



---

LIVES WORKING PAPER 2017 / 59.1

---

# WHEN DEVELOPMENT IS NOT "RIGHT": UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS, COLLECTIVE ACTION AND VICTIMHOOD

SUMEDHA JAYAKODY, RAMILA USOOF-THOWFEEK

RESEARCH PAPER

<http://dx.doi.org/10.12682/lives.2296-1658.2017.59.1>

ISSN 2296-1658



## Authors

Jayakody, S. (1)

Usoof-Thowfeek, R. (2)

## Abstract

Much of the research on effective reconciliation advocates a holistic approach to social harmony in post war settings. However, many state and non-governmental entities choose physical infrastructure development, as a strategy for reconciliation believing that enhanced access to physical resources would dampen any recurrence of violence and conflict. At the end of 30 years of war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealem (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan military, the Sri Lankan government for several years after, took a similar path. This paper examines community and individual responses to such development, in post war Sri Lanka with special focus on community reactions to development in situations where development is perceived as imposed. The paper specifically examines how these responses relate to support for collective action and whether this relationship is mediated by different forms of victim beliefs that community members hold.

The paper uses data collected in a survey conducted in two districts in Sri Lanka from 202 respondents, representative of all ethnic and religious groups. The survey probed respondents on their own and community views of the development that had taken place in post war Sri Lanka, their beliefs about their group's victimhood and their support and willingness to engage in collective action. The analysis revealed higher conflict exposure to be associated with higher tendencies to engage in collective action in the presence of certain types of victim beliefs. It revealed that lower receptiveness of development was positively related with collective action, but different types of victim beliefs mediated this relationship.

## Keywords

conflict | development | victim beliefs | collective action

## Authors' affiliations

(1) University of Lausanne, Switzerland

(2) University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

## Correspondence to

JayakodyArachchilageSumedha.Jayakody@unil.ch

*\* LIVES Working Papers is a work-in-progress online series. Each paper receives only limited review. Authors are responsible for the presentation of facts and for the opinions expressed therein, which do not necessarily reflect those of the Swiss National Competence Center in Research LIVES.*

## **1. Introduction**

Societies affected by war experience substantial collapse in their political, judicial, economic and social institutions (Newman & Schnabel 2002; Brounéus 2003). The disruption of such systems leads to a fragile state, which may result in the recurrence of conflict and violence. Therefore working towards reconciliation in societies that have experienced war becomes crucial to prevent further violence. However, this is no easy task and requires a multifaceted process, which reestablishes these institutions (Brounéus 2003, Newman & Schnabel 2002, van Gennip 2005, Lambourne 2004, Green 1999). Regardless of the importance that is placed on the need for a holistic approach to reconciliation, time and again, economic growth and enlargement are chosen as the main focus of these efforts. Selective attention to some evidence describing the relationship between economic deprivation and ethnic conflict, the role of economic deprivation in increasing risks of civil conflict in states with mid-level ethnic diversity (Bardhan 1997), and the successful use of economic development to defuse risks of conflict (Lambourne 2004), is a possible reason for the emphasis being placed on economic development while ignoring other facets of a successful reconciliation process. However, a tremendous risk exists in overlooking the ethno social aspects of reconciliation (Collier & Hoeffler 2002; Fearon & Laitin 2003). Economic development in itself will not address some structural inequalities and the resulting discriminatory treatment of certain groups. Hence such an economic development dependent reconciliation agenda is likely to result in dissatisfactions and worse still advance conflict caused by disempowerment in ethno social domains.

### *1.1 Development as a Strategy for Reconciliation*

Sri Lanka for more than three decades experienced a war fought between the Sri Lankan military and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealem (LTTE), which saw the North and the East of the country being severely affected by the conflict while other parts were also affected albeit to a lesser degree. The violence and fighting was mainly limited to the North and East, however, there were frequent suicide bombings and bomb blasts in other parts of the country, most often centered around the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo. The LTTE on one hand defined itself, as the representative of the Tamil people, while the Sri Lankan military was almost entirely composed of Sinhalese. Thus the war has often been portrayed as being based on ethnic tensions and discord between the three main ethnic groups in the country, the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims. While there had been peace talks and truces during these three decades, a final push by the Sri Lankan military resulted in a military victory for the Sri

Lankan government and the annihilation of the LTTE. Though the 2009 victory signaled an end to the war, ethnic tensions have remained, in some cases resulting in violence and destruction. In the previous ‘war zone’ of the North and the East of the country, discontent surround the continued military presence in the area, resettlement and the military occupation of lands. While, southerners have been suspicious of any moves at demilitarization and the return of lands. Additionally, there has also been an emergence of several Sinhalese extremist groups campaigning against minorities who they perceive as threatening to Sinhalese supremacy within the country.

The reconciliation strategy after the 2009 military victory has been very much focused on economic development operationalized largely through infrastructure development. The State has focused on many such projects throughout the country, which in turn have been publicly highlighted within the country’s official development policy framework (Ministry of Finance and Planning 2006 & 2010). Among the various initiatives taken, the North and Eastern provinces which were affected severely during the war have received considerable attention. This was commended by the Lessons Leant and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) report of 2011 (de Silva, Perera, Hangawatte, Chanmugam, Palihakkara, Ramanathan, & Bafiq, 2011). However, the effectiveness of these projects at winning the peace has been questionable. The Tamil minority, despite projects such as Uthuru Wasanthya (Northern Spring) and Negnahira Navodaya (Reawakening of the East), maintained that these development projects did not address issues they deemed important like demilitarization, release of lands etc. (Rajasingham, 2010).

Internationally, there have been cases where as in Sri Lanka, reconciliation efforts have focused intensely on economic development. Rwanda is one such case in point. Among various attempts made at reestablishing legal mechanisms and commissions, promoting national unity and cultural reconciliation, Rwanda adopted a similar strategy to Sri Lanka where economic development and reconstruction dominated other goals of reconciliation (Uvin, 1998; Eriksson, Adelman, Borton, Christensen, Kumar, Suhrke, & Wohlgemuth, 1996; Zorbas, 2004). In many of these studies it has been found that, at least in the Rwandan case, this has not always resulted in community healing. Similarly in Sri Lanka, while the physical impact of the 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 harbor 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 and 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 more 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. These could have fairly destructive consequences on communities.

### *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 reparative 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 and 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 postwar reconciliation development is construed as imposed which may result in the experiencing of fraternal deprivations, then collective action is a plausible reaction.

Another factor 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, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). 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 behavior Drury and 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 centered on various efforts made by communities in satisfying their diverse needs, especially postwar 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. It is hypothesized that the more negative the perceptions are for development the higher the tendency to support collective action.

### *1.3 Victim Beliefs as a Mediator*

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 recorded. 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, Postmes, & Spears (2008), for example find that these sort of politicized identities are 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 mediate the aforementioned relationship.

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 outgroups (Lindner, 2002 & 2006), anger has been associated with historical victimization predicting demands for reparations for harm committed by outgroups (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 as possible mediators, which can provide further insights into the relationship between how development projects are perceived and how communities respond to them.

The current study utilizes eight types of victim beliefs. Six of them have been proposed by Vollhardt, Nair, & Tropp (2016) and Cohrs, McNeill, & Vollhardt (2015). Victim beliefs are generally classified along two dimensions: (1) a reference point in time and (2) a scope of incorporation of outgroup 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 outgroups. 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 ingroup victimization, centrality of victimization worldwide, general exclusive victim beliefs, general inclusive victim beliefs, conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs and conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs.

This paper attempts to examine a new dimension of victim belief that the research may better reflect the cultural uniqueness of the context. Being collectivistic in nature, Sri Lankan culture places great emphasis on principles such as loyalty and reciprocity. Therefore, feelings of victimhood could result in situations where hospitality and good behavior towards another groups is not reciprocated. Thus, this paper also examines two new types of victim beliefs; victimhood born of historic betrayal and victimhood born of conflict specific betrayal.

Collective victimhood is understood as the response to harm committed by outgroups by focusing on the undeserved, unjust and immoral nature of the treatment (Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Shori, & Gundar, 2009). However these definitions do not encompass ideas of loyalty and reciprocity. In being betrayed, the group experiences the undeservingness, injustice and immorality of the other groups’ behavior. Therefore, the proposed categories of victimhood would fall within the understanding of collective victimhood.

The literature on victim beliefs also place great emphasis on the nature of the beliefs; i.e., exclusive and inclusive victim beliefs. Exclusive victimhood, is defined in terms of how greatly one’s group has suffered in comparison to other group (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015) Therefore, the defining characteristic is the comparative magnitude of the suffering. This definition, like the definition for collective victimhood does not capture the reciprocity, loyalty, betrayal dimension. The betrayal categories do not emphasize comparison. The suffering and the victimhood is experienced regardless and independent of how other groups have fared. The betrayal itself states the graveness of the injustice. The ingroup might also



utilize these victim beliefs that arise due to betrayal to maintain a positive moral image (Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, 2013) and to qualify the ingroup to be recipients of reparations (Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, Nadler, 2012). Thus this paper attempts to introduce the two new typologies of victim beliefs that arise due to the experience of betrayal: 1) Victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal - a victim consciousness based on continuous experiences of betrayal by different outgroups over time and 2) Victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal; a victim consciousness based on a betrayal experience resulting during a specific conflict. In examining these different victim beliefs, the researchers are interested in understanding how each of them impact the relationship between perceptions of development and collective action.

The paper explores several different possibilities of the impact of victim belief on the relationship between perceptions of development and collective action. The paper expects inclusive, exclusive and victimhood born out of betrayal 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. Additionally, given that these 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. On the contrary inclusive forms of victim consciousness acknowledging similarities in the victimization experience should less likely be associated with increased 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, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gundar, 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. The paper also expects victimhood born out of betrayal to have similar outcomes for collective action as exclusive victimhood. However, the reasons for the outcomes would be different. The literature on individual level betrayal shows that often people respond by social compensatory affiliations (Miller & Maner, 2008); or negative affect such as anger (Joskowicz – Jabloner & Leiser, 2013). Provided the collective action literature findings that negative affect such as anger increase the likelihood of engaging in collective action, the paper expects that increased support for collective action will be seen in conditions of victimhood born out of betrayal. Thus, in the case of exclusive victim beliefs the motive for collective action might be to save

face, while in the case of victimhood born out of betrayal, the receiver distrusts the help received and therefore may engage in collective action to protect oneself.

Additionally, the paper also takes into account different levels of experience that maybe important in explaining responses to help and the impact of victim beliefs. A large body of literature focuses on the impact of these variables at the individuals 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, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Therefore, particular attention will be paid to understanding how individual perceptions and group perceptions of development impact the responses. The current study hypothesizes that how development projects are perceived (either positively or negatively) will impact willingness to engage in collective action. However, this will depend on the nature of the victim beliefs that are held by respondents. Additional analysis will examine whether, individual and community level feelings impact this relationship differentially.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Introduction*

This study is based on data collected in an international survey, conducted in Sri Lanka, Burundi and Palestine, documenting diverse memories of past conflict. The sampling methodology utilized within this multinational project was network sampling and was designed to over sample populations with diverse experiences of conflict. (Gile & Handcock, 2010; Elcheroth, Penic, Fasel, Giudici, Glaeser, Joye, & Spini, (2013).). Keeping with this design, the survey was conducted in two districts in Sri Lanka, 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.

### *2.2 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.

### *2.3 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 1 & 2.

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 3 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.

#### *2.4 Measures*

As mentioned previously, the 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 international research project team and was tested within this survey.

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 postwar development initiated by the government to be a form of restorative justice for things done in the past', 'As beneficiaries of the government's postwar 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 postwar 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  $\alpha = .704$  and the subscale on individual's perceptions of the ethnic groups perspective on development had an  $\alpha = .746$ .

Eight types of individual victim beliefs were assessed using sixteen items. Six types of victim beliefs pertaining to centrality of ingroup 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, Nair, & Tropp, 2016; Cohrs, McNeill, & Vollhardt, 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'. Additionally, victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal and victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal were measured using five items each. These scales were developed by the researchers and tested within this study. While the items were the same for both constructs they referred to different time periods

(throughout history vs. during the ethnic conflict). Feelings of betrayal and un-deservingness of the treatment from other ethnic group(s) despite the respondent's own ingroup being hospitable and welcoming towards outgroups was the type of belief that was to be tested. For example: 'My ethnic group has lived in harmony with other ethnic groups throughout history.' and 'My ethnic group is undeserving / unworthy of the suffering it experienced throughout history'. These items were developed by the authors. The general subscale of the victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal recorded an  $\alpha = .675$  and the conflict specific subscale recorded an  $\alpha = .605$ . A higher score for these scales meant that the respondent subscribed to such victim beliefs.

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  $\alpha = .686$ . 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'.

Conflict exposure of respondents were assessed using five existing categorical measures. (Elcheroth, 2006; Elcheroth et al, 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.

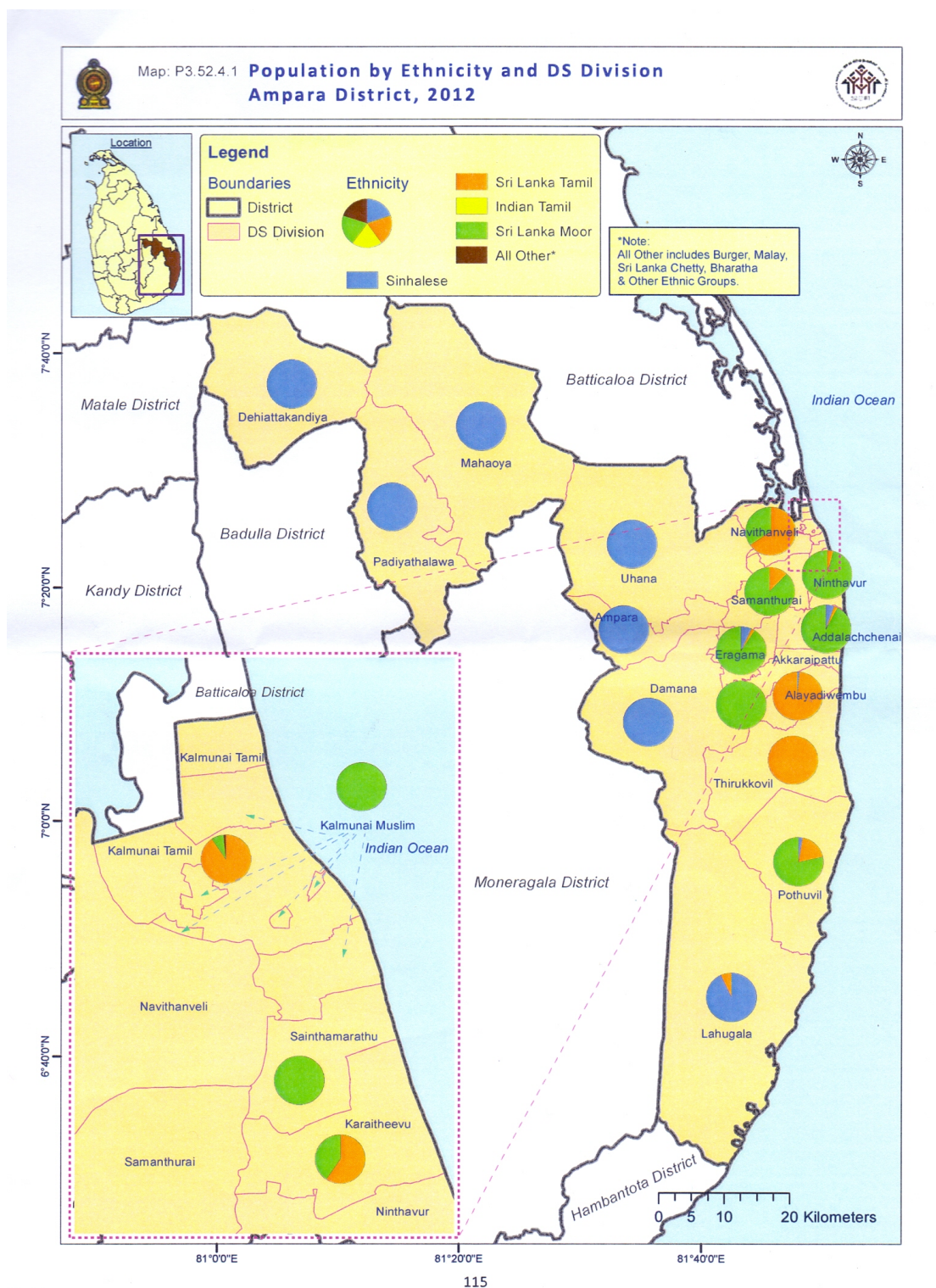


Figure 1: Map of Ampara with its DS division boundaries and ethnic breakdown per DS division (local area boundary)

Department of Census and Statistics-Sri Lanka. (2012). Population by ethnicity and DS division Ampara district, 2012. Retrieved from

[http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/PopulationAtla\\_2012/04\\_DSLevelMaps/Ma%20P3.52.4.1%20Ampara%20-%20Population%20by%20Ethnicity%20by%20DS.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/PopulationAtla_2012/04_DSLevelMaps/Ma%20P3.52.4.1%20Ampara%20-%20Population%20by%20Ethnicity%20by%20DS.pdf)

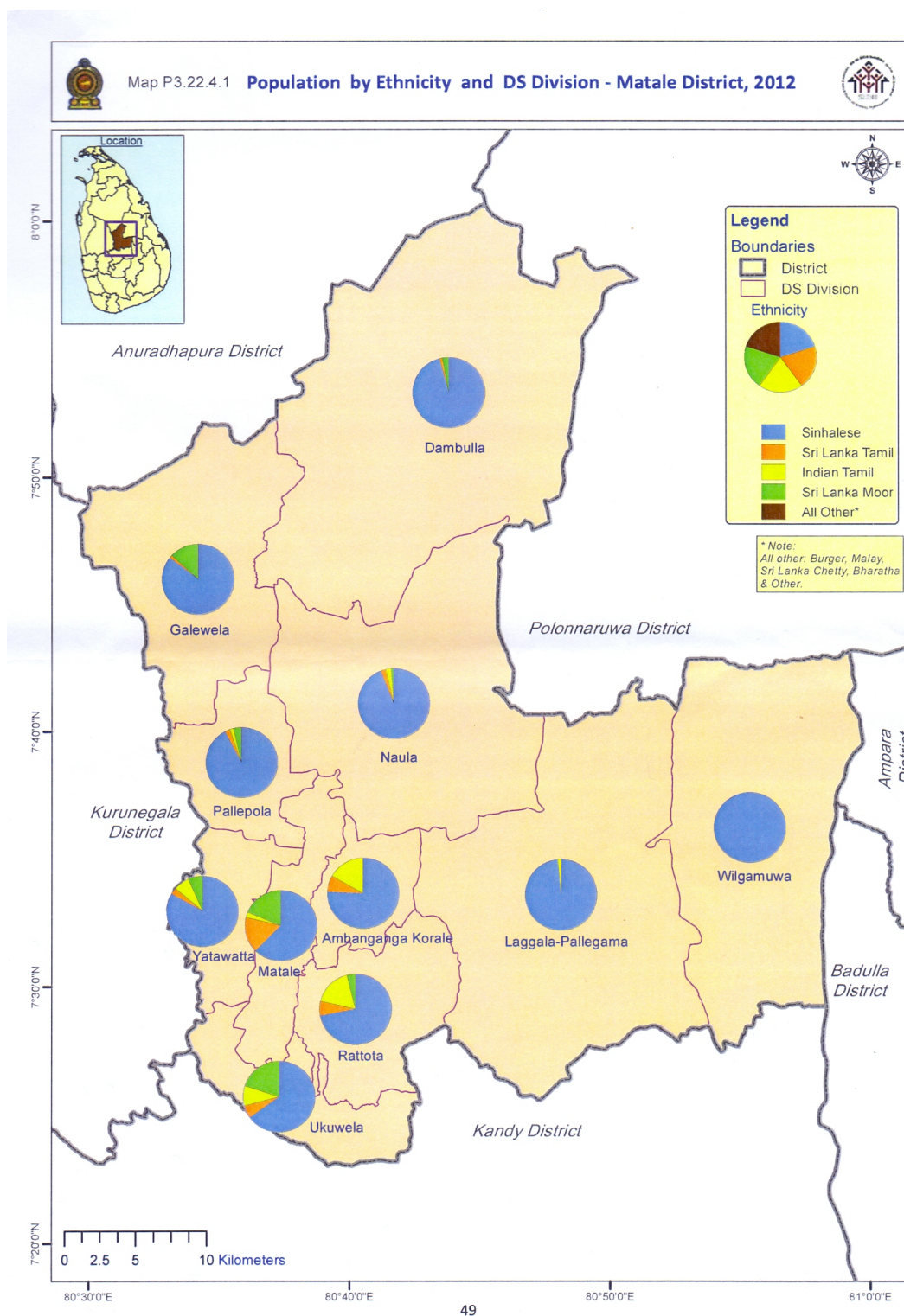


Figure 2: Map of Matale with its DS division boundaries and ethnic breakdown per DS division (local area boundary)

Department of Census and Statistics-Sri Lanka. (2012). Population by ethnicity and DS division Matale district, 2012. Retrieved from

[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](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)



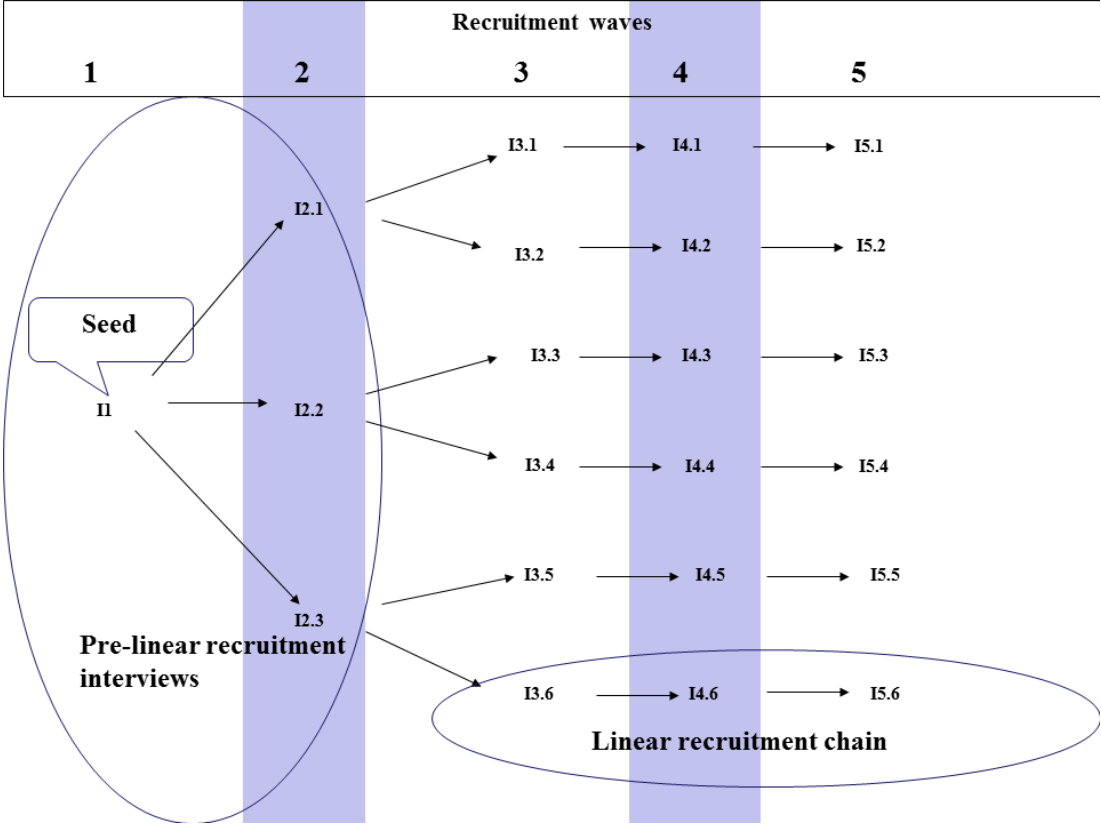


Figure 3: A Basic sampling unit within a local area (a cluster of 22)

### 3. Results

#### 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. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference in conflict exposure between respondents from Ampara and Matale ( $F(1,202) = 44.48, p < .001$ ). The respondents from Ampara had experienced higher levels of conflict exposure ( $M=1.13, SD = 1.25$ ) in comparison to respondents from Matale ( $M=.23, SD = .49$ ).

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  $\chi^2 (1, N = 202) = 20.36, p < .001$  revealed a significant difference in conflict exposure among the two districts. Ampara registered 34 respondents who said yes and 70 who said no for being 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 ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 202) = 0.30, p = .58$ ). In terms of an immediate family member been killed during conflict  $\chi^2 (1, N = 202) = 25.90, p < .001$ , 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  $\chi^2 (1, N = 202) = 21.08, p < .001$ . 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  $\chi^2 (2, N = 202) = 9.64, p = .008$ . Ampara recorded 18 instances of bearing arms during conflict out of 104 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 who live in unaffected communities respond on the different variables.

Provided the significant difference in conflict exposure between the two geographical locations, a one-way analysis of variance was used to determine 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 unaffected communities. A one-way ANOVA for individual as well as their ethnic groups perspective on development revealed no significant differences between individuals in the two districts.

The one-way ANOVA for collective action tendencies revealed a significant difference between respondents from Ampara and Matale ( $F(1,202) = 9.30, p = .003$ ). The respondents from Ampara displayed the greatest willingness to engage in collective action ( $M=4.88, SD = 1.08$ ) in comparison to respondents from Matale ( $M=4.46, SD = .86$ ).

A similar one-way ANOVA for the 8 different types of victim beliefs revealed the following results. Out of the eight, centrality of ingroup victimization, centrality of victimization worldwide and victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal revealed significant differences between respondents from conflict exposed and unaffected communities. For centrality of ingroup victimization ( $F(1,202) = 14.25, p < .001$ ), the respondents from communities affected by conflict (Ampara) subscribed more to these beliefs ( $M=4.89, SD = .77$ ) in comparison to respondents from low conflict affected communities (Matale) ( $M=4.35, SD = 1.24$ ). For centrality of victimization worldwide ( $F(1,202) = 7.47, p = .007$ ), again, respondents from Ampara placed more emphasis ( $M=4.81, SD = .86$ ) than respondents from Matale ( $M=4.43, SD = 1.10$ ). Finally for victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal ( $F(1,202) = 6.12, p = .014$ ), respondents from higher conflict exposure Ampara ( $M=4.35, SD = .54$ ) subscribed more strongly to these beliefs than respondents from lower conflict exposure Matale ( $M=4.06, SD = 1.06$ ). The non-significant variations in means for the rest of the victim beliefs and their standard deviations are presented in Table 1.

### *3.2 Preliminary Analysis of the Impact of Majority / Minority Status*

A similar one-way analysis of variance was used to examine whether respondent social identity as 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. The respondents individual perspectives on development ( $F(1,202) = 100.94, p < .001$ ) indicated minority respondents to have higher negative perceptions towards development ( $M=3.39, SD = .65$ ) in comparison to majority respondents ( $M=2.53, SD = .55$ ). The respondents' perceptions of how their groups felt about development revealed similar findings ( $F(1,202) = 79.52, p < .001$ ) indicating that minorities believed that their groups had more negative perceptions of development ( $M=3.35, SD = .92$ ) in comparison to the majority ( $M=2.42, SD = .51$ ). A similar significant difference existed between majority minority ethnic status and the respondents tendency to engage in collective action ( $F(1,202) = 50.34, p < .001$ ). Those from minority groups record a higher tendency to engage in collective action ( $M=5.12, SD = .87$ ) in comparison to the majority ( $M=4.22, SD = .93$ ).

Among the 8 different victim beliefs, four of them namely, centrality of victimization worldwide, conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs, conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs and victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal registered significant differences with regard to respondents' majority minority status. For centrality of victimization worldwide ( $F(1,202) = 19.62, p < .001$ ), the minority ( $M=4.91, SD = 1.12$ ) recorded higher scores in comparison to the majority ( $M=4.32, SD = .75$ ). For conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs ( $F(1,202) = 6.07, p = .015$ ); the majority ( $M=4.76, SD = 1.12$ ) recorded higher scores than minority respondents ( $M=4.34, SD = 1.28$ ). For conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs ( $F(1,202) = 6.88, p = .009$ ); minority respondents ( $M=4.72, SD = 1.18$ ) had recorded higher scores in comparison to the majority respondents ( $M=4.34, SD = .87$ ). Finally, on victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal ( $F(1,202) = 17.27, p < .001$ ); majority respondents ( $M=4.50, SD = .74$ ) recorded higher scores in comparison to the minority respondents ( $M=4.03, SD = .86$ ).

*Table 1: ANOVAs for measured variables based on conflict exposure*

(N = 202) Scale		M	SD	P	F	$\eta^2$
Aggregate Score	Matale	.23	.49	.000**	44.48	18.19
	Ampara	1.13	1.25			
Individual perceptions on development	Matale	2.90	.66	.199	1.659	-
	Ampara	3.03	.81			
Ethnic group perceptions on development	Matale	2.82	.88	.214	1.556	-
	Ampara	2.97	.88			
Centrality of ingroup victimization	Matale	4.35	1.24	.000**	14.255	6.65
	Ampara	4.89	.77			
Centrality of victimization worldwide	Matale	4.43	1.10	.007*	7.470	3.60
	Ampara	4.81	.86			
General exclusive victim beliefs	Matale	4.49	1.02	.236	1.413	-
	Ampara	4.64	.82			
General inclusive victim beliefs	Matale	4.64	1.23	.102	2.698	-
	Ampara	4.89	.93			
Conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs	Matale	4.48	1.37	.499	.458	-
	Ampara	4.60	1.07			
Conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs	Matale	4.51	1.24	.750	.102	-
	Ampara	4.56	.86			
Victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal	Matale	4.18	1.01	.188	1.742	-
	Ampara	4.33	.62			
Victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal	Matale	4.06	1.06	.014*	6.120	2.97
	Ampara	4.35	.54			
Collective action	Matale	4.46	.86	.003*	9.303	4.44
	Ampara	4.88	1.08			

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

Minority group participants endorsed inclusive types of victim beliefs whereas majority group participants were more focused on exclusive and betrayal based victim beliefs.

### *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 eight 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 victimization worldwide and conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs. It was also associated with lower levels of victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal and conflict specific betrayal. Similarly, an analysis of the eight victim beliefs and perceptions of ones ethnic group's feelings about development revealed the following two significant correlations. Higher negative perceptions were related to greater centrality of victimization world wide and greater conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs among individuals. Inclusive forms of victim beliefs were positively correlated whereas beliefs of betrayal were negatively correlated with negative perceptions towards development, contrary to what we hypothesized.

Correlations between the eight victim beliefs and collective action tendencies revealed the following three significant associations. Centrality of ingroup victimization and victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal were negatively related to collective action, whereas centrality of victimization worldwide was positively related to collective action. Again contrary to our hypothesis exclusive and betrayal based victim beliefs seem to be negatively associated with collective action whereas more inclusive beliefs seem to be positively related to collective action tendencies.

A post hoc power analysis using GPower 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner 2009) revealed the following statistical power for small ( $r = 0.10$ ), medium ( $r = 0.30$ ) and large correlations ( $r = 0.50$ ) (Cohen 1992) between two bivariate normally distributed random variables with a sample size of 202 and an alpha level of  $p < .05$ . For small correlations the power was 0.29, for medium 0.99 and for large correlations the power was 1.00. The minimum significant correlation within this study ( $-0.166^*$ ) recorded a power of 0.66 and the maximum significant correlation ( $0.673^{**}$ ) recorded a power of 1.00.

### *3.4 Primary analysis - Victim beliefs as mediators*

The relationship between individual perceptions of development and the tendency to engage in collective action was mediated by three types of victim beliefs. They were centrality of victimization worldwide, victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal and victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal. There was a significant indirect effect of individual perceptions on development on collective action tendencies through centrality of victimization worldwide  $b = 0.083$ , BCa CI [0.022, 0.208], victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal  $b = 0.125$ , BCa CI [0.048, 0.241] and victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal  $b = -0.072$ , BCa CI [-0.168, -0.021]. Similarly for the relationship between beliefs about ethnic group's perceptions on development and collective action tendencies, centrality of victimization worldwide acted as a mediating variable,  $b = 0.056$ , BCa CI [0.010, 0.145]. A multiple mediation model, which includes these three types of victim beliefs that better explains the relationship between individual perceptions on development and collective action tendencies, is presented in Figure 3.

A similar mediation model testing the relationship between beliefs about ethnic group's perceptions on development and collective action tendencies is presented in figure 4 which indicates centrality of victimization worldwide as the only significant mediator.

When controlled for living in conflict exposed communities, within high conflict exposed Ampara, the following significant mediations were observed. Centrality of ingroup victimization  $b = -0.134$ , BCa CI [-0.318, -0.013], centrality of victimization worldwide  $b = 0.141$ , BCa CI [0.033, 0.320], victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal  $b = 0.064$ , BCa CI [0.002, 0.183] and victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal  $b = -0.085$ , BCa CI [-0.263, -0.009] mediated the relationship between individual perceptions on development and collective action. The relationship for beliefs about ethnic group's perceptions of development and collective action tendency was mediated by centrality of victimization worldwide  $b = 0.108$ , BCa CI [0.037, 0.262]. No significant mediations were observed for respondents from low conflict exposure Matale. Similarly when controlled for ethnicity (majority vs. minority), no significant mediations were observed.

*Table 2: Correlations for measured variables*

(N = 202) Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Individual perceptions on development	-										
2. Ethnic group perceptions on development	.296**	-									
3. Centrality of ingroup victimization	.050	.075	-								
4. Centrality of victimization worldwide	.229**	.293**	.415**	-							
5. General exclusive victim beliefs	.024	.005	.454**	.534**	-						
6. General inclusive victim beliefs	-.016	.130	.510**	.417**	.524**	-					
7. Conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs	.018	-.106	.369**	.285**	.418**	.518**	-				
8. Conflict specific inclusive victim beliefs	.172*	.275**	.249**	.285**	.115	.330**	.373**	-			
9. Victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal	-.239**	-.034	.526**	.266**	.391**	.644**	.506**	.365**	-		
10. Victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal	-.231**	.136	.323**	.259**	.359**	.451**	.345**	.257**	.594**	-	
11. Collective action	.078	.232**	-.166*	.221**	-.015	-.029	-.137	-.007	-.172*	.077	-

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



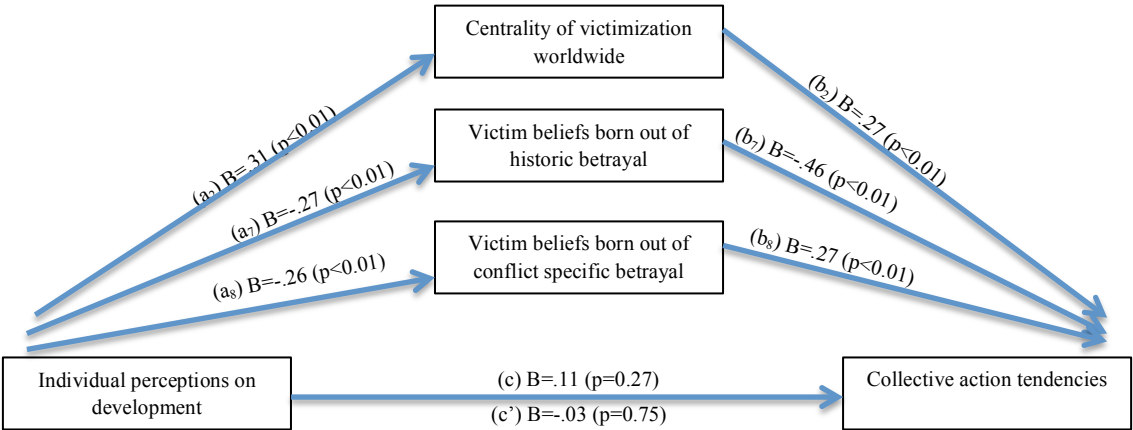


Figure 3: Multiple mediation model assessing potential victim beliefs as mediators between individual perceptions on development and collective action tendencies. Note: *a* = association between the independent variable and the potential mediator; *b* = association between the potential mediator and the dependent variable; *c* = association between the independent and dependent variables; *c'* = association between the independent and dependent variables adjusted for potential mediators.

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

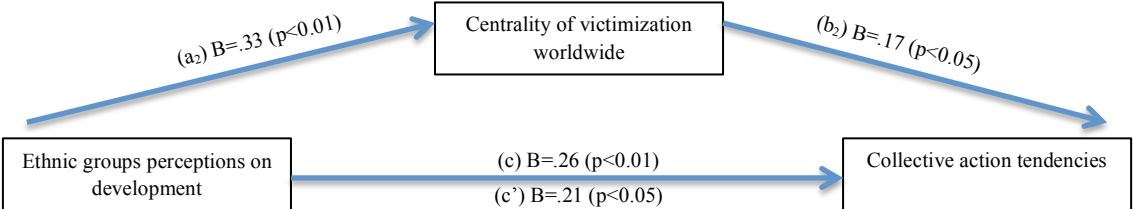


Figure 4: Multiple mediation model assessing potential victim beliefs as mediators between ethnic groups perceptions on development and collective action tendencies.

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

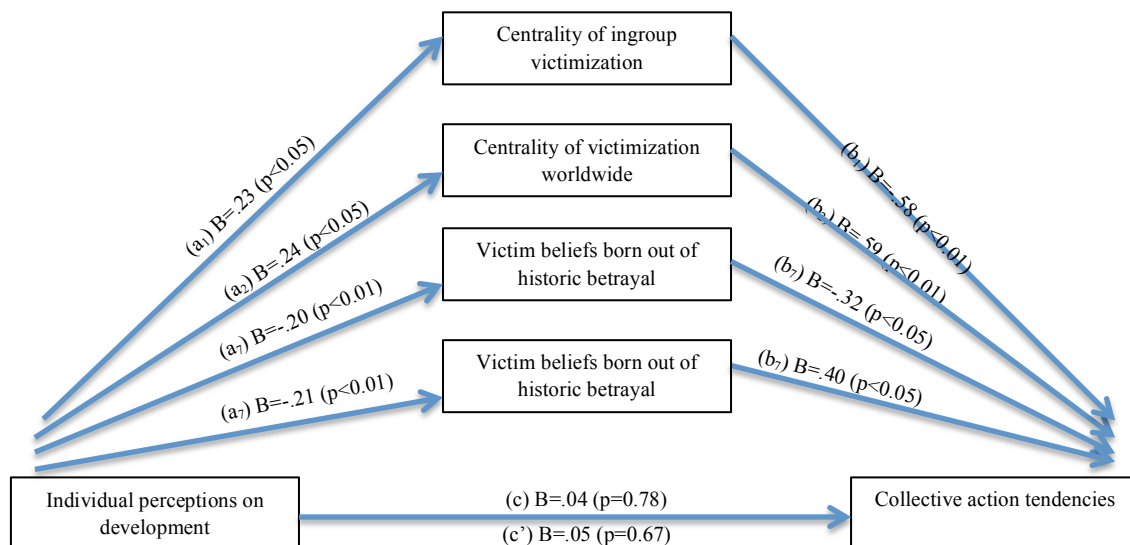


Figure 5: Multiple mediation model for individual perceptions on development when controlled for high conflict exposure (Ampara).

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

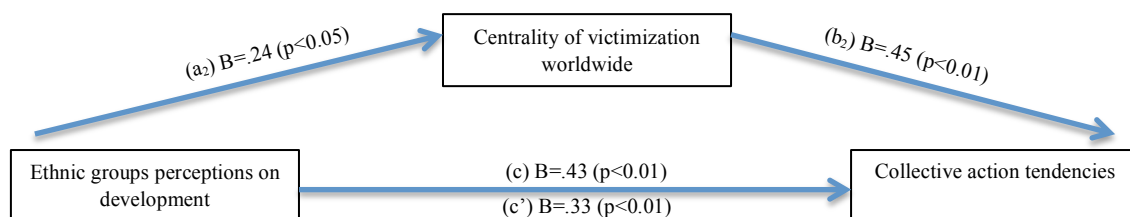


Figure 6: Multiple mediation model for ethnic groups perceptions on development when controlled for high conflict exposure (Ampara).

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

#### **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 as potential mediators influencing 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 low levels of exposure.

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 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, 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 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 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.

An analysis of different types of victim beliefs with regards to conflict exposure revealed centrality of ingroup victimization, centrality of global victimization and victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal to be most common among those living in communities with greater exposure to conflict. Centrality of ingroup 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 ingroup victimization. Centrality of global victimization is on the contrary a victim belief, which reflects the individual's understanding of suffering for other outgroups 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 ingroup 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 Buddhists 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 ingroup. It can facilitate the distribution of collective guilt, gain more recognition to the suffering and secure compensation and also gain allies for the ingroup. Hence inclusive victim consciousness may

not always intended to be ‘inclusive’. Respondents who had been exposed to more violence were also higher in victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal suggesting that the more exposed to violence, the more sympathetic individuals become towards their own group’s suffering.

Analyzing 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. Centrality of global victimization as mentioned previously is a concern for suffering of other outgroups 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 ingroup as well as outgroups 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; those in Ampara because of the war and those in Matale because many of them came from disempowered communities in the estate sector.

The majority Sinhalese indicated a higher tendency towards conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs and victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal. A majority having conflict specific exclusive victim beliefs especially during times where transitional justice mechanisms are put in place seems logical. As exclusive victim beliefs portray the ingroup to have suffered more than the other groups, this could act as a defense preventing the majority from being branded as the perpetrators by providing accounts of greater ingroup suffering. Victim beliefs born out of betrayal as mentioned previously were constructed to reflect the undeserving nature and the incomparability of the suffering experienced by the ingroup despite been welcoming and accommodating. This could function the same as exclusive victimhood, painting the ingroup as having suffered greatly historically, while providing

evidence against any contestation of the ingroup's innocence. These seem to supplement Sullivan, Landau, Branscombe, and Rothschild's (2012) experimental findings where it was found that people engage in competitive victimhood in response to information presented of illegitimate harm committed by their ingroup against an outgroup in a settings which involved no intergroup violence.

Interestingly, it was found that how individuals perceived development was related to their willingness to engage in collective action. But that relationship was mediated by being able to see the suffering of others to be similar to one's own suffering but also feeling that the suffering that one's ingroup had suffered during conflict was not deserved. In the first instance collective action seems to be driven by a willingness to facilitate the wellbeing of all, while in the second it appears to be an attempt to be driven by a need to correct a wrong done to one's ingroup. Future research is required to understand these relationships further.

However, this study has a few weaknesses that need to be addressed in future research. This is particularly true for the testing of the victimhood born of betrayal concept. This particular study has merely served as a pilot test of the measures and the concept itself. While, this study provides a glimpse of the differential impact of this concept, vigorous research is required to refine the conceptualization of victimhood born of betrayal and to develop a credible measure of this concept. Additionally, 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, some of which seem contradictory, but some others that seem to point to 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. It also provides some interesting insights in to how these perspectives may

differentially impact the willingness to engage in collective action, which are driven by varied motivations facilitated by different victim beliefs.

## 5. References

- Bardhan, P. (1997). Method in the madness? A political-economy analysis of the ethnic conflicts in less developed countries. *World Development*, 25(9), 1381-1398.
- Bar-Tal, D., Chernyak-Hai, L., Schori, N., & Gundar, A. (2009). A sense of self-perceived collective victimhood in intractable conflicts. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 91, 229–258.
- Bar-Tal, D., & Salomon, G. (2006). Israeli-Jewish narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Evolution, contents, functions, and consequences. In R. Rotberg (Ed.), *Israeli and Palestinian narratives of conflict: History's double helix* (pp. 19–46). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bilali, R., & Ross, M. A. (2012). Remembering intergroup conflict. *The Oxford handbook of intergroup conflict*, 123-135.
- Brounéus, K. (2003). Reconciliation-Theory and Practice for Development Cooperation. A Report for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.
- Chinthana, M. (2006). Vision for New Sri Lanka. *A Ten Year Horizon Development Framework–2006–2016, Department of National Planning, Ministry of Finance and Planning. Performance Report–Development of External Resources, Ministry of Finance and Planning.*
- Chinthana, M. (2010). Vision for the Future, Sri Lanka, The Emerging Wonder of Asia, Sri Lanka. *The Development Policy Framework, Department of National Planning, Ministry of Finance and Planning. Performance Report–Development of External Resources, Ministry of Finance and Planning.*
- Cohrs, J. C., McNeill, A., & Vollhardt, J. R. (2015). The two-sided role of inclusive victimhood for intergroup reconciliation: Evidence from Northern Ireland. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 21(4), 634.
- Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2002). On the incidence of civil war in Africa. *Journal of conflict resolution*, 46(1), 13-28.
- de Silva, C. R., Perera, A. R., Hangawatte, K., Chanmugam, C., Palihakkara, H. M. G. S., Ramanathan, M., ... & Bafiq, M. T. M. (2011). Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation. *Government of Sri Lanka, Colombo.*
- DeVotta, N. (2000). Control democracy, institutional decay, and the quest for Eelam: explaining ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. *Pacific Affairs*, 55-76.



- DeVotta, N. (2009). The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the lost quest for separatism in Sri Lanka. *Asian Survey*, 49(6), 1021-1051.
- Dovidio, J. F., Piliavin, J. A., Schroeder, D. A., & Penner, L. (2006). *The social psychology of prosocial behavior*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Drury, J., & Reicher, S. D. (1999). The inter-group dynamics of collective empowerment: Substantiating the social identity model of crowd behavior. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 4, 381–402.
- Drury, J., & Reicher, S. D. (2000). Collective action and psychological change: The emergence of new social identities. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 39, 579–604.
- Drury, J., & Reicher, S. D. (2005). Explaining enduring empowerment: A comparative study of collective action and psychological outcomes. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 35, 35–38.
- Elcheroth, G. (2006). Individual-level and community-level effects of war trauma on social representations related to humanitarian law. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 36(6), 907-930.
- Elcheroth, G., Penic, S., Fasel, R., Giudici, F., Glaeser, S., Joye, D., ... & Spini, D. (2013). Spatially weighted context data and their application to collective war experiences. *Sociological Methodology*, 43(1), 364-411.
- Eriksson, J., Adelman, H., Borton, J., Christensen, H., Kumar, K., Suhrke, A., ... & Wohlgemuth, L. (1996). The international response to conflict and genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda experience. *Synthesis Report. Copenhagen: Steering Committee for the Joint Evaluation of Emergency assistance to Rwanda*.
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A. G. (2009). Statistical power analyses using G\* Power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analyses. *Behavior research methods*, 41(4), 1149-1160.
- Fearon, J. D., & Laitin, D. D. (2003). Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American political science review*, 97(01), 75-90.
- Frijda, N. H. (1986). *The emotions*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Gay, C. (2006). Seeing difference: The effect of economic disparity on black attitudes toward Latinos. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(4), 982-997.
- Gile, K. J., & Handcock, M. S. (2010). Respondent-driven sampling: an assessment of current methodology. *Sociological methodology*, 40(1), 285-327.

- Green, R. H. (1999). Rehabilitation, sustainable peace and development: towards reconceptualisation. *Third World Quarterly*, 20(1), 189-206.
- Johnson, H., & Thompson, A. (2008). The development and maintenance of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in civilian adult survivors of war trauma and torture: A review. *Clinical psychology review*, 28(1), 36-47.
- Joskowicz–Jablonek, L., & Leiser, D. (2013). Varieties of trust-betrayal: emotion and relief patterns in different domains. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 43(9), 1799-1813.
- Lambourne, W. (2004). "Postconflict Peacebuilding: Meeting Human Needs for Justice and Reconciliation." *Peace, Conflict and Development* 4.1-24.
- Lindner, E. (2002). Healing the cycles of humiliation: How to attend to the emotional aspects of “unsolvable” conflicts and the use of “humiliation entrepreneurship.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 8, 125–138.
- Lindner, E. (2006). *Making enemies: Humiliation and international conflict*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International.
- Mamdani, M. (2001). *When victims become killers*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Martin, J., Brickman, P., & Murray, A. (1984). Moral outrage and pragmatism: Explanations for collective action. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 20(5), 484-496.
- Miller, S. L., & Maner, J. K. (2008). Coping with romantic betrayal: Sex differences in responses to partner infidelity. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 6(3), 147470490800600305.
- Nadler, A., Harpaz-Gorodeisky, G., & Ben-David, Y. (2009). Defensive helping: threat to group identity, ingroup identification, status stability, and common group identity as determinants of intergroup help-giving. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 97(5), 823.
- Newman, E., & Schnabel, A. (Eds.). (2002). *Recovering from civil conflict: reconciliation, peace, and development* (Vol. 9, No. 2). Psychology Press.
- Noor, M., Brown, R., Gonzalez, R., Manzi, J., & Lewis, C. A. (2008). On positive psychological outcomes: What helps groups with a history of conflict to forgive and reconcile with each other? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34, 819–832.
- Noor, M., Brown, R. J., & Prentice, G. (2008). Precursors and mediators of intergroup reconciliation in Northern Ireland: A new model. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 47, 481–495.

- Noor, M., Shnabel, N., Halabi, S., & Nadler, A. (2012). When suffering begets suffering the psychology of competitive victimhood between adversarial groups in violent conflicts. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 16*(4), 351-374.
- Pennekamp, S. F., Doosje, B., Zebel, S., & Fischer, A. H. (2007). The past and the pending: The antecedents and consequences of group-based anger in historically and currently disadvantaged groups. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 10*, 41–55.
- Rajasingham, D. (2010). One Year After Terrorism: Sri Lanka Needs to Demilitarise Reconstruction and Development for Sustainable Peace. *Strategic Analysis, 34*(5), 690-696.
- Runciman, W. G. (1966). Relative deprivation & social justice: Study attitudes social inequality in 20th century England.
- Roccas, S., & Elster, A. (2012). Group identities. In L. R. Tropp (Ed.), *Oxford handbook of inter-group conflict*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Schaal, S., & Elbert, T. (2006). Ten years after the genocide: trauma confrontation and posttraumatic stress in Rwandan adolescents. *Journal of traumatic stress, 19*(1), 95-105.
- Smith, H. J., & Ortiz, D. J. (2002). Is it just me? The different consequences of personal and group relative deprivation. In I. Walker & H. J. Smith (Eds.), *Relative deprivation: Specification, development, and integration* (pp. 91–115). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Shnabel, N., Halabi, S., & Noor, M. (2013). Overcoming competitive victimhood and facilitating forgiveness through re-categorization into a common victim or perpetrator identity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 49*(5), 867-877.
- Staub, E., & Vollhardt, J. (2008). Altruism born of suffering: The roots of caring and helping after victimization and other trauma. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 78*, 267–280.
- Sullivan, D., Landau, M. J., Branscombe, N. R., & Rothschild, Z. K. (2012). Competitive victimhood as a response to accusations of ingroup harm doing. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 102*(4), 778.
- Tajfel, H. (1978). The achievement of inter-group differentiation. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation between social groups* (pp. 77–100). London: Academic Press.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of inter-group conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of inter-group relations* (pp. 33–

- 47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Uvin, P. (1998). *Aiding violence: The development enterprise in Rwanda*. Kumarian Press.
- Van Gennip, J. (2005). Post-conflict reconstruction and development. *Development*, 48(3), 57-62.
- Van Zomeren, M., Postmes, T., & Spears, R. (2008). Toward an integrative social identity model of collective action: a quantitative research synthesis of three socio-psychological perspectives. *Psychological bulletin*, 134(4), 504.
- Van Zomeren, M., & Spears, R. (2009). Metaphors of protest: A classification of motivations for collective action. *Journal of Social Issues*, 65(4), 661-679.
- Vollhardt, J. R. (2009a). The role of victim beliefs in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Risk or potential for peace? *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 15, 135–159.
- Vollhardt, J. R. (2009b). Altruism born of suffering and prosocial behavior following adverse life events: A review and conceptualization. *Social Justice Research*, 22, 53–97.
- Vollhardt, J. R. (2012). Collective victimization. In L. R. Tropp (Ed.), *Oxford handbook of inter-group conflict*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Vollhardt, J. R. (2015). Inclusive victim consciousness in advocacy, social movements, and intergroup relations: Promises and pitfalls. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 9(1), 89-120.
- Vollhardt, J. R., & Bilali, R. (2015). The role of inclusive and exclusive victim consciousness in predicting intergroup attitudes: Findings from Rwanda, Burundi, and DRC. *Political Psychology*, 36(5), 489-506.
- Vollhardt, J. R., Nair, R., & Tropp, L. R. (2016). Inclusive victim consciousness predicts minority group members' support for refugees and immigrants. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*.
- Vollhardt, J. R., & Staub, E. (2011). Inclusive altruism born of suffering: The effects of past suffering on prosocial behavior toward outgroups. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 81, 307–305.
- Wakefield, J. R., Hopkins, N., & Greenwood, R. M. (2013). Meta-stereotypes, Social Image and Help Seeking: Dependency-Related Meta-stereotypes Reduce Help-Seeking Behaviour. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 23(5), 363-372.
- Walker, I., & Smith, H. J. (2002). *Relative deprivation: Specification, development, and integration*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Zorbas, E. (2004). Reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda. *African Journal of Legal Studies*, 1(1), 29-52.

## 6. Appendix

### Appendix A

*Table A1: Measures tested for perceptions on development, victim beliefs & collective action*

<i>Individual perceptions on development</i>
I consider the postwar 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 postwar development initiated by the government to be a form of retributive justice for things done in the past
As beneficiaries of the government’s postwar 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 postwar 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
<i>Ethnic group’s perceptions on development</i>
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 postwar 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
<i>Collective Action</i>
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

Table A1 (*continued*)

<i>Victim Beliefs (Existing typologies)</i>
It is important to me to remember and pass on stories about my ethnic groups suffering (Centrality of ingroup victimization)
Knowing about how other groups in the world have been victimized has influenced my opinions on many social and political issues (Centrality of victimization worldwide)
While all experiences of victimization are somewhat different, our group’s experience is truly unique (General exclusive victim consciousness)
There are other groups in the world that have suffered as much as the people of our ethnic group (General inclusive 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 exclusive victim consciousness)
In the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, people have suffered regardless of which ethnic group they belong to (Conflict-specific inclusive victim consciousness)
<i>Victim beliefs born out of historic betrayal</i>
My ethnic group has lived in harmony with other ethnic groups throughout history
My ethnic group is undeserving / unworthy of the suffering it experienced throughout history
Throughout history I feel as if my ethnic group has been betrayed despite being accommodating and welcoming
I feel disappointed towards the violence committed against my ethnic group throughout history as we did not deserve such treatment
I don’t feel other ethnic groups to have been ungrateful towards us throughout history as their actions can be justified
<i>Victim beliefs born out of conflict specific betrayal</i>
My ethnic group has treated such groups fairly and equitably throughout the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict
My ethnic group is undeserving / unworthy of the suffering it experienced during the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict
During the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict I feel as if my ethnic group has been betrayed despite being accommodating and welcoming
I’m disappointed about the violence committed against my ethnic group during the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict as we did not deserve such treatment
I don’t feel other ethnic groups to have been ungrateful towards us during Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict as their actions can be justified