

Abstract

The thesis (*A)symmetric dynamics of the conflict in Sri Lanka* is an attempt to apply the theoretical concept of asymmetric conflicts and asymmetric warfare to the empirical case of the conflict in Sri Lanka and to figure out whether or not the asymmetric nature of the relationship between the sides of the conflict was the cause of the conflict's long term persistence and incapability of finding a durable solution to the conflict. In order to do so, the author first introduced the theoretical framework itself and highlighted the most significant features which were furthermore employed as the tool for the following analysis.

On this basis the conflict in Sri Lanka was set into the theoretical framework and relevant asymmetries between the two counterparts – the Sri Lankan government/army and the organization of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam – were identified. As the next step, the author tried to embrace the variable dynamics of the conflict in terms of relevant asymmetries and also symmetries which came to being within the course of the conflict. Since the symmetric situation is deemed to be more advantageous for finding the solution to a conflict, the author focused on the impact of the “symmetrization” on the prospects for the solution to the Sri Lankan conflict.

However, the final findings were somewhat puzzling. The symmetric situation did not prove to be the “ripe moment” for the final solution to the conflict. Quite on the contrary, the conflict was terminated in highly asymmetric situation (in terms of military capabilities) and thus the renewed and reinforced asymmetry can be considered the key to its solution. As the guns of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have been silent since their capitulation in May 2009 the military victory of the Sri Lankan armed forces seems to be the final one.

The author also tried to explain the way the conflict was ended (well known “Sri Lankan option”) in terms of the chosen theoretical framework. Although the outcomes of the analysis were partially different from the preliminary expectations of the author the theory of asymmetric conflicts has proved to be a valuable analytical tool. Many theoretical assumptions have turned to be valid in the case of Sri Lanka and therefore the final solution to the conflict no longer seems to be so much unforeseen as at the very beginning of the analysis presented in this thesis.