politicisation of the ethnicity and assertion of the group interests and aspirations. Therefore, in the small states, the interplay of ethnicity and ethnic movements results in the \textit{`competitive-turned-conflictual assertion of ethnic nationalism against state centric nationalism'}\textsuperscript{85}, thereby enhancing ethnic mobilisation on the lines of group interests, which in its turn gives rise to clash of different ethnic groups within the state.\textsuperscript{86}

Thus, for small states ethnic nationalism is a major factor hindering the national unity in these societies. In these states, various racial-ethnic conflicts have arisen due to direct and indirect result of the exploitative nature of uneven development and relative deprivation of certain groups.\textsuperscript{87} This has been accentuated in the post-independence period though the political mobilisation by the national elite. One of the ways in which national governments attempt to manage secessionist

\textsuperscript{86} Walker Connor (1972), \textit{“Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?” World Politics}, 24(3), pp. 319-355.
tendencies is through alliances and collaboration with elites within national or ethnic minorities.\textsuperscript{88} These arguments are especially relevant in the case of Sri Lanka.

Further the political leaders have sought to mobilise different groups with the articulation of respective group interests arousing certain \textit{‘primordial sentiments’}, like race, religion, language, custom and culture on a geographical scale. Therefore, in a pluralistic society, where different groups compete in the arena of the state, \textit{‘there arise the conflicts between the group interests and the state policy’}. The group sought their primordial sentiments, which run counter to the civil politics of the state. Moreover, different ethnic groups seeking to forward their own interests clash with each other. The lack of integration in society and the presence of competitive loyalties of groups, thus, pave the way for the rise of innumerable problems like communalism, tribalism, regionalism and so on and so forth. In the absence of proper socio-cultural integration in the society, the rise of ethnic nationalism within different groups is evident. One view is that ethnic groups simply become nations when it developed ideas about obtaining political self-determination.\textsuperscript{89} Thus, racial-ethnic divergences are sharpened to point that the state only commands the \textit{‘conflictual loyalties’} from the masses.\textsuperscript{90} These conflicts of loyalty undermine the national consensus and legitimacy which adversely affect the security and stability of the state. In other words, the supremacy of the loyalty to state can only prevent the secessionist aspiration of ‘ethnic loyalty’. The submission of state loyalty to the supremacy of ethnic nationalism venting into secessionism has happened in the case of Sri Lanka, where the Tamil ethnic minority perceived the Sinhala Buddhist state of Sri Lanka as


the immediate enemy threatening their unique culture, language, and aspiration, by forcefully subduing them to the state power constitutionally approved by various acts of the Sri Lankan Parliament.

Further the ‘external dimension’ of the security threat emanating from ‘ethnic nationalism’ is equally, if not more, important. Here, the main problem posed by ethnic nationalism in small states is the possibility of external intervention by proximate or outside powers. Such a possibility exists due to two reasons:

First, that a neighbouring or an external power could see a direct or indirect security threat to herself emanating from a small state whose legitimacy is seriously undermined internally and therefore unstable.

Second, the possibility of intervention is directly linked to the peculiarities of ethnic nationalism itself. Nationalism of ethnic groups often overlaps international boundaries. In this broader context, the cross-border ethnic national relation and geographical proximity can be an important factor as countries closer to the national security issues become concern over the impact of the outcome. If the ethnic group under duress has kin in another state, particularly in a neighbouring state, there is likelihood for sympathy and support for the combating group. In such cases the impetus behind that outside support for the separatist movement is ‘ethnic affinity’.

In addition to this, it is fair to believe that the countries of closer proximity have more likeness to get involved in conflicts than distant ones. Presence of kin in other states may also make a tremendous difference to the geo-political environment, adding an ‘emotional element’ to instrumental motivations. Also the strength of kin ethnic group as a political constituency can play a vital role in policy making. If the

---

co-ethnic in the kin state holds a significant balance of power in central government, the likelihood of support for the minority group is large.\textsuperscript{92}

Further, any social turmoil in one country is bound to affect the other in terms of refugees, displacement of life and property of the kith and kin or other cultural affiliates. In such situations ethnic, religious and other sympathies and support get mobilised for the victims across the border irrespective of the nature of relations between the neighbouring governments. If the social turmoil in one country is serious, the socio-cultural constituency in the other country can become a significant pressure group, influencing the relations between the two countries.\textsuperscript{93}

Moreover, long term and short term economic, military and ideological interests are instrumental motivations for external intervention in small states.\textsuperscript{94} As Buzan explained, if an outside state finds that the prolonged security problems will be economically, politically or strategically advantageous, this may lead support to the dissident group.\textsuperscript{95} In addition to this, in the present context of globalization, security is determined by the international economic system\textsuperscript{96} which exerts strong pressure on small states to adopt economic policies and programmes, which would supplement their global economic strategies. To safeguard their security interests, dominant powers use various economic devices to increase the dependency of smaller economies. Preservation of economic interests is accorded a very high priority in the agenda of dominant powers that even military intervention to safeguard economic

interests is regarded as a legitimate act. In this context, economic and political factors play a significant role of external intervention in security issues of small states.

In the context of Sri Lanka, presence of ethnic kin in the neighbouring Union of India played havoc. In the initial phases of the conflict, only ideological assistance has been observed. However, with the passage of time, and with the increase of presence of the ethnic kin in the Central Government of the Union of India, has transformed the nature of assistance. It is indeed for sure that the ‘emotional element’ has played the most instrumental role in supporting the combating faction of the Tamil minority of Sri Lanka. Certainly, the factor of globalization has played its role in the ethnic conflict of Sri Lanka, by assisting the combating forces of the LTTE in ‘networking, mobilizing and accumulating arms and money’, on the one hand, and on the other by assisting the Sri Lanka Government by introducing the group (read LTTE) as the ‘most deadliest secessionist terrorist group’ of the world, with their deadly ‘human bomb’. Today, it is a fact that whatever has been the cause, the aftermath of this civil war is actually a defeat of humanity and civil society in terms of ‘inter-group suspicion, curbing of civil liberties, imposition of unitary culture and religion and above all the economic setback’, which has forced Sri Lankan Human Development Index pushed back to several years. For the new government of Sri Lanka, thus, along with keeping in terms with the long term and short term economic, military and ideological interests’ of both Union of India and the People’s Republic of China, economic and human rebuild will be the stupendous task.

---

1. 4. Concept of Insecurity Dilemma by Brian L. Job

The Concept of Insecurity Dilemma, which is analysed by Brian L. Job applies to the analysis of a given research problem and hypotheses. It is important to mention here that among the scholars who tried to conceptualize insecurity dilemmas of states within the context of Third World, Brian L. Job is one of the most important experts on the security study. He analysed the phenomenon and introduces a contrasting new line of thought while thinking of applying the security dilemma to the Third World.\(^{98}\) Especially, Brian L. Job seeks to rethink national insecurity dilemma in the post-Cold War setting. As Job demonstrated, the ‘insecurity dilemma’ is the core concept in the field of security studies. This is applied to states without cohesive nationalism, with weak institutional capacities to secure peace and order, with a pre-occupation of internal threats rather than external ones and with legitimacy problems.\(^{99}\) These definitions make his work a study of security problems of states, not of the powers in the Third World. The premise is that Western/Eurocentric theories about war, balance of power, hegemony and sovereignty are not meaningful to Third World studies because threats to national security have internal rather than external sources.

Therefore, Job analyses that the insecurity dilemma of states is often rooted in their colonial past and currently sustained by the international system. In his argument on the insecurity dilemma of states, Job articulated the following four important points.\(^{100}\)

1. Within the borders of the state, there is often no single nation, i.e., a socially cohesive society. Instead, there are usually a variety of

---


communal groups contending for their own securities and for supremacy over their competitors.

2. The regime in power, therefore, usually lacks the support of some significant component of population, because the regime represents the interests either of a particular social sector or of economic or military elite that has taken control. In all instances, the result is an absence of perceived popular legitimacy to the existence and security interests of the regime.

3. The state lacks effective institutional capacities to provide peace and order, as well as the conditions for satisfactory physical existence, for the population.

4. The sense of threat that prevails is of internal threats to and from the regime power, rather than externally motivated threats to the existence of the nation-state.

These above four points show that there is no necessary agreement on the notion of national insecurity and they illustrate that no externally oriented security dilemma for the typical state can be applied for the typical country. Actually, the premises of the security dilemma are violated. The main concern in these countries is the absence of popular legitimacy and not the security of one state over others. At this point the lack of governance becomes the main threats. The result is what Job actually characterized as an insecurity dilemma of states. They are:

1. Less effective security for all or certain sectors of the population.

2. Less effective capacity of centralized state institutions to provide services and order.

3. Increased vulnerability of the state and its people to influence, intervention, and control by outside actors, be they often states, communal groups or multinational corporations.

As Brian L. Job demonstrated, poor and lack of states-building process is one of the most important national insecurity dilemmas of states. The end of the Cold War and rapid globalization left a band of failed or weak states throughout the world. Weak or failed states are associated with some of the most serious problems of the world, from poverty and human rights abuses, to civil conflict, refugees, and terrorism. Even under the best of conditions, nation-building is a difficult task. The colonial legacies of many of these states make their state-building more challenging than was the case for Western states.\(^{102}\) These countries were often created arbitrarily and without the prerequisites for long-term internal and external security. The result was the creation of many quasi-sovereign states ridden with ethnic, religious, and cultural conflicts; states possessing the nominal features of statehood but lacking the functional capabilities. Post-colonial states were thus destined to pass through a period of turmoil, violence, and radical political experimentation on the road to social and political maturity.\(^{103}\)

Further, it is the vision of a state regime destroying its own citizens that strikes observers as the most incongruous and ultimately counterproductive of security strategies. A substantial section of regimes, both military and non-military, undertake repression against significant sectors and numbers of their populations. Hence, Job

---


emphasised that the insecurity dilemmas of states are basically irresolvable as long as
the various factions within the society are able to compete effectively as security
providers.

Moreover, Job notes that governments in weak states are preoccupied with the
short-term strategies, since their security and their physical survival are dependent on
the strategies they pursue for the moment. Consequently, it is rational for regimes to
adopt policies that, for example, utilize scarce resources for military equipment and
manpower, to perceive as threatening opposition movements demanding greater
participation, and to regard as dangerous communal movements that promote
alternative identifications and loyalties. Often the choice is presented to regimes as
one entailing a trade-off between the advantages and hopes of prosperity under
conditions of order and the disadvantages of unregulated democracy and disorder.\textsuperscript{104}

While considering the security strategy of states, Job also explained that it is
interesting to note the impossibility of separating internal and external notions of
insecurity both in theory and in practice. Further, he reveals, there are several obvious
manifestations of such external-internal linkages in security strategy.\textsuperscript{105} For instance,
states seeking arms can seldom afford them in the quality and quantity. In this
regards, states seek external supplies. But the suppliers have provided military
assistance to states in exchange over their domestic and foreign policies, often
concerning their economic resources.\textsuperscript{106} In his argument, Job considers three of the
general type of security strategies often adopted by regimes.\textsuperscript{107} They are:


\textsuperscript{105} For quite similar interpretation see, Shridath Ramphal (1984), “Small States is Beautiful but
Vulnerable”, \textit{The Round Table}, 292, pp. 368-369.

\textsuperscript{106} For more similar view see, Annette Baker Fox (1959), \textit{Op. Cit.}, pp. 180-188; Marshall R Singer
(1972), \textit{Weak States in a World of Powers: The Dynamics of International Relationships}, New York:
The Free press.

1. Militarization such as developing and arming substantial military/police forces,
2. Repression and state terror such as attempting to destroy the perceive enemy within, and
3. Diversionary tactics such as finding and provoking external enemies to distract attention from the situation at home.

It is important to mention here that even though this model could not apply to all states in general, it becomes useful to construct theoretical propositions regarding the insecurity dilemma of small states. In this broader context, two important conditions can be extracted from the above argument, and is taken into consideration to establish the problem statement of this thesis. They are:

1. Individuals or groups acting within a small state against perceived threats to assure their own security consequently create an environment of increased that and reduced security for others within the borders of such small state.
2. National insecurity dilemmas of small states are based on domestic level factors that could be vulnerable to international constraints and incentives.

The above mentioned features of insecurity constitute a highly relevant explanatory framework for analyzing the major sources of instability, especially for the case study of this thesis-Sri Lanka.

**Conclusion**

In the context of small states, the issue of security has multifarious dimensions in the complexities of the state and the region as whole. Hence, the nature and
magnitude of security within the state should be considered from various angles, viz., geographical, historical, socio-political and economical. Such a holistic approach can only ensure a proper understanding of the insecurity dilemmas of small states. Howsoever, all-encompassing the research may be done, throwing light in a particular dimension need not necessarily mean demeaning the other factors. It is just that the other factors are but less important from the point of the present research. Sri Lankan security dilemma, emanating insecurity complex needs to be understood from the specific geopolitical setting and the political culture of the state. Some of the more complex issues like religion in Sri Lankan security dilemma have not been dealt in details, since it has indirectly addressed the insecurity dilemma of Sri Lanka emanating from the ethnic crisis.

The following chapter will analyse in details the broader back ground of ethnic separatist ideology in Sri Lanka.