Bachelor thesis in Political Science

Processes of feelings in a society with a violent past

A qualitative study of the communication for Societal healing in the Truth Commissions in East Timor, Sri Lanka and Ghana between 2002-2011

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Abstract

The research investigates in what extent and how communication for meeting feelings is provided in Truth Commission work. It examines if and in what way feelings are addressed in the communication officially published by the Truth Commissions in East Timor, Ghana and Sri Lanka, occurring between 2002-2011. The research is also looking at the healing processes in a time perspective to find out if there is a communication for Societal healing to be continued in a longer term. My conclusion is that two cases of three in my research, the TRCs in Ghana and East Timor, have communication clearly directed to meet feelings caused by the war. One of the three cases (East Timor) has a communication with a clear ambition to heal over a longer period, to continue after the existence of the Truth Commission. The research suggests that communication with a clear ambition to reach out widely in the society, a communication directed to meet and process feelings over a longer period, can make Societal healing more effective. It also concludes that, in the future, Societal healing, as a field in conflict resolution, will be more based on representational media than today, provided through web communication.

Keywords: societal healing, trauma, national healing, conflict resolution, conflict analysis, Priscilla Hayner, David Philott, Wallensten, just and unjust peace, practicing political reconciliation, feelings, reconciliation, forgiveness, justice, post conflict work, peace building, democratic development, political science, civil wars, Ghana, East Timor, Sri Lanka, UN
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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Presentation

"Trauma and healing should be approached holistically. Trauma should not merely be understood as the psychological result of an event, but rather as a process that may change before, during and after the conflict. Therefore healing should be viewed as a process occurring sequentially within the wider social and political context of the conflict cycle. Truth, justice and reparation are all vital parts of the process of healing."\(^1\)

What happens after a war? How can former enemies coexist and live in the same society? How is it possible to build trust after a war has finished? What political actions can contribute to healing in a society, handling feelings of hate, fear and grief caused by the war?

In the opening quotation, a statement from a UN workshop performed in 2012, stated that meeting feelings is important in conflict resolution. Healing in the society can be seen as processes for rebuilding trust. They can also be seen as processes for justice, as the recognition of victims and their suffering by this is verified. Societal healing is about meeting feelings in the nation. It must be performed in some sort of communication with and towards the population. I want to examine the communication more deeply in this research. Healing, as a part of reconciliation in a post conflict society, is by UN described as something that needs to be done with a lot of creative thinking – a process that needs to be customized to a context, to real conditions. Customs and traditions are forming the processes. The healing processes have to vary depending on the context, the nature of the conflict and the nature of the transition.\(^2\) One process cannot be constructed and applied similar in all conflict restoring programs. The framework for the communication has to be seen in a context. Still, there are criteria, which can contribute to a better communication addressing feelings in a post conflict society. I am going to study how the communication relates to meet feelings by examining three Truth Commissions, in Ghana, East Timor and Sri Lanka, in 2002-2011. By looking at the communication both from a conflict resolution theory perspective and a communication theory perspective, I want to find out more deeply how Societal healing processes can be communicated. As feelings in a society after a severe war are not easily overcome and as the

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2 Ibid. P.6.
past conflict in many ways will affect the society for years to come, I also want to see how the feelings caused by the war are met in a time perspective.

An increased interest in meeting feelings – a nation’s trauma after a severe war – is coming from UN, with an argument that it is also processes and a communication for justice. Justice has to be seen from different views, is argued. Justice through prosecutions, legislative justice, has to be complemented by justice through knowledge. Justice is also about meeting feelings, as giving recognition of victims and their suffering. Allowing people to be a part of truth-telling and to make efforts to provide an open insight, reveal what happened during the years of war, is something the UN considers to be important elements of justice.

1.2 Purpose

The communication to meet feelings in a society after a severe conflict, is what I will analyse in this paper. I will examine the communication performed by three Truth Commissions to see in what way and in which extent they, through their communication, work with meeting feelings. Further knowledge about communication and processes for Societal healing might contribute to make healing in a traumatized society more effective, is my view.

1.3 Research Questions

Processes of feelings can be seen as ways to rebuild trust not only between former incompatible groups, but also to the official system and the state. But how can processes for Societal healing be performed and communicated? How can processes reach out to meet needs, to heal in a post conflict the society? I will in this research look deeper into three Truth commissions to see how they, through their communication, make efforts to meet feelings and in the society. My main questions in are:

• Is there a communication designed with an ambition to process feelings in the society?
• In what way has the communication and the material an ability to reach out widely in the society, to reach different groups?
• Is the communication for Societal healing working in a longer term in any of the cases?
1.4 Disposition

Chapter 3. Theory, will look upon Societal healing from a social science perspective and a communication theory perspective to find arguments for Societal healing as a political working-field and to define what can be of importance in communication to reach out broadly in the population. The chapter also describes what, according to conflict resolution theory, causes and drives conflicts, showing long-term effects a war has on a society, which gives a reason for regarding the communication for meeting feelings as an issue of importance to be continued in a longer term. I will also give a view of how the state can be described to have a role in every conflict. I continue with the concept Truth Commission (TRC), the instituted bodies where work with Societal healing is a part. I will discuss what TRC work can include and what it strives to achieve. After this I will go deeper into Societal healing, a communication with a goal to meet feelings/needs/emotions on a national level. Chapter 5 is examining the communication for Societal healing as it is performed by the TRCs in East Timor, Ghana and Sri Lanka. A table with measures is used to find out if and how the communication for Societal healing continue after the time the TRCs have ended their formal work.
Chapter 2. Method

2.1 Method

I am using a contextual analysis of ideas as a research method. My research is qualitative. The angel of the research is descriptive.

When using a contextual analysis of ideas as a research method, the researchers overall goal is to present and clear out views and arguments in a debate, describing opinions and arguments in an ongoing political discussion about a subject. This method is chosen here, as I want to look upon views of Societal healing, how to handle and meet feelings in a society after a war, the role it might play in conflict resolution.

Idea analyses can be described as having one of three main ambitions for the researcher: describing, explaining or stating a point. Having a main vision of the ambition is a way for the researcher to connect the orientation of the research to the research questions posed. I have in this research taken the more descriptive angel. My ambition is to analyse the communication for Societal healing in post conflict resolution to more closely see how societal healing as a process is performed, how the idea of Societal healing is viewed and communicated in three different Truth Commissions.

A qualitative analysis with a descriptive ambition can be suitable to use when the purpose is to examine ideas in a context among actors and how the actors perform, related to theories and public discussion. As I am examining three different Truth Commissions communication to the citizens in their specific context, this method can be suitable.

In the examination my questions and the answers to them give an opportunity to analyse in what way the Societal healing processes are widely spread in the society. It also examines whether the TRCs have channels for Societal healing working over a longer period.

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My approach to the material is open. This means that I have not used pre-established possible answers. With an open approach, I analyse the material from a general view. As a concept, a TRC is not determined. Therefore an open approach is to prefer. By having an open approach, I can also be able to view and analyse the interest for a certain idea.

By analysing as recently finished TRCs as I could, I hope to see if there are new tendencies in the way to communicate healing. Therefore I have chosen to examine the communication as it was performed in three recently finished TRCs. By examining their communication I hope to see if any of the cases has a kind of communication strongly directed to work with feelings in the nation. As work with feelings on a societal level has to be a kind of communication performed with an ambition to communicate widely in the population, I also want to examine if the TRCs in their communication have made efforts for this. The examination of the cases can also contribute to further knowledge about Societal healing seen in a time perspective.

2.2 Material

I examine Societal healing processes by looking at the communication and material officially published by three TRCs.

I have chosen to study three, in time, rather recently finished TRCs, in East Timor (2002–2005): The Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, Ghana (2003–2004): The National Reconciliation Commission and in Sri Lanka (2010 – 2011): Commission of inquiry on lessons learnt and reconciliation. The three TRCs in my research are chosen because I want to examine the view of today, as far as it is possible. I have chosen to examine finished TRCs (not TRCs still working) as I need to have access to the final reports and material of the TRCs. As I am analysing how Societal healing is viewed and communicated, what role such work can play in conflict resolution as a political sanctioned work, I have chosen to only investigate officially published material. I have analysed the official communication and the official material published by the TRCs.

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By investigating communication for Societal healing, I hope to contribute to further knowledge about measures of importance when building a framework for meeting emotions in a post conflict society. I hope that my work can be of use in discussions on how a good communication for Societal healing can be performed.

To find out how Social healing internationally is perceived, I have studied how communication for meeting feelings after a war is described by the United Nations, the Centre of torture victims, in former conflict research, in articles published in scientific journals and by Peace Research institutes.

2.3 Delimitations

This research has a main focus on the communication of the healing processes. Therefore I am not going to write so much about economic restoration and practical programs for resettlements or constitutional initiatives for reconciliation, though for example the state economy is of importance, concerning vulnerability to conflict as well as the stability of peace after a conflict. I have not considered military protection or the grade of stability, though this might influence the possibility to perform Societal healing processes. My view has been from an angle assuming the conditions in the country being stable enough.

Due to the limited selection of TRCs included in my study, three commissions, the results of my examination are going to need further analysis. My focus has not been to point out certified criteria for a communication for Societal healing. This research is rather an analysis with an ambition to describe and discuss how healing in a society can be viewed and how the processes can be more or less efficient by adding knowledge from both conflict resolution theory and communication theory.

I have focused on the communication and material in the TRCs and excluded deeper research of The TRCs relation to CTs. The way Societal healing relates to CT work is not investigated in this research.

There have been critics written against scientific reports of TRC work, and ability to draw conclusions from the reports. In a research, Eric Brahm points out problems of comparing TRC results, relating it to the difference in defining what can be consider as being a Truth Commission. His opinion is that researchers use different conceptions of truth commissions, and that this is one
of the reasons why the results in different reports come to so different conclusions.\textsuperscript{7} I am aware of this problem. I am focusing mainly on investigating how healing in a society can be performed and communicated, therefor the definition of what a TRC is, is not a problem here. Being aware of the problem of saying exactly what a TRC shall contain and what exactly can be viewed as Societal healing, I instead focus on showing criteria that might have influence.

Another delimitation is about the finance of a TRC and how this affects the work of the TRC in different ways, such as questions of status and the objectivity, of ability to economical restoration. Delimitation in my research is that I have not looked deeper into finance and the meaning of it for healing processes.

Another delimitation concerns the, by the government given, reason for establishing a TRC. In the investigated TRCs, reasons for the conflicts are stated by the TRCs. But if the written reasons fit to truth, is not something I have had a possibility to investigate. When studying the material, I saw that the stated reasons for the conflict in at least one of the cases differed from the international view of what had caused the conflict from the beginning.

Does the government sanction the TRC? Is it a construction started by UN engaged in a post conflict zone? Is the authorities involved and in what way? Is the TRC separate and independent from other interests, such as political or linked to other organizations? Those are questions pointed out to be relevant in TRC work. I have not made any deeper studies of TRC linked to interests, what resulted in a decision for a TRC. TRCs have historically started in different ways. For example in El Salvador, it was the church together with NGOs in the country that initiated the TRC. Usually a TRC is independent but authorised by the government. I am in this research only investigating officially sanctioned TRCs.

Chapter 3. Theory

3.1 Feelings caused by a war

Justice

Right to truth is inherent in human rights law. International human rights law obliges states to investigate violations of human rights. Inherent is a right of the residents to know the results of such investigation. Based on the argument that abuses and violations against human rights committed during a war should not be hidden, knowledge is a part of justice. To reveal the truth is also important to prevent historical facts from being presented one-sidedly or linked to religious or ethnic adversaries.

What is justice? If we only have the perspective restorative justice, a western society adopted way of treating abuses to human rights, we do not link it to a broader justice based on human rights, it is only an approach to criminal justice, David Philott argues. Acknowledgment can be the subject of justice in an overlapping consensus. Philott means that despite disagreement between and within traditions and schools, an overlapping consensus of justice, a secular justification for an ethic of political reconciliation based on secular arguments for human rights, can be achieved. Desmond Tutu has argued the importance of not invoking God in those processes and Philott is of the same opinion. Religions are in the overlapping processes of political reconciliations parts, but the consensus, the rooted reason linked to human rights, is to be seen linked to the individual “in which no set of gods or states of affairs, no matter how valuable or attractive, can justify certain kind of acts towards vulnerable people if they are not engaged in combat.”

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9 The consequences are thereby not the main focus. In the introduction of this paper I showed some arguments against TRC work. Some arguments has been raised that knowledge might blow up incompatibilities further. But in the view of seeing knowledge as a part of justice, the revealing of truth is to be seen as going before hiding things, saying it might cause a bad development in some way.
11 Ibid. P. 28.
Daniel Philott sees forgiveness as a practice to adopt in processes for healing. How can Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and secularists adopt a consensus of political reconciliation, he asks? He describes a process practiced in shifting, pragmatic *overlapping consensus*. Philpott has developed theories of philosopher John Rawl, what Rawls called *overlapping consensus*. He has used Rawls terms for agreement on principles of political justice among representatives of diverse religious and philosophical conceptions. Where Philott’s form for *overlapping consensus* is with emphasis on dialogue between different ethnic groups and minorities, Rawls form is more based on restrictions (Rawls argues for reaching consensus through limitations). Philott calls the base of the consensus of political reconciliation for *rooted reason*. Rooted reason is a way to gather and from different perspectives, emanate different beliefs about justice. He also says: “By assembling a consensus across cultures, a shared view of the ethic of political conception, a political work for conception will be given strength.”

Philott describes rooted reason as a process beginning with a set of ideas from one tradition. By studying a set of ideas in the context of other traditions, re-expressing them in this way, one can see a common sense. He calls the process reciprocal, going back and forth in purpose to reach mutual understanding. It is not meant to be an attempt to find something like a global standard of ethics of justice, on the opposite it is a shifting, pragmatic *consensus* made for practical operations. A common true meaning is a goal, and important for the healing process, he argues. Philott refers to philosopher Jacques Maritain who reflected that a compromise between cultures was necessary for the negotiations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, as an agreement concerning actions.

Justice can thereby be argued to require more than perpetrators getting their punishment. Justice can also include that a society works with telling a truth about violations that has been hidden during the years of war, in communication letting the population be a part of this telling of truth, contributing to the truth. Providing this form of communication can be seen as a way to work with healing in a society.

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14 Ibid. P. 21.
Justice relates according to UN to conflict-sensitive development: "Addressing social, economic and cultural justice issues can be an important means to achieving reconciliation and vice versa. In this regard, reconciliation can be interpreted as contributing to building just, equitable and inclusive societies rather than merely dealing with the physical violations of the past."¹⁵

**Everything is not possible to restore**

U.N. Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Margot Wallstroem, said only 12 cases have been prosecuted out of an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 victims in Bosnia, which shows "the magnitude of the problem." She called it a "painfully slow" process.¹⁶

Hayner points out a reason for other forms of justice than just through legal: “Because it is not always possible to prosecute hundreds of perpetrators, many new governments have turned to mechanisms outside the judicial system to confront the horrific crimes of a prior regime”.¹⁷

**Forgiveness**

As pointed out, a society can view justice as retribution and punishment. To others, forgiveness is contributing to justice. Still, forgiveness is rare in politics. To motivate forgiveness as a practice, one argument can be that it promotes the justice of increased right relationship.¹⁸ It is not evident that just prosecutions and punishment lead to a better relation between former conflict-parts. In a research the question “main purpose for punitive actions against perpetrators”, the answer “establishing the truth about what happened”, was the most frequent answer given by the victims (69 %).¹⁹ Philott's theory is that forgiveness can be processes which, when practised, will help a society to heal. Forgiveness is not appropriate in all times though, has to be mentioned. Sometimes justice requires war and opposition to unjust regimes. Sometimes the only way to look at justice is through judicial justice.

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¹⁶ Associated Press. (2010). *UN official: Bosnia war rapes must be prosecuted.*
¹⁹ Ibid. P. 217.
An investigation of pattern of abuses during a war can include confrontations of victims and perpetrators. A question often raised is how could a person commit those crimes to me, my relatives, to the residents? Perpetrators can through forgiveness be given a possibility to contribute to some restoration. Sometimes perpetrators can be found on both sides, or on multiple sides in a civil war. Sometimes perpetrators were children or young adults when they became a part of the violation against human rights.

### 3.2 Societal healing – communication to meet feelings

Healing processes, regarding feelings, can be viewed on a personal or broader societal level. Creating a forgiving climate, decrease hostile feelings and heal psychological wounds in a by war deeply effected society, are all issues for Societal healing. It can include such as work on restoring the victims through their own rituals.\(^\text{20}\) Emotions in the society can be difficult to process in just a few offered occasions for communication, performed during a few days. Feelings might need to be met and processed in a longer term. A society where conflict parts have experienced destruction and violence, have suffered and killed, seen children and relatives been killed, where maybe also authorities have committed crimes against human rights, can be described as wounded at large. All those feelings caused by the war, how are they to be met to normalize a society? What kind of communication can best meet feelings?

**Definition of Societal healing**

Societal can be described as relating to society or social relations: societal change. Healing on a societal level can be described as processes, series of actions or steps, forms of communication taken in order to create an environment, a climate where people can live with what happened. The processes are ways to meet emotional needs in the population related to what the war has caused. It is also a communication for achieving justice, is Philotts argument. Implicit in the word *process*, is that it relates to time. Societal healing are dynamic processes, as they have to be performed through a communication put in a context, sensitive to specific circumstances. Different cultures, type of conflict, ethnic groups and their needs, religions, types of violence, languages spoken in the country, the length of the war, are all variables that might influence how communication to meet

feelings are best designed. The needs of the population in the specific context need to be analysed. Preserving dignity is a key issue, because the lack of this reflects acting out of a desire to inflict humiliation on ones enemies. To make efforts to meet emotions, to preserve dignity may be one of the most important predictors of future violence, is stated in a recent UN report.\textsuperscript{21}

Though a TRC have a time-limited existence, the national healing processes might need a framework allowing a communication for healing over a longer period. Emotions might also need to be met in different ways to reach aout broadly in the society. The communication for preserving dignity, for apology and recognition can continue if there is arranged communication for healing in a longer term.

\textit{Framework for Societal healing – a model}

As a summery, I have structured criteria and arguments for Societal healing in a framework. As societal healing are dynamic processes, the needs to be met have to be selected for each specific context. Circumstances and conditions in which the model shall be used have to be considered. The list of possible strategies can be longer or shorter and also be described more case-related.

KEY WORDS:
Understanding, compromising, empathy, willingness to create a stable, secure and peaceful, nonviolent society

Conflict resolution
Reconciliation
Healing processes

MAIN PURPOSE
Rebuild trust to the state and between groups.

Personal healing (Can be psychological help, medical treatment)

Societal healing (nationwide)

Feelings/needs (to be processed)

OF IMPORTANCE
(Arguments given in reconciliation theory and communication theory)

X Reach out widely with the processes for justice, for knowledge and for inclusion
X Distributed material is formal and has got the states "blessing."
X Processing and distributing material shall have the receivers in focus for meeting needs and to reach different groups with the process/messages.

Solutions – Strategies:

• Using and building broad channels for communication
• Initiate and create channels and communication enabling communication in a longer term
• When creating messages, have the receivers (local groups, different ethnicities, different languages, ages) in focus
• See it as a two-way communication for:
  a) meeting needs
  b) a tool/area for different groups to be involved in the presentation and design of the messages to be widely spread
• communicate through different channels (presentational and representative).
• Representative communication can be designed as formal/fact-giving. It can also be designed as an effort to meet needs as empathy, understanding. To be able to do this, diverse groups in the society need to be a part of the working group. This is a way to reveal truth in a specific cultural context.
3.3 Societal healing in a communication theory perspective

I am interested in looking at Societal healing as processes of relations. Processes of relations will need some sort of communication. Therefore it is interesting to view the healing process in a communication theory perspective.

I will in my examination study the processes – the communication in three TRCs, their channels and their material, to analyse if and in what way the communication and the messages towards the society are for healing.

According to communication theory transmitting or receiving of signs/codes/communication is the practice of social relationships. This assumes that communication is central to life or our culture. Consequently the study of communication involves the study of the culture with which it is integrated. As Societal healing is a practice of relationships, it confirms a view of Societal healing as processes needed to be seen in a context. And considerations concerning cultural needs have to be taken if a process shall be efficient.

Social interaction through messages

There are two main schools in communication theory. The process school have a view with the sender in focus. The second school sees communication as a production and exchange of meanings, rather than as a transmission of messages. Messages are here seen as interacting with people in order to produce meanings. It means that the message itself, how it is received depends on the role of the signs/codes/text in our culture. In this theory, the process of reading/taking in a message can be viewed as a process of discovering meaning. The meaning interacts with the message. Readers/watchers/receivers with different social experience may find different meanings in the same text. Producing and reading are to be seen as producing meaning. If Societal healing is seen through this view, a communication of truth-telling can be to involve the population in truth-telling as well as being a communication with a sender revealing a truth. A production and exchange of meanings can be processed.

23 Ibid. P. 6-16.
Constitution and culture in communication

To structure a message, a material according to cultural, shared patterns, is a way to decrease unpredictability, to increase redundancy. Whether it is an artistic sender, a political messenger or a preacher, a will to build redundancy into the message is an audience-centred way to structure the message. It increases the accessibility of the work in what form it may be – can be messages consisting of art, can be text – to a wide audience. The level of redundancy is not static. A message and how it is interpreted is not unchanging. To be aware of redundancy is of importance when estimating efficiency in communication. Another aspect of this is that for example a work of art, lets say a photo followed by a text, can have high redundancy or low redundancy. With high redundancy a broader audience can be expected to receive the message and interpret it in a similar way. An aspect is that, say a formal message, may have a high redundancy, but it has limitations in communicating deeper levels with an audience, such as for example grief, empathy. Therefore messages with lower redundancy and higher entropy can sometimes be a way to a more dynamic respond, help to process feelings, even though they are more unpredictable.

Parts of Societal healing can, as described earlier, be:

• to be recognised (as an individual or as a group)
• to have channels for telling (about trauma and suffering, where dignity can be restored, where empathy and understanding are given a platform)
• to be told a truth (knowledge)

In communication, a sender increases the possibility of the message to be understood if the message is designed with focus on the receiver (here the population at large, all groups). Such as language, tone, cultural codes, cultural ways to correspond, different ages, customs have to be considered.

The choice of ways to communicate

Mainly media is divided into three types:
1. The presentational, where the sender is present, can be on a theatre, a live performance, a hearing.
2. The representing, creative media, which can exist without the communicator, for example photos, paintings, illustrations, and writing.
3. The mechanical, transmitters of the 2 above described types, for example telephones, cell phones, internet in different forms, television

One can regard media as a way to satisfy needs. In this way one can consider what channels to combine to best satisfy needs. Social needs can, according to communication theory be:

- knowledge about the world
- to feel influential
- to feel stability
- to strengthen connections (with family, friends or a society).  

These needs coincide with the described emotional needs to be met in Social healing processes. When looking at the three types – presentational, representing and mechanical – Societal healing is probably more efficient if it is performed in all three ways. A focus in earlier reconciliation work when making efforts to meet feelings has been in the presentational media type, in the form of public hearings. Those hearings have often also been mechanical, distributed through television and radio. The TRC in South Africa, still have available public hearings, they can be viewed on YouTube.

For Societal healing, a communication with the needs of the receiver in focus, a cultural context sensitive way of communication, be a way to communicate truth-telling, information and give knowledge. If a TRC use all channels and also design the messages with the receiver (the population in focus (not only publishing a formal truth-report, which might not reach out broadly in the society), the communication has a greater possibility to contribute to Societal healing. Communicating such as understanding, empathy, and dignity can be done if the messages are designed to meet the receivers (the populations) needs.

There has been much more attention on war crimes, such as systematic rapes, a terrible weapon towards the civilian population, the women. Rape, used as a systematized instrument of war, has become an issue lifted as important to work against. Those kinds of abuses can also be difficult to get a true picture of, as they are difficult to discuss in public hearings. Victims of different cultures and religions might not even tell that they have been raped or in other sexual ways abused, and

certainly not in a public hearing. Here representing media can be to prefer. Critique to presentation media communication is the cost for those arrangements. To attend physical meetings might not be possible depending on work, depending on culture. A complement to public hearings as a communication in order to meet feelings can be through representing media. A channel for social interaction and truth-telling, with material for Societal healing can be a way to increase the efficiency in healing processes.

25 The Center for Victims of Torture. (2013). *Partners in Trauma Healing*
Chapter 4. Background

4.1 Conceptions

Below follows some conceptions of importance when reading this research. I am mainly in this research using conceptions defined by UN.

**Human rights violations**
Violations of international human rights standards, violations of international humanitarian law and criminal acts.

**Conflict**
A social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources.\(^\text{26}\)

**Victim**
A person who, individually or as part of a collective, has suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of his or her rights as a result of acts or omissions over which the TRC has jurisdiction to consider and includes the relatives or dependents of persons who have individually suffered harm.\(^\text{27}\)

**Witness**
Person who has knowledge of acts or omissions or the effect of such acts or omissions and includes persons who appear before the TRC to provide information or testimony.\(^\text{28}\)


\(^{28}\) Ibid.
4.2 What causes and drives violent conflicts

Conflicts are in conflict research often divided into different levels, depending on how extended the conflict is. In this research I am not defining level of conflict more deeply, but what can be told is that the violent conflicts, which are subject to healing processes, have all been severe and going on for along time. It is in countries with a long history of atrocities that Societal healing processes are needed.

Resources, over which actors strive to acquire, can be territory, natural resources, money, political influence, positions and control in different aspects in the society. Other resources that may cause incompatibilities are more difficult to describe, such as feelings of disrespect or feelings of being not counted and recognized. Those are intangible resources relating to justice, moral, norms and guilt.\(^{29}\)

Conflicts are theoretically often divided into 3 main categories (the same as the distinction of international law): Interstate conflicts around territory and government, intrastate over territory or intrastate over government.

What drives conflicts, the mechanisms, are important for conflict analyses. The mechanisms can though, be viewed through different theoretical perspectives. When looking at conflicts from a calculating perspective, one can say that it is estimations of gains and losses, conflict parts calculating gains and losses, which drive conflicts. Viewed through another perspective, the basic needs model, one can argue that conflicts have a root in frustration and are emerging from unsatisfied needs.\(^{30}\) To not give enough influence in politics to a certain group or several, can be a possible risk for conflict.

Depending on different perspectives on conflicts, the views of how to resolve conflicts also differs. Reward and punishment for achieving conflict resolution are strategies used in mediation as well as in military peace efforts. Legal, ethic as well as more instrumental questions, as military, has to be considered in conflict resolution.\(^{31}\) The importance of punishment as a necessity in post conflict resolution, where crimes towards human rights, violence and abuses against residents has been


\(^{30}\) Ibid. P. 39.

\(^{31}\) Ibid. P. 15.
going on during the war, is easy to agree upon. But the demand for justice not only in the form of punishment, but also justice as processes to meet feelings, processes for forgiveness, truth-telling and recognition, invoking apology and other commitments, have been raised to be important, seen as form of transitional justice.\textsuperscript{32} When talking about justice in a social science perspective, it probably associates to legislative matters, such as laws and punishment. According to many researchers, justice has to be seen in a broader perspective. UN General Assembly in 2006, accepted the right to truth as a universal norm where the societal component is about the collective dimension, the obligation of the state to remember the past and to avoid negation or revisionism.\textsuperscript{33} The right to truth, is argued to be a part of justice.

Can punishment alone contribute to stable peace and reconciliation after a conflict? UN points out that retributive justice is not enough. As a way to normalize and restore a society, focus on meeting the emotions in a society after a long history of war, to meet feelings after severe atrocities, systematic repression, sexual and domestic violence, are necessary.

\textbf{4.3 Civilians to a greater extent affected in conflicts}

Most of the wars in the world in recent years have been intrastate wars. In today's armed conflicts are less than 10\% of the victim’s soldiers - more than 90\% are civilians, and half of them are children. This ratio was virtually the opposite 100 years ago.\textsuperscript{34} With the knowledge that there are so many civilian victims in modern wars, one can assume that restoring confidence and meeting feelings in a society will be of importance. Work for healing through forgiveness, truth telling and recognition, to find ways for restoring dignity among civilians, has been highlighted in recent years.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. P 8.
\textsuperscript{34} Search for Common Ground. (2013).\textit{ Basic Facts About Conflict}. http://www.sfcg.org/resources/resources\_conflict.html
\end{flushright}
4.4 Long term effects in a post conflict area

The surrounding environment, the infrastructure is often destroyed after years of war. Roads, buildings, homes, have to be rebuilt. Natural disasters are frequent. For example, 17 million litres of Agent Orange was spread by the USA over Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Dioxin (which Agent Orange contains), stays in the soil, the water and the sediment and continues to pass through the food chain. For many years people continue to suffer from diseases related to war crimes. Landmines are often a long lasting environmental problem. Land often remains unusable, requiring extensive mine clearance in order to be functional for living and exploring. As an example: 40 tons of uranium were left in Kuwait and Iraq after the Gulf War.

We can see how war has far-reaching effects. It gives arguments for processing feelings and not hiding the past. The reality for the citizens can often be that they for generations to come, in different aspects, are affected by the war. Besides practical issues as health programs, questions of infrastructure, one can assume that ways to meet feelings in a post conflict society can be of importance.

4.5 The role of the state in a conflict

The state determines and expresses the way in which a society describes its history. It reproduces the myths that exist for legitimizing its existence. This hegemony is present whether the state is democratic or not. According to most political science definitions, the state is the only legitimate user of physical violence in a society and thereby by definition involved whenever there is an armed conflict in a society. As the state by definition has some kind of role in a conflict, one can argue that investigations of eventual crimes against human rights committed during the war is necessary for rebuilding trust. Find ways to meet feelings of mistrust, fear, hate, and to recognize victims, stating their experiences as true, can be ways for the authorities to rebuild trust in the society. As the state always has some kind of role in a conflict, investigations and processes need to be performed by an independent commission. The regime might have been involved in the war. Army, police and

other institutions can be responsible for crimes against humanity.\textsuperscript{38} This is a strong argument for having an autonomous commission investigating truth.\textsuperscript{39}

### 4.6 Truth Commission

Truth Commission (TRC) is a concept first used after the civil war in Uganda in 1974. The TRC created there was established primarily for writing a report on war crimes committed during the 12 years of war. This basic concept remains valid but later TRCs have in different extent developed the work further, expanded the fields that might contribute to rebuild a society. Around 40 TRCs have appeared since 1974.\textsuperscript{40} A TRC is often something created by a pressure from the surrounding world, from the UN and from peace organizations. This is also the way Crime Tribunals (CTs) usually are established. International pressure urging for settling is of importance both for CTs and for TRCs. The interest in establishing TRCs and the number of research on TRCs has increased considerably. A TRC can be described as a politically initiated but independent body established work upon and recommend actions dealing with both practical and emotional needs following in a society after a violent conflict. Healing, meeting feelings in a society, to create processes for this, has been given increased interest as important in conflict resolution.\textsuperscript{41} This is also the field I am going to examine in this research. I want to see if and how feelings/needs as guilt, respect, apology, knowledge, trust, understanding and grief can be met. Through what kind of communication can a society where people have gone through trauma, where feelings of fear and insecurity caused by the war are present, meet emotions as hate between families and communities and mistrust to a maybe former involved authority?

TRC work is described as a complement to justice through judicial punishment. TRCs are, as well as Crime Tribunals investigating and documenting past human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, but when a CT seeks justice by punishment, a TRC can be described as political tool struggling to meet feelings to reconcile and heal in a society, by many also regarded as a part of justice. According to previous TRC research one can see that it is more

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\textsuperscript{38} The War Crimes Studies Center (2013). \textit{East Timor Truth Commission}.


likely that a TRC is established when there is a presidential election and after a UN mediation. And countries that have created measures as Crime Tribunals are more likely to adopt TRCs. Judicial inquiries sometimes use the information gathered by a TRC, but more common is that a TRC follows after a CT, or work besides it. A TRC has a best chance to succeed when established after a CT. A TRC is by some seen as an instrument for democratic development.

The temporary form of a TRC increases the possibility for the investigators to be independent of other interests. If the TRC were more permanent, like a state added institution, the investigators would possibly, when investigating, have an incitement to keep their jobs and could therefor be loyal in some ways to the authorities. A question I am interesting in is about time: as the TRC is limited, often existing during a year or two, do the TRCs have made efforts to let the communication for healing continue in a longer term?

**Practical work for a TRC**

Researcher Daniel Philott has a practical entrance to his theoretical studies of TRCs. He is describing a framework for their work, sees them as complements to judicial punishment. He divides the work for a TRC into the fields:

1. Building socially just institutions
2. Acknowledgment
3. Reparations
4. Punishment
5. Apology
6. Forgiveness

---

The first practice is to build institutions, guaranteed by the state, with the task to by law administer violence. The second practice concerns acknowledgment, dealing with lack of acknowledgment to victims suffering, ignorance of the source and circumstance of political injustices and, what Philott calls, standing victory for the perpetrators injustice, meaning acknowledge when the “winning part” hide their guilt in the former conflict. The third practice is about reparations. This practice has as a goal to reach contrition in perpetrators, regret and once again the violation of victims human rights is a matter, but here as an acknowledgment contributing to the public legitimacy of human rights (implicit supporting democratic processes as they are a base in democracy efforts). This third practice also can be seen as the work for reparation of victim wounds, physical, economical and psychological, restoring to the former status, as much as it is possible.

Apology and forgiveness involves perpetrators apology, giving a possibility for initiating reparation of perpetrators. To apologize is a way to heal, he argues. Perpetrators wounds and regrets also have to be met. Official political apology is also one part of this, reinforcing the legitimacy of humans rights, the respect for each victim and acknowledging his/hers humanity. Naming and condemning violence is a form of apology. The last two practices can be seen as communication for both perpetrators and victims. Long term debilitating effects of anger is something that has to be given attention, Philott states. He sees this as crucial to process for creating a stable peace. Perpetrators release of guilt is a way to continue in a restorative direction.

The global demand for a peaceful political instrument for reconciliation, dealing with justice through knowledge, forgiveness and recognition, is not decreasing. So how shall a TRC reveal the “truth” found. How shall a truth about the war be spread in the society? How can a TRC create channels and communication to meet feelings? This is what I will examine by studying the communication in three TRCs in the last chapter. First I will give a background and context to the chosen cases.
4.7 East Timor

TRC in East Timor 2002 - 2005
Commission of inquiry on lessons learnt and reconciliation (CAVR)

Decolonization from 450 years of Portuguese occupation started in 1974. Most of the Timorese wanted to build an own state in this change, to be independent and not a part of Indonesia. But Indonesia invaded. A long war, going on for 25 years, began. Indonesian institutions, the army, the police and the government - the whole state organization - was a part of the perpetrations of the Timorese. 100 000 Timorese were driven from their homes. In 1999, 78% of the Timorese voted for independence. The violations this year escalated to a maximum and UN forces were sent to establish peace.

The TRC work in East Timor was established and completed by UN administration. The TRC found that crimes against humanity had been committed in a highly organized and systematic manner with murder, rape, torture, deportation and forcible transfer, illegal detention and persecution as crimes against humanity.47

Estimated amount of killed persons in East Timor 1974-1999

Source: SCB48

48 Ibid.
In East Timor reparation Scheme for victims with urgent needs was created. The finance of the TRC worked well, it was getting direct financial support from the government. The web site is still active and sponsored by Timorese and foreign institutes and NGO’s. Village-level participatory workshops to record the impact of the conflict on communities were held. This can be seen as important as victims has pointed out that it is the grass roots, people living in the villages, that are most affected by the war.

4.8 Ghana

TRC in Ghana 2003 - 2004
The National Reconciliation Commission Report

Ghana was during the 15th century a rich region. This attracted European traders. The trading had been mainly African-based, but now the trading also became directed towards Europe. The Europeans established own trading-stations in Ghana and with this a development in a bad direction started. The Gold Coast, as the Europeans called the area because of its economical attraction, was progressively colonised. From the beginning the Europeans established small settlements. Finally there were a Portuguese Gold Coast, a British Gold Coast, a German Gold Coast, a Danish Gold Coast, a Dutch Gold Coast, a Portuguese Gold Coast and a Swedish Gold Coast. All those “goldcoasts”, parts of todays Ghana. For over 200 years, slaves were, by ship, sent to America. This continued until slavery was forbidden in USA in the beginning of 19th century.

As late as 1957, Ghana was one of the first African countries to be decolonized. A history of military coups took over. From 1957, and under the military leader John Rawlings almost 20 years of power, the country suffered from crimes against human rights. Political opposition was forbidden.

1994 armed civil conflicts between ethnic minorities started. Those conflicts continued with different intensity until 2000, when the first democratic election was held.

Today the country is calm and considered as democratically ruled. Expectancy of life is 65 years (the same as in East Timor). Ghana government has as a goal that in 2015, all children shall have
education. The country has 848 mobile phones subscribers out of 1000 people. A finding of a new oil-source has recently given a boost to the economy.

The TRC in Ghana was a way to confront the past, to acknowledge atrocities and advance toward a historical emancipation. A period of 36 years (1957-1993) was investigated. Under the former President, John Rawlings government, all oppositional parties were forbidden.

When the new regime in Ghana in 2000 sanctioned the TRC, it was said to be a way to show willingness to open up and investigate the governmental role in the abuses towards civilians during the years 1975-1993. Compensations for victims were one central recommendation and a programme for this was settled. The TRC recommended focus on reforming the military and the police. The Attorney General’s Office has a programme called “Justice For All”, as well as a human right hotline where people can report suspected human rights abuses. Since 2006 the police has human rights education in its training. There is also a special unit that deals with discipline within the Police Service.\(^{49}\) Ghana is a member of New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). It is noted in paragraph 44 that there is little evidence of direct human rights violations over the five-year period 1999 to 2004.\(^{50}\)

### 4.9 Sri Lanka

**TRC in Sri Lanka**

Commission of inquiry on lessons learnt and reconciliation 2010 – 2011

In 1970, minority Tamil and Muslim communities in conflict with the Government led to the outbreak of a civil war. The conflict was political, ethnic and social. Sri Lanka had one of the world’s highest rates of disappearances by the State. The Government limited the jurisdiction of courts to check abuses in 1970. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) began an armed fight against the Government, with suicide bombings against military, political and civilian targets, fighting for an own state in the north of Sri Lanka.


\(^{50}\) Ibid.

The civil war lasted until 2009 when ceasefire was held between LTTE and the government, a ceasefire settlement that led to military pressing LTTE to a small area up in the North. Survivors have stated that the government killed rebels who surrendered, a violation of Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions.

The government established the TRC. The TRC has by UN, been questioned as not telling the whole truth, inclining that the TRC has not fully investigated the crimes against human rights and what really happened in 2009, just before the ceasefire.

In the 407 pages long final report of the TRC in Sri Lanka, it is written a recommendation to the government to cooperate with international organizations.\footnote{52 TRC final report Sri Lanka. (2011). P. 186. http://groundviews.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/FINAL-LLRC-REPORT.pdf?46986d} When the report was published on the governmental website an opening text told that the TRC was satisfied with the military strategy that was adopted to secure the areas held by the LTTE.\footnote{53 Presidents office of Sri Lanka. (2011). \textit{Security Forces had not deliberately targeted civilians in the NFZs} – LLRC. http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201112/20111216llrc_report_tabled_parliament.htm} At the same time, the government did not want to cooperate to let independent experts investigate violations against human rights. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon set up a panel to advise him on accountability for alleged abuses, but the Sri Lankan government refused to cooperate with it. But an independent commission investigating the end of the war was set up without support from the Sri Lankan government. The committee was denied visas to enter Sri Lanka. The unwillingness to cooperate with independent observers is also stated in a UN report from 2012: \textit{At a time when the LTTE was desperate for the UN to remain in the Wanni, the immediate threat to safety and security of UN staff came from actions by Government forces, and artillery shelling in particular. In December 2008, referring to the relocation, Human Rights Watch said “Sri Lankan officials ... have shown overt hostility to outside agencies and humanitarian staff in recent months, suggesting that political considerations or a desire to remove independent observers from the scene might also have been behind the ouster".}\footnote{54UN. (2012). \textit{Report of the Secretary – General’s internal Review panel on united actions in Sri Lanka.} P.52.}
The text is written in a panel conducted 2012, by UN about the situation in Sri Lanka between 2007-2009. The text indicates that the government were against independent observers during the time the TRC was working and also after the TRC had finished.

In the TRC report is a British video done by Channel 4 mentioned. The video shows abuses done by military state forces during the civil war. It is written that the Government and certain technical experts have taken the view that the video footage has extensive technical and forensic ambiguities, suggesting that the alleged incidents and the videotapes are fakes. It is also written that the UN Special Rapporteur from Commission of Human Rights contend that despite certain unexplained technical ambiguities including the contradictions brought up by the Government experts, the videos can be considered authentic.\(^5^5\)

The last year, the Sri Lanka government seem to have opened up towards international inspection lead by UN Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The goal is to, by supporting the Government, achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth. In October 2012, the UN and the Government of Sri Lanka signed the “2013-2017 UN Development and reconciliation for lasting peace”. The unwillingness of cooperating for further investigating the past conflict, seem to have changed. Governmental documents show that the TRC recommendations are not only words. Recommendations are implemented in the governmental work. For example it is written that the Attorney General will examine material submitted by police, gathered during their investigations relating to involuntary disappearances, within the existing legal framework.\(^5^6\) At the same time, the material is to be submitted by the police and the military, both governmental institutions, loyal to the government. The reliability of such an investigation might be questioned. Present President of Sri Lanka, (since 2005), Mahinda Rajapaksa, is also Commander in Chief of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces. In the final report it is a reference to the American assassination of Osama bin Laden, saying that there is a grey legal zone regarding disappearances inclining that some disappearances is


action against terrorism and not to be considered as illegal actions against human rights.\(^{57}\) In 2006, UN Special Rapporteur stated that it is especially appropriate and feasible to call for an armed group to respect human rights norms when it exercises significant control over territory and population as it has an identifiable political structure, pointing out the necessity of applying human rights norms to armed groups.\(^{58}\) On the governmental website, on the page about implementation of the TRC recommendation, it is written that from 2008, training Courses on Human Rights for Police Officers have been a routine. Until now, 3126 Police Officers have been trained on Human Rights, is stated.\(^{59}\)

### 4.10 Summery of contexts

*Conditions that might have an influence on the processes for Societal healing*

Country-specific circumstances to consider when designing a framework for Societal healing, measures that might have an influence on the level of difficulty to perform/communicate Societal healing processes, can be:

- Several ethnic groups
- A minority forced to ceasefire
- Amount and strength of religions
- The time the TRC is given to operate
- Is a CT/ICT established?
- Is an independent report to be ordered to investigate the TRC report when it is finished?
- Who has initiated the TRC?
- Is UN engaged in the processes?
- Political change after the peace resolution

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The East Timor context showed a more homogenous country, with fewer religions, fewer ethnic tensions. UN was present and engaged. A CT was established at the same time. An independent report examined the TRC report. This TRC was also the longest in time, 45 months compared to 21 months in Ghana and 14 months in Sri Lanka. Those indicators together might show easier circumstances when it comes to perform and develop successful processes for Societal healing. See the summery below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of conflict parts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 main sides</td>
<td>2 main sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Indonesian government against Timorese people</td>
<td>A military government, dictatorship against oppositional</td>
<td>The government against the LTTE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic groups in the country</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Over 4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. East Timorese 80%, Indonesian and West Timorese 20%</td>
<td>Akan 42%, 23%, Ewe 10%, Adangme 7%, Gurma 5,5%, Nzima, Joruba.</td>
<td>Sinhalese 80%, Tamil 10%, Sri Lankan Moor 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Over 4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catholics 100 %</td>
<td>Christians 50%, Muslims 20%, Traditional beliefs 20%, others 10%</td>
<td>Buddhist 70%, Hindu 15%, Christian 8%, Muslim 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRC operational independence</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not certified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time TRC existed</td>
<td>45 months</td>
<td>21 months</td>
<td>14 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace 3 years after the TRC</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economical growth 3 years after the TRC</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of conflict</td>
<td>Civil war. Occupied by Indonesia in the decolonisation process. Territory conflict</td>
<td>Civil war. Political conflict. Different ethnic groups against a repressive regime.</td>
<td>Civil war. Territory conflict. Tamils, fighting for a free state, against the government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental institutions involved in the abuses</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long time did the conflict last?</td>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>36 years</td>
<td>c. More than 25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1974-1999</td>
<td>1957-1993 (The TRC had a focus on the military rule under John Rawling).</td>
<td>Between 1970-2009 with different intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well treating and a democratic view on minorities now</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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60 Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2013). World data
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of regime now</th>
<th>Republic state</th>
<th>Republic state</th>
<th>Republic state</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Languages in the country</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of religion (declaration)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRC work in relation to CT (or juridical inquiry of some kind)</td>
<td>Yes The TRC work was complemented by a Serious Crimes Unit, a prosecutorial body within the UN mission</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of the press (Yes, medium, no)</td>
<td>Yes Medium (There have been questioned trials against journalists.)</td>
<td>No (Formally yes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Chapter 5. Investigation

5.1 Examination

Processes of feelings in a society need to be performed with some sort of communication. Reaching out widely in the population is stated as important for healing processes. If for example some groups or minorities have no part in processes of telling truth, in processes of feelings caused by the war, those processes can be seen as not being practices of justice. Neither will attempts for healing be as successful as possible if groups targeted to have feelings needed to be met are not in focus when building a framework for the communication. If there are groups not addressed, not a part of, or without possibility to be a part of those processes, the efforts for Societal healing can be seen as having less chance to heal the society. A communication with the receivers in focus, making efforts to reach out broadly beyond such as language barriers, cultural difference, different ways to take in information, having a diversity-oriented material and several channels, with the receivers in focus can, according to communication theory, be ways to create a more successful communication for healing.

I will examine the official communication and material in three cases. The variables used are chosen as they make a ground to analyse Societal healing, to see if there is a communication of feelings, and if so, is the communication of feelings working in a longer term? I also want to discuss in what way certain efforts can increase the communications possibilities to reach out broadly in the society for meeting needs and processing emotions.
My questions in this research, to be answered by analysing the table, the public communication from the TRCs and their public material are:

- **Is there a communication designed with an ambition to process feelings in the society?**

- **In what way has the communication and the material an ability to reach out widely in the society, to reach different groups?**

- **Is the communication for Societal healing working in a longer term in any of the cases?**

The way the communication was made and in what extent it had a communication for meeting feelings in the society clearly differed among the cases. Only one case (East Timor) provided communication with strong focus on processing feelings in the population. Communication towards the population designed with an ambition to heal was though found in two cases, in East Timor and

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**TABLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of information and communication</th>
<th>COUNTRIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EAST TIMOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public hearings held by the TRC</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special website</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public hearings possible to see/read after the TRC has expired</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material possible to read in all languages spoken in the state</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original TRC final report documents available</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy read overview of TRC result</td>
<td>Yes (2 side document of key-results).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material for schools/education available</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent report on the final report ordered and available</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information easy to find and overview</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sanna Lindeby©
Ghana, in the form of presentational, IRL communication: public hearings. In the public report by the TRC in Ghana it is stated that the hearings had a healing ambition: “Commission followed the same routine in facilitating healing, forgiveness and reconciliation as appropriate”.\footnote{The National Reconciliation Commission Report in Ghana (2004). \textit{Hearing Procedure}. 2.6.2.2. P. 13. http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php?option=com_content&view=article…onal-reconciliation-commission-report&catid=59:reports&Itemid=208} In Sri Lanka, public hearings were also held, but here they were held without an, in the material shown, ambition to address feelings. Public hearings were rather performed for finding out more practical needs, as a base for recommendations for distribution of economical compensation.

All three cases had a final formal report available to read, though the Ghana report during the time of my research disappeared from the net. All three final reports in this research were mainly communicating to politicians and authorities. In one case an easy read version of the report was also provided, adapted for a broader public to read (East Timor).

The reports themselves were not a form of communication obviously designed to meet feelings. They cannot be described as a material communicating and addressing feelings. The final reports do not communicate in a way that they themselves can be viewed as satisfying for processing emotions. Revealing the truth is the purpose with the report, but it is not a material that can be seen as revealing the truth directly to the population. A communication in only this form does not give a sufficient result when it comes to reveal truth and therefor it is not in itself a material distributing justice, which is considered to be a way to heal, by revealing the hidden truth. As a source for justice through knowledge it is not sufficient. The report cannot be seen as a material processing feelings. It reports violations in numbers, but I believe that the communication of truth with a purpose to heal, need to be designed for meeting feelings. If the purpose is to meet feelings, the communication has to be performed with the receivers, the population in focus. Both the purpose and the possible difficulties to widely communicate need to be considered. For a material to be used to process feelings, the way the content is communicated is of importance. Therefor the final reports, even though they at least theoretically are available for everyone to read as they are public, are not enough as a way to communicate the truth and meet feelings. The final reports were not available in all languages spoken in the countries, except the final report in East Timor.
Public hearings might not be possible to perform as a way to meet feelings, if the society has no obvious will to meet and reveal the truth as it is given by different groups in the society. The Sri Lanka conflict was solved more as a forced ceasefire. The Tamils in Sri Lanka can, by reading the TRC report, be described as not have been given a possibility to fully tell the truth, though it might have been the ambition for the TRC. The text inclines that the TRC is aware of the difficulties for a healing process to really be performed and communicated. Forgiveness and recognition may not be possible unless further investigations, clearly independent from the authorities, have a possibility to operate. If there is not a will from the government to deeply solve the conflict and listen to all groups versions and emotions, a communication for meeting feelings will have small possibilities to work. In Sri Lanka, the communication of truth does not seem to have been directed to all groups.

The absence of clear communication for healing, processing feelings and revealing truth can depend on a climate and a society not stable enough for it. The authorities might not show a will to listen to all parts, and this attitude might influence the communication to meet feelings. The final report from the TRC in Sri Lanka insinuates very softly that the peace in fact is not a peace that has fully solved the conflict. Interviews in the report describe minorities as still being repressed. For example it is told that the Northern Province is economically backward. It is also told that Northern Rehabilitation body consisted of 19 people and there was not a single Tamil. About this is written: “Without addressing these needs, people affected by the war would not be able to move forward towards reconciliation, and neither would they have confidence or hope of any reconciliation process initiated at a macro level.” 68 Another reason for lack of communication for meeting feelings and emotions in Sri Lanka can be due to a not fully clear protection to all societal groups: “ It was stated that armed groups gave indescribable suffering to the Tamil people, and still continue their underground activities of kidnapping, ransom, murder, and robbery unabatedly, and cause fear and anxiety to the Tamil people. 69 In the report a witness describe the emotions among the Tamils as: “The Tamil pride is wounded. They could go to the South without passes, and children had access to jobs in the South, and people are no longer huddled behind closed doors fearful of unknown persons carrying their children away in white vans. At the same time he posed the question whether the peace that has been achieved could be leveraged towards national reconciliation and forging a united nation, and stated that he saw several “attitude” problems which could prevent it. He stated,

“Despite the new opportunities, there is a severe resentment among the Tamil people…we feel we are being treated like a conquered people although we ourselves suffered under the LTTE.”\textsuperscript{70} At least this text in the report point to a need for a communication in the society addressing emotions and needs for recognition, apology and a truth-telling performed with an open attitude. The need for meeting feelings can be analysed as considered to be important also for the TRC in Sri Lanka, though it seems as if it has no possibility to initiate those processes: “Abductions continue to take place in the Wanni and there is an element of sexual harassment as well. A speedy process of rehabilitation and reconstruction in a climate of trust and dignity was essential for these areas.”\textsuperscript{71}

According to communication theory a message designed with the receiver in focus is more efficient in reaching the target group. To be aware of this and by using different channels and consider the design of the message, even when communicating the same thing, one can reach out with the processes more efficiently in order to address needs, in this case feelings following after a severe war. Having formal, educational, culturspecific and artistic communication can increase the possibility to meet feelings and also increase the ability to reach out more broadly. Feelings can in this way be met in different ways, sensible to, as well context as the receiver’s different ways to react on a message. What I can see is that communication through representative channels, online communication, has a greater possibility to reach out widely and also to work in a longer term, which also increases the possibility for the communication to be widely spread. This is a scenario for future Societal healing communication, to both have this form of communication and a more direct presentational trough public hearings.

One case in this examination had communication made for processing feelings in a longer term, East Timor. Still one can find that the Ghana TRC clearly point out that they look upon reconciliation as a process to be continued. There is awareness that the final report cannot be the only way to work with emotions in the society: “In carrying out its activities, the Commission understood from the outset that national reconciliation in Ghana, as elsewhere, was a process, not an event. It also understood its work as a significant trigger to the reconciliation process, but did not

conceive of the effort as its exclusive property, or one that would end with the conclusion of its work and the submission of its report to the President”.  

The final report of the TRC in Ghana was published on a governmental website, difficult to reach and with no special website or any kind of link to other forms of communication from the TRC. None of the public hearings held were filmed and available linked to the report, therefor those processes had a limited time for processing feelings, but it was clearly written that those hearings were a way to heal. To find the final report was difficult. It was necessary to first go to the website for the Ghana government, then click on the link “information.” Here followed a lot of different documents, and among those the TRC report was to be found. Only a final report was available. It was only written in English, though the country has several groups speaking other languages. There was no more informative and readable material designed for being read by the citizens. It was difficult, from a public perspective, to see in what way the report were a work in purpose to heal by giving knowledge, revealing truth and showing recognition. No easy read material was provided. The report can be seen as mainly an instrument for giving recommendations to further work, but not in itself as a way to communicate with an ambition to meet feelings. Sri Lanka TRC had a communication similar to Ghana, providing just a final report, nothing more. It was difficult to read from a public perspective and only available in English. It is not linked from any official government website. I had to download it from a peace research institute in USA. Therefor one can say that the TRC communication in Sri Lanka in no great extent revealed the truth. The report in itself cannot be considered as have a possibility to be widely spread. It cannot be seen as a communication for meeting feelings in the society.

The TRC in Ghana existed during the same period (2003-2004) as the TRC in East Timor (2002-2005). At that time, Internet was not frequently used, especially not in more undeveloped countries. Statistics of Ghana today (2013) shows low rate of usage of Internet facilities in the country generally and the rural areas in particular, pointing to a digital divide between Ghana and the rest of the world and also an internal urban-rural divide. Only 7.8 percent of the population use Internet. Only 7.9 percent of households in the country own a computer. The East Timor TRC existed

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during the same time as the TRC in Ghana, but in East Timor a web based communication was created. The communication in east Timor shows a clear ambition to meet feelings and reveal the truth about the war, to continue the truth-telling during a longer period. In contrast to public hearings, a web communication is suitable for communication in a longer term. As the use of Internet grows, web based communication must be viewed as being of importance for future processes of Societal healing. In all three countries the use of Internet was, and still is, low. 8.2% of all households in Sri Lanka possess a personal computer (3.8% in 2004). A significant difference in the availability of personal computers can be seen between urban households 17.8% and in rural (6.9%). Among households that have computers though, 45% use the computer daily.\(^74\) What is a bit peculiarly is that of the three countries in this research, East Timor is the far most undeveloped country when it comes to Internet-using in the population. Percents of individuals using Internet in East Timor are only 0,9% (01% 2005).\(^75\) From this view, communication through representative media could not be seen as the most efficient channel to use for reaching out in the population seen in the time of the TRC existence. But now, the communication for processing feelings continues. As shown, the use of Internet is rapidly increasing also in the less developed countries. Just as the use of cell phones are increasing fast in undeveloped countries.

The pluralistic communication in East Timor had made efforts to reveal the truth broadly, in a long term and had a strong ambition to meet feelings, communicating with art, providing educational material and also providing formal material to be used by institutions etc. The still running and easily found website has an ambition to communicate with the population. The messages/material communicate through different design. Emotions are met through films, photos, books and Powerpoints.

\(^75\) International Telecommunication Union. UN specialized agency for information and communication technologies. (2012). Percentage of individuals using the Internet.
Examples from East Timor TRC website:

The website was easy to find. The earlier representative public hearings were now available as books on different subjects: massacres, women and the conflict, forced displacement. Here we can see efforts made to transfer the public hearings into a communication with a greater possibility to reach out in the society in a longer term. Operative guides for institutions in gender issues related to the war were available. *Hear Our Voices*, a photo-book with photos of East Timorese sharing their stories of pain and suffering together with written comments/thoughts, was possible to read and see online. Also in this material, texts were available in languages spoken in the country. An independent secretariat was created to continue the Societal healing processes. This certified the communication for a long-term use.

5.2 Conclusions

Only one case had a communication designed to reach out broadly. One case showed a clear ambition to create healing processes through their communication. The final reports are not a form of communication suitable for meeting feelings in the population. Further communication is needed.

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if there is an ambition to address feelings. Just one of three cases had a communication consisting of more than the final report. Only one case had a communication functioning in a longer term.

My conclusion is that feelings in a society can be met with a communication created with the receivers in focus. A material designed for communicating the truth with an ambition to reach the citizens and process emotions can contribute to Societal healing. Different design on the communicated material with focus on different groups of receivers, will increase the ability for the processes to work. A communication can be created to meet needs and at the same time inform, tell the truth about the war. I believe that social interaction through web communication can be further developed. Finding models and ways to work more directed to meet emotions and to establish communication with a focus on reaching out broadly in the society, is what I find useful. As public hearings are performed once, I believe that social interaction through web communication can be a good complement, to be further developed, as a way to continue processes for meeting feelings in a longer term.

5.3 Concluding discussion

I have during my study come to realize that all ambitions to heal in a society, to reveal truth, must have a focus on communication. To certify a broad communication, providing material for many different groups with a clear user perspective, can increase the possibilities for Societal healing processes to be successful.

Seen in the examination, only East Timor had a material produced by the TRC communicating for meeting feelings. Material was designed for communicating the truth found in different ways. With this, the possibility to reach different groups can increase. The material had different channels to reach the public. It had different types of material for different receivers in the society, written in the languages spoken in the country. It can be described as a material designed to reach all citizens, which according to Philott's theories, is a way to reach a consensus, and to be seen as a form of justice.

Public hearings have been the main form for a communication for meeting feelings, in former TRCs and also in my examined cases, except in East Timor where both public hearings and a range of other ways to communicate for healing were used. Presentational communication has limitations as
it involves a smaller group of participants. Critique to presentational meetings and hearings is that victims might not want to communicate directly. Difficulties in arranging hearings, as people have to leave work, children, and for other reasons are unable to attend, have also been raised. Representative media can be a complementary form of communication for meeting needs and feelings in the population. To heal a society takes time. It is important to have a communication for a longer term is my point. Further, an investigation for finding out how well a communication for meeting feelings has worked, to study a broad Societal healing ambition by doing interviews among the population, would be interesting.
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