Intergroup and identity dynamics in response to post-war policies in Sri Lanka

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Résumé

Cette thèse examine la continuation des politiques identitaires dans le Sri Lanka d'après-guerre en relation avec les tendances actuelles du pays en matière de politiques de justice réparative, sociale et rétributive. A partir d'arguments sur l'identité ethnique et ses relations complexes avec le pouvoir politique et la violence, cette étude vise à présenter une lecture psychosociale des réalités sociales divergentes créées autour des processus de justice transitionnelle parmi les ethnicités cinghalaises et tamoules, avec des implications potentielles pour leurs futures relations intergroupes. Elle fait l'hypothèse que la victimisation collective, une composante importante de l'identité ethnique, impacte de manière différenciée les réalités sociales de la population en relation à la justice transitionnelle, que les réactions collectives de groupes ethniques varient à cause de telles réalités différenciées, et formule des prédictions sur les relations futures entre des groupes, la majorité cinghalaise et la minorité tamoule, encore récemment engagés dans un conflit prolongé et dont les rapports de pouvoir sont asymétriques. A travers cette analyse, cette thèse vise à souligner l'approche stratégique et sélective adoptée par l'État sri lankais lors de l'implémentation des politiques de justice transitionnelle accentuant les identités ethniques au lieu de les atténuer, et maintenant un climat de politique identitaire dans la période d'après-guerre.

Les trois études empiriques rapportées dans cette thèse examinent les réalités sociales différenciées autour de la justice réparative, sociale et rétributive en relation avec trois faits politiques de la période d'après-guerre chronologiquement importants dans le discours socio-économique et politique. L'étude 1 analyse les perceptions du public à la base du développement massif des infrastructures à la fin de la guerre civile. L'étude 2 analyse les perceptions du public sous-tendant la participation à l'action collective en relation avec les demandes de justice sociale d'après-guerre. L'étude 3 analyse les perceptions et le soutien du public vis-à-vis de l'établissement de responsabilités pour les violations des droits humains perpétrées durant la récente période de troubles du pays.

Abstract

This thesis examines the continuation of identity based politics in post-war Sri Lanka in relation to the country's current trends in reparative, social and retributive justice policy. Based on arguments made on ethnic identity and its intricate relationships with political power and violence, this study aspires to highlight a social psychological reading of the differed social realities that have been created around transitional justice processes among the country's Sinhalese and Tamil ethnicities, with potential implications on future intergroup relations between them. It hypothesizes collective victimization, an important component of ethnic identity, to impact differently the social realities of the general public in relation to transitional justice and also hypothesizes varied collective ethnic group reactions as a consequence of such differed realities, making predictions on future intergroup relations between the asymmetric power groups, the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamils, that were quite recently engaged in protracted conflict. Through such an analysis, this thesis hopes to highlight the rather strategic and selective approach adopted by the Sri Lankan state in implementing transitional justice policies continuing to heighten ethnic group identities instead of de-heightening them, maintaining a post-war climate of identity politics.

Three empirical studies presented within this thesis each investigate differed social realities surrounding reparative, social and retributive justice in relation to three chronologically important post-war political outcomes within Sri Lanka's socio-political and economic discourse. Study 1 analyses public perceptions that underlie mass infrastructure development that has taken place following Sri Lanka's civil war while study 2 analyses public perceptions underling collective action participation in relation to social justice demands following the war. Study 3 analyses public perceptions and support towards accountability for human rights violation committed during the country's recent troubled past.

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Contents

Preface

Sri Lanka, the research context extensively reviewed within this thesis, recently saw the end of a civil war, which plagued the country for almost three decades (1983 – 2009). It took place between the country's state military which composed of and popularly portrayed as representing the interest of its majority Sinhalese ethnic group and an armed rebel group named the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) which comprised and was perceived as representative of the interest of the country's largest minority group, the ethnic Tamils. The war was asymmetric and gruesome with the Tamil minority suffering the most. However, both parties were known for their unconventional combat strategies. The government military forces were accused of human rights violations in varying forms ranging from targeting civilians, conducting extrajudicial killings, enforcing disappearances and showing lack of respect for habeas corpus. This resulted in four resolutions being passed against the Sri Lankan state by the Human Rights Council since 2012 ("OHCHR Sri Lanka", 2018). The LTTE on the other hand were reputed in making involuntary recruitments, using child soldiers, carrying out attacks on civilian and political targets and were notoriously known for their suicide bomb attacks. These actions resulted in the LTTE becoming branded as a terrorist organization subsequently being officially banned from 32 countries. This war ended on the 18th of May 2009, following the annihilation of the LTTE in the hands of the state military. Even though there are no official statistics, and numbers claimed by both the Sri Lankan state and the United Nations being heavily contested by each other, it is estimated that over 100,000 civilians and over 50,000 combatants from both parties to have perished during this 26-year conflict (Perera, 2001).

Following the war, the Sri Lankan state seem to have adopted mass scale infrastructure development throughout the war torn North and Eastern parts of the country as its official reconciliation strategy (see Rajasingham, 2010, Saparamadu & Lall, 2014). Unilaterally introduced and heavily militarized, the rationale behind this development drive seem to have been the redressing of mass suffering and destruction caused by the civil conflict (especially the heavily affected minority Tamils) through trickledown effects of economic development that had been absent within these regions since the inception of the war. An independent commission established in 2016 named The Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation

Mechanisms (the CTF) (see "Final report CTF", 2017) however, reveals transitional justice needs of the Sri Lankan public to be quite diverse and beyond restorative justice preferred by the majoritarian state. Consultations made with the wider public, which included civil society, the professions, public servants, the military, clergy and various artist groups ensuring equal ethnic and gender representations have revealed transitional justice needs to be quite diverse as well as to be heavily contested. For instance, varied interest groups among majoritarian Sinhalese such as the military and clergy seem to prefer restorative justice as opposed to retributive justice, deeming punitive aspects of reconciliation to be counterproductive, compromising national security and further risking a deepening of inter-ethnic cleavages. Members of the Tamil minority on the other hand seem more demanding of retribution. For them the articulation of "suffering" is not limited to the physical destruction caused by the war, but incorporates many other conceptualizations that include historic structural violence, psychological trauma and inequalities in memorialization in naming a few. The culture of impunity that has been prevailing requires international involvement and supervision according to the Tamils while Sinhalese interest groups demand transitional justice and reconciliation to be a purely domestic process. There also seem to be more nuanced claims for justice within each ethnic group. For instance, grievances reported by the Tamils against the LTTE for using civilians as human shields and forcible recruitment of children as combatants; and calls for justice by Southern Sinhalese for state brutality, violence against religious minorities among Sinhalese, and claims for justice for military and police brutality during post-war times, all indicative of the multifaceted contested nature of transitional justice in post-war Sri Lanka ("Final report CTF", 2017).

On the other hand a culture of impunity currently present within the country seems to be concerning its general citizenry regardless of ethnic majority minority and different socio economic and political orientations. During most of the country's recent postcolonial history, Sri Lanka has been ruled under emergency law. The executive through its military and police have been accused of utilizing a rather draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) in suppressing free expression and activism especially with regards to the public's fulfilment of social justice needs. Countless extrajudicial attacks have been reported to be carried out against human rights activist, journalists and political opponents in the form of abductions, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and rape throughout the country (see Human Rights Watch, 2020; Lewis, 2020; Amnesty International, 2017; Weliamuna, 2012; DeVotta,

2011). NGOs, INGOs and other neutral actors operating with the objective of furthering human rights, community empowerment and sustainable peace have been labelled as traitors. The conditions in the Northeastern parts of the country hard struck by the war and predominated by Tamils and Muslims, seem the most worst off in this regard. The presence of military and paramilitary groups carrying out extra-constitutional actions in these areas have been at its highest since the end of the war (Saparamadu & Lall, 2014; Fernando, 2017b). A high military presence coupled with greater involvement in civilian life has been a great concern for the diverse social groups living in these areas. Large amounts of civilian land have been occupied by the state based on justifications of security and the military has been influencing local economies by manufacturing and supplying various goods and services. Even the publics right to commemorate and mourn the fallen during the country's three-decade war has been heavily censored. A rather forceful, singular and inclusive narrative of victimization in the hands of the LTTE is been discursively constructed and propagated by the state (Schubert, 2013). The presence of such a culture of impunity during post-conflict times has resulted in the aforementioned resolutions by the United Nations Human Rights Council against the Sri Lankan state ("OHCHR Sri Lanka", 2018).

So, on one hand it is evident that restorative justice is been heavily emphasized by the majoritarian Sinhalese state, through visible mass scale infrastructure development projects and their physical impacts. But what aren't so clear are the psychological impacts of such projects on diverse communities. Are they been gracefully accepted by all segments of the public and is it really the best reconciliation strategy in de-hightening previously polarized ethnic group identities for all Sri Lankans? This was a question unanimously present among us authors inspiring this thesis. On the other hand the culture of impunity, fear and suppression currently been maintained in post-conflict Sri Lanka seem to be emphasizing an important need for retributive and other forms of social justice. However, are such needs equally shared among all segments of the public, how important are they within a post-conflict society in de-heightening polarized ethnic group identities and are diverse segments equally capable of collectively mobilizing for their desired justice related needs? This was a second important question unanimously held by us leading to subsequent analysis within this thesis.

Provided the fragile conditions present within post-war societies with substantial collapses in their political, judicial, economic and social domains, such context ideally seem

to require the establishment of multifaceted and rather complicated reconciliation processes that address numerous restorative, retributive and social justice requirements (Brounéus, 2003; Newman & Schnabel, 2002; van Gennip, 2005; Lambourne, 2004; Green, 1999). For instance ranging from truth seeking efforts, to criminal prosecutions, to reparations and institutional reforms, such processes seem to be helping the reestablishment of human morality and agency that are valued critically in de-heightening cleavages prevalent among parties that were formerly in conflict (Nadler & Shnabel 2008, 2015). Post-conflict eras however, often tend to be heavily contested settings involving diverse hierarchical power groups operating in quite strategic ways. These tend to be periods of transition where memories of violence are quite recent and levels of trust towards the conflicting other quite low. These are also periods in which restorative and retributive forms of justice often demand hefty penalties from perpetrators. As a consequence there often seems to be heavy contestations surrounding the types of transitional justice mechanisms that are called for within post-conflict settings and a huge disparity between such calls and the actual mechanisms being implemented.

It is such discrepancies involving diverse perceptions built around transitional justice mechanisms, their requirement (vs. denial) by diverse interest groups, and their actual implementation (vs. disregard) by the state that stimulated my interest in analysing Sri Lanka's policies towards retributive, restorative and social justice both present as well as absent within the country's post-conflict discourse and its potential implications for the future intergroup relations. Hence my central research question pursued throughout this thesis, whether ethnic group identities are been continuously maintained at a heightened level in post-conflict Sri Lanka through policy both present as well as absent relating to the populations transitional justice needs? In investigating this main research question I hope to conduct three empirical research studies that subdivide and investigate three sub research questions, each dealing with ethnic group identity heightening relating to restorative, social and retributive justice related policies in post-war Sri Lanka among the Sinhalese and Tamils.

Study 1 investigates the differed perceptions, reactions and subsequent identity heightening potential associated with restorative justice policies by analysing Sri Lanka's post-war reconciliation oriented boom in infrastructure development. It analyses the differed social realities associated with different ethnic groups towards mass scale infrastructure development, subsequently fuelling their collective grievances. The study hypothesizes

negative perceptions held towards post-war development to spark collective mobilization efforts, and this relationship to differ based on hierarchical group membership status as well as diverse collective victimhood beliefs held by people. Study 2 investigates the differing motivational factors that underlie collective social justice claims and their potential for identity heightening and collective violence, by analysing a collective action boom aimed at redressing post-war grievances stimulated by a political transition during the country's recent post-conflict era. It analyses the differed social realities of the general public that are associated with instrumental concerns, communal climates, as well as ethnic grievances, having potential in fuelling their collective mobilization efforts for social justice. The study hypothesizes collective mobilization for diverse hierarchical power groups to be motivated by different factors, ethnic grievances to be particularly important for minority collective social justice claims. Study 3 investigates the differed perceptions concerning retributive justice policy and its identity heightening potential following a renewed public zest and debate in relation to accountability, sparked by the same aforementioned political transition. It analyses such perceptions amidst differed social realities that are been created through an official inclusive suffering narrative, that everyone suffered equally in the hands of the LTTE rebels. The study hypothesizes having an inclusive suffering ideology to affect the public's perceptions regarding retributive justice differently. As a consequence affect their potentials for identity heightening differently based on hierarchical ethnic group status as well as strategic motives that underlie the adaptation of such inclusive victimhood ideologies.

In tackling this central research question and its three sub components, we the authors of this thesis intend to adopt a social identity approach which tends to be primarily based on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), Self-categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), the Elaborated Social Identity Model of Crowd Behaviour (Drury & Reicher, 2009; Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010) and the intricate relationship between political power, violence and social identity proposed by Elcheroth & Reicher (2017). Provided the combination of the above theoretical orientations capability in capturing social representations and social identities to be at the basis of human social realities; acknowledge the creative capacities underlying individual group membership as well as collective strategic manoeuvres undertaken by groups in furthering their privileged positions in society; and human social realities to be extremely volatile, time and context bound endeavours; us authors believe adopting such a social identity approach to be capable

of yielding a comprehensive understanding of Sri Lanka's post-war transitional justice policy and its competence in (de)heightening ethnic group identities.

In the process of capturing various strategies and selective processes underlying the implementation of transitional justice policy, the differed social realities that are associated with diverse power groups that are recipients of such policies and their reactions that subsequently determine ethnic identity (de)heightening, the authors take into consideration several core social psychology concepts relating to social identity. They include collective victimhood (Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gundar, 2009; Vollhardt, 2012; Noor, Vollhardt, Mari, & Nadler, 2017), in-group attachment and in-group glorification (Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Halevy, & Eidelson, 2008), acknowledgment of collective victimization (Hameri & Nadler, 2017; Vollhardt, Mazur, & Lemahieu, 2014), social cohesion (Lavis, & Stoddart, 2003; Stafford, Bartley, Sacker, Marmot, Wilkinson, Boreham, & Thomas, 2003), collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Drury & Reicher, 2005; Reicher, 2001) and collective action (Becker, 2012; van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009).

The data utilized within this thesis in investigating the aforementioned research questions comes from two surveys conducted in post-conflict Sri Lanka by the Pluralistic Memories Project. This project a scientific consortium funded by the Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development (r4d programme) and implemented jointly by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), is hosted at the University of Lausanne and is established for the preservation and analysis of conflict related memories in Burundi, Palestine and Sri Lanka, three diverse context uniquely placed at different stages of conflict. The surveys implemented in Sri Lanka were administered across samples representative of all ethnic, religious, socioeconomic as well as segments of the population that have been diversely exposed to conflict amounting to the different episodes of past violence within the country. The initial pilot survey, utilized as a test of field conditions in collecting transitional justice related data in post-war Sri Lanka, and the data source for study 1, within this thesis included a sample size of 400. The second main survey, which is the source for study 2 and 3, involved a sample of 1,188 respondents. The authors believe that these large scale surveys implemented using rigid methodologies with highest ethical scrutiny and meticulous fieldwork were capable of deriving valuable data from "real communities living in the real world", capturing

complexities and intersectionalities that can be extrapolated across multiple settings. The authors also believe that apart from facilitating a comprehensive social identity based understandings of transitional justice within the context of concern, the surveys also provided a unique and much needed space for its public in discussing nuances that exist in their conflict experiences and attitudes they possess towards transitional justice.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Social identities and their implications on intergroup relations at the basis of the study

The author adopts a social identity approach within this thesis with an expectation of carrying out a comprehensive analysis, provided the central research question governing the different studies performed being the ethnic identity heightening potential of transitional justice policies in post-conflict Sri Lanka. Within this initial section the rationale for adopting such a social identity approach tends to be highlighted along with its conceptualizations that underlie human social realities, their strategic group categorizations and tactical manoeuvres in minimizing persecutions and maximizing privileges. The section will further highlight the importance of collective mobilization, intergroup violence as well as conflict resolution to this study, which are all heavily contextual endeavours that underlie social identities.

Following the holocaust, and up to more recent incidences of unimaginable violence throughout human history, such as the killing fields in Cambodia, the genocide in Rwanda and the ethnic conflict within the former Balkan Peninsula in naming a few, a central concern within the field of social psychology in relation to intergroup relations has been with regards to the ubiquitous nature of violence displayed by the humans towards each other (see Bar-Tal, 2000, 2007). Among many explanations sought after, adopting a rather simplistic conceptualization of intergroup relations, especially based on the minimal group paradigm studies (see Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel, Flament, Billig, & Bundy, 1971), that conflict between groups are natural and inevitable, and that group based thought processes are capable of subverting intellectual and moral judgements of individuals, poses a high possibility in deriving inadequate and even erroneous conclusions relating to protracted conflict between groups and their outcomes that follow.

Often critiqued to have been based on rather WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic) samples (see Pechar, & Kranton, 2018) early studies within the minimal

group paradigm seemed to have based its findings on assigning participants to (meaningless) categories, asking them to allocate rewards to other anonymous members belonging to such groups, revealing reward allocation to be discriminative in favour of the in-group, regardless of how trivial or meaningless the group categorizations appeared to be. Such findings seem to have popularized the notion that categorical affiliations often trigger discrimination against out-groups. Supplemented and popularized further by Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, (1988) through their Classic Robbers Cave Experiment, the hierarchical and structural nature of groups seem to have been emphasised further along with the potential for conflict and violence in circumstances where group goals overlap. Such reasoning has often been at the basis of ethnic competition models by ethnic theorists developed later in seeking to understand discrimination and violence between ethnic groups. For example, attempts made at defining ethnic identities in terms of kinship and decent (see Harvey, 2000; Fearon, 2008), differing civilizational worldviews (see Huntington, 1993) and competition (see Olzak, 1992). Such attempts seem to convey violence between social groups (for example between the ethnic Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka) to be inevitable and cycles of violence to continue despite vigorous interventions made at reconciling them. Such views often entail many incomplete arguments relating to evolution, kin survival, competition for limited resources and civilizational differences in constructing social realities to be at the centre of intergroup conflicts (see Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017; Reicher, 2004; Reicher, 2012). What such reductionist extrapolations of minimal group studies fail to acknowledge is the exact opposite of conflict. Notions of intergroup coexistence through inter marriages, shared trade, linguistics and religious practices, and the sporadic nature of violence both temporally and spatially seem to be often overshadowed by the gruesome nature of the violent act itself. Such reductionist and evolutionary based views often seem to fail in acknowledging the creative capacity in humans and the associated flexibilities and complexities they display in altering their social worlds. This includes strategic manoeuvres undertaken by groups in perpetuating violence (often structural) masked by "positive intergroup behaviours" such as rewarding (Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim, 2012). Such explanations also seem to fail in assigning responsibility for initiating violence among leaders, subordinate in-group members and or towards the nature of group dynamics themselves. (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017).

On the contrary the social identity approach tends to be a more revised comprehensive development of minimal group studies, which incorporates both Social Identity Theory

(Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Self-categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). By adopting such an approach, capturing a more independent and dynamic nature of the self becomes plausible. This is due to the social identity approach considering the self being part of a more complex social system, governed by norms, values, and beliefs corresponding to an individual's salient multiple identities and categorical affiliations. This approach defines the permeability in categorical boundaries to determine the flexibility for individuals in remaining or exiting social groups. Despite illegitimate social conditions present as a result of hierarchical social realities and resource limitations, violence isn't the only natural and inevitable alternative available for groups according to this approach. Groups facing such unjust societal conditions often have cognitive alternatives at hand in re-conceptualizing a more legitimate and esteemed social position determining motives for collective action, for instance positive differentiations relating to prosocial behaviours rather than negative conflicting ones. As Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, (1996) point out, in the presence of positive in-group norms, groups may opt to compete and differentiate themselves from out-groups through the use of positive qualities such as fairness, kindness, generosity, and helpfulness. On a similar note the work of Brewer (see Brewer, 1991, 2000; Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Brewer & Pierce, 2005) on multiple identities and identity complexity, indicate greater possibility for tolerance and acceptance as an alternative to differentiation and discrimination. The greater number of categories people belong to the less reliant individuals become on one/fewer identities in satisfying their needs of belonging and self-definition (Brewer, 1991). The greater the number, the more vivid the memberships become and as a result the more exclusive the categories become resulting in a more diverse, inclusive and tolerant representations for an individual's social identity (Brewer, 2000; Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Brewer & Pierce, 2005).

Hence a plethora of factors that include identity complexity, permeability, inequality, legitimacy, cognitive alternatives and power dynamics involving multiple groups and their interrelations within particular social context are all conceptualized within the social identity approach in playing a cardinal role, prior to individuals perceiving phenomenon and behaving collectively. This includes collective expressions of tolerance and violence as well. Hence by adopting a social identity approach within this study, a comprehensive social psychological analysis of the three transitional justice outcomes in Sri Lanka relating to restorative, social and retributive justice is anticipated. A further understanding of differed motives that

surround these outcomes, the differed ethnic group perceptions towards them and consequentially, reactions that might be generated in terms of collective mobilization are also expected.

1.1.1 Social categories and identities for individual epistemic coordination

A critical justification provided by the social identity approach as to why humans think and behave categorically (particularly in ethnic terms) as opposed to thinking and behaving as individuals, is in relation to their needs of epistemic coordination. Amidst complex social realities that are present, and a plethora of epistemic repositories existent in making sense of such complex social realities, the social identity approach states the need for individuals in carefully navigating such vast epistemic repositories available to them. Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, (2011), and Elcheroth & Reicher, (2017) explain how our epistemic repositories are immersed within our social representations and social identities. According to them, we make sense of our experiences by embedding them within our shared repositories of knowledge (also see Elcheroth, 2006; Elcheroth & Spini, 2009; Moscovici, 2008). Our personal experiences convert from being opinions into rather objective social facts only when such embedding takes place. For example, in an experiment study conducted by Wright (1997), when participants were exposed to discrimination (when participants were deliberately provided with a low score on a decision making task characterized within the study to be essential in succeeding in responsible positions of leadership), and when exposed to discrimination alone with no precise clue as to what was happening to them, participants seemed to have reacted by resigning from the experiment. However, when they were made aware of others dissenting, participants seem to have begun opposing the perceived unjust situation in mobilizing collectively against such treatment. The vast repositories available to us according to Elcheroth et al., (2011) and Elcheroth & Reicher, (2017) exist not only in our own thought and behavioural experiences but are also preserved within material culture that are presented to us in various forms including cultural norms, state policies & laws as well as the mass media in naming a few.

This shared knowledge and its associated assumptions often appear banal within a particular context or group that is of high interest for us, and its communications quite implicit. We are able to interact quite easily which often happens instinctively with others who align themselves with the same set of assumptions that we do. For example, as Billig,

(1995) rightfully points out the banality associated with our sense making of social realities often seem to be displayed even through rather trivial discussions we have regarding the weather, which often assumes a national frame of reference. But with others who align to a different set of assumptions, we struggle with our interactions. In other words, our shared epistemic repositories that we require to make sense of the world and behave, seem to be constructed around the social identities and social representations that we immensely care about.

Another key aspect of our epistemic repositories tends to be our meta-knowledge; which is the understandings we have regarding how others think and behave. Raudsepp (2005), Elcheroth et al., (2011) and Elcheroth & Reicher, (2017) go on to state how reflexive we are as human beings often analysing social information from an egocentric perspective as to what the information means for us, and also from a allocentric perspective as to what the information would mean for relevant others and our relationships with them. We tend to react differently to the meta-knowledge we have regarding different others. In the case where the meta-knowledge is with regards to the groups that we share the same social identities with (and the associated set of assumptions), we often react positively whereas with regards to meta-knowledge of a different out-group, we often react less positively. It is the meta-knowledge we have regarding unfamiliar others that we have the least epistemic certainty of, that is often manipulated by in-group members in power, to heighten identities and implement identity projects which will be discussed in detail within the next section. Often by creating conditions of epistemic isolation especially through the manipulative use of mass media and institutional policies, Elcheroth et al., (2011) and Elcheroth & Reicher, (2017) argue how social realities for groups and their epistemic coordination could be drastically transformed, making epistemic repositories, especially the meta-knowledge we have regarding unfamiliar others and important means of epistemic capital.

1.1.2 Social identities for collective mobilization and change

The social identity approach further argues our epistemic repositories to be in a constant flux (see Reicher, 2004). Even though shared representations make up our social realities determining our collective values, beliefs and behavioural practices, this relationship is considered to be bi-directional, where social realities are often recreated by modified collective practices (Reicher, 2004; Elcheroth et al., 2011; Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017).

Whenever established institutional realities are dissented by individual group members and when such dissent is often shared by similar others, a re-definition of social categories, their epistemic capital and associated identities becomes plausible (Reicher, 2004; Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010; Reicher, Haslam, Spears, & Reynolds, 2012). This is argued within the social identity tradition to hold objective even when perceiving more fundamental categorical labels such as age and gender that are often cognitively camouflaged to remain relatively constant across time. A close analysis on such groups by researchers such as Burman (1994), Emler & Reicher (1995) and Hobsbawm (1994), have argued such groups to evolve across time. For instance, throughout history, what it means to be a women or a man, and what it means to be old or young, the expectations and rights associated with such groups have changed drastically even though the group labels have remained constant. Such fluidity is considered within the social identity tradition to be applicable across all groups and their interrelations across all contexts (see Reicher, 2004; Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010; Haslam, Ellemers, Reicher, Reynolds, & Schmitt, 2010). Hence notions of in-group, out-group, ally or enemy are all constantly in motion and only finds meaning within a particular context, within a specific point in time.

Whenever group boundaries are permeable, individuals have the independence and flexibility in exiting groups that cause dissent to them and potentially join other groups or remain independent contributing to their self-esteem (Reicher, 2004; Reicher et al., 2012). Whenever group boundaries are impermeable, and individual fate is tightly interwoven with group membership, then changing circumstances require shared dissent and collective action. According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Self-Categorization Theory (Turner et al., 1987), it is when group members collectively identify with their respective groups, are convinced that group boundaries are impermeable, perceive their group's position to be illegitimate and undeserving and finally, believe this illegitimate in-group position to be temporary and changeable, that collective action for change is plausible. The BBC Prison Study by Steve Reicher and Alex Haslam is a case in point (see Haslam & Reicher, 2006a, 2006c; Reicher & Haslam, 2006b), which investigates social dynamics underlying prisoners in adapting or challenging inequalities present within a prison system. The study reveals impermeability in group boundaries (having no opportunities for being a guard) and conditions questioning the legitimacy and stability in the guards' authority (having a trade unionist question the legitimacy of the guards authority), to galvanize strategic collective

efforts by prisoners against the guards. It is also important to note that the social identity approach through its focus on fluidity and agency in the hands of humans in manipulating their epistemic repositories, focuses not only on the social realities of the present, but also on the dynamic creation of future realities. Though such a focus it denounces static explanations of human behaviour argued by rather reductionist extrapolations of minimal group studies and other evolutionary based explanations of human thought processes and behaviour. Such a focus also establishes groups as the fundamental source that powers social change (Reicher et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the process of creating future social realities by collective masses is viewed within the social identity tradition as a process of "identity entrepreneurship" (see Reicher & Hopkins, 2003; Reicher, 2004; Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins 2005; Haslam & Reicher, 2007). Within this process on one hand, different individuals (especially leaders) are viewed as proposing different versions of their own as well as others identities/categorical definitions as strategic identity projects. While others (such as subordinate in-group members) viewed as aligning themselves with such projects, depending on their own strategic needs, such as in-group acceptance and influence over in-group members in naming just a few. Hence the social identity tradition argues, even though many future alternative realities are possible, the effectiveness of collective mobilization to depend upon imposing one version of social identity over other multiple alternatives, as the only version possible at a given moment in time within a particular social context of interest.

It was noted before that prior to entrepreneurial identity projects being proposed by potential mobilizers and followed by masses, certain social structural conditions to be satisfied in terms of impermeability, inequality, illegitimacy and the lack of cognitive alternatives. Hence collective action/social mobilization is conceptualized within the social identity tradition as a group-based function aimed at overcoming illegitimate and unequal intergroup relations (see Becker, 2012). However as argued much further by the Elaborated Social Identity Model of Crowd Behaviour (ESIM) (see Drury & Reicher, 1999; Drury & Reicher, 2009; Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010), mobilization efforts are not static endeavours. Often high-status groups aiming to protect their privileged status quo may react differently (often negatively) towards mobilization efforts by low-status disadvantaged groups. As a consequence, the ESIM model views mobilization to be quite a dynamic process itself within which identities, behavioural responses, epistemic repositories and social

realities are recreated. For instance, heterogeneous group members with varying degrees of identity salience collectively mobilize on behalf of their group, which may often be erroneously perceived as a more homogenous effort by a closely-knit group by out-groups, often in opposition or in competition. Depending on the out-group(s) response (which might be opposition or violence) things might escalate to a point where both in-group and out-group members realign their behaviours and social identities in a different manner to the point when mobilization efforts initially began.

1.1.3 Social identities as a source of collective violence

It was previously discussed how opposition and violence by out-group(s) as reactions to in-group mobilization can play an important role in social identity reformulation and associated social realities for groups. However, this relationship between identity formulation and intergroup violence is argued to be bi-directional within the social identity tradition. Violence can often be found intertwined with identity projects undertaken by identity entrepreneurs attempting to mobilize masses (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017). While a plethora of social groups exist around us enabling us to join, exit, relate, compare and obtain a unique understanding of who we are (Haslam & Turner, 1992; Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994) the success of identity entrepreneurs depend on strategically limiting this dynamism and invoking a "selected set of others" for comparison in mobilizing groups. For instance, an "other" who is more powerful and threatening to the collective self/in-group (Reicher, 2004) is capable of reformulating identities and associated epistemic repositories much more effectively enabling collective mobilization.

Actual violence from an out-group selected and presented for comparison by leaders, which might be in the form of structural and or physical violence, or simply a mere anticipation of a violent reaction is capable heightening in-group identities and increasing member attachment towards in-groups in a zero-sum manner where individuals become defined as interchangeable members of a common rigid category (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017). Increased attachment towards in-groups can result in greater overlaps between the "I" and the "We", resulting in strong emotions such as anger towards members of out-groups that cause harm / existential threat towards the perceived in-group (see Roccas & Elster, 2012). Under such objectified common category definitions, every member of the out-group (including protected categories such as civilians, children, and medical staff) becomes viewed

as a potential attacker whereas every member of the in-group (including the military) becomes viewed as potentially a victim or a defender. Such zero-sum definitions of identity diminish any other alternative interpretations as to who 'we' are, who 'they' are, and how 'we' interact. Alarmingly such rigid common category definitions are capable of setting in motion vicarious retribution, where avenging harm to any in-group member (including soldiers) by inflicting harm on any out-group member (including the aforementioned protected civilian categories) become morally justified (Roccas & Elster, 2012). Having a glorified sense of social identity which involves a more inflexible and uncritical attachment to one's in-group is said to worsen such effects of identity heightening, particularly increased intolerance towards out-groups and vicarious retribution (see Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Halevy, & Eidelson, 2008). Hence social identity seems an effective source of collective violence capable of shaping social realities and behavioural responses of groups, in turn able of perpetuating protracted conflict between them.

However, in order for in-group members to find meaning in their leaders' strategic identity projects and mobilize against out-groups, they often require finding resonance at the grassroots level. Remembering historic violence by out-groups in the form of structural and or physical violence can be one such means for in-groups in finding resonance for such identity projects by their leaders. In providing a few examples, Mamdani (2001) in his analysis indicates how colonial legacies of divide and rule contributed to more contemporary violence between the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi in Rwanda and similarly DeVotta (2000, 2002 & 2009) argues how divide and rule policies of the British later contributed in heightening ethnic identities and protracted conflict between the Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka. Violence strategically concealed within identity projects themselves by leaders is another means through which ordinary masses are able to find resonance with such projects drawing them in, in creating heightened rigid common category definitions. According to Elcheroth & Spini (2011) and Elcheroth & Reicher (2017), structural and indirect violence introduced through ethnocentric policies is one such strategic method capable of setting the tone within society (consequently creating the social realities) as to who is included, valued and taken care of by the state as opposed to who is not. Another strategic means by which entrepreneurs of identity are capable of embedding violence within their identity projects is by fostering the right conditions that would cause the general public to initiate violence on their own. They often tend to be in a position where they are capable of abusing their

hierarchical powers in generating self-fulfilling prophecies often supplemented by critical knowledge in the form of hate speech and rumours during critical turning points within a particular society's political history, mobilizing groups against each other, crystalizing their identities and mongering hatred in the process. Elcheroth & Spini (2011) and Elcheroth & Reicher (2017) further mention that in addition to facilitating structural violence and symbolic conditions that entice others in initiating physical violence, war-mongering policy makers are further capable of propagating violence simply by doing nothing to contain it. According to Wilkinson (2007), the severity and the repercussions of destruction caused by intergroup violence does not depend entirely upon the local conditions that cause the violent outbreak, but also on the capacity and the will of the leadership (the government) in containing it.

Hence social identities appear to be a powerful source of collective violence often harnessed by identity entrepreneurs in leadership positions as a source of power. Social identities (especially ethnic identities) provide such entrepreneurial mobilizers with fundamental group boundaries that can easily be made impermeable by instilling violence and fear. Actual violence or the mere anticipation of it has the potential in altering the practices we share with each other often ceasing previous healthy, complex and dynamic intergroup relations and creating new practices of exclusion. According to Elcheroth & Reicher, (2017), violence results in a radical reduction of identity where once, identities that were quite fluid and inclusive are being transformed into something that is quite frozen, exclusive and conflict exacerbating. Such reduction rules out any other explanations for provocation by an out-group such as miscommunication, poverty or other forms of oppression making the out-group perceivable as a constant threat to in-group survival. Not only does this set in motion a chain reaction resulting in unavoidable intergroup violence, it creates a self-sustaining set of reciprocal intergroup interactions that sustain violence making its initial root causes irrelevant for its understanding and resolution.

1.1.4 Social identities in conflict resolution

Within the previous sections it was discussed in detail how social identity is a valuable source of social power and a source of violence often utilized by leaders in furthering their political projects. Once violence is introduced within, it was stated how social identities and their associated realities are crystalized setting in motion necessary conditions for the

perpetuation of collective violence between groups. However, following the aftermath of protracted violence the focus seems to be upon the de-heightening of social identities and the reestablishment of more healthy and dynamic intergroup relations that had previously been abolished.

Within the early social identity based literature, especially within Muzafer Sherif's Robbers Cave Experiment discussed prior, apart from analysing conditions that foster intergroup conflict, conditions that reduce intergroup tension and foster intergroup coordination were also experimented with (see Sherif et al., 1988). Groups presented with competitive and frustrating situations, such as requiring to share resources, participation in competitive games to win commonly desired trophies, medals, and prices, were later attempted at amalgamation in regulating matters of mutual concern. For instance, participants initially put in situations of increased intergroup contact such as having meals, watching movies and participating for an experiment together were later presented with common superordinate goals such as seeking solutions to a drinking water problem, financing entertainment and assisting each other in coming up with creative solutions for a transportation problem, deriving reduced intergroup tension and increased corporation.

By this time "intergroup contact" seem to have established itself within the field of social psychology as a primary framework in understanding dynamics associated with prejudice and desegregation. Following concerns in the United States in relation to school, housing and workplace desegregation, the seminal work of Gordon Allport (1954) followed by others such as Cook (1985), Clark (1953), and Pettigrew (1969) in naming a few, seemed to have called for extensive contact in many walks of life as possible. Allport (1954)'s contact hypothesis states even profound antipathies between groups to be amended through regular interactions due to the 'law of frequency'. However, in order to optimize intergroup contact, the contact hypothesis calls on for four special conditions, which include equal status between groups, common goals, intergroup corporation and the support form authorities within contexts that contact takes place. The meta-analysis of more than 500 contact based research by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) is considered another mammoth contribution to this area further establishing intergroup contact as a means of reducing intergroup prejudice. More recent contributions to the "intergroup contact" hypothesis include Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, R., & Tropp, L. R. (2008), Scacco & Warren, (2018) which confirm heterogeneous group contact to produce less discrimination against out-groups in future

interactions. Pettigrew (1998) points out four main processes taking place and investigated within the intergroup contact literature relating to new learning's about out-groups, behavioural modifications, the generation of novel affective ties and a reappraisal of in-group norms to be responsible in reducing prejudice towards out-groups. The contact hypothesis seems to be conceptualizing increased contact and familiarization with different knowledge/meta knowledge repositories in reducing unfamiliarity-based anxieties, consequently improving positive intergroup relations with out-group members. However, despite transforming intergroup attitudes and stereotypes, the contact hypothesis has been recently criticised for sustaining existing hierarchies of oppression and discrimination (see Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005, 2007; Dixon, Tropp, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2010; Dixon et al., 2012).

Another identity-based conceptualization for conflict resolution that followed the "intergroup contact hypothesis" included the Common Ingroup Identity Model (see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Gaertner, Dovidio, Anasta-sio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). Some of the optimal conditions prescribed for successful intergroup contact to take place by Allport, (1954 & 1958) including equal status, common goals, corporative intergroup relations and equalitarian norms, were argued by Gaertner & Dovidio (2000) and Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, (2003) to transform social representations from a rather exclusive 'us' versus 'them' to a more inclusive 'we'. According to this Common Ingroup Identity Model, having conflicting groups identify across a more superordinate common identity results in the blurring of their unique group identities that previously made comparisons around issues of power and status, resulting in relations between members of the newly formed group cooperative, forgiving, and helpful.

A more recent social identity based conceptualization of conflict resolution and reconciliation within social psychology, seems to be viewed in terms of two fundamental contents of identity utilized by individuals in assessing themselves, which are agency & morality (Abele & Wojciszke, 2013). Due to heightened social identities and associated violence (both structural and physical) groups often face threatening conditions that limit or diminish their agency. Similarly, their morality is also at a all-time low due to heightened identities that force in-group members in viewing members of the out-group, especially protected categories such as civilians and children as enemies and justifying violence against them. According to Nadler & Shnabel (2008) and Nadler & Shnabel (2015) anxiety arising

due to such lower levels of agency and morality prevents conflicting parties from reconciling with each other, often perpetuating violence and competition for victimhood status against each other. They go on further in proposing a Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation (Nadler & Shnabel 2008, 2015) where the needs of agency and morality can be satisfied through an exchange of interactions. According to this model when perpetrators acknowledge the suffering inflicted by them on victims and offer an apology, they are capable of empowering victims and reinstating their inhibited agency. On the other hand, victim groups reciprocating this empowerment by forgiving perpetrators are capable of including them or reinstating them within their moral communities satisfying their morality needs. Such needs of agency and morality become quite applicable and intelligible in situations of mutual intergroup victimization, where all parties have assumed dual roles of victims and perpetrators (see Noor, Vollhardt, Mari & Nadler, 2017).

The current Transitional Justice discourse dominating post-conflict resolution, ensuring the smooth transition of societies previously in conflict into valuing more peaceful and democratic social relations (UN Secretary General, 2004; United Nations, 2010), seems perceivable from the social identity contents of agency and morality. Various mechanisms used within transitional justice including (but not limited to) truth commissions, reparations, institutional reform and criminal prosecutions seem to be aimed at improving agency and morality needs of victim and perpetrator groups with objectives of reconciling them. For instance, institutional reforms aimed at restructuring and democratizing previously oppressive social institutions are capable of empowering groups, and re-establishing morals of society in equally valuing all. Impartial prosecutions for human rights violation can create a deterrence effect on potential future manipulators and participants of identity projects. It also puts an end to cultures of impunity, increasing freedoms of individuals and their agency. Similarly, different forms of reparatory mechanisms (including official apologies) are capable of empowering individuals and improving their agency. Finally, all of these mechanisms relating to truth seeking, reparations, institutional reform and criminal prosecutions are all different forms of acknowledging harm committed during certain periods of identity heightening and associated collective violence within a particular context. Acknowledging harm according to the Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation, is in itself a means of agency deriving forgiveness, acceptance and morality.

It should finally be noted that regardless of agency, morality, contact, prejudice

reduction and or common group identification, social identity conceptualizations of conflict resolution always seem to be focussing on de-heightening crystalized identities into more fluid and complex identities that accompany a wide range of social interactions with out-groups.

1.1.5 The importance of contextual analysis

So far a rationale for adopting a social identity approach was established as to providing a more comprehensive understanding of human actors, their group affiliations and hence their intra and inter group interactions; as opposed to having a more limited deterministic conceptualization of human behaviour that is based on more evolutionary explanations and or civilizational differences associated with constructing social realities. As per the social identity approach [based on social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization (Turner et al., 1987) theories], it was reasoned as to how human epistemic repositories are highly contextual, immersed within social representations and social identities valued within particular social cultural and intergroup contexts (Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011; Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017). It was also noted how such epistemic repositories are in constant flux often reinforced by changing collective behavioural patterns, resulting in human social realities being highly volatile, fast evolving, time and context based endeavours. Hence within a social identity based conceptualization, individuals finding resonance and behaving are all part of a complex, dynamic, time and context bound social system where perceptions of in-group, out-group, ally or enemy, whom to compare with, what conditions are perceived to be (il)legitimate and to what identity based mobilization projects to align with are all highly context based.

Apart from the contextual dynamics surrounding individual creative capacities in perceiving, mobilizing and altering their social environments, demobilization and conflict resolution similarly seems to be calling for an important consideration of context. For instance, diverse contextual demands in relation to time, resources and political interests within different conflict settings are considered quite important within transitional justice, determining the type of focus (victim/perpetrator), the type of justice sought after (retributive/restorative), the variety of mechanisms implemented, and their perception, reception and success (see Avruch, 2010). Hence overall the field of transitional justice and reconciliation, seems to be advocating for a more inclusive perspective, taking into

consideration diverse voices and contextual complexities more seriously (see Madlingozi, 2010; Kagoro, 2012; Jones & Bernath, 2017).

In general, there also seems to be an epistemological call within the field of social psychology for context sensitive research work (see Bar-Tal, 2004; Elcheroth & Spini, 2015). As Vollhardt and Bilali (2008) and Vollhardt & Cohrs, (2013) argue, there seems to be a need for socially impactful research within the field of social psychology where data collected needs to be from real people living real lives. This is in comparison to commonly available experimental studies present within the field in more or less the global north, utilizing self-reported data from university students conveniently available for researchers, often attempting at extrapolating such findings to the real world in explaining intergroup attitudes, stereotyping, mobilization and conflict.

According to Elcheroth, Penic, Usoof, & Reicher (2019), this seems to be a result of adopting a more "simple approach" to studying complex psychological phenomenon especially in relation to mobilization and conflict. In avoiding further convolution of complex phenomenon the focus of such simple approaches are in making clear and simple categorizations of sides involved, establishing prejudice based causal explanations as responsible for mobilization (and violence) and finally producing policy recommendations based on such simplified direct causal relations. According to them the controlled laboratory settings provide ease of control in deriving such simplified causal reasoning, have readily available samples for mass testing and publication with minimum logistical and ethical challenges relating to communities in the real world that are harder to access (see also Barakat, Chard, Jacoby, & Lume, 2002; Wood, 2006). It is the view of Elcheroth et al., (2019) that such simple views obscuring complex contextual dynamics and multiple party interventions should be avoided and instead contexts and related processes which produce certain social categories and their fault lines to be closely studied as possible.

Hence with a call for more context-bounded, multi-sited, multi-iterative studies that make possible successful extrapolation within the field of social psychology, this thesis by adopting a social identity approach anticipates a comprehensive social psychological analysis of the differed perceptions that surround transitional justice mechanisms in post-war Sri Lanka. The country currently traversing a period of fragile transition from having nearly three decades of conflict to an absence of physical violence, seem to be officially attempting at de-

heightening ethnic identities between its majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil ethnicities (who were once at protracted war) through economic prosperity. However as discussed prior, the de-heightening of ethnic group identities and re-establishing complex behavioural patterns among former adversaries following conflict involves a lengthy and often complex process where diverse needs relating to identity content (such as agency and morality) are satisfied. During such periods of transition, physical and psychological wounds are still fresh, victimization and existential threat key components of identity content (see Roccas & Elster, 2012), shaping epistemic repositories influencing perceptions towards out-groups and notions of justice. On the other hand, the satisfaction of agency and morality requires often difficult acts of acknowledgement involving heavy penalties in the form of accountability and punishment, being reciprocated for forgiveness, which are all complicated and heavily contested. Groups on the other hand were also explained prior through the social identity tradition to belong to varying power hierarchies and to be extremely strategic enterprises driven by leaders acting as entrepreneurs of identity. Hence the types of transitional justice called for, actual mechanisms implemented (or disregarded), the perceptions built around them and the reactions groups have towards them (including potential future mobilizations) all tend to be a complex function of the social identity dynamics (discussed in detail prior) within a particular context of interest, which in this case is post-war Sri Lanka.

Hence this study aspires in performing such a comprehensive social psychological analysis by looking into key identity contents of attachment, glorification and victimization, as well as numerous identity related concepts such as collective action, collective efficacy, social cohesion and acknowledgment of collective violence. Such social identity based concepts are hypothesized by the authors to this thesis to highlight diverse contextual complexities in relation to restorative, social and retributive justice related policies in post-conflict Sri Lanka. Furthermore they are hypothesised in revealing differed motives surrounding such policies, differed ethnic group perceptions towards them and consequentially, collective mobilizations as reactions toward such policies determining future sustainable peace in the country.

The next section focuses on analysing and interpreting certain key socio-political and economic turning points within Sri Lanka's post-independent history in relation to theoretical underpinnings of social identity heightening. By doing so the differed social realities that have been faced by the ethnic Sinhalese and Tamils and the legacy of identity based politics

left behind, impacting their interpretations of current post-war transitional justice policies are to be emphasized for the empirical analysis conducted later.

1.2 The history of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict and its associated heightening of ethnic group identity

1.2.1 From colonization to independence and the emergence of ethnic nationalism

A historic analysis of intergroup relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils reveal ethnic relations to be much more tolerant especially a few decades prior to the conflict (see Silva & Hettige, 2010). Differences in religion and language between these ethnic groups seem to have been overcome through greater amounts of interaction, common practices and cultural fluidity. In fact, Silva (2002) referred to Sri Lanka as a Hybrid Island, a thriving multicultural society reflecting commonalities between its various ethnic groups relating to religious practices, language use and various other social practices including inter marriages. However, during the beginning of the 20th century, Sri Lanka's long standing history of multicultural heritage seems to have started to deplete rapidly, gradually being replaced by ethno nationalist sentiments from both Sinhalese and Tamils. In the early stages these sentiments seem to have been directed against Westernization and Christianization (Silva & Hettige, 2010). However, once decolonized and electoral politics set in motion, these nationalist sentiments seem to have been directed against each other, utilized by politicians from either side for political leverage, patronage and creating a system of clientelism leading eventually to the 26-year civil war (see Russell, 1982; Hoole, Somasundarum, & Thirinagama, 1989).

Ground conditions setup by 443 years of divide and rule colonial policies can be observed to be acting as predispositions in drawing in masses towards supporting such ethnocentric politics within postcolonial Sri Lanka. For example, in an era where employment within the public sector was highly desired, state employment along with its prerequisite tertiary education, seem to have been made to be disproportionately over representing for the Tamils by colonizers. Despite being a minority of only 11% during the time of independence, the Tamils comprised of 33% within the Ceylon Civil Service, 40% within the Judicial Service and represented 31% of total university admissions, clearly indicating this disproportionate advantage (DeVotta 2000, 2009). Following such historic deprivation, the aggrieved majority Sinhalese seem to have viewed independence as an

opportunity to reinstate their religious, linguistic and cultural dominance and consequently has resulted in them being drawn into preferring an ethnocentric system of political patronage, over liberalism, multiculturalism and democracy (DeVotta, 2002).

1.2.2 Ethnicity as socio-political power

It was discussed prior how getting people rallied around a common identity and a common objective increases their tendency to mobilize collectively and how identities tend to provide leaders with a valuable source of social power (see also Kawakami & Dion, 1993; De Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Simon, Trötschel, & Dähne, 2008). It was also discussed how ethnic identities provide politicians with fundamental group boundaries that can easily be made objectified and impermeable by instilling violence and fear. The subsequent illegitimate group conditions that arise through violence (or the potential threat of such illegitimate conditions arising due to a potential threat of violence) can put politicians in a favourable light as saviours in mitigating or changing such unfavourable conditions for groups (see Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017). On the other hand, internal divisions, especially divisions targeted at the inefficient handling of state affairs, can be suppressed and forgotten in the light of being saviours, while gaining temporary support in the process of mongering ethnic hatred. This is a concept known as diversionary war (DeRouen, 2000; Mitchell & Prins, 2004) where violence against an external party temporarily increases a government's popularity, suppressing any internal divisions through a process introduced by Russett (1990) as the "rally around the flag" effect. However, since a minute number of states such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France & Israel are capable challenging external states to war and maintaining successful internal political campaigns, others would have extremely short lived rally effects, amounting to the rising negative effects associated with war such as increased casualties, inflated defence budgets, international sanctions and military interventions. Hence as Tir & Jasinski, (2008) point out, domestic diversion seems to be a far more viable option for political leaders in targeting ethnic minorities in eliciting public support to remain in office.

Sri Lanka provides evidence for such domestic diversionary war politics when closely looking at its 'twin political uprisings' that took place during the 1970's. One of them refers to the Tamil youth uprising that took place in the North bearing separatist claims, later evolving itself into the LTTE's liberation movement, whereas the other refers to a Sinhalese

youth uprising that took place mostly in the Southern parts of the country emerging as a communist revolt against a failing state. Abeyratne (2004) who closely analyses economic roots behind these twin political uprisings state, fundamental flaws in Sri Lanka's post independent development policies to be at the centre of these uprisings. Despite having a strong economy at independence, restrictive trade and welfare policies without clear justification along with clientalist politics seem to have rapidly deteriorated Sri Lanka's economy. It seems to have failed to absorb a thriving youth both educated and healthy, a product of overemphasized welfare. As a consequence, poverty seems to have been redistributed among the entire population, gradually excluding individuals, specific minority group at first and later entire regions of the country such as the rural population from the country's development discourse. It is within such a backdrop that the twin political uprisings take place. However, as Nadarajah & Sriskandarajah, (2005) rightfully point out, a double standard has been maintained by the Sri Lankan state when dealing with these revolts. Even though proportionate to the years active, the Sinhala youth uprising has created the most destruction to human life and property, this movement has been pardoned and allowed to enter the country's mainstream politics as the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP party) (translated into People's Liberation Front). On the contrary, the LTTE has been branded as a terrorist group, later been annihilated in 2009. The differed treatment of these two revolts indicate a highly strategic state in numerous ways. Firstly, engaging in diversionary war against the Tamil minority has diverted the majority citizenry's attention from the state's failed economic policies. Secondly by using a terrorism rhetoric, political effort made by the Tamil citizenry have been systematically delegitimized. Thirdly this terrorism rhetoric has protected the state from criticisms both domestic as well as international, against human rights abuses that have been committed throughout the history of Sri Lanka's civil war. Thus, the heightening of ethnic identities through the strategic use of ethnic based violence has been commonplace throughout Sri Lanka's political history and utilized as a source of socio-political power.

1.2.3 Violent strategies in consolidating identity based power

During the initial stages, violence against the Tamil minority seemed more structural and indirect, reflected by some of the ethnocentric policies been implemented. Most influential ones out of them included the Ceylon citizenship act of 1948, state-sponsored colonization schemes throughout the 1950s, to the 1990s, the Sinhala only act of 1956 and

the 1971 policy of education standardization. In mentioning a few in detail, the Ceylon citizenship act brought forward to disenfranchise Indian Tamil plantation workers in preventing selective electoral defeats for Sinhalese politicians is said to have left over 700,000 Indian Tamils stateless (Hoole et al., 1989). The Sinhalese only act replacing Sinhala as the sole official language in the country, intended initially at discouraging Tamils from entering the much preferred state employment, is said to have later prevented any non-Sinhalese speaker from receiving justice within a court system, considered by many to be linguistic and economic discrimination (see DeVotta 2000, 2002, 2005; DeVotta and Stone, 2008). Apart from such structural violence, other strategic means of permitting the escalation of violence including rumour spreading and purposeful negligence seem to have been quite prevalent within Sri Lanka's post-independence identity heightening phase. For example, during the 1956 and 1958 ethnic riots, rumours of Sinhalese woman being raped and mutilated, and rumours of organized armed Tamil mobs approaching Sinhalese settlements seem to have been fabricated and widely circulated sparking severe retaliation from armed Sinhalese mobs (Vittachi, 1958). Reports are also available claiming local police made no attempt in controlling these raging Sinhalese mobs (Tambiah, 1997), and how government did not respond to requests for police reinforcements (Vittachi, 1958).

A similar subsequent ethnocentric undertaking can be observed among Tamil rebels. For instance, in his analysis of the politicization of trauma among the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, Ramanathapillai (2006) makes a clear case as to how the LTTE has been capable of transforming Tamil civilians into perpetrating violence by selectively using stories relating to the collective trauma of the Tamil populous. By repeating countless stories of rape, murder and displacement, the LTTE leadership, Pirabhaharan in particular was able to inspire (if not exploit) many to join the armed struggle. The use of political narratives here seems extremely selective because stories of Sinhalese protecting Tamils, Sinhalese been killed for protecting/standing up for Tamils or Sinhalese that were killed simply because they weren't conversant in Sinhalese due to their foreign education, weren't being included. Ramanathapillai (2006) states such narratives of solidarity and diversity could have easily been utilized in overcoming trauma of the Tamil people. Instead a new Tamil consciousness / identity were being created that justified violence against an oppressive majority sparking the three-decade civil war.

Hence a close analysis of post-independence political history in Sri Lanka indicates

identity entrepreneurship to be commonplace among both the factions, later leading to alterations in epistemic repositories and rather rigid social identities, contributing further to protracted violence in the coming future. Such historical alterations in epistemic repositories, often induced through both structural and physical violence have managed to communicate clear ideologies at both institutional and community levels, as to who 'we' and who 'they' are, and who needs to be 'taken care of' and who 'does not'. This thesis aspires in analysing such altered rigid epistemic repositories especially due to collective violence that might underlie the differed individual perceptions towards transitional justice policy between the two factions during current post-war times in Sri Lanka.

1.3 Sri Lanka's post-war social realities surrounding development, collective action and accountability

As discussed within the previous section in relation to Sri Lanka's post-independence history, the country's socio-political and economic discourse has historically been characterized by epistemic isolation and manipulation of its citizenry, where ethnic identities have constantly been utilized as epistemic capital in accumulating social power. Through the strategic use of violence in varying forms during different critical points throughout the country's history, ethnic identities have been heightened to a level where interethnic relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils that were previously found to be relatively inclusive and fluid, have now been transformed into more rigid, conflict exacerbating 'us' vs. 'them' relations that eventually resulted in a civil war beleaguering the country for 26 years.

It has now been 11 years since the war ended in 2009. The current period similar to Sri Lanka's post-independence era presents an important phase of historic transition where ethnic group identities and their interrelations remain a key determinant for sustainable peace. It was discussed prior how de-heightening ethnic identities and re-establishing interethnic relations during post conflict times often require a multitude of transitional justice mechanisms ranging from establishing truth, democratizing state institutions, reparations and accountability. It was also discussed how such mechanisms often entail hefty penalties in the form of prosecutions and compensations in satisfying agency and morality needs making them heavily contested among parties previously in conflict. In Sri Lanka, mass infrastructure development seems the sole reconciliation strategy officially adopted (Rajasingham, 2010, Saparamadu & Lall, 2014), despite claims made by different segments within the general public (from both

Sinhalese as well as Tamils) for transitional justice mechanisms addressing issues relating to democracy, power sharing, truth, missing persons, reparations, accountability and demilitarization in naming a few ("Final report CTF", 2017). Hence it is within such a current context of impunity and a rather jaded state focus on diversifying transitional justice, contributing to the continuation of heightened levels of ethnic group identity, that the implications of three post-war transitional justice policy related outcomes, which are development, collective action and accountability are being critically analysed within this thesis throughout the next sections.

Prior to introducing each transitional justice policy related outcome and various socio-political and economic discourses surrounding them, an important identity content which involves construals of collective victimhood (see Roccas & Elster, 2012), requires discussion and investigation, regarding their potential influence in shaping diverse perceptions and reactions towards such transitional justice policy outcomes analysed.

1.3.1 The potential impact victim consciousness may impose on post-war transitional justice outcomes and subsequent intergroup relations in Sri Lanka

During previous sections within this introduction, it was discussed as to how leadership from both sides to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict were quite successful in manipulating civilian epistemic repositories, hence altering their social realities to such an extent where heightened 'us' vs. 'them' relations between the Sinhalese and the Tamils became inevitable. It was also discussed, the role of varying forms of violence, real or imagined, structural, symbolic or physical that were frequently utilized, in altering civilian epistemic repositories and behavioural outcomes that eventually resulted in intergroup relations between the ethnic Sinhalese and ethnic Tamils, transforming from something that was historically quite fluid and inclusive into something that is presently quite rigid and exclusive. Regardless of the imagined nature or the actuality of violence, regardless of it being structural, symbolic or physical, the subjective psychological construals that individuals generate in relation to collective violence is referred to within the social psychology literature as victim consciousness or victim beliefs (Vollhardt, 2012; Noor, Vollhardt, Mari, & Nadler, 2017). Victim consciousness provides an important link between collective violence and the manipulation of epistemic repositories and subsequent associated intergroup behaviours. Since victim beliefs are subjective, not everyone reacts the same way towards objective forms

of collective violence, and as a consequence not everyone reacts the same way epistemologically and behaviourally towards each other. Hence the impact collective violence may impose on different individuals regardless of their group status may differ widely.

Now as mentioned previously, the research interests of this thesis pivots around the historical heightening of ethnic group identity and the subsequent impact such heightening imposes upon present intergroup relations between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamils in Sri Lanka following a thirty-year civil war. This continuous heightening of ethnic group identity is been evaluated against the perceptions individuals have with regards to three chronologically significant post-war transitional justice policy outcomes which are 1) state initiated and reconciliation oriented mass scale development, 2) collective action initiatives taken up by communities in redressing their post-war social justice related grievances and, 3) the general public's perceptions towards accountability measures for human rights violations that took place during Sri Lanka's recent tarnished past. In a nutshell individual perceptions towards restorative, social and retributive justice are been evaluated in a post conflict setting where almost seven decades of structural and three decades of gruesome physical violence once took place. It should be reiterated that regardless of the stark power asymmetries existent between the Sinhalese and Tamils, and the asymmetric nature of the conflict, both parties committed and were targeted by violence assuming dual roles of both the victim and perpetrator. Hence the collective victimization and the subsequent collective victim consciousness that is generated, influencing the perceptions that individuals have towards the aforementioned post-war policy outcomes, and their subsequent intergroup behaviours cannot simply be disregarded. As the literature has quite explicitly elaborated the effects of collective victimhood to often extend well beyond the immediate context of violence, even affecting relations with out-groups that had nothing to do with the ingroup's initial suffering (Vollhardt, 2012; Noor et al., 2017; Wohl & Branscombe, 2008), the study of such temporal extensions and subjective construals that often surpass hierarchical power relations between groups, has made it an interesting and essential endeavour to take up, within the study of post-war intergroup relations in Sri Lanka. Especially in relation to the diverse perceptions surrounding the post-war transitional justice outcomes analysed.

1.3.1.1 Factors influencing construals of collective victimhood

The research literature on collective victimhood has discussed many different factors that have been shown to influence the shared beliefs members hold towards their ingroup's victimization. Among them, the impact collective victimization that has been directly and personally experienced in the form of injury, loss of a loved one, destruction to property, livelihoods in naming a few (see Halperin, Bar-Tal, Nets-Zehngut, & Drori, 2008; Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, & Niens, 2006), have been of cardinal importance. Contrary to such direct experience, the pervasiveness of collective victimization has been known to impact individuals that identify with the in-group, indirectly. For example, getting to know of incidences where individuals have suffered from collective violence through personal acquaintance or from the media, have been proven to equally influence individual shared beliefs towards their ingroup's victimization (see Halperin et al., 2008; Manzi & Gonzalez, 2007). Hence it is possible for individuals to vicariously feel the suffering experienced by others despite having considerable geographic and/or temporal distances to the actual traumatic event(s) that affected their in-group. It has also been shown how individual construals of collective victimization might differ depending on whether the suffering was experienced directly or indirectly (see Elcheroth, 2006). The impact of such direct/indirect experiences of collective victimization are analysed within some of the empirical studies conducted within this thesis.

The possibility of in-group trauma to traverse time and space points out towards another obvious but important factor that can influence the significance individuals place upon their ingroup's suffering, which is the transmission of collective victimization. Vollhardt (2012) categorizes some of the research performed on collective victimhood transmission under societal (macro) and group (meso) level transmissions. Trauma narratives that are passed on through macro societal levels often tends to be part of a group's collective memory, frequently used by leaders in power to mobilize its members towards violence (see Bilali & Ross, 2012). It has also been shown for meso group level transmissions at the family level to shape awareness among offspring across several generations regarding their ingroup's victimization (see Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Litvak-Hirsch, Bar-On, & Chaitin, 2003; Roy, 2002; Waterston, 2005).

Societal processes underlying commemorations, memorials, political speeches, museums, and various forms of artistic expressions such as film and the media at the macro societal level are capable of creating a dominant societal narrative about the group's history of victimization. Temporal changes in such narratives often at critical turning points within a group's political history, might influence multiple generations diversely. For example, during the 1950's, during the initial stages of Sinhalese Tamil ethnic tensions, the official societal narrative that was propagated among the majority Sinhalese was a rather exclusive, conflict exacerbating outlook of the Tamil people. They were often portrayed as a barbaric ethnicity fighting for separatism at all cost that showed no mercy even for Sinhalese women and children. An analysis of the official Hansard quotes made in parliament throughout the 1950's to the 1990's make such portrayal of the Tamil people quite evident (see "Over two decades after", 2018).

However, following the cessation of the conflict in 2009 and the associated accusations on human rights violations by the military during the final phase of the war, the official narrative propagated by the state seems to have taken on a more inclusive note. While the victimization of the Sinhalese are still prominently acknowledged, the LTTE are portrayed as the sole perpetrators of the conflict while the Tamil people are framed as a special category of victims who were victimized by their own (the LTTE). The victory speech made by President Rajapaksa in parliament immediately following the end of the war (see Lankan TV, 2009) exemplifies the beginning of an effort taken by the state in construing an inclusive victimization narrative that is to be mass propagated during the years to come in post-war Sri Lanka. The impact such dominant societal narratives pose on individual construals of collective victimhood are also among some of the empirical analysis conducted within this thesis.

Another factor that has a potential impact upon construals that individuals generate regarding their group's victimization is the acknowledgement of their victimization. A lack in such acknowledgement have shown to result in heightened perceptions of in-group victimization and injustice among victims (see Hovannisian, 2007). On the contrary acknowledging in-group victimization at the macro societal level in the form of monuments, commemoration activities and or official apologies have shown individual victimhood construals to be minimized and to be quite important in societal processes of healing and reconciliation (see Ajdukovic & Biruski, 2008; Staub, 2008; Iyer & Blatz, 2012). The

improvements mentioned above in reconciliatory outcomes towards conflicting out-groups tends to be applicable not only for acknowledgements made by perpetrator groups (Alarcón-Henríquez, Licata, Leys, Van der Linden, Klein, & Mercy, 2010) but also for acknowledgements made by neutral third parties (SimanTov-Nachlieli, Shnabel, & Halabi, 2015). The social psychological dimensions of victimhood acknowledgment and reconciliation are explained within the Needs Based Model of Reconciliation proposed by Nadler & Shnabel, (2008, 2015) mentioned before. According to the model conflicting parties have distinctive psychological needs that are classified under two identity dimensions which are agency and morality. Perpetrator groups inhibit the agency of victims and as a result suffer a blow to their morality. Both agency and morality needs are satisfied when perpetrators offer the victims an apology and reinstate victim agency and when the victims reciprocate by forgiving the perpetrators and accepting them into their moral community. However official/societal acknowledgment of out-group victimhood often becomes extremely problematic due to the minimization of in-group victimhood and the maximization of in-group perpetration. The Sri Lankan state's defensive approach, for instance in the framing of Tamil liberation and the friction associated with Tamil commemorations mentioned before indicate practical limitations associated with such official acknowledgement of out-group victimization. The same can be assumed with regards to the reluctance of the Tamil political leadership to officially acknowledge the harm brought about by the LTTE on Sinhalese civilians. Hence, the acknowledgement of out-group victimhood at the individual level and its potential impact on post-war intergroup relations is another important aspect relating to collective victimhood studied within this thesis.

While some of the above mentioned macro societal factors have a potential impact on individual victimhood construals, more micro, individual cognitive processes such as social identification and social categorization seem to control the whole subjectiveness of an individual victimhood construal. These cognitive processes seem to determine the specific aspects upon which individuals pay attention to, of a particular group's victimhood narrative and also determine how strongly they react to such victimization. The process in which high identifiers tend to reduce social identities into 'us' vs. 'them' categories were discussed before. Within such a process a possibility exists where all members of the in-group including the self are perceived under threat by the out-group while all members of the out-group including civilians are perceived to be potential attackers. However not all individuals

think in such reductive conflict exacerbating terms. Some might be aware of multiple identities and associated categories that they and others simultaneously belong to, creating a greater overlap with members belonging to out-groups (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Some may be aware of common superordinate categories that might encompass the out-group (see Dovidio, Gaertnert, John, Halabi, Saguy, Pearson, & Riek, 2008). Some may even focus on more complex contents of their group's identity. For instance instead of blindly attaching themselves with a particular group's epistemic value systems and glorifying it, some may opt to attach themselves to groups based on critical understanding, and improving in-group value systems (see Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006). With groups differing in their histories, cultures and ideologies, group members might opt to focus on more positive aspects of the group instead of focusing on its collective trauma and victimhood (see Roccas & Elster, 2012). Due to the research interests of this thesis revolving around historical heightening of ethnic group identity, identity attachment as well as identity content tends to be analysed throughout the empirical studies performed. Hence identity attachment and identity content tends to be continuously assessed in relation to collective victimhood construals and perceptions individuals generate with regards to post-war outcomes studied throughout this thesis.

1.3.1.2 Different victimhood construal dimensions

In total, all of the above mentioned macro societal aspects and the micro individual aspects relating to identification and categorization are capable of impacting the subjective construals that individuals develop with regards to their ingroup's collective victimization. Among the individuals that develop such victimhood construals (place importance upon their ingroup's victimization), the social psychology literature proposes two main dimensions along which such construals can be classified (see Vollhardt, 2012 & 2009). The 1st dimension includes a reference point in time and it involves whether the conceptualization of victimization refers to a specific conflict (conflict specific victim beliefs) or whether it involves a broader historical context (global victim beliefs) within which the in-group was harmed. Some might have a much shorter reference point in time while some might consider more historical aspects of their ingroup's oppression. For example, among the Tamil youth the more current post-war structural aspects of their ingroup's harassment might be more salient whereas among the seniors, the physical violence during the civil war and the cumulative structural oppression following independence might be of greater significance

varying their temporal reference point. Siege mentality which is the perception that the entire world is against one's in-group (see Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992) is a good example of individuals having a more historic and global perspective with regards to their group's suffering. Such thoughts might not be limited to an oppressed minority. Schaller & Abeysinghe (2006) provide a good example of how diverse groups throughout the world might have a tendency to engage in such thought processes (Eidelson & Eidelson, 2002) that might exacerbate retaliation and violent conflict. By shifting the geographic frame of reference from Sri Lanka to South Asia they indicate how the majority Sinhalese are made to feel more threatened by the minority Tamils, who tend to be a majority throughout South Asia. These tend to be valuable examples of how different reference points with regards to in-group victimization might be present among anyone/ any group.

The 2nd dimension includes a scope or a comparison of suffering experiences in which the focus can either be solely upon the suffering of the in-group (exclusive victim beliefs) or include notions of suffering of others as well (inclusive victim beliefs). The most common form of thought following collective victimization tends to be exclusive or competitive victim beliefs where the focus tends to be on the uniqueness of one's ingroup's suffering (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008; Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008; Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012). Here, a groups' victimization may be considered as a resource where conflicting parties may compete against each other. Competition might arise as to who endured the most harm and whose victimization is the most legitimate. Moral and material resources may be at the disposal from 3rd parties to conflicting parties that succeed in claiming greater victimhood status (see Noor et al., 2012). Conflicting parties might also strategically make falsified claims of victimhood status in order to receive such aforementioned benefits and even avoid persecution. Exclusive victim beliefs have also the least success in resolving conflicts. Research indicate competitive victim beliefs to predict less trust and empathy towards the out-group (see Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008), less forgiveness (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, et al., 2008) militaristic attitudes (Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992), less collective guilt, and legitimizing committing harm towards out-groups in the present that weren't responsible for the ingroup's historic suffering (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008).

The least common form of comparative belief following collective victimization and the most anticipated for conflict resolution has been referred to as inclusive victim beliefs.

This involves the perception of similarities in the suffering experience with others including out-group(s) (see Vollhardt, 2015). Some individuals seem to be motivated by their victimization to assist others in alleviate their suffering, a phenomenon known as "altruism born of suffering" (see Staub & Vollhardt, 2008; Vollhardt, 2009b; Vollhardt & Staub, 2011). Inclusive victim beliefs have predicted increased willingness to forgive (Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, 2013; Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Doosje, 2015), reduced tendency to think competitively about the victimization experience (Adelman, Leidner, Ünal, Nahhas & Shnabel, 2016; Shnabel et al., 2013), increased tendencies to support inclusive leaders and speak out on behalf of other groups (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015), and predict solidarity towards out-groups who are not adversaries (see Vollhardt, Nair, & Tropp, 2016; Vollhardt, 2013; Vollhardt, 2015).

1.3.1.3 Victimhood construals in development, collective action and accountability

It is now quite clear that victim consciousness is a cardinal aspect of social identity content (Roccas & Elster, 2012), playing a major role in human perception of collective violence and subsequent social identity heightening processes. Despite collective violence being real or imagined, structural or physical, subjective victimhood construals determine the actual epistemic and behavioural responses individuals generate in relation to such collective violence. Hence it is the belief of us authors that victimhood construals relating to collective violence in Sri Lanka both past as well as contemporary, structural and or physical, real and or imagined, to play a major role in determining individual epistemic and behavioural responses towards transitional justice policies (both present as well as absent) during post-war times. Subseqntly contributing towards identity (de)heightening. Hence the aforementioned dimensions of time reference and scope giving rise to four possible combinations of victim beliefs which are global inclusive, global exclusive, conflict specific inclusive and conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs, are analysed in relation to post-war transitional justice outcomes within the empirical studies conducted throughout the thesis.

Within the initial empirical study in chapter 2, the perceptions different ethnic majority and minority group members in Sri Lanka have towards state initiated post-war development along with the likelihood of them voicing out their grievances collectively against development are analysed. The study also examines potential types of victim beliefs that are associated with these ethnic groups that might influence their reactions towards both

development as well as collective mobilization. Provided the asymmetric nature of the conflict in Sri Lanka, the authors hypothesize minority Tamils to possess more exclusive forms of victim beliefs such as conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs and global exclusive victim beliefs. Due to such strong exclusive construals towards their suffering, the minorities are hypothesized to react negatively towards development as inadequate, and to mobilize collectively more in comparison to the majority. The Sinhalese on the other hand owing to their relatively low collective victimization, are hypothesized by the authors to strategically possess more inclusive victim beliefs such as conflict specific inclusive and global inclusive victim beliefs. Due to such strategic inclusive thought processes and due to restorative justice being promoted by their own majority representative state, the Sinhalese are hypothesized by the authors to react more positively towards development and to mobilize less against it. Study 1 also considers the role of direct physical/structural violence against more indirect construals of violence transmitted through collective processes. Its influence on individual perceptions towards development and collective mobilization is performed by conducting a comparative analysis between individuals living in the former conflict zones and other areas that were least affected by conflict.

The second empirical study discussed in chapter 3, analyses collective action initiatives taken up by diverse majority and minority communities in post-war Sri Lanka especially in relation to satisfying their post-war social justice needs. Different factors ranging from individual instrumental concerns, communal climates, and ethnic grievances that can potentially motivate such diverse groups in voicing out their grievances collectively are been analysed along with potential impacts on future intergroup relations between the groups. For the minority Tamils especially for the ones residing within the former conflict zones all three factors relating to instrumental concerns, communal climates, and ethnic grievances are hypothesised by the authors to be important in galvanizing their collective mobilization efforts. Among numerous ethnic grievance related measures examined, placing a greater importance upon one's ethnic groups suffering as well as conflict specific exclusive victimhood construals are hypothesized by the authors to be quite important in collectively mobilizing the Tamils, especially with regards to their post-conflict social justice related needs. Greater the suffering, greater the importance placed upon the ethnic group's suffering and exclusive construals of suffering, motivating collective action participation. However for the Sinhalese, individual instrumental concerns are hypothesized to be more important for

collective mobilization over communal climates and ethnic grievances as they tend to be the advantaged majority in power.

The third and final empirical study discussed in chapter 4, focuses on one of the most contested form of transitional justice within Sri Lanka, which is accountability. Whether a mass socially propagated narrative of inclusive victimization, during post-war times, could impact different ethnicities diversely, especially in terms of their social realities surrounding accountability measures are been assessed. The study hypothesizes having an inclusive victimhood belief irrespective of the ethnic group one identifies with, to increase one's support for impartial prosecutions that are implemented both locally as well as through international support. The importance placed upon in-group victimization as well as acknowledging in-group crimes are utilized as mediators within this research model. The positive intergroup outcomes associated with inclusive victimhood beliefs are hypothesized to increase in-group crime acknowledgment and to decrease importance placed upon the suffering of ones own ethnic group, leading to increased support towards impartial prosecutions implemented both domestically and through international involvement.

Apart from the aforementioned empirical studies, this thesis through its analysis of individual victim consciousness within the Sri Lankan context makes the following contributions to the social psychology literature on collective victimhood (see Noor et al., 2017). Firstly, it studies victim consciousness at different levels when it focuses on individual victim beliefs as well as societal narratives massly propagated at a macro level. Secondly it focuses on the power asymmetries that exist between the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups while analysing their victim consciousness. Thirdly the studies focus on different temporal dimensions, namely historic victimization as well as the impact of the civil conflict, which is more recent. Fourthly the study considers victimization dynamically. The dual role of both victim and perpetrator by all parties to Sri Lanka's civil conflict are taken into consideration. The fifth contribution to the literature comes from the sample being driven from the global south diversifying findings within the collective victimhood literature.

Next, each post-war outcome and their surrounding socio-political and economic discourses impacting differed ethnic group perceptions, including the aforementioned victimhood construals will be discussed.

1.3.2 Post-war development and its implications on intergroup relations in Sri Lanka

1.3.2.1 An introduction to Sri Lanka's post-war development

Previously, the evolution of Sri Lanka's identity based politics were discussed in detail. The inefficiencies present in Sri Lanka's post independent development policy, particularly on restrictive trade and welfare policies that lacked clear justifications were mentioned. The continuous presence of clientalism or patrimonialism (see Moore, 1993; Fukuyama, 2014; Snyder, 1992) which involved the exploitation of state resources for private gains as well as their utilization for personal favours were also discussed. These in combination seem to have contributed to a failing state that gradually excluded specific minority groups at first, later expanding its exclusion to masses such as the country's youth and rural populations from economic prosperity. Instead of resorting to policy reform and accountability, the state seem eager in engaging in diversionary violence targeting ethnic minorities, transforming and heightening ethnic relations between Sinhalese and Tamils that eventually lead to a civil war that devastated the country for 26 years. Following the unilateral victory attained by state military on the 18th of May 2009, the Mahinda Rajapaksa regime in power at the time were presented with a valuable opportunity in ending this historic and vicious cycle of violence. By establishing effective transitional justice measures, democratizing state institutions and ensuring greater political independence to the North and East, the state possessed an opportunity in reintegrating the minority population back within Sri Lanka's socio political and economic discourse, de-heighten ethnic identities and provide minorities with some guarantee of "never again".

As Staub (2006), Fletcher & Weinstein, (2002), Hamber & Kelly, (2009) and many others emphasize, reconciliation following conflict involves a possibility for a constructive relationship between former perpetrators and victims (especially among ones that share the same geographic space). According to them it involves an intricate and continuous process rather than an end result that follows the cessation of violence. Due to such complexity there seems to be very little consensus on what reconciliation is, depending on historic, political, economic and sociocultural factors within a particular post conflict setting, and often revolving around mechanisms such as truth seeking, justice and reparations. Rajasingham, (2010) while acknowledging the above mentioned complexities associated with reconciliation, views Sri Lanka's post conflict challenges as twofold. According to her it

involves an immediate need in resolving humanitarian and human rights issues and in the long run, restoring democratic institutions and power devolution to the war affected North and East. Despite constant pressure from the United Nations, the European Union and the United States in resolving human rights violations especially during the final phases of the conflict, the Sri Lankan state seemed to have adopted its own home-grown approach towards reconciliation which was extensively rooted in mass scale infrastructure development.

In doing so, Sri Lanka seem to have relied heavily on its Asian neighbours and middle Eastern allies, mainly China, India, Pakistan and Iran just to name a few (see De Alwis, 2010, Rajasingham, 2010). These countries compared to the West were less demanding with regards to human rights concerns and seem to have adopted a position that intra-state conflicts were concerns of sovereign states themselves when it came to their provision of international assistance. As a result both during and following the civil conflict, the Sri Lankan state was capable of thwarting off Western pressures while simultaneously reaping international assistance on diplomatic, trade and military fronts from its afore mentioned non-Western associates. China being Sri Lanka's main ally at the time had also become its single largest lender by 2009, overtaking both the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank by lending the state US$1.2 billion for infrastructure development (De Alwis, 2010), large amounts of it being channelled towards rebuilding the conflict torn North East.

The Sri Lankan state's extensive focus on infrastructure development between the years 2007 and 2014 seemed to have stemmed from the political ideology of former president Mahinda Rajapaksa in transforming the country into an "Emerging wonder of Asia". During his term in office between the years 2005 and 2010, the president publishes three election manifestos targeting three presidential elections, out of which the initial two are incorporated within the country's official development policy framework and later implemented through the Ministry of Finance and Planning. An analysis of these policy documents/election manifestos provides a solid understanding as per the ethos of material construction adopted by the state during the years prior to as well as the years following the end of the civil conflict (see Ministry of Finance and Planning 2006, 2010 and Rajapaksa M, 2014). Along with the construction of major infrastructure projects such as an airport, harbour, coal power plant, railways and expressways etc. the focus also seems to have been around creating connectivity infrastructure including roads, electricity, telecommunications, information technology, education and health services throughout the island that would assist the general

public in reaping the economic benefits created through these mass infrastructure projects that were to be established. A highlight out of it all tends to be the proposed budgetary allocations for the development of the North and East (see sections relating to *Uthuru Wasanthya/Northern Spring* and *Negnahira Navodaya /Reawakening of the East* in Ministry of Finance and Planning, 2006) between the years 2007 and 2016 that amounts to a staggering Rs. Mn. 921,792. Out of which Rs. Mn. 724,336 was allocated for infrastructure development which was 78.57% of the total allocation.

1.3.2.2 The rationale for development in post-war societies

The emphasis on economic development in general and infrastructure development in particular seems to stem from the argument of trickledown effects of growth and development. Investing in public goods by states is considered extremely important within the field of economics in accelerating such trickledown effects, contributing to wealth redistribution, capital accumulation and equality in income generation in the long term (see Persky, Felzenshṭain, Carlson, 2004; Aghion, & Bolton, 1997). However, development, especially pure economic growth associated with neoliberal thought processes have historically been criticised for their dire side effects such as poverty, unemployment, inequality in income generation opportunities, social exclusion and environmental degradation (see Todaro & Smith, 2003), which has recently triggered notions of sustainability in development. The current focus as Seers (1972) states is more on creating the necessary conditions that help humans achieve their highest potential or as Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen (1998) would state, creating the conditions necessary in expanding human freedoms. Hence the current trends in development aren't solely focused on figures of gross domestic product or gross national product but rather on a long term process that is sustainable, environmentally cleaner and (with the introduction of the post-development discourse (see Nustad, 2001; Esteva, 1992) locally driven.

On the other hand, the rationale for an amplified zest on infrastructure development following conflicts appears to stem from the study of economic antecedents for intergroup conflicts. The games metaphor on intergroup conflict in particular declares hostilities between groups to be quite a logical occurrence depending on the scarcity of resources for such groups. While excluding more historic social cultural realities that influence intergroup relations and focusing on recent economic antecedents poses a potential danger in providing a

rather limited understanding of groups, their heightened social identities and conflict between them in general (see Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017 for further information), a plethora of empirical evidence seems to exist that associate poverty with ethnic group violence. For example Collier and Hoeffler, 2002; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Reynal-Querol 2002; indicate how poverty along with factionalized ethnicities and undemocratic polities can initiate civil conflicts within developing countries. Elbadawi and Sambanis, (2002) state how poverty can increase risk of civil conflict within contexts of mid-level ethnic diversity and how economic development on the contrary can defuse risk of conflict at any level of ethnic diversity. Even within the reconciliation literature, restorative justice seems to be preferred over retributive justice (Lambourne 2004) indicative of the difficulty for ethnic groups to simply forget, forgive and reconcile while thriving in poverty. Hence, economic development and poverty alleviation appears to have become an important aspect of post-war reconciliation often prioritized by development agencies, and an abundance of funding opportunities available for reconstruction and development of post conflict communities that neglect holistic needs of reconciliation (Brounéus, 2007; Cramer and Goodhand 2002; Simpson 1997).

1.3.2.3 Development within holistic reconciliation

There exist several risks with overlooking the holistic needs, especially the ethno social aspects of reconciliation. Firstly, present economic development rarely redresses past unequal treatments and human right abuses. Secondly as discussed before economic development is itself built upon the unequal distribution of resources and even though absolute poverty can be redressed in the long run, poverty in a relative sense never ceases to exist. Hence there always exists a possibility for civil wars to erupt due to economic opportunities let alone economic grievances (see Collier and Hoeffler, 2002; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Thirdly economic development provides very little guarantees for democratic transformation of state institutions (see Malaysia and Singapore as case examples in Slater, 2012). Hence disempowerments and heightened ethnic group identities arising from these ignored ethno social domains can very easily trigger renewed cycles of violence destroying reconstructed infrastructure and putting development initiatives to vain.

As a result the way forward advocated by many seems to be by incorporating development within post-war reconstruction and reconciliation rather than purely focusing on material growth. Within such an approach, formerly divided ethnic polities are encouraged to

pursue social and economic growth jointly. Ginty and Williams (2009) in particular state three ways in which development can be integrated within reconciliation. Firstly, development is to be combined with community healing and development by designing development programs to cater to grassroots participation and community empowerment. Based on Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, by making former conflicting parties jointly participate in changing their own destiny, it is assumed that they are capable of re-amending the social fabric that was disrupted through protracted conflict, with much ease. Secondly combining development with reparations for war affected communities is considered extremely important. With fewer resources available in functioning effectively, benefits of economic development in the form of reparations is considered essential for post-war communities, if reconciliation is to be seriously sought-after. Ginty and Williams state collective memories of violence to be the final important aspect to be incorporated within development. Acknowledging and understanding divergent perspectives to conflict becomes and essential precursor to reconciliation, hence investing on collective memories of conflict in the form of truth commissions and or other commemorative mediums (for example museums, memorials, art etc.) ensures the sustainability of development in the long run.

1.3.2.4 Differed perceptions on Sri Lanka's post-war development

Amidst the advocacy for such broader perspectives on post-war development, the rather narrow outlook where purely mass scale infrastructure projects are undertaken within Sri Lanka's unilateral peace process raises certain questions with regards to its sustainability in reconciling the aggrieved Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic polities. The risks of such physical developments continuing to heighten ethnic group identities, later feeding into renewed cycles of violence between these ethnic groups also appears a possibility. Apart from embracing development that was lacking for more than 30 years, the next section takes a closer look at the surrounding local socio-political and global context to Sri Lanka's mass scale (reconciliation oriented) post-war development initiatives and discusses potential reasons as to why different populations in Sri Lanka might have differed perspectives towards such physical development.

Firstly, the termination of Sri Lanka's civil war and its potential benefits including development reached its general public at certain costs. It resulted on one hand, in mass destruction including countless civilian casualties, and on the other, a loss in democracy. The

Rajapaksa regime seem to have mustered the political support required to defeat the LTTE by disabling certain democratic structures that kept a close watch on human rights violations and sought a negotiated settlement, (which on the other hand permitted the prolongation of the conflict for almost three decades). This included the dismantling of various national independent commissions such as the Constitutional, Police, Bribery and Human Rights commissions and keeping a stronghold on the activities of the media, local and international NGOs as well as other civil society organisations that essentially acted as civilian gatekeepers.

This gradual transition to a more centralized authoritative governance style accompanied by increased securitization and militarization, amidst a time of peace seem to have been disliked by many (including majority Sinhalese who denounced the Rajapaksa regime in 2015). It was amidst such a culture of impunity that a highly centralized and militarily driven development initiative was introduced throughout the country that rarely looked into the needs of the grassroots. Not limited to the conflict affected Northeast, the rural and impoverished Southern, Uva and or Sabaragamuwa provinces, the rights of even the vulnerable and marginalized living in the heart of the capital Colombo (especially among the majority Sinhalese) were reported to have been violated through land appropriation and other extra-judicial actions in the name of beautification, development and most importantly security (see DeVotta, 2010, 2013; Rajasingham, 2010, Saparamadu & Lall, 2014). The massive Chinese debts (amounting to around US$8 billion) accumulated by the Sri Lankan state due to its inability to diversify borrowing for development (resulting due to its bad humanitarian track record) had raised great concerns among the general public. The state's decision to convert such debt into equity by leasing out Sri Lankan land and infrastructure back to China had later lead to violent protests indicative of the general public's dissent over debt based infrastructure development in Sri Lanka (see "Protest over Hambantota port," 2017; Var, & Po, 2017; Moramudali, 2017). Unarmed civic protest not limited to issues relating to such development initiatives, but rather in relation to all walks of civilian life such as protests made against polluted water (see Jayatilleka, 2013), protests in opposition of a private pension scheme to be adopted by the government (see "Protests in Katunayake," 2011) and protest against acquired land (see Fernando, 2019), just to name a few were all been met with lethal force resulting in civilian deaths. Hence highly centralized and militarized development that was introduced within such a culture of authoritative

governance, suppression and impunity weren't preferred by all, especially by some of the Sinhalese dominant Southern constituencies of the country.

Secondly the plight of the minority Tamil & Muslim populations predominating the conflict ridden North and East seem to have been the direst in the hands of the state's infrastructure development initiatives guised in the name of reconciliation. The process being unilaterally introduced following the annihilation of the LTTE seemed highly centralized and militarized. Especially the involvement of the military and the competitive advantage they have over the locals in producing goods and services, particularly within the agriculture, livestock, construction and tourism sectors created problems for the locals who were trying to revive their livelihoods following a 26 year conflict. The locals had also complained of the influx in Sinhalese labour (alongside the military) working on mass infrastructure projects amidst high unemployment rates in the North (see ICG, 2012; Social Architects, 2012). The appropriation of land for creating High Security Zones for the military and establishing Buddhist religious structures had created a fear of 'Sinhalisation' of the region considered traditional homelands of the Tamil and Muslim minorities, raising serious concerns as to whether the dividends of development were truly reaching them. These populations also seem to have been missing out on the softer aspects of reconciliation (in relation to truth seeking, accountability and reparations) while they detested the lack of control over the harder aspects of reconciliation (in relation to reconstruction). These events seem to have been taking place amidst the minority, especially the conflict affected Tamils having a genuine requirement for reconciling with the majority Sinhalese (Herath, 2012). While the government seemed to have shown a candid interests in winning the hearts and minds of the minorities while reaping contributions to the national GDP by reconstructing former conflict zones, ignoring the softer aspects of reconciliation, especially with regards to accountability and the excessive control behind infrastructure developments have raised grave concerns with regards to the state's true motive behind such infrastructure development (see Rajasingham, 2010, Saparamadu & Lall, 2014).

Thirdly the presentation of infrastructure and economic development to the public in general seems to have been portrayed as help provided by a benevolent and responsible fatherly figure as head of state, to his children. Andi Schubert (2016) analysing the hetero-patriarchal logic of post-war nationalism in Sri Lanka, systematizes the staging of Mahinda Rajapaksa as the protective fatherly symbol of the nation, who has liberated the entire

country from the brutal terrorist LTTE and other neo-colonial conspirators (making inquiries to Sri Lanka's human rights violations) who is now ready to lead his children to a brighter future through rapid economic growth. Schubert makes this argument by analysing the constant and strategic use of children, women and youth within Rajapaksa's election campaigns including poster advertisements, television commercials, speeches as well as election manifestos (which were incorporated within Sri Lanka's development policy at the time).

1.3.2.5 Development as help and its ramifications on meta-stereotypes

When looking back at Ginty and Williams's recommendations, Sri Lanka's post war development seems rather inadequate in involving local communities in its planning and implementation. While it also fails to incorporate softer means of reconciliation in the form of provisions for reparations and preserving collective memories deemed necessary by communities exposed to conflict, the development seems rather forcefully imposed upon them. This forceful imposition of development especially its portrayal as help seems to have the potential in re-heightening ethnic group identities, losing its primary objective which is to de-heighten conflicting ethnic identities, and to reconcile communities through economic prosperity.

For instance, it would be quite common to assume that the conflict affected North and Eastern Tamil and Muslim minority communities to feel grateful towards the majority Sinhalese (represented) state for providing infrastructure development and economic prosperity that lacked the region for over 30 years. However, as Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, and Penner (2006) state, the social psychological dynamics related to intergroup helping and their associated perceptions can never be simplified into needs and resources, and the assumption that the recipient feels grateful towards the helper to always apply. The human tendency to socially categorize (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987) and positively distinguish one's own group over others tends to be an important aspect of one's social identity. In the process receiving assistance from a superior group can poses a threat on the positive distinction of a particular individual's social group and social identity, invoking negative meta stereotypes (see Wakefield, Hopkins, & Greenwood, 2013) and preventing group members from seeking critical assistance. In stating an extreme example, villagers in sub-Saharan Africa have refused to unload their own

consignment of emergency aid unless they received payment during times of severe famine (see Carr, McAuliffe, & MacLachlan, 1998). The Intergroup Helping as Status Relations model (IHSR) proposed by Nadler (see Nadler, 2002; Nadler & Halabi, 2006), provides a sound theoretical base in identifying the relationship between intergroup help and the heightening of group identity. According to this model intergroup help is distinguished between autonomy oriented and dependency oriented help. Autonomy oriented help involves the provision of necessary tools or processes required by recipients in empowering themselves to solve their own problems whereas dependency oriented help involves providing the recipient with a complete solution. According to this model hierarchically lower status groups prefer seeking autonomy oriented help from hierarchically higher status groups as they induce less negative impact upon their group's collective identity (due to lesser negative distinction of their group). The Defensive Helping Model introduced much later by Nadler, Harpaz-Gorodeisky, and Ben-David (2009) describes how higher status groups may strategically use dependency oriented help in a socially acceptable but potentially defensive manner in maintaining positive distinctions against lower status groups. Since such defensive help are targeted at prolonging the dependency of lower status groups upon the higher status group, the help provided often tends to be independent from the needs of its recipient.

1.3.2.6 The empirical study

The 1st empirical research study of this thesis analyses the differed perceptions held towards Sri Lanka's post-war restorative justice policy by varying ethnic groups. By doing so the study gauges ethnic identity (de)heightening potential of state reconciliation oriented development initiatives. It further analyses collective mobilization as a potential reaction towards development policy investigating the impact of such policy on future intergroup relations between the former parties to conflict.

Within a previous section on social identities and conflict resolution, it was discussed how transitional justice mechanisms aim at restoring agency and morality needs of victim and perpetrator groups (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008 & 2015). Economic development in the form of reparations similarly aims at restoring victim agency by providing them opportunities for rebuilding. As per Ginty and Williams (2009) conceptualization, reconciliation oriented development is more effective when integrated with participatory community healing,

reparations and preserving collective memory. Especially by letting diverse communities participate, interact and take ownership of their own development and healing, it was stated how processes such as intergroup contact (Allport, 1954) and superordinate identities (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Dovidio et al., 2003) can result in individuals being familiar with diverse meta knowledge repositories subsequently leading to de-heightened ethnic identities.

Development policy in Sri Lanka has historically been intertwined with identity politics. It has been clearly argued prior on how Sri Lankan development policy has frequently been clientalist, often utilized as a form of structural violence against minorities, ultimately instigating a diversionary civil conflict that masked state inefficiencies involved with such policy. Inflated defense budgets and halted development have often been ascribed on minority uprisings. Now following the war, despite gross human rights violations, disproportionate funding for development especially in the war-torn Northeastern parts of the country seems the sole reconciliation strategy. Hence historically both the absence as well as the provision of development in Sri Lanka has been at the centre of ethnic identity politics heightening ethnic identities and sparking civil conflict.

It is this identity (de)heightening potential of post-war infrastructure development for the diverse ethnic communities in the country, and its implications for future intergroup relations between them, that is been analysed by empirical study no 1. In the process the study takes into consideration the following concepts. 1. It considers the (in)adequacy of mass infrastructure development and its trickledown effects to facilitate agency for the diverse ethnic groups amidst its top-down initiation, heavy militarization and lack of local community ownership. 2. Provided the unilateral implementation of infrastructure development by the majority ethnicity represented state, the study comprehends the possibility of ethnic groups especially the minorities, perceiving development as dependency oriented help in accordance with the Needs Based Model of Reconciliation (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008, 2015). 3. The possibility of development being perceived as being handed over by a triumphant majority invoking negative meta-stereotypes is another potential conceptualization.

While the study examines identity heightening potential of Sri Lanka's reparative justice policies based on positive and negative perceptions invoked through above mentioned

conceptualizations, the study also considers collective mobilization as a possible reaction, having implications for future intergroup relations between ethnic groups. Provided collective mobilization to be associated with subjective states of injustice (Runciman, 1966; Walker & Smith, 2002), group-based deprivations (Smith & Ortiz, 2002), and social identification (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Development policy being construed as imposed, inadequate, and negative meta-stereotype invoking is hypothesized through the study to fuel collective mobilization.

Provided the historic structural and physical violence prevalent within a post-conflict society such as Sri Lanka, the study conceptualizes victimhood construals to be important contents of social identity influencing individual perceptions towards development as well as collective action participation. Due to deep-rooted feelings and competitive contestations involving unfair treatment that is associated with exclusive construals of victimhood beliefs (Pennekamp, Doosje, Zebel, & Fischer, 2007), the authors to the study hypothesize exclusive victimhood beliefs to be associated with negative perceptions towards development and greater tendencies in collective action participation. On the contrary with more positive pacific intergroup outcomes associated with inclusive victimhood construals (Vollhardt, 2012 & 2015) it is hypothesized to create more positive perceptions towards development and reduced tendencies for collective action. The study also performs a differential analysis of the three concepts analysed, which are development perceptions, collective mobilization and victimhood beliefs based on ethnic majority minority status and conflict exposure. With more hierarchical power difference, collective victimization, and the post-conflict needs prevalent the authors hypothesize greater negative perceptions towards development, greater collective mobilization and greater exclusive construals of victimhood to be prevalent among minorities and inhabitants of the former conflict areas. The actual empirical study is described within chapter 2 whereas more information on the methodology of the study can be found within chapter 5.

1.3.3 The post-war collective action drive and its implications on intergroup relations in Sri Lanka

1.3.3.1 Sri Lanka's post-war collective action boom

Previously, Sri Lanka's mass scale infrastructure development initiatives undertaken during Mahinda Rajapaksa's presidency and its incorporation within Sri Lanka's unilateral

peace process were described along with potential reasons as to why such initiatives might have been rejected by the general public. President Rajapaksa ceded power on his 3rd attempt to office and was replaced by Maithripala Sirisena a common candidate that went on later to form a coalition government in 2015. The reasons behind the fall of Rajapaksa as per the reasoning of Weerawardhana (2015) are threefold. Firstly, the confidence of Tamil and Muslim minorities in the conflict torn North and East seemed to have shattered due to their grievances associated with the regime's rather imposed victor's peace. Issues surrounding the militarization and securitization of the North and East, the enforced disappearances, issues relating to land grabbing, the culture of impunity maintained along with the failure in enforcing the 13th amendment essential for the democratic functioning of provincial councils in the North and East were discussed within the previous section on Sri Lanka's rather imposed post-war development oriented peace initiatives. Secondly, while the public in the Northeast were concerned with issues relating to democracy and transitional justice, the majority Sinhalese dominant South seemed more concerned with issues relating to good governance of the country. Extra-judicial acts implemented by the state in the form of intimidations, assaults, disappearances, killings, and surveillance of individuals that were critical of the government, the censorship of the media and its despotic and nepotistic implementation of the people's mandate were disliked by many in the South. Amidst all this suppression, the rise in cost of living attributed to the economic mismanagement by the state caused many Sinhalese in the South to lose faith in the Rajapaksa regime. Finally according to Weerawardhana (2015), the mismanagement of foreign affairs, especially with India, the European Union and various Islamic States resulted in tremendous foreign pressure being imposed on human rights and economic fronts that lead to the general public detesting the Rajapaksa regime.

It is amidst such a culture of despotic impunity that President Maithripala Sirisena and his coalition government (which was another majoritarian Sinhalese represented coalition that) gets elected into office in 2015 based on promises of good governance, transparency and serious commitments towards reconciliation. The implementation of the 19th amendment to the Sri Lankan constitution by this coalition immediately after being elected into power saw a substantial dilution in power previously held by the Executive. It's seeking of the removal of martial law and re-establishing the Constitutional Council and its various Independent Commissions such as the Human Rights Commission, the Election Commission, the National

Police Commission and the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption in naming a few, (previously disbanded by Rajapaksa) helped immensely in the progression of democratic governance in the country. While an independent Office for National Unity and Reconciliation was established under the purview of a former President (Mrs Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga) and a National Policy on Reconciliation & Coexistence in 2017, an Office on Missing Persons in 2017, and an Office for Reparations in 2018 followed (see "Office for national unity", 2018), blooming some hope of retribution in the hearts and minds of the conflict affected minorities, the implementation of a Right to Information Act along with increased press freedoms saw an increase in transparency and peoples' freedom of expression. This increase in people's freedoms in general and participatory democracy were further highlighted by an increasing wave of collective action initiatives that erupted throughout the country which were notably absent during the times of the Rajapaksa regime.

For instance, within a relatively higher culture of suppression, surveillance and impunity during the previous regime, unarmed civic protest (especially in the south among the majority Sinhalese) were met with lethal force of the tri forcers and police resulting in frequent civilian casualties. For example, protests held at the Katunayake Free Trade Zone by thousands of workers against a pension bill (perceived to be unfair) proposed by the state were fired using live ammunition by the police killing one protestor and injuring many (see "Protests in Katunayake," 2011). Similarly, another civil protest by locals demanding access to clean drinking water were fired at using live ammunition by the Sri Lanka army killing three including a 17-year old school boy (see Jayatilleka, 2013) raising grave concerns over peoples freedom of expression. Protests in the minority predominant North and East were almost non-existent provided the recent conclusion of the civil war, its mass destruction and the militarization of the area.

However, following the (rather relative) democratic transition in power to the Sirisena lead coalition regime in 2015, the number of protests in the country, especially protest in the North and East, particularly with regards to transitional justice, were at an all-time high since the cessation of the war in 2009. In order to provide a few examples, civilian protests that demanded the state in releasing land appropriated by it and its military were reported from Mullikulam in the Mannar district (within the Northwestern province of Sri Lanka) see (Wickrematunge, 2017b) and from Keppapulavu and Mullaithivu in the Mullaithivu district (within the Northeastern province) (see Fernando, 2019). These protests by small civilian

clusters in the North later drew widespread support from other parts of the country including the South in the form of solidarity protests by Muslim and Sinhalese community based organizations (see Fernando & de Silva, 2017). On a more serious and rather alarming note, protests by families of the disappeared were carried out in various parts of the country including the North, the East and the capital Colombo in the West (see Watchdog, 2013; Fernando, 2017; Fernando, 2018) amidst obstructions, intimidations, detentions, and surveillance by the state and its armed forces (see Fernando, 2017b). Certain protest on such claims of transitional justice had even passed the 365-day mark (Fernando, 2019b), some even continuing for more than 700 days (Fernando, 2018b), amidst great costs for their participants. These were often women protesting beside roads, braving adverse weather, challenges to livelihoods, and caring for their children and elderly. These protests were also taking place in the war torn North and East, which were still agonizingly rebuilding from the disruptions caused to its social and economic fabric. Even though martial law had been annulled, the Prevention of Terrorism Act was still in effect, granting authority to the executive (and its armed forces) in supressing activism for indefinite periods of time (and without judicial supervision) on the premise of preventing terrorism. Amidst such state dominance and intimidation, certain collectives had acquired the communal strength in order to take matters into their own hands. For example, a fisherman's community of around 300 individuals from the Iranaitheevu twin islands in the Northern Province (despite the lack of a solid response from the State for their appeals) had sailed out and reclaimed their native islands that had been forcefully occupied by the Sri Lanka Navy (see Fernando, 2018c). It is also noteworthy that despite the current Sinhalese dominant state's (rather relative) democratic style of governance (in comparison prior to 2015), its response to initiatives by collective masses had always been rather suppressive, even towards collective protests conducted in the South among the majority Sinhalese. For instance Protests carried out by university students and doctors opposing privatizing education in Colombo ("Anti SAITM protest," 2018), protest carried out by farmers in Anuradhapura against scarce irrigated water (required for cultivation) being granted to a private bottled water company ("Tension in Thambuttegama," 2018), and recent protests in Hambantota against the state's decision to lease out/sell Sri Lankan land and infrastructure back to China ("Protest over Hambantota port," 2017) had all been resisted by the state in the form of injunction orders and police brutality.

It was amidst such a context of continued suppression by the state towards its collective masses irrespective of ethnicity and it's rather subtle continuation of identity based politics (in comparison to the rather direct Sinhala Buddhist nationalistic approach adopted by its predecessor) in the form of being less attentive towards minority transitional justice needs and putting critical issues relating to participatory governance for minorities (such as devolution of power) in the backburner, that stimulated the authors train of thought as per the chronological importance of this collective action boom within Sri Lanka's post-war political discourse. Provided the rather dynamic nature of collective action initiatives themselves, where collective acts by different crowds (for example acts between protestors and law enforcement) are prone to differed interpretations leading to renewed psychological, behavioural and social outcomes as rightfully emphasized through the Elaborated Social Identity Model of Crowd Behaviour (ESIM) (see Drury & Reicher, 1999; Drury & Reicher, 2009; Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010), the plethora of motivators readily available for selectively mobilizing masses in Sri Lanka and the country's political discourse characterized by historic, strategic, diversionary based ethnic violence that has the capacity to convert a genuine peaceful demand for securing fundamental rights into a full-fledged protracted civil war, has inspired two main questions in the mind of the author. What factors motivate collective action participation for the different ethnic groups in post-war Sri Lanka and what implications do such participation hold for future identity heightening and intergroup relations between these ethnic groups?

1.3.3.2 The role of social identity and identity based grievances in collective action

Within this analysis, collective grievances associated with individual ethnicity are conceptualized to play a cardinal role in fuelling their decision in partaking collective action initiatives for the betterment of their lives. The collective action research literature that is based on Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), explain collective action to be most plausible when individuals categorize themselves as members of a disadvantaged group and collectively identify themselves with this group. It goes on further in explaining three other socio-structural variables relating to the impermeability of the group's boundary, the illegitimate, and unstable nature of the group's current circumstance to further satisfy conditions necessary for these individuals to engage in collective acts on behalf of their group, for the betterment of it. According to these SIT and SCT theories, the general

tendencies people have in relating themselves with the positivities of their social groups tend to be the reason as to why they associate with such social groups in the first place. When group boundaries are permeable, it permits members to leave these groups whenever their collective identities are threatened and whenever they require improved group status with increased positivities. Impermeable group boundaries on the other hand (such as one's ethnicity determined at birth) provides no such means of exit, forcing group members to make the best out of their circumstances, one option being to engage in collective efforts to negate unstable, illegitimate group deprivations. Kawakami and Dion (1993), De Weerd and Klandermans (1999), Simon, Trötschel, and Dähne (2008) include a few examples for contributions within the collective action literature that illustrate this relationship between deprived group identification and the tendencies for collective acts.

As highlighted before during several occasions, provided Sri Lanka's post-war socio-political context, where ethnic identities have been constantly heightened through historic, ethnic based structural and physical violence; the three decade asymmetric civil conflict and the emergence of the dual victim and perpetrator identities; the victor's peace, culture of impunity and the collective cry for transitional justice; individuals residing in mostly ethnically homogenous community clusters; the importance individuals place upon their ethnic group identity in making sense of their unequal and illegitimate collective grievances becomes extremely important when predicting their collective efforts for change. Hence the reflection of ethnic grievances through ethnic group identity salience is hypothesised to be an important factor in determining collective action participation especially among the aggrieved Tamil population.

1.3.3.3 Multiple identity contents: a focus on glorification & victimization

More recent work on identities and their impact upon intergroup outcomes however indicate the importance of considering the role of multiple identities, multiple modes and multiple contents of social identity (see Roccas & Elster, 2012). In continuation with the aforementioned understanding of identification, deprivation and collective action, people strongly identifying with their social groups have been known to react quite negatively when faced with in-group threat. For instance individuals have been known to react with emotions of anger (Stenstrom, Lickel, Denson, & Miller, 2008), desires of vengeance (Bar-Tal, 2003;

Lickel, 2012) and endorsement of aggressive policies such as militarization and war (see Eidelson, 2009; McCleary, Nalls, & Williams, 2009) in negating out-group threat.

However not all react in such aggressive ways. Some tend to be aware of multiple identities and associated categories that they and others simultaneously belong to, creating greater overlap with members belonging to out-groups (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Some are aware of common superordinate categories that might encompass members of out-groups (see Dovidio, Gaertnert, John, Halabi, Saguy, Pearson, & Riek, 2008). Some even differ in their focus on specific contents of their ingroup's identity. For instance Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, (2006) and Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Halevy, & Eidelson, (2008)'s work on glorified nationalism, where the effect of blind, inflexible and uncritical attachment to one's in-group often termed blind/pseudo patriotism versus critical loyalty towards one's in-group, viewing it as imperfect and constantly striving for improvement, often termed constructive/genuine patriotism has been consistently examined to lead towards differed intergroup outcomes. Glorifying in-group identity has often being known to legitimize violence against out-groups (Leidner, Castano, Zaiser, & Giner-Sorolla, 2010; Roccas et al., 2006, 2008) whereas more complex representations of in-group identities have been known to tolerate out-groups and be less biased towards in-groups (Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Brewer & Pierce, 2005; Schmid, Hewstone, Tausch, Cairns, & Hughes, 2009).

Since collective initiatives for change range from more simple awareness raising, petition signing and voting activities to more disruptive forms such as strikes, riots and even bombings (Wright, 2009); and as stated before according to the Elaborated Social Identity Model of Crowd Behaviour, where collective acts tend to be dynamic in nature continuously reciprocating and leading towards novel psychological, behavioural and social outcomes; provided Sri Lanka's history of ethnic identity heightening, leading towards protracted conflict; and the country's history of politicizing trauma, where selective narratives of trauma and victimization have been utilized in mobilizing civilians into perpetrating violence against out-groups (see Ramanathapillai, 2006); individual salience in glorified contents of their ethnic identity is conceptualized to be cardinal in fuelling their collective efforts for change. In other words glorification of ethnic group identity is considered an important aspect of ethnic grievances stimulating individual collective acts for change.

Continuing along the notion of "with what contents of group identity do people identify with", various groups seem to hold differed group dynamics ranging from their demographics to their history, culture, and ideologies held (see Cohrs, 2012). Focusing on contents of group identity relating to historic and or contemporary victimization and its associated trauma has extensively been studied within the collective victimhood literature (see Vollhardt, 2020; Vollhardt, 2012; Noor, Vollhardt, Mari & Nadler, 2017). While not all in-group members may perceive their present day grievances as relevant and consequential to historic victimization, continuing to focus on more positive aspects of their group's history (Vollhardt & Nair, 2018), the ones that actually do consider historic collective victimization as salient have shown to engage more in behaviors that strengthen their in-group, such as helping in-group members that are in need (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). According to the appraisal theory approach of collective victimhood (Leach, 2020), people continuously appraise their current in-group needs in relation to their collective victimization and as a consequence make appraisals as to whether the groups victimization can be managed or not. Accordingly coping strategies are implemented which may include collective efforts for reparation or retribution. Hence the importance one places upon one's in-groups victimization when comprehending the group's current needs, is conceptualized to play an important role in mobilizing for change.

Mentioned in detail within the previous section on "Potential impacts of collective victim consciousness …", victim beliefs held by individuals in the form of global, conflict specific, exclusive and inclusive have been known to be accompanied by a wide spectrum of emotional and behavioural outcomes towards out-groups. For example, global exclusive victim beliefs which is an understanding that one's in-group has been historically victimized by outgroup's particularly within the Palestinian context has been associated with less willingness to forgive and trust members of out-groups (Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008) and a decrease in collective guilt and an increase in legitimizing victimization of Palestinians (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). On the contrary inclusive victim beliefs which is an understanding that out-groups have suffered similarly to one's in-group has resulted in a phenomenon named "altruism born out of suffering" which is a tendency to support and help others alleviate their suffering (Staub & Vollhardt, 2008; Vollhardt & Staub, 2011) and even engage in collective action in support of and on behalf of such aggrieved out-groups (Vollhardt, 2010). Provided more recent qualitative conceptualizations of collective

victimhood that go beyond the comparative dimensions discussed before in exclusive and inclusive forms of victimization, seem to be revealing greater complexity in how people think about their ingroup's victimization and its intragroup implications. Vollhardt & Nair (2018) and Jeong & Vollhardt (2021) indicate how seemingly opposite, negative and positive experiences of collective victimization can be simultaneously experienced by people. For instance thinking about both the ingroup's vulnerability, and also about its resilience and strength in challenging such vulnerabilities. The positives according to Vollhardt & Nair (2018) can be conceptualized as coping mechanisms where the maintenance of cultural and religious identities, rebuilding communities, and in-group solidarity can all be seen as problem-focused coping effects of collective victimization. Provided such coping and intragroup solidarity effects involving collective victimhood experiences, it is the authors view that rather exclusive and inclusive construals of collective victimhood to similarly incorporate varying levels of problem-focused coping, in the form of collective mobilization.

Such conceptualizations make subjective construal of in-group victimization an essential component of ethnic grievances articulating the author's train of thought as important motivators inspiring collective acts for change in different ways.

1.3.3.4 The role of community climates in collective action: a focus on social cohesion and efficacy

Secondly apart from ethnic grievances, the author considers the communal climate within which individuals collectively organize, to play a substantial role in influencing their decisions in taking part in such collective action initiatives. Not all individuals who perceive their group situation as illegitimate organize themselves and protest violently demanding justice. In fact some people collectively do very little despite their anger towards their ingroup's unjust situation.

1.3.3.4.1 Collective efficacy

Resource mobilization theorists such as McCarthy & Zald (1977) and Klandermans (1984, 1986) state collectives (referred to as quasi-political organizations) to be quite strategic in their approach and to be quite effective in mobilizing resources. Hence according to such an understanding of collectives, rather than being a passionate reaction against injustice, collective acts seem to be extremely strategic responses, often taking into

consideration the pros and cons of such collective actions, striving to minimize losses and maximize gains for the group. In line with such reasoning, individual participation for collective initiatives for change seem to be governed by such individuals shared perceptions of group efficacy in achieving goals relevant to them, resolving collective grievances through unified efforts and transforming the group's destiny (see Mummendey, Kessler. Klink, & Mielke, 1999; Bandura, 1995, 1997; Drury & Reicher, 2005; Reicher, 1996, 2001).

As a result collective efficacy is conceptualized within this study to perform a vital role within communal climates in influencing individual decisions in participating communal efforts for change. Being studied within numerous collective settings including performance among diverse sports teams (Greenlees, Graydon, & Maynard, 1999; Watson, Chemers, & Preiser, 2001), goal achievement in enterprises (Jung, & Sosik, 2002; Goddard & Salloum, 2011), academic achievements in students (Bandura, 1997; Goddard 2001, 2002; Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2004) and wellbeing among communities in relation to health (Cohen, Finch, Bower, & Sastry, 2006), social support (Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999) and reduced crime rates (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Mazerolle, Wickes & McBroom, 2010), collective efficacy has been proven to improve diverse outcomes within such collectives. Grounded in Bandura (1997)'s social cognitive theory, collective efficacy involves a group's shared belief in its capacity in organizing and executing certain courses of action necessary for the achievement of desired goals. As a result individual members of groups that encompass higher collective efficacy beliefs have been known to embrace collective tasks with higher levels of enthusiasm and to be persistent in applying effort demanded by such tasks. Provided the different communal climates distributed throughout Sri Lanka, some of them being detached from centralized social structures for decades (due to their rural geographic positioning, poverty stricken, conflict ridden nature), receiving very little attention from the state, local and international NGO's whereas others have received greater support, such communities shared beliefs in their conjoint capabilities in achieving goals are bound to vary significantly. As a consequence their collective efficacy beliefs are bound to play a major role in influencing their decisions in participating collective action initiatives, making collective efficacy an important factor worth analysing within this research study.

1.3.3.4.2 Social cohesion

This study also considers social cohesion within such diverse communal climates to be an important factor shaping individual decisions in collective action participation. Being studied within a wide variety of social context including military combat (MacCoun, Kier, & Belkin, 2006), community health (Berkman, 2000; Dupuis, Studer, Henchoz, Deline, Baggio, N'Goran, Mohler-Kuo, & Gmel, 2016), and communal material deprivation (including education, poverty, unemployment) (see Stafford, Bartley, Sacker, Marmot, Wilkinson, Boreham, & Thomas, 2003) in naming a few fields of study, social cohesion within communities in such aforementioned areas of interest seem to predict increased personal wellbeing among their members. Despite the wide popularity gained within policy and academic circles, a clear and rigorous definition of what social cohesion actually means, seems long due (Chan, To, & Chan, 2006) often vaguely defined in terms of social integration and stability. According to Lavis, & Stoddart (2003), social cohesion involves "the networks, norms and trust that bring people together to take action". According to them social cohesion provides a useful framework in measuring the conduciveness of a social environment at a macro level as opposed to the overlapping concept of social capital which considers the benefits of a social environment upon its individual members (see Chan et al., 2006). Hence the emphasis when analysing social cohesion within a community is with regards to "the quality and quantity of social interactions that occur in a community as opposed to the resources generated for its inhabitants" (Stafford et al., 2003).

When focusing on quantity, the emphasis is on structural aspects of the community, which is in other words the types of social networks that exist within the community that might range from close family and friendship ties, associations with community organizations such as clubs, religious groups, pressure groups (such as trade unions) to wider associations that may span community boundaries often tapping into diverse ethnic/religious/economic and geographic circles. When focusing on quality, the emphasis is on cognitive aspects of the community, which range from generalized trust (which often occur due to higher and diverse social interactions taking place within a community), a sense of attachment or belonging to the community (that again occurs as a result of constant contact both formal and informal), informal support that is often shared among community members (as opposed to formal/State oriented support) and tolerance or respect among members within the community (see Krishna and Shrader, 1999; Stafford et al., 2003; Dupuis et al., 2006).

Provided the historic Sri Lankan context where a three decade civil war caused severe trauma to the social fabric of the country, the clientalist and ethnic based politics that exploited state resources at the expense of excluding certain populations (including the rural population for example) from centralized structures and the ethnically homogenous community clusters that heavily predominate most of the country's geographic land scape, focusing more on the qualitative cognitive aspects of social cohesion rather than the quantitative structural aspects in existing communities seemed more logical to the authors. As a consequence cognitive aspects of social cohesion particularly trust, attachment, help and tolerance levels were conceptualized and analysed as important factors within community climates influencing individual decisions in participating in collective action initiatives.

1.3.3.5 The role of individual grievances in collective action: a focus on poverty and conflict

The author finally considers individual instrumental concerns, in other words personal grievances to be of high importance in influencing individual decisions towards partaking or forfeiting collective action initiatives for the betterment of their communities. Instrumental concerns and life circumstances tend to differ even among individuals that live in severely oppressed societies (which include conflict affected communities). Firstly, and as rightfully pointed out within the collective vulnerability approach (see Elcheroth, 2006; Elcheroth & Spini, 2009, 2014; Penic, Elcheroth, & Spini, 2018) in relation to conflict experiences, individual interpretations of suffering seem to greatly vary depending on such individual's exposure to experiences of suffering. By conducting a multilevel analysis of more than ten thousand civilians in fourteen conflict affected countries, Elcheroth (2006) found people who had personally experienced war victimization to be less supportive towards humanitarian norms at the individual level. This was in contrary to the greater support shown towards humanitarian norms at the collective level by communities that acquired higher numbers of war victims. The potential reason according Staub and Bar-Tal (2003) seems to be the capability of personal trauma (especially intense victimization) in diminishing people's thought processes. Even if they are conscious of the fact that the victimization experience is totally random and beyond their control, they seem to develop doubts in their self-worth, often questioning "why me?", or the fact that "something must be wrong with me as an individual or as a member of this in-group". According to Lerner (1998) such diminished thought processes (or according to Eidelson & Eidelson (2003)'s 'catastrophic thinking

processes') go further in making individuals deny personal injustice and suffering. Such diminished/catastrophic thought processes provide individuals with a defence mechanism against being singled out within their own in-groups as random victims, and helps them maintain the fundamental belief about a just world in the face of such random unjust experiences. This tends to be the reason behind individuals personally exposed to violence often normalizing such violence by being less supportive towards humanitarian norms at the individual level as opposed to communities highlighting injustice and showing greater support towards humanitarian norms at the collective level. Due to this heterology that exist between community reactions to collective trauma and individual reaction to personal trauma, the notion that in-group members collectively react towards group threat/injustice based on elements of social identity theory presents some interesting doubts especially in the face of intense personal experiences of victimization. Hence individual instrumental concerns or personal grievances are argued to be interesting factors worth investigating individual decisions in engaging in collective action.

Secondly the fields of psychiatry and clinical psychology have profusely analysed the effect of conflict and disaster related trauma on individual wellbeing, resilience and post-traumatic stress among diverse populations throughout the globe (see Fernando, Miller, & Berger, 2010; Miller, & Rasmussen, 2010; Miljenović, & Žganec, 2012; Vindevogel, Ager, Schiltz, Broekaert, & Derluyn, 2015; Baingana, & Mangen, 2011; Friedman, & Mikus-Kos, 2005) and already made the case for such external stressors to adversely impact individual psychological and psychosocial functioning. Continuing along the arguments laid down by resource mobilization theorist (see McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Klandermans, 1984, 1986), where collective action is theorized to be guided by rational and strategic decision making processes by groups and their members, and where individual decisions to participate in collective action initiatives are stated to be governed by rational choices by individuals in minimizing personal losses and maximizing personal gains, the impact personal traumatic experiences might impose upon individual decisions in collective action engagement is considered by the author as an interesting element worth perusing in determining factors that motivate civilian collective action participation in post-war Sri Lanka. In other words, the question worth perusing is whether individuals amidst their current suffering (particularly due to war victimization) are willing to risk further grief by participating in (risky) future collective action initiatives against the state.

While intense and direct personal experiences of victimization (especially in relation to conflict) have been analysed within the research literature to play a major role in individual wellbeing and efficient psychosocial functioning, the role of more indirect daily stresses such as poverty impacting individuals of vulnerable communities (especially members of conflict ridden communities) have gained increased attention during recent times (see Fernando, Miller, & Berger, 2010; Miller, & Rasmussen, 2010). The argument here is in relation to the severe but distal/episodic impacts of trauma events versus the dull but constant presence of daily stresses. Daily stresses (in the form of malnutrition, access to clean water, unsafe housing, lack of economic opportunities, breakdowns in social support networks, and disruptions in public services such as education, health and transportation in naming a few) similar to conflict trauma (in the form of physical injury, displacement, the death or disappearance of a loved one) are conceptualized through these studies to create stressful conditions leading people to perceive they have little or no control over resources upon which their physical and psychological wellbeing depend. Hence amidst such perceptions of lack of control, are individuals willing to risk collective action participation is another enquiry the authors wish to pursue through this analysis. As a result, both conflict exposure as well as exposure to poverty will be analysed as potential individual instrumental concerns determining collective action engagement among diverse ethnic populations in post-war Sri Lanka.

1.3.3.6 The empirical study

In line with the central research question pursued which is the continuation of ethnic identity heightening through transitional justice policies in post-conflict Sri Lanka, study 2 investigates the second sub-research question pursued, which is the identity heightening potential of social justice claims and its implications for future intergroup relations. It was mentioned within this section previously how a rather relative democratic political transition following the war resulted in a collective action boom especially within the war torn North & Eastern parts of Sri Lanka. Amidst a void in transitional and social justice and a suppressive approach adopted by the state towards collective mobilization in general, collective efforts for change seemed quite common during this era, capturing the authors' attention as to what factors motivate collective mobilization for social justice in post-conflict settings. Provided the social justice needs readily available for collective mobilization, and the suppressive role of the state, which can lead to altered ethnic identities and related behavioural outcomes (see

the Elaborated Social Identity Model of Crowd Behaviour by Drury & Reicher, 2009 and Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010) with a potential of feeding into future cycles of ethnic based violence. Study 2 analyses potential factors ranging from ethnic grievances, communal climates to individual instrumental concerns that might fuel collective mobilization among the former parties to war, with implications on future identity heightening and intergroup relations. The study also performs a differential analysis between the ethnic Sinhalese and Tamils living throughout the country as well as the former conflict zones with an anticipation of capturing the effects of conflict on group structure.

The study hypothesizes the ethnic grievances, communal climates and individual instrumental concerns to influence the Sinhalese and Tamils differently. Provided the Tamils being a minority of only 11.2% of the country's population, having historic structural and physical violence since British colonial rule, being annihilated in a recent ethnic conflict, being recipients of a unilateral peace initiative and a culture of post-war impunity at the hands of a majority represented state, the authors predict ethnic suffering related grievances to be more relevant for the Tamils when perceiving their current injustices. Hence inline with the social identity model of collective action where identifying and categorizing with a disadvantaged group predicts greater collective mobilization (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), the authors predict ethnic group identification to be important when fuelling collective mobilization efforts among the ethnic Tamils. Similarly, with greater negative outcomes being predicted against out-groups (Leidner, Castano, Zaiser, & Giner-Sorolla, 2010; Roccas et al., 2006, 2008), having a glorified sense of ethnic identity which is a more blind uncritical sense of loyalty towards one's in-group is hypothesised by the authors to fuel greater collective mobilization against the majoritarian state. Provided that civilians have historically been mobilized into perpetrating violence by the use of selective trauma narratives (Ramanathapillai, 2006), a glorified sense of ethnic identity is hypothesised to predict greater collective action participation among the minority Tamils. Finally victimhood construals which is an awareness of ones' ingroup's suffering (Vollhardt, 2020; Vollhardt, 2012; Noor et al., 2017) is considered an important component of ethnic grievance in predicting collective mobilization. People assess whether in-group victimization is relevant for their current grievances and determine what kind of coping strategy is required for them to deal with such victimization collective action being a possibility (Leach, 2020; Vollhardt & Nair, 2018; Jeong & Vollhardt, 2021). With qualitative studies such as Jeong & Vollhardt

(2021) indicating that having grievances regarding ingroup's historical suffering, its present-day denial by perpetrators as well as the consideration of preserving such victimhood memories to trigger collective action that confronts perpetrator groups. It is the prediction that centrality of in-group victimization, conflict specific exclusive and inclusive victim beliefs to influence collective mobilization efforts among the minority Tamils. Provided the injustice associated with the suffering experience involving construals of centrality of in-group victimization and conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs, the authors predict greater collective mobilization among the minority Tamils. On the contrary with perceptions that involve similarities in the suffering experience along with reduced conceptualizations of unjust suffering, the authors predict demobilization effects associated with conflict specific victimhood beliefs among the Tamils. The state being a represented by the majoritarian Sinhalese ethnic group which comprise of 74.9% of the population, the authors hypothesize ethnic grievances in the form of ethnic identity attachment, glorification of ethnic identity, centrality of in-group victimization, conflict specific exclusive and inclusive victim beliefs to play no role in the collective mobilization decisions of the majority Sinhalese.

Provided the aforementioned structural and physical violence experienced during to the civil conflict, the authors predict individual instrumental concerns in the form of conflict and poverty exposure to be quite influential in determining collective action participation especially among the minority Tamils. Provided the case already made for external stressors associated with conflict and disaster related trauma on individual wellbeing (see Fernando et al., 2010; Vindevogel et al., 2015), and resource mobilization theory arguments on collective action being rational choices by individuals in minimizing personal losses and maximizing personal gains (see McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Klandermans, 1984, 1986). It is the prediction that individual instrumental concerns in the form of conflict and poverty to reduce collective action participation. The authors predict such instrumental concerns to be important for Tamils throughout the general population and for the Sinhalese who reside in the former conflict zone.

Furthering the aforementioned arguments of resource mobilization theory in minimizing losses and maximizing benefits, the authors argue conducive communal climates in the form of high collective efficacy and social cohesion to play a major role in fuelling individual decisions in partaking collective action initiatives more, irrespective of ethnic or conflict based geographical distinctions. Social cohesion which involves the social networks,

norms and trust that bring people together to act collectively (Lavis, & Stoddart, 2003) is predicted to fuel collective action along with collective efficacy which is the belief that ingroup's have the necessary resources to achieve their desired goals (Bandura, 1997). Communities with high social cohesion and collective efficacy beliefs are predicted to be conducive environments for collective action.

Chapter 3 discusses in detail the model studied and the empirical findings in relation to the differed motivators for collective action participation among the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups in post-war Sri Lanka. Figure 1 on page 122 depicts the model studied.

1.3.4 The zest for accountability in post-war Sri Lanka and its implications on intergroup relations

In summarizing what has been discussed so far, the central premise throughout this thesis has been with regards to the continued heightening of ethnic group identity in post-war Sri Lanka and conducting empirical investigations as to its potential impact upon intergroup relations between various ethnic groups living in the country (especially between the Sinhalese and Tamils among whom a three-decade civil war once broke out). The continued heightening of ethnic group identities degrading intergroup relations, consequently leading to renewed cycles of violence remains a great concern in post-war Sri Lanka. Such heightening of ethnic identity is to be analysed in relation to three chronologically important post war outcomes, out of which two have already been discussed. Initially, Sri Lanka's mass scale infrastructure development projects that were undertook during the Rajapaksa regime as a post-war reconciliation strategy that seem to have ignored post-war needs of conflict affected communities in the North and East were analysed and their potential implications on post-war intergroup relations investigated. Secondly, the collective action boom that followed the (relative) democratic political transition during the Sirisena regime were discussed particularly with regards to transitional justice needs of the public and the ramifications of suppression as reactions to such collective acts. The third and final post-war outcome to be introduced and effects on identity heightening and subsequent future intergroup relations to be examined within this section involves the enthusiasm and contestations surrounding accountability in Sri Lanka.

1.3.4.1 Accountability within the corpus of post-conflict transitional justice

Accountability following periods of mass scale violence is considered extremely important for victims' wellbeing and safety, and is considered cardinal in restoring the values upon which 'decent society' is established. The global discourse that has been formulated accumulating years of conflict and conflict resolution experiences, containing a broad set of processes and mechanisms available for societies in championing accountability is popularly known within the literature as Transitional Justice (see UN Secretary General, 2004; United Nations, 2010). Pioneered around (but not limited to) truth commissions, criminal prosecutions, reparations and institutional reform (named as the four main pillars of transitional justice) these mechanisms seem to aim at redressing victims and protecting them from future abuse.

Truth commissions (such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, Commission of Truth and Reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia and the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission of Rwanda just to name a few) are often established with broader responsibilities of collecting accurate information on what actually took place, why, and obtaining societal consensus as to what can be done in ensuring such atrocities never reoccur. The corpus of information gathered through multiple testimonies, have the potential of feeding into other mechanisms in the form of recommendations. *Reparations* satisfy a more direct restorative form of justice for losses incurred by victims during periods of oppression. They may be implemented as monetary payments, restoration of civil and political rights, access to essential services, and even be symbolic in the form of official apologies and memorialization that acknowledge victimization. *Institutional reform* involves the process of restructuring public institutions that were previously unequal, prejudice and oppressive, engaging in clientalist politics and catering towards certain groups only, to now providing services in a more equal and democratic manner. This also include reforms to the judiciary and military that formerly permitted extra-constitutional actions to now preserve rule of law and be accountable to all. *Criminal prosecutions* which is the form of accountability that will be mainly focused on within this section of the thesis, provide the legal means of holding perpetrators accountable for crimes committed at a larger scale (in the form of genocide and war crimes). By investigating and putting individuals responsible on trial, prosecutions assist in ending existing cultures of impunity, help create a sense of deterrence for potential future violators, and help people regain confidence in fragile judicial

systems present within post conflict societies. Often considered highly accountable and impactful when conducted domestically, judicial systems that often lack the capacity in fragile post conflict settings are capable of obtaining international assistance in the form of "hybrid" courts/tribunals or having trials heard at the International Criminal Court as a last resort. Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone and countries in the former Balkans provide examples for such prosecutions performed against mass violations of human rights (for more information on transitional justice mechanisms see ICTJ, 2020).

Even though founded upon the objectives of delivering accountability and re-establishing human dignity following mass atrocities, the discourse on transitional justice has not been without its own set of problems and criticisms. Despite cautions been made in terms of the conditions existing within particular contexts, determining specific action that can be implemented, concerns have often been raised in relation to dilemmas that exist within the discourse itself in grappling with notions of truth and justice. Often the implementations of such mechanisms are faced with time, resource and political constrains making them highly selective processes. For example, Truth Commissions have been known to be focusing on a limited past with limited powers in rendering justice. Such commissions have even been disbanded prior to completing their work (such as in Bolivia and Ecuador) or producing results that have been heavily censored (for example in Haiti and Sri Lanka) (see Avruch, 2010; Cronin-Furman, 2020). Accommodating different types of truth (often heavily contested) from the personal into a larger societal narrative of collective memory that contributes to (a continuing process of) reconciliation is another complexity discussed as posing many challenges. The type of 'justice' to focus on (whether retributive or restorative) which emphasize differently on victim/perpetrator needs and with varying benefits has been another central question (for more information on issues in transitional justice see Avruch, 2010). Apart from the mechanisms themselves, criticisms seem to be directed towards the discourse itself, for being wrongfully accepted as the global norm (Nagy, 2008), having agendas of liberal peace (Sriram, 2017) and for silencing and ignoring contexts (including beneficiaries and expertise) in the global South by voices from the global North (see Madlingozi, 2010; Kagoro, 2012; Jones & Bernath, 2017).

1.3.4.2 Accountability measures in post-conflict Sri Lanka

Accountability in Sri Lanka too, has not been without its fair share of challenges. Often criticised of being motivated by political ambitions and lacking sincere aspirations of acknowledging the past, transitional justice initiatives in Sri Lanka have inspired very little public trust despite its high demand. In previous sections of this introduction, it was discussed in detail how previous regimes focusing on mass infrastructure development and good governance initiatives seem to have avoided serious commitments towards reconciliation, nurturing a culture of impunity in the process that drew multiple resolutions from the United Nations Human Rights Council since 2012 ("OHCHR Sri Lanka", 2018). In fact according to Cronin-Furman (2020), Sri Lanka's failed transitional justice efforts can be attributed to a set of domestic/home-grown "human rights half measures" that were established in response to international pressure rather than genuine state intentions of investigating allegations of mass atrocity.

Following the war in 2009, the Rajapaksa regime in power made three main attempts towards ensuring accountability during critical moments of acute international pressure. Among them were (i) the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (see de Silva, Perera, Jiffry, Hangawatta, Chanmugam, Palihakkara, Ramanathan & Paranagama, 2011) established in 2010 having a mandate of investigating the failed 2002 ceasefire agreement and making recommendations for the non-occurrence of future violence, (ii) the Army Court of Inquiry (Sri Lanka Army, n.d.) convened in 2012 to investigate allegations on war crimes and, (iii) the Commission of Inquiry into Complaints of Abductions and Disappearances (Paranagama, Ramanathan & Vidyaratne, 2015) established in 2013 to investigate complaints of abductions or disappearances of residents in the Northern and Eastern provinces. While none of these initiatives were successful in delivering truth and or justice to victims (often criticised of being biased and inadequate), they seem to have been successful in convincing "Swing States" within the UNHRC in vetoing multilateral action against Sri Lanka (Cronin-Furman, 2020).

The subsequent Sirisena regime's initiatives on accountability have been similar, often attempting to strike a balance between satisfying local electoral constituencies while evading international pressures. Despite being elected to office on pledges of good governance and accountability in 2015 (see United National Party, 2015; Ranil and Maithree

election manifesto) (while such pledges have also been critiqued in relation to discrepancies existent between Sinhalese, Tamil and English versions of their election manifestos, see Fonseka, Ganeshathasan, & Daniel, 2017), this regime is said to have failed similar to its predecessor in delivering effective accountability. Even though truly independent and mass public consultations have been carried out, such as the Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms (see "Final report CTF", 2017), and independent offices established for carrying out transitional justice, such as the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation, Office of Missing Persons and the Office for Reparations (see "Office for national unity", 2018) often such measures have ignored stakeholder recommendations, are yet to be gazetted (and implemented), and have merely been established during critical post-war time periods as responses to UNHRC pressure.

1.3.4.3 Impartial prosecutions: a genuine but contested need

Despite indications based on international pressure on the conduct of the state during its final offensive in 2009 [fuelled by diaspora testimonies of brutal violence (see Human Rights Watch, 2013), the screening of the Channel 4 documentary "Sri Lanka's Killing Fields" etc.] and the state's rather lacklustre defensive response, prosecuting ones responsible and holding them accountable is a genuine transitional justice need that is currently highly sought after with serious implications on future ethnic group relations in the country. Apart from violations that took place during the conflict, the culture of impunity that is currently been maintained within the country guised in militarization and infrastructure development were discussed in detail within the section on "Post-war development". The collective action boom that followed the political transition during the Sirisena regime, especially with regards to transitional justice, and how certain pleas such as the roadside protests in Kilinochchi by family members of the disappeared have been continuing for more than 365 days (see Fernando, 2018c) were also discussed prior within the section on "The post-war collective action drive".

The independent fact finding mission stated before, the Consultation Taskforce on Reconciliation mechanisms established by the state during the Sirisena regime in 2016 in seeking public opinions on transitional justice had revealed criminal prosecutions to be the most contested, vibrantly discussed and highly sought after transitional justice mechanism by the general public. Headed by a 11-member panel drawn from civil society and collecting

over seven thousand submissions throughout the country via focus group discussions, public meetings and written submissions, the CTF revealed the Tamil population to have considered criminal prosecutions to be vital in ensuring justice, accountability, non-recurrence, and ending the existent culture of impunity. They had also emphasized the failure in the existing judicial system in delivering justice, raising concerns over risks for defendants that included re-victimization and failures in witness protection. Their proposal was international involvement in the process. The submissions however weren't limited to the temporal and geographic dimensions of the civil war in the North and East. Among majority Sinhalese in the South were claims for justice for state brutality performed during the Southern insurgency (the JVP insurrection) between 1987 and 1989. Some other claimants were for violence performed against religious minorities especially during post-war time. The material jurisdiction for the judicial mechanisms in prosecuting crimes against humanity included grievances from Tamils against the LTTE for the use of civilians as human shields, forcible recruitment of children and denial of medicine and food supplies. It also included grievances from Muslims against forcible expulsion and from Sinhalese against military and police brutality in the South. These grievances suggest the demand for impartial criminal prosecutions across a wider ethnic audience in Sri Lanka (for more details see "Final report CTF", 2017).

Despite the high demand, prosecutions in post-war Sri Lanka tend to be highly contested and exclusive. The vicious cycles of identity heightening, violence and counter violence throughout the country's conflict history have victimized all, feeding into mutual repositories of trauma memories. The Tamils remember of the pogroms throughout the 1950's to the 1980's where goons with state patronage attacked Tamil civilians throughout the country and the more recent civilian casualties in Mullivaikkal in 2009. The Sinhalese remember of LTTE suicide bomb attacks on Buddhist religious places of worship and places of economic importance such as the Bandaranaike International Airport and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka resulting in mass civilian casualties. The Muslims remember for example their mass eviction from the North and the massacre in Kattankudi in 1990 (see Anonymous, 2011). Such trauma memories of mass violence have created feelings of deep anger and vengeance towards each other that have prevented individuals from either side in truly acknowledging the dual role of victims and perpetrators hence demanding exclusively or rejecting exclusively the need for criminal prosecutions.

For instance, as mentioned previously even though the majority of the Tamils demand criminal prosecutions to reconcile and pursue international support in its implementation, there have been a segment in the population that have stated prosecutions to be irrelevant and even counterproductive in reconciling and dealing with the past. While a minute amount within this segment have been Tamils that possess a sense of cynicism as to what prosecutions can really achieve for them now, the majority opposing prosecutions have been hard-lined Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist groups including members of the military and Buddhist religious groups that unequivocally support restoration and reject retribution.

For most within the 74.9% Sinhalese voter base (Census & Statistics, 2012) that have entangled themselves within the constant political manipulation of epistemic capital, the triumphant military are heroes that have sacrificed their lives for them in protecting the Sinhalese nation. They are the saviours that have ended three decades of LTTE tyranny and implementing any form of accountability constitutes an attack on their "war heroes". By 2017 the military to civilian ratio of the country was 1:66 [based on calculations from Macrotrends. (n.d.)] with an increase of 3.87% from 2016, making the military a significant voter base in the country. As a consequence, any government in power willing to consider accountability have a heavy political price to pay not forgetting the fact that many perpetrators of the alleged atrocities still remain in power/active duty.

1.3.4.4 A complex inclusive narrative surrounding Sri Lanka's post-war accountability

While having a high demand and being heavily contested upon, the narrative that has been officially constructed around human rights violations following the war in Sri Lanka has been a one that is rather inclusive. As mentioned before in several sections within this introductory chapter, the Sri Lankan state had continuously and strategically delegitimized political efforts of the Tamil people by labelling such action as terrorism (Nadarajah & Sriskandarajah, 2005; Nadarajah 2018). By doing so the state has been capable of evading domestic and international criticism for human rights violations. It has also been discussed how the official political narrative of the majoritarian Sinhalese state during the initial stages of the war changed from a rather exclusive, conflict exacerbating outlook towards the Tamil people, into a more inclusive contemporary view, portraying the Tamils as a special category of victims harmed by their own rebel LTTE. This inclusive outlook of suffering attributed towards the actions of the LTTE even helped the government in scoring a diplomatic victory

at the UNHRC on the 27th of May 2009, by pushing through a resolution that welcomed the state's actions in releasing Tamil civilians held as human shields by the LTTE, during the final phase of the war (UNHRC, 2009). Similar strategic claims of inclusive victimization can be observed in other conflict contexts, for example in response to the Armenian genocide, the Turkish state has officially acknowledged the suffering of millions of Turkish, Kurdish, Arab, Armenian and other Ottoman citizens, simultaneously undermining the role of the state in perpetrating the genocide (see Bilali, Iqbal, & Freel, 2019).

While the positive intergroup effects of believing in inclusive victimhood still stand especially with regards to reducing competitive thoughts about one's own group's suffering, acknowledging the suffering of out-groups more and increasing one's willingness to forgive and reconcile with out-groups (see Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, 2013; Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Doosje, 2015; Cohrs, McNeill, & Vollhardt, 2015; Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015); and also while the current trends within the transitional justice discourse still hold, in acknowledging a more inclusive outlook towards claims of suffering, especially by considering the claims of 'spoilers' more seriously that often resist (the Sri Lankan state being a case in point), in appreciating the historical and contextual complexities surrounding accountability for intergroup violence (see Jones & Bernath, 2017); defensive claims of inclusive victimization aimed solely for the purpose of evading accountability might fail miserably in reconciling former parties to conflict due to several potential reasons.

The victimhood literature has shown how making simple claims that everyone suffered equally runs risks of ignoring power asymmetries present between groups and their differed histories of oppression (Vollhardt & Twali, 2016). Such ignorance can give rise to a particular group's distinctiveness threat which has also been shown to have negative impacts on intergroup relations (Vollhardt, 2013), often making victim groups strongly reject such claims of equal suffering (Vollhardt, Ünal, & Nair, 2020). Such simple claims also have the potential of making perpetrator groups fail to acknowledge the magnitude of harm inflicted by them, often making them less empathic and expecting greater forgiveness (Greenaway, Louis, & Wohl, 2012). In cases where groups have been willing to accept such simple claims of ingroup vicitmization they have also been simultaneously demobilized against making collective claims for justice (see Greenaway, Quinn, & Louis, 2011). For example in a study involving Turkish-Kurds who read narratives of inclusive victimhood, they were less likely in

supporting policies that challenged Turkey's dominance (see Adelman, Leidner, Ünal, Nahhas, & Shnabel, 2016).

1.3.4.5 The empirical study

Supplementing the central research question which is whether identity heightening is continued through transitional justice policies in post-conflict Sri Lanka, study 3 investigates the third sub-research question, which is the identity heightening potential of retributive justice claims with implications for future intergroup relations. It was mentioned before how accountability tends to play a central role in transitional justice, ending cultures of impunity and redressing victims by deterring potential perpetrators (United Nations, 2010; ICTJ, 2020). It was also argued how prosecutions acknowledge victim suffering, satisfying their agency needs and enabling the exchange of morality, reconciling former parties to conflict (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008, 2015). Despite accountability being highly demanded by a nuanced audience ("Final report CTF", 2017), its implementation by the Sri Lankan state has been put in a backburner focusing only on mass infrastructure development (see Rajasingham, 2010; Saparamadu & Lall, 2014). In the face of heavy domestic and international criticism on human rights violations, the response of the majority dominant state has been the mass propagation of an inclusive victimhood narrative placing the sole responsibility of collective violence on the LTTE ("Lands releases," 2018; "Rehabilitation to rejoice," 2018). Despite inclusive victimhood construals being quite beneficial for peace and reconciliation (Vollhardt, 2012a; Cohrs et al., 2015; Noor et al., 2017), it is its strategic utility that can be detrimental for intergroup relations (Vollhardt, 2015). Hence the authors' interest in analysing the impact of this inclusive victimhood narrative officially and massly propagated, on the diverse ethnic groups perceptions towards accountability measures.

Within this study the authors predict conflict specific inclusive victimhood construals with their high potential for reconciliation, to predict greater support for impartial prosecutions for human rights violations implemented at both the domestic as well as international levels. Provided the reconciliatory potential of both prosecutions and inclusive victimhood construals themselves, the relationship is hypothesised to be positive among both the ethnic Sinhalese and Tamils. However, in capturing the strategic use of inclusive victimhood construals, the authors include two social-psychological mediators. The initial mediator acknowledgement of in-group crimes is hypothesized to positively impact this

relationship if inclusive victimhood construals are genuinely held. Acknowledging suffering inflicted by one's own group becomes an important component of one's inclusive victimhood construals and as a result conflict specific inclusive victimhood is hypothesised to predict greater acknowledgment of in-group crimes and intern predict greater support for impartial prosecutions at the domestic and international levels of implementation. The second mediators used involves centrality of in-group victimization. With more exclusive victimhood construals it is known that individuals place greater importance on the injustice of their suffering experience expecting retribution from perpetrators (Vollhardt, 2012a; Noor et al., 2017). On the contrary inclusive construals of suffering are known to place less importance upon such unjust suffering experiences (Shnabel et al., 2013; Noor et al., 2015). Hence the authors hypothesize genuine construals of conflict specific inclusive victimhood construals to predict less centrality of in-group victimization and intern predict greater support for impartial prosecutions at both the domestic and international levels of implementation. In the case of possessing genuine inclusive victimhood construals the model predicts greater reconciliation and identity de-heightening through greater support for prosecutions. In the absence of genuine inclusive victimhood construals, the model predicts greater hostilities and identity heightening through greater opposition towards prosecutions. Chapter 4 discusses in detail the model studied and the empirical findings in relation to the impact of inclusive victimhood construals on retributive justice in post-conflict Sri Lanka. Figure 3 on page 153 depicts the model studied.

1.4 Research questions and the overview of the empirical studies conducted

This thesis attempts at performing a social identity based analysis on the differed perceptions that surround transitional justice mechanisms that are both present as well as absent within Sri Lanka's post-war discourse among the Sinhalese majority and Tamil minority that were previously engaged in a protracted conflict for 26 years. By doing so the author aspires in capturing the historical and contemporary heightening of ethnic group identity, physical and structural victimization, and the varying power dynamics and strategies that underlie the differed social realities that surround these transitional justice mechanisms, their implementation as well as various intergroup reactions towards them. Such differed perceptions and reactions are conceptualized subsequently in determining future intergroup relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils that are currently living within a fragile post conflict Sri Lanka.

In performing this analysis three chronologically important post-war outcomes relating to 1) a state initiated and reconciliation oriented infrastructure development approach implemented immediately following the war, 2) a collective action boom following a relatively democratic political transition that stimulated community initiatives in redressing post-war grievances and 3) a heightened public zest and debate towards long due accountability measures for human rights violations following both local and international pressure are been looked into across three empirical studies addressing the following three main research questions.

Q1. Is reconciliation based infrastructure development accepted by all? Are people willing to collectively express their dissatisfaction towards its inadequacy? What is the role of power and victimization in this process?

In addressing the first research question, study 1 measures both individual as well as ethnic group perceptions towards Sri Lanka's post-war infrastructure based development efforts. Collective mobilization is measured as a potential reaction individuals might have in relation to their attitudes towards development and victim beliefs analysed as an important construal influencing this relationship. Building upon the Intergroup Helping as Status Relations model, the Defensive Helping Model and notions of invocating meta-stereotypes, the study assumes development to be (at least for some) perceived to be dependency oriented assistance provided from above, invoking negative meta-stereotypes, hence perceived negatively and generating a response in terms of collective mobilization. Individuals preferring dependency-oriented development demobilizing themselves from collectively expressing their grievances (in line with the irony of harmony hypothesis) remains another possibility to be investigated. Divergent victimhood beliefs present among members of the two ethnic groups formerly at war are conceptualized to influence both these variables differently, where exclusive victim beliefs are assumed to intensify negative perceptions towards development and entice greater collective action tendencies due to the unjust and competitive notions of the victimization experience. Inclusive victim beliefs on the other hand are assumed to have a contradictory conciliatory effect. Apart from the power dynamics investigated between the majority and other minorities ethnic groups, the study being implemented within the former conflict zone as well as in areas that weren't directly affected by the war, provides opportunity for a comparative analysis in terms of conflict exposure.

Q2. What motivates people in collectively expressing their grievances within a post-conflict environment? To what extent do ethnic grievances, communal climates, and individual circumstances play a role in collective mobilization?

Besides one of the most heavily researched and popular theoretical justifications of collective mobilization being social identity based, it is the authors' perception that within severely deprived environments such as post-conflict societies, external stresses created through unsupportive community climates and harsh individual circumstances are capable of affecting individual decisions in partaking collective action initiatives. Hence building upon both social identity and resource mobilization theory, study 2 parses apart ethnic group based grievances, communal climates and individual instrumentalities in collectively voicing out grievances especially in relation to transitional justice needs within a post-conflict Sri Lanka. In particular, the study analyses ethnic identity attachment, glorified ethnic group identities, importance placed upon in-group victimization including conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs and conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs as indicators of ethnic grievances; collective efficacy and social cohesion as a measure of communal support; and exposure to poverty and conflict as measures of individual instrumental concerns. Along with differed social structural positions of ethnic Sinhalese and Tamils taken into consideration, the study further differentiates its findings across high and low conflict exposed geographies of the country. Furthermore the study makes a unique contextual contribution to the field of social psychology and collective mobilization in particular by analysing collective action preferences among populations that are "difficult to access" within the global south.

Q3. Are impartial prosecutions supported by all parties that were in conflict? Can an inclusive narrative officially and massly propagated have a positive effect on peoples' perceptions on prosecutory mechanisms?

In addressing the third research question, study 3 analyses individual perceptions towards accountability measures implemented both domestically and through international involvement against an inclusive victimhood narrative that (everyone suffered equally) is been officially and massly propagated in post-war Sri Lanka. Building on the inclusive victimhood consciousness literature, the author assumes individuals adhering to such inclusive victimhood construals and their positive intergroup outcomes to support impartial prosecutions unequivocally. However, following asymmetric conflict, provided the

differences in social realities associated with different asymmetric power groups and their victimhood construals, the hefty penalties associated with accountability in terms of prosecutions and material reparations, victimhood consciousness tends to be an extremely contested strategic affair. Hence the author conceptualizes the relationship between inclusive victimhood and support for prosecutions to be mediate by genuine vs. strategic interests between the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnicities. In capturing this authenticity, the author incorporates measures acknowledging collective guilt and in-group victimization as mediators within the model. It is assumed that genuine inclusive victimhood believers to support impartial prosecutions implemented both locally as well as internationally and the relationship to be positively mediated by acknowledging in-group crimes and negatively mediated by less importance placed upon the suffering of one's own in-group. On the contrary the author believes strategic inclusive victim beliefs to negatively predict support for domestic and international prosecutions, having a negative mediation in terms of collective guilt and a positive mediation in terms of greater importance placed on in-group suffering.

The following chapters introduce each emperical study followed by a description of the methodologies and associated challenges in a post-clonflict setting such as Sri Lanka.

Chapter 2

When Development is not "Right": Understanding the Relationship between Perceptions, Collective Action and Victimhood[1]

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the initial empirical study performed within this thesis, in investigating its central research question which is the identity heightening potential of post-war transitional justice policies in Sri Lanka. This particular study investigates the ethnic identity heightening potential of restorative justice policies in Sri Lanka following the war. It studies the differed ethnic group perceptions and potential reactions towards such (reconciliation oriented) mass infrastructure development initiatives. Utilizing data collected through the Pluralistic Memories Project's pilot survey in 2015, with its unique methodological contributions and challenges described later in chapter 5, it should be noted that this study was a feasibility study in selecting suitable research questions and testing appropriate methodologies in a high-risk post-conflict environment. Through the data collected, the study was able in questioning the adequacy of development as an effective reconciliatory strategy in post war societies such as Sri Lanka.

2.1.1 Development: a good strategy for reconciliation?

It was argued before especially in detail within the introductory chapter on how societies affected by war experience substantial collapses in their political, judicial, economic and social institutions (Newman & Schnabel, 2002; Brounéus, 2003) resulting in fragile states that require multifaceted processes delivering holistic reconciliation (Brounéus, 2003; Newman & Schnabel, 2002; van Gennip, 2005; Lambourne, 2004; Green, 1999). It was also mentioned how despite such holistic needs, economic growth and enlargement are often chosen as the main focus of reconciliation. Sri Lanka following its three-decade war is

[1] Jayakody, S., Usoof-Thowfeek, R. (2017). *When Development is not "Right": Understanding the Relationship between Perceptions, Collective Action and Victimhood* (Lives Working Paper 2017/59.1). Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR). http://dx.doi.org/10.12682/lives.2296-1658.2017.59.1

adopting a similar path investing greatly on infrastructure development especially in areas such as the war torn North and East. While the physical impact of such infrastructure development projects is clear and visible, what is not clear is the impact of such projects on communities, community perceptions of these projects and community responses towards them. What is also not clear is whether this is really the best reconciliatory strategy in the case of post war societies. In the Sri Lankan case could a unilateral cessation of hostility established by the government representing the majority Sinhalese be sustainable if reconciliation is largely based on a strategy of infrastructure development?

This paper broadly examines the responses different communities have towards development and development policy, in post-war Sri Lanka. The paper construes development as help provided by the state to rebuild and support war damaged communities. The common assumption would be that these receiver communities should be 'grateful' for these projects. However, research shows evidence to the contrary. It is not always the case that the receiver (war affected communities in the Sri Lankan case) will feel grateful for the 'help' (Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006). In some cases, help may elicit the exact opposite reaction. Receivers often harbour feelings of resentment towards the giver if they feel the 'help' is imposed. Additionally, they also become susceptible to self-directed negative emotions such as loss of face or self-esteem, and can be subject to negative meta stereotypes (Wakefield, Hopkins, & Greenwood, 2013). Furthermore, research also finds that more socially powerful groups may use help strategically to maintain their socially powerful and superior position. Such groups can discriminate against inferior groups in a socially acceptable manner by using defensive helping (Nadler, Harpaz-Gorodeisky, & Ben-David, 2009). It is this framework that the researchers use to examine community responses to the post-war development projects in Sri Lanka. Thus, this paper examines the possibility of negative perceptions of communities towards help in the form of development projects. It further, examines what consequences these perceptions have. Some of the possible responses in such a situation could be the rejection or avoidance in seeking needed help.

2.1.2 Collective Action

However, in addition to these negative responses what is also a possible response to receiving unwelcome help could be a greater focus on collective action that is geared towards changing one's circumstances. Communities perceiving current development initiatives to be

inadequate or mismatching in terms of restorative justice might feel a strong urge to overcome such a state of injustice. Similarly, communities feeling development to be forcefully imposed upon them might experience a lack of ownership within the reconciliation process leading to a sense of disadvantage. Therefore, collective action that is a common response towards subjective states of injustice and disadvantage (Runciman, 1966; Walker & Smith, 2002) can be a likely mechanism that communities use to respond to these development projects. This assertion is supported by a body of work that points to a general tendency towards collective action when individuals experience fraternal or group-based deprivations (Smith & Ortiz, 2002). When group based depravations are perceived to be unjust, collective action is triggered through group-based emotions like anger, which create action tendencies to confront such injustice (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Hence if Sri Lanka's post-war reconciliation oriented development is construed as imposed which may result in the experiencing of fraternal deprivations, then collective action is a plausible reaction.

Another factor greatly explored within the introductory chapter, that moves groups towards collective action is social identity. According to social identity theory people benefit from positive social identities and hence strive for such positive identities associated with their social groups (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In instances where their identities are threatened, depending on the permeability of group boundaries, individuals would either exit or remain within the group and engage in social competition. One such means of social competition is collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren, & Spears, 2009). Drury & Reicher, (1999, 2000, 2005) have further argued that social identity can mobilize people to work towards social change. Furthermore, through their Elaborated Social Identity Model (ESIM) of crowd behaviour Drury & Reicher, (1999) have illustrated how newly empowered definitions of a self could emerge through collective action initiatives. Hence, applied to the context under consideration in this paper, instances where communities experience heightened negative meta stereotypes by accepting assistance in the form of imposed development can be instances where their social identity is threatened feeding into initiatives for collective action.

The collective action responses that this paper examines are centred on various efforts made by communities in satisfying their diverse needs, especially post-war community needs required for effective independent functioning. These can range from needs of livelihoods,

income, health, education and also other needs relating to security, equality and justice. The paper specifically examines support for collective action in a context in which development is seen as imposed and mismatching to existing needs and expectations. The efforts made are assessed either as individual or collective and are measured through a wide spectrum of possibilities ranging from passive forms of collective action such as pickets, protests and sit-ins, towards more disruptive actions such as occupations, hunger strikes and riots in making their needs eminent to the local or central government of Sri Lanka.

2.1.3 Victim Beliefs

However, it would be a mistake to believe that there is a simple linear relationship between perceptions of development and collective action. Communities' experiences during the war play a significant role in how they react to post war situations (Vollhardt, 2009b, 2012). While at the individual level, common responses to war have been psychological distress, trauma etc. (Johnson & Thompson, 2008; Schaal & Elbert, 2006), responses at the community level have also been investigated within the literature. A common response to experiencing war and conflict is reimagining the groups and the emergence of new identities. Perceptions of victimhood, is one such basis for a post war identity (Ramanathapillai, 2006; Bilali & Ross, 2012). These identities significantly impact responses to post war or post conflict events. van Zomeren et al., (2008) for example find that this sort of politicized identities as key to engagement in collective action. Therefore in explaining the relationship between perceptions of development projects and community responses to them in terms of collective action, this study examines specifically victim beliefs and the manner in which these beliefs may influence the aforementioned relationships.

Victimization is a significant dimension in understanding conflict in the Sri Lankan context. While the three-decade long war brought to the forefront ethnic tensions between the Buddhist Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority, such tensions are well documented long before the beginning of the conflict. It is believed that these tensions harken back to the times of British colonial rule. Deep-rooted feelings of unfair treatment and victimization that stem from British policies in Sri Lanka (DeVotta, 2000, 2009) plague both communities. These historical feelings of victimizations are not without repercussions often impacting on present intergroup relations in Sri Lanka.

As much literature on collective victimization evidence, humiliation resulting from past victimization has lead towards direct support for violence and revenge against out-groups (Lindner, 2002, 2006), anger has been associated with historical victimization predicting demands for reparations for harm committed by out-groups (Pennekamp, Doosje, Zebel, & Fischer, 2007). Past victims can also become present perpetrators due to collective victimization (Mamdani, 2001). However, there exists great variation in the extent to which individuals perceive their ingroup's victimization to be important (Pennekamp et al., 2007; Roccas & Elster, 2012; Vollhardt, 2012). Hence an analysis of subjective victim beliefs are important, which can provide further insights into the relationship between how development projects are perceived and how communities respond to them.

The current study utilizes six types of victim beliefs which have been proposed by Vollhardt, Nair, & Tropp, (2016) and Cohrs, McNeill, & Vollhardt, (2015). These are generally classified along two dimensions: (1) a reference point in time and (2) a scope of incorporation of out-group suffering. Based on time, victim beliefs can either be 'conflict specific' which refer to a particular conflict or 'global' which use the global context as a reference point. Based on the scope of incorporation, victim beliefs can be either 'exclusive' which focus explicitly on the uniqueness of the ingroup's suffering or 'inclusive' which acknowledges similarities in the victimization experience with other out-groups. Importantly both inclusive and exclusive victim beliefs can be global or conflict-specific giving rise to the following six types of victim beliefs i.e. centrality of in-group victimization, centrality of victimization worldwide, general exclusive victim beliefs, general inclusive victim beliefs, conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs and conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs. In examining these different victim beliefs, the researchers are interested in understanding how each of them impact perceptions of development and collective action.

2.1.4 Hypothesis

The paper explores several different possibilities of the impact of victim belief on the perceptions of development and collective action. The paper expects inclusive and exclusive victimhood to present different relationships. For example, it seems logical that exclusive forms of victim consciousness to be associated with higher negativity towards development policy based reconciliation efforts. Particularly the contestations of unjust suffering involved with exclusive victimhood beliefs are also likely to highlight the unjust and inadequacies

associated with post-war development in Sri Lanka. Additionally, given that exclusive victim beliefs are steeped in grievances and injustice, it is also likely that collective action is chosen as a response, which in turn protects group self-esteem (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990). On the contrary inclusive forms of victim consciousness acknowledging similarities in the victimization experience should less likely be associated with negativity towards development policy. In fact the literature states conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness to be the most suitable form for conflict resolution (Bar-Tal & Salomon, 2006; Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Vollhardt, 2009a). It is also likely that these feelings of inclusive victimhood could lead a person to engage in collective action that benefits all; across group boundaries; or does not lead to collective action at all due to their pacific nature. Hence the authors hypothesize inclusive forms of victim consciousness to be associated with more positive attitudes towards development and a reduce tendency to mobilize collectively. Finally the authors hypothesize negative perceptions held by the general public towards post-war development that may amount to different reasons explained prior, such as its identity heightening, meta-stereotype invoking, dependency orientated and militarily imposed nature to be associated with increased collective expressions of dissent.

The study also performs a differential analysis of the three major concepts focused within this paper, which are perceptions on development, collective action and victim beliefs, based on ethnic majority minority status and conflict exposure. Provided the differed historic hierarchical power differences existent between such majority minority ethnic groups, differences in collective victimization, and the post-conflict needs championed by each group, the distinctions in living circumstances, values and aspirations of these diverse ethnic groups can not be simply ignored. Hence based on above criteria, the authors hypothesize ethnic minorities to detest development the most and engage in collective action more. Due to their inabilities in comprehending similarities in suffering with the majority, it is also hypothesized that the minorities would possess higher exclusive victimhood construals. The majority on the other hand is hypothesized to prefer development that has been overdue owing to a civil conflict and is hypothesized to mobilize less against a state that is being represented by their very own. The majority is also assumed to possess more conflict exclusive victimhood construals, largely due to the heavy contestations associated with human rights violations by both parties during the civil war. In terms of conflict exposure, provided the current situation in the war-torn North & Eastern parts of the country, where

infrastructure projects are being largely implemented amidst heavy militarization, land acquisitions, and surveillance impacting civilian freedoms of expression and activism. It is hypothesized that people living in former conflict zones to detest development the most and prefer collective resistance against development especially provided their other unmet transitional justice needs following the conflict. Given the mass destruction to human life and property, it is also hypothesized for people from the former conflict zones to possess more exclusive victimhood construals due to their inability in comprehending any similarities in their suffering experience with others.

Additionally, the paper also takes into account different levels of experience that maybe important in explaining responses to development as imposed help and the impact of victim beliefs. A large body of literature focuses on the impact of these variables at the individual's level and the group level. For example, individual level feelings of relative deprivation has a much different impact on people's tendencies to engage in collective action than does fraternal level or group identity related feelings of deprivation (Runciman, 1966; Martin, Brickman, & Murray, 1984; Frijda, 1986; Smith & Ortiz, 2002; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Therefore, particular attention will be paid on understanding how individual perceptions and group perceptions of development impact the responses.

2.2 Method

This study is based on data collected in an international survey, conducted in Sri Lanka, Burundi and Palestine, documenting diverse memories of past conflict. It is also an initial pilot study that was conducted in Sri Lanka. The sampling methodology utilized within it was network sampling and was designed to over sample populations with diverse experiences of conflict (Gile & Handcock, 2010; Elcheroth et al., 2013). Keeping with this design, the survey was conducted in two districts in Sri Lanka, that reflected variability in terms of conflict exposure. Apart from responding to survey items measuring perceptions of development, collective victim beliefs and collective action tendencies, which are central to this particular analysis, respondents were also probed on life events, conflict exposure, reactions to different memories of conflict and transitional justice with intentions of testing potential questions to included later in a main island wide survey.

2.2.1 Sample

The sample for this particular study included 202 Sri Lankans out of which 49% were female. Respondents' ages ranged from 19 to 79 (M = 47.36). Of the total sample 51.5% of them were from Ampara; a district in the Eastern Province Sri Lanka, which directly experienced fighting between the Sri Lankan Army and the LTTE and 48.5% of them from Matale a district in the Central province that did not witness fighting between the Sri Lankan Army and the LTTE. However, it was an area that had seen violence related to a youth uprising in 1989 – 1990. To support this distinction, level of conflict exposure was measured through the survey instrument. Of the total 84.2% of the sample represented respondents from rural areas. 6.9% of the participants had no formal education, 58.4% finished primary school, 26.2% finished secondary school and 8.4% had obtained a college degree or above. Of the total sample 48.5% of the respondents identified as Sinhalese the majority ethnic group in Sri Lanka, whereas the rest of the 51.5% captured Tamil speaking minorities, i. e, Tamils (24.8%) and Muslims (26.7%). This analysis on ethnicity was performed based on a linguistic classification rather than direct responses from respondents.

2.2.2 Procedure

The areas for conducting the pilot study were carefully selected to satisfy the main criteria of ensuring that as much of the diversity of Sri Lankan society was captured. The two districts and the Divisional Secretariat divisions (hitherto known as DS divisions, which are smaller administrative units within a district) within each district were reflective of the country's socio-demographic diversity with regard to language, religion, urbanism, socioeconomic conditions, and past conflict exposure. Based on these criteria two districts, Ampara and Matale were selected.

Within these two districts, 12 DS divisions were selected. It was assumed that much of an individual's daily activities would be concentrated within each of these divisions. Thus Uhana, Ampara, Damana, Irakkamam, Akkaraipattu and Alayadiwembu DS divisions were selected from the Ampara district and Yatawatta, Matale, Pallepola, Ukuwela, Ambanganga Korale and Rattota were selected from Matale district. In both cases the locations included the administrative and commercial hubs of the districts, which also coincidentally carry the same name as the district. Out of the 12 DS divisions 6 were predominantly Sinhala speaking and the rest predominantly spoke Tamil. The ethnic breakdown of these DS divisions are depicted through Figures 8 & 9 in page 180 & 181.

The basic sampling unit for this study consisted of a cluster of 22 target interviewees (or respondents) spanning across 5 successive recruitment waves. The cluster started with a single seed (the initial respondent selected for the cluster) selected in the initial recruitment wave. Enumerators had the freedom in recruiting seeds for the sample based on a set of criteria. The seed introduced three more respondents during the second recruitment wave and the network continued to grow through referrals up to a saturation point of 22 completed interviews by the end of the fifth recruitment wave. Figure 10 in page 182 clearly depicts the proliferation of the network cluster throughout the five recruitment phases. Within each local area a particular enumerator was given a target of 33 survey interviews (approximately 1.5 clusters depending on the proliferation of each network). Both the seed as well as subsequent network members had recruitment criteria to satisfy prior to being enrolled within a particular cluster. They had to be aged over 18 years at the time of the survey and live within the same local area as their referral. Seeds were selected by enumerators, arbitrarily.

Within the questionnaire each respondent would mention a maximum of 18 names of individuals (12 minimum) with whom they would have conversations regarding past events. Out of these individuals a maximum of 3 and a minimum of 1 (depending on the recruitment wave) would be selected randomly for the next recruitment wave for each cluster.

The survey was administered in the two local languages Sinhala and Tamil. Items had been translated and back-translated from English by professional translators and contextualized by researchers of the local project team. Enumerators were trained prior and assisted respondents in conveying the original meanings of the items. Survey items were read to respondents and responses marked by enumerators. Scales containing both written as well as pictorial responses were provided as show cards. Maximum effort was made in ensuring privacy when completing questionnaires.

2.2.3 Measures

As mentioned previously, this was a pilot study utilized in testing questionnaires to be used later in a much lager island wide survey. Hence data for this study was derived from a larger survey instrument. Two questionnaires were utilized in the larger survey, which had a reach of 400 respondents in Sri Lanka. However, the measures used for this particular study including perceptions on development, collective victim beliefs, conflict exposure and collective action tendencies were included in one set of the questionnaires which reached 202

respondents hence the sample size of 202. The two forms of the questionnaires were randomly assigned to respondents through a coin toss prior to the actual interview.

Most of the predictor and outcome measures within this study were assessed using a six point Likert scale with pictorial representations: big thumb down (strongly disagree), medium thumb down (disagree), small thumb down (somewhat disagree), small thumb up (somewhat agree), medium thumb up (agree) and big thumb up (strongly agree). This pictorial scale was developed by the Pluralistic Memories Project team and was tested within this survey.

2.2.3.1 Perceptions on development

The scale for individual perceptions on development had fifteen items constructed by the authors. This scale contained two sub scales measuring individual's perceptions (eight items) as well as the individual's perceptions on how his/her ethnic group perceived development (seven items). The items on individual perceptions on development assessed perceptions of respondents towards reconciliation oriented development initiatives introduced by the government of Sri Lanka. It measured whether they felt such initiatives were useful and matched their unmet needs, whether they felt such initiatives were being imposed, whether they felt inferior because they had to accept such initiatives, or whether they perceive it as a form of restorative justice for wrongs committed in the past. Some examples of items were, 'I feel post-war development initiated by the government to be a form of restorative justice for things done in the past', 'As beneficiaries of the government's post-war development, I experience negativity and harm to my self-esteem'. The items on individual's perceptions on how their ethnic group perceives development used the same items phrased to capture the individual's opinion of what members of their ethnic group thought. For example, 'Members of my ethnic group don't think government sponsored post-war development to be a form of restorative justice' and 'Members of my ethnic group oppose government sponsored development as they fear the acceptance to create a negative group image among other ethnic groups'. A higher score for both scales meant that development was perceived, negatively. The subscale on individual's perceptions on development had a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .699$ and the subscale on individual's perceptions of the ethnic groups perspective on development had an $\alpha = .626$.

2.2.3.2 Individual victim beliefs

The six types of individual victim beliefs were assessed using six items. These pertaining to centrality of in-group victimization, centrality of victimization worldwide, general exclusive victim consciousness, general inclusive victim consciousness, conflict-specific exclusive victim consciousness and conflict-specific inclusive victim consciousness were assessed using items adapted from previous measures of victim beliefs (Vollhardt et al., 2016; Cohrs et al., 2015). Examples of items measuring victim beliefs were 'It is important to me to remember and pass on stories about my ethnic groups suffering' and 'In the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, people have suffered regardless of which ethnic group they belong to'. A higher score for these items meant that the respondent subscribed to such victim beliefs.

2.2.3.3 Collective action participation

Individual perceptions of collective action tendencies were tested within this study using a three-item scale developed by the authors. The ability to attract sufficient numbers of individuals for collective action initiatives; to the likelihood of individuals participating in future collective action initiatives were tested in this section. For instance 'Sufficient numbers of individuals get together in order to work towards achieving intended goals through collective action initiatives' and 'You are extremely willing to participate in future collective action initiatives' were used in this case. The three items formed a reliable scale of $\alpha = .615$. A higher score meant a higher tendency to engage in collective action.

Tested collective action tendencies used ranked data. They assessed the costs associated with various forms of collective action decisions. For instance costs associated with preferred collective action types and reasons for motivation or demotivation in engaging in collective action were measured. An example of an item is as follows: 'Out of the list provided please indicate the three most important losses that might inhibit your participation in collective action initiatives?' and 'In your opinion please state the three most effective modes of social action out of the list provided below.

2.2.3.4 Exposure to war violence

Conflict exposure of respondents was assessed using five existing categorical measures. (Elcheroth, 2006; Spini, Elcheroth, & Biruski, 2013). 'Have you been forced to leave your home and live elsewhere as a consequence of violent conflict', 'Have you ever been imprisoned, kidnapped, or taken hostage as a consequence of violent conflict', 'Has a

member of your immediate family been killed during the violent conflict', 'Has a member of your immediate family disappeared during the violent conflict' and 'Have you ever carried a weapon during a violent conflict'. A composite score was created using these five items. The higher the composite score the higher the exposure to conflict.

Unless differently specified, all measures were computed by averaging scores in each scale. The data set upon which this study was derived can be accessed at FORSbase (https://forscenter.ch/), which is an online platform for social science based studies in Switzerland (see Jayakody, Usoof-Twofeek, Bady, Elcheroth, Penić, Vollhardt, 2020a).

2.3 Results

Table 1 indicates the means, standard deviations and table 2 the correlations between the central variables analysed within this study.

2.3.1 Preliminary Analysis to Assess Conflict Exposure by Location

Since the two locations, Ampara and Matale were selected to signify two different levels of conflict exposure (Matale = no exposure and Ampara = war exposure) preliminary analysis were a check on whether this was a credible assertion. In order to examine this, two different analyses were used. Primarily, a score was computed based on the aggregate of scores on five different questions that measured conflict exposure ('Have you been forced to leave your home and live elsewhere as a consequence of violent conflict', 'Have you ever been imprisoned, kidnapped, or taken hostage as a consequence of violent conflict'). The higher the score on this aggregate the higher the conflict exposure. An independent t-test revealed a significant difference in conflict exposure between respondents from Ampara and Matale. Respondents from Ampara had experienced higher levels of conflict exposure (M = 1.10, SD = 1.23), than respondents from Matale (M = .23, SD = .49). The difference, -.863, BCa 95% CI [-1.127, -.600], was significant $t(198) = -6.46$, $p = .000$. For the item measuring conflict exposure via being forced to leave home and live elsewhere as a consequence of violent conflict, a chi-square analysis of χ^2 (1, N = 202) = 20.36, $p < .001$ revealed a significant difference in conflict exposure among the two districts. Ampara registered 34 respondents who said yes and 70 who said no for been forced to leave home. The pattern was reversed in Matale where 7 said yes and 91 said no. For been imprisoned, kidnapped, or taken hostage as a consequence of violent conflict revealed no significant relationship (χ^2 (1, N =

202) = 0.30, p =.58). In terms of an immediate family member been killed during conflict χ^2 (1, N = 202) = 25.90, $p < .001$, revealed a significant relationship where 35 respondents from Ampara out of 104 responding said that they had experienced a member of their immediate family members being killed during conflict. The number of respondents experiencing such killings in Matale was 5 out of 98. For experiences of immediate family members being disappeared during violent conflict, there was a significant difference between the two districts where Ampara recorded 25 instances out of 104 and Matale 2 out of 98. The chi-square analysis was $\chi 2$ (1, N = 202) = 21.08, $p < .001$.

Table 1

Means & standard deviations of main variables in the study

	M	*SD*	N
Exposure to conflict events	0.67	1.04	200
Individual perceptions on development	3.00	0.72	202
Ethnic group perceptions on development	3.00	0.73	196
Centrality of in-group victimization	4.70	0.90	199
Centrality of victimization worldwide	4.67	0.89	200
General exclusive victim beliefs	4.61	0.81	200
General inclusive victim beliefs	4.87	0.86	198
Conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs	4.61	1.09	199
Conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs	4.60	0.90	199
Collective action	4.67	0.98	202

Table 2

Correlations for measured variables in the study

(N = 202) Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Individual perceptions on development	-								
2. Ethnic group perceptions on development	.434**	-							
3. Centrality of in-group victimization	.147*	-.127	-						
4. Centrality of victimization worldwide	.326**	.199**	.265**	-					
5. General exclusive victim beliefs	.096	-.242**	.305**	.396**	-				
6. General inclusive victim beliefs	.018	-.208**	.415**	.267**	.444**	-			
7. Conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs	.067	-.360**	.223**	.127	.313**	.401**	-		
8. Conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs	.242**	.158*	-.010	.095	-.122	.050	.174*	-	
9. Collective action	.093	.353**	-.145*	.261**	.000	-.048	-.154*	-.006	-

Note. *p < :05; **p < :01, two-tailed.

The final item which measured conflict exposure by inquiring respondents whether they bore arms during a violent conflict revealed a significant difference between the two districts with a chi-square of $\chi 2$ (1, N = 200) = 7.73, p =.005. Ampara recorded 18 instances of bearing arms during conflict out of 102 whereas Matale recorded 5 instances out of 98.

Hence out of the five items measuring conflict exposure, four revealed that respondents in Ampara reported significant higher conflict exposure in comparison to Matale. Therefore, it was decided that Matale and Ampara could be used to operationalize conflict exposure. The following analyses therefore will reflect how individuals living in conflict exposed communities and those living in communities that were least affected by conflict respond on the different variables central to this study.

Provided the significant difference in conflict exposure between the two geographical locations, once again independent t-test was utilized in determining whether respondents from war affected communities differed in their perceptions of development, their tendencies to engage in collective action and their victim beliefs from respondents who were from less conflict affected communities. Table 3 displays the independent t-test values.

The *t* values for individual as well as their ethnic group's perspective on development revealed no significant differences between individuals in the two districts. For collective action participation however respondents from Ampara displayed the greatest willingness to participate. Out of the 8 different victim beliefs types, respondents from conflict affected Ampara seems to have placed more importance on the victimization of their own group, and on victimization taking place throughout history throughout the world. Respondents from conflict affected communities seem to place great importance not only on the suffering experience of their own but of other throughout history and seem to display greater willingness in voicing out their grievances collectively.

2.3.2 Preliminary Analysis of the Impact of Majority / Minority Status

A similar independent t-test was used to examine whether respondents' social identity as a majority or minority group member impacted perceptions on development, their tendencies to engage in collective action and their victim beliefs. Linguistic identity was used as a stand in for majority minority status. All majority group Sinhala participants responded in the Sinhala language, whereas Tamil and Muslim respondents had completed Tamil language questionnaires.

Even though how individuals perceived development and how they believed their ethnic groups perceived development revealed no significant differences in relation to conflict exposure, perspectives did significantly differ based on respondents' majority or

minority ethnic status. Minority perceptions towards development seemed to be more negative at both the individual and ethnic group level in comparison to the majority. The minorities were also more likely to engage in collective efforts for change.

Among the 6 different victim beliefs measures, minorities seemed to have placed greater importance upon victimization that took place throughout the world throughout history, and adhered more towards conflict specific inclusive thought processes regarding their suffering experience. The majority on the other hand seemed more aligned with conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs. In general, the results indicate minority group participants to endorse inclusive types of victim beliefs whereas majority group participants to focus more on exclusive victim beliefs types.

2.3.3 Primary Analysis - Correlations between Perceptions of Development, Collective Action & Victim Beliefs

A correlational analysis between individual perceptions on development and collective action revealed no significant relationship. However individual's ethnic groups perception on development and collective action revealed a significant but weak positive correlation indicative of our prediction that higher the negativity towards development, the higher the tendency to engage in collective action would be. An analysis of the six different types of victim beliefs and the individual's perception of development revealed the following significant correlations. Higher negativity towards development was associated with greater beliefs of centrality of in-group victimization, centrality of victimization worldwide and conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs. Similarly, an analysis of the victim beliefs and perceptions of one's ethnic group's feelings about development revealed the following significant correlations. Higher negative perceptions of the ethnic group were related to greater centrality of victimization worldwide and greater conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs among individuals. Negative ethnic group perceptions of development were also associated with lower levels of general exclusive victim beliefs, general inclusive victim beliefs and conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs. In general, the results indicate more inclusive forms of victim beliefs to be associated with a more negative perception towards post-war development in Sri Lanka, whereas more exclusive victim beliefs to be associated with a more positive ideology towards development, contrary to what we hypothesized. Correlations between the six victim beliefs and collective action tendencies revealed the

following three significant associations. Centrality of in-group victimization and conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs were negatively related to collective action, whereas centrality of victimization worldwide was positively related to collective action. Again contrary to our hypothesis exclusive victim beliefs seem to be negatively associated with collective action whereas more inclusive beliefs seem to be positively related to collective action tendencies. Table 2 depicts all correlations analysed.

Table 3

Independent t-test values for measured variables based on conflict exposure

	Matale		Ampara		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t* (df)
Exposure to conflict events	0.23	0.49	1.10	1.23	- 6.46*** (198)
Individual perceptions on development	2.93	0.64	3.06	0.79	- 1.32 (200)
Ethnic group perceptions on development	2.96	0.66	3.03	0.78	- 0.74 (194)
Centrality of in-group victimization	4.48	0.99	4.89	0.77	- 3.27*** (197)
Centrality of victimization worldwide	4.52	0.91	4.81	0.86	- 2.30* (198)
General exclusive victim beliefs	4.58	0.79	4.64	0.82	- 0.53 (198)
General inclusive victim beliefs	4.84	0.78	4.89	0.93	- 0.44 (196)
Conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs	4.62	1.13	4.60	1.06	0.16 (197)
Conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs	4.65	0.95	4.56	0.86	0.74 (197)
Collective action	4.46	0.86	4.90	1.03	0.09** (200)

Note. *p < :05; **p < :01, *** p < .001 two-tailed.

Table 4

Independent t-test values for measured variables based on majority / minority status

	Majority		Minority		*t* (df)
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Exposure to conflict events	0.78	0.99	0.58	1.08	1.35 (198)
Individual perceptions on development	2.55	0.54	3.42	0.61	- 10.65*** (200)
Ethnic group perceptions on development	2.46	0.46	3.52	0.53	- 14.97*** (194)
Centrality of in-group victimization	4.78	0.63	4.62	1.10	- 1.18 (197)
Centrality of victimization worldwide	4.32	0.75	5.01	0.88	- 5.95*** (198)
General exclusive victim beliefs	4.60	0.70	4.63	0.90	- 0.22 (198)
General inclusive victim beliefs	4.91	0.77	4.83	0.94	0.59 (196)
Conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs	4.80	1.02	4.42	1.14	2.50* (197)
Conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs	4.38	0.76	4.81	0.98	- 3.47*** (197)
Collective action	4.23	0.87	5.12	0.87	- 7.20*** (200)

Note. *p < :05; **p < :01, *** p < .001 two-tailed.

2.4 Discussion

The primary objective of this research was to identify reactions towards development as a reconciliation mechanism. It examined individual experiences of living in different communities with conflict especially in terms of victim beliefs, influencing their perceptions on development and their willingness to take part in collective action as a response to how they perceive developmental work. Analyses used the two locations in which the survey was conducted to stand for different levels of conflict exposure. Conflict exposure was

significantly higher for Ampara district, which is in the former conflict zone of Sri Lanka. Respondents from Matale indicated significantly lower levels of exposure.

Contrary to what we hypothesised, the reactions people had towards development were not significantly different by the different levels of conflict exposure in the communities from which respondents were sampled. A possible explanation for this could be that the post war reconciliation oriented development targeted the country as a whole. One of the objectives stated within the Mahinda *Chintanaya* 2010 (Ministry of Finance and Planning, 2010) was to create equitable access to economic development through connectivity infrastructure throughout the country. This was evident by the initiation of various island wide development programs such as the *Rajarata Navodaya*, *Kandurata Navodaya*, *Pubudamu Wellassa*, *Sabaragamuwa Arunalokaya*, *Uthuru Wasanthaya*, *Negenahira Navodaya Wayamba Pubuduwa* and the *Ruhuna Udanaya*. However as predicted, minorities indicated a higher negative attitude towards development. To investigate the reasons behind this would be areas for future research. Some questions that seem pertinent are whether this is because minorities feel negatively towards development that is being put in place by a government that is seen as representative of the Sinhala majority or whether it is because they don't perceive the development work as adequately restorative or whether it is simply because it does not meet their current needs.

In terms of collective action tendencies, as predicted respondents from Ampara with its high conflict exposure indicated stronger support for collective action in comparison to respondents from Matale. It is possible that those living in areas that were severely affected by violence, and who received inadequate support from centralized political structures, had to take on the responsibility and initiate actions towards change. Another reason may be the considerable presence of local as well as international non-governmental organizations working in conflict areas on peace, human rights and infrastructure development. The North and the Eastern parts of the country were also greatly affected by the 2006 tsunami, which also increased NGO and INGO focus. Aid for these affected communities do not come in isolation. Often they are encompassed within a package of empowerment in terms of livelihoods, human rights, gender equality, etc. This legacy of NGO and INGO activity in the region would also make those living in these areas more comfortable with collective action. Minorities too as hypothesised indicated higher levels of support towards collective action. This too can be related to the above explanation. Even in Matale, a large proportion of the

Tamil community come from the estate sector. These minorities tend to be recipients of a considerable amount NGO intervention as well as state funded aid. This may explain the increased willingness to engage in collective action. On the other hand, the unmet needs of the minorities and their relatively high group-based deprivations can be another rational explanation behind their high levels of collective action participation.

An analysis of different types of victim beliefs with regards to conflict exposure revealed centrality of in-group victimization and centrality of global victimization to be most common among those living in communities with greater exposure to conflict. This tends to be contrary to the exclusive victim consciousness that the authors predicted for individuals living within the former conflict zones. Centrality of in-group victimization assesses the importance communities place upon their ingroup's suffering. Therefore, it is not surprising that those who report higher levels of exposure to violence also report higher levels of centrality of in-group victimization. Centrality of global victimization is on the contrary a victim belief, which reflects the individuals' understanding of suffering for other out-groups throughout history and throughout the world. Therefore, what the data seems to be pinpointing to is that those exposed to violence are likely to hold both the centralized in-group victimization as well as centralized global victim beliefs. The simultaneous subscription to these seemingly contradictory victim beliefs may need to be parsed apart. One possibility is that when asked about other groups that have suffered similarly, they are actually thinking of groups that are also similar to them on other dimensions. For example, a respondent who believes that they have been victimized may think of other groups of the same religions that have been victimized in other parts of the world. Anecdotally, Sri Lankan Sinhalese Buddhist often evoke the plight of Buddhists in Bangladesh, when describing their fears about Muslims in Sri Lanka. In doing so they are not thinking of every group that has been victimized by violence, they may only be focusing selectively on groups similar to them. According to Gay (2006), economic and political competition may result in the loss of recognizing similarities in the victimization experience among different groups living in the same society. Since, victim groups in other societies may be less threatening in this regard, it can be a potential reason behind individuals considering groups who are similar and live externally when thinking along the lines of inclusive victim beliefs. Vollhardt, (2015) also states how motivations for inclusive victim consciousness can be strategic for the in-group. It can facilitate the distribution of collective guilt, gain more recognition to the suffering and

secure compensation and also gain allies for the in-group. Hence inclusive victim consciousness may not always intended to be 'inclusive'. Another possibility would be simply the fact that individuals who value their own suffering experience genuinely valuing the suffering of others too.

Analysing victim beliefs with regards to majority minority ethnicity revealed that centrality of global victimization and conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs to be more prominent among minorities. This again seems quite contrary to the authors' predictions for minorities finding it difficult in comprehending similarities in their suffering experience with the majority, provided their asymmetric and historic suffering. Centrality of global victimization as mentioned previously is a concern for suffering of other out-groups whereas conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs tends to be an acknowledgement of similarities with the experiences of suffering of other groups within a particular conflict. Again the conceptualization of victimization worldwide needs further research. However, the research literature does site instances of inclusive victim beliefs where individuals have been motivated by their own suffering to be more sensitive towards others suffering. A concept proposed by Vollhardt & Staub, (2011) called "altruism born of suffering" provides examples of increased prosocial tendencies towards in-group as well as out-groups after experiences of collective victimization (Staub & Vollhardt, 2008; Vollhardt, 2009b; Vollhardt & Staub, 2011; Vollhardt, 2012). Vollhardt, (2015) has also pointed out instances where conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness is observed among victims who mobilize for peace and reconciliation by pointing out to shared suffering among parties at war. For example, the Jewish–Israeli organization "Parents' Circle: Bereaved Families for Peace" is a case in point. A possible explanation for our findings can be the minorities sampled were disproportionately representative of those who had experienced different forms of deprivation, structural violence; those in Ampara because of the war and those in Matale because many of them came from disempowered communities in the estate sector. Other potential confounding factors at play can be the life circumstances that the minorities are currently facing. Apart from the historic structural violence, they have quite recently been annihilated in a three decade long civil war, and are at the receiving end of a unilaterally implemented peace initiative by its former oppressors. Overt expressions of exclusive victim consciousness and its associated hostile intergroup outcomes may not be the most logical for

the minorities during current times. Hence are the minorities being strategic through their claims of inclusive suffering is another important question worth future investigation.

The majority Sinhalese as predicted indicated a higher tendency towards conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs. A majority having such exclusive victim beliefs especially during times where transitional justice mechanisms are put in place seems logical. As exclusive victim beliefs portray the in-group to have suffered more than the other groups, this could act as a defence preventing the majority from being branded as the perpetrators by providing accounts of greater in-group suffering.

Interestingly as predicted, within the general population it was found that how individuals' ethnic group perceived development was related to their willingness to engage in collective action. The greater they perceived their ethnic group to view development negativity, the higher their tendency was to mobilize collectively in voicing out their grievances. However, both at the individual and ethnic group levels, possessing more inclusive victimhood construals seem to be associated with more negative perceptions towards development, whereas more exclusive victimhood construals seem to be associated with more positive attitudes towards development, contrary to what the authors hypothesised. Again, contrary to what was hypothesised was the positive association of inclusive victim consciousness and the negative association of exclusive victim consciousness with collective mobilization. The negative attitudes people displayed towards development and their collective expressions of grievances to local and or central government of Sri Lanka seem to be driven by a mutual understanding and a willingness towards alleviating suffering that is common to all. These findings however require further analysis. The grievances involving Sri Lanka's post-war development, especially relating to its militarised, top down and imposed nature (Rajasingham, 2010; Saparamadu & Lall, 2014), its identity heightening potential involved with dependency orientation (Nadler et al., 2009), and its general inadequacy for all citizens, seem possible avenues for future investigation. The different victim beliefs prevalent among these hierarchically diverse ethnic groups and their impact upon other transitional justice policies within the country as well as collective mobilization will be investigated further in chapters 3 & 4.

This study however, has a few weaknesses that need to be addressed in future research. The current research uses location as a stand in for conflict exposure and linguistic

group as a stand in for majority and minority status. While, preliminary analyses show that this is possible, direct information would be significantly more credible and legitimate. Future studies in this area should strive to collect this data, directly. Furthermore, it is also noted that the data has been gathered in just two locations in Sri Lanka, which raises issues regarding the generalizability of these findings. While, these two locations were carefully selected to represent all ethnic and religious communities as well as socioeconomic groups, it may not be seen as providing adequate grounds for generalizability. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies attempt to include several locations that would enable generalization.

In conclusion, it can be said that this study through several interesting findings seem to point towards the importance of understanding how individuals in different communities with differing conflict experiences respond to development projects that may be portrayed as mechanisms of restorative justice and reconciliation. The outright detestation of such development projects by minorities clearly indicates the differed and inadequate post-war realities surrounding infrastructure development as a reconciliation strategy for them. The fact that individuals living in the former conflict zone (which are often predominated by the minority Tamils and Muslims) expressing greater negativity towards development and expressing greater willingness in voicing out their post-war grievances collectively, raises important questions as to what exactly triggers collective action among individuals living in such diverse communities, with diverse conflict experiences and having diverse post-conflict needs. Chapter 4 investigates such varying dynamics fuelling individual collective action next.

Chapter 3

Affecting Change: The Impact of group structure and conflict in post war Sri Lanka[2]

3.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the differed realities surrounding the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil's collective change initiatives in post-conflict Sri Lanka. Supplementing the previously studied inadequacies and reactions surrounding development, this chapter investigates the ethnic connotations underlying the collective efforts for change especially among the aggrieved minority. The data collected for this study involves the 2017 Pluralistic Memories Project's island wide survey discussed in detail within chapter 5.

3.1.1 Affecting change

Affecting change is an important aspect of human life. We live within a reality filled with unequal relations where power and resources are often unevenly distributed among different social groups. Group dynamics sustaining these inequalities are usually causes behind sever social problems such as prejudice, discrimination, ideological extremism, leading to conflict and genocide. Not all forms of inequalities are maintained through negative interactions. Oppressors resort to more positive means of sustaining and disguising unequal power relations by often rewarding subordinates that confirm to existing hierarchies (Dixon, Levine, Reicher, Durrheim, 2012). Under such circumstances the ability for group members who are at the receiving end of unfair treatment to understand it, and to rally around their group to initiate change for the betterment of their group, becomes vital for the survival of such groups as well as their individual members.

One way of affecting change for subordinate groups is to engage in collective action. This involves igniting a collective struggle to achieve social justice. A collective action can be any action that is targeted towards improving the status of the in-group as a whole

[2] Jayakody, S., Usoof-Thowfeek, R., and Spini, D. (2019). *Affecting Change: The Impact of group structure and conflict in post war Sri Lanka*. Manuscript in preparation.

(Wright, 2009; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Such actions can be performed by larger groups by means of mass protests, demonstrations and riots. It can also be performed by single individuals acting on behalf of their groups. Signing a petition, writing protest letters and confronting discriminatory acts can be examples of individuals engaging in collective action on behalf of their social groups. These struggles can also take many forms ranging from education, awareness raising, to signing petitions and voting. They can also take more disruptive forms such as strikes, riots and even bombings (Wright, 2009). In the process of questioning existing oppressive hierarchical structures, these collective acts can often disrupt existing social norms. Depending on the disruptive force of the action and the non-normative nature of it, the risks involved for the disadvantaged group, the attention drawn from advantaged groups as well as other third parties can vary (Louis, 2009; Wright, 2009).

Research investigating social psychological determinants of collective action have been performed using diverse social groups and diverse methodologies. Experimental studies performed in laboratories using mostly university undergraduates have been quite popular (Kawakami & Dion, 1993; Simon, Trötschel, & Dähne, 2008; Becker & Wagner, 2009; Jetten, Schmitt, Branscombe, Garza, & Mewse, 2011) with the exception of some being performed online with external participants. Alternative methods of study have included field surveys (Mummendey, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel, & Blanz, 1999), telephone surveys (Smith & Tyler, 1996), postal surveys (Bynner & Ashford, 1994) and discourse analysis based on public documents (Reicher, Cassidy, Wolpert, Hopkins & Levine, 2006). A current shift in the literature which studies collective action as a dynamic process which evolves as a function of actual participation, promotes the study of collective action through methods such as participation observation, semi structured interviews and various other data collection methods at different stages of the change initiative (Reicher, 1996; Stott & Reicher, 1998; Drury & Reicher, 2005; Stott, Adang, Livingstone, & Schreiber, 2007).

These studies highlight social identity, individual's instrumental belief of their costs vs. benefits, along with a belief of their group's efficacy to be central in determining their tendency to take part in collective action. Theoretical explanations of collective action which are based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) state collective action to be most plausible when individuals categorize themselves as members of a disadvantaged group and are collectively identified with that group. Three socio-structural variables, impermeability of

group boundaries, the illegitimacy, and instability of the ingroup's situation further contribute to group members' decision to initiate collective action. An individual's instrumental concerns regarding the costs and benefits associated with participating in collective action can greatly influence their decision to participate (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987, van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Based on resource mobilization theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), the assumptions behind a cost benefit theorization of collective action involves an understanding that inequality and discrimination is more frequent making it too pervasive in predicting collective acts. This theorizes collective action as a more strategic endeavour on the part of the individual and his or her in-group, contrary to being a simple passionate reaction to injustice. Along these lines, the perceptions one has regarding the efficacy of ones' in-group in pressurizing the powerful to enforce social change has also become an important factor influencing one's decision to participate in collective action (Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999; van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

3.1.2 Structural position of groups and collective action

Within such theorizations, the structural position of one's group can be quite important in revealing essential mechanisms motivating individuals' participation in collective action as the group's structural position can determine the amount of inequality and injustice experienced by its individual members. Throughout the literature, members of low status disadvantaged groups have been portrayed to participate more in collective initiatives to overcome social injustice, while members of high status advantaged groups have been shown to participate collectively to protect their own status quo or to show solidarity with the disadvantaged's efforts of social change (Becker, 2012; van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009). Members of the high status advantaged group who contemplate solidarity with the disadvantaged face a dilemma of being trapped between the interest of their in-group (maintaining the status quo) vs. interests of societal justice. This dilemma and difference in interest between challenging and maintaining status quos emphasizes a need for analysing both the advantaged as well as the disadvantaged within collective action research. However such a research focus within the collective action literature has been almost non-existent provided that collective action has typically been explained only through the actions of individuals belonging to one status group. This is either low status groups (Stürmer & Simon, 2009; Ellemers & Barreto, 2009), high status groups (Postmes & Smith, 2009) or opinion

groups undifferentiated by group status (van Stekelenburg, Klandermans, & van Dijk, 2009; McGarty, Bliuc, Thomas, & Bongiorno, 2009).

Another potential reason for emphasizing both advantaged and disadvantaged groups within collective action research and determining predictors motivating individual participation arises from the common misconception of homogenizing groups. Diversity exists within high status advantaged groups as well as low status disadvantaged groups. A small aggrieved group of members belonging to a majority representing a state, poses an example of an outer in-group among a high status advantaged majority. This small aggrieved group making their concerns heard to the central government comprising of members belonging to their own in-group involves a case where members belonging to a majority engaging in collective initiatives to overcome social injustice. Similarly, a small privileged group of inhabitants belonging to an oppressed minority of a country, could be an example of an outer in-group among a low status disadvantaged minority. Can all the factors predicting collective action such as social identity, cost vs. benefits of participation and collective efficacy be the same across these different status groups? Or even be the same across members of an inner in-group and outer in-group of one particular status group?

3.1.3 Conflict dynamics and collective action

A majority of research studies, which have entered the mainstream literature of collective action, have been implemented in more or less stable environments. For instance, within the global north, using different methods such as experiments and surveys. Even among the dynamic process studies on protests using participant observation, the contexts regardless of the violent nature of the protest have been within relatively stable environments in the global north. Besides collective action research carried out in the global south being quite sparse, research focusing on change initiatives within relatively unstable, conflict settings in the global south seem almost non-existent.

The instability involved with conflict settings can provide interesting contexts for collective action research. Post conflict societies present fragile conditions for living as conflict can cause substantial collapses in various political, judicial, economic and social domains (Newman & Schnabel 2002; Brounéus, 2009) of previously well-functioning societies. Community members that are directly affected in the form of physical assault, injury, destruction of homes, livelihood, displacement, the death or disappearance of loved

ones, can create immense trauma both individually and collectively. Reduced access to essential services, infrastructure and financial market failures can all amount to the daily stress experienced by people living in post conflict societies provided the different degrees of exposure to violence. Hence the instrumental concerns of people living in post conflict settings tend to be significantly higher compared to others living in non-conflict zones. In the face of such dire circumstances, communities greatly exposed to violence particularly the ones that were detached from centralized structures can have low expectations with regards to their collective efficacy. The emergence of victim vs. perpetrator identities also becomes inevitable in the aftermath of conflict where members of groups that experienced violence perceive their group to be victims while blaming others for perpetrating violence (Wohl and Branscombe, 2008; Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gundar, 2009; Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012). Bar-Tal et al., (2009), state this notion of victimhood to be often exclusive, which is an understanding that the in-group suffered unjustly the most compared to other groups. Such perceptions of unjust victimhood are likely to be much higher within contexts affected by asymmetric violence (Penic, Elcheroth & Spini, 2016).

As a whole, conflict settings seem to create precarious conditions for collective action. The destruction caused by war on physical infrastructure and the sociocultural fabric, places individuals living in former conflict zones in need of social change. It creates heightened social identities based on unjust in-group victimization but on the contrary burdens people with increased instrumental concerns, along with community climates often unsupportive for collective change compared to others living in non-conflict zones. The structural inequalities associated with groups are either maintained or worsened following conflict especially in the case of asymmetric violence. A structural aspect of groups highlighted by protracted conflict that is interesting for collective action research is the heightening of heterogeneity of in-group identity. We have outer in-groups belonging to both the high status advantaged and low status disadvantaged that are aggrieved by war, demanding justice from a victor. This triggers questions relating to whether factors predicting collective action, relating to social identity, cost vs. benefits of participation and collective efficacy is the same for different status groups across former conflict zones, as well as inner in-groups and outer in-groups across former conflict and non-conflict zones.

While the debate on perusing scientific inquiry of universal human motives that are isolated from social contexts versus the importance of environmental contingencies

influencing human behaviours still continue, holding an inductive approach in grounding theory in many contexts as possible seems to be the way forward suggested by many (Bar-Tal, 2004; Elcheroth & Spini, 2015; Moss, Uluğ, & Acar, 2018). Keeping in line with this ideology, the authors through this research paper attempt to investigate to a certain degree, the universality of collective action theory in a context where the structural position of a particular ethnic group matters within an intergroup system, where the system itself is more or less destabilized by protracted conflict. The context of interest within this study is post-war Sri Lanka.

3.1.4 Post conflict Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is currently rebuilding from a war that affected the country for more than thirty years. Its civil war that was fought, took place between the Sri Lankan military, which represented the Sri Lankan state, which comprised of the majority Sinhalese populous, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) an armed militant group representing the aspirations of the aggrieved Tamil minority of the country. The war ended in 2009 resulting in a military victory for the Government of Sri Lanka and a total annihilation of the LTTE. Prior to this war, Sri Lankan society was characterized by continued structural oppression against minority ethnic groups living throughout the country.

The current situation in the North & Eastern parts of the country comprising of most of the native land belonging to the minority Tamils and areas in which a great amount of destruction occurred due to the war is quite grim. Even though mass scale infrastructure development has occurred in these areas, serious efforts for reconciliation in terms of accountability, truth, restorative justice and securing of minority rights haven't been sought after. There has been a high military presence in these areas even to date since the end of the war and the military has been accused of occupying civilian land and influencing markets by the providing various goods and services. The prevention of terrorism act is still enforced and used to suppress free expression and activism granting a great deal of power to the executive, military and police to detain people for long periods without judicial supervision in the name of preventing terrorism. The situation in the southern parts of the country has similarly been unfavourable for change initiatives for members of both the minority and the majority as the government has been quite harsh in responding to protest action throughout the country.

Despite such suppression, accounts of communities standing up and making themselves heard to provincial and central government in the country regarding their grievances and unfair treatment are being heard of quite frequently during recent times. Accounts of protesters demanding the release of civilian land are reported from Mannar in the Northwestern province (Wickrematunge, 2017b) and Keppapulavu and Mullaithivu in the Northeastern provinces (Fernando, 2019). Similarly accounts of protests by families of the disappeared have been reported and followed in Vavuniya and Kilinochchi in the Northern province and in Mullaithivu in the Northeastern province (Wickrematunge, 2017a; Fernando, 2017).

On a different claim to transitional justice, back in 2017 there were mass protests in Kalkudah in the Eastern province against a proposed ethyl alcohol plant ("More protest against", 2017). Provided Alcoholism is currently a chronic social problem in the Northeastern parts of the Island since the end of the war, people from all three communities the Muslims, Tamils and the Sinhalese had participated in protest against the potential harm that can be induced upon their younger generations' health, education and the environment.

Even protests in the country's South among the majority Sinhalese dominant areas have been receiving huge resistance from the state. For example protests carried out by the doctors and university students opposing privatization of education in Colombo ("Anti SAITM protest," 2018) and the quite recent protest by the farmers of Rajanganaya in the North Central province against the approval of the state to provide tank water for a bottled water company, severely depriving cultivation during the dry season ("Tension in Thambuttegama," 2018), have all received huge state resistance in the form of injunction orders and police brutality.

Provided the historic ethnic and structural violence faced by different ethnic groups living in Sri Lanka, the current post war surveillance present and the overall suppressive role that is being adapted by the state especially on minority ethnic groups, studying factors that actually motivate different ethnic communities to get together and voice out their concerns to local and or central governments within a post conflict environment tends to be the main objective of this research paper. In the process, ethnically charged identities, communal climates, as well as individual instrumental concerns for participating, will be focused upon

in uncovering potential factors motivating different ethnic communities (both majority and minorities) towards collective action for change in post war Sri Lanka.

3.1.5 Ethnically charged identities

Within a context where a plethora of historic ethnic violence and structural violence is present and has fed into a protracted asymmetric conflict, the emergence of identities in the form of victims and perpetrators becomes inevitable. Provided that different ethnic groups have all experienced and perpetrated violence to a certain degree assuming dual roles as both victims and perpetrators (Noor, Vollhardt, Mari & Nadler, 2017), analysing the importance they place upon their ethnicity in making sense of the illegitimacy of their suffering and their unequal treatment becomes extremely important in predicting efforts for change. Also as ethnic identities provide for impermeable, illegitimate and unstable circumstances for the different ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, ethnic identity salience will be the initial motivating factor investigated.

Glorification of ingroup's identity is considered an important facet of in-group identity salience (Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Halevy, & Eidelson, 2008) and is known to be a better predictor of negative intergroup outcomes such as legitimized violence against out-groups (Leidner, Castano, Zaiser, & Giner-Sorolla, 2010; Roccas et al., 2006, 2008). Since collective struggles of achieving change can take many forms ranging from education and awareness creating to more disruptive forms such as riots (Wright, 2009), analysing glorification of ethnic identity might reveal better insights to identity content providing better explanations of factors influencing participation for collective action initiatives for the different ethnic groups. Also, provided the history of glorifying trauma narratives during Sri Lanka's conflict to bolster cohesiveness and mobilize people towards violence (Ramanathapillai, 2006), investigating the role of ethnic identity glorification in motivating collective action will be the second factor examined under ethnically charged identities.

A third potential trigger of collective action related to ethnic identity attachment worth analysing in a context frequent with incidents of war victimization and historic structural violence are victim beliefs. Victim beliefs refer to the subjective psychological experience that result from a more objective infliction of harm by one group on another (Vollhardt, 2012; Noor et al., 2017). The subjective construal of the objective victimization

experience is important as for some the experience is unimportant despite being direct recipients of out-group harm. On the contrary for some it becomes quite important despite having considerable geographic and or temporal distances to the actual victimization incident. Hence the importance placed upon by individuals with regards to the victimization of their in-group (in this case their ethnic group) referred to as 'centrality of in-group victimization' will be studied as the third potential factor related to ethnically charged identities, influencing individual decisions in participating in collective action.

Sometimes the importance placed by individuals on the suffering of their in-group has been known to be quite detrimental for intergroup relations. For instance when people perceive their in-group to have suffered more than an out-group(s), research have indicated instances where individuals have been less forgiving towards out-groups (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008; Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008). Studies have further revealed how awareness of an in-groups historical victimization can actually increase support for military actions and feeling of less collective guilt for violence committed against different and unrelated out-groups during present times (Schori-Eyal, Halperin, & Bar-Tal, 2014; Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). These detrimental views that an in-group has suffered more than the out-group in a given conflict is known within the collective victimhood literature as conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs (Noor et al., 2008; Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008; Noor et al., 2012). Provided the conflict exacerbating nature of exclusive victim beliefs and the conflicting nature associated with collective struggles themselves, conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs will be analysed as the fourth potential factor related to ethnically charged identities, fuelling collective action initiatives.

In contrast to exclusive victim beliefs, inclusive victim beliefs which involves an understanding that the out-group has suffered similarly to the in-group has been known for its impact in fostering positive intergroup relations. For example, Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, (2013), Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Doosje, (2015) and Adelman, Leidner, Ünal, Nahhas, & Shnabel, (2016) have shown how the focus on common suffering in a regional conflict have reduced individual tendencies to engage in competitive victimhood and increased willingness to forgive. Even though inclusive victim consciousness indicate better prospects for peace and reconciliation, a growing literature opposing intergroup contact has shown how strategies for forgiving and liking out-groups have prevented subordinate groups from mobilizing themselves for collective action, especially against structural violence (Dixon et al., 2012;

Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007). This indicated to us the importance of studying conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs as a potential demotivator in de-energizing collective action efforts especially among the aggrieved minority in post conflict Sri Lanka. Consequently conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs were analysed as the fourth potential factor related to ethnically charged identities, influencing collective action initiatives.

3.1.6 Communal climate

Even when individuals perceive their group situation to be illegitimate and unstable, not all of them rush to the streets, occupy, destroy property and engage in violent forms of collective action. Some do very little despite their anger and this is considered sometimes to be due to a lack of collective efficacy in bringing about change within their groups (Folger, 1987; Martin, Brickman, & Murray, 1984; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999). Collective action is considered very strategic and political. Hence an individual's participation is considered to be based upon rational decisions. They would participate only if personal gains over weigh personal losses (Van Zomeren et al., 2008). If their collective efforts are incapable of achieving change, individuals would refrain from risking participation.

Analysing the perceptions individuals have with regards to the level of collective efficacy present within their communities provide valuable insights to the communal climates that individuals are exposed to. The 30-year civil war in Sri Lanka alienated many communities from centralized structures. Some received very little attention due to inaccessibility while some received a plethora of assistance from the central government, international as well as local NGO's. Some despite very little assistance seem to have functioned quite well preserving their existence throughout the war. Hence, levels of collective efficacy, in other words the group's shared belief in their conjoint capabilities to achieve goals (Bandura, 1997) is bound to vary from one community to another, especially among ethnically homogenous majority and minority communities, drawing our attention as a plausible communal factor in predicting collective action tendencies in post war communities.

Another important factor determining the conduciveness of communal climates for collective action chosen by the authors was social cohesion. Social cohesion involves the "networks, norms and trust that bring people together to take action" (Lavis & Stoddart,

1999) and groups that are well connected tend to have greater access to social capital (Hannan, 1999; Portes, 1998). This involves greater access to information, financial resources and different assets that would directly influence the group's efficacy. Krishna & Shrader, (1999) in their social cohesion measure talk of different cognitive aspects involved with the quality of social interactions taking place within communities. The cognitive aspects measured involved trust, attachment, help and tolerance levels within communities. These cognitive aspects measuring the quality of social interactions within communities were considered by the authors to be a good measure of the conduciveness of communities for collective action, especially with regards to the homogenous majority and minority ethnic communities differently affected by war. Social cohesion was investigated as the second potential factor related to communal climates, influencing individual decisions to participate in collective action.

3.1.7 Individual instrumental concerns (Personal grievances)

Individual circumstances are not the same for everyone in conflict torn communities. Physical injury, the destruction of one's home, the disappearance or death of a loved one can create great trauma inhibiting individuals from participating in collective action initiatives. Staub & Bar-Tal, (2003) described how Trauma and especially intense victimization can diminish people, making them feel that something must be wrong with them as individuals or as members of groups, making them question, 'otherwise, how could such horrible things be done to them'? Hence studying the impact, exposure to conflict has on an individual's tendency to participate in collective action seemed an important and logical variable worth studying in a post conflict society such as Sri Lanka, especially due to its asymmetric exposure among the majority and minority ethnicity.

Even though individuals might not be exposed to conflict (both structural and physical) directly, stressful social and material conditions created or worsened by armed conflict often disrupt their lives. For instance, poverty, malnutrition, displacement and destruction of social networks may create stressful circumstances that may lead people to feel a fundamental lack of control over the basic resources on which their physical and psychological wellbeing depend. Under such circumstances of personal loss, are people willing to incur further physical and material loss by participating in collective action initiatives was a question worth investigating through this study. Again, provided the

different structural conditions historically faced by members of the majority and minority ethnic groups, exposure to poverty was analysed as the second instrumental concern motivating their participation in collective action initiatives in a post conflict setting.

3.1.8 Hypothesis

Within this paper the authors explore the following hypothesis in relation to collective mobilization for social justice in post-conflict Sri Lanka. Initially the authors hypothesize ethnic grievances, communal climates and individual instrumental concerns to influence collective mobilization differently for the majority Sinhalese and Tamils. Amounting to the Tamil's minority oppressed status, historic structural and physical violence, the authors predict ethnic grievances to be of greater relevance for the Tamils in their comprehension of current social justice issues. Inline with the social identity model of collective action (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), where identifying and categorizing with a disadvantaged group is predicted to stimulate collective action, the authors hypothesize greater identification with ethnic group identity to predict greater collective mobilization among the Tamils. Secondly, inline with the findings of increased violence towards out-groups involved with having an uncritical glorified sense of ethnic identity (Leidner et al., 2010; Roccas et al., 2006, 2008) and the possibilities associated with mobilizing civilians through the use of selective and glorified narratives of trauma, the authors hypothesize a glorified sense of ethnic identity attachment to predict greater collective mobilization among Tamils towards the majority Sinhalese represented state. Next, the authors hypothesize victimhood construals to be an important component of ethnic grievances facilitating collective mobilization. With studies indicating historic victimization to be considered relevant towards current social justice related issues experienced by groups (Leach, 2020; Vollhardt & Nair, 2018; Jeong & Vollhardt, 2021) and injustice related to the victimization experiences predicting collective action towards perpetrator groups (Jeong & Vollhardt, 2021), the authors predict centrality of in-group victimization beliefs and exclusive victim beliefs to predict greater collective mobilization among the Tamils against the majoritarian state. On the contrary the more pacifying and reduced feelings of injustice involved with inclusive victimhood construals to predict reduced collective mobilization. While the authors predict ethnic grievances among Tamils living in the former conflict zones to be greater hence such grievances to predict increased collective mobilization, the authors

simultaneously predict ethnic grievances to play no role among the Sinhalese living throughout the country.

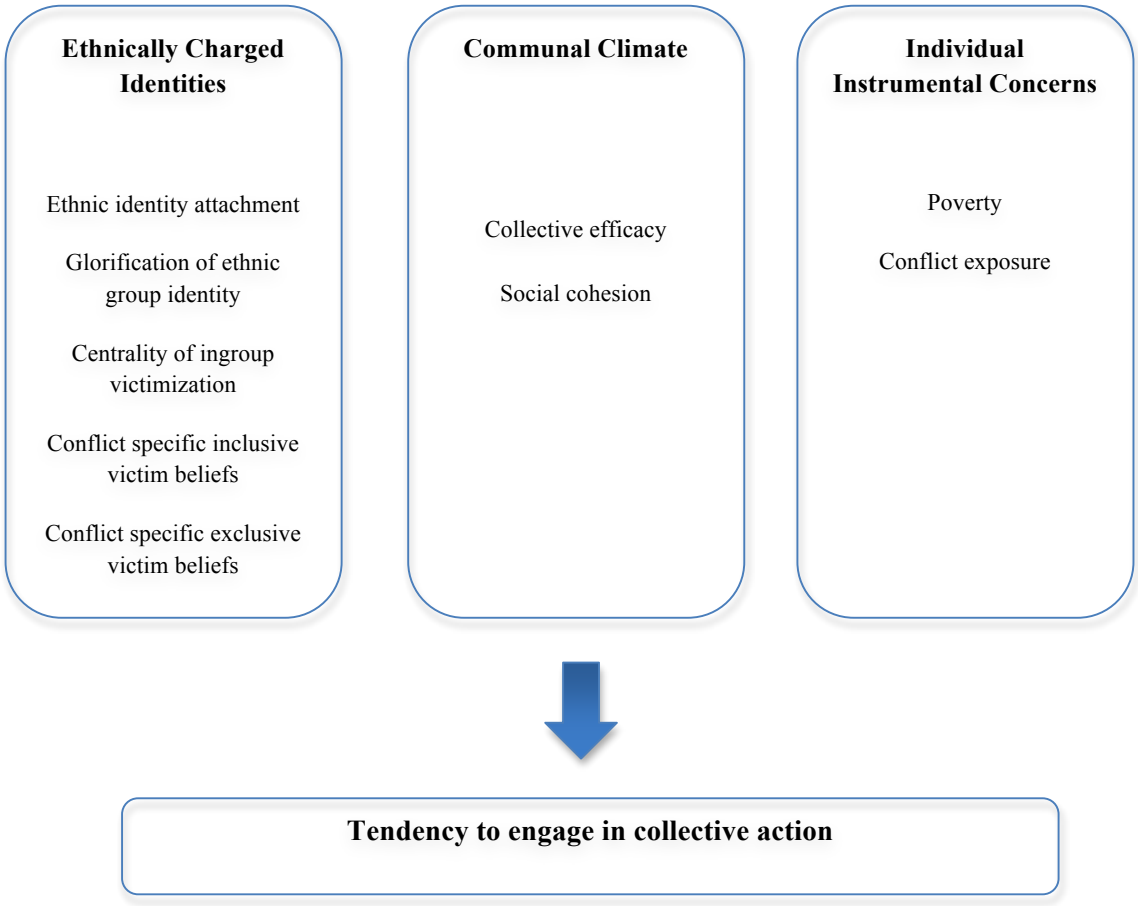
The paper hypothesizes conducive communal climates in the form of highly efficacious and cohesive communities to predict greater collective mobilization among individuals irrespective of ethnic and conflict based geographic distinctions. Aligning with the predictions of resource mobilization theory where collective action is defined to be a strategic endeavour where individuals and groups attempt at maximizing gains while minimizing losses (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Klandermans, 1984, 1986). Beliefs of Social cohesion involving networks, norms and trust, bringing people together in acting collectively (Lavis, & Stoddart, 2003) and collective efficacy involving in-group beliefs regarding their capacity in reaching desired goals (Bandura, 1997), are both considered positively influential in fuelling collective mobilization efforts of individuals irrespective of ethnicity and or conflict exposure.

Finally continuing along the arguments of resource mobilization theory in maximizing individual gains while minimizing losses, the authors argue individual instrumental concerns in the form of conflict exposure and poverty to inhibit participation in collective mobilization efforts. The prevalence of external stressor associated with conflict trauma and poverty are capable of diminishing people disrupting their lives (Fernando et al., 2010; Vindevogel et al., 2015), hence predicted by the authors to inhibit collective action participation irrespective of ethnic group distinctions. Individual instrumental concerns are predicted to be far worse in the former conflict zones.

To summarize, the model proposed by the authors based on the literature review include the following independent variables assessing collective action tendencies in post conflict settings among different status groups is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1

The impact of ethnically charged identities, communal climates and individual instrumental concerns on collective action tendencies



3.2 Method

3.2.1 Introduction

This study was part of an international research project carried out in Sri Lanka, Burundi and Palestine called the Pluralistic Memories Project that documented diverse memories relating to past conflict. Multi-stage stratified probability sampling was utilized in selecting respondents throughout Sri Lanka with unequal selection weights being implemented for areas that were diversely exposed to conflict. Apart from responding to

measures on collective action, ethnic group identity, victim consciousness, social cohesion, collective efficacy and exposure to poverty and conflict, that are at the centre of analysis for this particular research study, respondents were also probed within the survey interview on individual life events, psychological wellbeing, social networks, conflict memories, and attitudes towards different aspects of conflict including transitional justice as part of the larger research project.

3.2.2 Sample

The sample included 1,188 Sri Lankans out of which 53.6% were female. Their ages ranged between 19 and 93 with the mean age being 44.5. 14.7% of the sample had received no formal education where 51.2% had finished primary school. 29.7% of them had finished secondary school while 4.4% had gone on to obtain a higher-level degree.

46.5% of the participants identified themselves to be Sinhalese, which is the majority ethnic group in Sri Lanka that speaks the Sinhalese language. The remaining 53.5% included three main minority ethnic groups that predominantly speak the Tamil language. They included 31.3% Sri Lankan Tamils, 21.2% Sri Lankan Muslim (Sri Lankan Moor), and 0.9% Indian Tamil (Tamils of Indian origin).

Due to the unequal selection weights in place 72.7% of the sample was selected from the former war zones of Sri Lanka where armed warfare between the Sri Lankan military and the LTTE took place. These included the districts of Ampara, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Kilinochi, Mannar, Moneragala, Mullaitivu, Polonnaruwa, Puttalam, Trincomalee and Vavuniya. The rest of the 27.3% of the sample were from areas of the country that didn't witness direct violence between the two groups. These included the districts of Colombo, Galle, Gampaha, Hambantota, Kalutara, Kandy, Kegalle, Kurunegala, Matale, Matara, Nuwara Eliya, and Ratnapura. Even though these areas were not at the centre of violence during the civil war, certain regions categorized under the aforementioned low conflict zone experienced sporadic violence in various forms. For example the Colombo district, which holds the capital city of the country, saw many suicide bomb attacks during the civil war targeting civilians and important infrastructure. Furthermore, the central and southern regions of the country experienced violence from a youth uprising that took place during 1990's. Our classification of districts according to high conflict and low conflict zones

have also been confirmed through the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP, 2018) fatalities by conflict regions database.

3.2.3 Procedure

The survey instrument was administered both in Sinhalese and Tamil, the official languages used in Sri Lanka. A thorough bilingual training was provided for the enumerators using professional translators. The same translators were involved in translating and back translating the survey instrument. The authors were closely involved in the process ensuring the contextualization of the instrument and training prior to actual data collection taking place. The enumerators were to read out the instrument to the respondent and to record responses made by them. Likert scales with pictorial representations similar to the previous study (see chapter 3, page 114) were utilized in confirming the responses made by respondents. The enumerators were instructed to take extra effort to ensure that the survey interview takes place in a safe and private space to ensure confidentiality and better focus for the respondent.

3.2.4 Measures

As mentioned before, the data for this research study were gathered using an instrument that was intended for an international study. Therefore, a 224-item questionnaire was utilized for data collection. Six point Likert scales were used to assess most of the predictor and outcome measures within this study in exception to a battery of discrete measures. Pictorial representations developed by the research project team complemented the Likert scales. These pictorial representations included a big thumb down, medium thumb down, small thumb down, small thumb up, medium thumb up and a big thumb up referring to responses strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, agree and strongly agree.

3.2.4.1 Collective action

The outcome variable collective action was measured using a two-item, six point Likert scale developed by the authors. The items included, 'I would like to engage in protest actions (e.g. demonstrations, strikes etc.) to improve my community's living conditions' and 'I would like to engage in protest actions (e.g. demonstrations, strikes etc.) against any harm or disadvantage to my community'. Respondents were prompted with instructions indicating

the author's interest in their participation in future collective action initiatives organized within their community. They were told that these could be associated with their needs relating to health, education, security and justice and can include a wide range of actions ranging from simply signing a petition letter to collectively protesting on the street. They were also instructed that the central objective of such action would be to voice out their concerns to the local or central government. The scale recorded a Cronbach's Alpha of .694 for the Sinhalese ethnic group and an α of .911 for the Tamil ethnic group. A higher score meant that the respondent had a higher tendency to participate in future collective action initiatives organized by his/her community.

3.2.4.2 Ethnic identity attachment

The respondents' attachment with his or her ethnic group be it Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamil, Indian Tamil, Sri Lankan Muslim or any other ethnic group living in Sri Lanka was measured using a three-item scale adapted from Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears's, (1995) group identification measure. The items included 'Being part of my ethnic group is an important part of my identity', 'When I talk about people from my ethnic group, I usually say "we" rather than "they" ', and 'It is important to me that others see me as someone from my ethnic group'. This six point Likert scale recorded alpha values of .705 and .677 for the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups respectively. A higher score on the scale meant that each respondent identified more with his or her ethnic group.

3.2.4.3 Glorification of ethnic group identity

The respondents' tendency to glorify their ethnic group was measured using a three-item scale adopted from Roccas et al., (2006). The six point Likert scale included the following items 'Compared to other ethnic groups, my ethnic group is particularly good', 'Other ethnic groups can learn a lot from my ethnic group' and 'Relative to other ethnic groups, my ethnic group is very moral'. The Cronbach's Alpha's recorded for this scale included an α of .829 for the Sinhalese and an α of .918 for the Tamils. A higher score on the scale meant respondents admired their ethnic group over other ethnic groups.

3.2.4.4 Collective victimhood beliefs

The three victim belief measures utilized within this study have been adopted from a lager victim beliefs scale developed by Vollhardt, Nair, & Tropp, (2016) and Cohrs, McNeill,

& Vollhardt, (2015). Six point Likert scales were used for all three measures. The scale for centrality of in-group victimization measured the importance individuals place upon on the victimization of their ethnic group using the following four items. They include 'It is important to me to remember and pass on stories about my ethnic group's suffering', 'In order to understand my ethnic group, one has to know about how we have been victimized', 'Knowing about how my ethnic group has suffered has shaped who I am today' and 'Understanding my ethnic group's history of victimization is very important to me'. The scale recorded an α of .740 for Sinhalese and .708 for Tamils. A higher score on this scale meant that respondents considered the victimization of their ethnic group to be quite important for themselves.

The conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs scale measured the perceptions individuals have regarding the similarity of the suffering experience between their ethnic group and the other ethnic groups involved in the Sri Lankan civil war. This scale included the following four items; 'The experiences of my ethnic group and other ethnic groups who suffered because of the Sri Lankan conflict are similar', 'Despite some clear differences, the victimization of my ethnic group and other ethnic groups during the Sri Lankan conflict is similar', 'The degree to which other ethnic groups suffered during the Sri Lankan conflict is comparable to how much my ethnic group suffered during this conflict' and 'Other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka have suffered as much as my ethnic group during the Sri Lankan conflict'. The scale recorded an $\alpha = .849$ for the Sinhalese ethnic group and an $\alpha = .793$ for the Tamil ethnic group. A higher score for this scale meant that the respondent believed his/her ethnic groups suffering to be similar to the suffering experience of other ethnic groups during Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict.

The conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs scale measured the perceptions individuals have regarding the uniqueness of one's ethnic group's suffering in comparison to the suffering experience of other ethnic groups involved in the Sri Lankan civil war. The scale included the following three items; 'My ethnic group's suffering during the Sri Lankan conflict is completely different from what other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka experienced', 'Despite some basic similarities, my ethnic group's victimization during the Sri Lankan conflict is clearly distinct from other ethnic groups' experiences in Sri Lanka' and 'During the Sri Lankan conflict, my ethnic group has been harmed more than other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka'. The scale recorded a Cronbach's Alpha of .704 for the Sinhalese and a α of .640

for the Tamils. A higher score on this scale meant that respondents believed their ethnic group to have suffered more than the other ethnic groups during Sri Lanka's civil war.

3.2.4.5 Collective efficacy

Collective efficacy was measured using two items adopted from the Political Efficacy subscale of the Behavioural Empowerment Scale by Speer & Peterson, (2000). The two items used were 'People like me are generally well qualified to participate in the decision making in our community' and 'In my community, it is easy to do something about politics that affect our way of life'. These measured the respondent's perception regarding the level of collective efficacy that exists within their community, which is in other words the shared belief they have regarding their community's capability to collectively achieve a goal. This scale recorded an α of .635 for Sinhalese and .733 for Tamils.

3.2.4.6 Social cohesion

Social cohesion was measured using four items adopted from the Perceived Neighbourhood Social Cohesion Questionnaire (PNSC) by Dupuis, Studer, Henchoz, Deline, Baggio, N'Goran, Mohler-Kuo & Gmel, (2016). This measure is more interested in cognitive dimensions of social cohesion which includes reciprocity, sharing, and a sense of belonging (Stafford, Bartley, Boreham, Thomas, Wilkinson, & Marmot, 2004) rather than structural aspects of social cohesion (Bourdieu, 2002) which involves individual links with social groups and related structural dynamics. The measure includes both how people feel and perceive being part of a social group as well as how they facilitate such cohesion. The cognitive aspects of social cohesion that were incorporated for this particular study involved trust placed on one's community and attachment to one's community. The items used to measure trust included 'In my community, most people are trustworthy' and 'If I were in trouble, many people in my community would offer help'. Two items that measured attachment involved, 'I have strong bonds with others in my community' and 'In my community, people do care about the community'. The Cronbach's Alpha scores for the four item social cohesion scale were α = .771 for the Sinhalese ethnic group and an α = .878 for the Tamil ethnic group.

3.2.4.7 Conflict Exposure

The respondents' instrumental concerns, in other words their exposure to conflict and poverty were measured using a battery of categorical variables adopted from Elcheroth, (2006) and Spini, Elcheroth, & Biruski, (2013). Eight categorical measures were used to measure exposure to conflict which were, 'Have you been forced to leave your home and live elsewhere?', 'Have you ever been imprisoned, kidnapped, or taken hostage?', 'Has a member of your immediate family been killed (son, daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, or grandchild)?', 'Has a member of your immediate family disappeared?', 'Have you lost your home or land (as a consequence of violent conflict)', 'Has there been serious damage to your property (to your belongings)?', 'Have you been wounded by the fighting?' and 'Did you have your house looted?'. If a respondent experienced at least one of these eight conflict related events, the respondent was categorized as a victim of the Sri Lankan civil war.

3.2.4.8 Exposure to poverty

Exposure to poverty were similarly measured using the following six items, 'You and your family did not have adequate clothes or furniture to be comfortable in your daily life?', 'You did not have an access to clean water nearby?', 'You were unable to send your children to school (if you have children)?', 'You were unable to get medical help for you and your family?', 'You did not have enough food for you and your family?' and 'Have you ever been homeless (living in the street or in a collective shelter, including as a refugee/displaced person)?' Again, if a respondent experienced at least one of these eight poverty related hardships, the respondent was categorized to have been exposed to poverty.

3.2.4.9 Control variables

Among the control variables utilized for this study, age gender and level of education were measured as categorical variables. The levels of education measured by the survey instrument included no formal schooling, completing primary school, completing secondary school and acquiring of a higher level degree. Later the levels of education were further reduced to a dichotomous variable of secondary or higher education vs. no formal education at all.

Unless differently specified, all measures were computed by averaging scores in each scale. The data set upon which this study was derived can be accessed at FORSbase (https://forscenter.ch/), which is an online platform for social science based studies in Switzerland (see Jayakody, Usoof-Twofeek, Bady, Elcheroth, Penić, Vollhardt, 2020b).

3.3 Results

Table 5 indicates the means, standard deviations and table 6 the correlations between the central variables analysed within this study.

3.3.1 The application of the model to the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups in Sri Lanka

As mentioned before, the authors were interested in investigating the different life circumstances experienced by diverse social groups in post-war Sri Lanka and as a consequence the proposed model exploring potential determinants of collective action were applied to the two ethnic groups, the Sinhalese and Tamils who bore heightened ethnic group identities throughout the civil war for the past three decades. Prior to the application, an independent t-*t*est was conducted in relation to the different variables included within the model as well as a few additional variables in order to determine and confirm varying life experiences pertaining to the two ethnic groups living in post-war Sri Lanka. The living conditions were assessed relating to exposure to conflict and poverty, level of communal support in the forms of social support, cohesion, efficacy and tendency to engage in collective action. The attachments they have towards their ethnic groups as well as the claims they make relating to their victimization were also looked at.

The *t*-tests indicate the dire circumstances the minority Tamils are currently undergoing in post-war Sri Lanka. The Tamils distributed throughout the country seem to be experiencing higher levels of poverty and conflict in comparison to the Majority Sinhalese. Their social networks seem to be disrupted indicated by the low social support and cohesion reported. They also report low attachment to their ethnic group. Low levels of life satisfaction and greater levels of depression are expressed by the minority summing up the difficulties experienced by them. They also seem to be quite adamant that their respective group has been victimized the most during the Sri Lankan conflict. These dissimilar life circumstances faced by the two ethnic groups seem to be clearly reflected with regards to their different interests in participating in collective action. The *t*-tests results are displayed

within Table 7.

Table 5

Means & standard deviations of main variables in the study

	M	*SD*	N
Exposure to poverty	2.03	2.18	1139
Exposure to conflict	1.19	1.73	1150
Social cohesion	4.51	0.87	1186
Collective efficacy	3.98	1.17	1115
Centrality of in-group victimization	4.38	0.90	1145
Exclusive victim beliefs	4.38	1.06	1137
Inclusive victim beliefs	3.37	1.35	1137
Attachment to ethnic group identity	4.69	0.82	1166
Glorification of ethnic group identity	4.66	0.83	1143
Collective action	4.72	1.07	1153

The application of the regression model to the ethnic groups emphasizes further the different life circumstances that these groups are currently experiencing which is evident by the dissimilar factors that are claimed by them to be fuelling their collective action tendencies. For instance, for the Sinhalese throughout the country, only the control variables of age and gender significantly contribute to their collective action tendencies. Younger aged males seem to be participating more in collective action. For members of the Tamil ethnic community in Sri Lanka, ethnic grievances seem to be playing an important role where individuals that glorify their Tamil ethnicity and or individuals that place a great emphasize on the suffering of the Tamil people seemed more likely to engage in collective action within their respective communities. The communal climate too seems to be important for the Tamils where low collective efficacy seems to be predicting greater collective action. The regression coefficients applied to these two ethnic groups within the general population are indicated in table 8.

Table 6

Correlations for measured variables in the study

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Exposure to poverty	-									
2. Exposure to conflict	.663**	-								
3. Social cohesion	-.124**	-.053	-							
4. Collective efficacy	-.077*	-.020	.394**	-						
5. Centrality of in-group victimization	.261**	.348**	.119**	.020	-					
6. Exclusive victim beliefs	.355**	.374**	.003	-.111**	.538**	-				
7. Inclusive victim beliefs	-.387**	-.443**	.090**	.194**	-.323**	-.490**	-			
8. Attachment to ethnic group identity	-.010	-.007	.185**	.232**	.111**	.004	.044	-		
9. Glorification of ethnic group identity	-.014	.051	.317**	.160**	.162**	.135**	-.057	.410**	-	
10. Collective action	.176**	.203**	.097**	-.012	.251**	.193**	-.236**	.041	.152**	-

Note. *p < :05; **p < :01, two-tailed.

Table 7

Independent t-tests relating to different life experiences of individuals belonging to Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups

	Sinhalese		Tamil		*t* (df)
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Poverty	0.87	1.26	3.80	2.19	-25.05*** (875)
Conflict exposure	0.25	0.79	2.49	1.88	-24.35*** (886)
Depression	2.53	0.83	3.01	1.19	- 7.19*** (923)
Life satisfaction	4.91	0.62	4.54	1.10	6.49 (923)
Social support	4.94	0.67	4.30	1.12	10.71*** (921)
Social cohesion	4.58	0.76	4.40	1.11	2.97** (923)
Collective efficacy	4.20	0.97	3.40	1.43	9.87*** (876)
Centrality of in-group victimization	3.95	0.95	4.89	0.69	- 16.42*** (901)
Exclusive victim beliefs	3.85	0.98	5.14	0.89	- 20.04*** (888)
Inclusive victim beliefs	4.06	1.02	2.04	0.96	29.83*** (889)
Attachment to ethnic group identity	4.75	0.74	4.60	0.97	2.51* (905)
Collective action	4.56	1.08	5.07	0.97	- 7.14*** (896)

Note. *p < :05; **p < :01, *** p < .001 two-tailed.

Table 8

Regression model coefficients predicting collective action among Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka

Coefficients [a]					
		Sinhalese		Tamils	
		B	SE	B	SE
Control Variables	Age	-.009*	.004	.001	.003
	Male	.303**	.103	.150	.100
	Secondary or higher education	-.140	.110	-.108	.109
Individual Instrumental Concerns	Exposure to poverty	.075	.042	-.020	.030
	Exposure to conflict	.013	.065	.040	.034
Communal Climate	Collective efficacy	.009	.062	-.101*	.043
	Social cohesion	.152	.084	.052	.058
Ethnically Charged Identities	Ethnic identity attachment	.005	.084	-.007	.075
	Glorification of ethnic group identity	.067	.075	.216***	.066
	Centrality of in-group victimization	.015	.064	.648***	.090
	Inclusive victim beliefs	-.072	.052	.065	.062
	Exclusive victim beliefs	.054	.060	-.081	.066

[a.] Dependent Variable: Collective action

Note. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$, two-tailed.

3.3.2 The application of the model to the two main ethnic groups, the Sinhalese and Tamils living in the former high conflict zones in Sri Lanka

Often within post conflict settings, different regions that are affected by violence can vary based on different factors. Ease of access, political ideologies and ethnic composition prevalent can often influence the level of violence that is being instigated within a particular geographic region (Arriaza & Roht-Arriaza, 2008). This can result in the formation of diverse life circumstances among different geographic regions even within a single post conflict nation. It was the notion of the authors that such diverse realities along with different conceptualizations of violence can create a wide spectrum of factors that influence individuals in their pursuit of future collective actions. As a result the proposed model was applied to the two main ethnic groups, the Sinhalese and Tamils living in former high conflict zones in Sri Lanka. The former conflict zone was conceptualized to present some of the direst circumstances of living, hence further complicating the regression model and presenting unique conditions influencing individual participation in future collective action initiatives.

Independent *t*-tests, similar to the ones conducted for the overall population were performed relating to the different variables included within the model as well as a few additional variables in determining and confirming varying life experiences related to communities living in former high conflict zones contrasting them to the rest of the country. The assessments included exposure to conflict, poverty, social support, cohesion, efficacy, tendency to engage in collective action, attachment to their ethnic groups as well as their varying claims of victimization. Sri Lanka is divided into 25 second level administrative divisions called Districts. Out of the 25, 13 districts saw armed warfare taking place between the Sri Lankan military and the LTTE which were considered to be former high conflict zones. These included the districts of Ampara, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Kilinochi, Mannar, Moneragala, Mullaitivu, Polonnaruwa, Puttalam, Trincomalee and Vavuniya. The rest of the 12 districts which included Colombo, Galle, Gampaha, Hambantota, Kalutara, Kandy, Kegalle, Kurunegala, Matale, Matara, Nuwara Eliya, and Ratnapura were not at the centre of direct violence and destruction hence considered to be low conflict regions. The authors classification of the districts according to high conflict and low conflict areas were confirmed through data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP, 2018) fatalities by conflict regions database.

The *t*-tests indicate the unfavourable life circumstances that are at the disposal of people living in former high conflict zones. They state experiencing higher levels of poverty and conflict in comparison to others living in low conflict areas. The lack of conducive social climates seems evident among them with responses of low social support, social cohesion and collective efficacy compared to individuals in low conflict areas. Even though they have low attachment to their ethnic groups, people in high conflict zones consider the victimization of their ethnic group to be quite important. They also rarely see an inclusive suffering of everyone involved in the conflict and rather see their ethnic group to have been victimized the most. They also express low life satisfaction and record greater accounts of depression. People living in high conflict zones indicate that they are more likely to engage in collective action compared to others from low conflict zones. The *t*-test results are displayed within Table 9.

The application of the regression model to the two ethnic groups in former conflict zones derives similar results when applying the model to the ethnic groups throughout the nationwide sample. Among the Sinhalese living in high conflict zones young males seem to have a higher tendency to engage in collective action. Additionally, poverty seems to be an important individual circumstance influencing greater participation for collective action among the Sinhalese in high conflict zones. Similar to the Tamils within the overall nationwide sample, the Tamils living in high conflict zones who place a greater emphasis on their ethnic groups suffering and or tend to glorify their ethnic group, engage in collective action initiatives more. Even for them greater collective efficacy within their communities seem to discourage them from engaging in any collective action. The multiple regression coefficients are presented in Table 10.

Table 9

Independent t-tests relating to different life experiences of individuals living in low conflict and high conflict areas

	Low Conflict		High Conflict		*t* (df)
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Poverty	0.85	1.34	2.45	2.26	-11.51*** (1137)
Conflict exposure	0.15	0.52	1.57	1.86	-13.19*** (1148)
Depression	2.64	0.85	2.88	1.12	- 3.54*** (1182)
Life satisfaction	4.94	0.61	4.67	0.91	4.57 (1186)
Social support	4.90	0.66	4.59	0.95	5.36*** (1178)
Social cohesion	4.61	0.73	4.47	0.91	2.53* (1184)
Collective efficacy	4.22	1.03	3.88	1.20	4.33*** (1113)
Centrality of in-group victimization	4.33	0.81	4.40	0.93	- 1.06 (1143)
Exclusive victim beliefs	4.08	1.04	4.50	1.05	- 6.09*** (1135)
Inclusive victim beliefs	4.17	1.05	3.05	1.32	13.60*** (1135)
Attachment to ethnic group identity	4.84	0.65	4.63	0.87	3.91*** (1164)
Collective action	4.57	1.05	4.78	1.07	- 2.92** (1151)

Note. *p < :05; **p < :01, *** p < .001 two-tailed.

Table 10

Regression model coefficients predicting collective action among Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka living in the former high conflict zones

Coefficients [a]					
		Sinhalese		Tamils	
		B	SE	B	SE
Control Variables	Age	-.014*	.006	.001	.003
	Male	.557***	.168	.152	.102
	Secondary or higher education	-.342	.214	-.103	.109
Individual Instrumental Concerns	Exposure to poverty	.158*	.073	-.024	.031
	Exposure to conflict	.005	.083	.040	.035
Communal Climate	Collective efficacy	.091	.117	-.094*	.044
	Social cohesion	.111	.137	.041	.059
Ethnically Charged Identities	Ethnic identity attachment	-.042	.132	-.011	.075
	Glorification of ethnic group identity	.066	.140	.224***	.067
	Centrality of in-group victimization	-.040	.109	.643***	.091
	Inclusive victim beliefs	-.035	.089	.066	.062
	Exclusive victim beliefs	.198	.118	-.076	.067
[a.] Dependent Variable: Collective action					
Note. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$, two-tailed.					

3.4 Discussion

This research study attempted to investigate the impact different life circumstances instigated by violence to have on individual decision making in taking part in future collective action initiatives. By considering a wide array of factors ranging from individual instrumental concerns, communal climates and ethnic identity related grievances, the authors attempted to convey a central premise. Structural violence, inequalities and conflict produces varying life circumstances for different groups of individuals, and this creates a wide spectrum of factors that motivate individuals to take part in collective action initiatives for the betterment of their community. The two main ethnic groups that were in conflict for the past 3 decades in the country, the Sinhalese and Tamils, considered different factors to be fuelling their desire to participate in collective action. An extension of the analysis to different ethnic groups living in former conflict zones indicated similar patterns of diversity in terms of the factors fuelling their collective action tendencies. The findings contribute to the collective action literature in a unique manner by originating from a post conflict context in the global south.

Three important findings emerge from this particular study. Firstly different ethnic groups consider different factors to be important in influencing their decision to participate in collective action initiatives within their communities. Among the majority ethnic group in the country, the Sinhalese who represent 74.9% of the country's population (Census & Statistics, 2012), age and gender seem to play a greater role in determining collective action tendencies. Young and less experienced males (less experienced being in the sense that they possess less economic security, less social security and in general less experienced in life willing to take risks) seem to be participating more in collective action. This trend seems to make sense as more aged adults are less likely to participate in more dangerous and physically demanding forms of collective action such as protest. Financial stability and added responsibilities relating to occupation and family may deter adults from participating in riskier forms of collective action. Sri Lanka largely being patriarchal and especially Sinhalese culture appraising patriarchal values can be a possible reason behind increased male participation in collective action. An interesting trend regarding factors influencing the Sinhalese for collective action is the absence of any individual, ethnic or communal grievances. The study reveals the Sinhalese to be the most well off ethnic group in the country with lowest individual expressions of poverty, exposure to war related violence, supportive community

climates with greater social support, social cohesion and collective efficacy. They are also the ethnic group that records the highest level of life satisfaction and the lowest level of depression. Being the majority ethnic group in power and being the least recipients of ethnic violence may explain the absence of any individual, ethnic and communal grievances fuelling their collective action.

As predicted the Tamil ethnic minority, which represents 11.2% of the country's population, on the other hand consider both ethnic and communal grievances to be quite important in fuelling their collective efforts for change. The Tamils as a group record the most dismal living conditions with highest levels of poverty, highest exposure to ethnic violence, least conducive communal climates with lowest social support, social cohesion and collective efficacy. They also record the lowest level of life satisfaction along with the highest level of depression. Provided that the LTTE, the armed militia representing the political interests of the aggrieved Tamils were annihilated following a three decade civil war, the current unilateral peace and reconciliation processes set in place by the Sinhalese and a much longer history of structural and ethnic violence against them leading back to British colonial rule, the Tamils considering the suffering experienced by their ethnic group to be unjust and important in fuelling their efforts of initiating change seems unsurprising. These findings seem to be inline with Jeong & Vollhardt (2020), a qualitative study conducted on victimhood construals of South Koreans with regards to their historic victimization by the Japanese. The study reveals victimhood construals in the form of grievances concerning their historical suffering by the Japanese as well as an importance on preserving such memories of collective victimhood to predict increased collective action towards confronting their historical perpetrators. While our study tends to be a rather quantitative and comparative measure of collective victimhood, both these studies seem to be pointing out towards an important in-group strategy implemented by aggrieved victimized groups towards their oppressor, which is collective action. While the social identity model of collective action predicts relative deprivation and grievances as a starting point to collective action (van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012), what these studies provide is an important nuance as to how individual variability might be existent through victimhood construals predicting grievances and collective action only in certain instances. An interesting extension of these findings would be to test the mediation effects of comparative collective victimhood construals on ethnic grievance based collective mobilizations.

A further indication of the importance placed upon the suffering of the Tamil people is the likelihood of Tamils who glorify their ethnic group to be more likely to engage in change initiatives. During the process of mobilizing themselves as an armed political entity, the Tamil politicians were known for the selective use of trauma narratives in organizing masses (Ramanathapillai, 2006). The ethnic undertones underlying their communal change initiatives can be an indication of the fragile peace process currently put in place by the Sri Lankan government. Surprisingly and contrary to our findings the least collective efficacy present among the Tamil's in their communities, the more likely they are to participate in collective action. A possible explanation for this negative relationship would be the likelihood for communities that have a greater shared belief in their conjoint capabilities to go ahead and initiate change themselves rather than protest and demand assistance from formal administrative structures. It would be a further indication of the disruption of the Tamil people's social fabric and the possibility for communities in sustaining themselves regardless of being detached from centralized administrative structures It might also be a potential indication of the general distrust among the Tamil populous in appealing towards Sinhalese dominant state structures and formal support systems. Another potential reason that can be attributed to this unexpected result is the community Political Efficacy subscale of the Behavioural Empowerment Scale by Speer & Peterson, (2000) utilized in the measurement of collective efficacy. The items for example "In my community, it is easy to do something about politics that affect our way of life" seem to be focusing much more on the democratic empowering aspect of the community rather than the collective task at hand. A working system has very little to challenge collectively either through voting or some other form of civic participation. Hence the community adaptation of a more general collective efficacy subscale that assess task efficacy of a group, (for example see Watson, Chemers, & Preiser, 2001; Parker, 1994) can be a potential future progression.

The second important finding that emerges from this research study involves the similarities that exists in the trend in results between different ethnic groups living in the former conflict zone and the same ethnic groups living throughout the country. The authors anticipated a significant difference in the factors influencing respondents' decisions in taking part in collective action initiatives provided the mass violence and destruction that took place within the former conflict zones for the past three decades. Even though the people living in the former conflict zones clearly reveal the difficult life circumstances at their disposal with

higher levels of poverty, higher exposure to violence, lower social support, lower life satisfaction and high levels of depression in comparison to areas which weren't affected during the conflict, the factors influencing their participation in future collective action initiatives seem almost identical to the factors deemed important by the people of the entire country. For instance, among the Sinhalese, young and less experienced males seem more inclined towards participating more in collective action. However, one significant difference that exists among the Sinhalese living in former conflict zones compared to the Sinhalese living throughout the country is the importance placed upon poverty. Contrary to our predication of poverty inhibiting collective action as an individual instrumental concern, the more poverty stricken they are, the more likely they are to participate in collective action, a possible indication of the dire socioeconomic conditions that exist in the former conflict zones. Among the Tamils living in former high conflict zones, the island wide trend continues where individuals considering the suffering of their ethnic group to be important for themselves, individuals glorifying their ethnic group as well as individuals living in inefficacious communities tend to engage in collective action more.

Ethnic grievances seem quite important for the minority regardless of their exposure to conflict. A possible reason behind such an overlapping trend in the results could be the historic structural violence that has been continuously directed towards the minority Tamils and Muslims of Sri Lanka. In the past several parliamentary acts have been passed through such as the Sinhala only act, Ceylon citizenship act and the policy of standardization to deliberately carryout linguistic, cultural, economic and educational discrimination against the minority groups. Such initial structural violence was instrumental in instigating the three-decade civil war in the country. Apart from the gruesome violence experienced by these minorities during the conflict, their life circumstances haven't improved, indicative even within the results of this particular study. A culture of impunity is still being maintained by the majoritarian state that fails to establish meaningful transitional justice. A new wave of violence has recently taken place against the Muslims of the country by Sinhala Buddhist religious extremist groups. The response of the judiciary and other law enforcement agencies have been quite lethargic in this regard causing immense distress in the hearts and minds of the minorities. Amidst such historic structural and physical violence, the minorities throughout the country, not limiting to minorities living in former conflict zones, considering

ethnic grievances to be an important determining factor prompting them towards participating in collective action initiatives seem quite unsurprising.

The third important finding is the absence of conflict exacerbating conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs powering collective action partaking among the Tamils regardless of their geographic location. The Tamils living within the former conflict zones as well as the Tamils living throughout the country consider the suffering of their ethnic group to be an important factor contributing to their engagement in collective action. Regardless of the contrary being absolute true and exclusive victim beliefs being highly prevalent among the Tamils (see table 7), none of them consider the exclusive suffering experience of their group when mobilizing collectively. Having such a conflict specific exclusive victim consciousness has been acknowledged within the literature to be conflict exacerbating. Individuals with such exclusive victim beliefs have been known to be less forgiving towards out-groups and be supportive of reciprocating violence. It is the opinion of the authors is that the Tamils surveyed within the study are being very strategic in their collective efforts for change. They recall and maintain their ethnic grievance as a potential motivator for change. At the same time the absence of an exclusive victim belief seems to be preventing any violent reciprocation from their oppressors, which might further deteriorate their current life circumstance, contributing to another cycle of ethnic violence. It should also be noted that the 2017 island wide survey through which data for this particular study on social justice was carried out much later than the pilot study in 2015, upon which the previous empirical study on restorative justice was based on. During this period a significant change in the political economic and social discourse of the country has taken place, notedly the wave of collective protests analysed within this study. The changes are also evident in the collective victimhood construals reported by the minorities. In comparison to the previous study where the minorities indicated inclusive victim beliefs to be more prevalent, it is possible that the relative democratic transition has potentially impacted their reporting of more exclusive construals of collective victimization.

This study has a few limitations that can be addressed through future research. Firstly the study considers only two ethnic groups living in Sri Lanka. The sample size of 1,188 failed to capture the Indian Tamil Ethnic group comprising of 4.1% of the Country's population. The Indian Tamils are an ethnic group that has been historically oppressed and have been somewhat active during Sri Lanka's civil war. Including their perspective in

initiating change would provide a more complete analysis in terms of the different aspects motivating change initiatives among different ethnic groups in post-war Sri Lanka. It would also be extremely important in future to incorporate the perspectives of the Sri Lankan moor population regarding their collective efforts for change. They tend to be the second largest minority representing 9.3% of the country's population. Not only severely affected during the war often from the activities of both the sate military and the LTTE, currently the Sri Lankan Muslims tend to be at the centre of post-war identity politics in Sri Lanka. Secondly the methodological interest of the overall research project oversampled populations with diverse experiences of conflict. As a result, the model failed to capture most of the perspectives of people living in low conflict areas. As a result, a comparison could not be performed between the factors initiating change among different ethnic groups living in former high conflict zones and low conflict zones. An interesting extension of this study could be to perform such a comparison between high and low conflict areas.

Thirdly, this study aspired in presenting some of the diverse social realities surrounding the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil ethnic groups' collective efforts for social change. In the face of dire conditions presented within post-conflict societies in the forms of state suppression, military intimidation and destruction due to a three-decade civil war was analysed against potential motivators (or inhibitors) for collective action in terms of individual instrumental concerns, communal climates and ethnic grievances. Even though individual weighing of costs and benefits in relation to resource mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Klandermans, 1984, 1986) was taken into consideration, the risks associated with participating in collective mobilization efforts were not explicitly evaluated within this study. While costs may deter individual participation due to losses incurred in terms of time, energy and money, risks tend to associate more severe consequences (Klandermans, 1984). Within a culture of impunity the consequences might be in the form of prolonged incarceration, disappearances, injury and even death. Certain literatures have investigated repression to weaken social movements (Jeffries, 2010), whereas others have indicated repression to escalate collective protests due to increased outrage and identity consolidation (Ayanian, Tausch, Acar, Chayinska, Cheung, & Lukyanova, 2021). While Ayanian et al., (2021) have analysed state suppression in real contexts such as Russia, Ukraine, Hong Kong, and Turkey, the responses have been collected from activists and individuals with past experiences in participating protests. While the need for assessing real risks in real contexts remain, the real

need tends to be on assessing the effects of risk on collective mobilization among the general population, among whom a vast majority have no past experiences in mobilizing collectively. Hence an interesting extension of this study tends to be the mediating or moderating effects of risk on social-psychological motivators of collective action. Such analysis is extremely important as risks may be compounded depending on group structural hierarchy, context and even the exact cause people protest for.

Finally, with risks involved not everyone is likely to peruse ambitious expansive collective protests. This on the other hand doesn't mean individuals become passive and surrender to repression. Rosales & Langhout (2020) point out how within contexts that are repressive, marginalized groups may resort to more covert daily practices of resistance that may be not be easily observable to their oppressors. Such covert resistance may take the form of gossips, pilfering, tax evasion and slowing down production of labour just to name a few. Some may even be merely the preservation of aspirations for a better future or keeping alive a cultural spirit of resistance. It is such nuances that might exist in the collective expression of resistance, especially among the oppressed minorities of the country that this study fails to capture, despite its rather generalized inclusive inquiry to consider different forms of collective action when responding. Performing a differential analysis on potential motivators with regards to varying collective expressions of resistance might be another future expansion of this study.

In conclusion, the study reveals interesting findings with regards to collective action initiatives being carried out by groups with unequal power living in different geographic regions in post war contexts within the global south. Members belonging to an advantaged majority seem to have quite different concerns fuelling their change initiatives compared to the disadvantaged minority. Regardless of being affected by war violence or not, the disadvantaged minority seem to consider the historic oppression directed towards them to be quite important in influencing their participation in future change. They seem quite strategic in their approach to change. Especially in contexts of protracted violence, the minorities seem mindful of the potential backlash of their change initiatives, inhibiting themselves from having one-sided arguments with regards to their suffering. The focus on ethnic grievances by the Tamils in their collective efforts for change over instrumental concerns further highlights the continued argument of this thesis which is the differed ethnic realities during

post-war times and the inadequacies in transitional justice for the minority Tamils. The next chapter discusses more directly a transitional justice need long due, which is accountability.

Chapter 4

The influence of an inclusive victimhood narrative on support for prosecutions in post-war Sri Lanka[3]

4.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the differed realities surrounding the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil's perceptions towards prosecutions for human rights violations following the country's three-decade conflict. The two empirical chapters discussed before have already highlighted the negative perceptions surrounding Sri Lanka's current post-war reconciliation efforts and emphasized the ethnic grievances underlying collective efforts for change especially for the minority Tamils. Based on data collected through the 2017 Pluralistic Memories Project's island wide survey, this chapter discusses more directly a transitional justice need that has long been due, and its implications on intergroup relations during post-war times in Sri Lanka.

4.1.1 Inclusive victimhood beliefs and support for prosecutions

Conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness, in other words thought processes that focus on similarities of a victimization experience following a conflict has been known to be beneficial for post conflict reconciliation. Victimhood beliefs or victim consciousness involves an individual's subjective understanding of his or her group's objective suffering (Vollhardt, 2012a). For some, this understanding becomes very important having greater manifestations on their group identity, whereas for some it only presents little importance. While certain individuals may think only of the uniqueness of their group's victimization, some may tend to focus on the similarity that exist in the suffering between their in-group and other out-groups. Inclusive victimhood beliefs involve such an understanding for an individual with regards to the similarities existent in the suffering of one's own group and other groups (Vollhardt, 2012a, 2012b, 2013; Vollhardt, Nair, & Tropp, 2016; Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015; Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, 2013; Noor, Vollhardt, Mari, & Nadler, 2017).

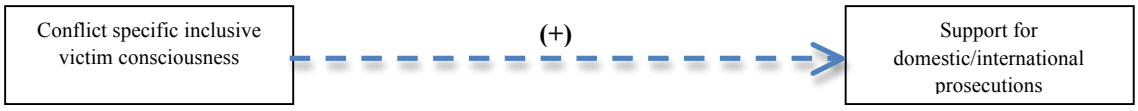
[3] Jayakody, S., Penic, S., and Vollhardt, J. (2019). *The influence of an inclusive victimhood narrative on support for prosecutions in postwar Sri Lanka*. Manuscript in preparation.

Numerous studies have shown inclusive victim consciousness to have positive and reconciliatory effects among former parties to conflict. The understanding of a common suffering experience has lead individuals to think less competitively about their own suffering and forgive adversaries within the Israel-Palestinian conflict (Shnabel et al., 2013; Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Doosje, 2015). It has also been known to predict willingness among Catholics and Protestants to reconcile in post-war Northern Ireland (Cohrs, McNeill, & Vollhardt, 2015). Furthermore, inclusive victim consciousness has predicted support for inclusive leaders and willingness to speak out on behalf of other groups in Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015). Even though inclusive victimization pertaining to a particular conflict (conflict specific inclusive victimization) has been known to be the most effective form of victim consciousness for conflict resolution (Bar-Tal & Salomon, 2006; Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gundar, 2009; Vollhardt, 2009a), it is also said to be the most challenging and the least common form of inclusive victim beliefs (Vollhardt, 2012a).

Within this study we hypothesize having a conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness to make individuals more supportive towards impartial prosecutions of human rights violations, an important transitional justice mechanism in reconciling former groups to conflict. Discussed prior in detail within the introductory chapter, holding perpetrators accountable for gross human rights violations have been shown to aid in ending cultures of impunity, increase public confidence towards fragile judicial systems within post conflict societies and create a deterrence effect on potential future perpetrators of war violence. In other words, accountability has been known to increase positive intergroup outcomes following protracted conflict and gross human rights violations. However, prosecutions have equally been known to be a heavily contested form of transitional justice often requiring international assistance in the form of hybrid courts or having trials heard at the International Criminal Court when implementing in fragile post conflict settings that often lack judicial capacity (ICTJ, 2020). Hence the preliminary model proposed by the authors involves an adherence to an inclusive victimhood consciousness predicting greater support towards impartial prosecutions implemented both domestically and through international involvement. The model proposed is depicted through figure 2.

Figure 2

The impact of conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs on support for domestic & international prosecutions



4.1.2 Complexities associated with an inclusive victimization narrative

However, the conceptualization of inclusive victimization can be more complex based on contextual differences and might not always lead to positive intergroup outcomes. Firstly conceptualizing other's suffering tends to be rare and often victimhood tends to be heavily contested within post conflict or settings with protracted conflict (Hameiri & Nadler, 2017; Noor et al., 2012). Vollhardt, (2015) in her detailed review of inclusive victimization and its implications on policy highlights different motivations that might underlie expressions of inclusive victimization by different political movements. These motivations may range from inclusive victimization being beneficial to the in-group, out-group or being mutual. In instances where benefits for the in-group is not apparent, expressions of inclusive victimization has been conceptualized to be expressed concerning out-groups. Altruism born out of suffering is such a phenomenon that has been studied among victims of violence, where their victimization experience has motivated them to help alleviate others' suffering (Staub & Vollhardt, 2008; Vollhardt, 2009b; Vollhardt & Staub, 2011). Instances where inclusive victimization has led to reduced conflict and increased peace efforts are instances where the motivations for inclusive victimization have been mutually beneficial. However inclusive victim consciousness often expressed strategically for the benefit of the in-group with no out-group interest can be detrimental. Gaining credibility, protecting the group's image, distributing collective guilt, securing victim compensation and maintain in-group status quo and power might be some of the strategic motives underlying defensive inclusive victim conscious users (Vollhardt, 2015).

Conceptualizing an inclusive suffering experience can often be quite difficult, especially within contexts where power and violence asymmetries are high. Vollhardt, (2015) has presented other research work relating to the failure of Black–Latino and Black–Jewish alliances against white supremacy due to the presence of such power asymmetries. A

narrative of inclusive victimization may also be rejected when a threat is being posed on the distinctiveness of one's own group's suffering. Research performed on superordinate categorizations and common in-group identities have shown how individuals especially with strong in-group identities have been threatened by overly inclusive categories failing to acknowledge their group's uniqueness (Crisp, Stone, & Hall, 2006; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009). Gomez, Dovidio, Gaertner, Fernandez, & Vazquez, (2013) provide another example of how intergroup attitudes can be the least positive when commonalities between groups are expressed by members of the out-group compared to in-group members or members of a neutral third party. Also any population can have segments that express high nationalistic sentiments that often glorify their own group. Vollhardt & Bilali, (2015) have found such segments to possess conflict-specific exclusive victim consciousness leading to more negative intergroup outcomes. Such individuals are less likely to make sense of an (conflict-specific) inclusive victimhood narrative.

4.1.3 Socio-psychological mechanisms underlying conflict specific inclusive victimhood and support for prosecutions

Provided such complications associated with a genuine connotation associated with inclusive victimhood beliefs, and often asymmetric power dynamics among groups preventing genuine perceptions of an inclusive victimhood belief as discussed prior, it was the authors' conceptualization that certain properties associated with a genuine inclusive victimhood belief needs to be parsed apart through potential socio-psychological mediators within this model. As a result, within this study, we further conceptualize two potential factors i) acknowledgment of in-group atrocities and ii) centrality of in-group victimhood within the relationship between inclusive victimhood and support for prosecutions, and, drawing on previous studies, hypothesize their potentially different role impacting asymmetric power groups.

4.1.3.1 Acknowledgment of in-group atrocities

The acknowledgment of harm committed by an in-group is emphasized as an important constructive mechanism when dealing with the past among 'perpetrator' and 'victim' groups. According to the Needs-based Model of Reconciliation proposed by Nadler & Shnabel, (2008, 2015), following a conflict the victimized group experiences a need to restore their sense of agency and the perpetrator group requires restoring any threats posed on their morality.

According to the model, these needs are satisfied when the perpetrators empowers the victims by offering an apology, (which means publicly acknowledging in-group crimes by the perpetrators), and when the victims reciprocate by accepting the perpetrators into their moral community by forgiving them. Hence acknowledging in-group crimes plays a major role in reconciliation. Additionally, the literature emphasizes the victim groups' need for their victimization being acknowledged by the perpetrators and or third parties. Such acknowledgment of the ingroup's victimization means the perpetrators acknowledging in-group crimes and is shown to increase reconciliatory attitudes (Hameri & Nadler, 2017; Vollhardt, Mazur, & Lemahieu, 2014) among the victims.

On the other hand, acknowledging crimes committed by an in-group becomes important with regards to one's understanding of inclusive suffering. Such an understanding becomes equally important in relation to one's support extended towards prosecutions, as perpetrators regardless of dominant/subordinate group status will be prosecuted. Provided the dual role of victims and perpetrators (Noor et al., 2017) rightfully applying to a significant number of conflicts, accepting crimes committed by ones in-group becomes central in genuinely supporting impartial prosecutions for all. It would further reveal genuine motives underlying inclusive victimhood claims within this relationship. Hence the acknowledgement of in-group crimes appears to be a logical intermediary conceptualization capable of further explaining the relationship between inclusive victim consciousness and support for prosecutions.

4.1.3.2 Centrality of in-group victimhood

The significance one places upon his or her group's suffering becomes important when demanding for recognition and justice among 'victim' groups. Inclusive victim consciousness can reduce the importance placed by an individual on the victimization of his or her in-group. When the literature states inclusive victim consciousness to be capable of reducing an individuals' tendency to think competitively of one's groups suffering and to forgive more (Shnabel et al., 2013), it involves less effort/motive from the part of the individual to legitimize the in-groups' suffering. This can have both positive and negative effects for different groups involved in a conflict and for reconciliation in general. For instance for more dominant perpetrator groups who would naturally be thinking competitively as a defensive strategy in legitimizing their ingroup's suffering, being exposed to an inclusive victim conscious narrative can reduce their defensive efforts to legitimize suffering and increase support for reconciliation. Ideally in our case more support for prosecutions. The same logic can be applicable for subordinate victim groups where inclusive victim consciousness can

reduce the importance placed upon their suffering, making them forgiving more, leading to a smooth and peaceful resolution. However in line with the 'irony of harmony' literature (Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim, 2012; Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007) the oppressed minority's reduced importance of suffering might also reduce their pursuit of justice. Hence we conceptualize centrality of in-group victimhood to be the second logical intermediary explaining the relationship between inclusive victim consciousness and support for impartial prosecutions.

4.1.4 Hypothesis

Within this third paper, the authors explore the following hypothesis in relation to an inclusive victimhood narrative officially propagated and its implications on retributive justice outcomes in post-conflict Sri Lanka. Impartial prosecutions of human rights violations are emphasized to play an important role in transitional justice, reconciling former groups to conflict (United Nations, 2010; ICTJ, 2020). Its ability in ending cultures of impunity and increasing public confidence in social justice was previously argued to have an identity de-heightening effect among former conflicting ethnic group by satisfying their agency and morality needs (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008, 2015). Despite the nuanced, multifaceted and heavily contested demand for impartial prosecutions ("Final report CTF", 2017), it was argued throughout the previous two empirical papers on how the Sri Lankan state has been strategically avoiding prosecutions by focusing on mass infrastructure development (empirical study 1) and reacting oppressively towards collective mobilization efforts demanding retribution (empirical study 2). The state has also been strategically and massly propagating an inclusive suffering narrative that both the Sinhalese and Tamils have equally suffered in the hands of the LTTE. It is the potential effect of this inclusive narrative of suffering, on the different ethnic groups perceptions towards retributive justice, that is been studies within this paper.

Provided the reconciliatory aspects involved with impartial prosecutions (facilitating agency and morality needs) and inclusive victimhood consciousness (Vollhardt, 2012a; Cohrs et al., 2015; Noor et al., 2017), the authors hypothesize having a conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness to make individuals more supportive towards impartial prosecutions of human rights violations irrespective of their ethnic group affiliations. Due to its heavy contestation between the two parties that were formerly in conflict, the implementation of prosecutions both domestically and through international involvement will be tested. The authors hypothesize a positive relationship to between conflict specific inclusive victim

consciousness and prosecutions implemented domestically as well as through international involvement.

However due to numerous complications associated with inclusive victimhood construals, for instance its strategic expression to dilute collective guilt (Vollhardt, 2015), heavy contestations preventing the comprehension of similarities (Hameiri & Nadler, 2017; Noor et al., 2012) and inclusive victimhood construals fostering distinctiveness threat (Crisp et al., 2006; Dovidio et al., 2009), inclusive victimhood construals may not always lead to positive reconciliatory intergroup outcomes. Hence with an objective of parsing apart and capturing more genuine conceptualizations of inclusive suffering, the authors introduce two main socio-psychological mediators to the model.

The initial mediator is acknowledgement of in-group crimes. On one hand victims have a need for their victimization acknowledged by perpetrators and or third parties (Vollhardt et al., 2014; Hameri & Nadler, 2017). Acknowledging harm to victim by perpetrators have been shown to facilitate the agency morality exchange facilitating reconciliation (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008, 2015). On the other hand acknowledging crimes committed by ones' in-group becomes and important construal underlying one's comprehension of inclusive suffering (of both the in-group and out-group) making it an essential component of a genuine construal of inclusive victimization. Hence the authors predict inclusive victimhood to acknowledge in-group crimes more, leading such acknowledgement to support impartial prosecutions more, both domestically as well as internationally. In other words it is hypothesized that in-group crime acknowledgement to positively mediate the positive relationship between conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs and support for impartial prosecutions.

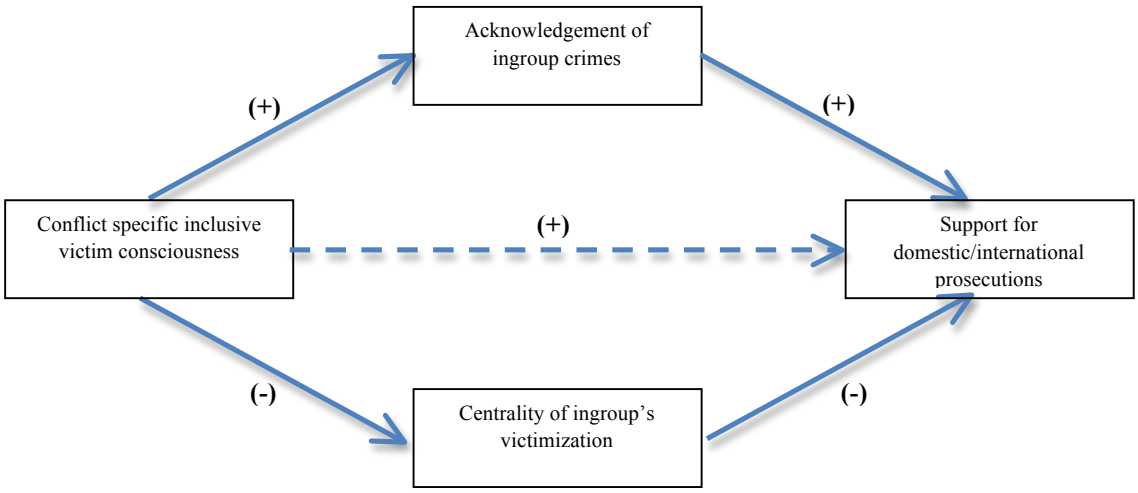
The second mediator is centrality of in-group victimization. While having perceptions of unjust suffering and greater competition in legitimizing such unjust in-group suffering is associated with more exclusive connotations of victimhood beliefs (Vollhardt, 2012a; Noor et al., 2017), the focus tends to be on perpetrator retribution rather than impartial prosecutions. With more inclusive construals of suffering which involves the absence of a compulsive need/importance for legitimizing in-group suffering (Shnabel et al., 2013; Noor et al., 2015), the prediction is inclusive victimhood construals to support impartial prosecutions. Hence it is the prediction of the authors that inclusive victimhood beliefs reduce the competitive importance placed upon in-group suffering and as a result increase support for impartial prosecutions of perpetrators belonging to both the in-group and out-group both domestically and through international involvement. In other words it is hypothesized that centrality of in-

group victimization to positively mediate the positive relationship between conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs and support for impartial prosecutions.

The model hypothesized by the authors is depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3

The impact of conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs on support for domestic & international prosecutions, mediated through in-group crime acknowledgement & centrality of in-group victimization



4.1.5 Dealing with the past in postwar Sri Lanka

The research model discussed so far was studied within postwar Sri Lanka. It was discussed greatly within the introductory chapter, the history of the Sri Lankan civil conflict and the historic heightening of ethnic group identity and power asymmetries present throughout between the majority Sinhalese and Tamil minority. It was also discussed how despite resolutions being adopted by the Human Rights Council over the conduct of the Sri Lankan government, particularly during the last phases of the war ("OHCHR Sri Lanka", 2018), the official ethos of the country has been a one of triumph, over the destruction of a lethal terrorist organization. To date, the Sri Lankan ministry of defense (MOD), which assumes coordination activities, related to the demining and release of lands of the former warzone and the rehabilitation of former LTTE combatants, refer to the rebel group as an organization that terrorized the citizens of the entire country regardless of religion or ethnicity ("Lands releases," 2018; "Rehabilitation to rejoice," 2018). In fact, as Nadarajah & Sriskandarajah, (2005) rightfully point out, the Sri Lankan state has strategically utilized the

terrorism rhetoric throughout history in delegitimizing political efforts of the Tamil minority and to evade domestic and international criticism for human rights abuses.

It has also been pointed out how the living conditions of the minorities today, especially the ones' living in the North and Eastern parts of the country where mass violence once took place, are quite grim. Even though a great amount of infrastructure development has taken place, serious efforts for reconciliation in terms of accountability, truth and securing of rights for various minority groups are yet to be sought after by the state. Expectations of constitutional change acknowledging greater autonomy for the Tamil dominant Northeast also seems quite farfetched. A culture of impunity for human rights violations especially for minorities being pervasive resulted in the fourth resolution being passed by the UNHRC in October 2015 on Sri Lanka ("OHCHR Sri Lanka", 2018).

As a gesture of compliance to the resolutions, the Sirisena regime that was in power between 2015 - 2019 established an office for national unity and reconciliation and proposed four main mechanisms in pursuit of transitional justice for the aggrieved parties to war. The proposed mechanisms included an office on missing persons, an office of reparations, a truth commission and judicial mechanisms comprising of a special court and office of a special counsel ("Office for national unity", 2018). Simultaneously, the government initiated an independent fact-finding mission called the consultation taskforce on reconciliation mechanisms (CTF) throughout the country in obtaining ideas on design, powers and functions of the above proposed mechanisms and other possible mechanisms the public would wish to pursue. This fact-finding mission revealed criminal prosecutions to be the most controversial. It was the aggrieved Tamil minority that were the most concerned with ending impunity, emphasizing the need to incorporate war crimes and crimes against humanity into Sri Lankan law. They were also opting for an international involvement of judges, prosecutors, investigators and the establishment of a hybrid judicial model. Members of the Sinhalese majority especially members of the military and religious extremist groups seemed outright against international involvement stating the process should be a purely domestic one ("Final report CTF", 2017).

Hence in summary, postwar Sri Lanka, the sociopolitical context within which the aforementioned research model is applied, involves the following key characteristics. The Sri Lankan state throughout its asymmetric conflict between its majority Sinhalese and minority

Tamils, and especially following the war, has been propagating an official ethos of triumph over the annihilation of the LTTE. Simultaneously an official narrative of inclusive victimization due to the LTTE is also being propagated. A culture of impunity for human rights violations prevails resulting in strong internal demands and international pressures for accountability. Criminal prosecutions, especially if implemented by an international body, are the most controversial in establishing transitional justice. Under such circumstances, studying Sri Lanka's official post war ethos within the discourse of inclusive victimization presents the authors with some interesting questions worth perusing utilizing this model in relation to the country's current political landscape.

4.2 Method

This study was performed as part of an international survey conducted in Sri Lanka, Burundi and Palestine, documenting diverse memories of past conflict. With an intention of oversampling populations with diverse experiences of conflict, multi-stage stratified probability sampling with unequal selection probabilities was utilized as its sampling strategy. Keeping with this research design, the study was conducted in Sri Lanka as a nationwide survey in areas of the country that reflected diversity in terms of exposure to conflict. Apart from responding to measures on victim consciousness, support for prosecutions, acknowledgement of in-group crimes, war victimization and attachment to ethnic group identity, which were central to this particular study, respondents were also probed on individual life events, exposure to poverty, psychological wellbeing, social networks, community environment, conflict memories, and attitudes towards different aspects of conflict including transitional justice as part of a larger study.

4.2.1 Sample

The sample size for the study included 1188 Sri Lankans where 53.6% of them were female. Respondent ages ranged between 19 and 93 with the mean age being 44.5. 72.7% of the sample were from former war zones in Sri Lanka where armed warfare between the Sri Lankan military and the LTTE took place. These included districts of Ampara, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Kilinochi, Mannar, Moneragala, Mullaitivu, Polonnaruwa, Puttalam, Trincomalee and Vavuniya. The rest of the 27.3% of the sample were collected from areas of the country that did not witness direct warfare between the two armed groups. These included districts of Colombo, Galle, Gampaha, Hambantota, Kalutara,

Kandy, Kegalle, Kurunegala, Matale, Matara, Nuwara Eliya, and Ratnapura. Even though these areas were not at the centre of direct violence and destruction during Sri Lanka's three decade long civil war, certain regions in the aforementioned low conflict zones experienced sporadic violence in the form of suicide bomb threats. Furthermore, the central and southern region of the country foresaw violence related to a youth uprising during the years of 1989 and 1990. The classification of the districts according to high conflict and low conflict areas were confirmed through the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP, 2018) fatalities by conflict regions database. 14.7% of the participants received no formal education where 51.2% finished primary school. 29.7% had finished secondary school and 4.4% had gone on to obtain a higher-level degree. Of the total sample 46.5% of the respondents identified themselves as belonging to the Sinhalese, the majority ethnic group in Sri Lanka who speak Sinhalese. The rest of the 53.5% comprised of the minority ethnic groups in Sri Lanka who predominantly speak Tamil. They comprised of 31.3% Sri Lankan Tamils, 21.2% Sri Lankan Moor (Sri Lankan Muslim), and 0.9% Tamils of Indian origin (Indian Tamil). Tamils of Indian origin are predominantly residents of the central highlands of the country and comprise of 4.1% of the entire Sri Lankan population (Census & Statistics, 2012). Even though these communities were involved in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, their involvement was relatively minute. This coupled with their geographic location resulted in their sample size of 0.9%. This reduced sample size of the Indian Tamil population prevented them from being included within various comparative analysis conducted within this study.

4.2.2 Procedure

The sampling strategy for the larger research project had a primary objective of capturing as much diversity of Sri Lankan society as possible, with regards to their conflict experiences. As a result, areas from which samples were to be drawn for the study were selected cautiously applying a multi-stage stratified probability sampling strategy with unequal weights.

Sri Lanka is divided into 25 administrative units called districts and are further subdivided into 331 administrative sub-units known as divisional secretariats. 47 divisional secretariats were selected through the sampling strategy to represent the entire country for this research study. 1200 individuals were initially planned to be randomly selected from these 47 divisional secretariats. However due to Sri Lanka's current volatile political context

and the sensitive nature of the data collected through this research project, certain complications that arose from the field restricted the actual sampling size to 1188.

Voters list that include the entire population in Sri who are aged 18 years and above are not centrally and publicly available in Sri Lanka. As a result, an additional fieldwork had to be organized to access voters lists from divisional secretariats and to randomly select respondents to the sample. In addition to sample lists, reserve sample lists were also generated. During actual fieldwork enumerators were instructed to perform a minimum of 3 attempts in recruiting respondents from sampling lists. In failing to do so they were to be substituted from reserve lists.

The survey instrument was administered in the field both in Sinhalese and Tamil, the two official languages used in Sri Lanka. Professional translators were utilized in carrying out translations and back translations of the survey instrument from English to Sinhalese and Tamil. The authors were closely involved in the process contextualizing the instrument and training enumerators prior to deploying them in the field. The instrument was read out to respondents and responses marked by enumerators. Both written and pictorial scales were utilized to confirm responses from respondents. A great effort was made to ensure that the survey interview took place in a safe private space ensuring greater respondent confidentiality and focus on the questionnaire. A small gift was provided to the respondents at the end of each successful survey interview as a token of appreciation for their time and effort.

4.2.3 Measures

As mentioned previously, the data for this study were gathered using an instrument intended for a much larger study. A 224 item questionnaire was used during data collection, which reached in total 1188 respondents in Sri Lanka. Apart from measuring victim beliefs, support for prosecutions and acknowledging in-group crimes, which were central for this particular study, the questionnaire also measured political psychological constructs relating to identity, personal and collective life events, conflict memories, social networks, community climates and attitudes towards transitional justice.

Six point Likert scales were used to assess the predictor, outcome and mediator measures within this study. Furthermore, a scale with pictorial representations developed by the international research project team was tested within this survey. The pictorial

representations included a big thumb down (for strongly disagree), medium thumb down (for disagree), small thumb down (for somewhat disagree), small thumb up (for somewhat agree), medium thumb up (for agree) and a big thumb up (for strongly agree) (see chapter 3, p. 114).

4.2.3.1 Conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs

The independent variable inclusive victim beliefs were measured using four items adopted from a larger victim beliefs scale developed by Vollhardt et al., (2016) and Cohrs et al., (2015). This entire scale was included within the questionnaire measuring individual subscription to different types of victim beliefs. The four items used to measure inclusive victimhood included 'Despite some clear differences, the victimization of my ethnic group and other ethnic groups during the Sri Lankan conflict is similar', 'The experiences of my ethnic group and other ethnic groups who suffered because of the Sri Lankan conflict are similar', 'Other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka have suffered as much as my ethnic group during the Sri Lankan conflict' and 'The degree to which other ethnic groups suffered during the Sri Lankan conflict is comparable to how much my ethnic group suffered during this conflict' These measured the respondents' perceptions regarding the similarity of the suffering experience between one's own ethnic group and the other ethnic group involved in Sri Lanka's civil war. This scale recorded an $\alpha = .849$ for the Sinhalese ethnic group and an $\alpha = .793$ for the Tamil ethnic group. A higher score meant that the respondent subscribed more towards inclusive victim consciousness.

4.2.3.2 Support for prosecutions

The dependent variables support for prosecutions and support for international prosecutions were developed by the authors. Support for prosecutions was measured using a two item scale which included items 'Those who have committed atrocities during conflict should serve jail time, regardless of what group they belong to' and 'All human rights violations perpetrated during the conflict should be investigated and punished, regardless of what group perpetrator belongs to'. This scale recorded an $\alpha = .834$ for the Sinhalese and an $\alpha = .934$ for the Tamils. A higher score for the scale meant greater support for prosecutions for crimes committed during the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict irrespective of group affiliations.

Support for international prosecutions was measured using a single item, 'Those who have committed atrocities during the conflict should be tried by international courts'. A

higher score for this item meant greater support for international involvement in prosecuting crimes committed during the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict.

4.2.3.3 Acknowledgement of in-group crimes

A mediating variable, acknowledgement of in-group crimes was measured using a two item scale adopted from Čehajić-Clancy, Effron, Halperin, Liberman, & Ross, (2011). Items 'Members of my group have committed atrocities during the conflicts' and 'I consider my group to be responsible for atrocities that we committed' measured acknowledgement of in-group crimes. The scale recorded an $\alpha = .797$ for the Sinhalese and an $\alpha = .875$ for the Tamils. A higher score for this scale meant greater acceptance of responsibility for the violent acts committed by one's own ethnic group during Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict.

4.2.3.4 Centrality of in-group victimization

The second mediating variable centrality of in-group victimization similar to inclusive victim beliefs was extracted from the larger victim beliefs scale developed by Vollhardt et al., (2016) and Cohrs et al., (2015). The centrality of in-group victimization subscale contained the following four items, 'It is important to me to remember and pass on stories about my ethnic group's suffering', 'In order to understand my ethnic group, one has to know about how we have been victimized', 'Knowing about how my ethnic group has suffered has shaped who I am today' and 'Understanding my ethnic group's history of victimization is very important to me'. The scale recorded an $\alpha = .740$ for the Sinhalese and an $\alpha = .708$ for the Tamils. A higher score on this scale meant that respondents considered the victimization of their ethnic group during the Sri Lankan civil war to be quite important to them.

4.2.3.5 Control variables

Among the control variables utilized for this study, gender, level of education and war victimization were measured as categorical variables. The levels of education measured by the survey instrument included no formal schooling, completing primary school, completing secondary school and acquiring of a higher level degree. Later the levels of education were further reduced to a dichotomous variable of secondary or higher education vs. no education.

War victimization included another dichotomous variable indicating whether a respondent had been victimized by the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict or not. However this

variable had been scaled down from eight categorical measures that evaluated respondents' exposure to conflict events within the survey instrument. These measures of conflict exposure were adopted from Elcheroth, (2006) and Spini, Elcheroth, & Biruski, (2013). The eight measures included the following. 'Have you been forced to leave your home and live elsewhere?', 'Have you ever been imprisoned, kidnapped, or taken hostage?', 'Has a member of your immediate family been killed (son, daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, or grandchild)?', 'Has a member of your immediate family disappeared?', 'Have you lost your home or land (as a consequence of violent conflict)', 'Has there been serious damage to your property (to your belongings)?', 'Have you been wounded by the fighting?' and 'Did you have your house looted?'. If the respondents experienced at least one of these eight conflict related incidents, the respondent was coded as being a victim of the Sri Lankan civil war.

The fourth control variable, respondents' attachment with his/her ethnic identity (be it a Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamil, Tamil of Indian origin, Sri Lankan Moor or any other ethnic category living in Sri Lanka) was measured using three items adopted from Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears (1995) group identification measure. A six point likert scale was utilized for this measure. The items included, 'Being part of my ethnic group is an important part of my identity', 'When I talk about people from my ethnic group, I usually say "we" rather than "they' and 'It is important to me that others see me as someone from my ethnic group'. A α = .705 for Sinhalese and a α = .677 for Tamils were recorded for this scale where a higher score on the scale meant that individuals identified more with their respective ethnic group.

The final control variable utilized involved the respondents' age.

Unless differently specified, all measures were computed by averaging scores in each scale. The data set upon which this study was derived can be accessed at FORSbase (https://forscenter.ch/), which is an online platform for social science based studies in Switzerland (see Jayakody, Usoof-Twofeek, Bady, Elcheroth, Penić, Vollhardt, 2020b).

4.3 Results

Table 11 indicates the means, standard deviations and table 12 the correlations between the central variables analysed within this study.

Provided the significant historic difference in power existent between the two ethnic groups that were once at war, the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority, an independent *t*-test was conducted to present these historic differences that currently exist in life experiences and living conditions within post-war Sri Lanka. Table 14 depicts the *t*-tests related to the variables concerning this study for the two ethnic groups.

Levels of conflict exposure are quite high among the Tamils indicative of the asymmetric nature of the conflict. The three decade long civil war mostly took place within the North and Eastern parts of the country, which is predominantly inhabited by Sri Lankan Tamils and Sri Lankan moors and the results clearly indicate their asymmetric exposure to the war. Even though the Tamils state less attachment to their ethnic group, which is probably an effect of war on the social cultural fabric of the Tamil people, they clearly indicate the victimization of their ethnic group to be quite important to themselves. The Tamils display less inclusive victim consciousness compared to the Sinhalese, again an indication of their understanding of the war being asymmetric.

The results for the Sinhalese on the other hand indicate less exposure to conflict and less importance placed upon their ethnic groups suffering during the conflict. They comprehend both parties to have suffered equally but are less likely to acknowledge atrocities committed by members of their own ethnic group. The Sinhalese seem to display greater attachment to their ethnic group in general and show less support for war crime prosecutions. The reluctance for support is much higher for international prosecutions.

Within the general population in Sri Lanka conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness seems to predict less support for both domestic and international prosecutions, which is contradictory to what we hypothesized. The support seems to be the least for international prosecutions. This negative trend seems to be present for both domestic and international prosecutions for the Sri Lankan Tamil population and for international prosecutions within the Sinhalese population sampled through this study.

However, as predicted through our proposed model, high conflict specific inclusive victimhood believers seem to acknowledge in-group crimes more among the Sinhalese population. Similarly, as predicted through our model, acknowledging crimes committed by one's ethnic group seems to predict greater support for both domestic and international prosecutions within the general population and among the Sinhalese population. However, it

seems to be contradictory for the Tamil minority where greater acknowledgment of in-group crimes lead to lesser support for both domestic and international prosecutions of human rights violations.

Thinking more inclusively of the suffering experience as common for all parties who were at war seems to reduce the importance one places upon the suffering of one's own ethnic group among the general population and among the Tamil population as predicted through are model. However contrary to what we predicted, the less importance one places upon the suffering of one's ethnic group seems to predict less support for domestic and international prosecutions within the general population and the Sinhalese and Tamil populations. The correlations between all the variables analysed within this study with regards to the general population and the Sinhalese and Tamil populations are displayed through Tables 12, and 13.

Table 11

Means & standard deviations of main variables in the study

	M	*SD*	N
Conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs	3.37	1.35	1137
Support for domestic prosecutions	4.82	0.99	1138
Support for international prosecutions	4.00	1.64	1072
Centrality of in-group victimization	4.38	0.90	1145
Acknowledgment of in-group crimes	2.87	1.45	1076

Table 12

Correlations for measured variables for the general population

(N = 1188) Scale	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. Conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs	-				
2. Support for domestic prosecutions	-.265**	-			
3. Support for international prosecutions	-.447**	.502**	-		
4. Centrality of in-group victimization	-.323**	.362**	.484**	-	
5. Acknowledgment of in-group crimes	-.045	.121**	.274**	.235**	-

Note. *p < :05; **p < :01, two-tailed.

Table 13

Correlations for measured variables for the Sinhalese and Tamil populations

	Sinhalese					Tamils				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. Conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs	-					-				
2. Support for domestic prosecutions	.050	-				-.219**	-			
3. Support for international prosecutions	-.155**	.361**	-			-.270**	.881**	-		
4. Centrality of in-group victimization	-.012	.221**	.268**	-		-.288**	.428**	.458**	-	
5. Acknowledgment of in-group crimes	.140**	.187**	.259**	.274**	-	.037	-.144*	-.158**	-.009	-

Note. *p < :05; **p < :01, two-tailed.

Table 14

Independent t-tests measures for variables within the study for both Sinhalese and Tamils

	Sinhalese		Tamil		*t* (df)
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Exposure to conflict	0.25	0.79	2.49	1.88	- 24.35*** (886)
Attachment to ethnic group identity	4.75	0.74	4.60	0.97	2.51* (905)
Centrality of in-group victimization	3.95	0.95	4.89	0.69	- 16.42*** (901)
Inclusive victim beliefs	4.06	1.02	2.04	0.96	29.83*** (889)
Support for domestic prosecutions	4.52	1.10	5.31	0.73	- 12.04*** (886)
Support for international prosecutions	2.88	1.54	5.26	0.77	- 26.06*** (838)
Acknowledgment of in-group crimes	2.47	1.13	3.33	1.62	-9.07*** (835)

Note. *p < :05; **p < :01, *** p < .001 two-tailed.

The relationship between conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs and the tendency to support domestic and international prosecutions was mediated by acknowledgment of in-group crimes and centrality of in-group victimization as predicted. The historic differences that exist in the life experiences and living conditions of both the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority in post-war Sri Lanka seem more evident through these mediations when applying our model separately to the two ethnic groups.

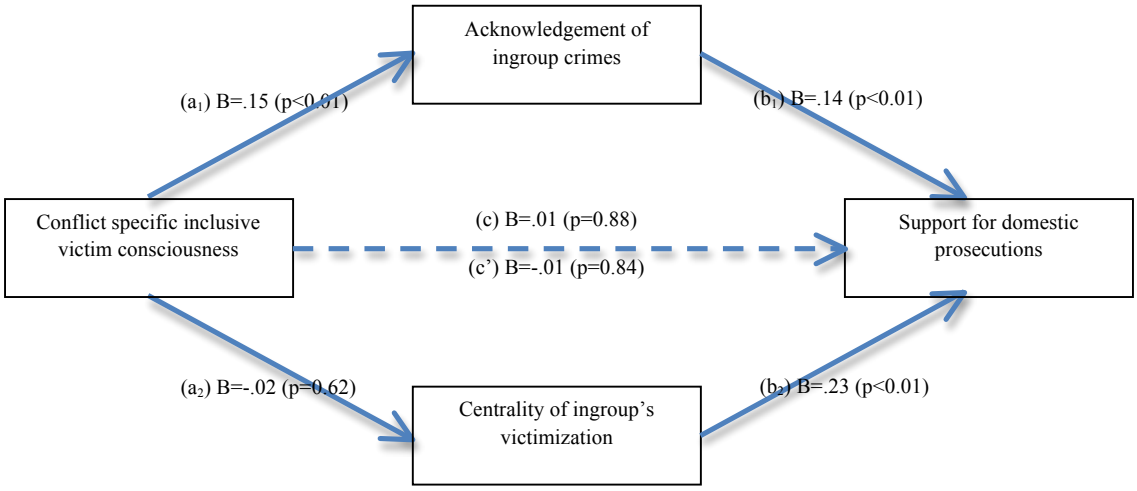
When analysing the Sinhaleses' support for domestic prosecutions, a statistically non-significant total and direct effect of inclusive victimhood exists. However, a statistically significant indirect effect of acknowledgment of in-group crimes occurs indicating that inclusive victimhood increases acknowledgment of in-group crimes, which in turn increases support for prosecutions. The indirect effect of centrality of ingroup's victimization is

statistically non-significant. The mediation model is presented in Figure 4 and the indirect effects are presented in Table 15.

Regarding the Sinhaleses' support for the more controversial international prosecutions, a more complex relationship takes place. On one hand, inclusive victimhood increases support for international prosecutions by increasing acknowledgment of in-group crimes. In other words a statistically significant indirect effect of in-group crime acknowledgment takes place. On the other hand, inclusive victimhood with the acknowledgment of in-group crimes partials out the relationship as the direct effect of inclusive victimhood is negative. The indirect effect of centrality of ingroup's victimization is again statistically non-significant. The mediation model is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 4

Sinhalese ethnic group's support for domestic prosecutions



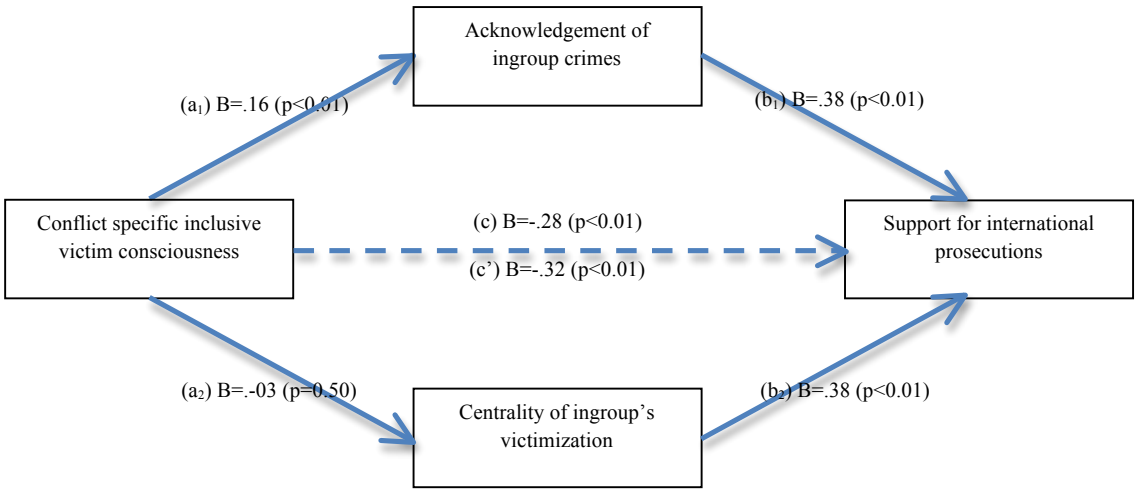
Note. *p < .05; **p < .01, two-tailed.

The Tamils' support for domestic prosecutions seem to be negatively influenced by inclusive victim hood where both a significant negative total and direct effect exists. However, the presence of a significant negative indirect effect of centrality of in-group victimization, indicates that, for the Tamils, having a conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness reduces the importance they place upon their ethnic groups victimization, and contrary to what was predicted, for them to show less support for prosecutions. The indirect

effect of acknowledging in-group crimes is statistically non-significant. This mediation is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 5

Sinhalese ethnic group's support for international prosecutions

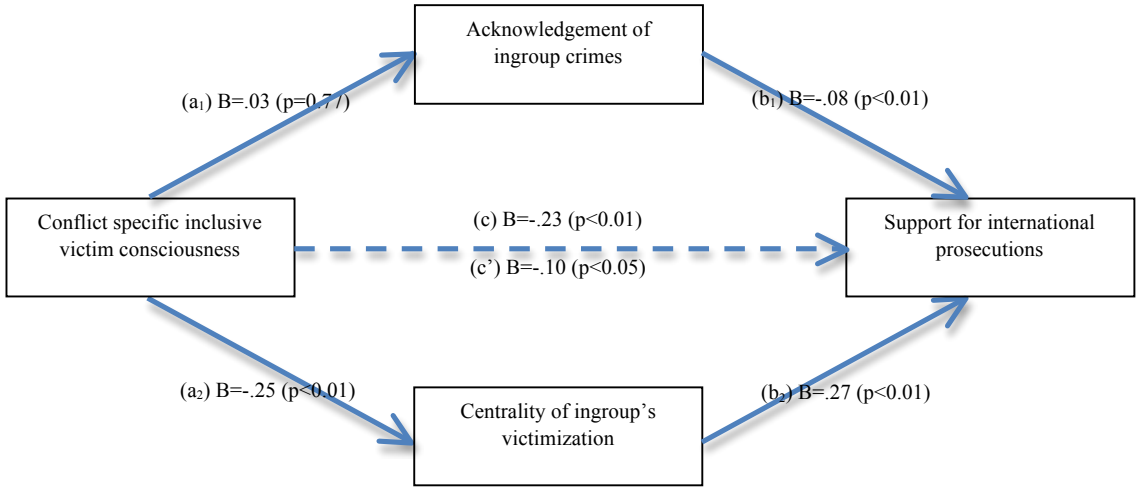


Note. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$, two-tailed.

Their support for international prosecutions is again negatively influenced by inclusive victim hood with a significant negative total and direct effect. The presence of a significant negative indirect effect of centrality of in-group victimization, similar to domestic prosecutions indicates conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness to reduce the importance Tamils' place upon their ethnic groups victimization resulting in them showing less support for international prosecutions. The indirect effect of acknowledging in-group crimes is again statistically non-significant. The mediation is presented through Figure 7.

Figure 6

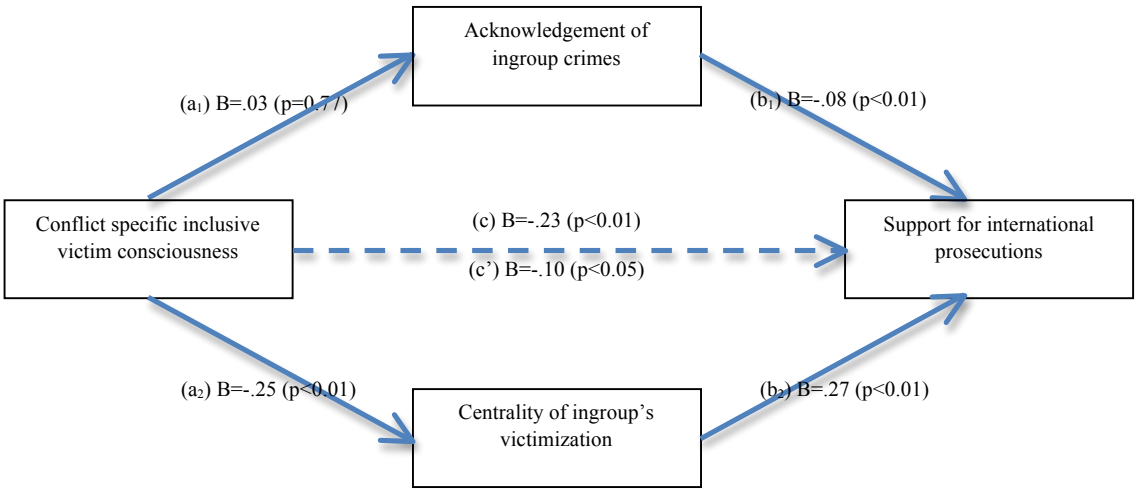
Tamil ethnic group's support for domestic prosecutions



Note. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$, two-tailed.

Figure 7

Tamil ethnic group's support for international prosecutions



Note. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$, two-tailed.

Table 15

Indirect effect sizes for Sinhalese & Tamil's support for domestic & international prosecutions

		Sinhalese			Tamil		
		Effect	BootLLCI	BootULCI	Effect	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Support for domestic prosecutions	Acknowledgment of in-group crimes	.0220*	.0060	.0407	-.0014	-.0137	.0108
	Centrality of ingroup's victimization	-.0046	-.0256	.0161	-.0914*	-.1441	-.0488
Support for international prosecutions	Acknowledgment of in-group crimes	.0573*	.0201	.0991	-.0024	-.0186	.0142
	Centrality of ingroup's victimization	-.0103	-.0453	.0221	-.1112*	-.1720	-.0614

Note. *$p < .05$ two-tailed.

4.4 Discussion

The main objective of this study was to identify different reactions by different parties to a protracted asymmetric conflict within Sri Lanka, to an official narrative of inclusive victimization that is being continuously propagated by the state. We specifically looked at how adherence to a conflict specific inclusive victimhood belief can influence an individual's support for impartial prosecutions of human rights violations in the aftermath of Sri Lanka's civil war. We focused on reactions by the majority Sinhalese ethnic group and the minority Tamil ethnic group living throughout the Island not limiting the analysis to the former conflict zones in the North and Eastern parts of the country. We found conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs to influence support for impartial prosecutions differently for the two ethnic groups across two different socio-psychological mediators. The influence was also different for domestic and international prosecutions.

Despite the rarity and preference for conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness in post conflict settings that are widely stated within the victim belief literature to result in favourable intergroup outcomes including reconciliation, the authors were sceptical of the contextual complexities that might be existent in interpreting such an inclusive victimhood narrative. And rightfully the correlations between conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs

and support for domestic and international prosecutions revealed negative relationships. This relationship was negative for both domestic and international prosecutions when considering the population as a whole and specifically for the Tamil ethnic group. The relationship was also negative for international prosecutions among the Sinhalese. A superficial analysis without the consideration of centrality of in-group victimization as a mediator would have highlighted only the fact that the minority Tamil ethnic group in the face of their historic oppression found it difficult to comprehend similarities in their suffering experience with the majority Sinhalese. Provided the structural inequalities that the Tamil people in Sri Lanka have been experiencing since the country's independence to date, the devastation to lives, livelihoods, property and the cultural fabric resulting from the three decade war, the culture of impunity currently being maintained by the state with high military presence acquiring land and infiltrating trade, the failure to secure the Tamil peoples' rights including the right to commemorate and morn the departed, raises considerable doubts regarding the ability of the Tamil's to draw parallels with the Sinhalese. Furthermore, the mass propagation of an inclusive narrative is performed by the state, the representatives of the majority ethnic group rather than members of the Tamil community acknowledging a common suffering with the Sinhalese. It wouldn't be surprising for such a mass transmission to generate negative reactions from members of the Tamil community and to read such a statement made in a questionnaire interview.

While the understanding of a common suffering experience can lead individuals to think less competitively of their suffering, the inability to comprehend similarities provide ample motives for individuals to think more exclusively and competitively of their groups suffering. This would have explained the negative relationship between inclusive victim consciousness and the support members of the Tamil ethnic group have for domestic and international prosecutions. The least similarities the Tamil people identify with regards to the suffering of their group and the Sinhalese, the more unjust they feel of their suffering and hence the more perseverance of accountability measures. Such exclusive and competitive ways of comprehending one's own group's suffering is known within the social psychology literature as exclusive victim beliefs and such beliefs pertaining to a particular conflict i.e. conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs have revealed negative intergroup outcomes such as negative attitudes, less trust and less willingness to forgive members of the out-group.

Unfortunately, this wasn't tested, as the main focus of the study was to analyse diverse reactions to an inclusive victimhood narrative propagated by the state.

However, the presence of centrality of in-group victimization as a social psychological mediator adds more sense to the negative relationship that exits between conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness and support for accountability measures. Initially we predicted inclusive victim believers to have positive attitudes for prosecutory mechanisms where inclusive victim beliefs would reduce the importance individual place upon the suffering experienced by their own ethnic group. This reduction in salience would further reduce any unnecessary need for individuals to compulsively assert the injustice caused to their in-group hence to accept more humanely the destruction to all parties and support impartial prosecutions for both parties involved in the war. However as predicted, a belief of conflict specific inclusive victimization seems to be reducing the importance Tamil's places upon their ethnic groups suffering, and instead of smoothening out the competitive, exclusive drive for justice and supporting impartial prosecutions for both parties, it seems to be inhibiting their own quest for justice for their historic victimization.

These findings seem to be in line with the irony of harmony literature. Contributors to this literature including Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, (2009), Dixon, Tropp, Durrheim, & Tredoux, (2010) and Dixon et al., (2012) amalgamate various independent lines of research that reveal the complexities that are associated with prejudice and conflict reduction approaches. The irony of harmony literature basically states how getting people to like each other, especially parties that are of unequal power can often be quite devastating for the historically disadvantaged. Often dominant groups maintain their stronghold over subordinate groups by rewarding them for accepting existing oppressive structures. It often becomes quite difficult for the powerful to suppress the powerless through negative interactions for longer time periods. As a result, to ensure the continuous flow of benefits from the superordinate, they resort to paternalism, defining the ideal norms and roles for the subordinates to follow, which eventually leads to the preservation of oppressive status quos. The subordinates who confirm are often rewarded with love and admiration creating a sedative effect making it difficult for them to realize the systems that have been oppressing them historically. The propagation of an inclusive victimhood narrative in Sri Lanka's post conflict society seems to be creating a similar sedative effect for the historically oppressed Tamil minority preventing those who adhere with such a narrative from perusing transitional justice.

Similarly, Gaertner & Dovidio, (2000, 2009)'s Common Identity Model talks of the benefits that are associated with including members belonging to different social groups into a shared in-group for example including blacks and whites into a common group called Americans. The model initially presents positive effects for intergroup relations such as improved intergroup attitudes and reduced intergroup biases. However, in a later version of the model Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, (2008) and Dovidio et al., (2009) talk of some of the negative impacts of a common identity for the subordinated groups where majorities often prefer to amalgamate themselves into a common identity that represents most of their existing value systems, whereas the minority value systems are inevitably lost in the process of amalgamation. The Sri Lankan state's inclusive victimization propaganda involves the construction of a similar superordinate category that fails to acknowledge the nuances in the victimization experience of the Tamil minority. Especially aspects relating to their historic oppression and the current state of impunity have been totally omitted within this common victimization narrative. Hence individuals of Tamil ethnicity adhering to the dominant conflict specific inclusive victimization narrative, loosing interest in prosecution mechanisms may not be so surprising.

The authors' scepticism regarding the genuine positive effects of conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness continues as the study reveals individuals that identify with an conflict specific inclusive victim conscience among the Sinhalese majority ethnic group to be unsupportive of prosecutory mechanisms. Even though the relationship between conflict specific inclusive victim consciousness and domestic prosecutions is not significant, the relationship with international prosecutions tends to be negative. This can be quite understandable provided that most reactions against prosecutory mechanisms in Sri Lanka have been from the Sinhalese ethnic group and specifically towards the international involvement in prosecutions as reported by an independent fact finding mission on transitional justice mechanisms ("Final report CTF", 2017).

The Tamils being the minority that have been historically victimized at the hands of the majority Sinhalese for more than half a century, the total annihilation of the LTTE in 2009 and the asymmetric conflict largely taking place within the North and Eastern parts of the country where a great amount of physical, material, cultural and psychological devastation occurred for the Tamils, can be clear indications behind the defensive stance adopted by Sinhalese against impartial prosecutory transitional justice mechanisms. The

states' defensive stance has also been a progressive one which has been analysed against a double standard maintained in dealing with a similar uprising among Sinhalese youth in the southern parts of the country (Abeyratne, 2004; Nadarajah & Sriskandarajah, 2005). While the LTTE youth were branded as a terrorist group, the JVP which, proportionate to its years active as an insurgency were responsible for greater destruction and loss to human life, have managed to enter the country's mainstream politics. Schubert, (2013) rightfully points out on how following a war, its narrative, including the victim(s), perpetrator(s) and the victor are being discursively constructed by the victor which in Sri Lanka's case is the Sri Lankan state. Schubert analyses a speech made by Mahinda Rajapaksa the head of state at the time, announcing the end of the war to the Parliament and an election manifesto by him the following year, on how the LTTE is constructed as the sole perpetrator, the Tamil people as a special category victimized by the LTTE and the Sinhala-Buddhist nation being portrayed as the real victims of the LTTE. Hence from the onset, the state's propagation of an inclusive victimhood narrative has been a strategic and defensive one.

The majority of the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka were directly unaffected by the war and were mostly populated throughout the southern regions of the country which were often exposed to mass mediated accounts of the conflict. Such accounts were often strongly politicized and tend to exclude information that challenges the in-group's morality (Bilali, 2013; Bar-Tal, Oren, & Nets-Zehngut, 2014). When such politicized accounts of conflict become an individual's only source of information, being susceptible to a defensive inclusive victimhood narrative that is being widely propagated by the state become quite natural. Individuals being susceptible to such a narrative would be less likely to acknowledge in-group crimes, would be less supportive of impartial prosecutions, as punishing the state funded military that ended war would be illogical to them. The military is often glorified through this same state propagated narrative thanking the military for ending the war. This seems to explain the negative relationship existent between conflict specific inclusive victimization and the Sinhalese's support for international prosecutions.

However, genuine Sinhalese believers of inclusive victimization, who are often exposed to diverse narratives of the conflict and who are critical of Sri Lanka's political history seem to be present. Such genuine believers of an inclusive victimhood narrative seem to be acknowledging crimes committed by the state and supporting both impartial domestic and international prosecutions. Such genuine conflict specific inclusive victimhood believers

seem to be captured by the model through the indirect effect prevalent for both domestic and international prosecutions. They also seem to be the one's partial outing the negative relationship between conflict specific inclusive victimhood and both domestic and international prosecutions among the majority of Sinhalese.

This study has a few limitations that can be addressed through future research. Even though the total sample size of the study was 1188, only 925 of them were used for analysis. The model incorporates conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs and such conflict specific victim beliefs become applicable for parties that have been in conflict. Hence the 925 represent the 553 Sinhalese and 372 Sri Lankan Tamils within the sample, which are the two groups that have historically being in conflict. However, the country also has an Indian Tamil population and a Sri Lankan Moor population that have both been directly and indirectly involved in the war and have also been victimized. Their perspectives are overlooked through this model. Another limitation of the study involves a complication that arises from the methodological interest of the overall project. With an interest of documenting diverse memories of past conflict the sampling methodology oversampled populations with diverse experiences of conflict. As a result, the model failed to capture the perspectives of the different ethnic groups living in non-conflict zones. A future extension of the study could be to perform a comparison in applying the model to conflict affected and non-affected areas. Another interesting extension of the research model would be to include conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs in the future.

In conclusion, the study reveals some interesting findings with regards to post-war contexts where an ethos of common suffering is being maintained. Members belonging to an advantaged majority, who genuinely believe victimization to be commonplace, acknowledge cruelties performed by their in-group and consequently support prosecutions including the more controversial accountability measures performed through international involvement. The aggrieved minority on the other hand who genuinely believe victimization to be commonplace seem to loose significance in their own group's suffering resulting in them loosing motive to pursue accountability measures ensuring their transitional justice.

Since up to now, the contextual and theoretical foundations underlying the empirical studies performed, along with the studies themselves have been discussed so far in detail.

Through chapter 5, the author would like to describe the research methodology, the field experiences and their associated challenges that underlie the data collected for theses empirical studies.

Chapter 5

Methodology

5.1 Introduction

There seems to be an understanding among scholars that social psychology as a discipline lacks adequate research performed on phenomenon within their natural environment (see Bar-Tal, 2004; Elcheroth & Spini, 2015; Moss, Uluğ, & Acar, 2018). According to them even though social psychology deals with important strands of research especially relating to conflict, violence and protest in extremely restrictive settings, it still bases its findings on experiments as a method of choice (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2008; Vollhardt & Cohrs, 2013). As a consequence, there exists a wider call for fieldwork to be performed within social psychology and particularly social psychological studies performed on phenomenon relating to conflict (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2008; Vollhardt & Cohrs, 2013; Elcheroth, Penic, Usoof, & Reicher, 2019). As emphasized by Robben and Nordstrom (1995) in order for one to be able to discuss violence in great detail, one needs to perform research in places where violence actually takes place. According to them, immersing one's self within the context of violence, the context forges specific attitudes within a researcher regarding the reality of violence that is both expressed by their participants and is being directly experienced by the researcher. This contributes to more responsible theory. Additionally the objective is to avoid simple analysis of complex phenomenon and instead encourage more context-bounded, multi-sited, multi-iterative studies that generate findings that can be successfully extrapolated throughout, within the field of social psychology (Elcheroth et al., 2019).

The pluralistic memories project's research activities upon which this entire thesis is based on, attempted to document diverse memories of conflict in Burundi, Palestine and Sri Lanka, which are three contexts that are uniquely placed at different stages of conflict. Through such documentation, the project aimed to examine various processes, which make certain narratives part of an official discourse while certain narratives simply fall into

oblivion, a process helping the perpetuation of violence. Ethnographic approaches to collecting memories of war as well as the documentation of changing patterns in recognizing these diverse memories were performed within the project using representative surveys. As a result, we as contributors to the pluralistic memories project are modestly proud of our contribution to social psychology literature relating to phenomenon such as memory, violence, social networks, group identity and transitional justice. The importance of this contribution is further highlighted by the studies being performed in diverse conflict settings and the contributions being both qualitative and quantitative. Another important contribution made by the pluralistic memories project especially its implementation in post-conflict contexts such as Sri Lanka and particularly through its representative surveys (that will be discussed in detail within this chapter) involves a unique space created (even though quite brief) in discussing nuances that exist in conflict experiences. The discussions and further relationships that were built among respondents, field staff and researchers, mentioned particularly through researcher field notes tend to be a testament for the importance of such research providing voices for people living in highly suppressive and contested regions.

The three empirical studies carried out within this thesis were entirely based on the pluralistic memories project's surveys carried out in Sri Lanka. Two main surveys were carried out throughout the project in Sri Lanka in the years of 2015 and 2017. The initial was a pilot study to test the waters in terms of the feasibility to ask the general public their opinion on various concepts relating to memory and transitional justice and to test the possibility of conducting a successful survey in the former conflict zones, which has a high military presence. Network sampling was utilized for this initial pilot study. Following its successful completion in 2015, an island wide representative survey was carried out later in 2017. A detailed description of the methodology and methodological challenges faced when implementing these surveys are stated within this chapter.

Wood (2006) and Moss et al, (2018) discuss difficulties associated with performing research in conflict contexts. Wood mentions a series of factors ranging from unpredictability, political polarization and military surveillance within conflict-induced contexts along with issues associated with the traumatization of research participants and the logistic challenges in reaching them. Going further Moss et al, (2018) in detail, list out several practical and ethical challenges that can arise when performing field research in conflict-induced contexts. Practical concerns discussed include the safety of researchers and

participants, the difficulties associated with getting research permits, the influence a researcher's identity can have in terms of being a gendered, aged, sociocultural human being, the cultural script at play in a given research context and the language barriers present for the researcher. Ethical concerns that are discussed by them revolve around issues of obtaining informed consent, recording interviews, potential trauma for research participants as well as the research crew and the importance of giving back to respondents. According to Wood (2006) and Moss et al, (2018)'s accounts, performing research in conflict induced settings is not easy and their accounts of challenges faced are derived while endeavouring qualitative research. Through this chapter I hope to provide a detailed methodological account of the pluralistic memories project's surveys carried out in Sri Lanka and by doing so to highlight some of the methodological challenges associated with performing quantitative research in post war Sri Lanka which is ethnically, religiously, politically and economically highly divided while being a context situated in the global South.

5.2 Pluralistic Memories Project's Pilot Survey in Sri Lanka 2015[4]

5.2.1 Sampling strategy

5.2.1.1 Survey areas

As mentioned before the Pluralistic Memories Project's initial pilot survey was conducted as a test run to simulate some of the realistic challenges that might arise during the implementation of the project's island wide representative survey in Sri Lanka. Selecting areas to implement the pilot study were performed carefully by the Sri Lankan local PMP research team and was done based on two main criteria. First the areas had to be reflective of the country's socio-demographic diversity with regard to language, religion, urbanism, socioeconomic conditions, and past exposure to conflict. Secondly they had to be closer in terms of proximity in facilitating supervisory and monitoring requirements. Based on these criteria, two districts, Ampara & Matale were selected out of a total of 25 Sri Lankan districts. Ampara situated at the Eastern border of the country was a district that was directly affected by the war whereas Matale a district situated in the central highlands of the country, was relatively unaffected by the proceedings of the war.

[4] Jayakody, S., & Herath, D. (2019). *Methodological report: Pluralistic memories project pilot survey in Sri Lanka*. Zenodo. http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3580667

Within these two districts, 12 local areas were selected for the implementation of the pilot study. The requirement was to have local areas that have been defined at an intermediate scale between small neighbourhoods and major administrative divisions, within which respondents were likely to move for daily activities. According to this requirement 6 local areas administratively known as DS divisions were selected for Ampara which included Uhana, Ampara, Damana, Irakkamam, Akkaraipattu and Alayadiwembu and six DS divisions for Matale which included Yatawatta, Matale, Pallepola, Ukuwela, Ambanganga Korale and Rattota. Figure 8 & 9 depicts the two districts and their local areas with a statistical breakdown of inhabitant ethnicity. In the selection of these areas, priority was given to linguistic diversity. Sinhalese and Tamil being the two official native languages used in Sri Lanka, 12 of the local areas were equally divided among 6 Sinhalese speaking and 6 Tamil speaking areas.

5.2.1.2 Network Sampling

The sampling methodology used within this pilot survey was network sampling and a cardinal point of interest for the research team was to evaluate the possibility of conducting a future island wide survey on transitional justice through this pilot study. Network sampling tends to be a preferred method of sampling often when identifying and studying sub-populations of interest, especially within the fields of anthropology and epidemiology (Gile, & Handcock, 2010). Unlike random sampling where the sample is known prior to field work actually taking place, respondents in network sampling are purposive, recruited as the sample is generated, simultaneously while field work is on-going, (in other words while survey instruments are being administered within the field), until a point of saturation predefined by the researcher is achieved. The basic sampling unit used within this pilot survey was a network cluster of 22 target interviews, which span across 5 successive recruitment waves. Figure 10 clearly depicts the proliferation of the network cluster throughout the five recruitment phases.

A third party survey consultancy firm the Kandy Consulting Group (KCG) was contracted by the PMP research team in planning out all logistics relating to the pilot network survey. The field survey team recruited by KCG utilized 6 research assistances (RAs) and 2 field supervisors. This recruitment was performed again keeping in mind the 2 official

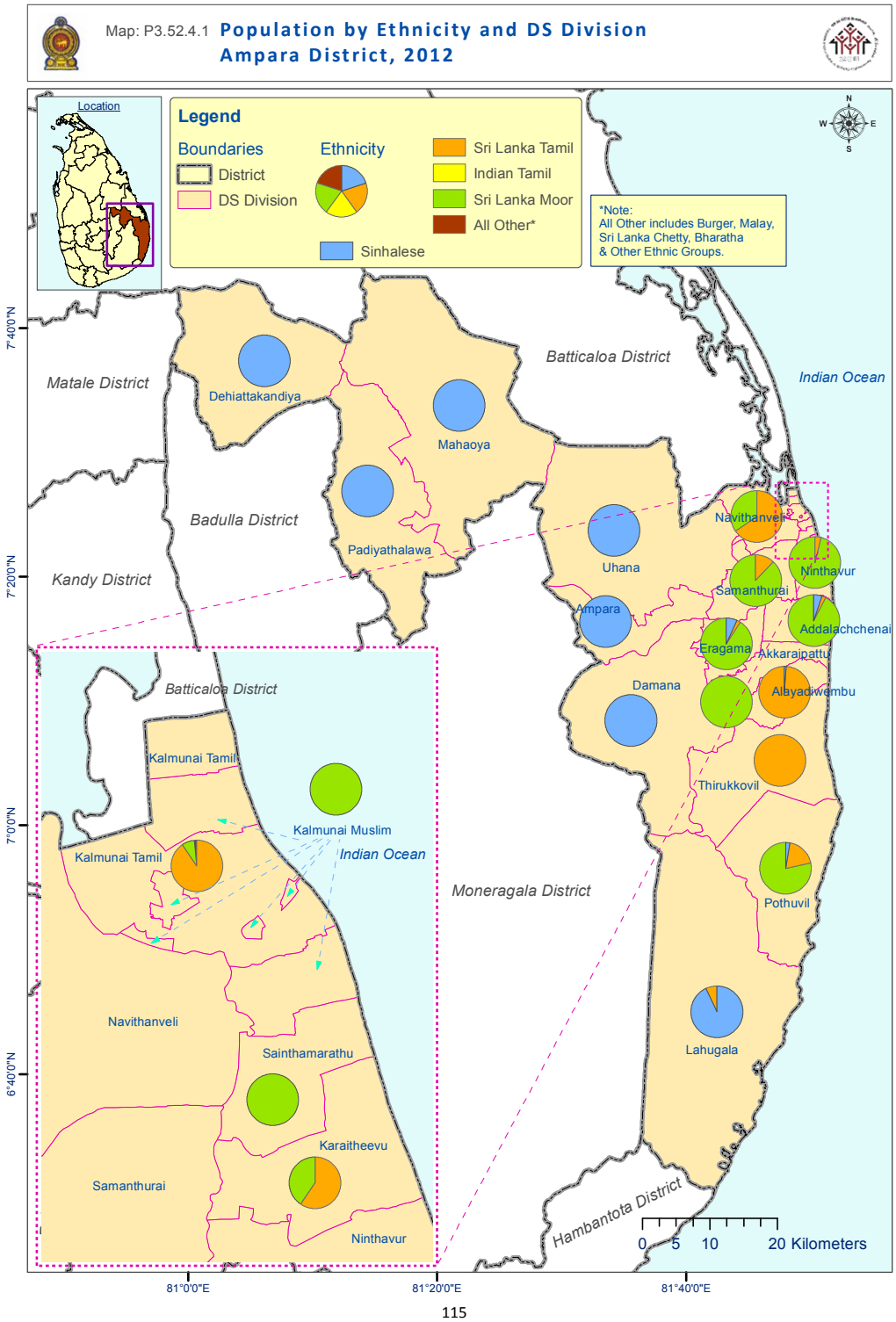
languages operational in Sri Lanka, including both Sinhalese and Tamil native speakers as well as bilinguist within the field survey team.

In ensuring confidentiality when conducting research in highly sensitive and surveiled contexts, the research team was mindful in limiting the recording of personal information relating to respondents. Such details were linked with an anonymous code frequently referred to when identifying respondents within the field. Copying of contact details both physically and electronically was forbidden and except for anonymous questionnaires, all personal details were destroyed at the end of fieldwork. Until then, they were securely stored.

The total number survey interviews conducted within the 2015 PMP pilot survey in Sri Lanka was 400. These survey interviews were subdivided across the two districts and the 6 Sinhalese and Tamil speaking enumerators as displayed through figure 11. The design enabled at least a minimum of 66 interviews being assigned to each enumerator a number considered sufficient for piecework remunerations due to uncertainties associated with network proliferation and the use of monthly wages.

Figure 8

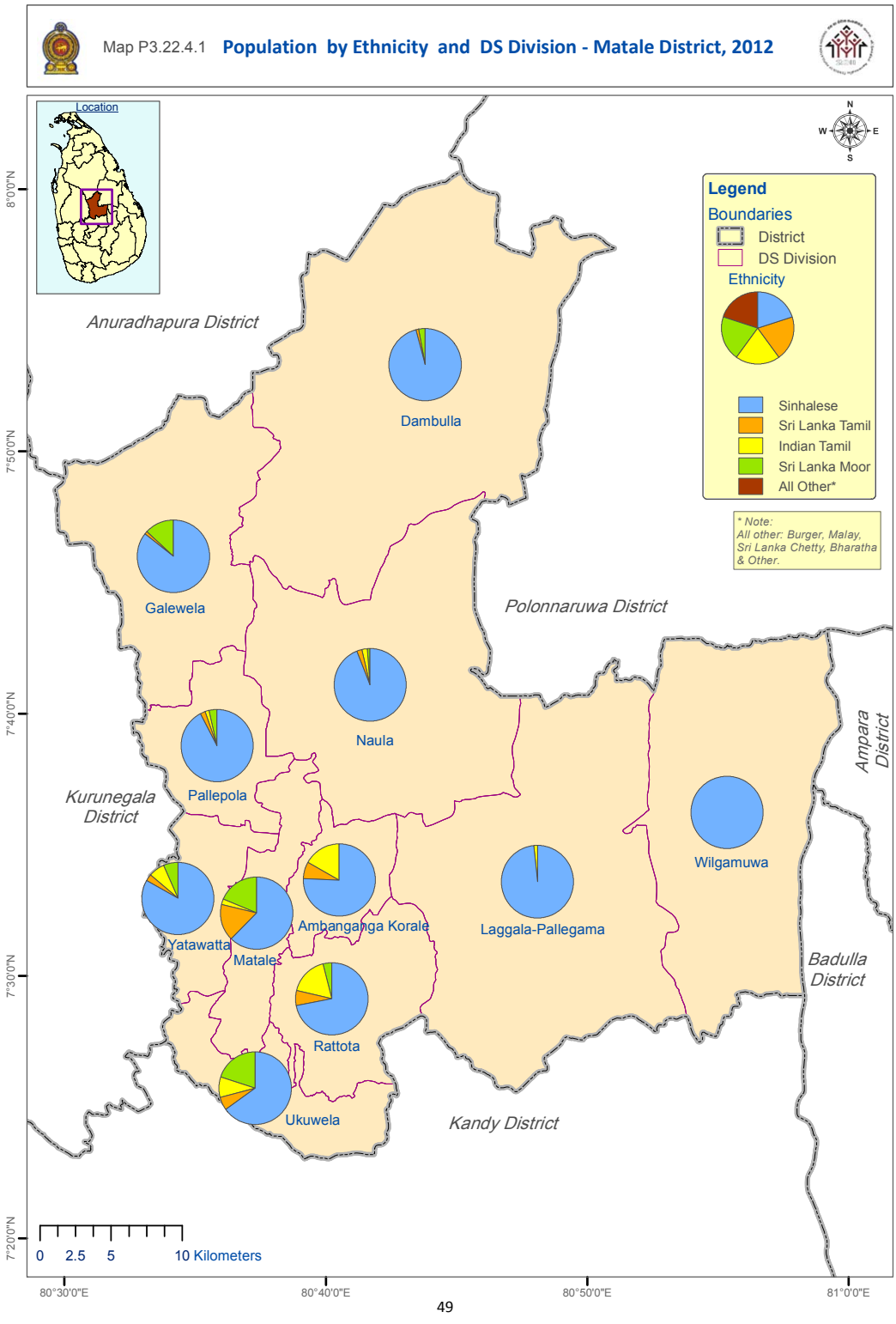
Ampara district, its divisional Secretariat division boundaries and ethnic breakdown, 2012



Note. Adapted from Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, 2012 (http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/PopulationAtla_2012/04_DSLevelMaps/Map%20P3.52.4.1%20Ampara%20-%20Population%20by%20Ethnicity%20by%20DS.pdf)

Figure 9

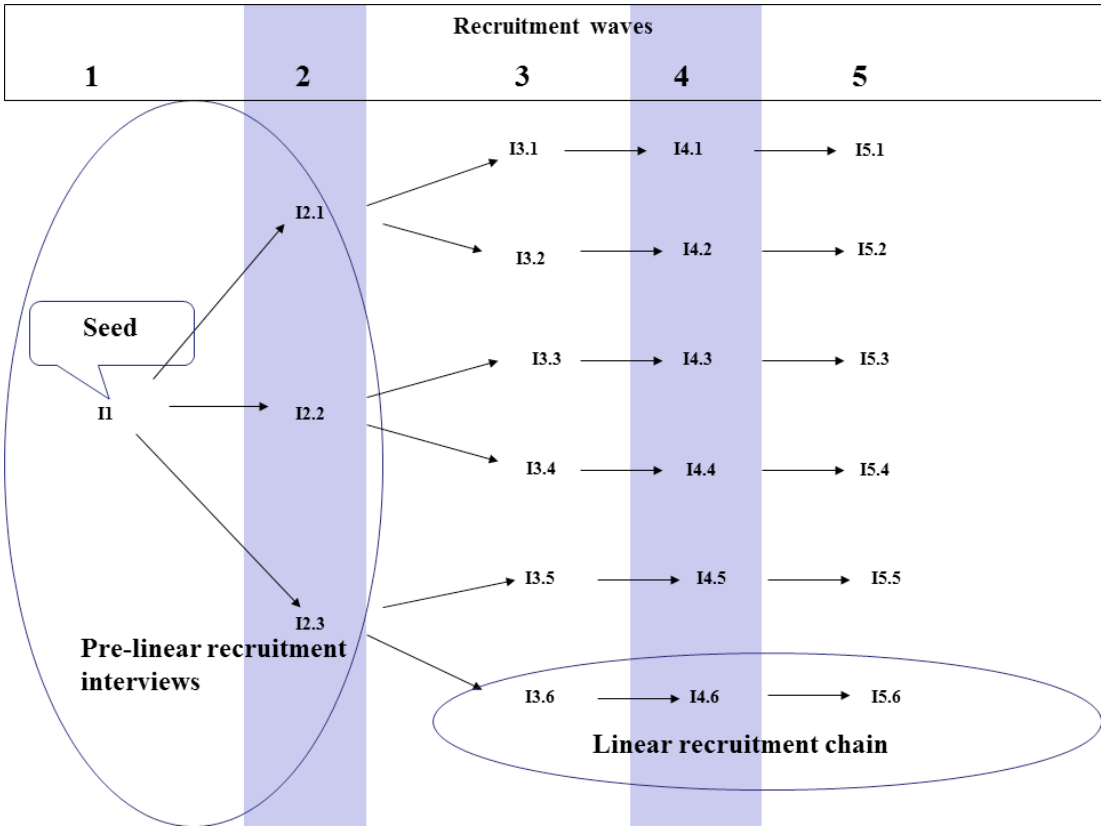
Matale district, its divisional Secretariat division boundaries and ethnic breakdown, 2012



Note. Adapted from Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, 2012 (http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/PopulationAtla_2012/04_DSLevelMaps/Map%20P3.22.4.1%20%20Matale%20-%20Populat%20ion%20%20by%20Ethnicity%20by%20DS.pdf)

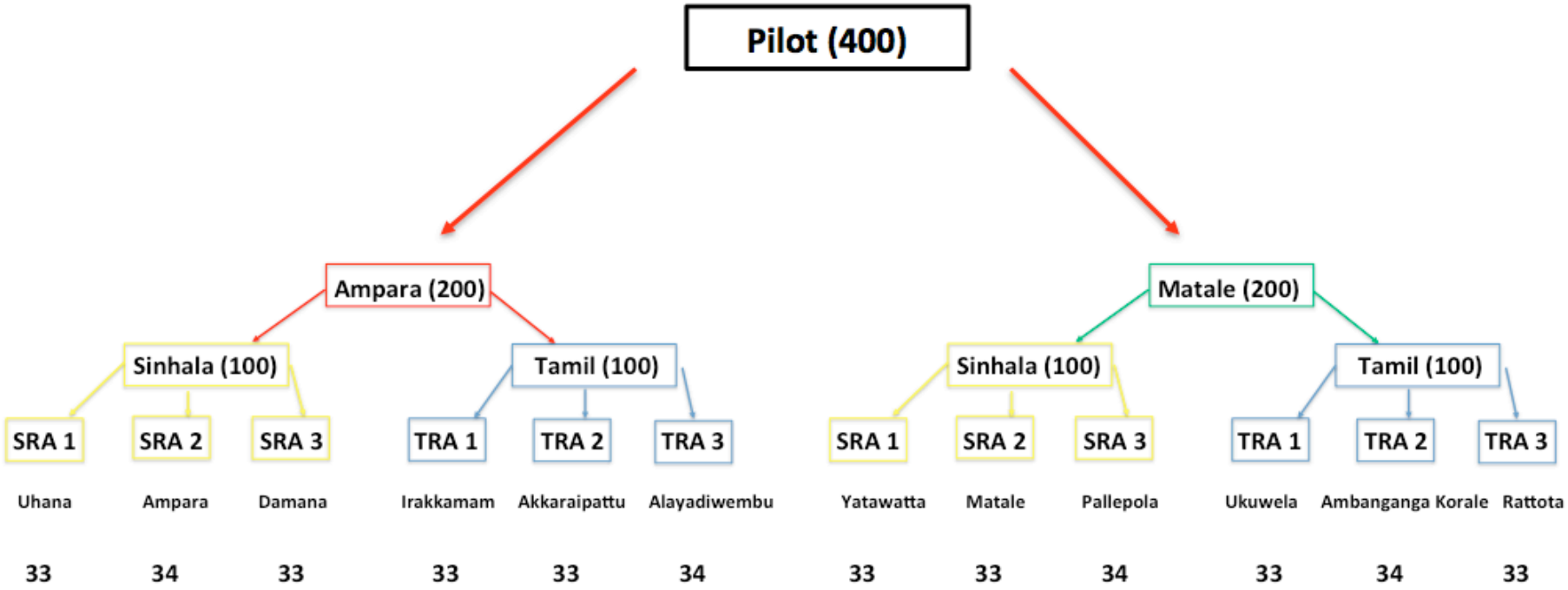
Figure 10

Basic sampling unit within a divisional secretariat division (cluster of 22)



Note. Adapted from Jayakody, S., & Herath, D. (2019). *Methodological report: Pluralistic memories project pilot survey in Sri Lanka*. Zenodo. http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3580667

Figure 11 – A graphical representation of the sample breakdown across districts, among local areas, respondents and enumerators speaking different native languages



* Two Clusters (22 + 11) for each enumerator within a single DS division

Note. Adapted from Jayakody, S., & Herath, D. (2019). *Methodological report: Pluralistic memories project pilot survey in Sri Lanka.* Zenodo. https://zenodo.org/record/3580667

5.2.2 Survey questionnaires

5.2.2.1 Survey instrument translation

The questionnaire administered within the pilot survey tested 318 items across two versions of the questionnaire. They collected responses in relation to personal information, social networks, conflict memories, living conditions, community life, community leadership, social identity, transitional justice, collective victim beliefs, collective action and development. Careful attention was paid in the translation and contextualization of survey documents. They were initially translated to Sinhalese and Tamil later backtranslted to English in ensuring the accuracy of the message conveyed and the concepts measured. Complex and cognitively challenging items were simplified and presented in a vernacular tone in order to avoid respondent and enumerator fatigue. During questionnaire training sessions, the enumerators were provided with a thorough training, which included adequate examples and scenarios in converting this formalized translation into a meaningful vernacular version during the survey interview. Due to issues involving government scrutiny, security, risks associated with leaking PMP project's private in-house material, the lack of professional translation services ensuring privacy and confidentiality of material in naming a few reasons, the translations of the documents were performed in-house. Having natives proficient in Sinhalese and Tamil within the Pluralistic Memories Project's local consortia in Sri Lanka was a great advantage in this regard.

5.2.2.2 Survey instrument training

Following translations and thorough back translations, the training of field staff took place. Even though a unidirectional training was anticipated with members of the local consortium explaining the instruments along with their instructions to the enumerators, the training unfolded itself to a focus group discussion between enumerators, KCG staff and members of the local PMP consortium. Experienced field staff exchanged valuable insights and decisions were made in terms of modifying or discarding items that would pose difficulties within the field, hampering successful data collection and threatening the security of field staff. Items that would cause respondents to feel as if they were undergoing an interrogation, items narrowing respondents' thoughts to a particular group when responding, items posing unrest and unwanted suspicion among different parties concerned within the geography of survey administration in naming a few, were decided to be excluded.

5.2.3 Data scrutiny measures

5.2.3.1 Interviewer / enumerator supervision

A huge effort was made by KCG the 3rd party company undertaking field logistics, in evaluating and supervising field staff. Zero tolerance was shown over fabrication of data or any other misconduct in the field. In order to ensure that the enumerator is physically present in the field and conducting interviews with a stated respondent, rigorous checks were being implemented. Enumerators were assigned with field supervisors who often lodged together in the field, or met regularly. During the initial stages, supervisors accompanied enumerators and were fully involved in respondent selection. The supervisors were physically present during the first couple of interviews conducted by each enumerator. By maintaining such close proximity, the supervisors were able supervise enumerators, ensure security and gain valuable insights to various issues taking place within the field.

Once a questionnaire was complete, it was checked 100% by the supervisor and then sent over to KCG's project office for further scrutiny. In the case of any errors made, enumerators were responsible in rectifying them by reacquainting with respondents physically or over telephone.

5.2.3.2 Supervisor supervision

In order to regulate supervisors, KCG staff was constantly in contact with supervisors. They had verified the activities of the supervisors through their daily logs. These logs had been crosschecked with enumerators to verify whether adequate time had been spent within the field supporting enumerators in building their confidence prior to working independently. KCG compares daily logs between enumerators and supervisors to check if entries match.

5.2.3.3 Random checks over the phone (Back-checks)

At least 10% of randomly selected respondents are given a phone call by KCG from its project office in order to ensure whether the interview genuinely took place. Items with regards to personal data such as "Date of birth", "Name of the GN division" and the "Most frequently followed media source" in naming a few were crosschecked. Furthermore, respondents were asked about any difficult questions they experienced within the questionnaire, whether they had received a token of appreciation and whether there was any

inconvenience caused due to the survey interview in general. Since the supervisor in the field had already performed a 100% check on the questionnaire including the accurate implementation of the sampling procedure, no requirement was seen in redoing it over the phone.

5.2.3.4 Data Entry

Once questionnaires had been checked by filed supervisors and scrutinized using KCG's internal staff, the questionnaire data were digitized. Excel templates, codebooks and a training in entering data were provided by the local project consortium beforehand. The data entry operators were responsible in producing a MS excel dataset that would subsequently be checked using STATA.

5.2.3.5 STATA checking

Within the STATA cleaning and checking phase a random stepwise inspection of variables for at least 10% of the entries made by each data entry operator was performed, ensuring the sequencing of key variable and their accurate logical flow. This phase lead to the final product, which is the final cleaned data set of the pilot survey.

5.2.4 Interviewer Debriefings

Two interviewer debriefings were performed during different stages of the pilot survey data collection. The main objective of them being the investigation of problematic issues arising with regards to the content as well as the process of data collection itself. Debriefing sessions were also used as a platform for sharing best practices among enumerators. Members of the field team were able to share their valuable experiences, which are summarized in the next section on field related issues.

5.2.5 Difficulties and unexpected events

5.2.5.1 Pre-fieldwork

Adhering to precise schedules and deadlines during the pilot study was problematic due to the following complications. The novelty as well as the logistical complexities involved with network sampling for the 3rd party survey agency resulted in a considerable amount of time consumed in understanding the methodology as well as agreeing on

budgetary allocations. Translating and contextualizing questionnaires into the two native languages similarly took significant time. Feedback received during the initial training session for the field staff resulted in modifications, a reprint of the questionnaires and an additional training. Within this time span the field team lost three of its enumerators due to receiving permanent employment elsewhere. The volatile political environment of the country during August 17th 2015 parliamentary elections and other delays resulted in the postponing of fieldwork for almost seven months.

5.2.5.2 Fieldwork

5.2.5.2.1 Issues pertaining to emotional trauma and interviewer/respondent fatigue

A frequent finding in the field with respect to Ampara was that respondents often became very emotional with regard to collective marker events and vignettes utilized in the questionnaire. For many, personal events were irrelevant and spent a lot of time talking about collective events. The enumerators were faced with difficulty as it took on average two hours or more to complete a single questionnaire. They also found witnessing the re-traumatization of respondents somewhat difficult to bear. The strategy discussed within the team was not to interrupt respondents but let them ventilate their emotions. They were provided with an option if interested in sharing their experience in detail with the project's testimonies collection. In situations where respondents were over enthusiastic about sharing their experience, they were courteously reminded that the survey wasn't the opportunity, but to testify instead if interested. Hence the re-traumatization of respondents, traumatizing effects on enumerators and the competency in responding during trauma such as consulting emergency services were some concerns that arose from the field especially within areas that were directly affected by the war.

In relation to the issue of additional time taken in responding to the survey, there have been instances especially in Ampara where respondents have been reluctant to participate due to the sensitive nature of the survey. They have had bad experiences in the past where following their participation, they've been subjected to harassment by law enforcement. In such instances of suspicion, the enumerators have experienced that the more they engaged with the respondent, the more time they spent befriending and empathizing with them, the more likely they were to change their decision and participate in the survey.

5.2.5.2.2 Difficulties experienced by field staff in relation to network proliferation

The social dynamics of ethnicity and gender between the respondent and the enumerator seemed to have played a major role in determining the success of an interview outcome. This was especially prominent in rural closed communities that are rarely open to strangers. The social cultural norms are more conservative in such settings where woman working, travelling alone and interviewing respondents of an opposite gender might be perceived erroneously. There have been instances where female enumerators have been strictly advised by locals not to engage in survey activities and to adhere to particular dress codes. Similarly, male enumerators successfully surveying female respondents in a private setting is highly unlikely in such closed communities requiring a gender balance in the availability of enumerators for a particular area or sampling cluster. Under such conditions, female enumerators may face limitations in terms of the number of working hours available for them affecting the pace of data collection and network proliferation. Enumerators had taken notes of these instances and revealed them during field debriefings. It was noted that during future questionnaire design, it would be advisable to have a section on interviewer impressions where they could make spontaneous notes on such issues arising in the field.

Similarly, the ethnicity of the enumerator seemed to play a major role on the interview outcome. There had been instances where respondents have refused to answer the questionnaire due to the presence of a field staff member belonging to a different ethnic group. Differences in ethnicity are apparent in language use (accents) and dress code. Hence similar to gender, placing more emphasis on harmonizing the effect of ethnicity between the enumerator and the respondent becomes important in ensuring the authenticity of responses. This can especially be an issue within border villages where respondents often have network members who belong to different ethnicities. There have also been instances where members of some communities have refrained from giving details of network members to enumerators who belong to different ethnic groups than their own.

Daily records on network proliferation indicated that some enumerators were capable of performing up to five interviews per day whereas some weren't capable of finishing off five interviews within the first week of data collection. The reason for such variation was due to different social dynamics involving different respondents. In rural more collective and open communities, respondent's network members would be within the vicinity of a few

hundred meters. There were instances where the seed respondent elected to take the enumerator to the next referral(s) in their own bicycle. Some respondents would provide their network's contact numbers more readily than others. Some would call them up, explain to them the survey and their impressions and would introduce the enumerator voluntarily. However, in more closed communities getting in contact with network members hadn't been that easy. For instance, the enumerator who couldn't finish off more than five interviews during the initial week had a government servant as a seed respondent. They typically have eight to five jobs and by the time they are home they either wouldn't like to be disturbed or would be engaged in some other activity making them inaccessible during week days. In such instances there is a higher probability that their network members to have similar professions resulting in such slow network proliferation. In rural farming communities during cultivating seasons finding respondents during the daytime even during weekends is difficult. Hence enumerators face immense challenges, working odd hours in rural areas with no transport and security threats, not to mention threats from wildlife. This is especially challenging for female enumerators. Finding accommodation in rural closed communities is difficult resulting in higher transportation costs for enumerators. In some geographical locations, each household block looks exactly the same making it difficult for enumerators to locate respondents. In such instances instead of risking missing a scheduled appointment the enumerators would hire a taxi increasing their transportation costs further.

There were instances where enumerators had experienced male bias among respondent networks. Men would often have expanded networks as they would interact in public spaces such as religious institution and have conversations. However, females seem to have had less social ties resulting in slow network proliferation. In such instances a strategy of finding a new seed had been adopted. Finding seeds within the field had sometimes become challenging for respondents as the lack of familiarity with regards to the context had resulted in some enumerators associating themselves with members of the military and individuals engaged in illegal activities within communities. Such contact could have posed a huge risk on the enumerator and jeopardized network proliferation.

5.2.5.2.3 Maintaining privacy and confidentiality within the field

In rural village communities it is often difficult to interview respondents alone. Others such as family members tend to participate within the interview. This can be facilitating in

some instances, but inhibiting during others. For example, there are instances where a wife might supplement a brief response made by the husband (who is the targeted respondent). Sometimes it is the supplementing family member a female in most cases who becomes emotional and expresses opinion. But in some instances other participants may prevent the respondent from answering. For example, when asked about examples of mass graves, a wife interrupted a husband by saying "don't talk about things you don't know". Also when there are multiple participants with contradictory responses, enumerators often find it quite difficult to carry on with the interview. There have also been instances where respondents have requested enumerators to meet them out of their homes. For example, a principle of a school had told an enumerator to come meet him at the school library as his wife wouldn't be too keen in him answering a questionnaire of 'this' sort.

5.3 Pluralistic Memories Project's Island Wide Survey in Sri Lanka 2017[5]

Following the successful completion of the pilot survey in 2015 and based on its field experiences, an Island wide representative survey with a sample size of 1200 was designed and implemented in 2017 by the PMP research consortium in Sri Lanka. The Kandy Consulting Group were once again entrusted with all responsibilities related to the logistics of this island wide survey.

5.3.1 Sampling strategy

5.3.1.1 Sampling methodology and survey areas

In selecting 1200 individuals, representative of the Sri Lankan population, multi-stage stratified probability sampling was utilized as the surveys sampling methodology. 100 Grama Niladhari divisions (GN divisions), which correspond to the lowest in hierarchy and the smallest administrative level in Sri Lanka, were selected to draw 12 respondents each to create the 1200 representative sample. These GN divisions spread throughout the 25 districts of Sri Lanka and encompassed a total of 47 DS divisions of the country.

5.3.1.2 Fieldwork for Sampling

A specialized fieldwork had to be organized through KCG to randomly select respondents for the 1200 sample. Voters lists that include all people registered and eligible to

[5] Jayakody, S., Herath, D., & Penić, S. (2019). *Methodological report: Pluralistic memories project main survey in Sri Lanka*. Zenodo. http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3580549

vote (age 18 years and above) are not publicly available in Sri Lanka and obtaining such voters list through the elections commission would have incurred huge costs and unnecessary publicity to the pluralistic memories project in general. Hence the most feasible option available was to take use of the voters' lists that were accessible at divisional secretariat offices under the prevue of their respective divisional secretaries. These DS offices contained voters' lists of all GN divisions that came under its administrative authority. The process started off with a letter addressed to the relevant divisional secretaries by the research consortium which explained the nature of the survey and requested permission and cooperation in carrying out the survey within their administrative regions (GN divisions) and also seek permission to access voters list. Subsequently a training was carried out by KCG premises for a group of enumerators recruited for the specific task of accessing voters lists and selecting respondents to the sample randomly.

5.3.2 Fieldwork

With a sample size of 1200 survey interviews planned to be completed, similar to the pilot, instrument translation, contextualization, recruitment of field staff, instrument training, fieldwork and enumerator debriefings were conducted similarly for this island wide survey. With regards to instrument translation, a new complication arose in relation to different dialects of Tamils that are in use in different parts of Sri Lanka. The dialect spoken in Jaffna and throughout the northern areas of the country (often referred to as Jaffna Tamil) tends to be more formal and closer to formal written language and language used in literature. As a result the questionnaire containing less formal dialect spoken mostly in the southern parts of the country posed issues relating to distancing and prejudice arising among respondents in the North against the enumerators who were mostly from the South. The vignettes used within the questionnaire prompting questions related to conflict memories, which are short, but represents itself as small works of literature were also presented in more formal written Tamil during questionnaire translations. This was indicated by enumerators during feedback sessions to have broken the flow in the use of vernacular language throughout the questionnaire.

5.3.3 Data scrutiny measures

All measures of data scrutiny that were performed during the pilot survey including enumerator and supervisor supervision, random checks performed over the phone, checks in place during data entry and STATA checking were all performed by KCG during the island wide survey. Additional to these, KCG also scheduled two field visits during which enumerators were observed in the field conducting survey interviews with respondents. Consent was obtained from respondents prior to performing such observations. Members of KCG staff and the PMP consortium were present during such field visits and each enumerator was observed in the field. Even though the main purpose of such visits were to evaluate staff performance in the field, having a team during the initial stages of data collection that were responsible for the inception of the survey became highly beneficial for the data collection process. Firstly, given the sensitive nature of the instrument and the sensitivity associated with the context, especially in the former war zone, the researchers themselves being present in the field were a huge confidence booster for the field team. Such presence in the field was also thought to increase the credibility of the overall survey project in the face of unexpected obstacles preventing data collection.

5.3.4 Interviewer Debriefings

Similar to the pilot survey a debriefing occurred following the completion of the island wide fieldwork. Data collection had taken almost 20 weeks and, as a result, enumerators who had finished off data collection quite early in the process found it a bit difficult to recall their field experiences. The meeting was again organized as a final get together for the field staff with a lunch reception at the end. Some of the important feedback received during the debriefing meeting is summarized below.

In the Northeast, some people had been reluctant to provide information about their social networks. They would barely introduce networks beyond their husband or son. One possible reason was speculated to be suspicion, the other being lack of social contact. Neighbouring houses are often spaced apart in these regions following their recent construction following the war and the rural nature of the terrain.

Many LTTE Ex-combatants as well as members of the armed forces had taken part in the survey. Some military personnel had been very critical about the questionnaire and had

been hesitant when answering questions relating to transitional justice. With regards to ex-combatants, a great effort had been taken by the Tamil speaking field team to locate such respondents. Some had even fled with their families when news had spread that the enumerators had come searching for them. Nevertheless, they had shared valuable life experiences while participating in the survey. However, requests had been made to the enumerators to refrain from taking notes or stating responses in the questionnaire. Tamil field staff made a special request from KCG and the PMP consortium at the debriefing to be extra cautious when contacting respondents from former war zones, as many of them are still extremely nervous when answering calls. This was confirmed by KCG research assistants when respondents living in former conflict zones were very difficult to get hold of on the phone for random checks. They would often hang up saying it's a wrong number.

It was very heart warming in the end when the field staff stated that they were grateful for the PMP project for providing them with a great field experience. Some Tamil enumerators stated that even though they were Tamils who originated from the south, they had learnt so much first hand, regarding the destruction that had happened to their own people during the war.

5.3.5 Difficulties and unexpected events

5.3.5.1 Pre-fieldwork

In Sri Lanka, there exists no convenient means of obtaining a list of registered voters that can be utilized for random sampling. Even the department of census and statistics in Sri Lanka is very protective of its data and tends to be extremely cautious when providing it for private use. The election commission maintains a voters' list, however its provision for private use wasn't previously heard of. To avoid unnecessary exposure of the PMP, a separate fieldwork was organized to obtain voters' list from different divisional secretary administrative offices in areas in which the survey was to be administered.

The divisional secretariats have great administrative authority over their DS divisions. As a result, they have the power in turning down requests for using voters' list. Even though precautions were taken by KCG and the PMP consortium to request for permission beforehand, it also required skilled enumerators to confidently present the research purpose (which didn't frequently happen) in gaining access to voter information. Some divisional

secretariats were extremely helpful, some required greater persuasion and a single divisional secretariat refused access to the voters' list stating it to be extremely confidential. In the North, some divisional secretariats required the consortium to inform the district secretariat prior to the release of the voters' lists. Hence the volatile nature of the context and the lack of a straightforward mechanism in obtaining sampling list for research in Sri Lanka, causes a great amount stress and extra effort even prior to actual fieldwork.

5.3.5.2 Fieldwork

The entire data collection exercise was greatly delayed due some unexpected events occurring in the field. Firstly, the extreme weather related disasters that occurred during the month of May 2017, greatly affected the southern part of the country. This stalled fieldwork from taking place in the South for almost two months.

A field evaluation visit carried out by KCG revealed that a highly experienced enumerator who had been working with KCG for the past five years to have committed systematic fraud. Another enumerator maintaining a good track record with KCG was at the receiving end of a few unfortunate incidents while collecting data. In a GN division in the Colombo district, which is notorious for high crime and the presence of narcotics, this particular enumerator had got attacked by an alleged drug addict. The attacker had misrecognized the enumerator for a microfinance officer. Microfinance companies often operate in poverty stricken neighbourhoods and offer microcredit. When customers fail to pay, reclaiming officers are sent to their homes to collect payments due. Our enumerator who was well dressed with an identity card lanyard around his neck perfectly matched the profile of a typical microfinance recovery officer. Without any explanations being asked for, the enumerator had been assaulted. Once KCG had received information regarding this incident, immediate measures were taken to remove the enumerator from the respective GN division and to provide him with medical care. The termination of fieldwork resulted in a loss of three questionnaires from this particular GN division.

The same enumerator operating at a similarly notorious location had his bag stolen one night. He had been lodging at a temple within the region and had noticed that his overnight bag had been stolen. His valuables along with 14 completed questionnaires were lost in the process. Upon receiving information on the incident, KCG in consultation with the

local PMP team instructed the enumerator to redo the survey interviews with the 14 respondents. Police complaints were lodged for both incidents by the enumerator.

Another enumerator was involved in a more serious incident while collecting data in the Hambanthota district. This GN situated in the deep south of Sri Lanka and being the electorate of the former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, is known in general to hail Sinhala Buddhist nationalistic sentiments. A government official working for the GN had walked in unannounced into a survey interview that was being conducted by this enumerator. Upon hearing the questions presented on minority rights, the official had become extremely agitated and had disrupted the interview. He had immediately called the divisional secretariat and had informed of the situation. The enumerator had been instructed to stop work and to meet the divisional secretariat the following morning. Upon meeting the divisional secretariat, she had reprimanded the enumerator stating that he could not conduct such research in her administrative area. Upon receiving information regarding this incident, the senior manager for research of KCG got in contact with the relevant divisional secretariat. Upon stating that the survey had been introduced and permission sought after before and voters list collected, the only answer given by the divisional secretariat was, “this is a sensitive area, it is the former presidents electorate, and we can’t do whatever we want”. Furthermore she had stated that she had informed the criminal investigations division (CID) and that once they cleared KCG and the survey project, she would let us resume data collection. However, such a call was never received by KCG. The enumerator was questioned by the CID division in Tangalle. All documents pertaining to survey introduction and the survey ID card had been produced by the enumerator. Subsequently the enumerator had been released without further hassle. Upon PMP local team and KCG instructions, data collection was terminated immediately and the enumerator was called back to KCG with the questionnaires completed so far in the particular GN. This premature termination of data collection resulted in the loss of 9 more questionnaires. This along with the 3 questionnaires lost in Obesekarapura, resulted in the final sample figure of 1188.

This is a classic example of the volatile political context in Sri Lanka. A government official at the lowest administrative level can hamper data collection based on nationalist sentiments. The divisional secretariat present during the time when KCG sent permission letters and collected voter lists had gone on transfer and another divisional secretariat was

present during the time of data collection. Perhaps if the time gap between permission seeking and data collection was narrower, such an incident would not have taken place.

The final problematic issue took place in the field when an enumerator who claimed to have completed 27 questionnaires suddenly went off the radar failing to answer calls made by KCG. Even though contact was established through great effort, the enumerator refused to resume fieldwork and submit the already completed survey instruments. This posed a serious issue to KCG and the PMP consortium as confidential respondent information was being compromised. While KCG was contemplating legal action against the relevant enumerator, it was revealed that this enumerator hadn't completed a single questionnaire. A substitute enumerator sent to repeat data collection revealed that the original sampling list had not been exhausted.

Due to aforementioned complications taking place in the field, data collection was significantly delayed by 14 weeks. Apart from contracts being terminated on disciplinary grounds, a greater number of enumerators were lost to the project due to the delay caused in data collection. Most of the enumerators tend to be part time employees selected from a pool for short-term assignments. Most of them have permanent employment that they attend to and as a result 3 new enumerators had to be recruited, trained additionally by the PMP consortium and sent to the field to collect data.

5.3.5.3 Post-fieldwork

The CID investigation that originated in Hambantota had triggered a general investigation with regards to KCGs research portfolio resulting in a CID officer visiting the office premises of KCG and conducting a preliminary investigation following the completion of all fieldwork.

This incident was followed by another investigation involving the ministry of defence. Organizations that undertake sensitive research projects such as the PMP local consortium tends to be constantly monitored by military intelligence, under the purview of the ministry of defence in Sri Lanka. Just after the conclusion of fieldwork of the PMP and the CID investigation at KCG, a military intelligence official had got in contact with the co-investigator of the local PMP consortium in Sri Lanka.

The investigations mentioned above all occurred during the post-fieldwork stages of the PMP island wide survey. Most of the questionnaires had reached KCG and were being entered by data entry operators. Upon notifying the PMP consortium regarding the investigative attempts made on the survey project and its current stage of data entry, one of the main concerns raised by the PMP team was regarding the risk to confidentiality of the respondents interviewed. Hence until all documents were entered into the system, scanned, digital copies made and physical copies destroyed, any documents containing personal information were transferred to a separate secure storage location.

5.4 Conclusion

Similar to the experiences of Moss, Uluğ, & Acar, (2018) and Wood (2006) when performing qualitative research in conflict settings, performing quantitative research in conflict settings can induce similar methodological, practical and ethical complications. Through this chapter, I hoped to highlight some of the complications that arose relating to the unpredictability of the environment especially in the form of natural disasters, political polarization in certain regions hampering data collection and triggering military surveillance on several organizations related to the survey and possibilities of re-traumatizing participants even through administering a questionnaire. The chapter highlights instances where the safety of respondents as well as field staff could have been compromised and instances where prior notification and approval did not guarantee successful data collection. This relates to the initial stages of sample collection as well. Instances where the identity of field staff as a gendered ethno religious human being can both facilitate as well as inhibit successful data collection were mentioned. The chapter also indicated potential complications that can arise in a research setting such as Sri Lanka, which is multi linguistic, making researchers native to the country still outsiders to micro geographic, ethno cultural and linguistic clusters within. In summary, I would like to provide my own recommendations based on experiences gained through the Pluralistic Memories Project's surveys conducted in post conflict Sri Lanka.

In relation to pre-fieldwork, adhering to precise schedules and deadlines when conducting field surveys in volatile context can be extremely difficult. Hence allocating considerable time and budgetary allocations for the following pre-fieldwork tasks can often help save time. Informing (and requesting permission if necessary from) public/government officials responsible for civil service in areas of fieldwork tends to be one of them. Our

strategy in approaching officials involved the use of personal contacts. Keeping communications official, written and transparent often helps in mitigating the risk of such officials being replaced by others due to varying reasons (going on maternity leave/ transfers etc.) during the course of fieldwork. Having such communications upfront and official prevents unnecessary delays caused at the more volatile grassroots levels, and unnecessary risks posed on respondents, field staff and local researchers/research organizations. The second involves pre-fieldwork planning with regards to sampling and survey methodology. Certain contexts may not have sampling lists readily available requiring preliminary fieldwork in obtaining sampling frames. New research methodologies may require extensive training and pilot fieldwork for enumerators. Survey instruments may require contextual grounding when translated. They also require discussion and several rounds of revisions by local field staff before they can be deemed field worthy and be introduced to officials when requesting permission for fieldwork. All of the above incur significant cost monetary and time wise hence planning ahead is worthwhile.

In relation to on-going fieldwork, compared to qualitative research, time spent with respondents can be limited when conducting large-scale surveys. Nevertheless, rapport building with respondents is equally important in survey research especially when the materials studied tend to be rather sensitive. Relationship building not only increases survey response rates, but also helps mitigate respondent re-traumatization. Reading signs of respondent trauma, knowing when to stop, and whom to refer in case of trauma emergency, tends to be an important component of enumerator training. Imposing a maximum daily limit on number of surveys performed per enumerator can be helpful in increasing the quality of the relationship established between respondent and enumerator and the subsequent quality of the survey interview. Being sensitive towards respondent ethnicity and gender beforehand in matching them with equal characteristics in enumerators especially in culturally sensitive context may contribute further to quality of the survey interview. In improving respondent commitment and ensuring greater attention span, conducting interviews in private and secluded locations, away from fewer disturbances as possible needs to be encouraged.

Microenvironments within the larger study context may yield different challenges in relation to survey logistics, requiring flexibility and patience when collective data. In the case where signs of agitation towards the survey or other inevitable circumstances within micro volatile environments are on offer, stopping fieldwork immediately is important. Fieldwork

can be recommenced during calmer times or entirely replaced by alternate field areas, preventing unnecessary risk to field staff and the implementation of the overall research project. Readily available backup sample areas and sample list helps smoothen this transition. In doing so maintaining rapid and efficient communication channels between field staff, survey agencies and research teams becomes crucial.

Systematic fraud is another common challenge experienced during field research. Having robust back checks during different points in data collection can ensure prevention of fraud and in worst case scenarios ensuring such fraud are identified promptly. Having a sound budget for contingencies becomes important when dealing with fraud and other emergencies in the field, as resurveying respondents following main fieldwork can be costly. In this regard budgetary allocations for enumerator payments that are typically considered 'more than fair' goes a long way in ensuring high quality data and preventing enumerator attrition due to alternate employment opportunities. Seeking survey agencies that maintain a pool of permanent employees as field staff may be beneficial in this regard.

The importance of metadata cannot be emphasized enough. Field notes by enumerators, researchers as well as the setting up of debriefing meetings within the entire methodology, especially during several points in data collection becomes important for information exchange between researchers and field staff especially with regards to the instrument, its study content, research methodology and the study context.

Finally, the most difficult challenge in the opinion of the author involves the ethical dilemma associated with managing the expectations of respondents. Regardless of the type of fieldwork conducted being qualitative or quantitative, especially in relation to vulnerable communities living in conflict affected areas, participating as a respondent often includes mammoth expectations relating to transitional justice and monetary compensation in naming just a few. Provided the colossal risks associated with participating in a sensitive research study such as the pluralistic memories project amidst official surveillance and scrutiny, and risks of re-traumatization while participation, the power dynamics involved and the ethical responsibilities of handling expectations between the researcher and respondents can often be quite a daunting task. The projects strategy (amidst budget constraints) in handling such participant expectations were; (1) Providing a clear indication of the academic nature of the study with potential benefits for participants and or their future generations in terms of a

scientific inquiry and conceivable future policy changes. (2) Ensuring referrals are being made and followed up for respondents who are in search of particular services (3) Attempting to schedule a respondent interview that is as much convenient as possible for respondents, if not ensuring that respondents are at least remunerated for their transportation. (3) Providing a small gift, as a token of appreciation for their quality time and rapport built with the research project.

The next chapter concludes this thesis summarizing its empirical contribution to the field of social psychology.

Chapter 6

General Discussion

In this thesis the continuation of ethnic identity heightening in post-war Sri Lanka and its potential implications for future intergroup relations were analysed. Based on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), Self-categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), the Elaborated Social Identity Model of Crowd Behaviour (Drury & Reicher, 2009; Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010) and theoretical underpinnings indicating the intricate relationship between political power, violence and social identity by Elcheroth & Reicher (2017), it was conceptualized how ethnic identities were historically utilized as sources of socio-political power among both the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil ethnic factions in the country. It was also discussed how various strategies often based on violence were utilized in manipulating civilian epistemic capital, causing a severe reduction in ethnic identities, their associated social representations and social realities in the process. The differed and often limited social realities that were gradually established between these ethnic groups were later argued to have escalated into a civil war that lasted for almost three decades.

The cessation of the conflict following a unilateral victory by the Sri Lankan state over the LTTE in 2009 marked a pivotal point in Sri Lanka's socio-political history where a valuable opportunity lay for the state in restoring peace by de-heightening ethnic tensions and working towards creating equal social, political and economic realities for its citizenry. While the call was on for restoration, retribution and democratization, the official state focus seemed more on mass scale infrastructure development, a move considered by many to be strategic in navigating numerous complexities associated with the country's local political constituencies and the international community on human rights grounds. Through a thorough analysis of three chronologically important post-war outcomes that span two majoritarian political regimes following 2009, along with their local and geopolitical implications on the Sri Lankan state, this thesis argued the continued heightening of ethnic group identity by studying the differed realities associated with such post-war outcomes on

the majority and minority populous of the country. The three post-war outcomes empirically analysed within this thesis included (1) the state's reconciliation oriented development approach following the war in 2009 (2) a collective action boom following a regime change in 2015 and (3) a similarly associated enthusiasm for accountability following the 2015 political transition in the country.

In assessing the differed ethnic group realities towards the post-war outcomes analysed, this thesis took into consideration a core subjective content of social identity which is collective victimhood (Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gundar, 2009; Vollhardt, 2012; Noor, Vollhardt, Mari, & Nadler, 2017). The varied subjective construals that individuals possess with regards to their ethnic groups victimization proved to influence their epistemic and behavioural outcomes differently subsequently feeding into their differed social realities towards the post-war outcomes analysed. The analysis also considered collective action as a potential behavioural outcome to the differed ethnic group realities associated with the post-war outcomes analysed. Ethnic grievances underlying such collective action tendencies pointed towards a potential risk of perpetuating future cycles of violence.

In conceptualizing and arguing the continuation of ethnic identity heightening and its potential implications on post-war interethnic relations in Sri Lanka, this thesis empirically examined three research questions. Through study 1 it examined the differed perceptions held by the majority and minority communities towards Sri Lanka's post-war development and their likelihood in expressing grievances collectively. Through study 2 it performed a differential analysis on ethnic, communal and individual grievances fuelling collective efforts for change, again among the different majority and minority ethnic communities. Through study 3 it examined the majority and minority preferences for accountability during post-conflict times, especially in relation to an inclusive suffering narrative officially propagated by the state. In generating such arguments and conceptualizations, a quantitative analysis based on two public opinion surveys carried throughout the country, representative of all ethnic and religious groups was conducted. A summary of the main findings are as follows.

6.1 Differed ethnic perceptions and reactions surrounding Sri Lanka's post-war development

Economic development and its restorative properties following mass violence seem rarely discussed within the field of social psychology. Typically studied within transitional

justice, the potential impact of a sole focus on economic prosperity, has often being warned against due to its negligence toward other holistic needs in reconciling former parties to conflict (see Brounéus, 2003; Newman & Schnabel, 2002; van Gennip 2005; Lambourne 2004; Ahmed & Green, 1999). Despite proposals being made at combining grassroots participation, reparations and memorialization with physical development (see Ginty & Williams, 2009) the trend continues where states focus and a plethora of funding available for peace initiatives dominated by infrastructure development. A similar unilateral reconciliation process highlighted by mass scale infrastructure development prevails in Sri Lanka and despite its comprehensive analysis at a more macro socio-economic and socio-political level (see Rajasingham, 2010; Saparamadu & Lall, 2014), it's implications at a more micro individual level and a meso ethnic group level was yet to be analysed

Hence by performing an empirical analysis on differed ethnic perceptions and reactions towards development, the author aspired through study 1 in making a contribution to the field of social psychology as per the role of post-war (reconciliation oriented) development's influence on heightening ethnic group identity. In conceptualizing such a heightening impact, the quintessential post-war needs of the general public following conflict as opposed to the unilateral, majoritarian and often militarily imposed nature of Sri Lanka's post-war development; the positioning of development as majoritarian help (see Schubert, 2016); the implications of internalizing development as dependency oriented vs. autonomy oriented help and other potential invocations of negative meta-stereotypes (see Wakefield, Hopkins, & Greenwood, 2013) in relation to development were taken into consideration.

Study 1 was performed mainly in identifying differed ethnic group reactions towards development as a potential reconciliation mechanism. However it also investigated the effects of victim beliefs among respondents living in communities affected by varying degrees of war violence. This effect of victimization was examined in relation to their perceptions held regarding state initiated development as well as their willingness to take part in collective action as a response to development. As conceptualized, the study revealed negative perceptions held towards development to entice greater collective action participation among the general public, and surprisingly more inclusive conceptualizations of suffering experienced by all (not limiting to one's own ethnic in-group) to be associated with greater negativity towards development and greater collective action participation. A heavy dislike towards development stimulating collective action tends to be an important policy

implication especially an indication for the state regarding the inadequacy and common grievances present among the general public towards mass infrastructure development. The grievance being commonplace irrespective of ethnic and geographic connotations seem to indicate towards the inability of such mass scale infrastructure projects to yield to the development needs of the ordinary citizenry. Furthermore, connotations of inclusive victimhood relating to the suffering of all throughout history underlying displeasure towards development tends to be another indication for its inadequacy in yielding to the needs of many. With modern notions of development being locally driven (Nustad, 2001; Esteva, 1992) and expanding human freedoms (Sen, 1998), whether trickledown effects of Sri Lanka's relatively authoritative, militarily driven infrastructure development projects are reaching the grassroots and contributing to equal wealth distribution remains a question to be further analysed and seriously pursued by the Sri Lankan state. The more reconciliatory and inclusive thought processes surrounding the suffering of all, contributing towards collective action against development on the other hand, seems to be driven by a willingness to facilitate wellbeing for everyone amidst a common grievance. Even though requiring deeper analysis (especially in terms of asymmetries in power), such findings seem to be contributing further to the literature affirming reconciliatory properties associated with inclusive victimhood beliefs (Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, 2013; Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Doosje, 2015; Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015; Vollhardt, Nair, & Tropp, 2016) in post-conflict settings.

Even though the analysis fails to yield significant effect sizes when differentially applied to majority and minority ethnic groups, the study reveals a clear distinction between majority and minority perceptions towards development. While minorities express negativity towards development the most, they also show greater willingness in voicing out their grievances collectively, whilst possessing greater inclusive victimhood beliefs in comparison to the majority. Such findings do point towards the differed ethnic group realities surrounding Sri Lanka's mass infrastructure based reconciliation strategy and indicate potential in heightening ethnic group identities and subsequent mobilization, especially due to its detestation. The risks associated with overlooking the holistic needs of reconciliation (Brounéus, 2007; Newman & Schnabel, 2002; van Gennip, 2005; Lambourne, 2004; Ahmed & Green, 1999) having potential in sparking future intergroup violence and the importance of nestling economic development within other softer aspects of reconciliation were mentioned before (see Ginty and Williams, 2009). Hence these findings of study 1 relating to greater

ethnic minority dissent towards pure infrastructure development based reconciliation have important policy implications for the state in terms of reviewing its future reconciliation strategies.

Conceptualizing why resentment exists towards development provides useful avenues for future empirical investigation, especially in combining and analysing transitional justice within the field of social psychology. For instance, the diverse positioning and perception of infrastructure development in relation to essential post-war needs of the general public; unilateral, majoritarian and militarily imposed top-down help; can be analysed further in terms of satisfying/dissatisfying agency and morality needs of the citizenry in accordance with the Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation (Nadler & Shnabel 2008, 2015). An alternative means of conceptualizing development within the social psychology literature can be its analysis in terms of autonomous versus dependency orientated help in accordance with The Intergroup Helping as Status Relations model (Nadler, 2002; Nadler and Halabi, 2006), and The Defensive Helping Model (Nadler, Harpaz-Gorodeisky & Ben-David, 2009). The invocations of negative meta-stereotypes (Wakefield, Hopkins, & Greenwood, 2013) in the form of failure and dependency can also be looked into in heightening ethnic group identities. Whether individuals require changes in the implementation of post-war development, such as incorporating physical development around collective memory and memorialization, grassroots participation improving agency, and including compensatory mechanisms (see Ginty and Williams, 2009) can be further investigated.

Due to certain restrictions within the field including inadequate sample sizing, the authors were unable to conduct further differential analysis within study 1, particularly in relation to variances that exist in perceptions towards development among members belonging to the same ethnic groups living both in the former conflict zones and areas that were least affected by the conflict. Such analysis in future would reveal interesting findings especially by highlighting temporal and geographic distances to the conflict as well as the importance placed by such groups on structural and or physical violence. Such factors impacting their varying attitudes towards development might even surpass their hierarchical ethnic group boundaries.

6.2 Differed ethnic perceptions involving collective change

The initial empirical study, revealing negative attitudes towards reconciliation oriented development in sparking greater collective mobilization among the general public, inspired the author in terms of investigating various factors that motivate diverse individuals in participating collective mobilization efforts, especially within a post-conflict environment. Provided the power differences prevalent among the different ethnic groups predominating various geographies within the country, and the unilateral peace established by the majoritarian state amidst the annihilation of a minority rebel group, it was the ideology of the author that factors motivating collective expressions of grievances especially relating to transitional justice cannot be the same for everyone.

Within the social psychology literature, collective identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) with disadvantaged groups tends to be one of the most popular theoretical justifications of collective action. Alternative explanations to noting the pervasiveness of group inequality focuses on individual instrumentality and collective efficacy (see Klandermans & Oegema, 1987, van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Analysis parsing apart individual instrumentality, collective efficacy and collective identification seems quite rare if not non-existent. Studied extensively in relatively stable contexts within the global north, the literature also seems mostly focused on low status disadvantaged groups overcoming social injustice. When the structural position of high status advantaged groups are considered they seem to be studied in relation to protecting their own privileged status quo or in displaying solidarity towards the disadvantaged (see van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; Becker, 2012). Hence differed structural positions of groups impacting collective initiatives for change seem equally underexplored within the literature.

Through study 2, the author attempted in sustaining the argument as per the continued heightening of ethnic group identity in post-war Sri Lanka by analysing a collective action boom taking place following a change in political power (to a relatively less authoritative regime) in 2015. The differential analysis performed on the role of individual grievances, ethnic grievances and communal support systems in stimulating collective efforts for change among Sinhalese and Tamils, not only investigated the differed social realities associated with each ethnicity during post-conflict times, but also contributes to the literature by parsing

apart the impact of individual instrumentality, collective efficacy and collective identification in affecting collective change. By differentiating findings between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamils with asymmetric power relations and differing histories of both structural and physical oppression, the study takes into consideration the varied structural positions of each group impacting their collective change initiatives. A further contextual contribution made through this analysis to the social psychology literature on collective action involves a differentiation made within the analysis in relation to former conflict zones and areas less exposed to conflict, shedding light on potentially differed grievances prevalent among such vulnerable communities.

Study 2 reveals a clear distinction in terms of factors motivating collective change among groups with differed structural positions. While ethnic grievances and collective efficacy underlie collective efforts for change among minority Tamils, more instrumental concerns surrounding individuals such as poverty seem to be fuelling collective action tendencies among the majority Sinhalese. Such instrumental needs of the Sinhalese perhaps explain some of the variation between Sinhalese and Tamil perceptions towards development revealed in study 1, where the Tamils seem to perceive development more negatively than the Sinhalese. These findings even seem to hold when extended from the general public to individuals living in former conflict zones indicative of the differed realities and the pervasiveness of ethnic grievances surrounding collective change efforts for minority Tamils.

Despite living conditions being stated as quite dire with higher recorded levels of conflict violence, poverty and non-conducive communal environments documenting low levels of social support, individual instrumental concerns seem insignificant for the Tamils. On the contrary the victimization of their ethnic group and a glorified sense of ethnic group identity seem to underlie their collective efforts for change. This absence of instrumental concerns motivating or inhibiting tendencies for collective action participation, and ethnic grievance instead, motivating collective efforts for change among the Tamils, indicates further the potential irrelevance or inadequacy in Sri Lanka's post-war reconciliation efforts that are biased towards economic reparation. The heavily contested nature of transitional justice needs for Tamils ranging from truth seeking, right to memorialization, institutional reform and criminal prosecutions in naming a few were discussed before (see "Final report CTF", 2017) along with collective protests organized by them within the former conflict zones against land appropriation by the state, abductions, intimidation and enforced

disappearances (see Watchdog, 2013; Fernando, 2017, 2018, 2019). The extension of these findings from the former conflict zones to the Tamils living throughout the entire country, further implies the prevalence of physical as well as structural violence against them, pointing towards an urgent revision in transitional justice and reconciliation strategies adopted by the state.

Apart from considering ethnic group's victimization to be quite important, the absence of exclusive victimhood beliefs along with its negative intergroup outcomes (see Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008; Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008; Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992; Wohl & Branscombe, 2008) in fuelling collective mobilization among the Tamils can be easily and erroneously perceived to be an absence of competition in terms of victimhood status (and their associated ethnic grievances and identity heightening) between the former parties to conflict. It is possible for such absence to be a strategic move on the part of minority, being only 15.3% of the population when collectively mobilizing against a state that currently represents a majority ethnic group of 74.9% of the population (Census & Statistics, 2012), and had quite recently annihilated their historic collective mobilization efforts (that were armed and violent). On the contrary identity heightening seems more evident through the Tamils' sense of glorified ethnic group identity stimulating mobilization. Provided the rather inflexible and uncritical attachment to an in-group associated with glorification (Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Halevy, & Eidelson, 2008); the negative intergroup outcomes associated with identity glorification (Leidner, Castano, Zaiser, & Giner-Sorolla, 2010; Roccas et al., 2006, 2008); and the historic mobilization of Tamils using selective trauma narratives (Ramanathapillai, 2006); all seem to indicate a potential future risk towards ethnic grievances feeding into renewed cycles of ethnic based violence, in the near future having again important policy implications in reviewing state reconciliation strategies.

6.3 Differed ethnic perceptions surrounding accountability

While the initial empirical study seem to have pointed towards the inadequacy of infrastructure development as a reconciliation strategy, study 2 seem to have highlighted the role of ethnic grievances prevalent among the minority Tamil populous in sparking their collective mobilization efforts. These findings seem to have been indicating a potential need especially for closure, for what people had experienced in the past, inspiring author interest in

investigating public perceptions towards accountability measures in Sri Lanka through study number 3.

Retributive justice and its implications for future intergroup relations following mass violence seems another area rarely discussed within the field of social psychology. Studied extensively within transitional justice, retribution involves a punitive aspect in delivering accountability for perpetrations of gross human rights violations (ICTJ, 2020). It is also a valuable means of creating a deterrence effect on potential future manipulators and participators of identity projects, ending cultures of impunity, increasing individual agency, an important social identity need required for successful reconciliation (see Nadler & Shnabel 2008, 2015; Abele & Wojciszke, 2013). However retributive justice tends to be often critiqued of being perpetrator centred and compromising accountability over truth. It also tends to be heavily contested between groups with asymmetric power, often denounced by groups having greater power. In instances where high power groups act as "spoilers", international assistance is required when implementing retributive justice especially within fragile post conflict settings (Avruch, 2010). Accountability for gross human rights violations in Sri Lanka seems similarly contested, lacking a sincere political commitment despite its high domestic and international demand ("Final report CTF", 2017; "OHCHR Sri Lanka", 2018). An official narrative of inclusive victimization (that suffering has been commonplace for everyone) seems massly and continuously propagated through state communications (see "Lands releases," 2018; "Rehabilitation to rejoice," 2018), discursively constructing the LTTE as the sole perpetrator, concealing allegations of historic and contemporary offences allegedly committed by the majoritarian state in the name of humanitarianism (Nadarajah & Sriskandarajah, 2005; Schubert, 2013; Nadarajah, 2018). Despite a more contemporary inclusive outlook called for within transitional justice in taking the so called "spoilers" seriously in piecing together a more complete analytical framework of unknown contested contexts (Jones & Bernath, 2017); and despite the reconciliatory outcomes shown to be present within social psychology to be associated with such inclusive understandings of suffering (Noor, Vollhardt, Mari, & Nadler, 2017; Vollhardt, 2009, 2015), such inclusive thought processes are not without their pitfalls (Vollhardt, 2015); stimulating author interest in studying the differed ethnic perceptions on accountability, amidst an official narrative of inclusive suffering propagated in post-war Sri Lanka.

Through study 3 the author analyses the impact inclusive construals of victimization imposes upon differed ethnic group perceptions towards prosecutions, implemented by both domestic and international involvement in post-war Sri Lanka. By analysing such differed ethnic realities surrounding accountability, the author attempts in sustaining the thesis's central argument as per the continued heightening of ethnic group identity in post-war Sri Lanka. This study, especially through its context contributes uniquely to both social psychology (particularly collective victimhood studies) and the transitional justice literature by analysing a post-conflict setting situated within the global south that has constantly propagated an inclusive victimhood narrative potentially influencing its citizenry's attitudes towards transitional justice, especially prosecutions. Analysing the acknowledgment of crimes committed by in-groups and the importance placed upon in-group suffering as mediators within this study model, contributes further to the understanding of nuances surrounding interpretations and potential consequences of inclusive victimhood beliefs for asymmetric power groups.

The study revealed greater conflict exposure among Tamils throughout the civil war and for them to place greater importance upon this suffering experience. While they showed the least tendency in comprehending similarities in their suffering experience with Sinhalese, they showed a greater need for accountability by championing prosecutions implemented both domestically and internationally. Regardless of the low support shown towards accountability, especially towards prosecutions conducted through international involvement, the Sinhalese seem to claim greater similarities in their suffering with Tamils.

The study revealed further, inclusive victimization beliefs among both the asymmetric power groups to negatively influence their support for prosecutions. For the minority Tamils this negative relationship indicated their inability to comprehend similarities in their suffering experience considering the asymmetry in their historic suffering, both structural and physical. For Tamils who actually did align themselves with inclusive victimization thoughts, resulted in a reduction in their importance placed upon in-group suffering, contributing towards reduced support for impartial prosecutions implemented both at the domestic and through international involvement. Such findings seem to be align well with the irony of harmony literature, where harmonizing with high power groups have shown to demobilize low power groups (Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009; Dixon, Tropp, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2010; and Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim, 2012)

The high inclusive victimhood claims resulting in low support for prosecutions among the Sinhalese point only towards a more strategic and defensive stance adopted by the majority ethnic group. However a minute proportion of the Sinhalese that genuinely possess inclusive victimhood beliefs (potentially with nuanced understandings of the asymmetric civil war that took place in the country) seem to acknowledge crimes committed by their in-group resulting in them supporting impartial prosecutory mechanisms implemented both domestically as well as through international involvement. Such individuals seem to partial out the negative relationship between inclusive victim beliefs and support for prosecutions held by the rest of the majority.

These differed and contested social realities surrounding perceptions of inclusive victimhood and prosecutions between the Tamils and Sinhalese, seem to signify a continued sense of heightened ethnic group identity. By one refuting to acknowledge the suffering of another, and the other equally refuting the implementation of accountability measures for the other, seems to indicate a deadlock in terms of the two groups willingness to reciprocate and satisfy morality and agency needs, which is considered undesirable for conflict resolution with risks of unresolved animosities feeding into future cycles of violence. As noted within the previous two studies, this 3rd study reviewing perceptions on accountability too seems to be suggesting the importance of reviewing current state reconciliation strategies in post war Sri Lanka. The importance of diversifying transitional justice mechanisms beyond economic restitution (by including accountability measures for instance), and seeking the truth (by establishing a Truth Commission) in order to officially acknowledge the suffering of diverse parties affected, needs to be seriously sought after above and beyond massly and strategically propagated inclusive victimhood narratives.

6.4 Conclusion

"Is Sri Lanka effectively reconciling?" was a rather abstract ideological question governing the empirical research studies conducted within this thesis. An analysis of differed ethnic group realities and reactions surrounding restorative, social and retributive justice among high power majority Sinhalese and low power minority Tamils made a case for the continuation of identity based politics, along with a potential risk of heightened ethnic identities feeding into future cycles of violence in the country. The inadequacy of restorative justice adopted as the sole reconciliation strategy by the Sri Lankan state seem to be signified

by all three studies conducted within this thesis. While study 1 clearly indicates the negative perceptions held by the general public towards development, study number 2 and 3 indicate the grievances surrounding the deliberate ignorance of retributive justice especially for the minority Tamils, when ethnic grievances surpass instrumental needs in motivating their collective mobilization efforts, and when officially stipulated inclusive claims of suffering are incapable of inhibiting their quest in pursuing accountability. These findings in general seem to have important policy implications for the Sri Lankan state in terms of diversifying its upcoming reconciliation portfolio or facing imminent cycles of violence amounting to heightened ethnic identities in the near future.

Having a more nuanced understandings of conflict and suffering, especially the fact that everyone irrespective of ethnicity suffered to a certain degree due to conflict seems to have had a conciliatory impact, de-heightening ethnic identities and promoting constructive attitudes and behaviours towards peace. This was observed through individual responses in voicing out concerns regarding the inadequacy of infrastructure development and their need for more serious and holistic measures of transitional justice irrespective of ethnic identity. However such nuanced understandings of suffering, namely inclusive victimhood consciousness, especially when held genuinely impacted the asymmetric power groups differently. While it made the high power majority more supportive of the plight of the low power minority, in certain cases the low power minority were made complaisant, having a demobilizing effect when fighting for their own socio-political rights. Furthermore at a more conceptual level, an increasing need of analysing and embedding transitional justice within theoretical notions of social psychology seems to be emphasized through this research work. Apart from diversifying transitional justice mechanisms, analysing them through social identity based needs of agency & morality (Abele & Wojciszke, 2013) among various parties to conflict are capable of providing an estimate as to how such mechanisms are being perceived within the general public. While the main objective of transitional justice lies in acknowledging maltreatment and reinstating agency, enabling former parties in conflict to reintegrating each other within their moral domains, mechanisms implemented in particular (strategic) ways have a potential in inhibiting this process of agency morality reciprocation. Sri Lanka's infrastructure development based restorative justice being a case in point, potential future directions that stem from this thesis include a Needs-Based analysis of

transitional justice (Nadler & Shnabel 2008, 2015) both present as well as aspired for, along with potential meta stereotypes (Wakefield, Hopkins, & Greenwood, 2013) being invoked.

Owing to an adaptation of a social identity based approach, the author believes a rather comprehensive social psychological analysis relating to the three post-war outcomes development, collective action and accountability were made possible along with a plethora of factors relating to identity content, inequality, legitimacy and power asymmetries in naming a few, being discussed. Secondly in this process, a detailed contextual analysis relating to post-war Sri Lanka was thought to have been possible catering to a high demand within the field of social psychology in adopting a more complex approach when studying multifaceted social psychological phenomenon that can be extrapolated across multiple settings. Through numerous surveys, some conducted throughout the entire country representative of all ethnic, religious and socioeconomic levels, the sensitive data and their research findings presented within this thesis stem from rigid methodologies, highest ethical scrutiny and meticulous fieldwork from "real communities living in the real world" that are much harder to access.

Apart from the theoretical contributions made to the field of social psychology, this thesis makes an important contribution to research methodology, specifically with regards to conducting large scale survey projects within post conflict contexts. Several challenges encountered by researchers when conducting sensitive research that inquire individual attitudes in relation to ethnic identity, conflict, victimization, human rights violations, collective mobilization and transitional justice was discussed and strategies adopted by the authors in mitigating such challenges stated. In alleviating challenges posed by a politically diverse, extremely polarized and heavily surveilled post-war society such as Sri Lanka, the study emphasizes careful planning, vigilantly developed questionnaires, prior notification, approval and open communications with officials in ensuring the safety of respondents, field staff and all parties involved in the data collection exercise. Flexible research schedules, budgets and backup samples are considered a requisite within this research study in mitigating such unpredictable environments that are often manifested through natural disasters, frequent local/national level regime changes, and even enumerator fraud. Awareness towards microenvironments frequently encountered within larger survey projects are also considered crucial for successful data collection especially in politically sensitive research. Enumerator identity in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, dress code and the cultural

script at play in a given microenvironment matters immensely and hence require careful pairing with respondents in ensuring better rapport building. Nuanced language use tends to be another key attribute often overlooked, making researchers native to the research context still outsiders to the microenvironments studied, requiring careful attention towards questionnaire development, enumerator trainings and the actual execution of survey interviews. Finally sensitive research projects often pose risks of re-traumatization and persecution for respondents. They often participate amidst such risks with mammoth expectations of transitional justice and monetary compensations. Hence protecting participants and managing their expectations tend to be a daunting ethical obligation in the hands of research practitioners when collecting data from sensitive post-conflict contexts.

The author ruminates on certain limitations of this research study, one being the volatile political climate within the study context. It was mentioned prior how a relatively democratic political transition took place in 2015 that was based on commitments towards good governance, transparency, power sharing and reconciliation, which resulted in a collective action boom and a zest for accountability that were analysed through study 2 & 3 within this thesis. Despite the transition itself resulting in the post-war outcomes being analysed, the studies themselves have no mechanism that have been put in place to control for the drastic ideological changes in responses that have been stimulated in the process. The years 2015 and 2017, within which the two main PMP surveys collecting data for the three studies conducted within this thesis were implemented, the country saw two main elections, the 7th Presidential and the 8th Parliamentary Election, a period during which ethno-nationalistic sentiments were known to be heavily and overtly expressed. Under such circumstances chances of survey responses being jaded by heightened ethnic identities tend to be quite high a common complication present within conflict prone contexts. A strategy adopted in mitigating such effects and controlling for such ideological shifts in subsequent PMP surveys have been the implementation of rolling surveys during pre and post-election periods.

A second constraint worth noting tends to be the limitation of the analysis to only the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups that were previously at war. The inability in incorporating the perspectives of other ethnic groups such as the Indian Tamils and the Muslim communities in Sri Lanka, that have especially during recent times been subjected to identity politics and collectively victimized within the country's post-conflict socio-political and economic discourse, tend to be quite a loss to the richness of the findings. Often forgotten and

left out from mainstream conflict studies, the moor community in particular have a history of collective victimhood being oppressed in the hands of both the state military and the rebel LTTE (see Haniffa, 2007). Even though these groups have been purposefully sampled and included within various analysis conducted through this study, their precarious positioning within the conflict seem to have derived interesting atypical responses relating to identity, conflict, peace and justice, that require further analysis in future. Both the Indian Tamils and the Sri Lankan Muslim participants were removed from the 2nd empirical study on social justice due to recording low Cronbach's Alpha scores on the scales utilized, as well as their sample sizes being inadequate in order to conduct differential analysis in relation to conflict exposure. These too ethnic groups had to be removed from the 3rd empirical study on retributive justice again due to recording low Cronbach's Alpha scores on the scales utilized.

Another constraint within this thesis tends to be the rather static consideration of social identity and its various contents ranging from glorification to collective victimhood, as opposed to its dynamic nature argued within the social identity tradition (Reicher, 2004; Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011; Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017). The dichotomy in transitional justice perceptions that are being studied against the power dynamics of being a Sinhalese or Tamil seems somewhat inevitable provided the nature of the study itself. Even though Elcheroth & Reicher (2017) rightfully state "Unlike diamonds, ethnic groups are not forever", the heightened continuation of ethnocentric politics especially during current post conflict times in Sri Lanka, seem to be sustaining the elution of rigid, polarized ethnic groups that are constantly under threat by each other. Future studies should focus on a more qualitative grassroots approach towards defining ethnic group identity and its contents including collective victimhood. For example comprehending concepts such as inclusive victimhood in terms of mere acknowledgment of out-group suffering instead of looking at explicit similarities in the suffering experience (Vollhardt, Twali, & Jayakody, 2021).

Related to this static dichotomous consideration of social identity concepts is the thesis's consideration of collective mobilization within studies 1 & 2. Study 2 predicted ethnic grievances to fuel collective mobilization efforts of the Tamil minority while more instrumental concerns related to poverty seem to have driven collective efforts of the Sinhalese towards social justice. These differences seem to clearly indicate a conceptual deviation especially in terms of the differed ethnic groups conceptualization as to what collective mobilization actually means to them. For the majority, the instrumental concerns

seem to suggest more socio-economic rights underlying their collective mobilization efforts whereas for the minority, more fundamental rights relating to liberty, equality before law, protection from cruel inhuman treatment and arbitrary arrest in naming a few seem to be of concern. As discussed prior the risks involved for these two parties also seem to be quite different when engaging in collective action. While costs associated with time, energy and money may be similarly applicable to both parties analysed within study 2, the risks involved with collective action in the form of surveillance, persecution, disappearances, injury and death especially in a context governed by a Prevention of Terrorism Act is bound to be different in favour of the majority group in power. The risks are also bound to magnify for the minority, provided the different types of justice perused by them. Under such circumstances questions arise with regards to the universal measurement of social identity related concepts between asymmetric power groups often performed within social psychology, the measurement of collective action within study no 2 among the Sinhalese and Tamils being the case in point here.

Diversities overlooked through such dichotomous study across asymmetric power groups were further made evident in the analysis of collective victimization across all three empirical studies within this thesis. Regardless of complexities that are often involved (Vollhardt, 2015), conflict specific inclusive construals of collective victimhood is frequently considered one of the most relevant and least common forms of victimhood construal desired in conflict resolution (Vollhardt, 2012a). Study 3 however has revealed how dangerous such construals can be at least at the surface indicative of pacificity but deep down, revealing variety in conceptualizations and motive across power groups. While the majority seemed merely conforming to a massly propagated official narrative that is aimed at strategically minimizing perpetrator guilt, such narratives seem to have a sedative effect on the Tamils, inhibiting them from mobilizing against their own quest for justice. The notion of collective victimhood also seem to temporally evolve as captured by two field surveys taking place throughout two major political regimes in post-conflict Sri Lanka. Within study 1 the minorities seem to indicate greater inclusive victimhood beliefs and such beliefs to underlie their collective mobilization efforts. However study 2 taking place two years later and following a (relatively democratic) regime change, seems to indicate greater conflict exclusive victimhood beliefs among the Tamils. Such exclusive victimhood beliefs don't seem to fuel their collective mobilization efforts as yet indicative of how diverse, strategic,

unstable and dynamic social psychological phenomenon can be across time and group hierarchies making it difficult in equating such concepts and their measurement.

The study being part of a larger scientific consortium, "The pluralistic Memories Project" was immensely beneficial for the author as well as the empirical studies conducted within this thesis. A single limitation that resulted from being part of this large consortium was the finite space that was available in testing out social psychological constructs among the researchers that were involved over multiple sites. As a consequence the author had to limit certain constructs being investigated within certain studies, collective victimhood being one such construct. For instance, within study 1 which was based on the pilot survey conducted in Sri Lanka, the full range of comparative victimhood beliefs relating to time and scope were incorporated (Vollhardt, Nair, & Tropp, 2016; Cohrs, McNeill, & Vollhardt, 2015). As a consequence, a relatively comprehensive analysis with regards to the majority and minority groups collective victimization were able to be analysed with regards to restorative justice and collective mobilization. However, with regards to study 2 and 3, which were based on the island wide main survey conducted in Sri Lanka, the temporal dimension had to be dropped due to limited space. As a consequence, the impact of more mutual, historic, structural and or physical suffering experienced by the different ethnic groups since the country's colonization had to be omitted and their impact on social and retributive justice excluded from the current analysis.

Finally, the author contemplates on the lack of qualitative analysis within this research study as a potential concern affecting the richness of the findings reported. Provided the theoretical concepts analysed in relation to ethnic identity, ethnic conflict, peace and transitional justice, throughout a post-conflict society that is highly polarized, heavily militarized and closely surveilled, it is the opinion of the author that qualitative data collection efforts in relation to the topics discussed would have posed significant risks upon respondents, field staff and a numerous other personnel who have worked behind the scenes making the entire Pluralistic Memories Project a huge success. Nevertheless, it is also the authors opinion that regardless of the studies been heavily quantitative in nature, the concepts of identity, victimization, mobilization, conflict and transitional justice being analysed, have been impacted by the authors outlook as a majority Sinhalese Buddhist, living in the South of the country having considerable geographic and temporal distance to the actual ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, and also the authors theoretical grounding as a social psychologist.

Overall the author highlights and commends the importance of research projects such as the Pluralistic Memories Project, within which this particular thesis was conceived, which provides opportunities for sharing, discussing and comprehending nuances in diverse conflict memories within polarized societies such as Sri Lanka.

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Appendix A

Precise Item Wordings

Study 1

Individual perceptions on development

I consider the post-war development initiatives introduced by the government to be highly beneficial for me

I feel as if such development initiatives have been forcefully imposed upon me

I feel post-war development initiated by the government to be a form of retributive justice for things done in the past

As beneficiaries of the government's post-war development, I experience negativity and harm to my self-esteem

Accepting development-oriented benefits from the government makes my ethnic group look inferior

I think there are other unmet needs that the government needs to prioritize over post-war development

Regardless of the autonomy and other benefits, I feel as if access to such development initiatives are being unequally distributed

It is my view that development initiatives that are taking place throughout the country to be focusing on developing the country as a whole

Individual's perceptions on his/her ethnic group's perceptions on development

My ethnic group disagrees that such development initiatives have been forcefully imposed upon us

My ethnic group feels that the government has been greatly assisting us through such development initiatives

Members of my ethnic group don't think government sponsored post-war development to be a form of retributive justice

Members of my ethnic group oppose government sponsored development as they fear the acceptance to create a negative group image among other ethnic groups

It is my ethnic group's view that apart from development, there are other unmet needs that the government needs to prioritize on

It is my ethnic group's view that regardless of the autonomy and benefits, access to such development initiatives are being unequally distributed / controlled

It is the view of my ethnic group that development initiatives that are taking place throughout the country to be focusing on developing the country as a whole

Centrality of in-group victimization

It is important to me to remember and pass on stories about my ethnic groups suffering

Centrality of victimization worldwide

Knowing about how other groups in the world have been victimized has influenced my opinions on many social and political issues

General exclusive victim consciousness

While all experiences of victimization are somewhat different, our group's experience is truly unique

General inclusive victim consciousness

There are other groups in the world that have suffered as much as the people of our ethnic group

Conflict-specific exclusive victim consciousness

During the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, members of my ethnic group have been harmed more than the other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka

Conflict-specific inclusive victim consciousness

In the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, people have suffered regardless of which ethnic group they belong to

Collective Action

Sufficient number of individuals get together in order to work towards achieving intended goals through collective action initiatives

Actions and protests should stop once the desired goals are being attended to, by responsible parties

You are extremely willing to participate in future collective action initiatives

Exposure to conflict

Have you been forced to leave your home and live elsewhere (as a consequence of violent conflict)?

Have you ever been imprisoned, kidnapped, or taken hostage (as a consequence of violent conflict)?

Has a member of your immediate family been killed during the violent conflict (son, daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, or grandchild)?

Has a member of your immediate family disappeared during the violent conflict?

Have you ever carried a weapon during a violent conflict?

Study 2

Collective Action

I would like to engage in protest actions (e.g. demonstrations, strikes etc.) to improve my community's living conditions

I would like to engage in protest actions (e.g. demonstrations, strikes etc.) against any harm or disadvantage to my community

Attachment to ethnic group identity

Being part of my ethnic group is an important part of my identity.

When I talk about people from my ethnic group, I usually say "we" rather than "they."

It is important to me that others see me as someone from my ethnic group.

Glorification of ethnic group identity

Compared to other ethnic groups, my ethnic group is particularly good.

Other ethnic groups can learn a lot from my ethnic group.

Relative to other ethnic groups, my ethnic group is very moral.

Centrality of in-group victimization

It is important to me to remember and pass on stories about my ethnic group's suffering.

In order to understand my ethnic group, one has to know about how we have been victimized.

Knowing about how my ethnic group has suffered has shaped who I am today.

Understanding my ethnic group's history of victimization is very important to me.

Inclusive Victim beliefs

Despite some clear differences, the victimization of my ethnic group and other ethnic groups during the Sri Lankan conflict is similar.

The experiences of my ethnic group and other ethnic groups who suffered because of the Sri Lankan conflict are similar.

Other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka have suffered as much as my ethnic group during the Sri Lankan conflict.

The degree to which other ethnic groups suffered during the Sri Lankan conflict is comparable to how much my ethnic group suffered during this conflict.

Exclusive Victim beliefs

My ethnic group's suffering during the Sri Lankan conflict is completely different from what other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka experienced.

Despite some basic similarities, my ethnic group's victimization during the Sri Lankan conflict is clearly distinct from other ethnic groups' experiences in Sri Lanka.

During the Sri Lankan conflict, my ethnic group has been harmed more than other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka.

Collective efficacy

People like me are generally well qualified to participate in the decision making in our community.

In my community, it is easy to do something about politics that affect our way of life.

Social cohesion

In my community, most people are trustworthy.

If I were in trouble, many people in my community would offer help.

I have strong bonds with others in my community.

In my community, people do care about the community.

Exposure to conflict

Have you been forced to leave your home and live elsewhere?

Have you ever been imprisoned, kidnapped, or taken hostage?

Has a member of your immediate family been killed (son, daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, or grandchild)?

Has a member of your immediate family disappeared?

Have you lost your home or land (as a consequence of violent conflict)?

Has there been serious damage to your property (to your belongings)?

Have you been wounded by the fighting?

Did you have your house looted?

Exposure to poverty

Has there been a period in your life during which: You and your family did not have adequate clothes or furniture to be comfortable in your daily life?

Has there been a period in your life during which: You did not have an access to clean water nearby?

Has there been a period in your life during which: You were unable to send your children to school (if you have children)?

Has there been a period in your life during which: You were unable to get medical help for you and your family?

Has there been a period in your life during which: You did not have enough food for you and your family?

Have you ever been homeless (living in the street or in a collective shelter, including as a refugee/displaced person)?

Study 3

Inclusive Victim beliefs

Despite some clear differences, the victimization of my ethnic group and other ethnic groups during the Sri Lankan conflict is similar.

The experiences of my ethnic group and other ethnic groups who suffered because of the Sri Lankan conflict are similar.

Other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka have suffered as much as my ethnic group during the Sri Lankan conflict.

The degree to which other ethnic groups suffered during the Sri Lankan conflict is comparable to how much my ethnic group suffered during this conflict.

Support for Domestic Prosecutions

Those who have committed atrocities during conflict should serve jail time, regardless of what group they belong to.

All human rights violations perpetrated during the conflict should be investigated and punished, regardless of what group perpetrator belongs to.

Support for International Prosecutions

Those who have committed atrocities during the conflict should be tried by international courts.

Acknowledgment of in-group crimes

Members of my group have committed atrocities during the conflicts.

I consider my group to be responsible for atrocities that we committed.

Centrality of in-group victimization

It is important to me to remember and pass on stories about my ethnic group's suffering.

In order to understand my ethnic group, one has to know about how we have been victimized.

Knowing about how my ethnic group has suffered has shaped who I am today.

Understanding my ethnic group's history of victimization is very important to me.