ATROCITY PREVENTION THROUGH RECONCILIATION?
TESTING THE IMPACT OF INTERPERSONAL RECONCILIATION IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT
In the aftermath of mass atrocity, two major questions emerge: how to heal the wounds of violence, and how to ensure that violence does not break out again. This paper explores the links between interpersonal reconciliation efforts and the mitigation of interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors. Using a mixed-methods design of a randomized field experiment and qualitative interviews, it seeks to evaluate the hypothesis that participation in a program that targets interpersonal reconciliation outcomes will lead to a reduction in interpersonal atrocity risk. It does not find support for this hypothesis: attitudes on interpersonal atrocity risk remain largely stable even after participation in an interpersonal reconciliation program. Instead, it finds that majority and minority ethnic groups experience divergent effects of the program, and that participants experience positive contact, de-categorization and re-categorization. It also finds modest changes on measures of identity transformation and coexistence as a result of the program.

**Keywords:** reconciliation, mass atrocity, atrocity prevention, social identity theory, contact theory
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1. INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of mass atrocity, two major questions emerge: how to heal the wounds of violence, and how to ensure that violence does not break out again. Reconciliation efforts seek to bring together formerly conflicting groups and address legacies of violence. Similarly, mass atrocity\textsuperscript{1} prevention efforts attempt to identify and mitigate risks for future atrocities. Reconciliation is often seen not only as a goal in its own right, but as a tool to stop the cycle of violence that so often occurs in countries recovering from past conflict. Despite the theorized links between the fields of reconciliation and atrocity prevention, little research has empirically examined these links. This thesis attempts to address these gaps by answering the following research question: \textit{What is the impact of an interpersonal reconciliation program on interpersonal atrocity risk factors?}

Interpersonal reconciliation is the transformation of individual beliefs and interpersonal relationships that have previously been defined by conflict into those defined by peace and mutual respect (Bar-Tal 2000; Verdeja 2009). Previous research identifies five minimal outcomes of interpersonal reconciliation: identity transformation, coexistence, truth, empathy, and mutual acknowledgement. These outcomes are theoretically linked to five interpersonal-level factors that increase risk for participation in a mass atrocity. These include an internal self-concept oriented towards authoritarian approaches, a sense of victimization of one’s own identity group, distance and negative attitudes towards other identity groups, exclusionary beliefs that dehumanize others, and the development of beliefs that justify the use of violence against others.

Interpersonal reconciliation and atrocity risks are theoretically linked through a process of social identity change. Social identity theory (Tajfel 1974) describes a process of defining social identities that can give rise to an “in-group” of similar members and an “out-group” of those who are different. Under circumstances of extreme polarization, identity groups can develop a “conflictive” identity, which is characterized by negative and potentially destructive orientations towards the out-group (Bar-Tal 2000). Interpersonal reconciliation is a process to reorient these conflictive identities to peaceful identities, and establish more peaceful relationships between formerly conflicting groups. The shifts in social identity resulting from this process remove the foundation of many of the cognitions and beliefs underlying individual-level risk factors for mass atrocity. This theorized causal chain leads to the hypothesis that

\textsuperscript{1} Mass atrocities include genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes (OSAPG 2014)
participation in a program that targets interpersonal reconciliation outcomes will lead to a reduction in interpersonal atrocity risk.

To test this hypothesis, an experimental impact evaluation was conducted with a convenience sample of 207 university students at the University of Colombo, in Sri Lanka. From this sample, half were selected using stratified random sampling by ethnicity to participate in an interpersonal reconciliation program to discuss issues related to identity, coexistence, trust, empathy and mutual acknowledgement. Both the test and control groups completed a survey measuring individual-level atrocity risk before and after the reconciliation program. In addition to the survey findings, individual in-depth interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of test group participants. These interviews explored the causal mechanisms at play in individual change experiences throughout the reconciliation program.

The findings of this study show overall stability in interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors after participation in an interpersonal reconciliation program. This contradicts the hypothesis that participation in an interpersonal reconciliation program will result in lowered interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors. However, it does find limited evidence of other changes and effects of the program. Qualitative interviews show that participants experience positive cross-ethnic group contact resulting in subtle social identity shifts. Participants developed personalized relationships that challenged categorical stereotypes, and began to identify common superordinate identities with members of other ethnic groups. This indicates that, while theorized shifts in social identity may occur as a result of the interpersonal reconciliation program, they do not impact interpersonal atrocity risk factors in the expected way.

Additional analyses disaggregated by ethnicity show that majority and minority groups experienced the program in different ways. Participants from the majority Sinhalese ethnic group showed lower interpersonal atrocity risk on one measured variable, which is expected by the theory. In contrast, participants from minority Tamil and Muslim ethnicities did not show the expected change. Further examination of the survey data show that participants demonstrate change on only a limited number of reconciliation outcomes, which sheds further light on why the hypothesized change did not occur.

The next chapter of this report will review key findings from the literature on reconciliation and atrocity prevention, and identify the gap in knowledge that this research intends to address by answering the research question. Chapter Three will present the theoretical
framework and hypothesis to be tested. Chapter Four will outline the methodology used to test this hypothesis, and Chapter Five will present the empirical findings, and Chapter Six will discuss conclusions and directions for further research.
2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH: Current Understanding Of Interpersonal Reconciliation And Atrocity Prevention

This chapter reviews current research findings on interpersonal reconciliation outcomes and interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors. Many scholars have made theoretical connections between the contributions of interpersonal reconciliation practice to the reduction of atrocity risk factors and future prevention of atrocities. Practitioners have also emphasized these links, making claims of the transformative and preventive capacity of reconciliation interventions that bring together individuals from formerly conflicting groups. However, despite the clear theoretical overlap, these connections are rarely empirically tested. By exploring the research question *what is the impact of an interpersonal contact and dialogue-based reconciliation program on interpersonal atrocity risk factors*, this research hopes to contribute new empirical data focused on the links between reconciliation practice and atrocity prevention at the interpersonal level.

The chapter begins with a review of the concept of interpersonal reconciliation, and identifies five minimal outcomes. Next, it considers previous research findings on interpersonal risk factors for mass atrocity and identifies six key indicators of interpersonal atrocity risk. Finally, the chapter concludes with a review of the theorized connections between these two fields and the gaps in current research findings toward which this research hopes to contribute.

### 2.1 Interpersonal Reconciliation

Reconciliation, as a broad field, considers the question of how to rebuild and repair society following violent conflict. At the very broadest delineation, reconciliation can be divided into interpersonal or institutional processes (Verdeja 2009; Hayner 2001, 155; Skaar et al 2005, 20). Depending on the level of focus, both the process and outcome of reconciliation can vary. Interpersonal reconciliation focuses on the individual level, while institutional reconciliation efforts focus on creating change at the structural level through law or policy. Both levels of reconciliation interact to facilitate a holistic societal transformation towards peace. However, the relationship between individuals is arguably the most fundamental starting point for a

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2 A meso-level between institutional and individual change is arguably a distinct category as well, and includes structures that bridge the gap between interpersonal relations and intergroup relations (Brounéus 2003).
reconciliation process, the building block upon which institutional reconciliation must stand. Changes at the institutional level do not always trickle down to the individual level, where neighbors must live with each other after violent conflict and find a way to move forward based in peaceful coexistence. For this reason, it is important to explore the effects of interpersonal reconciliation on atrocity prevention.

Interpersonal reconciliation seeks to transform individual beliefs and interpersonal relationships that have previously been defined by conflict into those defined by peace and mutual respect (Bar-Tal 2000; Verdeja 2009). One conception of interpersonal reconciliation frames it as a process of changing societal beliefs from those that constitute a ‘conflictive ethos’ to those that constitute a ‘peace ethos’. Beliefs that perpetuate conflict and fuel divisions between opposing groups arise at the societal level, out of collective cognitive coping responses to protracted conflict. Changing these beliefs must target the individual socio-psychological level at which they originally developed (Bar-Tal 2000).

Reconciliation can be conceived either minimally or maximally. Minimalist approaches define reconciliation simply as peaceful coexistence between formerly conflicting parties, and a commitment to use nonviolent means, such as the judicial system, to resolve disputes. Maximalist approaches, in contrast, demand a holistic and meaningful reconciliatory process that includes acknowledgement of the past, apology, and forgiveness (Verdeja 2009, 12). While maximalist approaches encompass the broad range of processes that can facilitate the development of relationships defined by peace and mutual respect, full achievement of this ideal is rarely realistic. Of primary concern to an evaluation of the effects of reconciliation are testing the minimum conditions through which this goal can be achieved. Reconciliation efforts are typically constrained by both time and resources, thus limiting the outcomes on which they can reasonably focus. Prioritization and sequencing of goals is frequently required (Brounéus 2003). The following review will examine some minimally necessary required to transform relationships from ones of conflict to ones of peace at the interpersonal level.

2.1.1 Transformed Identity Salience

Identity transformation is the starting point of reconciliation. Identity is a set of beliefs about oneself and one’s relation to the world (Northrup 1989; Donohue 2012). Kelman (2001) argues that reconciliation primarily focuses on changing and re-orienting identities. If conflict arises from the clash between identities that have been constructed in opposition to each other
and defensive reactions to protect one’s positive self-identity (Bar-Tal 2000; Northrup 1989), then the process of recovering from conflict must necessarily include a transformation of these conflicting identities into ones defined by peace.

Identity transformation is based on an assumption that individual and social identities are mutable and multi-faceted. Individuals can hold multiple identities that vary in level of salience depending on their personal and social values. The salience of each identity determines how much influence it will have on attitudes and behavior (Stryker 2000; Tajfel 1974; Northrup 1989; Zartman & Anstey 2012). When conflict is based around a particular belonging such as ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation, the salience of that identity dimension can begin to influence all areas of life and interactions with the world. Reconciliation, in contrast, can increase the salience of other less conflictual identities. Multiple salient identities provide more points of commonality over which to connect with members of a formerly conflicting group.

2.1.2 Coexistence

Peaceful coexistence is the ability for previously conflicting groups to live together and resolve disputes without violence. This is the most basic minimal condition for reconciliation and establishes sufficient physical security and good will between former enemies to allow a process of repair and reconnection to emerge (Verdeja, 2009, 12).

The first element of coexistence, and a basic precondition to bring members of formerly conflicting groups together, is an environment of sufficient physical security (Bloomfield et al., 2003). This justifies turning attention towards peace and coexistence. Beyond physical security and the ability to live together without outright violence, coexistence also encompasses a commitment to use nonviolent means to resolve disputes. Peaceful coexistence does not imply that the grievances and disputes that can lead to conflict have necessarily been resolved. Instead, parties reach a stage where they view the rule of law and procedural justice as an acceptable way to resolve conflicts and disputes rather than violence (Verdeja 2009). Kelman (2001) argues that in order for reconciliation to occur, both patterns and institutional mechanisms of cooperation

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3 Although an end to conflict is often cited as an important condition for institutional reconciliation processes (Bloomfield et al 2003; Brounéus 2003), localized physical security and commitment to coexistence on an individual level can be sufficient to begin an interpersonal reconciliation process. Efforts towards reconciliation at the interpersonal level have begun during ongoing conflict, such as in Israel-Palestine (Kelman 2004). Recent developments in Colombia challenge this condition further, with both institutional and interpersonal reconciliation processes that have begun under conditions of conflict (Cante & Quehl 2015, 58).
and coexistence must be established. Institutions that can peacefully mediate disputes that arise between identity groups are imperative for peaceful resolution. Moreover, members of those identity groups must view these institutions as legitimate and relevant. Although peaceful coexistence also involves group-level processes and broader societal shifts, it begins on an individual level. Members of formerly conflictual groups must both accept and utilize structures of peaceful coexistence in their everyday interactions, which will feed into the larger interactions between their groups.

2.1.3 Trust

Trust is a necessary condition to mediate the process of reconciliation. Conflict is characterized by mistrust between groups and between individuals (Kelman 2005). Interpersonal conflict is the result of broken trust, while intergroup conflict occurs as a result of fractured relationships and trust between collectivities. Without first establishing trust, it is more challenging to initiate the process of reconciliation and to maintain effective communication throughout the process. Social psychological experiments have demonstrated the importance of trust at the individual level during an interpersonal reconciliation process. In an experiment with Israeli and Palestinian students, Nadler & Liviatan (2006) found that individuals with low levels of trust for the conflicting group showed less willingness for reconciliation. Trust sets the stage for the types of positive interactions that can lead to the development of more positive relationships between formerly conflicting groups. It allows individuals to be receptive to other elements of reconciliation and to open space to redefine conflictual identities.

2.1.4 Empathy

Empathy is the process of “imagining and seeking to understand the perspective of another person” (Halpern & Weinstein 2004). Conflict distances people from each other and destroys human connections. This lack of connection diminishes capacity for empathy and ability to imagine and understand another’s suffering. In order to build more positive relationships, it is necessary for individuals to see the other person with whom they have a relationship as a complex individual worthy of care and compassion. Holding this belief allows the other to be viewed with the potential for positive interactions. Empathy allows the development of a “common moral basis for peace” (Kelman 2001) and allows for consideration of another group’s needs and interests (Bar-Tal 2000). This understanding is necessary in order
to end patterns of behavior that create distance between groups and fuel negative relationships that may develop into conflict.

Empathy involves perspective-taking, an information-gathering process that “makes the unintelligible understandable” (Stephan & Finlay 1999). This might include exposure to the cultural events and traditions of the other group, or learning more factual information about their ways of life. Affective empathy occurs at an emotional level, where one is able to connect to the emotions another person is experiencing and respond accordingly (Duan & Hill 1996).

2.1.5 Mutual Acknowledgement of History and Past Suffering

Acknowledging the history and past suffering of a formerly conflicting group requires re-examination of the narratives and assumptions that have fueled past conflict identities. Acknowledgement goes beyond establishing fact or recording information. Instead, acknowledgement strives towards a process that “validates experience and feelings and represents the first step toward restoration of the person and the relationship” (Lederach 1997, 26). Mutual acknowledgment requires that both parties recognizing the narrative from both perspectives while acknowledging and accepting the gaps between them as valid, if not necessarily true. For victims, acknowledgement of their pain and suffering restores the sense of worth that was destroyed through a violent act. At the societal level, acknowledgment recognizes that values that have been violated (Govier 2009). Without addressing the underlying narratives that fueled conflict, discord and grievance is likely to continue under the surface. Any continuing conflict between these narratives will threaten to unravel other elements of interpersonal reconciliation.

Truth is one component of mutual acknowledgement. Although the formal establishment of truth is often treated as an outcome of reconciliation in its own right, at the interpersonal level the more important aspect is that individuals are able to achieve meaningful acknowledgment and validations of experiences and feelings (Lederach 1997, 26). While formalized truth efforts are a common example of this process at the meso-level, mutual acknowledgement can begin at the interpersonal level even in the absence of a larger process of establishing officially agreed-upon truth.

2.1.6 The Practice of Interpersonal Reconciliation: Contact and Dialogue

The concept of interpersonal reconciliation consists of identity transformation, peaceful coexistence, trust, empathy and mutual acknowledgement, but what are the pathways to
achieving those outcomes? How can identities be re-oriented, coexistence established, trust gained, empathy built and mutual acknowledgement shared? In practice, many different approaches are used to build more peaceful relationships and reconcile. These can include individual apologies, trauma healing, mediation, joint development projects, and documentation of history (McKone 2015).

A common mechanism for interpersonal reconciliation is an interactive program that brings individual members of formerly conflicting groups together to build positive relationships and reduce animosities between them through a dialogue process (Ropers 2004; Kelman 2008, Rothman 2012, McKone 2015, Hamber 2016). A recent review of reconciliation practice found community dialogue to be the most common approach to reconciliation projects carried out by the non-governmental organizations sampled. (McKone 2015). The popularity of contact and dialogue programs as an intervention reflects the theory behind interpersonal reconciliation outcomes. In order to transform relationships, one must do so in relationship to others. For these reasons, the experimental impact evaluation conducted in this research focused on contact and dialogue as the operative tools to achieve interpersonal reconciliation outcomes.

2.2 Interpersonal Atrocity Risk Factors

After horrific incidents of mass atrocity that occurred throughout the twentieth century, from the Nazi Holocaust to the Rwandan genocide, both academic and policy audiences began to systematically explore why mass atrocities occur. From understanding the causes of these events, it is reasoned, it is possible to identify areas of emerging risk and take preventive actions to address these risks. While some scholars have examined large-N, cross-country analyses of macro-level influences on genocide (Rummel 1995; Harff & Gurr 1998; Harff 2003), others focused on the level of individual participants in mass atrocities. The latter addresses the question of why individual perpetrators participate in mass atrocities. What drives so-called “ordinary men” (Browning 2002) to participate in mass violence rather than to resist?

Although carried out by a collective of individual actors, mass atrocity is an inherently social process and thus necessitates exploration at the interpersonal level. With the exception of self-harm, violence involves at minimum one perpetrator and one victim. The harm inherently happens in relationship to another entity. This interpersonal relationship is the smallest unit at which mass violence occurs. Although mass atrocities, conflict and war are usually presented as conflicts between groups and nations, the actions of these larger conflicts are carried out by
individuals against other individuals. The starting point to reconcile from these conflicts is through rebuilding relationships between the individuals affected by larger violence. For this reason, this research will refer to the factors that increase the risk of an individual’s participation in an episode of mass violence as “interpersonal atrocity risk factors”.

For the purposes of this research, mass atrocity is defined as genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. Genocide is defined, according to the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, as systematic violence committed with the intent to destroy members of a national, ethnical, racial or religious group on the basis of their membership in that group (OSAPG 2014). ‘Crimes against humanity’ is a broader term that encompasses widespread and systematic violence against civilians that does not reach the level of genocide. War crimes consist of violence against the wounded and sick, prisoners of war, and civilians during wartime. The guidelines for war crimes follow the 1949 Geneva Conventions, as well as other selected international law instruments that address the protection of civilians and non-combatants.

Mass atrocities are an extreme form of violence, and usually result from an escalatory cycle of violence. Thus, the terms “mass atrocity” and “extreme violence” will be used interchangeably throughout this paper. Although there generally exists an escalatory spiral towards mass atrocity, the intention is not to imply that mass atrocities are inevitable under conditions of risk. The cycle of escalation is not linear, and there are many additional factors that create resilience to the sources of risk. This is the logic of atrocity prevention: if the path to mass atrocity can be diverted or slowed, then factors of resilience have the capacity to diminish factors of risk. To act on these hopes for prevention, a necessary first step is to understand the factors that create a risk for participation in a mass atrocity.

The following review identifies two underlying conditions of mass atrocity and five risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will participate in a mass atrocity. Underlying conditions include the basic psychological needs that humans seek to fulfill, and the onset of disruptive societal events that limits the peaceful pathways to fulfilling these needs. Interpersonal factors that increase an individual’s likelihood to participate in a mass atrocity include: a restrictive and authoritarian self-concept, a sense that one’s own group has been victimized, distance and negative attitudes towards other ethnic groups, beliefs that exclude other
groups from the universe of moral concern, and beliefs that can justify the use of violence against others.\(^4\)

2.2.1 Underlying Conditions: Basic Psychological Needs and Disruptive Societal Events

Psychosocial analyses of the causes of atrocity are premised on an understanding of human behavior driven by psychological needs and goals (Staub 1989, 2010). Needs are actions that are either required for our survival or for the functioning of a culture. These are necessary in order for a person to feel whole, and are often motivated by biological tendencies and evolutionary development. Goals are less imperative than needs, but bring us benefit and satisfaction. When the achievement of goals become closely tied to our basic human needs, they can become equally important (Staub 1989, 15).

Basic human needs include security, positive identity, control, autonomy and positive connection (Staub 1989, 15-16). At the most basic level, humans need physical safety and security. There is a powerful self-preservation instinct to defend against threats (whether real or perceived) and maintain physical security. On a more abstract level, humans also need a positive self-concept and to maintain positive self-esteem. Similarly, there is a basic need for humans to have control and autonomy over their lives. The needs for positive self-concept, control and autonomy allow people to make sense of the world and to bring order to chaos. To maintain this, humans seek to defend their values, traditions and ways of life when they are threatened. There is also a powerful need for positive connection and feelings of mutual support. This can be achieved by membership in a group.

Basic psychological needs and the hierarchy of motivational salience to achieve them can help to explain why violent and destructive behavior arise. In certain situations, individuals may turn to pathways of hatred and violence to achieve these needs. These alternative ways of meeting basic psychological needs can change attitudes and beliefs in such a way that mass atrocity and genocide becomes justified and morally acceptable.

There are some conditions that make it more likely that an individual will seek to fulfill their basic needs, goals and motivations through violent and destructive means rather than

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\(^4\) The influence of immediate situational factors and obedience to authority are also closely related to interpersonal drivers for participation in mass atrocity. Because these factors are inextricably related to larger social processes, along with the difficulty of testing these conditions in an experimental design, they have been excluded from this review. For a discussion of situational influences on mass atrocity participation, see Straus (2006), Zimbardo (2004); Zukier (1982); Milgram (1974); Russell & Gregory (2005).
peaceful. Conflict, political violence, economic crisis, horizontal inequalities and social instability have all been identified as factors associated with mass atrocities (Zartman & Anstey 2012; Zukier 1997; Sharma & Welsh 2015; McLoughlin 2014; Staub 2006). These hugely disruptive societal events limit one’s ability to meet basic human psychological needs for security, positive identity, control, autonomy and positive connection (Staub 1989, 2000, 2010). These disruptive events can so completely alter our usual pathways to meet our needs that radical alternative approaches seem necessary. The individual psychological response to the perceived experience of deprivation, struggle and loss can create an environment in which mass violence can become justifiable. In an environment of disruptive change and ongoing conflict, the following interpersonal-level factors can increase risk for participation in a mass atrocity.

2.2.2 Internal Self-Concept

Many analyses of the causes of mass atrocity have searched for a fundamental psychopathology or abnormal personality trait that could explain how and why individuals are driven to commit extreme violence (Mann 2000). They have largely found perpetrators of atrocity, even at the highest level, have a variety of different personalities, characteristics, backgrounds, and temperaments. Findings instead indicate that even ordinary people have the capacity to commit extreme violence under certain circumstances (Browning 1992; Waller 2002). However, individual characteristics do still have some influence on how we perceive and interact with the world (Waller 2002). Rather than a particular personality or psychopathology, evidence indicates that it is an individual’s internal self-concept, and the way they relate to the world, that will determine their likelihood of participating in a mass atrocity (Monroe 2008, 713; Kriedie & Monroe 2002, 31, Vollhardt 2015). A self-concept of weakness or victimization can make an individual more likely to view violence as a pathway to meet their basic psychological needs of positive identity, connection and autonomy.

One element of internal self-concept associated with mass atrocity is an authoritarian orientation. The authoritarian orientation is an individual’s support for societal-level repression and violence (Vollhardt 2015). Measures of authoritarian orientation focus on the way that an individual relates to the world, and look at an individual’s perceptions of and response to particular events that are based on order and hierarchy (Staub 1989). Although these psychological concepts have mainly been tested in non-conflict situations, they are logically connected to mass atrocity. Support for authoritarian ideologies represent beliefs that make it
more possible to justify violence targeted against particular groups.\(^5\) This is not an immutable characteristic, but may be influenced by a number of different factors and can change over an individual’s life. Although imperfect, authoritarian orientation is a relevant predictor of the influence an individual’s self-concept will have over his or her likelihood to participate in a mass atrocity.

2.2.4 Sense of In-group Victimization

An individual’s sense of in-group victimization is another factor that influences risk for participation in a mass atrocity. This is the belief, whether real or perceived, that one’s own group has been the victim of injustice, discrimination, or inequality. This perception of collective victimization can be internalized and influence the way that individuals interact with the world and with other members of the victimizing group. A sense of victimization can heighten the risk of mass atrocities by fueling grievances that can lead to violence (Vollhardt 2015). Perceived victimization also takes an emotional toll. Anger and dissatisfaction from unresolved trauma can lead to an increased desire for revenge. It can convince the victimized individuals that the world is a dangerous place, which colors their perception and can lead to defensive violence (Staub 2006, 293).

2.2.3 Ethnic Distance

Identity-based divisions are widely agreed upon as a risk factor for mass atrocities at the intergroup level (McLoughlin 2014; Staub 1989; Staub 2001; Zartman, Anstey & Meerts 2012). Given that mass atrocities include violence targeted on the basis of a victim’s group identity, constructing these identities and making them meaningful is a necessary basis. Once conflict develops between identity groups, an “identity trap” (Donahue 2012) can emerge where fear of the other becomes so immutable that an intractable security dilemma emerges. Once a threat from another group is perceived, actions are taken to reduce that threat, up to and including participation in a mass atrocity. Without guarantees of security and a reduction in perceived threat, this security dilemma will exist and continue to fuel conflict (Zartman, Anstey & Meerts 2012; Donahue 2012).

\(^5\) Initial research on authoritarian orientation, which viewed it as a fundamental personality trait, has been called into question. Measures of this concept were deterministic, suffered from self-reporting biases and excluded Left-leaning authoritarian (Staub 1989). More modern measures of authoritarian orientation, which are used in this study, focus on an individual’s worldview and beliefs rather than fundamental personality characteristics.
At the individual level, group-based identity divisions manifest as prejudice, stereotypes and a strong sense of “otherness” towards an out-group. One way to conceptualize this phenomenon is that of ethnic distance, or how far an individual feels from other groups.

2.2.6 Exclusionary Thinking
Beliefs and narratives that exclude certain groups and individuals from the universe of moral concern can increase the risk of participation in mass atrocity (Waller 2002). Exclusionary thinking encompasses three interrelated processes: delegitimization, dehumanization and eventually moral exclusion.

Delegitimization is fundamental loss of respect for another group as a result of their perceived violation of moral norms and values (Janoff-Bulman & Werther 2008; Vollhardt 2015). This process sets up a perception that there is a conflict between the “good” in-group and the “evil” out-group (Janoff-Bulman & Werther 2008). This can arise from negative stereotypes that frame the group in terms of negative qualities and moral violations.

Extreme levels of exclusionary thinking can create an ideology that dehumanizes the other, and excludes them from the universe of what is considered human and thus worthy of moral treatment. Dehumanization is a two-fold process. First is the perception that an individual’s identity is reduced to the point of being exclusively ascribed to their larger social identity group. Next, members of the out-group are excluded from human connection (Kelman 1974). A classic example of dehumanization was the reference to Tutsi victims in the Rwandan genocide as “inyenzi”, or cockroaches. This reference painted members of the Tutsi ethnic group as sub-human. The spread of dehumanizing language and attitudes implied that it was no worse to kill a Tutsi than to kill a cockroach.

After stripping a group of their legitimacy and human connection, they no longer occupy a position within the “moral universe” (Waller 2002). Once excluded from the realm of moral concern, violence against members of the group no longer challenges one’s moral guidelines and need for positive self-identity (Kelman 1974; Bandura 1999). The victim loses their legitimacy, value and worth in the eyes of the perpetrators. The development of these beliefs that exclude members of a particular group from the universe of moral concern and reduce moral barriers to violence can increase the likelihood for participation in a mass atrocity.

2.2.5 Justifying Beliefs
The development of justifying beliefs and narratives is one way that individuals can address their psychological need for a positive identity while committing violence against others. This allows them to use violence against an out-group to meet their needs for security and control while still maintaining a positive self-image and positive connection to reality. One process of justifying mass atrocity is “de-agentification” (Leader Maynard 2014). This cultivates the belief that the perpetrator has no agency over his or her destructive actions and that the killing is somehow necessary and inevitable. While this is not a reasonable excuse for action, de-agentification describes the psychological process by which one can separate actions from moral values in order to carry out unthinkable violence.

Another justifying belief is the construction of a perceived threat by a victimized group, and the subsequent development of a narrative of virtue around destroying a particular group (Leader Maynard 2014, Kreidie & Monroe 2002). The psychological need for security drives this justifying belief. When another group’s existence is perceived as a threat to one’s own safety and well-being, the use of violence against that group is much more easily justified. By taking on the temporarily unpleasant task of conducting an atrocity, the perpetrator is serving future generations by eliminating a threat and creating a better society.

The activation of narratives to justify violence can lead to the normalization of violent acts and a “spiral of evil” towards widespread, large-scale atrocities (Zukier 1994). Violence can also become normalized on an individual level (Kelman 1974; Staub 1989; Zukier 1994; Monroe 2008). Through a process of “cognitive stretching” (Monroe 2008, 705), previous moral boundaries are re-drawn and shifted to justify previously unacceptable actions. Once a violent act is committed and a justifying belief is developed to align this action with the need for positive self-image, the new justifying belief must be maintained. The establishment of justifying beliefs can trigger a self-perpetuating process of participating in violence in order to maintain positive self-image.

2.3 Research Gap: Connecting Reconciliation and Atrocity Prevention

Reconciliation is often framed as a tool to prevent the recurrence of violence and atrocity. Drawing on the theoretical links between interpersonal reconciliation outcomes and interpersonal atrocity risk factors, scholars claim that achieving interpersonal reconciliation outcomes after an atrocity can help to prevent future atrocities from emerging (Staub 2010; McLoughlin 2014; Bellamy 2016; Ingelaere et al 2013). If future risk factors can be minimized through a post-
conflict reconciliation process that addresses the underlying causes of atrocity, then the escalatory spiral of extraordinary violence will not begin. This claim is made more relevant by the evidence, which indicates that prior history of atrocities increases the risk for future atrocity incidence (Harff 2003). Logically, it is claimed, a process to reconcile from those past atrocities will break the cycle of violence and prevent future atrocities from developing.

Current scholarship focuses on two main theoretical links between reconciliation and atrocity prevention. First, reconciliation addresses impunity and thus provides a deterrent effect on future perpetrators of atrocity. Secondly, the argument is made that reconciliation addresses the core risk factors for mass atrocity, and will thus reduce the likelihood of future recurrence (Theriault 2013, 98). Impunity has been identified as a risk factor for mass atrocity recurrence because it indicates a tacit acceptance of perpetrator’s actions. When would-be perpetrators see that past incidents of mass atrocity have been largely free of consequences, the barriers to their participation will reduce. Studies of the Rwandan genocide have found that the culture of impunity following previous atrocities reduced the sense of risk felt by perpetrators in the 1994 genocide (Ngoga 2008 and Schabas 2008, in Anstey 2012). Impunity also fuels denial of mass atrocities and allows perpetrators to justify their violent acts with their psychological need for positive moral self-regard. A reconciliation process that involves confronting the past and building broken relationships will inhibit the future development of justifying beliefs (Moshman 2008). Processes to acknowledge and confront past atrocities, even at the interpersonal and non-punitive level, could help to inhibit the cycle of impunity and reoccurrence.

Arguments for reconciliation as a preventive activity also highlight ways in which reconciliation processes address core issues that fuel mass atrocity, namely inter-group tensions and past victimization. The resolution of these issues removes underlying structural causes for future recurrence. Inter-group tensions are one structural cause of mass atrocity that advocates claim can be addressed through a reconciliation process (Bellamy 2016; McLoughlin 2015). This has proven true in Zambia, where risk factors for mass atrocity have been averted by policies that constructively manage diversity and inter-group tension (McLoughlin 2014). Reconciliation processes can also address risks posed by past victimization (Waller 2002, 268; Staub 1989, 2006, 2010, 2012; Lemarchand 2013). “Unhealed wounds” (Staub 2012) of past conflict can lead groups to feel vulnerable and defensive, and more likely to resort to violence as a means of self-protection.
Despite these explanations of the logical and theoretical links between reconciliation and atrocity risk, very little empirical evidence exists to assess the preventive power of interpersonal reconciliation programs. Reconciliation programs are rarely empirically tested, although a growing body of literature has begun to address this gap (Cilliers, Dube & Siddiqi 2016; Svensson & Brounéus 2013; Malhotra & Liyanage 2005; Staub 2005; Paluck 2009). These studies find that reconciliation interventions can improve outcomes on trust, empathy, social cohesion, positive attitudes towards the other. However, none of these existing studies have looked specifically at indicators of atrocity risk. By measuring the impact of an interpersonal reconciliation program on interpersonal atrocity risk factors, this study will contribute new empirical evidence against which previous claims can be judged.

In addition to this empirical contribution, the present research will explore the interpersonal level of atrocity risk and prevention. Within the atrocity prevention field, little attention has been given to individual-level atrocity risk factors (McLoughlin 2014b). Most prevention actors tend to focus on the political causes of atrocity, and steps that international and external actors can take to address political risks in other countries. Very little attention has been paid to existing forms of prevention and risk reduction that can take place within a country. Interpersonal reconciliation efforts are by nature a domestic activity, and thus in theory would be carried out primarily by domestic actors and would have an effect on aspects of atrocity prevention that relate to individual members of society.

To address the lack of empirical evidence on interpersonal reconciliation programs and atrocity prevention, this research project will seek to measure the impact of an interpersonal reconciliation program on interpersonal risk factors for participation in a mass atrocity. Figure 2.1 illustrates where this research question is situated in the theorized cycle of prevention, resolution, reconciliation and back to prevention.
Figure 2.1: Research Gap

RQ: What is the impact of an interpersonal reconciliation program on interpersonal risk factors for participation in a mass atrocity?
3. THEORY: From Reconciliation To Atrocity Risk Through Changes In Social Identity

How to do we expect the achievement of interpersonal reconciliation outcomes to affect interpersonal atrocity risk factors? This chapter will explain the theorized causal mechanism that explains how participation in a program that targets interpersonal reconciliation outcomes can be expected to impact interpersonal atrocity risk factors. Participation in a program that targets interpersonal reconciliation outcomes transforms an individual’s understanding of their social identity, and spurs them to re-evaluate their positive beliefs about both the in-group identity and negative beliefs about the out-group. This is expected to result in individual-level attitude changes that reduce interpersonal atrocity risk factors.

The first part of the chapter will explain social identity theory, and the process by which identities can change and conflict identities can develop. It will end with a description of the theorized causal pathway through which interpersonal reconciliation outcomes affect interpersonal atrocity risk factors.

3.1 Social Identity Theory and Its Role in Conflict

The causal mechanism linking interpersonal reconciliation with reduced individual level mass atrocity risks can be explained through social identity theory. Social identity theory is the development of socially constructed categories of meaning that create an individual’s identity. Social identity theory explains the bridge between individual identity and group dynamics. Part of the individual identity is determined by the individual’s membership as a part of a larger group. Social identity theory as articulated by Tajfel (1974) is built on four inter-related processes: social categorization, social identity, social comparison and psychological group distinctiveness. These cognitive processes form the building blocks of the theory.

*Social categorization* is the starting point for developing social identities and giving them meaning. Categorization is simply our human instinct to assign things into groups based on like characteristics to give meaning and order to a chaotic world (Tajfel 1974). Social categorization refers specifically to the groups we create to make sense of society, and where we fit ourselves into that categorization. After creating these categories, a *social identity* is an individual’s idea of his or her own meaning based on how he or she fits into larger social structures. The meaning of one’s own social identity is thus connected to the meaning one assigns to membership in a group. Group identity may be more or less important to the overall individual identity depending on the meaning given to it or the particular social situation (Tajfel 1974).
Next, *social comparison* is the process of assigning meaning to different social categories and identities. Categorization is not inherently meaningful, it only acquires meaning through a comparative process and the social assignment of values to those categories. We desire to have a positive view of our own social identity group, thus our comparisons tend to value similarities and devalue differences (Tajfel 1974). This process of categorization, identity formation and comparison gives rise to an “in-group” of similar members and an “out-group” of those who are different.

The prevalence of these processes in our everyday lives and experiences indicates that there is a psychological tendency towards establishing group distinctiveness, or attributing value to the differences created through the process of establishing “in-groups” and “out-groups”. This differentiation and value attribution to our own differences meets a basic psychological need for security, positive identity, control, autonomy and positive connection. Typically, this process happens peacefully and without incident. However, when categorization and distinctiveness become too extreme and fixed, and negative qualities are assigned to the psychologically distinct groups, then prejudice, discrimination and identity-based conflict can develop (Bar-Tal 2000; Riek et al. 2008)

### 3.2 How Social Identities Change

Although conflictive social identities can seem intractable, it is also possible for social identities to change. Most social identities are to some extent insecure, where change is conceivable even if it is unlikely or difficult (Tajfel 1974). In a post-conflict situation, the important social identity changes for achieving lasting peace and reconciliation are to alter the perceived threat of the out-group and perceived distance and polarization between “in-group” and “out-group”, while at the same time reduce the salience of the identities that have led to conflict. In situations where ethnicity has defined the boundaries of violence, it is often necessary to shift the dominant social identity comparison away from ethnic divisions.

Social identity change can occur through three theorized processes of de-categorization, re-categorization, and mutual intergroup differentiation. These processes are all based on the Contact Hypothesis, which posits that prejudice, discrimination and negative identity divisions can shift following positive contact with an out-group members under specific conditions of equal status, pursuit of common goals, and broader social and institutional support (Allport 1979 in Hewstone & Brown 1986, 4)
De-categorization is a process of breaking down rigid social identity categorizations and replacing them with individualized associations (Miller 2002; Riek et al. 2008). This is based on the assumption that negative identity-based attitudes develop when the identity group is treated as a monolithic category with solely negative traits. De-categorization occurs through personalized contact with members of the out-group. Creating these positive individualized relationships will provide more nuanced information for social categorization and classification and challenge negative attitudes towards the group as a whole. This can occur through creating cross-group friendships, working across groups towards cooperative goals, and developing empathy towards the other group (Riek et al. 2008).

Re-categorization is the process of shifting social identities from two conflictive and divisive identities to a single common in-group identity (Gaertner et al. 1994, Gaertner et al. 1996; Miller 2002; Riek et al. 2008; Dovidio et al. 1998). This creates a point of commonality rather than divisions, and re-categorizes out-group members as in-group members of the new shared identity. The creation of a superordinate in-group identity can also facilitate de-categorization and personalization (Gaertner et al. 1994, 134). An example of this is coalescence around an inclusive national identity rather than ethnic or racial identities.

A third process through which social identities can change is through mutual intergroup differentiation. This is a contact process where the salience and positive status of the in-group is maintained and connections are made explicit at the intergroup level (Hewstone & Brown 1986; Dovidio et al. 1998; Miller 2002; Riek et al. 2008). Although similar to de-categorization and re-categorization in its emphasis on contact and cooperative action, the key difference is that previous social identities are maintained and celebrated as a source of positive esteem. What is replaced are the negative stereotypes and attitudes towards the out-group. Another key distinction is in the power attributed to intergroup contact rather than interpersonal contact. Contact between individuals is explicitly extrapolated to the intergroup level, and the individual is seen as a representative of the larger group (Miller 2002).

3.3 Breakdowns in Social Identity and Mass Atrocity

A change in social identity is the central causal mechanism that links together causes of mass atrocity, the process of achieving interpersonal reconciliation outcomes, and the risk for future atrocity participation. Staub (2001) argues that genocide and mass atrocities are made possible by altering social and individual identities. Instigating conditions that create a threat to
basic psychological needs lead to polarized social categorization whereby the in-group is elevated and the out-group is devalued. This process of divergent valuation meets psychological needs for security, positive identity, control, autonomy and positive connection. The development of a polarized version of social identity and social categorization places the out-group outside the realm of moral attention, and thus lowers barriers to committing an initial violent act against the out-group and its members. Once this initial harm has taken place, an altered social (and individual) identity develops that can justify the harm with needs for positive identity and connection. Within the framework of this new, altered social identity, participation in genocide and mass killing becomes both a possible and justifiable pathway to fulfill basic psychological needs (Staub 2001, 161).

3.4 Interpersonal Reconciliation Outcomes and Change in Social Identity

Reconciliation outcomes are achieved by shifting and transforming negative and conflictive social identities to those defined by peace. Social identity is, at its origins, a theory of relationship and interpersonal connection. Although it focuses on dynamics at a group level, the group is made up of individual connections and interpersonal relationships. To change the broader group dynamics, it is necessary to start with the individuals that make up that group (Staub 2001, 161)

The development of plural identities creates, by definition, a shift in social identity. Conflict and violence are more likely to arise when social identities become monolithic and immutable, which precludes interpersonal connection. The process of challenging these polarized identities, and developing points of commonality and connection across conflictive identity groups, requires a change in the salience of social identities.

Achieving peaceful coexistence also results in a change in social identity constructs. Perception of security and willingness to live in peace with a formerly conflicting group is a condition of peaceful coexistence. In order for this to occur, an individual must be able to establish at least a marginal connection with members of the other group.

Building trusting relationships between formerly conflicting groups also requires a shift in social identity. Trust requires viewing the other person as within your realm of care and respect. When social identities have become so polarized and rigid that mass violence is possible, there is little possibility for trusting relationships.
The development of empathic relationships further shifts social identities, and widens the in-group circle of connection. To empathize with a former enemy, it is first necessary to re-draw the boundaries of your social identity and relax the rigidity of those divisions. This widened circle allows for connection and understanding with members of the out-group, and the ability to deeply understand and identify with their struggles and joys.

Mutual acknowledgment of shared history is an extension of this social identity-widening process that is begun while developing empathy. When the boundaries of categorization and distinctiveness are relaxed, it is possible both to understand and empathize with the past history of an out-group member and to allow their experiences to co-exist within your narrative of history and truth.

3.5 Change in Social Identity and Interpersonal Atrocity Risk

Atrocity risks arise from changes in social identity that justify and make possible participation in a mass atrocity. After conflict or atrocity, relations between formerly conflictive groups are characterized by delegitimization of the out-group, positive views of the in-group, and negative beliefs about intergroup relations and conditions for living in peace (Bar-Tal 2000). Achieving reconciliation outcomes, as described above, creates a change in social identity towards one that is more fluid, inclusive and peaceful. This in itself is a significant contribution towards peace. But how can we expect this shift towards a more peaceful social identity to continue forward to influence interpersonal risk factors for atrocity?

At the interpersonal level, participation in a mass atrocity occurs because peaceful pathways to meet basic psychological needs are obstructed, usually by a sudden instigating condition such as social or political instability, and violence becomes the more appealing option. The development of a more inclusive and peaceful social identity can create non-violent pathways to achieve basic psychological needs, thus reducing atrocity risk even in the face of instigating conditions.

To reduce the risk factors present in one’s internal self-concept, a change in social identity can re-orient how one perceives and interacts with the world. An authoritarian outlook supporting violent hierarchies can shift towards a self-concept of connection and openness.

A shift in social identity can also change one’s perception of victimhood. The sense of victimhood originates with a rigid conception of an out-group that targets and violates one’s in-group. While a shift in social identity does not negate perceived injustices or right past wrongs, it
can instead shift the blame for these actions away from the out-group as a whole. If the injustices are not attributed to the group and all members belonging to it, any remaining grievances and desires for revenge are less likely to take a group-targeted form.

By shifting social identity and redrawing the lines or softening boundaries between the in-group and out-group, ethnic distance can reduce. By no longer categorizing one group as the “other”, the perceived distance between the two groups reduces.

This shift can also change exclusionary beliefs. Transforming social identities and the boundaries between the in-group and out-group inherently rehumanizes and brings the previously excluded group back into the fold of moral care and attention. Re-humanizing the other and bringing them within the in-group boundaries disrupts the beliefs that justify participation in mass violence. After a positive shift in social identity, violence against others within one’s own moral universe is considered morally unacceptable, and the psychological barriers to this violence would be high enough to potentially preclude an individual from participating in mass violence.

3.6 The Causal Pathway
In order for interpersonal reconciliation programs to influence interpersonal atrocity risk factors, a shift in social identity must take place at the internal, individual level. Participating in a mass atrocity is the most extreme and destructive result possible of the processes of social categorization, social identity development, social comparison and psychological distinctiveness. By achieving interpersonal reconciliation outcomes of plural identities, peaceful coexistence, trust, empathy and mutual acknowledgement, these extreme and destructive social identities are shifted towards social identities characterized by openness and inclusivity. In the process of establishing more positively-oriented social identities, the level of psychological distinctiveness between the in-group and out-group is reduced, social comparison between groups becomes positive rather than negative, and social identity categories become less rigid. This change in social identity happens by removing the threat of the out-group and reducing salience of conflictive identities, through a mechanism of de-categorization, re-categorization or mutual intergroup differentiation. Through these changes in the underlying cognitive processes that make up social identity, there is less need for the processes that create interpersonal atrocity risk. Figure 3.1 illustrates this process.
3.7 Hypothesis

Achieving interpersonal reconciliation outcomes transforms an individual’s social identity in a way that is both positive and mutually respectful of the other group’s positive identity. The existence of a positive self-identity and the establishment of mutual respect removes the foundation of many individual cognitions and beliefs underlying the interpersonal risk factors for mass atrocity. These theoretical links lead us to hypothesize that participation in a program that targets interpersonal reconciliation outcomes will lead to a reduction in interpersonal atrocity risk.

Figure 3.1: The Causal Process
4. RESEARCH DESIGN

This section elaborates on the research design and methodology used to test the hypothesis that participation in a program that targets interpersonal reconciliation outcomes will lead to a reduction in interpersonal atrocity risk. First, it introduces the case and explains the rationale for case selection. Next, it details the overall research design, a mixed-methods study combining a randomized field experiment, survey data collection, and qualitative individual interviews. This section concludes with a detailed explanation of the field experiment, survey procedures, and structure of the qualitative individual interviews.

4.1. Case Selection

The case selected for study is Sri Lanka, and the unit of analysis is the individual participant in a reconciliation program. Sri Lanka was selected as a case to study reconciliation and atrocity prevention both because it fulfills necessary scope conditions on both the independent and dependent variables, and because it has limited influence of key potential confounding factors.

The first reason Sri Lanka is a suitable case for study is because it meets key scope conditions required for interpersonal reconciliation. Prior group-based conflict is necessary for interpersonal reconciliation to occur: there must be a conflict to reconcile from, and the conflict must have taken place between two delineated identity groups for the development of peaceful relationships to be a relevant goal. Sri Lanka has a history of identity-based conflict beginning after its independence in 1956. Ethnic identity divisions and horizontal inequalities between the Tamil and Sinhalese ethnic groups grew during the British Colonial administration, and became further entrenched in post-independence political maneuverings. Grievances and tensions between the groups eventually led to a nearly thirty-year civil war between the Government of Sri Lanka and the separatist group the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In more recent years, violence has been targeted against the country’s Muslim minority ethnic group, most notably in a 2014 attack in the Southern coastal town of Aluthgama that left three dead and seventy-eight injured (BBC 16 June 2014).

The second reason Sri Lanka is a suitable case is because of the limited current influences of institutional reconciliation efforts, which provides a natural isolation to test the influence of an interpersonal reconciliation program. Because institutional and interpersonal reconciliation efforts overlap and complement each other, it is very difficult to attribute a change in attitudes solely to the effects of a single program. Although institutional reconciliation is beginning in Sri
Lanka, to date the efforts have been limited and thus can be expected to have a minimal influence on the attitudes and beliefs of the population studied.

This study focuses its analysis at the individual level, to ascertain changes in interpersonal atrocity risk. Thus, the unit of analysis is an individual participant in a reconciliation program. The individual participants selected for this study were students at the University of Colombo. The University of Colombo was selected as the site of the experiment due to its diverse student body and organizational structures suitable for a sustained five-week reconciliation program. Due to its location in the capital city, the University of Colombo’s student body is highly ethnically diverse and includes Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim students. This allowed us to recruit a sample group that was roughly reflective of the overall ethnic distribution of the country. The selection of a university population reflects the trend in reconciliation practice in Sri Lanka to implement programming focused on youth. Youth are targeted for their capacity to influence future change and theoretically less entrenched social identities. The university system structure also increased the likelihood of sustained participation over all five sessions. Sessions were held in on-campus facilities and thus were easily accessible to the majority of student participants. Additionally, existing relationships between the University of Colombo’s Political Science department and the local partner organization Social Scientist’s Association (SSA) facilitated key logistical aspects of the research.

The selection of Sri Lanka and the University of Colombo as cases for study presents some generalizability issues for the research findings. Extrapolation of the findings beyond Sri Lanka will be somewhat influenced by the unique of atrocity and reconciliation within the country. However, because test and control groups were drawn from within the same population, the core research findings and test of theory can be expected to be applicable to other cases. These issues will be discussed further later in this section.

4.2 Research Design

A mixed-methods design was used to explore the relationship between interpersonal reconciliation and interpersonal-level atrocity risk. Quantitative data were collected using a randomized field experiment and survey, and qualitative data were collected using in-depth individual interviews with a purposive sub-sample of participants.

There are three main reasons why this research design is best suited to determine the impact of interpersonal contact- and dialogue-based reconciliation programs on individual-level
atrocities risk factors. First, the use of a randomized field experiment design allows for control of potential confounders, and creates the ability to make causal attributions and account for issues of selection bias. Second, survey data allows for an individual-level unit of analysis and for paired observations to observe individual-level changes over time. Finally, in-depth individual interviews allow for a more nuanced exploration of causal mechanisms.

A randomized field experiment design allows for isolation of the effects of a reconciliation program on interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors. This addresses potential problems of confounding influences. Isolating the effect of a reconciliation program is extremely challenging, since the concept of reconciliation is so broad that other aspects of daily life and social influence can also influence the dependent variable. In the Sri Lankan context, ongoing macro-level reconciliation efforts also create a high risk of confounding influences. Major developments in national policy, public statements or other broader efforts to transform conflictual identities and improve intergroup relations in the country may likely influence a subject’s attitudes on the variables of interest. An experimental design minimizes confounding influences on the data by comparing to a similar control group at both points of measurement.

An extended benefit of an experimental design and isolation of variables is the ability to determine causal attribution. By controlling for potential confounders using randomized assignment, it is possible to determine causality (Solomon et al 2008). Randomized design also offers the ability to account for selection bias, which is an inherent risk of research on reconciliation because of the way participants are recruited (Svensson & Brounéus 2013). Voluntary participation is a key theoretical aspect of interpersonal reconciliation, thus the overall research sample of reconciliation program participants will rarely be truly representative of the overall population. However, by creating a randomized test and comparison group from the initial voluntary convenience sample, it is possible to isolate the effects of the program with minimal influence of selection bias.

A second benefit of the research design is the suitability of survey data collection to an individual-level unit of analysis. Survey data can measure micro-level changes in attitudes and behavior (Eck 2011, 165). Given the importance of attitudes and behaviors to individual-level atrocity risk, it was necessary to collect data on these attributes at the individual level. The use of a pre-post test design also creates the availability of paired observation data. This allows for an individual change analysis between each participant’s attitudes before and after participation in
the program. This allows for a more detailed analysis of the factors influencing changes on the variables of interest both pre- and post-test.

The third benefit of including a qualitative interview component in the research design is the ability to delve further into the causal mechanisms linking reconciliation and atrocity risk. Individual interviews provide depth and detail that cannot be captured in a survey alone. They also allow for a more nuanced exploration of the causal mechanisms at play, and how the theorized mechanisms work at an individual level (Brounéus 2011, 131). Supplementing survey data with individual interviews allowed for a more fine-grained assessment of whether the principles of social identity theory were at work in any processes of identity change that the participants experienced.

4.3 Field Experiment

A field experiment was conducted to compare the experiences of a test and control group. While long considered the gold standard in scientific and medical research, the use of randomized control trial designs and field experiments is gradually becoming more common in peace and conflict research (examples include Cilliers, Dube & Siddiqi 2016; Svensson & Brounéus 2013; Blattman, Hartman & Blair 2011; Paluck 2009). Although logistics often preclude this approach, it is ideally suited to test both correlation and causation between social phenomena.

This program was funded by the United States Institute for Peace and implementation of the program was carried out in partnership with the Social Scientist’s Association (SSA), a Sri Lankan research organization. A survey of the test and control groups was conducted to measure changes on the variables of interest. In addition to the quantitative survey data, qualitative individual interviews were conducted to explore the causal mechanisms that led to changes in attitudes and beliefs over the course of the program.

4.3.1 The Intervention: An Interpersonal Reconciliation Program

To isolate and measure the impact of interpersonal reconciliation on atrocity risk, an interpersonal reconciliation program was conducted with a convenience sample of 207 students at the University of Colombo. A stratified random sample ensuring consistent representation

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6 The author had a lead role in developing the survey instrument, and worked with SSA to develop specific questions within the theoretical framework. The author developed all individual interview questions and conducted the interviews with support from SSA.
from each of Sri Lanka’s main ethnic groups (N=95) was selected to participate in five two-hour program sessions, each designed to address a theoretical element of interpersonal reconciliation: identity, coexistence, trust, empathy, and shared history. Each session was based around interactive dialogue activities. Activities were drawn from common reconciliation programming used in global settings, and were adapted by the partner organization for use in the context of a Sri Lankan university. Further information about source material for program activities can be found in Appendix A.

Program sessions were designed to reflect necessary conditions for positive contact, including equal status of participants and pursuit of common goals (Allport 1979 in Hewstone & Brown 1986, 4). Program activities took place in 10-person discussion groups comprised of diverse ethnic identities and language groups. Groups were divided using stratified random assignment to ensure uniform diversity in each group. Participants remained with their discussion groups for entire program, allowing for the development of trust between members. Bi-lingual participants translated between Tamil and Sinhala so that all group members could participate fully in the discussion, which both established equal status and created a common goal. To facilitate equal discussion, the small group dialogues employed a “talking piece”. Borrowed from restorative justice traditions, a talking piece is a symbolic object that marks the opportunity for the holder to speak without interruption and for the listeners to focus their attention on the speaker. The talking piece is passed around the discussion circle, offering equal opportunity for each member of the group to speak. Finally, all participants agreed to behavior guidelines of respect, equality, and confidentiality.

Each of the five sessions of the program focused on a different theme. A summary of the program activities is detailed below, and further information can be found in Appendix A.

Session 1: Team building. The first session focused on building rapport within the small discussion groups. The groups first played an introductory icebreaker game, in which they introduced themselves to their group mates and devised a “team name” that would be used to identify their group for the remaining sessions. Next, each group competed in a cooperative team challenge to build trust and rapport amongst group members and encourage cooperative interaction.

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7 The overall program and large-group activities were also facilitated bi-lingually, by Sinhalese and Tamil facilitators from the partner organization, SSA.
*Session 2: Identity and Coexistence.* The next program session focused on the themes of identity and coexistence, which are initial steps towards recognizing and relaxing polarized social identities and developing relationships defined by peace. The activity on identity focused on exploring the concept of identity salience and identifying multiple common identities beyond ethnicity. To create an experience of inter-ethnic coexistence, groups carried out a cooperative challenge where one group member was issued a restriction that created a significant disadvantage. After this activity, the group discussed power imbalances.

*Session 3: Trust.* The third session focused on trust, a key element of rebuilding broken ties and establishing the basis for peaceful relations. Groups competed in a blindfolded obstacle course that challenged group members to trust each other and experience vulnerability with their group-mates. A group discussion of the relationship between trust and reconciliation followed the activity.

*Session 4: Empathy.* The fourth program session involved empathy-building activities at both the interpersonal and intergroup level. The process of developing empathy through perspective-taking and cultivating human connection breaks down barriers between members of different groups and reinforces positive relationships. The first activity introduced the idea of interpersonal empathy, and challenged participants to practice empathic listening. The next activity looked at empathy on a larger scale. Groups were presented with scenarios of disputes related to reconciliation from the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. As a group, they discussed how they might have reacted given the information in the hypothetical scenario.

*Session 5: Mutual Acknowledgement.* The final session explored the theme of mutual acknowledgement of past wrongs through a guest lecture on contested historical sites in Sri Lanka. The lecture highlighted the multiple conflicting narratives surrounding each historical site, and emphasized that there is more than one way to understand history.

### 4.3.2 Sample Selection

The test and control groups were randomly assigned from a voluntary convenience sample drawn from students at the University of Colombo. A voluntary convenience sample is a pool of participants who have, of their own accord, offered to participate in a study (Kellstedt & Whitten 2013, 76). To establish the sample pool, an open call for participation was advertised to

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8 All scenarios were drawn from interview data collected by SSA through previous research.
students in all faculties of study at University of Colombo. The program was presented as a “Workshop on important socio-political themes”, so participants were informed of the general topic but did not know beforehand that the program would focus specifically on reconciliation or interethnic dialogue. 207 students volunteered for the program. Stratified random sampling was then used to assign the population (N=207) into test and control groups. Both test and control groups were comprised of approximately 50% Sinhala, 25% Tamil and 25% Muslim. The groups were also selected to be approximately 50% male and 50% female. The test group began with 95 participants, and the control group began with 112 participants. The test group participated in the five-week reconciliation program as previously described. The control group did not participate in any reconciliation activities or inter-ethnic dialogue.

4.3.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are important to ensure that participants are not harmed as a result of their participation in a research program. This is particularly important for research dealing with potentially sensitive issues such as reconciliation and past experiences of violence and atrocity. Measures were taken to ensure that the security and emotional well-being of participants would not suffer. All research protocols were reviewed and approved by a third-party Institutional Review Board. Written informed consent was obtained from all program participants before the start of the first session and before both baseline and endline surveys. Survey and interview data were also stored anonymously. A copy of the informed consent form is available in Appendix E.

4.3.4 Survey

Pre- and post-test surveys were administered to both test and control groups to measure participants’ individual-level atrocity risk before and after participating in the reconciliation program. To minimize external influences and potential confounding factors, both groups completed the surveys in the same week, one day apart.

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9 This was intended as a rough approximation of the ethnic distribution in the country, which according to the 2012 Census was 74.9% Sinhala, 11.2% Tamil, 9.2% Muslim, and 4.2% Up-Country Tamil (CIA World Factbook).
10 In the interest of fair treatment for the students not placed in the test group, the control group received one lecture on historical traditions of dress and costuming in Sri Lanka at the time of the baseline survey. The lecture was not interacted and thus limited artificial inter-ethnic exposure in the control group. Because this lecture did not address any of the topics covered in the interpersonal reconciliation program, it is not expected to have a systematic influence on the control group’s answers on the dependent variables.
The baseline survey consisted of 65 questions. Four additional questions on past conflict experience were added to the baseline survey, for a total of 69 questions. The survey took respondents approximately one hour to complete. The majority of survey questions were attitude statements answered on a six-point Likert scale where a score of one represented “Strongly Agree” and a score of six represented “Strongly Disagree”. The common seventh point of “Neutral” was omitted from this scale to avoid over-reliance on neutral answers as a form of social desirability bias (Guy & Norvell 1977). Instead, options of “Do Not Know” and “No Response” were also available for every question. Participants were instructed to select the “No Response” option if they did not feel comfortable answering a particular question. Wherever possible, survey questions were drawn from existing measures and adapted to the Sri Lankan and university context. Other questions were drawn from SSA’s previous experience conducting surveys on democracy and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka. The survey was tested with a small pilot group (N=10) of university students and revised accordingly.

4.3.5 Operational Definitions

This design tested whether the independent variable, participation in an interpersonal reconciliation program, led to more positive outcomes on the dependent variable, measures of interpersonal atrocity risk. The independent variable was measured as a dichotomous variable of participation or non-participation in an interpersonal reconciliation program. The test group represents participation in the program, while the control group represents non-participation. The concept of an interpersonal reconciliation is operationalized as a program that develops plural identities, nurtures peaceful coexistence, establishes trust, encourages empathy, and facilitates mutual acknowledgement of a shared past.

The dependent variable is operationalized as changes in attitudes on self-concept, ethnic distance, sense of victimhood, justifying beliefs, and exclusionary beliefs (as measured by dehumanization). This is measured using a survey of attitudes and beliefs, in which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a statement using a six-point Likert scale where score of one represented “Strongly Agree” and a score of six represented “Strongly Disagree”.

Each operationalization of atrocity risk was measured using multiple questions to adequately capture the complex nature of these concepts. The number of questions used to measure each concept ranged from one to five, depending on both the complexity of the concept
and logistical considerations. Decisions on which elements of the broader concepts to address in the survey were determined by their relevance to the Sri Lankan context and the anticipated reception of questions on certain sensitive topics by the participants.

Additional questions were also included, measuring related issues such as reconciliation outcomes (Identity Salience, Coexistence, Trust, Empathy and Mutual Acknowledgement), as well as potential confounding factors such as previous exposure to reconciliation mechanisms, attitudes towards reconciliation, and past conflict experience. See Appendix D for further details about these measures.

Where possible, survey items were drawn from previously established measures and adapted for the Sri Lankan context. Items measuring internal self-concept were drawn from an authoritarian orientation scale used in Duckitt, et al (2010). Questions measuring ethnic distance were drawn from a scale used in the 2005 Serbia Human Development report, to measure identity divisions within Serbia (Vukotic & Vojin Dimitjjevic 2005). Measures of exclusionary beliefs were drawn from Wang’s (2003) Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy and then reverse-coded in the analysis to capture dehumanizing beliefs. Other items were developed by the author in collaboration with the partner organization, drawing on current understandings of the concepts of interest in Sri Lanka.

Index variables for each indicator of atrocity risk were created by averaging the results of multiple survey questions. The relationships between these questions were verified using a Cronbach’s alpha test. The Cronbach’s alpha is a measure of internal reliability that measures how closely a group of items are to each other. This provides an indication of the suitability of different items to be grouped together in a single indexed measure. Cronbach’s alpha can be used when test-retest reliability is not available, as is the case in this survey. Alpha scores are measured between zero and one, with numbers closer to one representing higher reliability. The typical cutoff point for alpha scores is typically .70 (Sundberg 2015; Tavakol & Dennick 2011). Because the variables used in this analysis looked at heterogeneous concepts, alphas of .50 or greater were accepted.11 Table 4.1 shows the Cronbach’s alpha score for each index variable tested in the analysis.

11 While higher alpha scores generally indicate higher internal reliability, a low alpha score does not categorically indicate that a measure should be dropped. A number of issues can potentially affect the Cronbach’s alpha calculation and result in a lower score. Scales with fewer items can result in a low alpha calculation score. The index
The calculations of internal reliability resulted in five index variables measuring the operationalized components of the dependent variable, interpersonal atrocity risk. SELFCONCEPT combines two questions that measure an individual’s support for an authoritarian interpretation of events. VICTIM measures a respondent’s agreement with statements that indicate the perceived victimization of their own identity group during past conflict. ETHDIST measures attitudes that indicate negative attitude, or distance, from other ethnic groups. EXCLUDE measures agreement with dehumanizing statements. JUSTBELIEF measures agreement with statements that justify violence towards an out-group.

Table 4.1 shows a sample question for each measure. A full list items for each measure is available in Appendix B. Descriptive statistics for each of the variables measured are shown in Table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>Sample Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal Self-Concept (SELFCONCEPT)</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>“The more people there are that are prepared to criticize the authorities, challenge and protest against the government, the better it is for society” *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Group Victimization (VICTIM)</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>“My ethnic group has suffered the most in past conflicts/mass violence”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Distance (ETHDIST)</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>“I feel uncomfortable when people of different ethnic backgrounds speak their language around me”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusionary Beliefs (EXCLUDE)</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>“I am not hesitant to express my concern about discrimination to people from other ethnic groups”*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifying Beliefs (JUSTBELIEF)</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>Using violence to protect the legacy of my ethnicity can be approved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data drawn from full sample (Test and Control) at baseline, N=207

*Denotes reverse-coded question

Variables used in this analysis are constructed from a relatively small number of items, thus potentially lowering all scores. Beyond that, because Cronbach’s alpha can only capture one underlying concept in a scale heterogeneous measures are expected to have lower scores (Tavakol & Dennick 2011, 53). Given the conceptual overlap between the different components of interpersonal atrocity risk, it is expected that multiple concepts may actually underlie each index variable measure. This would lower the alpha scores across the board, which justifies the relatively low alpha scores for some measures included in this analysis.
Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Interpersonal Atrocity Risk Index Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELFCONCEPT</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTIM</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHDIST</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>19.08</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>9.68</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUSTBELIEF</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>17.46</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Data drawn from full sample (Test and Control) at baseline, N=207*

### 4.3.6 Generalizability, Validity and Reliability

While a randomized field trial addresses issues of causality and controls for confounding factors, it also carries other methodological risks. The primary risks include issues of internal and external validity, non-compliance rates, and potential spillover effects.

Validity issues in experimental designs can be roughly divided into internal and external issues. Internal validity concerns the design of the experiment and the likelihood that confounding factors have influenced the results (Johnson & Reynolds 2012). Overall, due to the randomized impact evaluation design of the research, internal validity is relatively high. The randomized design ensures that test and control groups are comparable, and that potentially confounding factors will be controlled for (Solomon et al 2008). Randomization tests do reveal a small but statistically significant difference between test and control groups on two dependent variables, Internal Self-Concept and Sense of Victimhood. This discrepancy does raise concerns about internal validity, but the difference was taken into consideration when analyzing the results of the survey.

External validity refers to the extent to which the sample population of the randomized field experiment can be generalized to a population at large (Nezu & Nezu 2007, 11). Issues of external validity are in some ways inherent to experimental design. By selecting a small group to study at the individual level, it is possible that the findings can only be generalized to a group with those particular characteristics. One effort to counteract this was through recruiting a group of participants from diverse backgrounds, ages, and ethnic groups. Although ethnic diversity was successfully achieved, the available university population from which the sample was drawn
limited diversity on other factors. Another effort to maximize external validity was the design of a reconciliation program that mirrors most common practices in the field. Although certain characteristics of Sri Lanka and the University of Colombo population are unique, the interpersonal reconciliation program that was tested roughly reflects common practice for interpersonal reconciliation interventions both in Sri Lanka and throughout the world.

Self-selection bias presents a significant challenge to external validity in this research design. All participants in the experiment were volunteers, which raises the concern that they are fundamentally different in some way from the general population. The students who chose to attend a five-week extracurricular program to discuss socio-political issues may not be fully representative of broader Sri Lankan society. The impact of this potential selection bias was addressed in a number of ways. First, randomized selection into test and control groups ensures that selection bias was mitigated within the framework of the study. There is no reason to believe that the test group differed systematically from the control group, thus selection bias does not affect the comparison between test and control groups. Beyond that, the goal of this research is to test the effects of interpersonal reconciliation practice on indicators of atrocity risk. Thus, it is important to test a reconciliation program as it is typically implemented. Voluntary participation is a fundamental cornerstone of most interpersonal reconciliation programs. Because interpersonal reconciliation is structured around changes in cognition and personal belief, participants must be willing and ready to have a reconciliatory encounter. Reconciliation is also a potentially traumatizing experience, and ethical practice demands that participants are not forced to participate.

Within the university setting, there was a danger that participation would be heavily skewed towards the Faculty of Arts, and the Political Science department in particular. The Political Science and Public Policy department served as an implementing partner, which included organizing recruitment of students. There is also a chance that students of subjects related to sociology and politics would be more interested in participating in a series of extracurricular workshops on this topic. Again, this issue was addressed by randomly assigning participants to the test and control groups.

Another validity challenge facing randomized field experiments is attrition (Nezu & Nezu 2007, 9). In this experiment, two challenges arose. First was a challenge of complete attrition, i.e. participants who dropped out after the first session and did not complete the endline
survey. A secondary challenge was incomplete compliance with the program, i.e. participants who attended fewer than five sessions of the reconciliation program but still completed the endline survey. Attrition issues present a challenge if they are systematically correlated with the variables of interest. It is possible that those participants with higher individual atrocity risk were more likely to drop out of the program, thus excluding their results from the final survey and creating potential bias.

It is likely that this experiment experienced some level of spillover effects. All participants were drawn from a pool of university students, where we can expect to have pre-existing social relationships. Because volunteers were randomly assigned to either the test and control group, we would expect some of those pre-existing social relationships to cross over between test and control group. However, the size of the sample is sufficiently large enough to minimize the bias from these effects. Additionally, this phenomenon is an accurate reflection of reconciliation programs in practice.

Validity of the survey measures is also a concern. Interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors each encompass many different dimensions and relevant issues, making it challenge to design questions to measure these topics. This was addressed in part by combining multiple items to measure each concept. However, the validity of the measures should be considered when extrapolating the results of this study to practice. A survey based on self-reporting is also a concern, as respondents may inaccurately represent their true feelings. Anonymous surveys attempt to address this concern.

4.4 Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative interviews were conducted to delve more deeply into the causal mechanism linking interpersonal reconciliation programming with interpersonal atrocity risk. Individual interviews allow for a more nuanced exploration of the causal mechanisms that took place for participants in the program, and to see whether the principles of social identity theory were at work in any processes of identity change that the participants experienced. A causal mechanism looks beyond correlation between an independent and dependent variable and seeks to offer a reasonable explanation for why an observed change has occurred (Hedström & Swedberg 1998). The qualitative research component utilized a Causal-Process Observation (CPO) approach to examining the causal mechanisms that connect the independent and dependent variables. CPO is “an insight or piece of data that provides information about context or mechanism and
contributes a different kind of leverage in causal inference” (Brady & Collier 2010, 184). In mixed-methods research, this can be a valuable supplement to correlational findings determined through quantitative analysis (Dunning 2015). The data collection specifically took a mechanism approach to CPO, which focuses on whether an event posited by the theory has taken place (Mahoney 2010). In this case, qualitative interviews focused on uncovering evidence of social identity change.

Interviews took a semi-structured approach, where a number of broad topics and categories were covered in a flexible manner (Yates 2004, 165). This method is well-suited for uncovering casual mechanisms of individual attitude change because it allows the interviewer to probe interesting responses and follow up on areas that are of primary importance to the respondent. Sixteen interviews in total were conducted with respondents from the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim ethnic groups, representing different baseline levels of interpersonal-level atrocity risk. Interviews were conducted in the respondent’s native language, either through a translator or with a native speaker. Eight interviews (three Sinhala, three Tamil, and two Muslim) were conducted by the author with the assistance of a native speaker translator from the partner organization, SSA. The remaining interviews (three Sinhala, three Tamil, and three Muslim) were conducted by staff of SSA directly in the speaker’s native language.

4.4.1 Sample Selection

Purposive sampling was performed to select interview subjects that represented the full range of possible baseline attitudes and all three ethnic groups. Individual responses to baseline surveys were roughly categorized into “High Risk” and “Low Risk” categories. The High Risk category had an average score of between one (“Strongly Agree”) and two (“Agree”) for statements that demonstrated interpersonal atrocity risk factors. The “Low Risk” category had an average score between five (“Disagree”) and six (“Strongly Disagree”) on baseline questions measuring interpersonal atrocity risk factors.

Very few respondents fell firmly into the “High Risk” or “Low Risk” categories, so interviews were also conducted with two respondents from each ethnic group who had an average score that was roughly representative of the entire sample. To obtain this, the mean response on all questions addressing interpersonal atrocity risk was calculated for the whole group. Two respondents from each ethnic group whose mean responses came closest to this overall average were chosen for the interviews. The “Representative Risk” category roughly
corresponded with the two moderate answers on the Likert scale, three (“Somewhat Agree”) and two (“Somewhat Disagree”).

Two respondents were selected from each of the High, Representative and Low Risk categories for each of the Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim groups. This amounted to a total of eighteen scheduled interviews, comprised of 6 Sinhala respondents, six Tamil respondents and six Muslim respondents. Although interviews were scheduled with all targeted respondents, logistical challenges resulted in only sixteen of the eighteen completed. The final interview sample included six Sinhalese respondents (two high risk, two representative and two low risk), six Tamil respondents (two high risk, two representative and two low risk), and four Muslim respondents (one high risk, two representative and one low risk). The uneven sample introduces a slight bias into the results, as Sinhalese responses were somewhat overrepresented. This is counteracted by a slight oversampling of Tamil-speaking minority respondents (both Tamil and Muslim). Given the importance placed on language barriers by all respondents, regardless of ethnicity, we can conclude that the sample interviewed still provides sufficient diversity on at least one potential confounding factor, language group.

4.4.2 Ethical Considerations

One of the most important ethical concerns when conducting individual interviews in fragile and post-conflict contexts is the security and confidentiality of the interviewees (Brounéus 2011, 141). Because of the potentially sensitive nature of questions about personal identity, negative attitudes towards other identity groups and conflict experiences, this was of considerable concern. As with the quantitative data collection, measures were taken to ensure that participants in individual interviews were not harmed as a result of their participation in the research. In order to uphold security and confidentiality, care was taken to obtain verbal informed consent prior to beginning the interview. The interviewer explained the purpose and goals of the research, and that the responses would be used in a published report. The interviewer also explained confidentiality procedures and that the names and identifying information of the interviewees would be kept private. Consent was also obtained to record the interview and take handwritten notes. The interviewer explained that the interviewee was welcome to stop the interview at any time, to skip a question, or to stop recording for a particular question. In addition to these precautions, the interviewer also practiced active listening techniques and
remained alert to signs of discomfort or distress from the respondent, and shifted topics if the
interviewee appeared uncomfortable with the questions.

4.4.3 Interview structure

The structure of the interview followed best practices for in-depth interviews in peace
and conflict research (Brounéus 2011, 139-140). Each interview began with an introduction,
during which the research topic was introduced, permission was obtained and ethical issues were
reviewed with the participant, and the participant was briefed on how the data would be used in
the future. Next, the interview moved on to some initial questions on demographic data and the
participant’s general reactions to the program. After building rapport in the first part of the
interview, the middle section was devoted to more sensitive and emotionally demanding
questions around in-group identity, out-group stereotypes and perceived threats. The interview
closed with some reflective question on current events related to aspects of atrocity risk. At the
end of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to share any questions or final
comments that had not yet been addressed during the discussion. Appendix C contains a full set
of individual interview questions.
5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter will present the findings of both quantitative and qualitative analyses, and explain the impacts of participation in an interpersonal reconciliation on interpersonal atrocity risk factors. It will begin with the findings of the quantitative survey data on the group level, comparing overall change between test and control groups. Next, it will turn to the qualitative interview findings and review the key themes that emerged. Finally, it will delve further into individual experiences of the reconciliation program and explore the causal mechanisms that drive individual-level stability and change in interpersonal atrocity risk factors.

The findings indicate that overall, interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors remain stable after participation in an interpersonal reconciliation program, but that small changes in attitudes, beliefs and identities change as a result of the program.

5.1 Quantitative Analysis

A first analysis of the quantitative survey data compared the difference in post-test means between the test group and control group, to identify any statistically significant changes. To account for randomization issues, the difference of means was also compared between the pre- and post-test scores for the test group. These initial analyses show no statistically significant changes on any the interpersonal atrocity risk variables. Overall, the quantitative analysis shows that interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors largely stay stable even after participation in an interpersonal-level reconciliation program. Subsequent qualitative data and additional quantitative analyses offer more nuance to these findings. These additional analyses indicate a limited effect of positive contact on social identity change mechanisms, and greater change in attitudes within participants from the majority ethnic group.

5.1.1 Randomization tests

The survey responses of the test and control groups were compared at the baseline level to identify any systematic biases in the attitudes of the group on the variables of interest before the start of the interpersonal reconciliation program intervention. To test randomization, a two-sample t-test was performed on the baseline responses from the test group and control group for a set of control variables and the dependent variables. A t-test comparing the mean baseline responses of the test group and the control group show that the groups differed substantially on measures of Self-Concept and Victimization. The test group demonstrated a mean baseline score
of 9.774 on the measure of self-concept, showing lower interpersonal atrocity risk than the control group (μ=9). On the measure of in-group victimization, the test group had a mean baseline score of 6.732, showing higher risk than the control group (μ=7.598). These were the only statistically significant differences found in the initial analysis of survey findings. This issue was taken into consideration when analyzing the results of difference of means tests on those variables, and subsequent findings of significant change on those measures in the analyses of test-control and pre-post test means are rejected. Table 5.1 shows the randomization check results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
<th>Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Test Obs</th>
<th>Control Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Control Obs</th>
<th>Min-Max (High-Low Risk)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELFCONCEPT</td>
<td>.013**</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>9.774 (.207)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>9 (.225)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTIM</td>
<td>.067*</td>
<td>-1.846</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>6.732 (.344)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>7.598 (.320)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHDIST</td>
<td>.794</td>
<td>-0.262</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>18.978 (.536)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>19.18 (.553)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
<td>.670</td>
<td>.427</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>9.747 (.194)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9.629 (.197)</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUSTBELIEF</td>
<td>.505</td>
<td>.669</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>17.684 (.464)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>17.25 (.452)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>6-24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Data drawn from full sample (Test and Control) at baseline, N=207

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.10

5.1.3 Difference of Means test

A two-sample t-test was conducted to compare the average response on each of the four variables measuring interpersonal atrocity risk between the post-test responses of the test group and control group. These tests did not reveal statistically significant changes on any of the measures of interpersonal atrocity risk. Although the SELF-CONCEPT variable showed significant change at the 95% confidence level (p=.0013), because the test and control groups showed a statistically significant difference on that variable at the baseline we cannot interpret that as evidence of program effect.
Table 5.2 summarizes the results of the difference of means test for each index variable, between test and control group.

### Table 5.2: Difference of Means for Interpersonal Atrocity Risk Index Variables, Test & Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
<th>Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Test Obs</th>
<th>Control Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Control Obs</th>
<th>Min - Max (High - Low Risk)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELFCONCEPT</td>
<td>.002**</td>
<td>3.270</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>9.920 (.216)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>8.873 (.236)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTIM</td>
<td>.589</td>
<td>-0.542</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>7.013 (.326)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>7.265 (.330)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHDIST</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td>-0.893</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>18.619 (.507)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>19.288 (.553)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>9-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>-1.488</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>9.298 (.226)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>9.763 (.213)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUSTBELIEF</td>
<td>.792</td>
<td>-0.264</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>17.136 (.470)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>17.306 (.438)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>6-24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Data drawn from Test and Control at endline, N= 173
***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.10

Because the randomization tests indicate potential issues in the randomization procedures between the test and control groups, a difference of means analysis was also conducted between the test group baseline and endline scores. This comparison also shows no statistically significant change on the variables of interest after participating in the interpersonal reconciliation program. Detailed results of this test can be found in Appendix D.

These findings indicate that the hypothesis that participation in a program that targets interpersonal reconciliation outcomes will lead to a reduction in interpersonal atrocity risk is not supported by the initial survey data analysis. After exposure to an interpersonal reconciliation program, attitudes and beliefs indicating interpersonal-level atrocity risk remain stable on average.

### 5.2 Qualitative Analyses

Qualitative interviews explored the changes that participants experienced over the course of the five-week interpersonal reconciliation program, and explored whether these changes reflected the theorized causal mechanism of social identity change. These findings indicate that
participants overwhelmingly experienced positive contact with different ethnic groups during the course of the program. Through the course of this positive contact, they experienced both de-categorization, or personalized experiences with out-group members as individuals, and re-categorization, or the identification of a superordinate social identity.

5.2.1 Positive Contact Experience

Respondents nearly unanimously spoke about positive contact experiences with members of an out-group during the course of the program. They described new opportunities to speak to, befriend and collaborate with members of different ethnic groups. Although very few participants had no contact or friendship with people from other ethnic groups before the program, they still described a general feeling of distance and segregation in their everyday lives. A Sinhalese and Muslim respondent each described similar dynamics of division and de facto segregation between ethnic groups on campus:

“Even in campus, even though there are multiple ethnicities in one batch, there’s no real interaction. Especially after you get divided according to your medium of study, no interaction at all.”

“I really like the program because previously I have thought that, you know, they mind their own business, we mind ours. And that was kind of an understanding, but now it has sort of empowered us to go out there and make friends with other people.”

One Muslim respondent described the often unequal barriers that exist between majority and minority communities:

“It [the program] actually made us to interact with the other communities. And basically the main thing is, we [Muslims] always get a chance to interact with the other communities. But the majority people [Sinhalese] will get a less chance to interact with us.”

This may be surprising given the diversity of the student body at University of Colombo, and the diverse population of the city at large. Despite spending their days on the same campus

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12 Sinhalese respondent, Interview conducted 25 February 2016
13 Muslim respondent, Interview conducted 24 February 2016
14 Muslim respondent, Interview conducted 26 February 2016
as students from other ethnic groups, academics at University of Colombo remain highly segregated. This is primarily due to language barriers. Coursework is offered in either Sinhala, Tamil or English. Because language correlates so closely with ethnicity, this effectively means that students have very little opportunity to work with and get to know members of the other groups. The exception to this are classes taught in English, which combines students from all ethnicities under a common third language. However, very few students study primarily in English and for those who do, the structured classroom setting is not conducive to developing warm interpersonal relationships. One Muslim student described this dynamic:

“And even our interactions in University, because we are in Tamil medium, our opportunities for interaction are very limited. It is only in English class, and that is a class, so you just go there. But in this group setting there was a difference. There was more opportunity for interaction.”

Despite these barriers to prior interaction, respondents from all ethnic groups described positive contact as a result of the small group work. A Sinhalese respondent described the change in her first impressions of the program:

“So on the first day we felt strange and didn’t know what to do. Then it became exciting. Even though we couldn’t understand the language, we communicated through signs. Especially the first activity where we had to build something with newspapers encouraged this type of interaction.”

Some respondents commented specifically on the new experiences of interacting with members of different ethnic groups in an equal status atmosphere and towards common goals, two of the conditions for success of contact experiences (Allport 1979 in Hewstone & Brown 1986, 4). One Muslim respondent identified the equal status afforded to all ethnicities during the program activities as a key element of facilitating positive relationships, and the challenge of translating between languages as a common goal that united the group:

“And the thing about her main experience was that there was a barrier between those who spoke Tamil and those who spoke in Sinhala but here it was all the groups were split equally and they had everyone represented in the group. Somehow they had to

15 Muslim respondent, Interview conducted 25 February 2016
16 Sinhalese respondent, Interview conducted 25 February 2016
overcome that language barrier through translation or through something else, and that was a good experience.”

A Sinhalese student reflected on the positive experience of learning more about the problems of other identity groups:

“Usually even though we attend the same university, we don’t get to meet these people. But when we talk like this, they come out with their problems even sometimes. So these kinds of programmes are good for understanding.”

Bringing students of different ethnicities together for positive interpersonal experiences in an equal status environment seems to remove both language and social barriers that previously inhibited development of close interpersonal relationships across ethnic lines. This reflects the theory of social identity change posited in the Contact Hypothesis.

5.2.2 De-categorization

Respondents from all three ethnic groups consistently described a process of decategorization and personalization as a result of their participation in the program. Because of the limited meaningful contact across language groups in their daily life, this program offered a rare opportunity to develop individualized relationships across majority-minority ethnic groups. A Tamil respondent reflected on changed attitudes towards Buddhist monks, a powerful symbol of the religion practices by most of the Sinhalese ethnic group:

“I thought all monks were the same. But after the sessions I found out that not all monks are like that… There was a Buddhist monk in our group. I found out that even though you belong to the same ethnic group, there would be individual differences between people.”

Through the personalization process, they were able to shift initial assumptions based on the individual’s social identity and connect on a basis of friendship and commonality. A Sinhalese respondent described:

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17 Muslim respondent, Interview conducted 24 February 2016
18 Sinhalese respondent, Interview conducted 25 February 2016
19 Although Muslim and Tamil students had more opportunity for interaction on the basis of a shared language, respondents from both minority groups reflected personalization change towards the majority Sinhalese.
20 Tamil respondent, Interview conducted 25 February 2016
“Earlier I thought of Muslims as a bit extremist. Even Tamils. For instance, though the LTTE lost the war, if Prabhakaran won the Tamil people would have actually been happy no? Can’t blame them, it’s the ethnic consciousness. But when I met them here I realized it’s not necessarily like that. They sometimes think exactly like us.”21

Not all participants attributed the personalization process solely to the program, but spoke about other situations where they developed personal connections. One Tamil respondent described how her parents attitudes towards Muslims shifted slightly after she lived with Muslim roommates, in contrast to the unchanging prejudice of her family outside the country:

“[My] parents had actually told me not to associate with Muslims from Batticaloa…they warned me not to associate with them too much. But now after so many years, whenever they call me, now they also speak to all of my Muslim roommates. And so they have slowly sort of changed their attitudes. My father's relations who are abroad still tell me don't associate with Sinhalese and Muslims, that is not good.”22

This diffusion of tolerant norms reflects the causal chain through which the mechanism of interpersonal de-categorization is intended to affect intergroup relations.

5.2.3 Re-categorization

Respondents also reflected a process of re-categorization, where they identified a common in-group identity with which to replace divisive ethnic categories. This emerged in two ways, through national identity and a broader sense of common humanity. First, many respondents identified their primary identity as a Sri Lankan national identity. This was more salient than Sinhala, Tamil or Muslim ethnic identities. A Tamil respondent described this process of change:

“So basically before the program I would have considered my Tamil identity, or my identity as a girl, or as a Tamil speaker, important to me for everyday life. But after the program, or during the program I have realized that maybe the Sri Lankan identity is more important because that is more unique in terms of internationally. Also it is a more unique identity to claim.”23

A Sinhalese respondent also described a similar process of re-categorization:

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21 Sinhalese respondent, Interview conducted 25 February 2016
22 Tamil respondent, Interview conducted 24 February 2016
23 Tamil respondent, Interview conducted 24 February 2016
“Before coming here, we thought Muslims follow the Arab culture, Tamils follow the South Indian culture and have opinions more or less like Prabhkaran, and we are Sinhala-Buddhists who should protect the country. But when I got here I realized it’s not like that, these people also have some feeling towards the country. So the idea I had that they’re extremist changed.”

Secondly, many respondents spoke of recognizing common humanity or shared traits with members of the out-group. One Sinhalese respondent described how she developed an outlook of shared humanness rather than ethnic distinctions:

“I realized who we are. Also that we can work with others in a team spirit...It [ethnic identity] is a socially imparted understanding. Ultimately all humans are equal. I don’t consider divisions. I view everybody as humans and therefore equal.”

This illustrated a widening of their categories of inclusion and decreased psychological distinctiveness, two key elements of social identity change that are theorized to reduce interpersonal atrocity risks.

Overall findings of the qualitative interviews reveal that the program facilitated positive contact experiences as well as evidence of de-categorization and re-categorization social identity change processes. Although respondents highlighted these mechanisms, the survey findings of no statistically significant change on measures of interpersonal-level atrocity risk suggests that the causal chain does not continue as theorized.

5.3 Additional Analyses

Due to the discrepancies between the quantitative and qualitative findings, additional tests were conducted to understand the effects of the interpersonal reconciliation program and the factors that influence change and stability at the individual level. First, an analysis of reconciliation outcomes examines whether the first step of the causal chain was achieved. This finds statistically significant change on identity and coexistence, indicating that reconciliation outcomes were only partly achieved. Second, levels of individual change in responses were assessed to determine factors that can be expected to influence change and stability of attitudes. Starting scores on authoritarian self-concept, in-group victimization, salience of national identity

24 Sinhalese respondent, Interview conducted 25 February 2016
25 Sinhalese respondent, Interview conducted 25 February 2016
and cross-ethnic friendship can help to explain stability of attitudes. Finally, a comparison of mean scores within disaggregated majority and minority ethnic groups were reviewed. This finds that different ethnic groups changed in different and contradictory directions: majority Sinhalese demonstrate lower atrocity risk while minority Tamil and Muslim participants largely remain stable, with a slight increase in one measure of atrocity risk.

5.3.1 Difference of Means Test of Reconciliation Outcomes

In addition to measures of interpersonal atrocity risk, survey data was also collected on indicators of interpersonal reconciliation outcomes. These included a measure of identity (IDENTITY), which inquired about an individual’s national identity salience; coexistence (COEXIST), which looked at the respondent’s belief that formerly conflict groups could live peacefully in the country; trust (TRUST), which looked at the extent to which they trust members of groups outside of their own; and mutual acknowledgement (ACKNOWLEDGE), which looked at their support for statement about openly discussing sensitive history and sharing truth about past experiences. The survey also captured overall attitudes towards reconciliation (ATTREC). Measures of empathy towards the other group were captured in a proxy fashion through questions that measured re-humanization and exclusionary beliefs. Because these questions were also used to measure exclusionary beliefs, they are not included in this analysis.

Measures of coexistence, trust, mutual acknowledgement and attitudes towards reconciliation were measured by an index variable combining multiple survey items covering different elements of the concept (see Table 5.3 for internal reliability scores). Identity was measured using a single question of the salience of an individual's national identity or ethnic identity salience. To account for the categorical answer scale of this question, it was recoded in the analysis as a dichotomous measure of national identity salience. Randomization was also confirmed between the test and control groups, and showed no statistically significant differences between test and control groups on any of the variables (Results of the randomization test can be found in Appendix D). Table 5.4 shows descriptive statistics for these measures.

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26 Data availability limited this analysis to a single question, which undoubtedly does not capture the entirety of the concept of identity salience. These limitations were taken into consideration when analyzing data findings.
Table 5.4: Descriptive Statistics for Reconciliation Outcome Index Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
<th>Min (High Risk)</th>
<th>Max (Low Risk)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDENTITY</td>
<td></td>
<td>205</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COEXIST</td>
<td></td>
<td>161</td>
<td>14.26</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td></td>
<td>169</td>
<td>17.58</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGE</td>
<td></td>
<td>177</td>
<td>8.60</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTREC</td>
<td></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>15.65</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data drawn from full sample (Test and Control) at baseline, N=207
A difference of means test was conducted on these measures to verify whether the first step in the theorized causal chain, achievement of reconciliation outcomes, was actually realized. The finding that no statistically significant change occurred on measures of interpersonal atrocity risk raises the question of whether the five-week program that the test group participated in achieved its goal of shifting attitudes on interpersonal reconciliation outcomes. If interpersonal reconciliation outcomes are not achieved, the next steps in the causal chain cannot be expected to occur. The social identity changes that are theorized to cause a reduction in interpersonal atrocity risk will not occur if the participants show no change on the intended interpersonal reconciliation outcomes.

Because of the previously identified discrepancies in randomization between test and control groups, difference of means tests were performed comparing both endline scores between test and control groups and baseline to endline scores in the test group alone. Tables 5.5 and 5.6 show these results. Both comparisons show that achievement of the interpersonal reconciliation outcomes of plural identities, truth, empathy and mutual acknowledgement are incomplete.

Between the test and control groups (Table 5.5), only the measure of national identity salience shows statistically significant change, at the 95% confidence level. On a dichotomous measure where one is equal to primary national identity salience and zero represents varying other levels of identity salience, the test group shows a higher average score ($\mu=.4$) than the control group ($\mu=.217$). This indicates that the test group shows more reconciliatory attitudes on identity salience than the control group. However, given the inexact nature of the identity measure and the fact that it only captures one dimension of identity salience, these results should be interpreted cautiously.

The test group shows statistically significant change from the pre-test to post-test survey on the measure of coexistence, at a 90% confidence level (see Table 5.6).\textsuperscript{27} After participating in the program, the test group shows more support ($\mu = 14.387$) for the idea of peaceful coexistence between different ethnic groups in Sri Lanka than their starting point ($\mu = 13.472$). This shows that the interpersonal reconciliation program demonstrated to participants that diverse groups in

\textsuperscript{27} Although a 90% confidence interval is lower than the conventional 95% level (Johnson & Reynolds 2012, 402; Kellstedt & Whiten 2013, 127), it is accepted in this study. This decision was made due to the inherent challenges of valid measurement of a multi-faceted concept such as interpersonal atrocity risk in a self-reporting survey format (See Section 4.3.6 for further discussion). Acceptance of a 90% confidence level hopes to mitigate the risk of a Type II error of falsely rejecting the null hypothesis.
Sri Lanka are able to successfully to live peacefully together, cooperate, and resolve disputes without resorting to violence. This supports the qualitative interview findings on the importance of positive contact.

The measure of trust shows small changes between the test and control group that, while not statistically significant, neared the $p = .10$ threshold for significance at the 90% confidence level. This finding reflects the qualitative findings that indicate cautious and incrementally changing attitudes towards different ethnic groups as a result of positive contact. While we cannot confidently reject the null hypothesis that trust and empathy do not change as a result of participation in an interpersonal reconciliation program, this is an interesting observation in the support it lends to the contradictory and cautious accounts of attitude change revealed during individual interviews.

Table 5.5: Difference of Means for Reconciliation Outcome Index Variables, Endline Test-Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
<th>Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Test Obs</th>
<th>Control Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Control Obs</th>
<th>Min - Max (High - Low Rec.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDENTITY</td>
<td>.045 **</td>
<td>2.023</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>.356 (.051)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>.217 (.046)</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COEXIST</td>
<td>.398</td>
<td>-0.848</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>13.472 (.390)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>13.981 (.457)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>5-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>-1.524</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>16.346 (.432)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>17.277 (.419)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>6-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>.796</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>8.929 (.379)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>8.775 (.467)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTREC</td>
<td>.504</td>
<td>-0.670</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>14.909 (.342)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>15.268 (.415)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8-25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Data drawn from Test and Control groups at endline, N= 172

*** $p<.01$, ** $p<.05$, * $p<.10$
Table 5.6: Difference of Means for Reconciliation Outcome Index Variables, Baseline-Endline Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
<th>Baseline Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Baseline Test Obs</th>
<th>Endline Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Endline Test Obs</th>
<th>Min-Max (High-Low Rec.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDENTIFY</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>-1.645</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>.245 (.045)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>.356 (.051)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COEXIST</td>
<td>.062*</td>
<td>1.882</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>14.387 (.294)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>13.472 (.390)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>5-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>1.489</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>17.266 (.442)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>16.346 (.432)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>6-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>.843</td>
<td>-0.199</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>8.822 (.372)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>8.929 (.379)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTREC</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>1.410</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>15.598 (.347)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>14.909 (.342)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>6-23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data drawn from Test group at baseline and endline, N=185

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.10

5.3.2 Individual Change Analysis

The results of the individual interviews indicate a discrepancy between the quantitative and qualitative findings. While the survey data indicates that attitudes of interpersonal atrocity risk remain largely stable after participation in the reconciliation program, the qualitative interviews reflect de-categorization and re-categorization processes of identity change. To further explore the discrepancy between these findings, factors influencing individual change or stability in attitudes were analyzed.

These influences were analyzed by first calculating each individual respondent’s change (in either positive or negative direction) on each measure of interpersonal atrocity risk and reconciliation outcomes. A linear regression was performed to assess the relationships between individual change scores and eight different potential influences on change and stability. Table 5.7 summarizes the results of this regression.

The potential influences analyzed include majority ethnicity, previous reconciliation experience, past conflict experience, and baseline measures of attitudes towards reconciliation, identity salience, cross-ethnic friendships, authoritarian self-concept, and in-group victimization. A dichotomous measure of whether the respondent identified with the majority Sinhalese

59
ethnicity (MAJORITY) reflects the potential for the differing power dynamics of different ethnic
groups to influence the stability of a respondent’s attitudes. Past experience and adverse life
effects of conflict (PASTCONFLICT) builds on findings that difficult life conditions including
wartime experience influence later attitudes (Hall et al. 2015; Staub 1989). A measure of
attitudes towards reconciliation (BASEATTREC) and previous exposure to reconciliation
programs (BASEPREVREC) assumes that starting reconciliatory attitudes and exposure may
influence an individual’s flexibility on atrocity risk factors. The salience of a respondent’s
national identity (BASEIDENTITY) and whether or not they have friends from different ethnic
groups (BASEFRIENDS) tests the finding that participants show significant change on a
measure of coexistence and positive contact. Finally, measures of baseline authoritarian self-
concept (BASESELFCONCEPT), and in-group victimization (BASEVICTIM) are included
because of the initial difference in scores between test and control group on these measures.

The dependent variable in this analysis measured change in interpersonal-level atrocity
risk factors (the variables of interest in the overall study) between the test group’s pre-test and
post-test scores. More change in certain atrocity risk factors is associated with cross-ethnic
friendships, adverse conflict experiences, and authoritarian self-concept. A one-step increase
from some cross-ethnic friendships to none prior to participation in the interpersonal
reconciliation program is, on average, expected to result in 2.075 steps more change in
authoritarian self-concept (min=0, max=5), at the 95% confidence level. Thus, having no cross-
ethnic friendships at the start of the program is correlated with more change in authoritarian self-
concept after participation. A one-step increase on a scale of adverse effects of conflict is, on
average, expected to result in .432 steps more change in beliefs around in-group victimization
(min=0, max =7), at the 90% confidence level. This means that a less adverse experience of the
civil conflict in Sri Lanka is associated with a higher likelihood of change in victimization
beliefs. A one-step increase in the Likert scale on the starting measure of authoritarian self-
concept is, on average, also expected to result in .251 steps more change in beliefs around in-
group victimization, at the 90% confidence level. Respondents that demonstrate lower atrocity
risk through a less authoritarian orientation before the program were more likely to change their
attitudes towards in-group victimization. Lastly, a one-step increase in the Likert scale on the
starting measure of authoritarian self-concept is, on average, expected to result in .345 steps
more change in ethnic distance, at the 90% confidence level. This means that a lower baseline
atrocity risk on the measure of authoritarian self-concept is more likely to lead to a change in perceptions of distance from other ethnic groups.

Less change in interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors is correlated with starting scores on authoritarian self-concept, in-group victimization, salience of national identity and cross-ethnic friendship. A one-step increase in the Likert scale on the starting measure of in-group victimization is, on average, expected to result in .406 steps less change in justifying beliefs (min=0, max =13), at the 99% confidence level. Thus, as an individual’s starting level of atrocity risk decreases on the measure of in-group victimization, justifying beliefs will become more stable. A one-step increase from some cross-ethnic friendships to none is, on average, expected to result in 1.38 steps less change in justifying beliefs (min=0, max=13), at the 95% confidence level. A one-step increase from salience of other identities to only salience of national identity is, on average, also expected to result in 1.38 steps less change in justifying beliefs at the 90% confidence level. Respondents whose national identity was more important than their ethnic identity at the start of the program were less likely to change their justifying beliefs. A one-step increase in the Likert scale on the starting measure of authoritarian self-concept is, on average, expected to result in .19 steps less change in the measure of authoritarian self-concept (min=0, max=5), at the 99% confidence level. Respondents with a less authoritarian orientation before the program were less likely to change their outlook.

Given the small amount of real change and the comparatively large standard errors for many of these measures, their systematic influence on attitudes is likely small. Although cross-ethnic friendships, adverse conflict experiences, and authoritarian self-concept are associated with more change, the predicted movements are very small and unlikely to make a notable influence on overall attitudes related to interpersonal atrocity risk. Authoritarian self-concept, in-group victimization, salience of national identity and cross-ethnic friendship are all associated with less change, which can also be conceptualized as stability of beliefs. These measurements of stability echo the group-level analysis that shows no statistically significant changes in interpersonal atrocity risk. On average, lower starting atrocity risk is associated with more stability on atrocity risk factors. This does show that an individual’s starting attitudes will influence how they interact with the program and the likelihood for attitude change.
Table 5.7 Individual Change Analysis Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Concept</td>
<td>Victimization</td>
<td>Ethnic Distance</td>
<td>Excl. Beliefs</td>
<td>Just. Beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Max-Min: 0-5)</td>
<td>(Max-Min: 0-7)</td>
<td>(Max-Min: 0-11)</td>
<td>(Max-Min: 0-7)</td>
<td>(Max-Min: 0-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Ethnicity</td>
<td>.345</td>
<td>-.293</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>.453</td>
<td>1.469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.527)</td>
<td>(.699)</td>
<td>(.891)</td>
<td>(.608)</td>
<td>(1.007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Conflict Experience</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.432*</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.188)</td>
<td>(.238)</td>
<td>(.326)</td>
<td>(.207)</td>
<td>(.378)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base Reconcil. Attitudes</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.064</td>
<td>-.147</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>-.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.066)</td>
<td>(.085)</td>
<td>(.115)</td>
<td>(.073)</td>
<td>(.124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base Prev. Reconcil.</td>
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<td>.639</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>-.154</td>
<td>.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.344)</td>
<td>(.428)</td>
<td>(.581)</td>
<td>(.380)</td>
<td>(.618)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Base Identity</td>
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<td>.229</td>
<td>-1.388*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.442)</td>
<td>(.574)</td>
<td>(.767)</td>
<td>(.509)</td>
<td>(.804)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base Friends</td>
<td>2.075**</td>
<td>-.114</td>
<td>.916</td>
<td>-.075</td>
<td>-3.827**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.949)</td>
<td>(1.180)</td>
<td>(1.619)</td>
<td>(1.052)</td>
<td>(1.645)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base Self-Concept</td>
<td>-.192*</td>
<td>.251*</td>
<td>.345*</td>
<td>-.033</td>
<td>.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.101)</td>
<td>(.129)</td>
<td>(.177)</td>
<td>(.113)</td>
<td>(.223)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base Victimization</td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>-.406***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.070)</td>
<td>(.096)</td>
<td>(.122)</td>
<td>(.079)</td>
<td>(.136)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constant</td>
<td>1.506</td>
<td>-4.098</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>1.482</td>
<td>4.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(2.971)</td>
<td>(3.923)</td>
<td>(2.532)</td>
<td>(4.554)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>63</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R-squared</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>-0.084</td>
<td>.136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard Errors in parentheses
*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.10

5.3.3 Inter-ethnic Comparison

An additional theorized influence on change and stability in both reconciliation outcomes and interpersonal atrocity risk is the participant’s ethnicity. Studies have found that asymmetrical intergroup relations can influence the effects of contact situations and inhibit intergroup reconciliation (Malloy et al. 2011; Theriault 2013). In this study, difference is potentially expected between the dominant majority Sinhalese ethnic group, and the minority Tamil and
Muslim groups. To test the effects of this potential confounder, a two-sample t-test was conducted to compare mean scores between Majority (Sinhala) and Minority (Tamil and Muslim) groups.\textsuperscript{28} Both groups were first tested for randomization. The majority group showed no significant difference at the baseline measure between test and control groups. The minority groups showed statistically significant differences between test and control groups on measures of authoritarian internal self-concept, sense of in-group victimization, belief in peaceful coexistence, and mutual acknowledgement of shared history. Because the division of the overall sample into majority (Test N= 45; Control N= 37) and minority (Test N= 45; Control N= 46) groups reduces the number of observations, all measures in this analysis should be interpreted cautiously. Change was measured on both interpersonal atrocity risk and reconciliation outcome variables, to provide a comparison with all previous analyses.

The findings show somewhat contradictory changes between majority and minority groups. The majority group shows significant change between test and control groups on measures of authoritarian internal self-concept, trust, and mutual acknowledgement of shared history. Table 5.8 shows the results of these tests. These changes all moved in the theorized direction: after participating in an interpersonal reconciliation program, members of the majority ethnic group showed lower atrocity risk through less authoritarian attitudes, and demonstrated greater reconciliation outcomes through increased trust and more openness to mutual acknowledgement of a shared conflictive history.

\textsuperscript{28} The test was conducted on a majority/minority basis to counteract the calculation issues arising from the small sample sizes of Tamil and Muslim participants in the program. This division between majority and minority reflected framings made by the interview respondents regarding their attitude towards other groups throughout the program. However, combining two different minority groups into one measure does its own set of issues, and it is possible that within the ‘minority’ group Tamils and Muslims experienced the program in different ways.
The minority groups, however, present a more complicated finding. There is statistically significant attitude change between test and control groups on measures of authoritarian internal self-concept, dehumanizing and exclusionary beliefs, salience of national identity, and mutual acknowledgement of shared history. Because the difference in attitudes toward mutual acknowledgement and authoritarian internal self-concept was also present at the baseline they will be excluded from the analysis. In contrast to the majority group, the minority test groups showed on average an increase in interpersonal atrocity risk on the measure of support for statements of exclusionary beliefs at a 90% confidence level (Test $\mu =10.098$; Control $\mu =10.744$). They also

Table 5.8: Difference of Means, Majority Test-Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Atrocity Risk Index Variables</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
<th>Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Test Obs</th>
<th>Control Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Control Obs</th>
<th>Min-Max (High-Low Risk)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELF-CONCEPT</td>
<td>.003*</td>
<td>3.035</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>9.704 (.290)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8.406 (.304)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTIM</td>
<td>.677</td>
<td>-0.418</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>8.237 (.312)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8.433 (.351)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHDIST</td>
<td>.599</td>
<td>.528</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>16.488 (.532)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16.059 (.619)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
<td>.913</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>8.535 (.338)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8.485 (.276)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUST-BELIEF</td>
<td>.819</td>
<td>-0.230</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.848 (.664)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17.065 (.661)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10-24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reconciliation Outcome Index Variables</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
<th>Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Test Obs</th>
<th>Control Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Control Obs</th>
<th>Min-Max (High-Low Rec.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDENTIY</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td>.244</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>.378</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>.351 (.080)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>.046*</td>
<td>-2.036</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>15.711 (.553)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17.462 (.655)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOW-LEDGE</td>
<td>.004*</td>
<td>-2.957</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10.190 (.506)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12.367 (.506)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTREC</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>-1.488</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16.028 (.344)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16.935 (.522)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12-25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data drawn from Test and Control groups endline, N=82

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.10
showed a more salient national identity (Test µ = 10.098; Control µ = 10.744) which demonstrates more reconciliatory attitudes. This shows that minority attitudes changed in directions inconsistent with the hypothesis that interpersonal reconciliation program will reduce interpersonal atrocity risk factors.

Table 5.9: Difference of Means, Minority Test-Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Atrocity Risk Index Variables</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
<th>Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Test Obs</th>
<th>Control Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Control Obs</th>
<th>Min - Max (High - Low Risk)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6.342 (.473)</td>
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<td>2-12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>87</td>
<td>20.651 (.727)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21.674 (.655)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
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<td>-1.979</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>10.098 (.246)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10.744 (.216)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUSTBELIEF</td>
<td>.890</td>
<td>-0.139</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>17.424 (.671)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17.548 (.583)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10-24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reconciliation Outcome Index Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
<th>Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Test Obs</th>
<th>Control Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Control Obs</th>
<th>Min - Max (High - Low Rec.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDENTITY</td>
<td>.009***</td>
<td>2.658</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>.333 (.071)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>.109 (.046)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COEXIST</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>12.429 (.513)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12.32 (.695)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>.774</td>
<td>-0.288</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>16.907 (.513)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17.154 (.552)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGE</td>
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<td>2.510</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>7.666 (.497)</td>
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<td>6.146 (.341)</td>
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<td>4-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTREC</td>
<td>.949</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>13.927 (.524)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13.975 (.538)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8-23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data drawn from Test and Control groups endline, N= 92

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.10
5.4 Discussion

The findings indicate overall stability of interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors, even after participation in an interpersonal reconciliation program. Despite the finding of broad stability, micro-level changes and understandings of the causal process offer important information to understand the process of reducing interpersonal atrocity risk factors. Initial quantitative analysis of the survey data shows no statistically significant change on interpersonal atrocity risk indicators. Qualitative findings, however, challenge this picture of pure stability, and describe positive contact effects and identity change processes of de-categorization and re-categorization. To further explore these discrepancies, additional quantitative analyses are conducted. An analysis of reconciliation outcomes finds statistically significant (but cautious) change in national identity salience between the test and control groups, and change in coexistence between the baseline and endline measurements of the test group. An analysis of influences on individual-level changes in atrocity risk shows that starting scores on authoritarian self-concept, in-group victimization, salience of national identity and cross-ethnic friendship can help to explain stability of attitudes. Overall, the analysis indicates very small changes. Finally, an examination of differences between majority ethnicity and minority ethnicity participants shows that majority Sinhalese participants showed, on average, lower atrocity risk through less authoritarian attitudes, and more reconciliatory attitudes through increased trust and more openness to mutual acknowledgement of a shared conflictive history. Minority Tamil and Muslim respondents, in contrast, show, on average more support for statements of exclusionary beliefs and a more salient national identity. More exclusionary beliefs indicate greater atrocity risk, while national identity indicates reconciliatory attitudes.

Overall, these findings indicate that the hypothesis that \textit{interpersonal reconciliation program will reduce interpersonal atrocity risk factors} is not supported. The causal process whereby reconciliation will lead to social identity change and reduce interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors is not fully realized. The finding that reconciliation outcomes are only partially achieved helps to explain this. If the first part of the causal chain is not fully achieved, we can logically expect that the theorized effect on the dependent variable will not materialize. However, interview data with a sub-set of program participants reveals partial evidence of social identity change through positive contact experience, de-categorization and re-categorization.
processes. This indicates that some shifts in social identity began as a result of the program, but they did not have a notable effect on interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors.

Based on these findings, two questions remain: Why are attitudes stable on measures of interpersonal atrocity risk? And why do we see limited evidence of the causal mechanism but no significant change in interpersonal atrocity risk? Two alternative explanations are offered to answer these questions.

5.4.1 Alternative Explanation: Limitations of Contact Theory

Contact theory proposes that social identity change can occur through processes of de-categorization, re-categorization and mutual intergroup differentiation. It was hypothesized that achievement of interpersonal reconciliation outcomes through participation in a contact- and dialogue-based intervention would reduce interpersonal risk factors for mass atrocity participation. The findings of this research indicate that participants experienced de-categorization and re-categorization, but showed very little change in mass atrocity risk factors. This indicates that while the causal chain may have initially moved as theorized, it did not complete its logical progression to a reduction in interpersonal atrocity risk factors. Findings on the limitations of contact theory, and the alternative change mechanism of mutual intergroup differentiation can help to explain this.

Evidence on contact theory is extensive but contradictory. While some studies find that positive intergroup contact results in reduced prejudice and more positive out-group attitudes, others have demonstrated limited influence. This may have to do with the increasingly specific conditions under which contact has a transformative effect. Beyond Allport’s initial necessary conditions, subsequent studies have expanded the set of conditions to be more restrictive. A review of contact hypothesis finds that positive contact requires not only conditions of equal status, pursuit of common goals, and broader social and institutional support, but contact is pleasant and meaningful rather than superficial and brings together majority group members and higher-status minority group members (Hewstone & Brown 1986, 7). Even when those conditions are met, there are additional limitations to the effectiveness of social identity change processes. Possible limitations that may have inhibited social identity transformation in this case are the transferability of interpersonal identity change to the intergroup level and the influences of broader social dynamics.
First, the generalizability from interpersonal contact to intergroup social identity change is unclear. It is not a linear path to extrapolate positive contact from a specific situation and relationship to other members of the group (Hewstone & Brown 1986, 17). Rather than seeing the individual relationship as a representation of the good qualities of the larger identity group, contact participants may instead see it as an exception to the trend. This leads to the seemingly paradoxical situation of holding positive interpersonal relationships but maintaining negative intergroup attitudes.

Secondly, the impact of interpersonal social identity change on attitudes and beliefs may be limited by the influences of broader social dynamics that encourage inter-group tensions. Objective conflict issues may remain after individual relationships are built. Personalizing individuals and developing a common in-group identity may still leave very real issues of discrimination, injustice, segregation and poverty untouched. These ongoing objective issues may continue to fuel grievances at an intergroup level even as interpersonal relationships are built (Hewstone & Brown 1986).

Similarly, the premise of social identity change through interpersonal contact and dialogue does not sufficiently address structural issues of power and domination. Despite the requirement for equal status of the participants in the contact encounter, interpersonal reconciliation also does not address broader power dynamics between majority and minority groups. Mass atrocity is an extreme manifestation of dominance by the perpetrator group over the victim group. Even after the atrocity, the relationship of dominance remains. Theriault (2013) argues that the influences of this dynamic will inhibit efforts to reconcile through dialogue. This is hinted at in the comparison of change in attitudes between respondents who identified as belonging to the Sinhalese majority group or the Tamil and Muslim minority groups. Although attitudes on the whole remained stable, the cautious change that did occur moved in opposite directions. While Sinhalese respondents demonstrated more positive attitudes on some reconciliation variables after participating in the program, Tamil and Muslim respondents showed more negative attitudes on other variables. While the predictive power of these results should be approached cautiously given the small sample sizes when analyzed by ethnicity, they reflect other findings that emphasize the importance of power dynamics in interpersonal reconciliation processes.
Hewstone & Brown (1986) propose that a process of mutual intergroup differentiation instead of de-categorization or re-categorization will have more lasting change on social identities. Through this process, each in-group maintains a positive view of itself and develops a positive view towards the out-group. This meets psychological needs for positive connections while still maintaining positive identity and esteem. It also explicitly frames contact participants as representatives of the larger identity group, thus creating an explicitly intergroup exchange. This addresses some of the generalizability issues that plague other interpersonal identity change processes. The process of mutual intergroup differentiation was not reflected in qualitative interviews with program participants or in the survey data. It is possible that a process that facilitated identity change through more explicit intergroup engagement and the maintenance of in-group identity may have counteracted some of the divergent attitude change effects that are indicated between the test group and control group.

5.4.2. Alternative Explanation: Long-term processes

Another possible explanation for the absence of hypothesized change in interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors is the short-term nature of the interpersonal reconciliation program. Although in theory a five-week program was able to address five key outcomes of interpersonal reconciliation, both theory and practice demonstrate that longer-term, more sustained engagement is preferable for achieving successful reconciliation outcomes.

Reconciliation is an inherently non-linear process, in part because of the individualized process of attitude change occurs differently for each individual (Rigby 2001, Hayner 2001, Aiken 2013, Verdeja 2009). Long-term processes allow for clarification of positions, reflection on new information, and opportunities for cooperation (Ropers 2004). Furthermore, interpersonal reconciliation depends at least in part on individual emotional capacity and well-being. Unpredictable, personal factors such as trauma and emotional pain can influence the process of building more positive relationships between individuals (Hayner 2001, 165, Verdeja 2009, 160). Over a longer term, the effects of this unpredictability will be less likely on average to inhibit an individual’s experience of interpersonal reconciliation.

Reconciliation is also far more than a single event or intervention, rather it is an ongoing and long-term process (Bloomfield 2003, 19). Institutional and interpersonal reconciliation processes interact with and influence each other (Verdeja 2009). Without sufficient change at both levels, full reconciliation is likely to be limited. This is quite likely the case in Sri Lanka. Although
grassroots reconciliation efforts are growing, limited meaningful movement has occurred at the
level of institutional and societal reconciliation. Despite the development of positive
relationships, in a broader environment of imbalanced power dynamics between ethnic groups
and societal norms that reinforce ethnic distance and exclusionary beliefs it can be very difficult
for attitude change to take hold.

Evidence from evaluations of similar reconciliation programs that demonstrate change have
had either more contact hours or a longer period of measurement (Malhotra & Liyanage 2005;
Paluck 2009; Svensson and Brounéus 2013; Cilliers, Dube & Siddiqi 2016). Both will, in theory,
influence the level and consolidation of attitude change. Although all of these studies measure
reconciliation outcomes rather than atrocity risk, they can shed light on possible reasons for the
incomplete causal chain. If reconciliation outcomes are not fully achieved, it may disrupt the
process meaningful social identity change that is theorized to lead to reduced interpersonal-level
atrocity risk.
6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to answer the research question: *What is the impact of an interpersonal reconciliation program on interpersonal atrocity risk factors?* Using a randomized field experiment and qualitative interviews, it assessed whether participation in an interpersonal reconciliation program results in change on five interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors: (1) internal self-concept oriented towards authoritarian approaches; (2) a sense of victimization of one’s own identity group; (3) distance and negative attitudes towards other identity groups; (4) exclusionary and dehumanizing beliefs; and (5) the development of beliefs that justify the use of violence against others. Participation in an interpersonal reconciliation program was expected to reduce interpersonal-level atrocity risk factors, but survey findings indicate that these risk factors remained stable throughout the program. Further analyses suggest that impacts of the program differed by ethnicity, and participants from the majority Sinhalese ethnic group did show, on average, lower atrocity risk through less authoritarian attitudes. Qualitative interviews also reveal limited social identity change through positive contact, de-categorization and re-categorization.

These findings provide useful empirical evidence to claims that reconciliation efforts can help to prevent the outbreak of future mass atrocities (Staub 2010; McLoughlin 2014; Bellamy 2016; Ingelaere et al 2013). Such claims have thus far remained at the theoretical level, but the current findings challenge whether the theorized causal process will occur in practice. Given that this is the one of the first attempts to establish empirical evidence and to evaluate interpersonal-level atrocity risks, further research is needed to corroborate the current findings. Particularly, future research should address dimensions of majority-minority power dynamics that may inhibit change in atrocity risk factors, and evaluate a longer-term reconciliation intervention that may have more success in shifting entrenched attitudes and beliefs.

The research findings also have important but measured policy implications. First, the findings indicate shifts in the approach to interpersonal reconciliation programming. Findings on inter-ethnic differentiation in program effects indicate the need to consider the effects of broader group-based dynamics when designing interpersonal reconciliation programs. The contrast of these findings to those of programs that offered more holistic engagement in environments of concurrent structural and institutional reconciliation indicate the importance of these considerations when designing reconciliation program. Additionally, the findings indicate that scholars and practitioners alike are advised to be more cautious in claims that reconciliation can
prevent the future outbreak of mass atrocity. While this does not diminish the importance of interpersonal processes to reconciliation outcomes in their own right, the preventive effects of these programs should not be overstated. This study indicates that other factors may be affecting interpersonal atrocity risk besides reconciliation outcomes and social identity change. More holistic approaches may come closer to identifying factors that will result in reduced atrocity risk.
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APPENDIX A: Interpersonal Reconciliation Program Activities

SESSION 1: Intro & Teambuilding

Activity Source: Social Scientist’s Association

1. Introductions & Team Name activity
Participants will be assigned to one of 10 small groups, which they will utilize for activities and small group discussions for the duration of the project. Participants will begin with an introduction game, until everyone in the group can repeat the others members’ names.

After, each group will come up with a “team name” for their group. A prize will be awarded for the best group name.

2. Newspaper building challenge
Each team will receive 3 newspapers and will have 20 minutes to build the tallest free-standing structure using only newspapers. A small prize will be awarded to the group with the tallest structure.

SESSION 2: Identity & Coexistence


1. Icebreaker Introductions (15 minutes)

Come up with a name for your group

2. Small Group Discussion Agreements (10 minutes)

We will each speak from our own personal experience and avoid making generalizations about other groups
We will communicate respectfully, and avoid personal attacks
We will help everyone to have equal time to speak
We will respect the talking piece and not interrupt unless we are having trouble hearing the speaker.
If we discuss this experience with people who are not present, we will not use names or any other identifying information about what other participants have said
To allow you more time to speak and to get to know each other, we have divided this group up into small discussion groups. You will stay with the same groups for the next five sessions, every time we do an activity or have a group discussion. We will also be doing some activities as a full group. Each time we will ask the group to choose a new “group leader” for the session. The group leader is responsible for keeping the group focused on the activity, watching the time, and helping the group to respect the agreements we just made.

Not everyone in the group will speak this same language. This is something that you will need to work together as a group to overcome. Anyone who speaks multiple languages, we ask that you help your fellow group members by translating. If any group is having trouble with this, please let us know and we will help you.
We want everyone here to have an equal opportunity to speak. You are never required to say something in a discussion, but you will always have the chance. To make this easier we are going to use a talking piece in the discussion.

The talking piece is passed from person to person around the rim of the circle. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak. It allows the holder to speak without interruption and allows the listeners to focus on listening and not be distracted by thinking about a response to the speaker.  
(Source: Pranis, Kay (2010) Heart of Hope)

3. Identity Worksheet (5 minutes)  
(Source: Men and Women in Peace and Security Dialogue Facilitation Manual, “We All Belong to Many Groups”)  
Activity rationale: We all have multiple identities that we reveal in different contexts. For most, identity is complex. For some, identity is a source of conflict. Many individuals who belong to groups that are not part of mainstream society encounter identity-based conflict on a regular basis. Entire groups may exist in conflict because of their identity. This exercise invites participants to consider the many aspects of their identity, including aspects that are not so obvious. The activity promotes self-awareness, which helps individuals understand how they see the world. Each person’s identity shapes the filter through which he or she sees the world.

Hand out worksheet to participants. Explain that they should write down the groups they most identify with, but avoid writing down personal characteristics.

Have participants put their name in the center circle and write five groups with which they identify in the four outside circles. Allow two to three minutes to complete the worksheet. When they are finished, have them select the primary group with which they identify and circle it. Their primary group is the group that feels the most significant for you generally.

4. Group sharing
Within their groups, each person will share the identities they wrote down.

5. Stand-up Activity (5 minutes)
Tell them that you are going to call out certain groups one at a time and those who identify with each group should stand and look around at the others who are standing with them. They should stand even if they did not include the group on their worksheet. Remind people that this is a self-identity activity and it is not appropriate to tell someone else they should or should not stand when a specific group is called.

Call out ten different identities. Be sure not to call out the name of the person connected to any of the identities you call out. Try to include a mix of identities. The number of identities you call out will depend on how much time you have, but 10 is usually a good number.

Identity List:
1. Sinhala  
2. Left-handed  
3. Tamil  
4. Muslim  
5. Christian  
6. Older sibling  
7. Volleyball  
8. Yellow tables  
9. Rural area  
10. Durian

6. Small Group Discussion (30 minutes)
Put the questions on the projector so all the groups can see it

Ask participants to discuss the following questions in their small groups:
1. What are the advantages of being part of that identity group you claimed was most important to you?
2. What are the disadvantages of being part of that identity group you claimed was most important to you?
3. What did it feel like to stand with lots of others (What is it like to be part of a majority)?
4. What did it feel like to stand with very few others (What is it like to be part of a minority)?
5. Coexistence Activity

Two students from each group were given a small straw and a small piece of paper. The objective of the game was to suck the paper on to the straw, and carry it to a designated point. In the second round of this game, one group had to suck the paper on to the straw without holding the paper in their hand. This was a significant disadvantage and it made the competition very difficult for these groups. The activity was used to initiate a conversation within each group on the following questions:
1. What did it feel like to have an advantage over the other group?
2. What did it feel like to be at a disadvantage?
3. How can the power imbalances be balanced out in a way that is pleasing to both groups?

6. Closing (3 minutes)

Review the intention of the activity in the rationale and thank participants for their time. Remind them about the next session.

| SESSION 3: Trust |

3. Icebreaker: Chairs in a Circle

Create a circle of chairs and have participants sit in the chairs. Ask one participant to stand in the middle and remove their chair so there is one less chair than group participants. The person in the middle then shares something about themselves that others could potentially relate to. If the other participants agree with the remark or have experienced the same thing, they stand up and all standing (including the person in the middle) attempt to be seated in the remaining open chairs. The last person without a chair then becomes the next leader in the middle.

2. Blindfold Activity

Ask each group to nominate one person who will be blindfolded. The rest of his/her team has to direct him/her through an already prepared obstacle course. This team works together to guide the blindfolded person through. This is used as a platform from which groups could begin a conversation on trust.

3. Small group discussion

1. How would you define trust?
2. What factors help build trust?
3. What factors undermine trust?
4. Do you think political leaders can be trusted?
5. Why do you think trust is important in addressing conflict?
SESSION 4: Empathy

Divide participants into two groups of 4. Give each participant paper and ask each to write down a situation or event which is troubling him/her at the moment. This could be a conflict or tension with another person/group or an inner dilemma s/he is facing. Give enough time for participants to finish writing.

All participants put their situations in the centre, shuffle and draw one (this must be one of the others’ situations but further than that anonymity should be stressed – if participants during the course of the activity wish to reveal which situation is theirs, they can). Give participants a few moments to read the situation they have drawn and think a little about it.

Guide the learners in techniques to develop empathy:
- Speak in the first, rather than the third, person.
- Speak in the present tense.
- Spend some time imagining what it would feel like to BE in that situation.
- Imagine how the emotions would manifest themselves physically.
- Take concerns seriously even if you have not encountered similar.
- Remember that all emotions are real for the people who experience them. Try to avoid judging the situation.
- Explain the difference between sympathy and empathy: we are not “feeling sorry” for the person but “feeling with” the person – it is a difficult thing to do as often the situations or emotions with which we are trying to empathise do not have parallels in our own lives.

Each participant should now talk about the situation as if it was HER OWN. The emphasis should be on understanding the position of the other person, and not on “giving advice” or on “solving” the problem. Give each participant 3 minutes to talk. There should be minimal interruption from other participants except perhaps to help guide the feedback.

4. Empathy Role Play

This activity will draw on the skills learned in the previous activity and start to put those into practice. Paired groups will be given different scenarios to role-play. Instruct participants to draw on the skills they learned in the last activity and try to empathize with how they would feel if they were really in the situation.

Scenarios:

Muslim Story
Fathima is a Muslim woman who is now back in Jaffna. Her father, a successful businessman, was leading a comfortable life along with his family in Jaffna. In 1990 when she was very young and still schooling, her father and other members of the Muslim community were summoned for a meeting at the Usmania College in Jaffna, by the LTTE. At the meeting, the LTTE informed them that all the Muslims living in the Jaffna should leave the peninsula within 24 hours and that each family would only be allowed to take Rs. 500 in cash along with them. Fathima and her family had to leave their home, their belongings, their father’s shop, and were compelled to travel a long distance to Puttalam. Along the way LTTE cadres conducted a thorough body search on each and every Muslim man, woman and child, in the most demeaning of manners, to ensure that they were taking absolutely nothing more than the prescribed Rs. 500 with them. Upon reaching Puttalam, Fathima and her family who had been used to a comfortable
life in Jaffna didn’t even have a place to stay. They were forced to build a small hut in a bare land and lived there. Her father, once a wealthy businessman, now barely earned enough to provide his family the bare minimum by working as a waged labourer. Her family had been stripped of not just their possessions but also their dignity. As a result of such abject poverty, Fathima had to forego her education and get married at an early age. However, her husband was not the wealthiest of individuals either, and Fathima still struggled in her life. After the conclusion of the war, Fathima moved back to Jaffna and lived on the land owned by her father. Their house had been completely destroyed as a result of the war, and they are now living in a small hut, since government assistance is provided only to those who lived on a particular property before the war, and she cannot afford to build a more comfortable house. To add to her hardships, she finds it extremely difficult to obtain assistance from government servants who are Tamil as they disapprove of the return of Muslims to Jaffna.

Tamil Story
Kamini is a Tamil mother who lost four of her five children, for various reasons, as a consequence of the war. Her eldest two children had joined the LTTE at a young age. They were both actively involved in the expulsion of Muslims from the Jaffna Peninsula in 1990. During the course of the war both of them had died as a result of armed confrontations with the Sri Lankan Army. Her third son was critical of the LTTE and had been assassinated by the LTTE. At the conclusion of the war, after suffering many hardships, her and her two other sons were among those civilians who survived. However, one day when in the Camp for Internally Displaced People, she watched as her son was taken away by the Sri Lankan Army. To date, even though she is now back in her home town and is gradually rebuilding her life, her son has not returned home. She too receives government assistance.

Point of Meeting

Both Kamini and Fathima meet at the DS Office. During their conversation they share how each of them were affected by the war.

Sinhala Story
Arun is a Sinhalese man from Anuradhapura. He served in the Sri Lankan army at the height of the armed conflict in the late 1990’s. His brother Anil also served in the army at the time. He and his brother were part of the same regiment. Many times they would be in the frontlines together. At one such time there was a major confrontation with the LTTE, and many soldiers were killed while many more were injured. Arun was one of the fortunate few who escaped with injuries. The Sri Lankan Air Force came to the battle field to take back the soldiers who sustained injuries, and the bodies of those soldiers who died. Arun was carried by an officer of the Sri Lankan Air Force and placed in a helicopter. As the Air Force officer who brought him to safety was about to walk away he managed to tap him on his leg and claim his attention. When he leaned in to hear what Arun had to say, Arun asked that he place one of the bodies that was at the bottom of many other corpse on top. When the air force officer inquired in to why he made this request Arun said, “Because he is my brother.”

Tamil Story
Lakshmi was a member of the LTTE outfit. She joined the LTTE at a young age and worked her way through the ranks of the LTTE. At the conclusion of the war, she was quite highly placed in the LTTE. She commanded over a hundred cadres. As the war was drawing to an end all those serving under her were killed. Even though she had lost her leg in the confrontation, she managed to retreat to a bunker. She
was alone in a bunker underground, as the Sri Lankan Army forces pushed forward. At one point she reached upwards, and the shelling was so severe that in that moment a shell exploded nearby and her hand was seriously injured. She looked around the bunker for Cyanide but could not find any. She looked for a pistol but could not find one. She looked for a sharp object but could not find one. She was too weak to drag herself out of the bunker to find some object outside which she could end her life with. She was in the bunker for three days, bleeding, waiting for the Army forces to find her. The army forces found her, and carried her away. She believes that because of her high rank she was unharmed. Her wounds were treated, and she was placed in rehabilitation. Now she has returned home and is attempting to piece her life back together.

**Meeting Point**

Arun left the army and is now a journalist. He is travelling to meet Lakshmi to conduct an interview for an article he is working on.

**3. Group Discussion**

1. How would A feel in this situation?
2. How would B feel in this situation?
3. What will be the outcome/ nature of their conversation?

**SESSION 5: Mutual Acknowledgement & Shared History**

The final session comprised a lecture by Dr. Nirmal Ranjith Devasiri of the Department of History, University of Colombo. It was held on the 25th of February 2016, at 4.00pm at the auditorium of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo. The lecture focused on contested historical sites. The main thrust of it was to highlight that there are multiple narratives surrounding one site and that each group must attempt to understand and accept that there is more than one way of understanding such History.
## APPENDIX B: Survey Items

*Indicates placement of the question in the survey questionnaire

* Denotes reverse-coded item

All questions were scored on a six-point Likert scale where 1=Strongly Agree and 6=Strongly Disagree, with the exception of the measure of identity salience, which was scored on a five-point scale as indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal Self-Concept</strong> (SELFCONCEPT)</td>
<td>#60. People should be ready to protest against and challenge laws they don’t agree with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#61. The more people there are that are prepared to criticize the authorities, challenge and protest against the government, the better it is for society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal orientation disposed towards respect for authority and hierarchy</strong></td>
<td>#40. My ethnic group has suffered the most in past conflicts/mass violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sense of In-Group Victimization</strong> (VICTIM)</td>
<td>#41. My ethnic group was the most discriminated against in the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An individual’s perception of the victimization of their identity group, which can fuel conflict grievances and contribute to unresolved emotional trauma.</td>
<td>#4. I feel uncomfortable when I am around a significant number of people who speak a different language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic Distance</strong> (ETHDIST)</td>
<td>#6. I would like to live in a neighbourhood with mostly people from my own ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative attitude towards and perceived distance from different ethnic groups</td>
<td>#7. I can live with any other ethnic group the same way I would live with my own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#8. I feel uncomfortable when people of different ethnic backgrounds speak their language around me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#19. I am not likely to participate in events organized by another ethnic group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#18. I seek opportunities to speak with individuals of other racial or ethnic backgrounds about their life experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary Beliefs</strong> (EXCLUDE)</td>
<td>#20. I am not hesitant to express my concern about discrimination to people from other ethnic groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures of dehumanization of an out-group</td>
<td>#45. The security/position of my ethnic group will decline as a result of creating better relationships between different ethnic groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#56. It is my ethnicity that has a historical right to this country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#57. Using violence to protect the legacy of my ethnicity can be approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#58. My ethnic group has certain characteristics which make us superior than others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justifying Beliefs** (JUSTBELIEF)
| **Coexistence**  
*COEXIST* | #34. In the constitution all religions should be given equal status  
#35. Future changes in the composition of the population can be problematic to harmony  
#42. It is important for Sri Lanka to continue as a unitary state  
#47. Minorities should have constitutional guarantees to protect their rights  
#52. I believe the behaviour of certain ethnic communities is detrimental to the reconciliation of the country *  
#1. Members of my ethnic group should not marry individuals from other ethnic groups *  
#2. Due to mixing of various cultures, my ethnicity is threatened of losing its cultural identity *  
#9. I don’t feel comfortable living in a neighbourhood with mostly people from other ethnicities *  
#15. Sometimes it would be better to be cautious when interacting with people from other ethnic groups *  
#16. When thinking other ethnic groups, I think they mostly trust their own members |
| **Trust**  
*TRUST* | #34. In the constitution all religions should be given equal status  
#35. Future changes in the composition of the population can be problematic to harmony *  
#42. It is important for Sri Lanka to continue as a unitary state  
#47. Minorities should have constitutional guarantees to protect their rights  
#52. I believe the behaviour of certain ethnic communities is detrimental to the reconciliation of the country *  
#1. Members of my ethnic group should not marry individuals from other ethnic groups *  
#2. Due to mixing of various cultures, my ethnicity is threatened of losing its cultural identity *  
#9. I don’t feel comfortable living in a neighbourhood with mostly people from other ethnicities *  
#15. Sometimes it would be better to be cautious when interacting with people from other ethnic groups *  
#16. When thinking other ethnic groups, I think they mostly trust their own members |
| **Mutual Acknowledgement**  
*ACKNOWLEDGE* | #28. Open discussion of sensitive historical incidents is necessary for a true and meaningful process of building better relationships between ethnic groups in the country  
#29. Creating opportunities for people to share the truth of their experiences is central to building positive relationships between ethnic groups  
#43. My ethnic group has a shared history in this country along with other ethnic groups  
#46. I approve of the proposal to sing the national anthem in both Sinhala and Tamil  
#32. It is not interpersonal understanding that matters for building positive ethnic relationships but a proper constitution *  
#37. A reconciliation process would heal the suffering of the war-affected people  
#39. People will be able to come out of their psychological suffering with the help of financial compensation  
#50. The security/position of my ethnic group will improve as a result of the reconciliation process  
#51. Sri Lanka needs involvement from outside actors in creating positive relationships between its ethnic groups |
| **Attitudes Towards Reconciliation**  
*ATTREC* | #34. In the constitution all religions should be given equal status  
#35. Future changes in the composition of the population can be problematic to harmony *  
#42. It is important for Sri Lanka to continue as a unitary state  
#47. Minorities should have constitutional guarantees to protect their rights  
#52. I believe the behaviour of certain ethnic communities is detrimental to the reconciliation of the country *  
#1. Members of my ethnic group should not marry individuals from other ethnic groups *  
#2. Due to mixing of various cultures, my ethnicity is threatened of losing its cultural identity *  
#9. I don’t feel comfortable living in a neighbourhood with mostly people from other ethnicities *  
#15. Sometimes it would be better to be cautious when interacting with people from other ethnic groups *  
#16. When thinking other ethnic groups, I think they mostly trust their own members |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past Experiences of Conflict (PASTCONFLICT)</th>
<th>#E64. Were you displaced at any point during the war or after the war?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior exposure to conflict or conflict-related events</td>
<td>#E65. Are any of the members of your family dead as a result of the war?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#E66. Did you lose contact with any close relatives as a result of the war?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#E67. Has your family lost property (e.g. house, land, machinery, equipment) as a consequence of war?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salience of Identity (IDENTITY)</td>
<td>#5. Of the following statements, which do you most agree with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative importance of national identity versus ethnic identity</td>
<td>1. For a person, what is important is only the national identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. For a person, both ethnic and national identities are equally important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. For a person, national identity is important, but ethnic identity is more important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. For a person, ethnic identity is always more important than the national identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. For a person, what is important is only ethnic identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. For a person, neither ethnic nor national identities are important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C: Individual Interview Questions

Intro
1. Demographics (name, age, what do you study)
2. What did you like most about this program? Why?
3. What did you like least about this program? Why?
4. What did you learn about yourself during this program?
5. What did you learn about other people in the program?
6. Did you notice any changes in yourself, especially your attitudes and opinions, over the course of this program?
7. What were your expectations when you saw that you would be in a small discussion group with people from other ethnicities and religions?
8. How are you feeling now that you have been working with those people for four weeks?

In-Group Identity
9. What is the primary ethnic identity that you identify with?
10. What does being Sinhala/Tamil/Muslim mean to you?
11. What qualities does your ethnic group have?
12. How and why do those identities matter in your everyday life?
13. How did your awareness of your ethnic and religious identity change over the course of this program?
14. Did anything that happened in this program change a belief that you held about your own identity group? If so, what?
15. Can you describe some of the positive interactions you had with someone from a different identity group during the program?

Out-group stereotypes & attitudes
16. Before the program, what qualities did you associate with other groups (Sinhala/Muslim/Tamil)?
17. Did those assumptions change at all over the course of the program?

Out-group threat
18. What kind of fears do you have about other ethnic groups? In what ways could they cause problems for your group?
19. Can you tell me about times that you have had friends from other ethnic groups, or other religious groups? How did you develop those friendships?
20. Do you think it would be possible for you to be friends with someone from a different ethnic group who had a negative attitude towards your people?
21. What makes it possible for you to understand what someone from another ethnic group has experienced, to put yourself in their shoes? Do you experience any challenges doing this?

Justifying ideologies
22. Rev. Gnanasara [a Buddhist monk] was arrested recently, what do you think about that incident?

Politization of Identity
23. In 2014 there was an incident in Aluthgama where violence was targeted against Muslims. What do you think of that incident? Why do you think it happened?
24. If something like the 1983 riots happened again, where people were being targeted for violence because of their ethnic identity, how do you think you would respond? What would influence how you responded?

Susceptibility to inflammatory rhetoric
25. There is currently a bill in parliament about hate speech. How can you differentiate hate speech from freedom of expression?
APPENDIX D: Additional Statistical Tables

Difference of Means for Interpersonal Atrocity Risk Index Variables, Baseline-Endline Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
<th>Baseline Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Baseline Test Obs</th>
<th>Endline Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Endline Test Obs</th>
<th>Min-Max</th>
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<tr>
<td>SELFCONCEPT</td>
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<td>-0.486</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>9.774 (.207)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>9.920 (.216)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>4-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTIM</td>
<td>.554</td>
<td>-0.593</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>6.732 (.344)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>7.013 (.326)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHDIST</td>
<td>.628</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>18.978 (.536)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>18.620 (.506)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>7-30</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>1.516</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>9.747 (.194)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9.298 (.226)</td>
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<td>3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUSTBELIEF</td>
<td>.412</td>
<td>.823</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>17.684 (.464)</td>
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<td>17.136 (.470)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>8-24</td>
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Note: Data drawn for the Test group at baseline and endline, N= 185

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.10

Randomization Check for Reconciliation Outcome Index Variables

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<tr>
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<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
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<th>Test Obs</th>
<th>Control Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Control Obs</th>
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<tr>
<td>IDENTITY</td>
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<td>203</td>
<td>.245 (.045)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>.225 (.040)</td>
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<tr>
<td>COEXIST</td>
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<td>.499</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>14.387 (.294)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>14.151 (.358)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
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<td>-0.983</td>
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<td>17.266 (.441)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>17.856 (.407)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGE</td>
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<td>8.418 (.389)</td>
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Note: Data drawn from full sample (Test and Control) at baseline, N=207

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.10
## Randomization Checks, Majority Ethnicity

### Interpersonal Atrocity Risk Factors

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<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
<th>Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Test Obs</th>
<th>Control Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Control Obs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELF-CONCEPT</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td>1.037</td>
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<td>9.413 (.276)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9 (.286)</td>
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<td>8.5 (.388)</td>
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<td>ETHDIST</td>
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<td>.172</td>
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<td>15.74 (.588)</td>
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<td>.750</td>
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<td>9.064 (.269)</td>
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<td>8.773 (.276)</td>
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<td>JUSTBELIEF</td>
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<td>17.025 (.706)</td>
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<td>16.674 (.698)</td>
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### Reconciliation Outcomes

<table>
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<td>.340 (.070)</td>
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<td>TRUST</td>
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<td>16.636 (.409)</td>
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*Note: Data drawn from Test and Control groups at baseline, N=107*

***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.10
### Randomization Checks, Minority Ethnicity

#### Interpersonal Atrocity Risk Factors

<table>
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<th>Test Obs</th>
<th>Control Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Control Obs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELF-CONCEPT</td>
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<td>2.416</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>10.128 (0.304)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>VICTIM</td>
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<tr>
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<td>22 (0.592)</td>
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<td>22.62 (0.638)</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>17.8 (0.575)</td>
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#### Reconciliation Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Deg. of Freedom</th>
<th>Test Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Test Obs</th>
<th>Control Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Control Obs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>98</td>
<td>.149 (0.052)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>.150 (0.049)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COEXIST</td>
<td>.012**</td>
<td>2.569</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14.194 (0.431)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12.526 (0.483)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td>-0.213</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>18.452 (0.597)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18.630 (0.585)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>.002***</td>
<td>3.170</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>7.619 (0.376)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6.058 (0.322)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTREC</td>
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<td>.211</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>14.841 (0.519)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14.675 (0.597)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Data drawn from Test and Control groups at baseline, N=100

***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.10
APPENDIX E: Informed Consent Form

Consent Form for Micro-Level Reconciliation Survey

Protocol Title: Atrocity Prevention Through Reconciliation: Evaluating the Impact of Post-Conflict Reconciliation Programming

Research Team: Elizabeth "Lili" Cole (ecole@usip.org)  
Jonas Claes (jclaes@usip.org)  
Kate Lonergan (katelonergan@gmail.com)

Before we begin, we would like to share some information about the goal of this survey and how it will be used in our research project. The goal of this survey is to understand your attitudes about certain topics of interest for our research on reconciliation and atrocity prevention.

Our research project focuses on the relationship between reconciliation efforts and atrocity prevention. We would like to understand how reconciliation programs that bring together people from different ethnic and religious groups can help to prevent future instances of mass violence, and how to improve reconciliation practices. We will use your answers to inform our research report.

- All answers will be kept confidential and will never be directly attributed. All identifying information will be stored separately from your answers.
- A final dataset of the results of this survey may be made available to other researchers upon request, beginning one year from the end of the project. No individual identifying information will be included in this.
- There are no right or wrong answers; all we want are open and honest opinions.
- We request your participation in a follow up survey in approximately 4 weeks. You will be contacted with further details on the time and place for that survey. Participation in this study will require approximately 4 hours of your time in total. There will be approximately 200 participants in total in this study. There is no risk to you in participating in this study. Throughout the study we will ask some questions and discuss some topics related to your personal beliefs and attitudes. All answers to these questions will be kept confidential, but if there are any questions that you are uncomfortable with you may decline to answer. While there will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this survey, by answering these questions you will help us to understand how the public feels about reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Your assistance in this regard is very much appreciated. Upon completion of the program, you will be offered a small stipend to cover your transportation expenses.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the project at any time. I will answer any questions you have regarding this study. If you later have any questions regarding this study, you may contact the Social Scientist’s Association (SSA) at +94 11 2501339.

Only study team members (USIP team and Social Scientists Association team in Sri Lanka) will have access to the information about participants, recorded audio, and transcripts. These will be stored in a locked shared file; and
Information will be stored for the duration of the study. Any participant information will be deleted after that, but transcripts and recording will be maintained in USIP secure files for future reference.

I agree to participate in this survey __________________________

Please sign here