

The Third Pillar:  
The Role of Reconciliation in  
Supporting Peace Agreements

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## **Declaration**

I, Melanie Esta Sarah Garson confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

## **Abstract**

Social-psychological research suggests that parties in conflict develop a conflict identity which becomes independent of the conflict itself contributing to the breakdown of agreements and the continuation of the conflict. This identity, formed of collective memories, negative stereotypes, existential fears and strong emotions, requires more than a passing nod to reconciliation in a peace settlement. Yet neither policy-makers nor political science research have paid much attention to these dynamics. Traditionally considered as a complement or final stage of the conflict resolution process, reconciliation activities have not been viewed as integral to increasing the durability of peace settlements. However, if the “mind and heart” remain armed, the hand will always find a weapon, even after the most rigorous post-conflict peace-building programmes.

The central argument of the thesis is that institutionalising and implementing reconciliation measures are fundamental to increasing the durability of settlements. Utilising a new dataset, the thesis provides a statistical analysis of 259 peace agreements in 41 conflicts between 1945 and 2011 in order to test whether incorporating commitments to reconciliation activities in peace settlements reduces the likelihood of settlement breakdown.

The dynamics as to how reconciliation activities can transform conflict identities and in turn lead to supporting peace agreements are investigated through using process tracing in the case studies of Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia Herzegovina. Based on independent survey research of participants of joint reconciliation activities supported by additional interviews and evaluation reports, the cases demonstrate the process by which former enemies can become advocates of supporting non-violent approaches to conflict resolution.

Expanding the literature on conflict recurrence, post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation, with implications for both policymakers and practitioners, this research suggests that reconciliation is more than just a nod to politically correct terminology but joins security and state-building measures as a key element of post-conflict stability.

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>BiH</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>CCA</b>	Columbanus Community on Reconciliation
<b>CHPR</b>	Columba House of Peace and Reconciliation
<b>CfP</b>	Combatants for Peace
<b>CPP</b>	Community of the Peace People
<b>CRC</b>	Community Relations Council
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DDR</b>	Demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration
<b>DUP</b>	Democratic Unionist Party
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ERDF</b>	European Regional Development Fund
<b>EUSSPPR</b>	European Union Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation
<b>FAIT</b>	Families Against Intimidation and Terror
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GFAP</b>	General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>ICR</b>	Interactive Conflict Resolution
<b>IEA</b>	Interfaith Encounter Annual Report
<b>IFI</b>	International Fund for Ireland
<b>IGO</b>	Intergovernmental Organisation
<b>INCORE</b>	International Conflict Research Institute
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>INLA</b>	Irish National Liberation Army

<b>IRA</b>	Irish Republican Army
<b>L.I.V.E</b>	Let's Involve the Victim's Experience
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NICRA</b>	Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
<b>NILT</b>	Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey
<b>NISA</b>	Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey
<b>NISRA</b>	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
<b>NIVT</b>	Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust
<b>NIWC</b>	Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
<b>OSCE</b>	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>PCFF</b>	Parents' Circle Family Forum
<b>P/CRO</b>	Peace and Conflict Resolution Organisations
<b>PIRA</b>	Provisional Irish Republican Army
<b>PLO</b>	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
<b>PRG</b>	Peace and Reconciliation Group
<b>PRIO</b>	International Peace Research Institute, Oslo
<b>PSNI</b>	Police Service of Northern Ireland
<b>SPEUPB</b>	Special EU Programmes Body
<b>TRC</b>	Truth and Reconciliation Commissions
<b>UCDP</b>	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
<b>UDA</b>	Ulster Defence Association
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

<b>UPC</b>	Ulster People's College
<b>US</b>	United States of America
<b>USIP</b>	United States Institute of Peace
<b>USSR</b>	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
<b>UVF</b>	Ulster Volunteer Force

## Chapter 1: Introduction

*“It will be a huge challenge: to learn to live a life that is not defined by hostility, anxiety, and violence. To foresee a continuum of existence and a constant future. To educate children based on views and beliefs that are not shaped inevitably by the fear of death. To raise our children not based on the daily fear that they may be taken from us at any moment”*

David Grossman (2009)

### **Why Do Peace Agreements Break Down? The Case for Psychological Disarmament?**

Over the last twenty years, understanding the causes of the breakdown of peace agreements and subsequent conflict recurrence has been a continued source of challenge to both conflict scholars and practitioners. The theorised “pillars” of a sustainable peace include measures to manage the root causes of the conflict, post-conflict peacebuilding mechanisms, military restructuring, and social, political and economic institutions. Scholars hold differing opinions as to the significance of these mechanisms in reducing the likelihood of agreement breakdown, though there are some, such as those promoting demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR), which have become a standard and integral element of peace agreements. Yet, when everyday objects such as cars, bulldozers, matches, and machetes can become a weapon in a politically motivated action, the effects of physical disarmament and demilitarisation may well be limited. Left to their own devices, militarised hearts and minds can in themselves be akin to an armed weapon, ready to discharge itself at any time. Consequently, should mechanisms to facilitate “psychological disarmament” be considered as critical in preventing agreement breakdown and conflict recurrence as physical DDR?

Psychological disarmament involves recalibrating the “shared repertoire” of beliefs that prevent individuals of societies involved in conflict from supporting peace processes and agreements. It requires transforming the beliefs that form the basis of a conflict identity – an identity that is characterised by a culture of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2013: 257). The beliefs by which civilian “individual farmers, shopkeepers and workers voluntarily choose to enlist in the armies” (Walter, 2004:372) and why they may choose to do so on a recurring basis even when the losses may outweigh the potential gains. This shared repertoire of beliefs is similar to what Darby and Mac Ginty (2000: 260) term the “custom of violence,” the dynamic that emerges in which society’s norms of acceptable behaviour are fundamentally changed and violence becomes normalised and entrenched into the very essence of that society.

Conflict identities often become “frozen, resistant to change, and this inhibits the de-escalation of the conflict and its peaceful resolution” (Bar-Tal, 2013: 17), as they prevent society members from acknowledging and embracing opportunities for peace (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2009, 2011; Halperin & Bar-Tal, 2011; Hameiri & Halperin, 2015; Reykowski, 2015). They not only reduce openness to new information that would facilitate a willingness to compromise (Halperin and Bar-Tal, 2011), but can also lead to a propensity to seek out information that is biased against peaceful initiatives (Porat et

al., 2015). It can lead to a structural and psychological commitment to the conflict, which becomes independent of the conflict itself (Kelman, 2007: 90-99; Bar Tal, 2013: 24). The amalgamation of these individual beliefs can come to drive the social behaviour within that society (Bar-Tal, 2000: xvi). This process can contribute to the derailment of peace processes and the lasting resolution of the conflict.

### **The Potential Role of Conflict Identities in Current Conflicts**

Whilst it can be said that a measure of psychological armament is present in all violent conflicts, hardened conflict identities are more likely to emerge in the course of so-called intractable conflicts (Bar Tal, 2007; Hameiri & Halperin, 2015).<sup>1</sup> Such conflicts have come under greater scrutiny with the shift in the changing nature of conflicts since 1945, which has seen civil conflict (also termed internal or intrastate conflict) become the most common form of warfare (Lacina, 2006: 273; Collier et al., 2008: 6).<sup>2</sup> Civil conflicts have been so pervasive, that since 1950 nearly one third of all states have experienced a civil conflict that resulted in over a thousand battle deaths in a given year, and over half of all nations have experienced civil conflict that resulted in over 25 deaths in a year (Blattman & Miguel, 2010: 4).

These intrastate conflicts include ethnic conflicts, ideological wars, wars of independence and secession. Their protracted nature is evident in that, on average, they can last over six times longer than the average interstate conflict (Collier et al., 2004: 253), and recur with such frequency that, in some countries, civil wars have become an ever-present state (Quinn et al., 2007: 168; Doyle and Sambanis, 2000). Their persistence is evident in studies that find that post-conflict periods survive for approximately just over six years before the renewal of hostilities, with only 41 percent of post-conflict periods surviving the first decade (Elbadawi et al. 2008: 455). Although Collier et al. (2008) find that 60 percent of peace periods survive their first decade, 25 of the 30 conflicts active in 2010 had experienced conflict in the previous ten years (Merz, 2012: 202), suggesting that a large number of post-conflict situations are at risk of relapsing into violence.

Some argue that conflicts persist until the dispute at its heart has been completely resolved (Merz, 2012: 208). Consequently, some of the conflicts are decades old, with 66 percent of the conflicts that were active for five or more years between 2000 and 2009 and 75 percent of those recording fighting in all ten years had been active in both of the previous decades. Take as examples conflicts such as the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict, which lasted nearly three decades (1964-1991), the Ulster conflict in Northern Ireland lasted over three decades (1961-1995); and the Israeli-Arab/Israeli-Palestinian conflict that has endured since 1948. These conflicts may not always be active but can be frozen or

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<sup>1</sup> These conflicts are also known as “protracted conflicts” (Azar, 1990; Brecher & Wilkenfeld, 1998; Crighton & MacIver, 1990) or “persistent conflicts” (Merz, 2012), and share elements with those conflicts termed as “malignant conflicts” (Deutsch, 1985), “deep-rooted conflicts” (Burton, 1987; Mitchell, 1981), and “enduring rivalries” (Goertz & Diehl, 1993; Huth & Russert, 1993; Mor & Maoz, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Fearon and Laitin (2003: 75) highlighted that between 1945 and 1999, there were nearly five times as many intrastate wars as interstate wars, resulting in five times as many deaths.

“abeyant conflicts” (Crocker et al., 2004), such as Bosnia, Cyprus, and Kosovo, which have the potential to break down into violent conflict, as we saw with the eruption of violence in Kosovo in 2011 (Merz, 2012: 206).

For as many conflicts that have occurred or occurring, there have been even more peace agreements. Between 1975 and 2011 there were 216 peace agreements agreed in 60 conflicts (Högbladh, 2011). This reflects that whilst we are able to bring about peace agreements, we are not necessarily bringing about long-lasting peace agreements. Some have said that many of these agreements are little but “short term triumph[s] of international diplomacy” (Collier et al., 2008: 26). Some may never be implemented at all with 77 of the agreements between 1975 and 2011 never being implemented (Högbladh, 2011: 53). Civil war peace settlements are notoriously fragile and, some suggest, more likely to lead to renewed violence than civil wars resolved by military victory (Wagner, 1993: 255; Licklider, 1995). Similarly, Doyle and Sambanis (2000: 786) found that 65 percent of civil settlements resulted in the resumption of violence within two years. This failure in the sustainability and implementation of peace agreements has led to an acknowledgment that “the effective handling of post-conflict periods is arguably the most important component in international efforts to bring down the recurrence of civil war” (Elbadawi et al., 2008: 458).

Further, the civilian dimensions of these wars have increased the need to look at the factors that influence populations’ willingness to engage in conflict (Kreutz, 2010: 247). Kalyvas has highlighted that one of the key features differentiating today’s civil wars from conventional wars is not the levels of bloodshed and violence, but rather the extent that civilians are on the front lines of the battle (Kalyvas, 2001). These wars, not fought on the battlefields of traditional warfare, see the people in whose name the fight for liberation, justice, or self-determination is launched paying most of the price. The breakdown of agreements is viewed by some as irrational from a cost-benefit perspective (Walter, 2004). The fact that conflicts endure despite extreme sacrifices and casualty rates suggests that they might be underpinned by deep-rooted psycho-political motivations (Holsti, 1996: 88). The continued willingness of populations to take on the risks of continuing conflict through joining and supporting rebel armies (Walter, 2004: 372) instead of embracing peace agreements points to a flaw in the post-conflict environment.

This dissertation seeks to improve on understanding of the mechanisms that prolong conflict and increase the potential for the resumption of violence. Kalyvas (2003: 475) noted that civil wars are “complex and ambiguous processes that foster an apparently massive, though variable, mix of identity and action.” Just as the conflict shapes identity, in turn identity influences the course of the conflict (cf. Oren, 2010). If an identity emerges that means commitment to conflict, ordinary people will continue to enlist in armies, peace agreements will encounter obstacles to implementation, and conflicts are likely to persist.

## **Conflict Identity and the Breakdown of Peace Agreements**

Whilst there are many definitions of conflict, this research is premised on Bar-Tal's definition of social conflict, which combines a number of definitions (cf. Mitchell, 1981; Pruitt & Rubin 1986; Fisher, 2000; Coleman, 2003; and Kreisberg, 2007) and sees conflict as "a situation in which two or more of the parties perceive their goals, intentions, and actions as being mutually incompatible and act in accordance to this perception" (Bar-Tal, 2013: 5). This definition recognises the psychological dynamics underpinning conflict and that "conflicts begin in our heads" (Bar-Tal, 2013: 7), based on subjective perception of facts, events, the self and the other (Dayton & Kreisberg, 2012: 11).

The roots of the subjective perceptions underpinning shared repertoires can often be found in the identities of the parties. Ethnicity, religion, and ideology become relevant in that they provide a basis for identification through shared characteristics or perceived differences with other groups (Bar-Tal, 2013: 13). This is the basis of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which suggests that members of social categories classify others according to the similarities and differences with themselves, that is, into "in-groups" and "out-groups" (Riek et al., 2008: 257). When one group perceives that the purpose or actions of the other group presents a realistic or symbolic threat, then the potential for the emergence or persistence of conflict is intensified (cf. (Bar-Tal, 2013: 5; Dovidio et al., 2008: 258; Dayton & Kreisberg, 2012:11).

Threats to basic psychological requirements such as positive esteem, identity, autonomy, or security can result in emotions contributing to the maintenance of conflict and create barriers to ending the conflict (Nadler and Schnabel, 2008: 38). Identity groups are motivated to take up arms to protect these needs through myth-symbol complexes that justify hostility, create a sense of victimisation, and result in the groups feeling that they are in an existential crisis (Kaufman, 2001: 30-34). The violence can be mass-led, such as in the Karabakh conflict, or elite-led such as in Serbia (ibid.: 37-38).

Persistent conflicts in which the perceived solutions are highly polarised trigger continued violence due to the "essential and existential" nature of the goals (Bar-Tal, 2013: 16). The intense socio-psychological dynamics are reflected in a set of beliefs, attitudes and emotions about goals, about the causes of the conflict and its course, about people's own group, about their rivals, and about the desired solution (ibid: 16-17). In each group, a new collective conflict identity is generated from the shared experiences, beliefs, and emotions that have resulted from the conflict. Each group's own society, history, and identity becomes defined in relation to the image of the enemy (Kelman, 2007: 99-100). The longer conflict persists, the more the conflict identity becomes entrenched, leading to the parties becoming structurally and psychologically committed to the continuing the conflict. It feeds conflicts, as ending the conflict would require a reassessment of the groups' and their members' entire outlook on life. I argue that central to explaining the breakdown of peace agreements is their ability to reconcile people with such polarised conflict identities.

## The Role of Reconciliation

Given the prevalence of the breakdown of peace settlements, it is evident that in many cases conflict resolution is failing to bring about the type of stable peace in which the probability of war is so low that it is not really contemplated by the parties (Boulding, 1978: 13). Conflict resolution efforts do not seem to be achieving the “harmony associated with a mature relationship, gentleness and love” (Boulding, 1978:13) or a “positive peace” (Galtung, 1969). Bar-Siman-Tov’s (2004: 73) paradigm of stable and lasting peace is predicated on reconciliation that emerges from basic cognitive and emotional changes of both sides. Bar-Tal (2013: 370) expands this as a change to the “worldview, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, motivations and behavioural intentions,” which needs to be reflected in new narratives and symbols. This need becomes even more acute in conflicts in which conflict identities have developed. As Bar-Siman-Tov notes (2004: 72; cf. Bar Tal, 2002)

“Reconciliation is not a requirement to end every international conflict, probably only those conflicts that are characterised as protracted and zero-sum and similar to internal conflicts and civil wars.”

Kelman (2008: 23) sets out a three-stage approach to peace-making specifically designed for identity conflicts, based on a paradigm of settlement, resolution, and reconciliation (cf. Galtung, 1969; Ramsbotham, 2005). In this framework for peace-making, *settlement* is described as a “process yielding an agreement that meets the interests of both parties to the extent that their respective power positions enable them to prevail” (Kelman, 2008: 22). Yet these mechanisms are solely a starting point within the peace-making process as they are not designed to change the quality of the relationship (ibid.). It is a relationship based on a “calculus-based trust” rather than a deep trust developed from a changed relationship and relies on parties believing that the benefits of peaceful relations outweigh the costs of violating the agreement (Bar-Tal, 2013: 368).

Conflict *resolution* goes beyond settlement in several ways: it refers to an interactive agreement rather than one imposed by third parties, to which the parties have a higher level of commitment; it addresses the parties’ basic needs and fears; it builds a degree of working trust that is not dependent on third-party surveillance; it establishes a reciprocal partnership; and it generates public support for the agreement (ibid.: 23). Conflict resolution changes the relationship between the parties, with each more committed to the belief that peace and cooperation are in their best interest, with new attitudes alongside or on top of existing attitudes (Kelman, 2003: 23.). Yet, a stable peace, particularly in conflicts in which conflict identities are engaged, requires these superimposed attitudes to become internalised so that the parties support peace. This internalisation can only be achieved through societal *reconciliation* (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004: 73).

Reconciliation is a term that was long avoided in political science, possibly due to its religious or spiritual suggestions (Nadler et al., 2008: 3). However, it has more recently become central to studies

of persistent and recurrent conflict.<sup>3</sup> Within the context of Kelman's framework for peace-making, reconciliation constitutes a step beyond conflict resolution. Conflict resolution implies a change in the identity of the parties, represented by the removal of the negation of the other as a central component of one's own identity (Kelman, 2008: 24). Through this process, parties internalise the new relationship, and their old attitudes are gradually replaced (ibid.). This is the process by which conflict identities are transformed to allow for a new form of positive intergroup relations between the parties in conflict.

### **Can Reconciliation Activities Help Prevent the Breakdown of Peace Agreements?**

The field of activities aimed at transforming conflict identities to lead them towards reconciliation involves top-down, middle level, and grassroots approaches. The field was largely pioneered by John Burton (1969, 1987) and his colleagues at University College London who, in 1965, created the concept of interactive conflict resolution (ICR) using "controlled communication" as an approach to assist the conflicts in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, which were at that time unresponsive to mediation. This approach facilitated problem-solving discussions and workshop between unofficial representatives of state or groups involved in violent protracted conflict.

Leonard Doob (1973) built upon Burton's work and particularly noted the role that the workshops could play as a precursor to negotiation. Kelman, on one of Burton's panels at a conference, coined the term the "problem-solving workshop" and in 1971 designed the first proto-type workshop for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. His numerous workshops and activities have resulted in an enormous body of literature providing insights into the social-psychological dynamics of this conflict. Ronald Fisher (1983, 1997, 2005), drawing on the work of Burton and Doob, developed an approach of "third-party consultation" largely for interpersonal peacemaking between executives, which was later applied in international settings. Vamik Volkan focuses on the psychodynamic approach to ICR, drawing on psycho-analysis to explain violent inter-communal behaviour (Volkan et al., 1991). He, along with Demetrius Julius and Joseph Montville, led a series of workshops bringing together Israelis, Egyptians, and later Palestinians, focused on the psychological aspects of the conflict. Joseph Montville (1991) built upon this psychodynamic approach to create the "track-two" diplomatic process. This track encompasses problem-solving workshops between adversaries to explore the psychological elements of the conflict in order to bring resolution. It includes strategies to influence public opinion as well as building cooperative economic relationships.

The problem-solving workshop paved the way for numerous other approaches to ICR, including intercommunal dialogues. These complement other reconciliation activities at the elite level, such as truth and reconciliation commissions and war tribunals. Utilising Allport's contact hypothesis (1954), ICR has also formed the model for many grassroots programmes, aimed at building peace from the

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<sup>3</sup> In Chapter 2, I address the many definitions of reconciliation as well as discussion of reconciliation as both an outcome and a process.

ground up. These programmes are very diverse, mostly focused on post-war counselling, inter-group forgiveness, conflict resolution training, education, and cooperative projects. Some engage the participants in formal psychological education and others aim purely to increase contact and create positive associations with the other party. Ultimately, they are all predicated on the theory that “extensive communication and interaction among the parties produces the peace benefits or dividends that are necessary for emerging a social learning process” (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004: 80). This is the type of learning process which, from the perspective of Social Identity Theory, allows for the “cognitive representations of group boundaries [to be altered] in ways that would eliminate bias” and promote attitude change towards the out-group as a whole (Riek et al., 2008: 259-260). It facilitates the “cognitive unfreezing” which allows for openness to considering new information and opportunities for conflict resolution (Cohen-Chen et al., 2014: 20).

The question is, does incorporating reconciliation processes into peace agreements make them more stable and less susceptible to breakdown?

### **Examining the Impact of Reconciliation**

Whilst studies have attempted to identify the key cause of settlement failure and breakdown in both civil wars and interstate conflicts, the effect of reconciliation mechanisms has not been widely investigated. There has been some analysis of reconciliation, particularly the influence of transitional justice mechanisms on the post-conflict environment (Stover & Weinstein, 2004; Lie et al., 2007; Chapman, 2009; Aiken, 2013), the impact of reconciliation events (Long & Brecke, 2003), and whether reconciliation can be negotiated or is in fact possible (Rosoux, 2014; 2015). Karen Brounéus (2008) set out to analyse reconciliation through designing a structured method for measuring national reconciliation initiatives, but this is limited to acts at the leadership level and to the cases of Mozambique and Rwanda. Lund and McDonald (2015) have recently examined ICR initiatives aimed at facilitating cooperation between local leaders of opposing sides. Their study provides valuable insights into methods for systematically assessing such programmes, as well as the optimal conditions for success from a set of diverse cases, but their study is also limited to leadership and middle-tier actors.

More recently, there has been increased scholarship examining the effects of conflict on political and inter-group identities, political growth, and support for peace processes (Annan & Blattman, 2011; Blattman, 2009; and Balcells 2012). Dyrstad et al. (2011, 2015) have examined the more micro-level effects of individual attitudes on the sustainability of peace agreements and the role that reconciliation might play in preventing conflict recurrence. Badran (2014: 196) has highlighted that the self-sustainability of peace agreements depends on creating cooperative behaviour between the parties. He suggests that facilitating group interaction through legal mechanisms in the peace agreement can lead to sustainable cooperation (ibid.: 214).

This opens the question as to whether the transformation of *individual* conflict identities through increased interaction can create *societal* change that helps sustain peace agreements. Hermann (2004: 40) highlighted that that “the root of the difficulties in preventing wars and reaching a stable peace should be sought not only on the elite level or in the formal procedures and documents but to no less an extent on the people to people plane.” Similarly, “bottom-up” approaches rely on people’s role in recognising opportunities for conflict resolution, and highlights the significance of societal and group-based attitudes (Cohen-Chen et al., 2014: 12). The multiple levels at which conflict resolution needs to be built emphasises the need for peace agreements to address measures for reconciliation at all level of society. Baron (2008: 284-285) suggests that the individual and societal processes are not separate and that there is a pattern of “circular causality” in that “reconciliation occurs at the interface between individual and group-level change processes.”

This dissertation builds upon these theories by investigating the role that reconciliation activities have in supporting peace agreements. It examines whether incorporating reconciliation clauses that commit parties to increased interaction and cooperation results in more stable peace agreements. Further, it theorises and traces the process by which the hardened attitudes that form the basis of conflict identities can be transformed into identities committed to conflict resolution.

The following key questions underpin this dissertation:

1. Does including commitment to reconciliation activities in peace agreements have any impact on increasing the sustainability of a peace agreement?
2. What is the process by which reconciliation activities transform conflict identities into identities that are supportive of non-violent approaches to resolving the conflict?
3. How do groups of people committed to non-violent approaches create ripple effects at the wider societal level that could influence government commitment to reconciliation?
4. What type of activities or action (e.g. educational activities, people-to-people programming, cross border cooperative ventures, joint economic activity) aimed at reconciliation have the greatest impact in transforming conflict identities? Does it matter if these are initiated by governments or civil-society actors?

Researching these questions should also provide some insights into the following questions, which would be valuable in formulating policy guidance in this area.

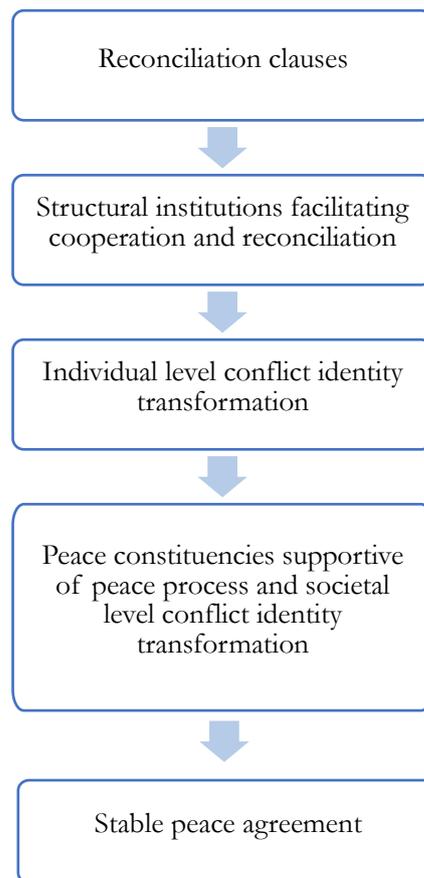
1. To what extent should architects of peace agreements ensure that obligations towards reconciliation activity are included in the agreement?
2. Which actors (governments or non-governmental organisations (NGOs)/civil society organisations (CSOs) are likely to be the most successful at implementing such reconciliation

programmes and how should the peace agreement and subsequent post-conflict peacebuilding work be designed to accommodate them?

### **Argument**

Whilst there is a rich literature on the social-psychological impact of various aspects of intergroup reconciliation (cf. Hewstone et al., 2008b; Tam et al., 2009; Nadler et al., 2008) and the impact of contact and coexistence programmes (cf. Chayes & Minnow, 2003; Fisher, 2005; Kelman; Maoz, 2011), there has been less analysis of the impact of joint reconciliation activities, and the extent to which they contribute to stabilising peace agreements and bringing about conflict resolution. Using a multi-methods approach, I examine the potential impact of including reconciliation clauses into an agreement in increasing the sustainability of peace agreements. Figure 1.1 sets out the overall process by which reconciliation clauses can lead to more stable peace agreements. I argue that including reconciliation into peace agreements facilitates support for institutions that promote cooperation and reconciliation. These institutions provide opportunities for people to transform their individual conflict identities, which in turn leads to shift in the societal conflict identity to one more supportive of the peace agreement. The peace agreement is then situated in a less hostile societal environment, in which people are less likely to oppose its implementation and may even actively attempt to ensure its success.

**Figure 1.1 The Link between Reconciliation Clauses and Stable Peace**



In order to examine if there is a correlation between reconciliation clauses and stable peace agreements, I test quantitatively whether building commitments to reconciliation into peace agreements and subsequent reconciliation activity has any impact on the sustainability of a peace agreement. I built a new dataset, the Peace Agreements and Reconciliation Dataset, covering 259 agreements in 41 conflicts since 1945. The dataset builds upon existing peace agreement datasets to include detailed data on the reconciliation provisions included in these agreements, the strength of the clause and their implementation. The Large-N findings provide suggest that overall reconciliation clauses contribute to decreasing the likelihood of peace agreements breaking down, and that government-led reconciliation activity can have an important role in stabilising agreements.

I then turn to process tracing to examine the mechanisms that are not captured in the quantitative study. The purpose is to establish how reconciliation activities can contribute to the building and maintaining of a stable peace. In the case study chapters of Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia Herzegovina, I trace the process by which conflict identities are transformed through the participation in joint reconciliation activities into identities. Surveys of alumni of reconciliation activities in these cases provide insights into the most effective elements of these activities in inducing

this transformation, thus providing guidance for policymakers and practitioners when considering the design of joint reconciliation activities. The dissertation concludes by highlighting obstacles to successful implementation or ripple effects of reconciliation activities, which can contribute to our understanding of the challenges facing reconciliation activities in the post-conflict peacebuilding context.

## **Conclusion**

When peace settlements break down, fragile bonds of trust between the parties may be eroded, further hardening conflict identities and consequently making the conflict more entrenched. There has been much analysis of the reasons for settlement breakdown and recommendations to increase their stability, yet it is only recently that academics have started to examine the importance of realigning attitudes that have developed during the course of the conflict. The “mobilised mind” that can only relate to other parties in a framework of conflict will always be ready to engage in conflict if left unattended. Therefore, demobilising and disarming the mind is central to conflict resolution efforts.

Social-psychologists advocate reconciliation as a means to assist the warring parties in redefining their conflict identity so that they can support the conflict resolution process, rendering the settlement agreement more stable. If it is the case that the “more dimensions of interaction that [an] agreement institutionalises the better the chances of lasting peace” (Badran, 2014: 214), then the central argument of this dissertation is that settlements that incorporate commitments to reconciliation will be more stable than those which do not. Facilitating change in the conflict identities of the parties at the grassroots level will generate attitudes more supportive of the resolution of the conflict, and ultimately sustain the peace agreement. The claim is not that these activities can achieve a stable and sustainable peace on their own, and neither can they substitute for other initiatives in the peace building process, but the study suggests that the role of reconciliation clauses is perhaps “greater than previously recognised” and bring us closer to the “ultimate destination” (Lund in Lund & MacDonald, 2015: 30) of a stable peace.

In the following chapter, I examine the literature on the breakdown of peace agreements and address the role of reconciliation. It explains the process by which conflict identities develop and can become independent drivers of the conflict. This leads to a more detailed analysis of the processes required to transform conflict identities and how these can be operationalised in the context of conflict de-escalation and resolution. It provides greater insight into the nature of reconciliation and its critical function in transforming the key cognitive and perceptual processes that are at the heart of conflict psychology. This discussion provides the basis and reasoning for my hypotheses. Chapter 3 sets out my research design and the methods that will be employed to both quantitatively and qualitatively test my hypotheses. In this chapter, I explain how the Peace Agreements and Reconciliation Dataset was constructed. I also explain the process tracing methodology that is used in the three qualitative

case studies of Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia Herzegovina. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the statistical analysis based on the Peace Agreements and Reconciliation Dataset to try to ascertain if there is a correlation between the inclusion of reconciliation clauses and the stability of a peace agreement. The final chapters are dedicated to demonstrating the process by which conflict identities are transformed through participation in reconciliation programmes. In these chapters, I examine the three case studies for commonalities as to elements of the reconciliation process that have greatest impact in transforming conflict identities and bringing about greater support for peace agreements. Finally, I conclude by assessing the lessons that can be of value for architects of peace agreements as to the optimal approaches for disarming conflict identities in the course of a holistic conflict resolution process.

## Chapter 2: Understanding the Need for Psychological Disarmament

*“If all the involved politicians completely settled their dispute tomorrow, by developing a comprehensive settlement over agreed structures for the future political landscape of the entire region, the settlement would still stand or fall on the presence of widespread acceptance. For it to flourish in a durable form, it would depend on the existence of an atmosphere of trust, respect, cooperation and optimism”*

David Bloomfield (1997)

### Introduction

The pillars upon which a sustainable peace agreement rest reflect the need to address and redress the direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence that are the cornerstones of Galtung’s conflict triangle (Galtung, 1969). Psychological disarmament is one of these pillars, alongside numerous other conflict resolution mechanisms, which can help decrease the likelihood of the agreement breaking down and contribute to conditions in which a positive peace can emerge. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the current literature on the breakdown of agreements and the literature that examines the role that reconciliation might have in this dynamic. I then explore how conflict identities develop and how the need to address these identities can be critical in increasing the sustainability of peace agreements. I also examine the various definitions of reconciliation and how I conceptualise and operationalise it. The latter half of the chapter explains how various types of reconciliation activities influence conflict identities. It also sets out the nexus between individual transformation and wider impact on the political level, demonstrating how the ripple effects of a process of reconciliation can provide the “atmosphere of trust, respect, cooperation and optimism” to which Bloomfield refers to in the quote above, as such ensuring that peace agreements endure.

### Examining the Breakdown of Agreements

Recent scholarship examining the breakdown of agreements focuses on the role and content of the negotiated agreement in preventing war recurrence. Scholars have emphasised various elements of the pre and post-conflict conditions and solutions broadly corresponding to military, political, and social conditions. Military factors investigated have included the contested impact of DDR programmes and the challenges inherent in decommissioning when trust between the parties is fragile in raw post-conflict scenarios (Collier et al., 2003; Knight & Özerdam, 2004; Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007). This is an area that still requires further research (Hartzell, 2013). Studies focused on alleviating the problems of fragile trust and security dilemmas that can prevent the implementation of peace agreements have assessed the impact of third party guarantors in overcoming these commitment problems (Walter & Snyder, 1999; Walter, 1997, 2004; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003; Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008). More specifically, they have examined whether peacekeeping forces reduce post-conflict violence or whether they can potentially aggravate the post-conflict balance and contribute to the breakdown of the peace agreement (Fortna, 2004; Doyle & Sambanis, 2000, 2006; Sambanis, 2008; Hegre et al. 2015).

Beyond the overall questions of whether partition is preferable in conflicts in which parties are highly polarised and geographically homogenous (Kaufmann, 1996; Walter, 2004; Sambanis, 2009; Sambanis and Milanovic, 2014), research focusing on political factors has largely emphasised the role of power sharing agreements in bringing about a more stable post-conflict environment (Walter, 2002; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003, 2007; Mattes & Savun, 2009). Questions such as whether power sharing further polarises parties leading to the destabilising the post-conflict environment in the long-term (Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008) continue to prevail, with recent findings suggesting that executive power-sharing is particularly unstable (Martin, 2013) and that it can increase the risks of in-fighting between power-sharing partners (Bormann et al, 2014). The role of democracy and its facilitation of non-violent alternatives to achieve political objectives has also been emphasised (Hegre et al., 2001; Mukherjee, 2006). The strength of the state institutions (Fearon & Laitin, 2003) and local capacities (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006) to engage in peace-building and sustain the post-conflict environment have also been examined. The quantitative studies have also included analysis of the role of economic factors on war recurrence (Collier et al., 2003; Fearon & Laitin, 2003), and infant mortality rates (Walter, 2003), reflecting the dominant view that the onset and recurrence of civil war is highly linked to poverty and state weakness (Call, 2012: 28). Similarly, Merz (2012: 189) supports the proposition that international investment and post-war economic development increase the likelihood of sustainable peace agreements. More recently, Walter (2015) has built upon these theories to highlight the role of political and legal institutions in constraining elites and preventing the recurrence of civil wars.

Studies focusing on social factors have investigated a wide range of potential correlations, including the effect of the duration of the war, found to negatively impact the duration of peace by Fortna (2004) and Walter (2004) (*see also* Quinn et al., 2007). Studies focused on the effect of identity, ethnic or religious fractionalisation on war recurrence have yielded differing findings pointing to a “complex but statistically significant relationship with war recurrence” (Call, 2012: 56; *see also* Walter, 2011; and Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Overall, ethnic and religious fractionalisation can influence the likelihood of war recurrence, however, it has less effect at the extreme of its values such as when there is very high levels or very low levels of fractionalisation (Call, 2012: 57).

The nature of the peace process itself can reflect on the stability of the agreement. The presence of spoilers (Stedman et al., 2002: 7-8, Nilsson, 2008), and parties’ incentives to renegotiate the agreement in line with changed interests (Werner, 1999) are likely to impact implementation. Werner and Yuen (2005) utilise Fortna’s (2004) data to argue that conflict often recurs as parties consciously choose war in the belief that it will lead to a better settlement, and that this can be avoided by ensuring that both parties “share similar enough beliefs about the likely outcome of the war.” Nilsson (2008) finds that the prominent view that settlement durability is increased if all the parties are included in the agreement (Hampson, 1996; Pearlman, 2009; Stedman, 1997) does not always hold true and that the exclusion of a rebel group does not necessary affect whether the signatories will uphold the peace.

However, Nilsson (2012) later finds that the inclusion of civil society does have a role in increasing the durability of peace. A number of studies (Toft, 2010; Collier et al., 2003; Suhrke & Samset, 2007; Quinn et al., 2007; Licklider, 1995; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003) have focused on whether the type of victory influences the possibilities of war recurrence, with military victories, and particularly rebel victories (Toft, 2010), bringing about an increased likelihood of post-conflict stability. Although, the research places varying degrees of importance on the factors supposed to contribute or prevent war recurrence, common themes have emerged. However, the role of reconciliation in preventing war recurrence has not been as widely explored.

### **The Role of Reconciliation in Preventing the Breakdown of Agreements**

There has been relatively little analysis of the impact of reconciliation on the breakdown of peace agreements, although it is increasingly becoming a focus of study. Long and Brecke (2003) examined the effects of “reconciliation events” on the durability of peace in inter and intrastate conflicts. This study analysed acts by senior representatives of both sides in conflicts between 1957 and 2003 and found that in the 11 cases of reconciliation events, seven did not return to violent conflict. They also found that 91 percent of the cases which did not have a reconciliation event returned to violent conflict. This research is the springboard for Brounéus’ study (2008), which sets out a structured method for analysing national reconciliation initiatives. However, her study also focuses on elite-level initiatives (in Rwanda and Mozambique) and does not necessarily provide any insights on the link between reconciliation and the sustainability of peace agreements.

The majority of larger studies on the effects of reconciliation have been focused on transitional justice mechanisms (*see* Mendeloff, 2004; Weinstein & Stover, 2004; and Barsalou, 2007). They all highlighted the need for further empirical studies to test the impact of reconciliation initiatives. Lie et al. (2007) provide a quantitative study that examines the effects of post-conflict justice mechanisms on the duration of peace. More recently, Gurses and Rost (2013) found that the way ethnic groups interact with each other after the war and the reduction of ethnic discrimination is more significant in preventing war recurrence than the intensity of violence during the war. It points to the need for further study of how post-conflict measures to reduce social and psychological polarisation between the parties in conflict can impact the stability of peace agreements. Similarly, Dyrstad et al. (2011, 2015,) have started examining the micro-level effects of individual attitudes on the sustainability of peace agreements and the role that reconciliation might play in preventing conflict recurrence. This expands a growing body of literature examining the psychological foundations of political engagement, particularly after traumatic experiences of conflict (Blattman, 2009; Balcells, 2012; Staub, 2013; Taylor, 2016).

Scholars have questioned whether reconciliation is a process that can be negotiated (Rosoux: 2013) and the impact of the timing of the negotiation processes on reconciliation initiatives. Similarly, Fletcher (2009: 55) focuses on the sequencing and timing of transitional justice mechanisms and the

extent that these mechanisms are dependent upon a range of factors including culture, the legal environment, rule of law, and economic development. Rosoux (2013, 2014) provides arguments as to whether reconciliation is also necessary or appropriate, as there are instances that reconciliation initiatives may need to be predicated by a certain measure of healing in society.

However, there has been less comprehensive analysis of the impact of grassroots intergroup encounters and their contribution to stabilising peace agreements. Much of this work has been focused on the analysis of individual programmes, such as those in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which are focused on specific aspects or techniques used within the programmes, the direct effects of the interactions, and how to improve the quality of the interaction (Maoz, 2000, 2011; Suleiman, 2004; Bar-On & Kassem, 2004). Similarly, in the Northern Ireland context, Hewstone et al. (2008b) examine the effect of intergroup contact in reducing prejudice and improved intergroup relations, and trust-building as envisaged by the Belfast Agreement, but they do not assess the impact of these activities on the sustainability of the agreement. Scholars have brought together collections of successful civil society initiatives that involve reconciliation or co-existence that have contributed to peace building (cf. Chayes & Minow, 2003; Tongeren et al.; 2005; Weiner, 1998), but there still remains a lack of systematic analysis of their role in preventing conflict recurrence. Some studies have involved more middle/track-two level analysis, such as Fisher's (2005) survey of 75 "third party consultations" and Kelman's (1998) evaluations of the transfer and impact of the problem-solving workshops involving participants who already had political influence.

Yet large scale or long-term impact assessment has for many years seemed "impressionistic and anecdotal, with little consideration of potential ripple effects" (Prendergast and Plumb 2002: 38). There is also a sense that some of the literature overstates the objectives and impacts of their projects, and that the evaluations of these programmes do not provide generalizable findings (Lund, 2015: 34-35). Lund and Macdonald (2015) recently tried to close this gap in their study of six unofficial conflict resolution initiatives. However, as with Fisher (2005) and Kelman (1998), this research is limited to those with some measure of involvement in politics and leadership and does not provide a complete picture of the potential ripple effects of grass-roots activities. Similarly, USIP's recent Reconciliation in Practice project (McKone, 2015) has sought to provide an overview of reconciliation practices worldwide, their evaluation mechanisms and potential impacts. Here, too, the project highlighted the difficulties in developing indicators of demonstrable impact, and evaluation practices that yield widely applicable lessons (ibid.: 42).

My study, therefore, aims to extend the literature on causes of the breakdown of peace agreements and conflict recurrence by examining whether reconciliation can disarm the conflict identities that fuel many conflicts.

## Understanding Recurrent or Persistent Conflicts

Intrastate conflicts have been particularly persistent both in their duration and rates of recurrence. Blattman & Miguel (2010: 4) highlighted the enduring nature of these conflicts and noted that 20 percent of states have experienced at least ten years of civil conflict since 1960. Quinn et al. (2007), Elbadawi (2008) and Collier et al. (2008) all built upon Doyle and Sambanis' (2000) findings to demonstrate the high levels of recurrence of civil wars, and that these recurrences have increased. Similarly, the 2011 World Development Report highlighted how all civil wars that had begun since 2003 was in a country that had previously had a civil war (Merz, 2012: 210). Whilst there exists some debate on the coding of the duration of these conflicts, as to whether they are in fact one long conflict or a series of conflict recurrences (cf. Elbadawi et al., 2008: 455; Merz, 2012: 207), the rate of renewed violence within five years of the purported end of the conflict has risen from less than 20 percent in the 1960s to 60 percent in the new millennium (Merz, 2012: 210).

Licklider (2005: 33) highlights that, intractable conflict is a “misleadingly simple term” but the conflicts themselves are “extraordinary” owing to their “intransigence, complexity, persistence, and malignancy” which require new approaches to examine them (Coleman, 2003: 4). The phenomenon was first identified by Edward Azar (1986) as “conflicts between communal groups that spill over national boundaries, linked to an “intangible” need, and drives high levels of violence (Bercovitch, 2005: 100). Multiple definitions of intractable conflicts have since emerged (*see* Crocker et al., 2005: 12-14; Kreisberg, 1993, 1998; Bar-Tal, 2013; Zartman, 2005). The key common elements that differentiate these types of conflicts from other conflicts are the elements of protraction/longevity, their pervasive nature (including all areas of societal life), violence, and goals that are seen as existential, perceived to be irresolvable and zero-sum in nature (*see* Bar Tal, 2007, 2013; Kreisberg, 1993, Cohen-Chen et al., 2013, 2014). Bar-Tal emphasises that the “use of violence is the most critical characteristic in turning intergroup conflict into an intractable conflict” due to their psychological as well as physical effects, as seen in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Israel-Palestine, and the Chechen-Russian conflicts (2013: 40-41). These psychological effects include the development of societal beliefs that become the prism through which the conflict is viewed and leads to negative intergroup emotions (Wohl et al., 2016: 65; Cohen-Chen et al., 2013: 1) that form part of the psychological armament or conflict identity that fuel conflicts. As such, intractable conflicts can be seen as bottom-up rather than top-down processes (Halperin, 2016: 11), and consequently the key to their resolution lies in addressing the roots of these conflict identities.

## The Development of Conflict Identities

The development of identities can be analysed from a number of perspectives. Constructivism views identities as social relationships that can change with time and context (Klotz and Lynch, 2007: 65; Wendt, 1999; Fearon, 1999; *see also* Deutsch 1953; Gellner, 1983; Anderson 1983). However, recently, some have highlighted the danger of “clichéd constructivism” that has led to constructivist interpretation becoming “weary, stale, flat and unprofitable” (Brubaker, 2004: 3). Brubaker (2004), amongst others, has highlighted the contribution that other disciplines can add to constructivist thought on identity, particularly those based on cognitive perspectives. Valuable insights can be drawn from sociological emphasis on intergroup roles, anthropological focus on symbols as signifiers of race or nationality, or cultural studies’ emphasis on ideology or religion as the basis of collective identities. The social-psychological perspective breaks these down to focus on the process by which individuals adopt or reject specific self-understandings (Klotz and Lynch, 2007: 65)

Indeed, Checkel (2001: 561-562) has emphasised that constructivists sometimes under-theorise the mechanisms of interaction by which learning and change emerges, and advocates drawing lessons from social-psychology in order to better understand the processes underlying change in beliefs and attitudes. Similarly, Welch Larson (2012: 59) highlights how constructivists are sometimes criticised for taking identities as exogenous and do not look at the micro-processes or causal mechanisms central to their formation. Understanding identity requires unpacking the “generative socio-cognitive mechanisms that underlie identity formation” (Welch Larson, 2012: 62). Similarly, Kaufman (2012) emphasises the role that psychology has in informing constructivism in that it provides the insights into the process underpinning the action. Hobsbawm (2012:10) highlighted that the forces of nationhood and nationalism could not be understood without analysing the processes that emerge on the grass-roots level, “the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings, and interests of ordinary people.” Hale (2008) similarly utilises research on psychology, including Tajfel’s Social Identity Theory, to help understand ethnic identity. Therefore, in order to understand whether reconciliation can be successful in disarming conflict identities, this thesis uses the social-psychological approach to understand the processes by which these identities are developed.

Long-running violent conflicts are the grounds for large number of negative interactions between the parties, consequently breeding “prejudice, mistrust, hatred, and animosity” (Bar Tal, 2013: 51). The persistence of these psychological dynamics over time leads to the “evolution of a socio-psychological infrastructure that includes collective memory, ethos of conflict, and emotion orientations” (Bar Tal, 2013: 52). This “infrastructure” in time becomes embedded in the collective psyche of the subsequent generation, thus fuelling new generations committed to the conflict. The “shared repertoire” in regards to the conflict “becomes an investment in the conflict, because it supports and fuels its continuation” (Bar Tal, 2013: 16-17). In this way, the longevity of the conflict “has a determinative effect on the emerging cultures of both societies” involved in a conflict (*ibid.*). It

becomes a form of psychological “inner armament” that needs to be disarmed. If conflict identity is a potential driver of conflict escalation and an obstacle to successful peace building, it takes its place amongst the other elements that need to be addressed in a peace agreement in order to bring about a lasting end to protracted conflict.

Indeed, the conflict identity results in a structural and psychological commitment to the conflict which becomes independent of the conflict itself (Kelman 2007: 90-99; Bar Tal, 2013: 24). As it becomes more entrenched, the relationship between the parties passes a psychological “point of no return” that redefines the relationship between the parties as conflictual (Rubin et al., 1994: 99). This conflict identity, or “intractable syndrome” (Bar Tal, 2013: 56), is a dynamic by which the original incompatibilities become secondary, to some extent, to the normalisation of hostility and violence, to the point that the parties develop “a sense of reality in which the hostilities are as natural as the landscape” (Coleman, 2006: 541). The parties often do not perceive that there are any other options than living with the conflict (Bar Tal, 2013: 52) and are psychologically committed to an identity that is defined by their role within the conflict. The conflict permeates their consciousness, attitudes, and beliefs and becomes an inherent part of their being. Revising their attitude towards the conflict would involve “jeopardi[sing] their entire world view” and force a process of introspection in which they would have to closely examine their entire belief system (Kelman, 2007: 91), or become “vulnerable to an unacceptable loss in a value central to their self-identities or self-esteem” (Deutsch, 1985: 263).

Bar Tal (2013: 52) identifies the key elements of conflict identity as including “collective memory,” “ethos of conflict,” and “emotional orientations.” Similarly, Coleman (2006: 538-9) refers to the effects of “oppositional group identities,” “strong emotionality,” and “malignant social processes.” These encompass the normative processes that contribute to the formation, escalation, and commitment to the conflict, including the quest for recognition, sense of victimisation, and formation of collective moods (Kelman, 2007: 61).

Collective memory or a collective narrative is an element of the conflict identity that is developed and hardened over the course of a long-running conflict. This shared narrative is a non-objective “socially constructed narrative that has some basis in events but is biased, selective and distorted in the way that it presents societal needs” (Bar Tal, 2013: 141). Each party develops its own narrative of collective memory that is often very different and may reflect the contradicting aspirations of each society (Bar Tal, 2013: 144). The collective memory is often intensified and solidified by extreme trauma that the society has experienced and the “transgenerational transmission” of that trauma (Volkan, 1998: 48). These traumas, such as the Holocaust, the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, and the Navajo Long Walk, create a “shared mental image of a massive tragedy that leads to shame, humiliation, helplessness and difficulty in mourning over losses within a large group” (Volkan, 2006: 17; Bar-Tal, 2013: 146-148). This focus on a “chosen trauma” (Volkan, 1998: 48) can alter the parties’ perceptions and have detrimental effects on their sense of victimisation, often due to the fact that

the mourning process has been incomplete or non-existent (Bar Tal, 2013: 146). Ultimately, the maintenance of the collective memory is a fundamental part of the conflict identity, which feeds off the support of the “conflict ethos” and “emotional orientations and allows for the perpetuation of “a self-righteous and ethnocentric narrative that not only hides one’s misdeeds and deficiencies but also blocks information about the humaneness of the rival group” (Bar Tal, 2013: 172-173). Consequently, this sense of victimisation and formation of collective mood creates barriers that prevent the de-escalation or resolution of conflict (Kelman, 2007:81-82).

Bar Tal (1998, 2000, 2007, and 2013: 175-176) divides the “ethos of conflict” into eight central themes of beliefs: the justness of one’s own goals, opponent de-legitimation, self-victimhood, positive self-image, security, patriotism, and unity. Underpinning these are perceptual and cognitive processes such as stereotyping, ethnocentrism, selective perception, self-fulfilling prophecies, and cognitive rigidity (Coleman, 2006; Kelman, 2007). The mirror images, in which both parties form parallel images of the self and the other with the values reversed, lead to the other party’s aggression being considered an inherent part of their nature, ideology, system, religion, or character (Kelman: 2007).<sup>4</sup> This perception of another group’s action as inherent to the nature of the group is the lynchpin of the de-legitimation, demonization, and dehumanisation of the group that can have deadly results.

This process of de-legitimation, demonization, and dehumanisation is one of the most powerful elements in intractable conflict as it provides the framework to overturn the normal “self-sanction” that regulates humane conduct and instead sanctions violent action against the other party in the conflict (Bar Tal, 2013; Bar Tal & Hammack, 2012; Bar Tal & Teichmann, 2005; Kelman, 2001; Opatow, 1990). Beyond facilitating the moral disengagement that allows parties to engage in extreme violence against innocents, it contributes to the development of a psychological framework by which the parties are able to recast objectively repugnant action as being acceptable within conventional norms or even as serving a higher moral purpose (Bandura, 1998: 161-163; Bar Tal 2013: 180-181).

The perception of another as human usually enhances empathy and vicarious actions through perceived similarity, resulting in a personalisation of injury that makes suffering more salient and makes it more difficult to mistreat without self-condemnation. Self-sanctions against cruel conduct can be disengaged through dehumanisation, divesting people of human qualities, rendering the potential victims as without feelings, hopes, and concerns, that is subhuman objects. The “other” or enemy become “satanic fiends,” insensitive to maltreatment and only capable of being influenced by violent means (Bandura, 1998: 180-181). Such labelling, as in the use of medical or biological terms (“pigs,” “cockroaches”) or demonised terms (“monsters”), can act as a convenient device for masking reprehensible activities or conferring them with respectable status (Bandura, 1998; Bar Tal, 2013:

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<sup>4</sup> Halperin (2016:12) argues that the traditional emphasis on positive and negative valence should be replaced by a more nuanced understanding of emotion on people’s attitudes and behaviours. This is the basis of the “discrete emotions approach” that is underpinning reconciliation efforts discussed below.

181). Words such as “wasting” someone instead of “killing” or the use of hygienic words, such as “cleansing” and “purification,” perpetuate the demonised image of the victim. De-legitimisation can also be achieved through casting groups as outsiders, emphasising negative character traits, the use of political labels, and group comparison (Bar Tal, 2013: 181). Ultimately, this process of de-legitimisation and dehumanisation has a self-exonerating effect on the perpetrator of the violence as the object is not considered human, and thus, not subject to the same moral restraint reserved for humans. In turn, this contributes to the higher intensity and frequency of violence in intractable conflicts.

Conflict identity is also characterised by strong emotions that drive extreme reactions within the conflict. Shared collective emotions such as fear, hatred, humiliation, indignation, rage and righteousness, as well as pride and hope, shape the direction and intensity of conflict (*see* Petersen, 2002; Coleman, 2006: 539; Dayton & Kreisberg, 2012: 146-147; Bar Tal 2013: 219-244). These feelings are the “boiling emotional core” (Coleman, 2006: 539) of the conflict identity and an integral part of the communal psyche of societies in conflict, driving the conflict’s escalation, momentum, and continuation (Bar Tal, 2013: 244). Long and Brecke (2003: 29) also highlight the role of such shared emotions in the emergence of conflict, noting that “violence erupts not so much from the clash of interest of system structure but when the unseen emotional bonds between the parties are broken.” Similarly, Halperin (2016: 3) sees these emotional phenomena or processes acting as the most significant barriers to conflict resolution and peacemaking. Building upon research that shows how emotions can affect political attitudes more than other factors such as ideology and socio-economic conditions, he highlights the influence of emotions as a barrier to conflict resolution (*ibid.* 4). However, understanding the emotions underpinning conflict identities provide opportunities for breaking the cycle of intractable conflict. Halperin (2016) consequently advocates an emotion-based approach to conflict resolution, emphasising the role that positive emotions such as hope, empathy, and willingness to forgive can have on peacemaking processes.

The nature of intractable conflict may result in parties living in separation with limited contact, sometimes even when they live within close proximity to each other or in supposedly heterogenous areas.<sup>5</sup> This selective exposure results in selective perception (the interpretation of information that confirms initial negative impression of the other), and as a result the rationalisation of behaviour (the rationalisation of actions through reaffirming the negative views that triggered the action), all of which harden the conflict identity (Rubin et al., 1994: 100-103). The lack of association and normal interaction fosters a party’s image of the other, which is never opened to new observations and demonised and dehumanised images remain resilient to change (Kelman, 2007: 98; Gross-Stein, 2006: 195-196). The combination of these factors limits the possibilities of understanding the perspective of another, as well as increasing the chances of self-fulfilling prophecies (Rubin et al., 1994: 100). The

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<sup>5</sup> Such dynamics can be observed in places such as Mostar (Bosnia), Belfast (Northern Ireland) or Jerusalem (Israel).

distorted view of the other party inhibits the negotiation of settlements as it is often accompanied by feelings that concessions made by the other side are an effort to advance their own goals. All concessions by the other party is viewed as a trap for the other, and any type of agreement is considered as submission (Etzioni, 1973: 543).

Conflicts in which these identities developed are often cast as ethnic conflicts. Whilst many of the conflicts in this research could be considered ethnic conflicts in that they are between two or more “culturally differentiated groups” (Esman, 1990: 53), in which ethnicity may be a fundamental part of the parties’ identity, for the purposes of this study it is viewed as a form of social identity that is based on a “perceived common past, common culture, common language, and common destiny” (Bar-Tal, 2013: 12). Although, some of these common beliefs may be primordial in origin, as Van Evera (2001) highlights, they are not imprinted on an individual’s DNA and therefore also subject to development and change over time. Ethnicity, like religion or ideology, is one determinant of difference that can be utilised in the formation of the in-group/out-group dynamic (Tajfel, 1987), and results in the divisive politics that can form the basis of an ethos of conflict. Social categorisation theory leads members of a group to unite over their perceived similarities and exaggerate their differences with other groups (Turner, 1987). When this is accompanied by glorification of the in-group’s superiority it leads to the derogation of the outgroup (Roccas et al., 2006; Mummendey et al., 2001) that can become the basis of legitimating violent action between two groups engaged in social conflict.

Collective myths based on ethnic identity can be used to fuel the delegitimisation and dehumanisation of other groups and when compounded with fear and hatred, transform ethnicity into a tool of war (Korac, 2009: 107; *see also* Kaufman, 2001; Petersen, 2002). Therefore, while ethnicity might play a role in the escalation of violence (Sambanis, 2004: 848), the “salience of ethnicity” may be an outcome of the conflict rather than its cause (Kalyvas, 2009: 420). In cases such as Croatia, it was not ethnicity itself that led to breakdown of multi-ethnic communities but the process by which political elites and nationalistic parties created pressure by highlighting difference based on ethnicity (Korac, 2009: 110; Milivojevic, 1992). The creation of an in-group/out-group dynamic based on bonds of the shared blood of destiny of ethnic groups, rather than shared cross-cutting traditions and culture, facilitated the destruction of those groups not sharing such bonds. Therefore, whilst ethnicity maybe a feature of many conflicts, in this thesis ethnicity is viewed as one of many forms of identity around which social categorisation can emerge, and which contribute to the development of a conflict identity.

It is evident that conflict identity dynamics can have both an escalatory and inhibitory function. Steps towards compromise or peaceful resolution may be viewed as a “half-step to suicide,” leading to polarised positions seeking one-sided victory and confirming existential fears (Zartman, 2007: 51; Kelman, 2007: 74). Failure to deal with the conflict identity and overlaying a new paradigm on top of the existing collective memory, ethos of conflict, and emotions leaves the situation volatile, with

old attitudes ready to be triggered (Kelman, 2004: 118-119). If the parties are not challenged to dispute their psychological repertoire, that is to disarm their psyches, then the conflict is likely to continue, peppered with periods of escalation and relative de-escalation and leading to cycles of breakdown of agreements.

### **The Pivotal Role of Reconciliation**

Breaking the cycle of intractable conflict and stepping towards peacebuilding and a stable peace is, presumably, the primary objective of any ceasefire or negotiated agreement. It assumes a process that results in parties realising their interdependence in ensuring their security (Kacowicz & Bar-Siman-Tov, 2000: 25), a process by which there is a commitment and political will to maintain the agreement. Some argue that initial trust in military and political settlement can have “spillover” effects, leading to greater trust and new norms which exclude violence as a method of conflict resolution (Kacowicz & Bar-Siman-Tov, 2000: 25-27). This places the process of reversing deeply embedded attitudes and enemy images as the final stage of change in a settlement, despite the fact that it is critical in bringing an end to intractable conflict. Conflict *settlements* yield agreements that meet the interests of the parties while conflict *resolution* represents a “strategic change in the relationship between the parties,” which allows for a “pragmatic partnership” to emerge. Yet neither *settlement* nor *resolution* necessarily change the pre-existing set of attitudes and values held by the parties (Kelman, 2004: 118-119). Such change begins with *reconciliation*.

Ceasefires and negotiated agreements may bring about the reduction of the intensity of violence and introduce factors that engender peaceful change, but they do not easily change the conditions of an individual’s physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being that is required to be the basis of stable and lasting peace (Rasmussen, 1997: 41). The change that is required to break the conflict identity with its fixed attitudes, feelings, beliefs, emotions, and memories, is the “slow socio-psychological processes of information processing, persuasion, learning, reframing, re-categorisation and the formation of the new socio-psychological repertoire” (Bar Tal, 2013: 371). This process requires relational transformation. That is, it requires the transformation of the interaction and communication between the parties in order to increase mutual understanding, reduce the fear of stereotyping, and confront mutual interdependence (Rasmussen, 1997: 41). It also requires cultural transformation reflected in the transformation of the deeply embedded values and beliefs that support the mechanisms and interactions in both societies, especially patterns that contribute to the increased incidents of violent conflict (ibid.). *This transformation that can lead to psychological disarmament requires a process of reconciliation.* In this way, *reconciliation* is “the heart of deep peacemaking and cultural peacebuilding” (Ramsbotham et al. 2008: 231).

## What is Reconciliation?

In this thesis, I define reconciliation as a process by which parties transform the attitudes underpinning their conflict identities in order to develop new networks and relationships that contribute to sustainable peace. Similar to other scholars trying to operationalise the notion of reconciliation, I also face the challenge of navigating the disagreements in the literature as to whether to identify reconciliation as an *outcome* or a *process* (see Bloomfield, 2003: 11).<sup>6</sup> Definitions encompass a range of action from “facing unwelcome truths” to re-establishing friendship so that trust can be built across divides (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004: 20). It is often defined by the context in which it is discussed which can range from religious, historical, and political perspectives to psychological perspectives (Maoz, 2004: 225). This ambiguity over the definition of reconciliation creates challenges as to its operationalisation and measurement, particularly when trying to discern its effects as an *outcome*. Further, the difficulties in measuring reconciliation as a *process* are compounded by the fact that it is not a linear process of change but often encapsulates a process of forwards and backwards steps (Bar-Tal, 2009: 372).

Superficially, reconciliation can be viewed as “mutually conciliatory accommodation between two former protagonists” (Long & Brecke, 2003: 1). Reconciliation is widely considered to be concerned with building relationships, particularly the “formation or restoration of a genuine peaceful relationship between societies that have been involved in intractable conflict” (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004: 14),<sup>7</sup> and in its most minimalistic form, merely the “readiness for transition to a more peaceful relationship based on cooperation” (Maoz, 2004: 226). It is a psychological process that induces attitudinal change in the majority of the members of society (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004: 17) or from the game theory perspective, the transition from a Defect-Defect interaction to a cooperative relationship of Cooperation-Cooperation (Maoz, 2004: 226). It can be aptly summed up as “a cluster of cognitive and emotional processes through which individuals, groups, societies, and states come to accept relationships of cooperation, concession, and peace in situations of former conflict” (Maoz, 2004: 225)

Reconciliation as an *outcome* denotes a state by which parties in a destructive conflict have been able to “put aside feelings of hate, fear and look to discard views of the other as dangerous and subhuman, and to abandon the desire for revenge and retribution” (Kreisberg, 1998: 184). As an *outcome*, it consists of “mutual recognition and acceptance, invested interests and goals in developing peaceful relations, mutual trust, positive attitudes, as well as sensitivity and consideration for the other party’s needs and interests” (Maoz, 2004: 15). These are represented by the parties having a new set of

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<sup>6</sup> Reconciliation can also be viewed as a *locus*, a space, place, or location of encounter where parties to the conflict can meet, and within which parties can focus on their relationship with each other (Lederach, 1997: 27-29).

<sup>7</sup> See also Lederach (1997: 26); Bloomfield (2003: 11).

“motivations, goals, attitudes and emotions” that genuinely support peace and have positive views of the other party as a partner in peace (ibid.: 17).

Reconciliation as a *process* can be generally defined as “a process that leads to a stable end to conflict and is predicated on changes in the nature of adversarial relations between the adversaries and each of the parties, conflict-related needs, emotions, and cognitions” (Nadler et al., 2008: 3). It is the process that allows for the building of new relationships and peaceful relations (Bloomfield, 2006: 8; Bar Tal & Bennink, 2004: 37). It is a continuum -- a slow process of transforming beliefs that should be conducted by the leadership and civil society simultaneously in order to have maximum impact (ibid.: 27). The IDEA handbook (Bloomfield et al. 2003: 12) reaches a definition based on “a process through which society moves from a divided past to a shared future.” Further, it is a reciprocal process and cannot emerge if only one side is engaged in the process (Bar-Tal, 2009: 372). As such, it is often a painstaking and lengthy process that emerges from the partial reconciliation resulting from activities at the leadership level to the full reconciliation within which peace between the parties becomes entrenched and permanent at all levels of society.

Consequently, similar to Brounéus (2003: 20) (*see also* Wohl et al. 2016), I see reconciliation as a “societal process that involves mutual acknowledgement of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships towards a sustainable peace.” In this framework parties can develop a mutual respect for each other that does not deny either’s experience, and can lead to the foundation of cooperative patterns that are more beneficial than conflictual relationships. This definition reflects the IDEA’s Handbook (2003) emphasis that reconciliation is an umbrella term for a “relationship-oriented process,” in which there are a number of constitutive parts (Bloomfield, 2006: 11). The IDEA Handbook definition, however, focuses on justice, truth, healing, and reparation in order to bring individual healing with the intention that these processes happening in parallel (ibid.; 11-12), but it does not address the social-psychological mechanisms that facilitate these processes. In this thesis, transforming the conflict identity developed in the course of intractable conflicts requires a mutual and interdependent reconciliation process started on the individual level that redresses the social-psychological underpinnings of this identity. This transformation of attitudes and consequently behaviour allows for a new constructive relationship to emerge both at the individual and societal level.

### **Reconciling Conflict Identity**

A process of reconciliation leads to a state that goes beyond mere acceptance of the other. The process requires the removal of the negation of the other as a central feature of the collective identity, acknowledging the identity of the other (Kelman, 2004: 120). The other party is “legitimised, differentiated, equalised, and personalised” (Bar Tal & Teichman, 2005). The deepest form of reconciliation encompasses the disarming of all the fears, mistrust, and stereotypes, resulting in parties not only tolerating each other but also being able to celebrate each other’s difference and envision a

shared future in spite of those differences (Ramsbotham et al., 2005: 245). This process renders violent action more difficult and constitutes the inner disarmament that should accompany physical DDR processes to break the cycles of conflict.

In order to achieve this goal, reconciliation needs to address all of the elements that constitute the conflict identity: collective memory, ethos of conflict, and the emotional orientations. Theorists have posited a number of optimal paradigms of reconciliation that can address these elements. Bar Tal's paradigm to transform a conflict identity into an "ethos of peace" requires change to societal beliefs about the group's goals, about the rival group, about one's own group, about relations with the past opponent and about peace (Bar-Tal, 2000: 351-365; 2013: 387-389). These changes can be facilitated through reconciliation mechanisms that seek to bring about truth, justice, mercy, and peace (Lederach, 1997: 28-31). The relative importance of these dimensions change during the stages of the reconciliation process and reconciliation strategies (ibid.: 85).

For some, the key mechanism for change lies in transitional justice with justice, truth-telling and reparations being central. The IDEA handbook (2003), following Montville (2001) and McCandless (2001), emphasises the primacy of justice within reconciliation processes (Bloomfield, 2008: 17). Mendeloff (2004) highlights that the benefits of mechanisms such as truth-telling might have been overstated. In some cases, the focus on justice and truth telling have polarised communities in highly divided societies (ibid.: 374). Similarly, Bar-Siman-Tov (2014: 22) highlights the challenge of focusing on justice when it is unlikely that the parties share a common concept of justice. Indeed, Bar-Siman-Tov suggests that excessive focus on justice in the early stages of peacemaking can in fact damage the sustainability of the peace agreement and that issues of injustice and justice should be deferred until the parties are more emotionally mature (ibid.: 22-23).

At the other end of the spectrum, others have examined the effect of addressing the emotions that are part of ethos of conflict. Building upon the assumptions that emotions influence the continuation of conflict and that emotions can be changed (Halperin, 2015: 11-13), effective reconciliation mechanisms should seek to acknowledge and regulate these emotions. Unlocking emotions can help to address the cognitive freezing that prevents individuals from processing new information that allows for compromise and reconciliation (Porat et al, 2015; Wohl et al, 2015: 83). For example, emotions such as anger can result in greater support for compromises in situations where there is no hatred (Halperin et al., 2011), whereas fear of the out-group can be linked to higher motivation for aggression in unresolved conflicts (Spanovic, 2010). Groups high in collective angst are more likely to support political protest to protect the in-group (Wohl et al., 2015: 66), whereas inducing hope can help support for difficult concessions (Cohen-Chen et al., 2013)

Apology, acknowledgement, truth and reconciliation commissions are all critical mechanisms in establishing truth and regard. Confrontation with the past, formal apologies, and commitments to

justice provide the parties with ways to recognise the humanity and identity of the other and overcome the negative feelings that act as barriers to moving forwards from a conflict identity (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004: 28-30). Actions of mutual acknowledgment may be small but can reap enormous dividends such as the PLO's recognition of Israel in the 1993 Declaration of Principles, Nelson Mandela wearing a Springbok shirt, and Anwar Sadat addressing the Knesset. Justice can be achieved through public trials and reparations, both of which reflect admissions of guilt on the part of the perpetrators and a willingness to forgive by the recipients and help the victims move forward towards reconciliation they begin to feel that grievances are being addressed and their basic needs fully recognised (ibid.). Peace can include writing a common history, joint projects, cultural exchanges, security and other actions that contribute to creating respect and harmony between the parties. In this sense, reconciliation is a process that is the foundation of stable or positive peace. It requires mutual acknowledgement of suffering and victimhood, as well as a transformation of attitudes and beliefs towards the other party, which will be reflected in new cooperative behavioural dynamics.

### **Role of Joint Reconciliation Activities in Transforming Conflict Identities**

The process of psychological change usually starts with small groups changing their attitudes rather than large-scale change on the societal level (Bar-Tal, 2009: 372). Indeed, if intractable conflicts are viewed as bottom-up processes, then the reconciliation efforts need to start from the bottom. One type of initiative that is of "special importance" in promoting reconciliation are "people to people" activities that bring ordinary people together to engage in joint meetings or projects (ibid., 2009: 373). Joint grassroots reconciliation activities aim to facilitate identity change by addressing the structural and psychological commitment that individuals make to the conflict. Lack of association and normal interaction with people from the other side of a conflict prevent new observations that could challenge demonised and dehumanised images (Kelman 2007: 98; Gross-Stein, 2006: 195-196).

Nadler (2002, 2006) proposes two models of reconciliation that facilitate mechanisms that help change conflict identities, and form the basis of the activities examined in this thesis. The instrumental reconciliation approach is based on instituting cooperative projects by which trust and acceptance between the parties grows through the gradual learning process of repeated cooperation (Nadler & Schnabel, 2006). This approach is the foundation of intergroup programmes based on Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2005) and other cooperative projects. Such activities are predicated on the theory that when intimate contact is established, "the in-group member no longer perceives the member of the out-group in a stereotyped way but begins to consider him or her as an individual and thereby discovers many areas of similarity" (Amir, 1998: 174).

The other approach is the socio-emotional process aimed at addressing the deep-seated emotional and identity issues by completing an apology-forgiveness cycle (Tavuchis, 1991). This process builds upon Burton's (1969) and Kelman's (1997) paradigms, which see reconciliation as alleviating

concerns about the basic needs, such as security and esteem, that underpin the existential fears at the core of the conflict identity. Ultimately, without addressing these needs, a settlement is less likely to bring about a sustainable end to the conflict. Initially, such meetings were aimed at bringing the parties together informally to engage in joint problem-solving approaches towards creating agreement, rather than having a formal and more confrontational negotiation or mediation process. It was believed that this conflict resolution process, which addressed basic interests and needs, changed the relationship between the parties, with each more committed to the belief that peace and cooperation are in their best interest (Kelman, 2008: 23). More recent research has focused on the use of direct and indirect reconciliation strategies to regulate emotions in the intergroup conflict context that contribute to the ethos of conflict (Halperin, 2015).

Reconciliation activities use a range of diverse and creative approaches to create such “normal” interaction among conflicting parties. Some engage the participants in formal psychological education and others aim purely to increase contact and create positive associations with the other party. Drama, music, and art can be vehicles for cooperative activities that help participants address the past and increase interaction, and cooperative projects in the fields of business, medicine, and academia can help cement a joint future. These programmes can be summarised as either information-based interventions that provide participants with new information that challenges previously held beliefs; experience-based interventions that unfreeze conflict-supporting beliefs; or skill training interventions that help individuals address emotional and cognitive reactions (Hameiri & Halperin, 2015: 177-181).

All of these programmes are built on the engagement of the parties in relational and cultural transformation. Relational transformation, that is the transformation of the interaction and communication between the parties in order to increase mutual understanding and confront their mutual interdependence (Rasmussen, 1997: 41), emerges from the creation of social bonds between groups and common group membership and dependence (Rubin et al., 1994: 129-131). Cultural transformation involves the transformation of the deeply embedded values and beliefs in both societies, especially patterns that contribute to violent conflict (Rasmussen, 1997: 41). In Bar-Tal’s paradigm (2009; 2013), cultural transformation is the transformation of the “ethos of conflict” into an ethos of peace based on mutual knowledge, mutual acceptance, mutual understanding, respect for difference and focus on commonalities, the development of cooperative relations, valuing peace and developing mechanisms for maintaining peace.

Measurement of the success of these programmes and their role within the reconciliation process remains contested. Similar to Lund and McDonald (2015: 29), I propose that the impact of these transformations can be seen in the extent to which former participants continue their participation in reconciliation programmes or establish related joint activities, and whether there is continued contact between participants from opposing sides of the conflict once the programme has been

completed. It is this kind of transformation that can lead to attitudes and actions that prevent the breakdown of peace agreements.

### **The Trickle-Up Effect of Transforming Conflict Identities**

Whilst the transformation of individual conflict identities is critical to the reconciliation process, these individual-level changes need to “penetrate deep into societal fabric so they are shared by the majority of both rival groups of society members” (Bar-Tal, 2013: 376). The success of reconciliation is dependent on the “reciprocal process of individual and group level change,” getting the larger group to “accept these new understandings as a basis for global group action” (Baron, 2008: 283). Ultimately, conflict resolution and reconciliation in democratic societies depend on significant mass support. From the Social Identity Theory perspective, this is the way in which de-categorisation and/or re-categorisation moves beyond isolated changes to group shifts, that is “small-scale group dynamics, along with socially embodied cognitive change, [becomes] self-organised into large scale institutional change” (Bar-Tal, 2013: 285). Similarly, the emotions-based approach highlights how the joint positions of the individuals involved in conflict shape the leaders’ decision making processes and affect the course of the conflict (Halperin, 2015: 12). This leads to the question as to, how do individual-level changes “trickle up” and transform conflict identities in society at large?

Dayton and Kreisberg (2012:11) highlight how conflict resolution practitioners encourage contact activities so that “individuals can overcome their parochial identities and develop a new superordinate identity that includes their former adversary.” This type of reconciliation leads to societal changes that are supportive of peace as “a new form of positive intergroup relations,” and a new worldview for action and interpretation of the other party’s action (Bar-Tal, 2013: 377). Identification theory explains how individual action and change can trickle up to result in mass level mobilisation, in that:

“if a mass of people exist whose individual constituents share the same national identification, then it can, with a clear methodological base, be stated that this mass may act as one unit in situations which affect the shared identity. They may act together to make new identifications or act together to enhance and protect identifications already made” (Bloom, 1990: 53)

Changing individual group members’ worldview through reconciliation can translate to societal transformation through the creation of “peace constituencies” (Lederach, 1997: 94) or “viable constituencies for peace” (Goodhand and Hume, 1999:18), that is, groups or social networks who actively support the peace-building process (Bar-Tal, 2013: 430). Intergroup emotions theory provides that people are capable of experiencing emotions in the name of their group, and collective emotions can lead to common action in groups with social relationships (Halperin, 2015: 25-26). In Halperin’s paradigm the ethos of conflict or a conflict identity is one element that affects the cognitive

appraisal of both negative and positive events.<sup>8</sup> This, in turn, triggers emotions that can affect political attitudes about the peace process (ibid.: 31). Positive experiences, such as positive contact with the outgroup through activities that lead to dialogue and friendship, lead to a more measured appraisal of events and potentially more positive attitudes towards a peace process (ibid.). Although the group of people with positive attitudes may be small, theories of minority influence (Moscovici, 1976) highlight that change originates with those who may have different attitudes from the majority, and that if that minority acts consistently and resolutely, it will be viewed as confident by the majority and can be a powerful force (Gerard, 1985: 171). If minority groups are credible and can resonate with the majority group, then they can potentially impact the majority (ibid., 172-173). Therefore, the psychological disarmament of individuals could have the potential to trickle up to impact the majority.

Joint reconciliation activities can also create the type of cross-ethnic bridging connections or capital (Putnam, 2000) that allows for civic rather than ethnic politics to develop (Korac, 2009: 108). Kaldor (1999) identifies these “islands of civility” as being critical to redressing the destruction of the social networks that result from wars. Varshney (2002) demonstrated the role that cross-cutting networks were effective in mitigating conflict between Hindu and Muslim communities in India. The development of these initiatives eventually led to an “institutionalised peace system” (ibid.: 46), demonstrating the potential trickle-up effect of cross-cutting grassroots initiatives.

In some conflicts, we can observe how joint reconciliation activities have had significant impact on facilitating and supporting peace agreements. The Good Friday Agreement formally recognised the role of these activities as encouraging and supporting peace (The Good Friday Agreement, 1998: Strand 3, Clause 13). At the time of the signing of the agreement, community relations work employed more people than the manufacturing sector (Hughes, 2009: 296-297) and consequently its role was enshrined in the peace agreement. The recognition and institutionalisation of these activities may have contributed to increased reconciliation and commitment to the peace process in Northern Ireland, as opposed to in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where the activities came to be viewed with great scepticism (Atieh et al., 2005). As Bloomfield (2006: 25-26) has highlighted, whilst reconciliation initiatives may originate at the grassroots level, without some measure of institutional support, their effectiveness is likely to be limited. Ultimately, bottom-up processes would be supported by top-down processes that communicate to the public the nature of the change in relationship with the former adversary.

The question of whether these activities can result in greater commitment to peace is at the heart of my dissertation. Whilst it is now widely accepted that programmes at the grassroots level are critical in the reconciliation process and one of the factors that contribute to building a stable peace

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<sup>8</sup> Negative events would include violence, terror attacks, or rejections of overtures to peace. Positive events would include overtures to peace or compromise.

(Lederach, 1997: 79), the process by which they facilitate identity change and shape other levels of society is often under-explained.

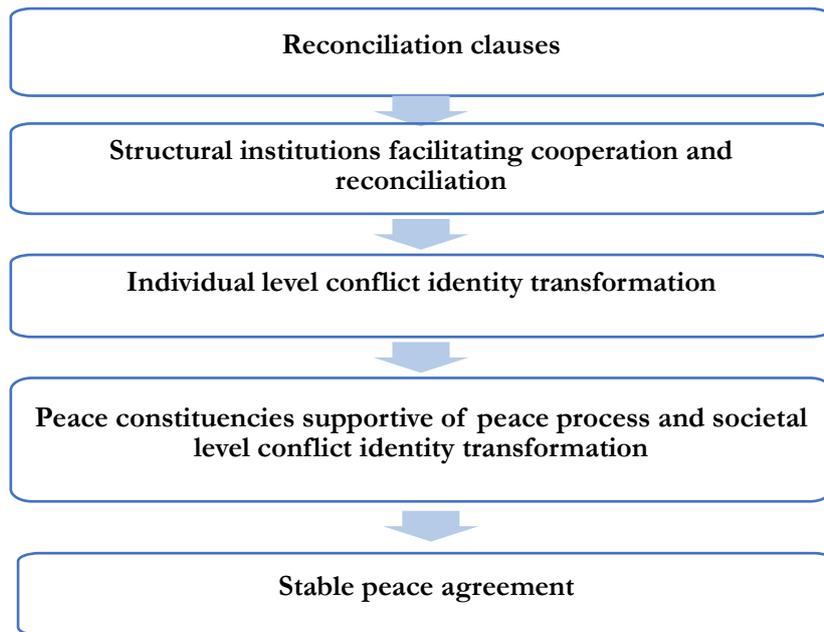
## **The Role of Reconciliation in Preventing the Breakdown of Peace**

### **Settlements**

A stable peace settlement should be the map that takes the parties from initial agreement on measures to formally end the conflict to a relationship based on sufficient respect and trust so that disagreements do not trigger conflict spirals. It is the central premise of this thesis that in the long term, in cases of protracted or intractable conflicts, the trust and respect necessary for stability and peace require the parties to transform their conflict identity. This helps the parties to have the confidence to be receptive to new information and to be able to accept disagreements without reviving enemy images. If underlying core attitudes and beliefs are not transformed, continued commitment to the implementation of the agreement is less likely. Obstacles or challenges along the way have the potential to revive the latent conflict identity, leading to the return of hostile actions characteristic of intractable conflict, such as violent breakdown of the agreement. Bar-Siman-Tov (2013: 32; 2014: 23) has noted that:

“[a] failure to reach a reconciliation agreement to the satisfaction of both sides may endanger the peace agreement, and the sides should consider this possibility as a constraint on the durability of peace.”

Alternatively, breakdown of the agreement can be triggered by non-violent action. Parties may utilise non-violent action to try to sabotage or spoil the implementation or continuation of peace agreement, such as the case of the Ulster Workers' Council strikes (*see* Farrington, 2006) following the 1973 Sunningdale Agreement in Northern Ireland. The point is, a sustainable peace can only emerge from a long process of engaging in activities designed to bring about reconciliation between the parties. Bar-Siman-Tov (2004: 76) notes that both stable peace and reconciliation require complementary structural-institutional conditions, “especially a high level of interaction and cooperation, joint institutions and organisation, and social learning with basic cognitive-emotional changes.” Similarly, Bloomfield (2006: 27) highlights that reconciliation requires the combination of the interpersonal and political elements of reconciliation. It is through the interrelationship of the two that parties in conflict can reach a positive peace. Figure 2.1 illustrates the process of how reconciliation can shape conflict identities and help prevent breakdown of peace agreements.



**Figure 2.1: The Link between Reconciliation Clauses and Stable Peace**

As a first cut, my dissertation seeks to examine the association between including reconciliation clauses into a peace agreement and the susceptibility of that agreement to breaking down.

H1a: Peace settlements that contract the parties into commitments to reconciliation activities are less susceptible to breakdown than those that do not make such provisions.

The term reconciliation can be used broadly or specifically depending on the genuine commitment of the parties to resolving the conflict. Some agreements merely provide a cursory mention of reconciliation, whereas others, such as the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, set out a detailed plan for instituting mechanisms to promote reconciliation. I suggest that more well-developed mechanisms are more likely to bring about change.

H1b: The stronger the reconciliation clause, the less likely that the settlement will break down.

Reconciliation requires the commitment of the parties to institutionalise reconciliation activities, so that they have funding, genuine support at the leadership level, and can permeate all levels of society through access to educational establishments, local government, and commerce (*see* Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004; Bloomfield, 2006). As such, I hypothesise:

H2a: Peace settlements are less likely to breakdown if accompanied by top-down government-led reconciliation activities.

Conflict is an inter-societal process with fear, mistrust, hatreds, and negative stereotypes permeating all levels of society. The community is at the centre of the conflict action and the object of most of the suffering and violence, as well as the destruction of social networks. As such, the transformation of the conflict identity that is bred during the conflict is required at the communal level in order for a peace settlement to be stable. Whilst it could be possible that this transformation could trickle down from the elite-level processes, that transformation is probably more easily achieved through promoting reconciliation at the grassroots level.

Yet, governments are answerable to their electorates, which may not always support reconciliation activity, and when governments change, previous activities may be disbanded or abandoned. NGOs and IGOs can establish or continue activities that work towards reconciliation even when the political circumstances are less favourable to such work. Even though there may be obstacles to implementing the activities, they may be able to continue nonetheless. Creating new cross-cutting bridging ties and networks supportive of peace process is critical to maintaining support for the peace agreement through changes at the elite level. Therefore, I hypothesise:

H2b: Peace settlements are less likely to break down if accompanied by NGO-led reconciliation initiatives.

In many conflicts, much of the activity aimed at bringing about reconciliation, particularly at the grassroots and middle levels, is initiated and implemented by NGOs and IGOs. These organisations can often operate irrespective of the mainstream beliefs of the parties involved, working at the micro-level to create a trickle-up approach to reconciliation. However, the sustainability of such reconciliation initiatives is usually dependent on external sources of funding and the political climate that allows them to operate effectively. Reconciliation is a long and painstaking process, requiring long-term commitment and finances.<sup>9</sup> Bar-Tal and Bennink (2004: 27) highlight that effective reconciliation is the result of simultaneous top-down and bottom up processes. Similarly, Bloomfield (2006: 29) emphasises that it is the complementarity of the two processes that is significant, with each benefiting from their interaction. Therefore, I propose that:

H2c: Peace settlements are less likely to break down if accompanied by both NGO and government-led reconciliation activities.

## **Conclusion**

In identity conflicts, the successful implementation of the commitments set out in a peace settlement is dependent upon transforming the attitudes, perceptions, and fears that perpetuated the conflict. This psychological disarmament is critical to the parties being able to redefine their identities so as to cooperate and co-exist for the long term. Such transformation can only be achieved through

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<sup>9</sup> Border closures, permit requirements, and travel restrictions can also be obstacles making it difficult for NGO's to implement programmes effectively.

concerted and structured processes that address the conflict identities of the parties. I argue that peace settlements that commit to instituting programmes aimed at achieving reconciliation and engage the parties in concrete efforts to reverse the psychology of conflict that permeates all levels of society should be more stable than those that do not include such commitments.

In the following chapters, I will examine the circumstances under which peace settlements break down and the impact of provisions in the settlements that relate to reconciliation activity. Through large-N analysis of peace settlements and their breakdown in 42 identity conflicts, I will attempt to draw conclusions as to the extent that reconciliation activity increases the stability of the agreement. Through in-depth case studies of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Northern Ireland conflict, and Bosnia, I assess the impact of reconciliation activity in creating support for peace settlements. The large-N analysis will provide a picture of whether any relationship can be discerned between the inclusion of reconciliation clauses and the sustainability of peace agreements, and the in-depth case studies go beyond the numbers to understand the processes underpinning the relationships. The combination of the two approaches provide a complementary picture of how facilitating reconciliation processes may impact the stability of peace agreements.

## Chapter 3: Research Design

### Introduction

The central argument in this study is that transforming conflict identities through reconciliation is critical to increasing the sustainability of peace agreements. In this section, I describe how I measure and analyse the impact of reconciliation provisions and reconciliation activities. Whilst the effect of reconciliation and the inclusion of reconciliation clauses on the stability of agreements have been less explored than other mechanisms, such as military, economic, and political ones, there is a growing body of literature addressing questions of the impact of reconciliation on the duration of peace (Long & Brecke, 2003; Brounéus, 2008, Gurses and Röst, 2013). The largest body of literature examines how transitional justice mechanisms impact the durability of peace or sustainability of the peace agreement (Mendeloff, 2004; Weinstein & Stover, 2004; Barsalou, 2007; Lie et al., 2007). However, as noted earlier (*see* p.15), there has been little analysis of the overall impact of the inclusion of reconciliation clauses and subsequent contact-oriented reconciliation activities.

The primary focus of much of the analysis of reconciliation activities was analysing the effects and impacts of individual programmes, such as Kelman's analysis of his own interactive problem-solving workshops in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Other research has focused on the social psychological analysis of specific grassroots programmes (Worchel and Coutant, 2008), NGOs' own analysis of their programmes, or middle/track-two level analysis (Fisher, 2005, 2007). Hewstone et al. (2008b) examine the effect of intergroup contact in reducing prejudice and improved intergroup relations, promoting intergroup forgiveness and trust-building as envisaged by the Belfast Agreement, but they do not measure the impact of these activities on the sustainability of the agreement.

Long and Brecke's study (2003), although systematic, provides few insights into research design and measurement as it is limited to "reconciliation events" as a proxy for reconciliation. They found only eleven reconciliation events in four hundred and thirty cases, which opens the question as to whether their definition adequately captured these reconciliation events and was a suitable proxy for reconciliation overall (Brounéus, 2008: 295). Brounéus (2008) attempts to solve these issues in her study, but while she presents a more systematic framework for analysis, it does not provide insights as to a framework for the present study as she is analysing only national-level reconciliation initiatives, defined as acts or behaviour by national political leaders that promote reconciliation, and only in the cases of Mozambique and Rwanda. Lie et al.'s study (2007) on post-conflict justice and sustainable peace does not provide insights into operationalising reconciliation variables as they are utilising post-conflict justice variables such as trials, amnesties, and truth commissions that are more clearly defined.

There are a few key works that investigate similar questions as those that I present in this research, which provide useful guidance that has assisted in designing this research. Gidron et al. (2002) have provided an analysis of peace and conflict resolution organisations (P/CROs) as a movement or social institution that have facilitated social, political, and cultural changes in response to the conflict. By comparing the cases of Northern Ireland, Israel/Palestine, and South Africa, they investigated the “possibility that a relationship existed between the breakthroughs in the three conflicts and the P/CRO activity that preceded them” (ibid.: 5), with a particular interest as to the nature of the organisation and their shared common features. This was a large study, involving three research teams, and provides some insight into case selection, programme selection, and survey design.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, there has been limited evaluation of the longer-term impact of joint reconciliation programmes. In the 2003 handbook, “Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners,” Anderson and Olson highlight that “most agencies neglect to question how their discrete programs contribute to progress on the bigger picture, to Peace Writ Large [the big peace]” (2003:14-15). The challenges of such assessment are significant both from the perspective of finding the appropriate indicators or measurements of progress, as well as the problem of causality and attribution in a complex environment, and the difficulty of identifying which actions bring about specific outcomes (Anderson, 2004: 2). Similarly, Lund (2015: 28) has highlighted the lack of “hard evidence” and a lack of evaluation mechanisms that can demonstrate the “transfer effects” of these activities.

## **Measuring the Impact of Reconciliation Activities on Peace Settlements**

### *Mixed-Method Approach*

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to capture the complexities of the processes being studied. While the Large-N analysis of my dissertation can provide insights into whether there is a relationship between the inclusion of reconciliation provisions and the stability of the agreement, it cannot demonstrate the process by which reconciliation activities induce attitudinal change or change the conflict identity. The quantitative section can identify correlations or the “magnitude of the causal relationship” (Gerring, 2009: 44), but these “static” results (Bryman, 1988: 178) do not explain the processes or “causal pathways” (Gerring, 2009: 44). The case studies provide insights into the “compound outcomes (otherwise known as big questions)” (Geddes, 2003: 23) that the Large-N analysis cannot address because it may not have the data to do so or cannot adequately capture the causal mechanisms that are inferred (Lieberman, 2005: 436; George and Bennett, 2005: 34-35).

In-depth process tracing allows the direction of causality to be more clearly seen and the causal mechanism better established (Chapman, 2009: 158-160). Aiken (2013: 6) highlights that quantitative methods are inefficient in dealing with “intricate processes such as societal reconciliation where direct claims about correlation are easily confounded by interaction effects and path dependence.” Therefore, the case studies allow for the analysis of both patterns and processes to help clarify the

direction of the causal influence, assess if any correlations are spurious and increase the confidence of the causal significance identified in the statistical models (Bennett & Checkel, 2015: 20). They also provide checks and balances on the possible causal mechanisms that are highlighted in the statistical analysis (George and Bennett, 2005), and can help overcome the problems of endogeneity that can be present in statistical analyses.

*The Peace Agreements and Reconciliation Data Set*

Examining whether reconciliation clauses and activities can have any impact on the breakdown of a peace agreement required a dataset that records the status of the agreement, the specifics of the reconciliation clauses, and other clauses that might be control variables. Other significant data includes the details of the implementation the agreement in whole or in part, NGO involvement, and the state of civil society (to the extent that it reflects the presence of NGOs which might be conducting reconciliation work). Currently, existing datasets incorporate some of these variables, but there are no datasets that combine all of these (cf. Walter, 2004; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2007; Harbom et al., 2006; Höglbladh, 2012).

The new Peace Agreements and Reconciliation Dataset covers 259 agreements in 41 intractable conflicts.<sup>10</sup> Initially based on Crocker et al.’s (2005) list of intractable conflicts, these conflicts were either active, or abeyant/frozen in that the “dispute at its heart” was not completely resolved and the potential to erupt into violence at any time remains (Merz, 2012: 206- 208). Figure 3.1 sets out the list of conflicts included in the dataset. Although these conflicts are diverse in their motivations, in most of them, ethnic, religious, or ideological identities contribute to the cycle of conflict. Many of these conflicts have the generational requirement in which a conflict identity, replete with the collective memory and emotional orientations that support it, can develop and feed into the loop of intractability. Over time, this identity, can lead to a structural and psychological commitment to the conflict, which is extremely difficult to reverse and becomes independent of the conflict itself. Transformation of this conflict identity, or psychological disarmament, through reconciliation becomes a critical part of the conflict resolution process.

**Table 3.1 List of Conflicts in the Peace Agreements and Reconciliation Dataset**

<b>Peace Agreements and Reconciliation Dataset</b>	
Abkhazia-Georgia	Kashmir
Aceh-Indonesia	Kosovo
Afghanistan	Lebanon
Angola	Liberia
Bosnia-Herzegovina (Serbia)	Mauritania-Western Sahara
Burma	Moldova-Dniestr
Burundi	Morocco-Western Sahara
Cambodia	Nagorno-Karabakh
Chad	Nepal

<sup>10</sup> The complete outline of the variables included in the database is set out in Appendix [A].

Colombia	Northern Ireland
Chechnya	North- South Korea
Croatia	Philippines (Mindanao)
Cyprus	Rwanda
Democratic Republic of Congo	Sierra Leone
East Timor	Somalia
Georgia	South Africa-Namibia
Guatemala	South Ossetia-Georgia
India-Bodoland	Sri Lanka
Israel-Egypt	Sudan
Israel-Palestine	Uganda
Israel-Syria	

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The dataset draws on data from the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset (v.2.0), 1975-2011 (Harbom et al., 2006; Högbladh, 2012) and the Peace Accords Matrix project (Joshi & Darby, 2013). Whilst these datasets formed a good basis, they did not include specific information on reconciliation clauses and their consequent implementation. In order to create a dataset that would be suited to this research, I expanded the dataset drawing on data from the UCDP/PRIO Conflict Termination Dataset v.2010-1, 1946-2009 (Kreutz, 2010) as well as the Armed Conflict Dataset v.4-2013, 1946-2012 (Gleditsch et al., 2001; Themnér & Wallensteen, 2013). Original data on the details on agreements provisions was added, based on examining the text of the agreements themselves, mostly available through the UN Peacemaker database.<sup>11</sup> Data on the state of civil society and the presence of NGOs was drawn from reports such as the CIVICUS Civil Society Index state of civil society reports,<sup>12</sup> as well as from country reports from Conciliation Resources, and examining local NGO networks' history of NGO development in those countries.

### **Measuring the process of transforming the conflict identity**

One of the key uses of case studies is to investigate causal mechanisms, helping the reader “peer[ing] into the box of causality and to locate the intermediate factor lying between some structural cause and its purported effect” (Gerring, 2009: 44-45). As Dunning (2015: 234) highlights, “analysis of datasets is rarely sufficient” and in order to “validate causal models and interpret effects, analysts typically require fragments of information that give crucial insights into causal processes of interest.” Causal mechanisms or processes can be understood as the “unobservable physical, social, or psychological processes through which agents with causal capacities operate, but only in specific conditions, to transfer energy, information, or matter to other entities” (George and Bennett, 2005: 137). In the context of testing the hypotheses in this research, these mechanisms would be the

<sup>11</sup> If the agreement was not present on the UN Peacemaker site, searches were conducted until the original text of the agreement was sourced. These were most often available through government websites, UN mission websites, or third parties, such as United States Institute of Peace.

<sup>12</sup> See Civicus Civil Society Index, <http://csi.civicus.org/> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

elements of reconciliation activities that induce attitudinal change or disarm the conflict identity on the individual level, which leads to a societal transformation that can help sustain peace agreements.

Process tracing allows for the testing of hypotheses by examining whether the observed variables match those that are predicted or implied by the theory (ibid.: 217). If an uninterrupted causal path can be established “linking the putative causes to the observed effects, at the appropriate level(s) of analysis” then a strong case for causal inference can be made (ibid.: 222). As a technique that emerged from the field of cognitive psychology, to “examin[e] the intermediate steps in cognitive mental processes to understand better the heuristics through which humans make decisions” (Bennett & Checkel, 2015: 5), it is well suited to examining the stages of unlocking and transforming conflict identities.

*From support for conflict to support for peace agreements*

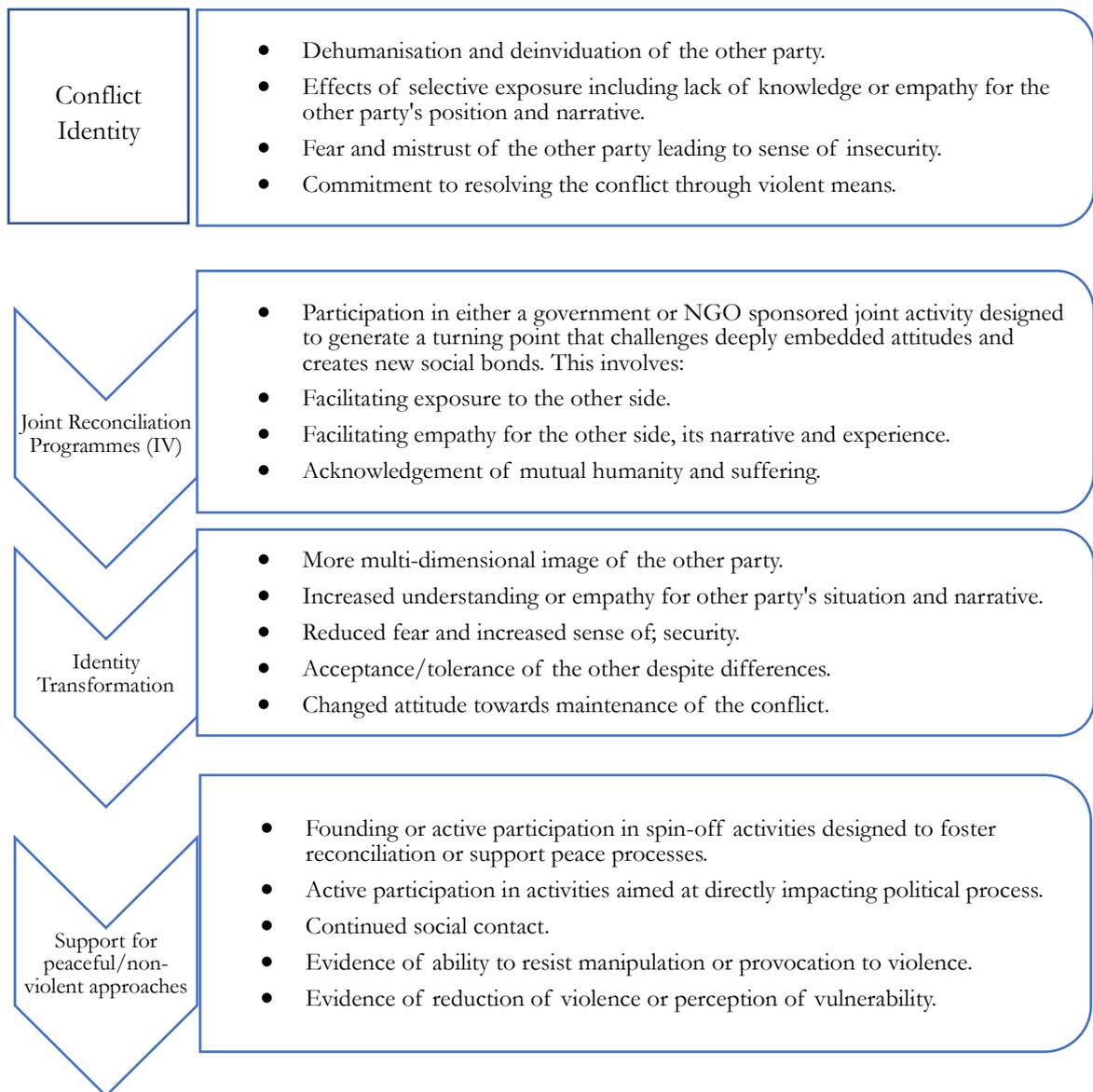
In my case studies, the key task is to analyse the process or causal pathway by which joint reconciliation programmes and activities, the independent variable, leads to the societal-level reconciliation that helps sustain the peace agreement. As explained in Chapter Two, a stable peace agreement depends upon the trickling-up of individual-level reconciliation to the societal level. It rests on the nexus between individual conflict identity transformation, continued positive contact with the outgroup, and whether more positive attitudes towards the peace process result (Halperin, 2015). Societies with institutionalised peace systems of cross-cutting ties (Varshney, 2002) or social networks of people committed to the supporting the peace process are less likely to experience agreement breakdown. Peace constituencies of people committed to non-violent approaches to resolving the conflict diminish the chances of peace agreement breakdown through resorting to violence or impeding implementation. Therefore, the dependent variable for the purposes of the case studies is the presence of networks pursuing continued engagement in promoting a peaceful or non-violent approaches to the resolution of the conflict. This is based on the assumption that if there are high levels of continued engagement in cooperative activities or activities focused on peaceful approaches, then the post-conflict environment is sufficiently stable to facilitate these interactions, that is the peace agreement has not broken down. In the event that there are fewer such networks I would anticipate that the peace agreement would break down. By tracing the process of transformation in the three case studies, I aim to demonstrate whether and how the joint reconciliation activities represent the mechanism that changes the relations between individuals, and that greater engagement in promoting peaceful approaches is the “observable implication” of the changed relations (Checkel, 2013: 21), that is the extent to which conflict identities have changed.

Anderson and Olson (2003) have been at the forefront of providing a methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of such programmes and have suggested that at the wider societal level, the effectiveness of a programme should be measured by assessing changes in the overall environment outside of the actions for which they are directly responsible. Anderson and Olson (2003:15-18)

suggest that the measurement criteria should be whether participants go on to develop their own initiatives; the creation or reform of political institutions which address the grievances fuelling the conflict; people's subsequent ability to resist manipulation or provocation to violence; and a reduction of threat of violence or a changed perception of vulnerability. In their study of six cases of non-official conflict resolution activities at the leadership level, Lund and McDonald (2015: 35-37) seek to establish evidence of direct impacts such as changed perceptions and attitudes, greater empathy; cross-cutting relationships with increased trust; reduction of hostility in communications; development of mutually beneficial interests; new vocabulary; and dispute resolution capacities. They also look for evidence of engaging new participants, the use of public resources and spin-off partnerships that improve relationships (ibid.).

Building upon both sets of criteria, Figure 3.1 sets out the process by which I propose that participation in joint reconciliation activities transform the conflict identity of individuals: that is the attitudes of individuals towards the other party in the conflict and towards the conflict itself, so that the parties do not wish to resume violent conflict and instead engage in promoting a non-violent approach to the resolution of the conflict.

**Figure 3.1 Tracing the Causal Effect of Participation in Joint Reconciliation Activities**



### *Conflict Identity*

In order to assess the effect of joint reconciliation activities on psychological disarmament, the presence of conflict identities needs to be determined at the outset. This was guided by Bar-Tal's (1998, 2000, 2007, and 2013: 175-176)<sup>13</sup> themes of the ethos of conflict as well as Kelman's (2007) framework of the socio-psychological underpinnings of intractable conflict. A combination of original survey data and collections of interviews of alumni or participants in joint reconciliation activities, interviews with activists, as well as third-party evaluations and analyses were examined in order to determine the presence of each of the theorized stages.<sup>14</sup> The presence of dehumanised or deindividuated images of the other party was determined through statements that derogated the other party or referred to the actions of the other party as being performed by the collective group rather than by individuals within the collective. This includes statements such as "all I knew of Jews was their violence" (abo Saymih, 2011) or "I would ride the bus to school and as soon as I saw an Arab got on, I would immediately try and see if he had something tied around his stomach" (Kallai, 2011). These and statements such as "when I see an Arab I would feel frightened" (Monkotowitz, 2011) also reflect the sense of fear and mistrust of the other party that are key elements of the ethos of conflict.

Selective exposure to the other was evidenced by expressions of being separated and not having contact with the other party such as "until the first intifada I did not encounter Israelis" (Mukbal, 2011). If the survey respondents or interviewees demonstrated an active role in violence or a belief in the path of violence, such as "our vision was clear: to have one state comprising the entire area of Palestine and getting rid of the Jews into the sea" (Abu Nssar, 2011), this would be regarded as the element of the conflict identity that is committed to violent means.

### *Joint reconciliation programmes*

Survey respondents and interviewees were coded as having participated in a joint reconciliation programme if the survey or interview data clearly stated that they had participated in such programmes. The extent to which the programme facilitated exposure and empathy for other parties was evidenced through statements such as "[I] heard more of the other side's experience" (NI Survey Respondent: 740355) and "they feel misunderstood and threatened" (NI Survey Respondent: 740372). The fact that the programme allowed for the acknowledgment of mutual humanity and suffering was drawn largely from responses to survey questions regarding what the parties may have learnt about other participants that was surprising or most resonated (Alumni Survey, Questions 21 and 23), as well as interviewee statements to the same effect. These include statements such as "gaining knowledge that others have suffered and that we all have the same problems today (BiH

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<sup>13</sup> See Chapter Two.

<sup>14</sup> Further details about the data sources can be found in the "Data" section later in this chapter, and more specifically prior to the process tracing exercise in each of the individual case studies.

Survey Respondent, 743043) and “that the pain and suffering of all participants has been roughly the same” (BiH Survey Respondent, 742724) as reflections of these new levels of understanding.

### *Identity Transformation*

The assessment of the transformation of the conflict identity is based on evidencing changes to the key themes that underpin the ethos of conflict outlined above. A reappraisal of dehumanised and deindividuated stereotypes is reflected in responses to Alumni Survey questions 21, 23, and 25, which asked participants to identify changed attitudes or perceptions about the other party. The ability to differentiate between the group and the individual as reflected in responses such as “the same person was traditional loyalist and broadminded” (NI Survey Respondent, 740364) demonstrates a more multidimensional understanding of the other. Evidence of increased empathy and understanding for the other party’s narrative is drawn from statements such as “I was pained to hear of their suffering and understood their need to fight us” (Monkotowitz, 2011) or “some stories that I heard on TV, I heard from people that actually experienced it and it seemed to be much more serious and tragic” (BiH Survey Respondent, 742745).

The responses to these survey questions, as well as the further comments section at the end of the survey provided evidence of acceptance and tolerance of the other despite differences. Responses such as “we are all very alike in opinions even though we are from different backgrounds” (NI Survey Respondent 740456) or “that people from all national groups are realising and recognising that we are all the same...” (BiH Survey Respondent, 741944) reflect Kelman’s (2007) paradigm of the removal of negation of the other as a fundamental part of one’s identity. A changed attitude towards the maintenance of the conflict is one of the key elements demonstrating successful psychological disarmament and can be evidenced from responses to question 27 of the Alumni Survey,<sup>15</sup> as well as interviewee statements such as “...for peace, I was willing to pay that price, even if it meant losing my land and never returning to my land” (Abu Nssr, 2011).

### *Support for peaceful/non-violent approaches*

This research utilises the Anderson and Olson (2003) criteria as a base but also considers the following as indicators of relational and cultural transformation that are similar to the Lund and McDonald (2015) criteria: willingness to continue participation in such activities; recommending the activity to a friend; and continued post-activity contact with other participants. The evidence for these positions is drawn from the responses to questions 28 to 37 of the Alumni Survey, which asked the participants to detail the way the participating in joint activities has impacted their lives in both the short and the long term, whether they have any continued contact with other participants in the programme, as well as any spin-off activities with which they are actively engaged. The qualitative

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<sup>15</sup> Question 27: “Has participating in the activity changed your perceptions about the conflict and its potential for a positive solution for all the parties? Please explain your answer.”

answers and the interviews of alumni of reconciliation programmes and activists provide insights into whether it has led to an ability to resist provocation to violence. Statements such as “there was no return from dialogue and non-violence” (Aramim, 2010) or when Nour Shehadeh (2010) says that she did not listen to those who called her a traitor for advocating non-violence. These answers and interviews are also a rich source of data on the types of programmes or ongoing activities with which the parties are involved. I was particularly interested in finding activities that gained some level of trickle-up impact on the middle or leadership level, such as the participant in Bosnia who was working on trying to get a change to the federal law on detainees (BiH Alumni Survey, 742647) or Raed Hadar (Hadar, 2010), who co-founded Combatants for Peace after participating in the Sulha project.

In summary, the process tracing exercise provides insights as to the way that joint reconciliation activity causes change that creates support for peace processes. Underpinning the effectiveness of these is the identity change resulting from increased contact between people from either side of the conflict divide, which reduces the entrenched ignorance and fear of the out-group. This allows each party to develop a sense of empathy for their counterpart and consequently to re-humanise them. In turn, this impacts other cognitive and behavioural psychological processes that underpin conflict identity, including lack of trust, attitudes towards tolerance, perceived group (in)security, and perceptions of the conflict.

### **Case Selection**

There is much debate as to the best method for selecting cases for small-N case studies. The case studies could be selected following the Large-N analysis on predicted or actual scores on the dependent or independent variable, or they could be selected more randomly. Cases should be selected in order to demonstrate “representativeness” and “variation,” bearing in mind pragmatic considerations, as well as potential for experimentation and process tracing (Gerring, 2009: 149-150). Aiken (2013: 6-7), employing similar methodology to analyse the effect of transitional justice on reconciliation, highlights that as process tracing draws inferences from examination of the causal chain at work within a specific context rather than “the correlative terms of the conventional comparative method,” there is less necessity to select representative cases. However, Aiken also highlights that if generalisations are to be drawn then the cases should conform to a broader type or subtype. Therefore, as an initial requirement, the cases need to be states which have the democratic and legal infrastructure in place that can facilitate the implementation of formalised reconciliation processes, such as truth commissions, as well as the growth of civil society. Furthermore, they must have some history of organisations running reconciliation activity, which are accessible.

The cases selected, Israel-Palestine, Bosnia Herzegovina, and Northern Ireland, are all similar in the base elements of conflict identities that can be observed. Oberschall (2007:159) highlights how both groups in Northern Ireland had a “threatened minority mentality” accompanied by a “siege mentality in response to perceived threats” and each feel they have the monopoly on victimhood (double victim

syndrome). These dynamics were common in all three cases. These conflicts are all based on conflicting historical narratives that have been passed down through generations, which validate claims on the land and create myths of victimhood sufficient to drive existential fear and mobilise people to violence. In the case of Bosnia, myths of Serb martyrdom at the hands of Muslims at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 was utilised to promote hostility (Kaufman, 2001: 30-31). The historical narratives in Northern Ireland can be traced back to 1170 when the first British settlers arrived (Fitzduff & O'Hagan, 2009). While in the Israeli-Palestinian context, in which both Israelis and Palestinians place Jerusalem at the centre of their collective myths (Oberschall, 2007: 24). Benvenisti (1995: 103) highlights how in both the Israel-Palestine context and the Northern Irish context “both sides act and feel like threatened minorities.” Similarly, in Bosnia all groups felt that their national group was the greatest victim (Oberschall, 2007: 25).

In all three contexts, the conflicts were terminated through negotiated peace agreements, although in the Israeli-Palestine context there has been subsequent re-emergence of the conflict. The agreements in Bosnia and Northern Ireland have not formally broken down, however, the differing levels of reconciliation provisions in the agreement provide opportunities for examining the extent that facilitating reconciliation through the agreement leads to more positive peace. All the agreements required significant third party assistance in the negotiation process and there has been continued external assistance in the post-conflict building process. While the reconciliation clauses in the Belfast Agreement (1998) and the Oslo Accords (1993, 1995) are more developed than those in the Dayton Peace Accords (1995),<sup>16</sup> there have been different levels and types of reconciliation activities in all three contexts. This allows for some investigation into which type of reconciliation activities might be more effective in transforming conflict identities.

In all three contexts, the parties may live completely separately from each other politically and/or physically such as by walls in the case of Belfast and Israel-Palestine, or bridges in the case of Mostar in Bosnia. This leads to reduced opportunities for positive contact and contributes towards perpetuating negative stereotypes, and increasing fear and mistrust. All three of the conflicts demonstrate how people in conflict become structurally and psychologically committed to conflict when conflict is protracted. Whilst they are not representative of all identity conflicts, they display common elements of intractability as well as extensive attempts at post-conflict reconciliation activity over a significant period of time since the peace agreements, which make them suitable for analysis. As Aiken (2013: 7) noted, concerns of selection bias, in particular, selecting on the dependent variable, are less acute with process tracing that is being utilised for potential theory development as the selection allows for better identification of the potential causal paths and variables leading to the selected outcome (cf. Dion, 1997; George & Bennett, 2004: 121-122 quoted in Aiken, 2013: 7).

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<sup>16</sup> The Dayton Peace Accords has numerous references to cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) but no direct references to reconciliation or commitments to reconciliation.

**Table 3:2 Case Selection**

	<b>Israel-Palestine</b>	<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>Bosnia-Herzegovina</b>
<b>Peace agreement breakdown</b>	Yes	No	No
<b>Conflict initially resolved through negotiated peace agreement</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Third party mediators involved in the negotiation process</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Political solution</b>	Partition	Power-sharing	Power-sharing
<b>External post-conflict building assistance</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Reconciliation activities</b>	Yes <sup>17</sup>	Yes	Yes
<b>Active civil society</b>	Yes <sup>18</sup>	Yes	Yes
<b>Conflicting historic collective narratives</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Double victim syndrome</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Contact with other party/parties limited</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Time since peace agreement signed<sup>19</sup></b>	22 years	17 years	20 years

### **Data**

As highlighted in Chapters One and Two, there have been analyses of outcomes of reconciliation activities conducted in all three of the cases. These include micro-level analyses of specific

<sup>17</sup> It is acknowledged that since the withdrawal from Gaza in 2008 and the subsequent rise of Hamas, reconciliation activities with Palestinians from Gaza has been more difficult. However, programmes have continued allowing for participation with Palestinians from Gaza insofar as they are able to participate.

<sup>18</sup> Palestinian civil society is restricted in some areas, potentially limiting the effect of reconciliation activities.

<sup>19</sup> Although this research is not examining the effect of duration on peace agreements, for the purposes of the case studies sufficient time must have elapsed since the peace agreement to allow for the trickle up process to be observable. This is calculated as the time elapsed between the signing of the agreement and August 2015, the end of the data collection period in this piece of research

programmes, techniques or psychological dynamics (such as the role of forgiveness) (Hewstone et al., 2008b), or the impact of problem-solving workshops (Kelman, 1972, 1976, 2005). There may be differing motivations behind their analysis, which could bias its design and content, such as whether they are produced as evaluations by the organisations themselves, by funders, or whether they are for academic study.<sup>20</sup> Using these diverse and “distinct data streams” provide the cross-checks for the causal inferences being drawn” (Bennett & Checkel, 2015: 28). The foundational data for the process tracing exercise in my case studies triangulates these sources with my own original survey data of participants of reconciliation activities in all three cases.<sup>21</sup>

The surveys were based in part on Worchel and Coutant’s (2008) model and designed to measure variables related to theories of conflict resolution, reconciliation, and models of peaceful coexistence. In both the Israel-Palestine and Bosnia cases, consultations were held with a number of organisations who manage joint activities and who had agreed to distribute the surveys to ensure that the nuances of the questions were captured both conceptually and in the local language. These consultations helped to ensure that the questions were easily comprehensible (Fowler & Cosenza, 2009: 376) and could not be construed as offensive in any community. The survey comprises of 41 questions and includes both closed multiple choice options as well as open-ended opportunities to explain choices. The surveys were completely anonymous, and the participants could refrain from answering any questions that they did not wish to answer. The online survey tool (Opinio) did not require that a question be answered in order to move to the next question. The surveys were available in all local languages and were aimed at participants over eighteen years old, so that no parental consents were needed.

The purpose of the surveys is to identify processes of attitude change or transformation amongst former participants of reconciliation activities. In many instances, participants in reconciliation activities may need to remain anonymous, such as in the Israeli-Palestinian context in which such activities have been banned as they are supporting “normalisation” (Abu Toameh, 2011) or in instances in which an individual’s community may not be disposed to participation in such activities. Consequently, there is a lack of publicly available information on participants in such activities, and the only real way of identifying such a sample is through the organisations themselves. Due to confidentiality obligations, organisations cannot release the details of their former participants, so I was reliant upon the participating organisations to distribute the online link for the surveys to their former participants.

This creates possibilities of selection bias on a number of levels. Firstly, I was unable to control to whom the organisations sent the survey, and there was the possibility that they would only send the

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<sup>20</sup> A list of the interviews, personal stories and sources of personal accounts is attached as Annex A

<sup>21</sup> A copy of the survey that was used in Northern Ireland is attached as Annex D. The surveys were also available in all the local languages.

survey to participants whom they felt had had a positive experience in their activities. The survey responses, however, did include negative responses about organisations' specific activities, as well as negative experiences with reconciliation activities as a whole, indicating that bias may not have always been at work. In some instances, the organisations posted the survey links on their Facebook page, which potentially allowed for a more random sample to be accessed. However, it is likely that members of the Facebook pages are demonstrating continued contact with the organisation and are more likely to have had a positive experience with the reconciliation activities. In some instances, the organisations provided participants of reconciliation activities with paper versions of the survey. Although these were completed anonymously, there is a possibility that this may have biased the responses, particularly if the respondents felt that there may either be a positive effect for the organisation if certain responses were given, or if there was a fear that the anonymity may be compromised.

There was a mixed response to the survey process, with Bosnia yielding the largest pool of respondents, with 81 respondents. Israel-Palestine and Northern Ireland yielded only 17 and 16 responses respectively, despite significant engagement with organisations. This to some extent reflects the levels of surveying and evaluation that has already taken place in those contexts, which is greater than in Bosnia. Organisations in Bosnia were enthusiastic when asked to participate, whereas both Israeli-Palestinian organisations and Northern Irish organisations were conscious of their participants being over-surveyed. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, the timing of the surveys clashed with that of Kahanoff and Shibli's study (2012) of the Parents Circle Family Forum (PCFF), which affected a large pool of potential respondents. Although the pool of respondents was smaller than originally intended, the surveys nonetheless provided a large amount of qualitative data. The combination of closed and open-ended questions provided ample opportunities for the respondents to explain their answers and share their experiences.

In all of my cases, the survey data was triangulated with additional data sources. In the case of Israel-Palestine, I collated 118 interviews and personal accounts of participants in reconciliation activities and grass-roots leaders. These were drawn from collections of accounts and narratives including from the PCFF's narratives project,<sup>22</sup> Just Vision,<sup>23</sup> Combatants for Peace,<sup>24</sup> and the Forgiveness Project.<sup>25</sup> The resulting collection of interviews is a unique and original dataset that has not been analysed as a single unit previously. Similarly, in the Northern Ireland case, the surveys were triangulated with NGO reports or programmes such as the Glencree Centre's "Let's Involve the Victim Experience" (L.I.V.E.) programme, and the evaluation of the Glencree Centre's political dialogue workshops.<sup>26</sup> Shirlow's study (2010) of 150 prisoners also provided some narrative accounts

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<sup>22</sup> See Parents-Circle Family Forum, <http://center.theparentscircle.org/WrittenTestimonials.aspx>, [last accessed on 11 May, 2017].

<sup>23</sup> See Just Vision, [www.justvision.org](http://www.justvision.org), [last accessed on 30 March 2017].

<sup>24</sup> See Combatants for Peace, <http://cfpeace.org/personal-stories/>, [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>25</sup> See The Forgiveness Project, <http://theforgivenessproject.com/stories/>, [last accessed on 11 May, 2017].

<sup>26</sup> See Glencree, <http://glencree.ie/our-work/>, [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

that added to the process tracing analysis. In the Bosnia case, additional source material was drawn from narratives published as part of research projects such as UNHCR's "Imagine Coexistence" programme (Chayes & Minow, 2003), the Nansen Dialogue Centre and Saferworld's report "The Missing Peace: The need for a long-term strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2010),<sup>27</sup> and the Centre for Non-Violent Action's report, "Four Views. How I Found Myself in War. How to Reach Sustainable Peace" (2002).<sup>28</sup>

The answers to the open-ended questions, as well as the interviews and personal stories, were analysed using qualitative textual analysis. This was a deductive process that involved analysing the text of the survey responses and other qualitative data according to the categories set out in Figure 3.2, as described in the previous section. In the Israeli-Palestinian interview collection this facilitated some additional analysis into the frequency of the elements underpinning the theorised process. The textual analysis provides greater weight and descriptive colour to the quantified survey responses, and uncovers some of the latent processes driving the responses. In each of the case studies, vignettes have been included that set out personal accounts drawn from the survey responses, demonstrating the path of individual transformation as a result of participating in reconciliation programmes and the subsequent influence on their behaviour and actions. These vignettes provide an in-depth insight to the process being traced, which complements the more overarching analysis of the surveys and secondary sources.

## **Conclusion**

Premised on the theory that hardened conflict identities can contribute to the failure of peace agreements, this study examines the effect of including reconciliation clauses into peace agreements. The use of both Large-N statistical analysis and case studies allows for "a more holistic view of the phenomena [being studied], of patterns, processes, effects, and causes" (Thaler, 2013: 15). The Peace Agreements and Reconciliation Dataset allows for the identification of a relationship between the reconciliation clause, reconciliation activity, and the sustainability of the peace agreement, while the case studies allow for the examination of the process by which conflict identities can be transformed through reconciliation activities to create support for the peace agreement. The combination of the two methods allows for each to fill in the gaps left by the other, thus allowing for research that "both satisfies the criteria of social scientific inquiry and provide[s] more useful and complete information for policy makers and practitioners" (ibid.: 16).

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<sup>27</sup> See Saferworld <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/The%20missing%20peace%20-%20English%20reduced.pdf>, [last accessed on 11 May 2017]

<sup>28</sup> See Nansen Dialogue Centre <http://www.nenasilje.org/publikacije/pdf/4pogleda/4views-02-sr-vreme.pdf>, [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

## **Chapter Four: The Role of Reconciliation in the Sustainability of Peace Agreements**

### **Introduction**

Not all ceasefires or peace settlements are created equal (Fortna, 2004: 76; Badran, 14: 196). In Badran's (ibid.) conception, more mechanisms, such as those addressing DDR and power-sharing, result in a stronger design which is more sustainable. Hampson (1996: 10-11) highlights that "for a peace agreement to be durable, institutions and support structures must be put in place so that the parties are discouraged from taking up arms again." The provisions of peace settlements now often include mechanisms and structures addressing all aspects of the military, political, and socio-economic contexts in the post-conflict environment. The central question of this research is whether structures implementing reconciliation activities can help reverse the conflict identities that keep parties committed to perpetuating the conflict. In this chapter, I explore whether there is a correlation between including reconciliation provisions into peace settlements and the sustainability of those settlements.

### **Reconciliation and the Sustainability of Peace Agreements**

In Chapter Two I set out the literature on the institutions and structures that could be built into peace settlements to increase the durability of the settlement, including power-sharing (Walter, 2002; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2007; Mattes & Savun, 2009), peacekeeping forces (Doyle & Sambanis, 2000; Fortna, 2004), and DDR (Hartzell, 2013). While these structural measures are critical to building basic levels of trust, they are not sufficient to bring about the transformation of entrenched attitudes and emotions that is required for a stable or positive peace (Rosoux, 2013: 479). The discussion in Chapter Two suggests that conflict identities can be transformed through reconciliation activities, and that this disarming of the mind increases the sustainability of the peace agreement. This is the foundation of my hypotheses:

- H1a: Peace settlements that contract the parties into commitments to reconciliation activities are less susceptible to breakdown than those that do not make such provisions.
- H1b: The stronger the reconciliation clause the less likely that a settlement will breakdown.
- H2a: Peace settlements are less likely to break down if accompanied by top-down government-led reconciliation initiatives
- H2b: Peace settlements are less likely to break down if accompanied by NGO-led reconciliation initiatives.
- H2c: Peace settlements are less likely to break down if accompanied by both government-led and NGO-led reconciliation initiatives.

The analysis of the sustainability of peace agreements is split roughly into two schools. Some studies use methodologies based on dichotomous variables such as logistic regression (Maoz, 1984; Licklider, 1995; Walter, 1997; Senese and Quackenbush, 2003; Toft, 2010). The other school utilise duration models or hazard analyses, such as Fortna (2004), in order to resolve the problem of “censored data,” cases in which peace last until the observation ends but there is no guarantee that it will continue (*see also* Hartzell et al., 2001; Werner, 2009; Nilsson, 2012). As the duration of the agreement is not the focus of the research and the dependent variables are binary, the logistic model is more suitable, with robust standard errors clustered on specific conflicts used.

### **Dependent Variables**

The key dependent variable in all the models is whether a peace agreement broke down. The binary variable *breakdown* captures all sources of breakdown and is coded 1 if the agreement broke down (for any reason) and 0 if the agreement was still in place in full. Overall, 185 of the 259 agreements broke down.

Because agreements can break down or fail in different ways, it is of interest to explore whether reconciliation clauses and activity not only prevent the breakdown of agreements, but also whether they have greater impact on certain types of breakdown. Therefore, I distinguish between agreement breakdown that occurs primarily due to the resumption of violence and breakdown that may have occurred due to non-implementation of the agreement or other action that causes the agreement to fail (such as abrogation of the agreement by the parties). The binary variable *breakdown: violence* was coded as 1 if the primary form of breakdown of the agreement was the resumption of violence between the same parties or over the same incompatibility within five years of the agreement being signed. This was ascertained from historical accounts, as well as examining the Battle Deaths Dataset (v. 3.0) (Lacina & Gleditsch, 2005), and the UCDP Armed Conflicts Dataset (v.4.0) (Gleditsch et al., 2002).<sup>29</sup> Overall, 144 of the peace agreements broke down due to the resumption of violence.

Agreement breakdown can also take the form of lack of implementation of the agreement or factors leading parties to abrogate the agreement, such as change of government. These processes are captured in the variables *breakdown: non-implementation* and *breakdown: abrogation*. *Breakdown: non-implementation* accounts for instances such as the repudiation of the 1986 Koka Dam agreement by the Government of Sudan or the repudiation of 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement.<sup>30</sup> In 42 instances agreements broke down due to lack of implementation, echoing Walter’s (1997) findings that the challenge is often not in reaching agreement but effecting implementation. Civil dissatisfaction or unrest that does not result in the requisite 25 deaths considered a resumption of violence could also constitute breakdown of the agreement. *Breakdown: abrogation* adds to *breakdown:*

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<sup>29</sup> The detailed coding and sources for the variables used in the quantitative model are set out in Appendix B.

<sup>30</sup> The agreement was signed by 19 parties but did not include the main parties, including the armed factions of the CNDD, PALIPHETU, the FDD, and the FNL (Boshoff, 2010: 7-8).

*non-implementation* to include all agreements which broke down due to alternative political action such as protests, change of government, and other political action which undermined or spoiled the agreement. This is coded 1 in instances such as the breakdown of the 1973 Sunningdale Agreement which broke down due to the Ulster Worker's Strike forcing the end of the Northern Ireland Executive and the power-sharing structures set out in the agreement (*see* Farrington, 2006). This type of action, whilst non-violent, creates sufficient pressure on one of the parties that the agreement becomes untenable to the point that they withdraw from the agreement and contributes to breakdown in 130 of the cases.

## **Independent Variables**

### *Reconciliation Clauses*

The new dataset on reconciliation clauses and reconciliation activities is largely the result of my independent research and coding. The Peace Agreements Dataset (v.2.0) 1975-2011 (Harbom, Högladh, & Wallensteen, 2006; Högladh, 2012) includes a binary variable taking into account clauses providing specifically for national reconciliation, as well as binary variables for some transitional justice mechanisms, such as amnesties. Given that this coding and the timeframe were not specific enough for the purposes of testing whether agreements that include commitments for reconciliation activities are less likely to break down (H1a), I created new variables to capture clauses addressing reconciliation at the political level, transitional justice, and social reconciliation. The full text of the agreements was examined to provide for the following variables: truth & reconciliation commissions, tribunals, victim commissions, joint cooperative activities, joint social activities, textbook review, and other reconciliation initiatives. These are essential elements in Lederach's reconciliation paradigm of truth, justice, mercy, and peace (Lederach 1997: 28-31). They each contribute to challenging the elements of conflict identities by increasing contact, providing opportunities for conflicting narratives to be understood and stereotypes challenged, thereby reducing fear and mistrust. In each instance the objective was to code whether these elements of reconciliation were addressed in the agreement. They were coded as 1 when there was an unambiguous reference to the mechanism, such as Article XII of the 2003 Accra Peace agreement which calls for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission "to address issues of impunity" and in "the spirit of national reconciliation shall deal with the root causes of the crises" and call upon the international community for the financial and technical assistance to do so. The 1997 agreement between Georgia and Abkhazia set out commitments for exchange visits for parliamentarians, which would be coded 1 for joint cooperative activities.

### *Strength of Reconciliation Clause*

To test my hypothesis that the stronger the reconciliation clause, the less likely it would be that the settlement would break down (H1b) I needed to distinguish between those reconciliation clauses that are little more than a nod to reconciliation. Therefore, I assigned each instance of a reconciliation clause a value for strength. This was designed to determine the real commitment of the parties

towards reconciliation, rather than the clause being a stock phrase included to appease third party mediators or because it is the appropriate wording to include. Clauses coded weak (1) were those that made mention of reconciliation in a cursory way but did not provide any concrete measures as to implementation. Those with stronger provisions were coded as 2. They outlined concrete measures or activities aimed at achieving reconciliation and clauses which, not only, included a clear outline of the type of measures or activities to be implemented such as details of funding allocation or methods to ensure participation (e.g. The Belfast Agreement, 1998). Appendix C sets out the peace agreements that included reconciliation provisions and the strength of those provisions.

#### *Reconciliation Activity*

In order to examine the second set of hypotheses, examining whether government-led or NGO-led reconciliation activity affected the likelihood of breakdown of an agreement, information was required as to the presence of reconciliation activity in each context. As there are no datasets which capture post-agreement reconciliation activity, or reconciliation activity as a whole, a number of new variables addressing reconciliation activity had to be coded independently. These new binary variables include: *implementation of a reconciliation clause*; *reconciliation activity*; *NGO-led reconciliation activity*; *government-led reconciliation activity*; *truth and reconciliation commission*; *truth and reconciliation commission report*; and *tribunals*.<sup>31</sup> The variable *reconciliation activity* is intended to capture the presence or implementation of any reconciliation activities and is coded as 1 if there is any evidence of any type of reconciliation activity.

The actual establishment of truth and reconciliation commissions, tribunals, special courts and their subsequent reports is used as a best proxy measure for implementation of reconciliation activities at the government level as they require a measure of government support. If any of these were present, the variable *government-led reconciliation* was coded as 1. This was clear-cut in instances that involved the establishment of truth and reconciliation commissions or conferences, as the events were often reported either in the news or on Foreign Ministry websites. Data on truth and reconciliation commissions and their subsequent reports were sourced from the United States Institute of Peace's Truth Commission Digital Collection. Similarly, information on criminal tribunals and special courts, such as the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Extraordinary Chambers Courts for Cambodia, was widely available.<sup>32</sup> This variable was also coded 1 if governments had taken steps to formalise other commitments to reconciliation, including the formation of victims' commissions, such as the

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<sup>31</sup> Both truth commissions and international criminal tribunals could be said to be part of a country's post-conflict justice mechanisms. However, for the purposes of this research, these fall into Lederach's (1997) conception of reconciliation which encompasses both truth and justice alongside peace and mercy.

<sup>32</sup> See United Nations Dag Hammerskjöld Library, <http://research.un.org/en/docs/law/courts> [last accessed on 30 March 2017].

Commission for Victims and Survivors in Northern Ireland that was established through formal legislation at the government level.<sup>3334</sup>

Gleaning accurate information on NGO-led and non-government-led reconciliation activities involved more primary research so that I could create the variable *NGO-led reconciliation*. Indices that purely measure the presence of civil society or international organisations would not necessarily provide insights into whether these organisations engaged in reconciliation activities. In developed post-conflict contexts, local peace NGO networks or large NGOs provided reports on the history and nature of the activities in that setting, such as the Peace NGO Forum in Israel.<sup>35</sup> In the absence of local networks, organisations such as Insight on Conflict<sup>36</sup> or Infrastructures for Peace<sup>37</sup> provide overviews and listings of local NGO activity. Practitioner publications, academic articles, INGOs or supporters of local projects, such as the Catholic Relief Services peacebuilding unit, also provide information on the extent of reconciliation activity.<sup>38</sup> This resulted in a measure coded as 1 if there was evidence of reconciliation activity in the immediate 5 years following the peace agreement. These sources were also able to provide an indication of the extent to which this activity was government or NGO-led. Admittedly, this is a crude measure, and there is currently no data available as to the exact number of reconciliation activities in each context. Further, this measure does not distinguish between the various types of NGO-led reconciliation activities and programmes, however, this inquiry could be viewed as an important initial stage in exploring the impact of these activities.

#### *Control Variables*

A number of control variables were included in the analyses to account for other findings on key factors that contribute to the likelihood of breakdown of peace agreements. Power-sharing has been cited as one of the key elements that can increase the durability of a peace settlement (Walter, 2002; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2007; Mattes & Savun, 2009), therefore the variable *power-sharing provisions* was included to account for the effect of any political power-sharing provisions in the settlement. The variable *third party guarantor* aims to control for Walter's (1999) findings that the involvement of third party guarantors provides credible commitments can contribute to the implantation of an agreement. Similarly, the variable *peacekeeping operations* is included to account for the possibility that peacekeepers

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<sup>33</sup> The Commission for Victims and Survivors in Northern Ireland is a non-departmental body of the Executive Office and was established in May 2008 under the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, as amended by the Commission for Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Given that different types of reconciliation activities can have different effects, I considered trying to test for the effects of the different types of reconciliation activities. This is particularly pertinent in regards to government-led reconciliation activities, which for the purpose of this study, includes transitional justice mechanisms such as TRC's and tribunals. As the intended effects of retributive and restorative justice mechanisms differ, a question arises as whether they can equally lead to the type of reconciliation effects that impact upon the sustainability of the peace agreement. In some cases, transitional justice mechanisms can fuel the conflict identity as Rosoux (2013: 484) notes that "in certain circumstances the search for truth can be seen as undermining fragile cooperation by holding on to the past instead of looking to the future." However, given that there were only 25 instances of TRC's associated with peace agreements and 8 instances of tribunals associated with the agreements, the samples would be too small to draw any substantial conclusions from the results.

<sup>35</sup> See Peace NGO Forum, <http://peacengo.simpleit.co.il/en/> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

<sup>36</sup> See Insight on Conflict published by Peace Direct, <http://www.insightonconflict.org/> [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>37</sup> See Infrastructures for Peace, <https://www.peaceportal.org/web/i4p/home> [last accessed on 11 May, 2017].

<sup>38</sup> See Catholic Relief Services, Justice and Peacebuilding <http://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/program-areas/peacebuilding>, [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

may reduce the likelihood of conflict recurrence in civil wars (Doyle & Sambanis, 2000; Fortna 2004). The data for these three control variables were drawn from UCDP's Peace Agreement Database, or by independently examining the agreements for the years in which they were not covered by the database.

Controlling for characteristics of the conflict that have been found to affect the durability of the conflict is also important. The variable *conflict intensity* is a measure similar to the cost of war variable used by Fortna (2003) and is included to account for findings that the stability of agreements is affected by the intensity of the conflict (Fortna, 2008; Hartzell, 2009; Mukherjee, 2006; Quinn et al., 2007; Doyle & Sambanis, 2000). Using data from Themnér and Wallensteen (2012), this was coded 1 if there were over 1,000 battle deaths at the time the peace agreement was signed.

Although the effect of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) on settlement duration is still an area requiring further research (Hartzell, 2013), the control variable *DDR* has been included based on its emphasis by the UN Security Council as being “vital to stability” (UN, 2000) in the post-conflict context, and its accepted role in contributing to peacebuilding (Knight & Özerdam, 2004). It is operationalised and coded as 1 if the agreement includes a clause addressing DDR. Similarly, *withdrawal* is a binary variable that accounts for the withdrawal of the combatants' troops from disputed areas to acknowledge Fortna's (2003) findings that failure to withdraw from territory can serve as a driver of future conflict. It is coded as 1 if the agreement includes a clause providing for withdrawal of troops.

Three more control variables, *GDP (per capita)*, *democracy*, and *inclusiveness*, were added to reflect the emphasis of their role in preventing the recurrence of civil conflict, even though not all these conflicts are civil conflicts. In light of the prevailing view that the risk of conflict recurrence is lower in democracies (Mason et al., 2011), I controlled for whether the state was a democracy at the time of signing the agreement, using the Polity 2 score from Polity IV Project data (Marshall and Jaggers, 2013). In the instances of inter-state conflict, the lower of the Polity scores was used as a baseline. The *GDP* variable represents GDP per capita in the year of the agreement and controls for the level of state capacity, to reflect findings that state weakness is associated with peace agreement implementation (De Rouen et al., 2010) and the risk of conflict recurrence (Collier, 1999). Where available the data, was drawn from the World Bank World Development Indicators.<sup>39</sup>

When examining the second set of hypotheses on the effect of government-led or NGO-led reconciliation on the breakdown of peace agreement, it was also important to consider whether other civil society activity, even if it is not specifically reconciliation focused, has any impact on the durability of the agreement. In the absence of specific data on the strength of civil society, a measure had to be

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<sup>39</sup> See World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

constructed. Nilsson (2012: 254) constructed a similar measure based on the presence of international organisations in a country as a reflection of the strength of domestic civil society, but this is only a proxy measure. The variable *civil society strength* was constructed from a number of sources including Civicus Civil Society Index Country Reports,<sup>40</sup> Accord Country Reports, and Infrastructures for Peace reports. The variable was coded as 2 if civil society was strong and could operate without government restriction, and 1 if civil society was present but restricted. The variable was coded 0 if there was no presence of an active civil society.

**Table 4:1 Summary statistics of independent and control variables**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	Min - Max
Reconciliation clauses	0.28	0.449	259	0 - 1
Reconciliation clause strength	0.42	0.735	259	0 - 2
NGO-led reconciliation activities	0.83	0.374	226	0 - 1
Government-led reconciliation activities	0.28	0.452	228	0 - 1
DDR	0.33	0.418	259	0 - 1
Withdrawal	0.22	0.417	218	0 - 1
Third-party guarantor	0.44	0.497	245	0 - 1
Peacekeeping operations	0.18	0.389	259	0 - 1
Power-sharing provisions	0.13	0.339	257	0 - 1
Conflict intensity high	0.42	0.494	259	0 - 1
Democracy	2.18	5.936	257	-10 - 10
Civil society strength	1.65	0.748	243	0 - 3

### **The Impact of Reconciliation Clauses and Reconciliation Activity**

In order to better understand the framework of the statistical analysis, it is worthwhile to consider some of the basic descriptive information that can be observed (Table 4.2). How many of the agreements actually include reconciliation clauses in some form? Out of the 259 peace agreements, 28% (72) of the agreements included some form of reconciliation clause. 23% (38) of these clauses

<sup>40</sup> See Civil Society Index, <http://csi.civicus.org/> [last accessed 11 May 2017]

were strong or very strong, such as the 2003 Inter-Congolese Agreement (the Sun City Agreement) that includes as an annex a resolution committing to institute a truth and reconciliation commission and an annex addressing national reconciliation and *inter alia* establishing programmes for interethnic coexistence.<sup>41</sup> However, overall 71% (185) of the 259 agreements broke down, with violence being the primary means of breakdown in 66% (144) of the cases.

**Table 4.2** Descriptive statistics for impact of reconciliation clauses

Variable	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)	N
Reconciliation clauses	72	27.80	259
Strong reconciliation clauses	38	14.67	259
NGO-led reconciliation activities	188	83.19	226
Government-led reconciliation activities	65	28.51	228
All breakdown	185	71.43	259
Breakdown: Violence	144	66.06	218
Breakdown: Abrogation	129	63.55	203
Breakdown: Non-implementation	42	36.21	116

The data evidences that there was some form of NGO reconciliation activity present during or following 83% (188) of the 226 agreements for which data was available. Missing values result from the lack of reliable data. Government-led reconciliation activities were associated with 28% (65) of 228 agreements. Of these 65 cases, there were 25 incidences of truth and reconciliation commissions and 8 cases of tribunals. The statistical analysis that follows allows for further exploration into the associations between the variables and their significance.

#### *Effect of Reconciliation Clauses on Peace Agreements*

I first examine my initial hypothesis (H1a), whether peace agreements that have reconciliation clauses are less likely to break down. Table 4.3 sets out the results of this first statistical analysis. My first hypothesis suggested that the inclusion of reconciliation clauses should increase the sustainability of the peace agreement. When looking at whether including reconciliation clauses is linked to lower

<sup>41</sup> These provisions are included in Resolution DRC/COR/04 and DRC/CPR/03 annexed to the 2003 Agreement. The full text of the agreement can be found on the UN peace agreements database, [http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/CD\\_030402\\_SunCityAgreement.pdf](http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/CD_030402_SunCityAgreement.pdf) [last accessed 11 May 2017].

incidences of the breakdown of agreements, the first model (Model 1, Table 4.3) shows that the variable *reconciliation clause* has a significant effect at the .05 level. When conducting further exploration into whether there is any link between reconciliation clauses and specific types of breakdown, I find a lower chance of breakdown through abrogation, significant at the 0.1 level (Model 3, Table 4.3). Although not statistically significant, I also find that the inclusion of reconciliation clauses is associated with lower chance of breakdown by resumption of violence (Model 2, Table 4.3).<sup>42</sup>

Overall, the models are in line with the theoretical expectation that engaging in work to psychologically disarm parties alongside physical disarmament, and taking into account political and economic changes, can help prevent the breakdown of agreements. The marginal effects model shows that the effect of reconciliation clauses is highly significant at the .01 level and that the expected probability of breakdown decreases by 14% with the inclusion of a reconciliation clause.<sup>43</sup> Similar models were run with the other forms of breakdown resulting in an expected decrease of breakdown between 2% (breakdown by abrogation) and 12% (breakdown by violence). The models improve upon the naïve guess that committing parties into engaging in reconciliation programmes, thus disarming psychologically, should decrease the likelihood of breakdown of the peace agreements.

The control variables in the model also yielded some notable results that confirm some of the findings on factors contributing to the decreased likelihood of agreement breakdown in the wider literature. Specifically, the role of DDR mechanisms has strong effects in preventing breakdown of peace agreements. It provides support to the logical argument that the effective removal of weaponry and the return of combatants to their homes will prevent the parties sliding back into conflict. This effect is stronger than the more conventional factors, such as third party guarantors and power-sharing arrangements, which the civil conflict recurrence literature has demonstrated have important roles in preventing conflict recurrence. This non-finding could be explained by the fact that the dataset includes conflicts that are not civil wars or that power-sharing arrangements in intractable conflicts can cause considerable tension, particularly if the hardened conflict identities do not allow for the necessary trust for an effective working relationship (*see* Jarstad, 2008; Martin, 2013; Bormann et al., 2014). The output for GDP per capita suggests that it has little influence on the breakdown of the agreement which could indicate that change in economic well-being does not sufficiently counteract the conflict identity in order to bring stability.

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<sup>42</sup> The effect of *non-implementation* of the agreement was also examined, and although the results also suggested that reconciliation clauses could help prevent breakdown of peace agreements (Model 4, Table 4.3), however examination of the correctly classified cases reveals that the model does not have any real predictive value. Although this may be due to the small sample size, as it does not contribute to our understanding, it is not discussed further.

<sup>43</sup> The average predicted value at 0 = 77% and at 1=63% with 95% confidence intervals.

**Table 4.3 Reconciliation Clauses and the Breakdown of Agreements**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	All breakdown	Breakdown: Violence	Breakdown: Abrogation	Non- Implementation
Reconciliation clause	-0.663** (0.304)	-0.516 (0.324)	-0.501* (0.302)	-0.370 (0.580)
<i>Controls</i>				
DDR	-0.792** (0.397)	-0.654* (0.394)	-0.867*** (0.230)	-0.231 (0.321)
Withdrawal	0.340 (0.446)	0.391 (0.425)	0.062 (0.456)	-0.747 (0.539)
Third party guarantor	0.216 (0.458)	-0.224 (0.465)	0.020 (0.427)	0.056 0.443
Peacekeeping operations	0.181 (0.661)	0.140 (0.629)	0.184 (0.702)	0.417 0.545
Power-sharing provisions	-0.096 (0.404)	-0.174 (0.450)	-0.104 (0.492)	0.381 0.502
Conflict Intensity High	0.097 (0.525)	0.458 (0.554)	0.045 (0.637)	-0.748 0.583
GDP per capita	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 0.000
Democracy	-0.058 (0.063)	-0.035 (0.051)	-0.057 (0.623)	-0.070 0.055
Constant	1.769*** (0.422)	1.283** (0.520)	1.399*** (0.496)	-1.298 0.461
Number of agreements	228	190	180	228
Correctly predicted cases (%)	74.56	71.58	67.78	83.33

Notes: The estimations are the result of logit regressions (in STATA 14). The table reports coefficients and, in parentheses, standard errors (defined as clustering according to conflict). \* indicates significant at 0.10, \*\* indicates significant at 0.05, and \*\*\* indicates significant at 0.01.

*Effect of the Strength of Reconciliation Clauses on Peace Agreements*

I next turn to examining the expectation that a stronger reconciliation clause can be linked to a decrease in the likelihood of breakdown of the agreement (H1b). Table 4.4 shows the results of testing for the effects of the strength of the reconciliation clause on an agreement as compared to not having a reconciliation clause. The analysis reveals that a statistically significant effect in all the models, indicating a lower likelihood of breakdown with the inclusion of a strong reconciliation clause. The effect is statistically strongest, at the 0.01 level, for all types of breakdown (Table 4.2, Model 1), however it is also statistically significant at the 0.05 level for the other types of breakdown (Table 4.2, Models 2, 3, and 4), suggesting that overall the strength of the reconciliation clause plays a role in preventing the breakdown of agreements. An examination of the marginal effects at the mean highlights that there is little difference in effect of the inclusion of a weak reconciliation clause and having no reconciliation clause at all in the agreement.

These models, once again, demonstrate the role that DDR plays in preventing the breakdown of the agreement. In particular, DDR is highly significant at the 0.01 level when considering preventing the breakdown of peace agreements. This begins to point to the importance of the twin processes of physical and psychological disarmament in reducing the likelihood of the agreement breaking down.

**Table 4.4 The Effect of the Strength of Reconciliation Clauses on Peace Agreements**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	All breakdown	Breakdown: violence	Breakdown: abrogation	Breakdown: non- implementation
Weak Reconciliation Clause	0.042 (0.446)	0.127 (0.477)	0.190 (0.475)	0.101 (0.505)
Strong Reconciliation Clause	-1.181*** (0.441)	-0.999** (0.472)	-0.900** (0.434)	-1.245** (0.635)
<i>Controls</i>				
DDR	-0.882** (0.394)	-0.680* (0.393)	-0.834*** (0.217)	-0.904** (0.363)
Withdrawal	0.412 (0.444)	0.418 (0.431)	0.116 (0.443)	-0.502 (0.575)
Third party guarantor	-0.228 (0.469)	-0.242 (0.479)	0.081 (0.458)	-0.215 (0.599)
Peacekeeping operations	0.173 (0.674)	0.163 (0.640)	0.192 (0.724)	0.187 (0.824)
Power-sharing provisions	-0.219 (0.372)	-0.253 (0.423)	-0.177 (0.446)	0.083 (0.535)
Conflict Intensity High	0.094 (0.510)	0.452 (0.539)	0.080 (0.599)	-0.889 (0.535)
GDP per capita	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Democracy	-0.056 (0.063)	-0.032 (0.078)	-0.047 (0.063)	-0.124 (0.089)
Constant	1.781*** (0.424)	1.298** (0.522)	1.337*** (0.508)	0.639 (0.740)
Number of agreements =	228	190	180	101
Correctly predicted cases (%)	73.68	70.00	66.11	59.41

Notes: The estimations are the result of logit regressions (in STATA 14). The table reports coefficients and, in parentheses, standard errors (defined as clustering according to conflict). \* indicates significant at 0.10, \*\* indicates significant at 0.05, and \*\*\* indicates significant at 0.01.

### *Effect of Reconciliation Activities on Peace Agreements*

The second set of hypotheses proposed that peace agreements are less likely to break down if accompanied by reconciliation activities. In Chapter Two, I theorise the process by which participation in reconciliation activities, such as joint dialogue, social or professional activities, helps transform the conflict identities that can contribute to the perpetuation of conflict. The analysis confirms the expectation that reconciliation activities are important to help prevent the breakdown of settlements, and highlights the role of government-led reconciliation as having a statistically significant effect on decreasing the likelihood of the breakdown of a peace agreement (Table 4.5). The results show a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 level indicating a decrease in the risk of breakdown when there is government-led reconciliation activity (Model 1, Table 4.5). More specifically, if there is government-led reconciliation, the expected risks of breakdown decrease by 25%, providing support for the argument that peace settlements are less likely to break down if accompanied by top-down government-led reconciliation initiatives (H2a). Whilst the models show that NGO-led activity may have an effect on preventing the likelihood of settlement breakdown (H2b), there is no clear statistically significant relationship to lend weight to this part of the hypothesis.

This impact of government-led reconciliation could reflect the theoretical argument that activities that address the conflict identity create an atmosphere in which commitments to peace are upheld, including the greater likelihood of implementation and fewer opportunities for abrogation. Therefore, agreements that include reconciliation clauses with commitments to government-level reconciliation should be stronger than those agreements without reconciliation clauses. This might, however, be an indication that parties who are able to agree to reconciliation clauses at the negotiating table are likely to be more amicable, or committed, to the peace process than those who do not, and therefore the peace agreement had a greater chance of success at the outset.

**Table 4.5 The Effect of Reconciliation Activities on Peace Agreements**

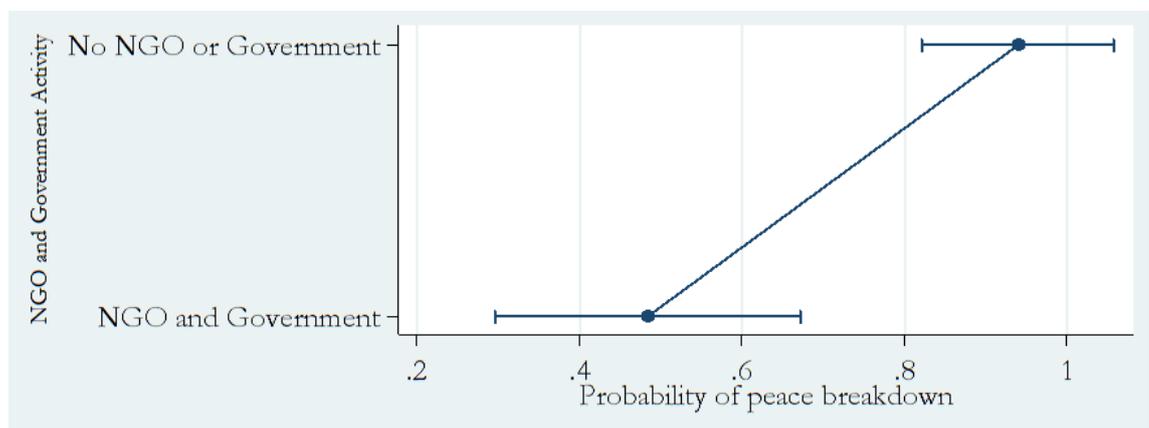
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	All breakdown	Breakdown: violence	Breakdown: abrogation	Breakdown: non- implementation
NGO-led Reconciliation Activity	-1.628 (1.112)	-1.792 (1.105)	-1.782 (1.232)	-1.273 (1.413)
Government-led Reconciliation Activity	-1.208** (0.621)	-0.836 (0.596)	-1.388* (0.824)	-2.961** (1.326)
<i>Controls</i>				
DDR	-0.750* (0.398)	-0.706* (0.400)	-0.692** (0.334)	-0.901* (0.481)
Withdrawal	0.428 (0.417)	0.486 (0.401)	-0.121 (0.485)	-0.287 (0.674)
Third party guarantor	-0.072 (0.483)	-0.042 (0.502)	0.062 (0.443)	-0.575 (0.773)
Peacekeeping operations	0.233 (0.722)	0.309 (0.665)	0.346 (0.755)	0.353 (0.724)
Power-sharing provisions	-0.557 (0.466)	-0.381 (0.665)	-0.463 (0.462)	-0.044 (0.521)
Conflict Intensity High	0.401 (0.538)	0.901 (0.569)	0.536 (0.674)	-0.295 (0.641)
GDP per capita	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-5.54 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Democracy	0.011 (0.059)	0.013 (0.068)	0.010 (0.066)	-0.045 (0.080)
Civil Society Strength	0.481 (0.429)	0.718 (0.472)	0.462 (0.470)	0.716 (0.778)
Constant	2.219* (1.197)	1.298 (1.233)	1.880 (1.284)	-0.233 (1.340)
Number of agreements =	209	172	167	90
Correctly predicted cases (%)	75.60	72.09	71.26	73.33

Notes: The estimations are the result of logit regressions (in STATA 14). The table reports coefficients and, in parentheses, standard errors (defined as clustering according to conflict). \* indicates significant at 0.10, \*\* indicates significant at 0.05, and \*\*\* indicates significant at 0.01.

Although, the effect of NGO-led reconciliation was not statistically significant, it is possible that it facilitates government-led reconciliation, and that there is potential endogeneity in the relationship between the two types of reconciliation activity. Therefore, in order to explore whether it is NGO-led or government-led reconciliation or the combination of the both that might have a more profound effect in preventing the breakdown of the agreement, an analysis was conducted to examine the interaction between the two levels of reconciliation activity. When conducting the analysis, the models showed that there were no instances of government-led reconciliation without NGO-led reconciliation, and consequently the interaction reduces itself to an additive effect.

The results, reported in Table 4.6, confirm the expectation that agreements are less likely to breakdown when there is both NGO-led and government-led reconciliation (H2c), with a statistically significant effect found at the 0.05 level, showing a low likelihood of breakdown of the agreement in all the models (Table 4.6). As Figure 4.1 shows, it can be expected that combination of NGO and government-led reconciliation will be associated with a 44% decrease in the likelihood of breakdown of an agreement. The question of endogeneity regarding whether it is government-led reconciliation that leads to NGO-led reconciliation or vice-versa is answered partially in these findings, in that there are no instances of government-led reconciliation without NGO-led reconciliation. This would suggest that there is greater likelihood of government-led reconciliation when there is NGO-reconciliation.

**Figure 4.1 The Effect of NGO-led and Government-led reconciliation**



**Table 4.6 Effects of Types of Reconciliation Activities on Peace Agreements**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	All breakdown	Breakdown: violence	Breakdown: abrogation	Breakdown: non- implementation
NGO-led reconciliation activity only	-1.628 (1.112)	-1.791 (1.105)	-1.782 (1.232)	-1.273 (1.413)
Both NGO-led and Government-led reconciliation activity	-2.837** (1.117)	-2.627** (1.169)	-3.171** (1.434)	-4.233** (1.820)
<i>Controls</i>				
DDR	-0.750* (0.398)	-0.706* (0.400)	-0.692** (0.334)	-0.901* (0.481)
Withdrawal	0.428 (0.417)	0.486 (0.401)	0.122 (0.448)	0.287 (0.674)
Third party guarantor	-0.072 (0.483)	0.042 (0.502)	0.062 (0.443)	0.575 (0.773)
Peacekeeping operations	0.233 (0.722)	0.309 (0.665)	0.346 (0.756)	0.353 (0.725)
Power-sharing provisions	-0.557 (0.444)	-0.381 (0.515)	-0.463 (0.463)	-0.044 (0.521)
Conflict Intensity High	0.401 (0.538)	0.902 (0.569)	0.536 (0.674)	-0.294 (0.641)
GDP per capita	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-5.54 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Democracy	-0.011 (0.059)	0.013 (0.068)	0.010 (0.065)	-0.045 (0.080)
Civil Society Strength	0.481 (0.429)	0.718 (0.473)	0.462 (0.470)	0.716 (0.778)
Constant	2.219* (1.197)	1.299 (0.232)	1.880 (1.284)	-0.233 (1.340)
Number. of agreements =	209	172	167	90
Correctly Predicted Cases (%)	75.60	72.09	71.26	73.33

Notes: The estimations are the result of logit regressions (in STATA 14). The table reports coefficients and, in parentheses, standard errors (defined as clustering according to conflict). \* indicates significant at 0.10, \*\* indicates significant at 0.05, and \*\*\* indicates significant at 0.01.

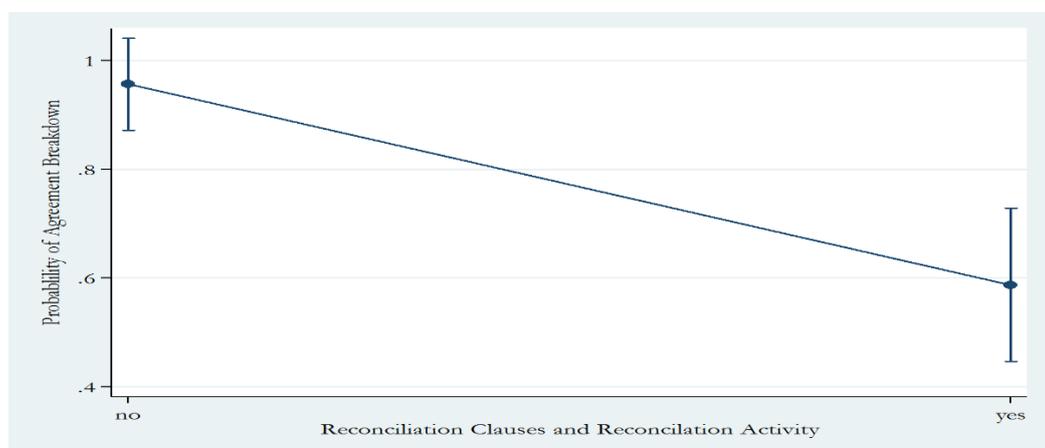
The findings above suggest that including reconciliation clauses into peace agreements and reconciliation activities can have positive implications for decreasing the likelihood of a peace agreement breaking down. The analyses do, however, open the question as to whether it is the reconciliation clauses or the reconciliation activities that are the most significant? Therefore, I conducted a further exploration into the interaction between reconciliation clauses and reconciliation activities.

**Table 4.7 Effect of reconciliation clauses and reconciliation activities on settlements**

	No reconciliation activities	Reconciliation activities
No reconciliation clauses	Settlement breakdown	Reduced likelihood of settlement breakdown
Reconciliation clauses	Reduced likelihood of settlement breakdown	Highly reduced likelihood of settlement breakdown

Overall, the combined effect of reconciliation clauses and reconciliation clauses leads to a decrease in the likelihood of the breakdown of the peace settlement that is significant at the 0.05 level. However, the results seem to indicate that the inclusion of reconciliation clauses has a more statistically significant effect (at the 0.01 level) than reconciliation activities alone (Table 4.8). This likely reflects the fact that the most detailed reconciliation clauses often include commitments for government-level reconciliation clauses, which, as detailed above, have the greatest expected effects on the stability of a peace agreement. An examination of the marginal effects (Figure 4.2) reveals that in instances that there are reconciliation clauses and reconciliation activities, there would be a 37% expected decrease in the likelihood of the breakdown of the agreement.

**Figure 4.2 The Effect of Reconciliation Clauses and Reconciliation Activity**



**Table 4.8 Interaction Effects of Reconciliation Clauses and Reconciliation Activities**

	(1)
	All breakdown
Reconciliation Activities Only	-2.077** (1.080)
Reconciliation Clauses Only	-1.531*** (0.548)
Both Reconciliation Activities and Reconciliation Clauses	-2.734** (1.089)
<i>Controls</i>	
DDR	-0.850** (0.404)
Withdrawal	0.334 (0.407)
Third party guarantor	-0.056 (0.456)
Peacekeeping operations	0.343 (0.669)
Power-sharing provisions	-0.196 (0.427)
Conflict Intensity High	0.266 (0.526)
GDP per capita	-0.000 (0.000)
Democracy	-0.039 (0.059)
Civil Society Strength	0.261 (0.398)
Constant	3.018*** (1.135)
Number of agreements =	209
Correctly predicted cases (%)	72.73

Notes: The estimations are the result of logit regressions (in STATA 14). The table reports coefficients and, in parentheses, standard errors (defined as clustering according to conflict). \* indicates significant at 0.10, \*\* indicates significant at 0.05, and \*\*\* indicates significant at 0.01.

While conducting this analysis, I have controlled for a number of key factors that previous research has identified in being significant when looking at the breakdown of agreements. Consistently, across all the models I find the presence of DDR clauses in an agreement is associated with low likelihood of breakdown of the peace agreement. The role of DDR in preventing the breakdown of agreements has been contested (Collier et al., 2003; Knight & Özerdam, 2004; Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007). In my research, the measure does not reflect the implementation of DDR programmes, which would be required in order to get a more complete picture of the impact of DDR programmes. Some of the models also provide confirmation of findings in other research, such as the role of power-sharing provisions (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003) and third party guarantors (Walter & Snyder, 1999; Walter, 1997, 2004; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003; Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008), in decreasing the likelihood of settlement breakdown, but none of these findings are significant. Overall, in all the models, the findings reflect that commitments to peacekeeping can contribute to the breakdown of conflict. Whilst there is some conflict in the literature as to the effectiveness of peacekeepers,<sup>44</sup> the finding could be due to the selection bias that these are intractable conflicts and therefore those agreements requiring commitments to peacekeepers would be more likely to breakdown.

#### *Robustness checks*

As there is the possibility that civil society activities that might not be directly aimed at reconciliation work could potentially have a side-effect of aiding reconciliation, the variable *civil society strength* was included as a control variable when testing for the effects of NGO-led or government-led reconciliation. In both sets of models testing for the effect of reconciliation, activities (Table 4.6) and the interactions effects of NGO-led or government-led reconciliation (Table 4.7) the findings showed that a strong civil society could potentially increase the likelihood of the breakdown of the agreement, however these findings are not significant. This can reflect the fact that not all society is necessarily civil, particularly in the absence of strong state institutions (Kostovicova & Bojicic-Dzelilovic, 2013). Strong civic life can also be sources of violence and collective violence with civic ties being used to create support for extremist agendas that lead to violence (Chapman, 2009: 160). Insular civil society groups can develop the moral disengagement that can result in extreme violence (Bandura, 1990; Oberschall, 1973) and act as spoilers whose actions ultimately lead to the derailment of peace processes and their settlements. Further research would be required to try to classify the types of civil society organisations in order to clarify these findings, however the findings suggest that the presence of a strong civil society is not necessarily an indicator of the likelihood of a peace agreement lasting.

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<sup>44</sup> Overall the literature finds that peacekeeping operations have a conflict-reducing effect (Hegre et al., 2015), however, the success of these operations can be dependent upon the type of mandate and strength of the force (Doyle & Sambanis, 2000), the size of the mission (Hultman et al., 2013; Ruggeri et al., 2010); and their budgets (Collier et al., 2008).

## **Conclusion**

The statistical analysis focuses on whether reconciliation as a mechanism for reversing entrenched conflict identities has any impact in decreasing the likelihood of the breakdown of peace agreements. The findings suggest that including reconciliation clauses in agreements and conducting reconciliation activity can contribute to the long-term success or failure of the agreements. Overall, the models suggest that including a strong reconciliation clause in a peace agreement can decrease the likelihood of an agreement breaking down. Reconciliation, the analyses suggest, is another tool in the arsenal of optimal settlement design and post-conflict peacebuilding that (cf. Badran, 2014).

The findings suggest that reconciliation activities on the whole can contribute to low likelihood of agreements breaking down. Whilst the results show that government-led reconciliation has a stronger impact, it is the combination of both types of activities that has the potential to increase the sustainability of the agreement. This is in line with Rosoux (2013: 487), who highlights that third parties play a critical role in supporting reconciliation, but it also requires the active support of the leadership and society. The finding that there are no instances of government-led reconciliation without NGO-led reconciliation has important implications in pointing to the link between the two and how grassroots reconciliation activity can potentially trickle up to affect government-level approaches towards reconciliation.

A conflict identity that intensifies as conflict intractability increases is a powerful weapon that continues to feed the conflict. It facilitates the militarisation of the mind which can require demilitarisation before the cycle of intractability can be broken. The analysis here has highlighted the importance of physical DDR processes on decreasing the likelihood of breakdown, but on their own their utility could be limited. A holistic approach to DDR, which includes both physical and psycho-social disarmament and reintegration, could be key to preventing the breakdown of peace agreements in intractable conflict. Building reconciliation clauses into agreements followed by facilitating and institutionalising both government-led and NGO-led activity is a vital step in this process.

The limited effect of NGO-reconciliation potentially highlights that NGOs are facing challenges in implementing effective reconciliation programmes. Increasingly, arguments are being made as to the need for contextual sensitivity, as well as an awareness of the timing of reconciliation initiatives and activities. In Rosoux's study of reconciliation in Rwanda, she encounters a survivor of the genocide who highlighted how he needed time to hate before he could think about reconciliation and that this process took ten years (Rosoux, 2013: 486). Oberschall (2007: 181) notes that there is the possibility that third-party programmes and provisions of resources can be appropriated by "ethnic political machines" in order to "strengthen ethnic patronage and clientelism to the detriment of cross-ethnic ties." Hermann (2004: 49) has highlighted the dangers of "context insensitive reconciliation" and the dangers of approaching post-conflict situations with a reconciliation tool-kit that may not be suitable for the situation. My findings perhaps, also emphasise that the reconciliation process designed to

challenge the conflict identities that have been developed over the course of generations of intractable conflict is a long and arduous journey of psycho-social unravelling that cannot be achieved by NGOs alone.

Although the results of the analysis are in line with expectations, the endogeneity present when examining social processes could interfere with the significance of the findings overall. The correlations between reconciliation clauses or activities and stable peace agreements do not necessarily point to one direction of causation but causality can flow in both directions. Are reconciliation clauses more likely to be included cases where there are already active reconciliation activities? Are reconciliation activities driven by people who are already reconciled? Chapman (2010: 158) encounters a similar problem when examining the role of civic institutions in contributing to peace. Chapman identifies that in-depth process tracing and clear identification of causal mechanisms through case-study analysis can be one of the approaches that can help deal with such endogeneity (ibid.).

In the following chapters, I further explore the link between reconciliation and the sustainability of the agreement. The attempt to analyse the interaction effects between NGO-led and government-led reconciliation revealed the significance of NGO-led reconciliation in facilitating reconciliation at the government level. In the next chapters I aim to delve deeper into the process by which reconciliation activities facilitated by commitments to reconciliation in the agreement can lead to the psychological disarmament. Using the cases of Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, I follow the process by which those who have entrenched conflict identities are able to transform the psychological dynamics underpinning their conflict identities, through participation in reconciliation activities, so that they actively engage in activity that increases the sustainability of the peace agreement.

## Chapter 5: Transforming Conflict Identity in Israel-Palestine

*“...your story has changed my life and changed in every way possible the way I view politics...”<sup>45</sup>*

### Introduction

In the previous chapter I investigated whether any correlation could be found between reconciliation clauses, reconciliation activity and the sustainability of peace agreements. The Large-N study provides insights into the wider relationship between reconciliation and the sustainability of the peace agreement but provides little insights into the intervening process – the process of psychological disarmament. The case studies aim to uncover the middle stages of the process set out in Figure 1.1. The process of individual-level transformation trickling-up and rippling-out to impact the development of peace constituencies that can help sustain peace agreements. This reflects the development of horizontal and vertical capacity that is the core of successful peacebuilding in Lederach’s (2008) paradigm. Through following the process of reversal of conflict identities and the potential trickle-up effect of these activities, we can gain deeper insights into the relationships that were observed in the Large-N study. In particular, we can explore questions as to the relationship between NGO-level and government level activity, and questions such as whether reconciliation activities are more likely to emerge in situations in which people are already reconciled.

The signing of the Declaration of Principles (also known as Oslo I or the Oslo Accords) on September 13 1993, between Yitzchak Rabin as the representative of Israel and Yasser Arafat as the representative of the Palestinians, was the “mother of all breakthroughs” in an age-old conflict (Shlaim, 1994: 25). It was intended to signal the close of some of the most bitter and long-held enmity in the Middle East, “an end to blood and tears” (Address of Yitzchak Rabin, 13 September 1993). The agreement that broke the deadlock over mutual recognition set the parties on the path of a series of negotiations designed to be a phased exchange of land in return for peace and security (Oberschall, 2007: 145). This was intended to end with a series of “final status” negotiations on the core issues of sovereignty, borders, security, settlements, Jerusalem, holy places, and refugees. However, Oslo I did not set out concrete provisions for reconciliation activity. Under Chapter Four on Cooperation, provisions were set out to avoid “hostile propaganda” (Clause 1, Art XXII, Chapter 4, Oslo I) and commitments to ensure that the educational systems supported a rhetoric of peace and did not “introduce any motifs that could adversely affect the process of reconciliation” (Clause 2, Art XXII, Chapter 4, Oslo I). These together were the sum total of reconciliation measures set out in the agreement.

Annex VI to the Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (28 September 1998 *hereinafter* Oslo II) set out more far-reaching measures to establish “dialogue and cooperation

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<sup>45</sup> Samer Anatabawi in an open letter to Robi Damelin, “We Need Your Voice Robi,” 26, October, 2010.

... in order to ensure that peace, stability and cooperation” (Clause 1, Article 1, Annex VI, Oslo II). It specifies that part of achieving this aim involves the design and implementation “of various programmes which will facilitate the efforts leading to full reconciliation...and make it possible for smooth implementation of a permanent settlement” (ibid.). These clauses acknowledge the strong belief of the architects of Oslo II in the link between joint reconciliation activity and the sustainability of the peace agreement that emerged from their concern for the “hostile relationship between the two populations” and the need to gain “support and legitimacy for the peace process” (Endresen, 2001: 7). Annex VI continues to set out a proposal for joint cooperation in the economic, scientific, technological, cultural, educational arenas, and that dialogue should be facilitated through the “People-to People” programme. Article VIII of the annex specifies that the programme should be established in cooperation with the Norwegian FAFO Institute for Applied Social Science and with funding from the Norwegian government. This programme was supported by funds from other governments and agencies, including the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union (EU), the Swedish Agency for International Development (SIDA) and Belgian Aid (ibid, 8). The reconciliation work was premised on the principle that “while political leaders can make peace, only people can build peace” (Uri Savir quoted in Endresen, 2001: 9).

With the Oslo process, now declared “null and void” by Hamas, and Israeli-Palestinian relations suffering under the weight of “the additional bloodshed and shattered hopes” (Oberschall, 2007: 156), the long-term impact of the People-to-People programme and other intergroup encounters has become the elephant in the room in the literature on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Widely viewed with great scepticism for their failure to efficiently impact political process so as to prevent the Second Intifada (Hermann, 2009; Herzog and Hai, 2005; Liel 2005-2006) and subsequent Hamas initiated violence, People-to-People activities<sup>46</sup> such as inter-group dialogues, joint social or educational projects and coexistence programmes have been labelled as “little more than an isolated bubble in a troubled sea ... [that] had no impact on troubled political process [and] were virtually ignored by local and international policy makers” (Herzog and Hai, 2005: 9). In recent years the Palestinian Authority and Hamas have publicly opposed all informal meetings between Israelis and Palestinians (Abu Toameh, 2011). Opposition is based on the belief that such meetings represent a form of “normalisation” between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as a feeling that they have no tangible results for Palestinians and are used by Israel for political gains. Yet, in spite of the extreme disillusionment of NGO leaders and peace activists,<sup>47</sup> these activities have not disappeared but continue to operate, gain participants and facilitate movement on the grassroots level.

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<sup>46</sup> People-to-People activities is used in this paper as a neutral, generic term which covers a range of Palestinian-Israeli joint projects which have no strict political, commercial or humanitarian agenda.

<sup>47</sup> Assessment based interviews conducted by the author in April and August 2011.

Ongoing impact assessments of individual programmes or their organisation have rarely extended to long-term impact assessments. This study aims to close this gap and provide a more long-term and generalised impact assessment of intergroup encounters through trying to understand the causal path between participation in joint activity, the transformation of attitudes and conflict psychology, and whether such transformation contributes to continued engagement in seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Following a brief overview of the conflict and the history of reconciliation activity in the Israeli-Palestinian context, I use the model set out in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.1) to set out the results of my analysis of survey and interview data of former participants in reconciliation activities and activists. Through this analysis we can observe the role of participation in joint reconciliation activities in transforming conflict identities, and the extent to which this transformation trickles up to have an impact on the political level.

### **History of the Conflict**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, like both the other conflicts examined in these case studies can either be dated at the time of the eruption of conflict in the modern era following the Second World War or to the historical claims that in this case span millennia. The history is fraught with contested narratives and deeply embedded collective memories. In its essence, it is a conflict about two peoples and one land (Louis & Shlaim, 2012: 3). With a Jewish, Christian and Muslim presence in the land for centuries, the modern conflict emerged following the increased return of the Jewish people to Palestine, in the late nineteenth century, as part of the growing trend in Europe of people seeking to identify themselves as nations and to demand national rights (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014: 1). The territory, which was under Ottoman rule, became of key significance to the allies fighting the Germans and a series of promises “some of them mutually exclusive” (Gidron et al., 2002: 54) were made in order to secure support in fighting the Turks. This included the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence promising Palestine to the Arabs, the Balfour Declaration, supporting a “Jewish national homeland” in Palestine, and the Sykes-Picot Agreement aimed with the division of the territory between Britain and France (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014: 2). During the British Mandate of Palestine, relations between Arabs and Jews in Palestine began to deteriorate and by the time of the outbreak of the Second World War, both communities had “developed a zero-sum perspective on their claims to Palestine (Gidron et al., 2002: 54-55).

In the aftermath of the Second World War the competing claims of the two parties increased and in 1947 the British turned the matter over to the United Nations for resolution on the partition of Palestine. On 29 November 1947, the UN vote on partition was passed and met with Jewish celebrations and Arab protests (ibid. 56). Tensions increased as the termination of the British Mandate drew closer leading to the invasion of 25,000 troops from Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq on 15 May 1948 as the British evacuated and Israel declared its independence (ibid.; cf. Beinin & Hajjar, 2014: 5). The fighting ended with the signing of the armistice agreements in 1949 which led to the split of Palestine into three parts with Israel encompassing 77 percent of the territory,

Jordan occupying East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and Egypt taking control of the Gaza Strip (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014: 5).

Whilst the narrative as to how the refugee situation emerged, whether it was due to flight or expulsion, remains a subject of dispute between the Israelis and Palestinians, the fact is that the war created about 730,000 -750,000 Arab refugees, an event they termed “Al-Nakhba” (the disaster) (Gidron et al., 2002: 56; Louis & Shlaim, 2012: 4). This event is a key collective memory that forms a vital part of the Palestinian conflict identity. In 1967, when Israel “smashed the armed forces of Egypt, Jordan and Syria” (Gidron et al., 2002: 58) they conquered the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula and the responsibility for over a million Palestinian refugees. The controversial UN resolution 242, passed following the 1967 war requires Israel to withdraw from some or all of the territories acquired during the 1967 war and the “just settlement” of the Palestinian refugee problem (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014: 6-7). This highly contested resolution provides for unilateral recognition of Israel without recognition of Palestinian self-determination.

The Palestinian Liberation Organisation formed in 1964 as a coalition of a number of Palestinian political, paramilitary and refugee groups (Oberschall, 2007:134). These included Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Palestine People Party (PPP). Yasser Arafat, chairman of Fatah, was the chairman of the PLO from 1968 until his death in 2004 (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014: 7-8). From its base in Jordan, then Lebanon, and eventually Tunis, claiming to be the “sole representative of the Palestinian people” in its “struggle for national liberation,” the PLO led a campaign of armed resistance against Israel, which included terrorism, plane hijackings, border raids, attacks on Israeli civilians and other general violence (Oberschall, 2007: 134). Hamas, a sub-group of the Muslim Brotherhood emerged as a social welfare and education organisation in the Gaza Strip in the 1970’s. In conjunction with its military wing, the al-Qassam brigades, and funded heavily by Iran and Saudi Arabia, Hamas has publicly stated its commitment “to the full destruction of Israel” by force claiming that “Jews are the source of all evil in the world” (ibid.: 135).

The Israeli-Palestinian peace process traces itself in part to the Camp David Accords in 1979 following Anwar Sadat’s unprecedented visit to Israel in 1977. The Camp David Accords was a two-pronged accord that included Israel’s withdrawal from Sinai in return for peace with Egypt, and a phased process of autonomy for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank to be granted over 5 years (Oberschall, 2007: 140; Beinin & Hajjar, 2014:8). Only the Egyptian part of the treaty was implemented and by the time of the first Lebanese war (1981-1984) the peace process had in effect stalled. In 1987, the accidental killing of four Palestinians by an Israel Defence Forces (IDF) truck triggered a wave of protests and violence that became known as the Intifada (Gidron et al., 2002:60). The violence and the subsequent reactions including the increasing divisions within the Palestinian community, made it clear that the situation was unsustainable and led the Palestinian National

Council to pass a resolution recognising the State of Israel, declaring an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and renouncing terrorism (Beinin & Hajar, 2014: 9).

The Madrid talks in 1991, in which the Palestinians participated as part of the Jordanian delegation as Israel did not formally recognise the PLO, comprised of a series of talks in which the “land for peace” formula was rejected (Oberschall, 2007: 144). The subsequent Oslo process began as a non-governmental initiative by two academics, Yair Hirschfeld and Ron Pundak, under the auspices of the Norwegian government. On September 13, 1993, the process was formalised with the Israeli public 65 percent in favour of the agreement (ibid.: 145). The historic compromise in which Israel recognised the PLO and Palestinian right to self-determination and the PLO recognised Israel’s right to exist and renounced terrorism, was followed by a series of agreements on territorial control and transfers of economic, fiscal, health, education and other functions being transferred from Israel to the Palestinian administration (ibid.). Oslo II established the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and outlined the transfer of various levels of civil and security authority to areas in the West Bank (Gawerc, 2012: 35). The murder of Yitzchak Rabin in 1996 and subsequent spoiler violence on both sides led to a period of slowdown in the peace process, characterised by a “negative peace” (ibid.: 36).

The US mediated Wye River agreements in 1998, which were intended to restart the peace process, were suspended after 18 months amidst claims that Palestinians were not abiding by security obligations (Golan, 2014: 142) and the Oslo process seemed to finally break down with the failure of the Camp David talks in June 2000. This was cemented by the rise of the Second Intifada (Al-Aqsa Intifada) triggered by Ariel Sharon’s visit to Al-Aqsa mosque on September 28, 2000 (Oberschall, 2007: 155; Gawerc, 2012: 39). During the period of the Second Intifada, Israel experienced some of the highest levels of terror that it had ever seen with 136 suicide and other bombings, leading Israel to build its controversial “security fence” (Gawerc, 2012: 41). The Al-Aqsa Intifada was seen by Israelis as confirmation of Barak’s statement at Camp David that the Palestinians were not partners in peace and led to a shift in public opinion towards the right, with declining support for a Palestinian state (Golan, 2015: 157-158). The wave of violence eventually ended with the ceasefire agreed between Ariel Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas in February 2005, but the legacy of mistrust and disappointment between the two sides had widened immeasurably, with Palestinian support for the peace process declining to around 30 percent and Jewish Israeli support declining to about 28 percent (ibid.: 41-42).

In 2005, Sharon unilaterally disengaged from the Gaza Strip. Divisions in Palestinian society led Abbas to encourage Hamas and Islamic Jihad to participate in political process leading to Hamas winning 45 percent of the vote when it participated in its first legislative election (ibid.: 43-44). However, due to Hamas’ refusal to “recognise Israel, renounce violence and abide by existing agreements,” international funding to the PNA was ended, leading to a humanitarian crisis in the

Gaza Strip (ibid.: 44). In 2007, Hamas seized power in the Gaza Strip leading to the dissolution of the unity government and a division between the government of the West Bank and Gaza (ibid.). Secret negotiations between Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert and Mahmoud Abbas from 2006 to 2008 came close to an agreement, but the negotiations were stalled following the election of Netanyahu in 2009 (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014: 16).

### **Civil Society and Reconciliation Activity**

As the Oslo Accords, in particular Oslo II, put the responsibility for reconciliation activity into the hands of the non-governmental sector, it is important to understand the role and influence civil society had in the Israeli-Palestinian context, and why this was thought to be the appropriate vehicle for reconciliation activity. The growth of civil society in Israel can be traced to the growth of civil activism as a whole globally in the early 1970's, as NGO's developed to address issues such as medical care, education, and environmental protection (Gidron et al., 2002: 59). Although there is evidence of peace movements dating back to the 1920s, such as the Peace Covenant which was founded in 1925 advocating for a binational state model (ibid.:98), it is during the 1970s that organisations began to emerge that urged dialogue with the Palestinians and discussion on the political situation (ibid.). Peace Now, the largest peace and conflict resolution organisation (PCRO) in Israel's history, was formed in 1977, out of the fear that peace talks with Egypt would be jeopardised by the election of Menachem Begin (ibid.).

The development of the Palestinian non-governmental sector has been more limited, as Hassassian (2002: 131) highlights, as Palestinians "never had a sovereign or democratic government, and therefore [could not] have organisations that exist outside of it." The development of civil society organisations that were focused on peace and conflict resolution were even more limited as "the Palestinian people [had] never properly considered the development of a culture of peaceful coexistence with the Zionist movement" given the educational system "adopted a political ideology that demonises the Zionist movement" (ibid.: 132). Further, the Palestinian Authority, in acting as the sole representative of the Palestinian people felt that organisations could compromise their authority and legitimacy (ibid.). As Zakaria al Qaq explained, the PNA saw NGOs as a "rival authority" and thought that the best way to function was to get rid of them as they were seen as a type of "undeclared opposition party" (Gawerc, 2012: 59). This was compounded by the fact that civil society organisations were seen as Western-style institutions and incompatible with Palestinian culture and tradition (ibid.). Nonetheless, civil society organisations and institutions did emerge, including educational organisations, women's organisations, professional unions and chambers of commerce (ibid.: 133). These organisations have assisted increasing democratisation and peace in that they lay the groundwork for democratic behaviour, acted as a counterbalance to the Palestinian Authority and recognised the value of peace with Israel (ibid.).

Since the mid 1980's, Israelis and Palestinians have engaged in a range of joint activities. In their early iterations, these activities were primarily dialogue groups that became rapidly more popular until the first Intifada challenged many groups' ability to deal with the situation practically and ideologically (Hermann, 2009: 98-99). However, such groups gained momentum following the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. Although the agreement included a People-to-People pillar, this was not institutionalised, and activities sprang up in spite of limited governmental support. Annex VI of Oslo II was the basis for the Norwegian-supported People-to-People initiative run under the auspices of FAFO/Institute for Applied Science. This programme originally envisaged encouraging cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian public sector institutions, but following the election of Netanyahu in 1996, which shifted the political mood, the programme refocused itself on smaller-scale, NGO led co-existence projects (Herzog and Hai, 2005: 29). Nonetheless, the People-to-People programme funded approximately 130 NGO cooperative projects, covering the key areas of youth, adult dialogue, culture, environment and media and communications (Endresen, 2001: 12).

Palestinian organisations have encountered significant obstacles in creating a sense of legitimacy about their work in their own society (Gawerc, 2012: 58-59; 76). The prevailing thinking is that "normalisation" cannot be established until negotiations have been completed and that dialogue or joint encounters constitute normalised activity (ibid.: 58). The definition of reconciliation activities as "normalisation" could put organisers and participants of such activities at physical risk as well as acting as a catalyst for staff and participants to question the value of such work (ibid.)

Nonetheless, numerous planned encounters have taken place spanning a diverse range of activities that mostly followed one of the major models of intergroup encounters: coexistence, joint projects, confrontation, or storytelling (Maoz, 2011; 2004; 2000). The activities were implemented by joint Israeli-Palestinian organisations, or independent Israeli or Palestinian organisations. Activities were offered to all sectors of society from youth and university students to academics, and professionals. Despite limited funding,<sup>48</sup> data shows that about one in six Israeli Jews has participated in an encounter with Palestinian citizens of Israel (Maoz, 2011:116). Further, most participants from both sides in joint meetings have reported increased levels of empathy and trust for the other side and an increased support for peace (Kahanoff and Shibli, 2012).

Israeli-Palestinian People-to-People activities have encountered numerous obstacles, from lack of institutional support; practical logistical difficulties; political developments, including episodes of increased violence and anti-normalisation discourse;<sup>49</sup> and socio-economic asymmetries. Hermann (2004: 53-54) has highlighted how Israelis participating in reconciliation activities were accused of

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<sup>48</sup> It is estimated that \$25-25 million was spent on People-to-People in the 1990s in comparison to the EU allocation of £250 million to peace-building and reconstruction efforts in Northern Ireland in 1994 alone (Herzog and Hai, 2005: 31).

<sup>49</sup> Normalisation (tadbiye) is a negative term that encapsulates the belief that if Palestinians participate in dialogue or cooperation projects that are not directly opposing the occupation it represents tacit consent that the occupation has ended and legitimises Israeli actions (Herzog and Hai, 2005:28).

being “unpatriotic” and as neglecting Israel’s security. In both societies, there was a sense that dialogue was “fraternising with the enemy” as it was seen as “according the enemy legitimacy” and possibly “crippling...an ability to fight” (ibid.). Yet, in spite of the challenges of the stalled negotiating process, internal divisions with Palestinian politics, and the criticism, a core group of NGOs have persevered based on the belief that “it won’t stop until [they] talk.”<sup>50</sup> The critical question remains, however, as to whether these activities have had any wider impact beyond the immediate participant in these programmes?

### **Evaluation of reconciliation activity**

As with broader analysis of reconciliation programmes, analysis of Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation programmes has rarely evaluated their “trickle-up” effects or long term impact. Endresen (2001:18) highlighted how “there are no tools to evaluate the People-to-People programme” as it is difficult to measure success. Similarly, she noted that the success of individual projects is also not easily measured as “relationships and understanding are not easily measured in a reliable way” (ibid.: 19).

Many of the analyses cast the People-to-People programmes as failures as they have not prevented violence nor reached the “important sections of society” (Atieh et al., 2005:4), however they do not offer much insight into how the programmes were supposed to impact upwards in order to prevent violence and the breakdown of the agreement. Most of the evaluation is focused on specific aspects or techniques used within the programmes, the direct effects of the interactions, and how to improve the quality of the interaction (Maoz, 2000, 2011; Suleiman, 2004; Bar-On & Kassem, 2004). Kelman’s evaluations of the transfer and impact of the problem-solving workshops involve participants who already had political influence (Kelman, 1998). Gidron et al.’s (2002) investigation into the effect of peace and conflict resolution organisations focuses on the organisation rather than the activity. Bekerman (2007) suggest that encounters should incorporate a socially activist component to promote structural change, but this does not include analysis of such.

Recent studies have focused on evaluating cooperation at the organisational level (Kahanoff et al., 2007), why some such initiatives adapt and survive, and the ways the staff and participants deal with internal conflict (Gawerc, 2012). Some studies aim at providing strategies to improve peacebuilding design and impact, however they focus on highlighting the flaws or areas for improvement rather than any successes (Brand-Jacobsen, 2009). Yet as Gawerc (2012: 217) highlights in her concluding chapter, future research needs to investigate the ripple effects stemming from participants, whether alumni influence policymakers and whether their participation turns into action outside of the organisation.

This research aims to fill this gap through providing a new framework for evaluating the impact of such programmes. Through analysing the processes of psychological transformation and identity

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<sup>50</sup> The Bereaved Families Forum, Parents-Circle Family Forum, <http://center.theparentscircle.org> [last accessed on 11 May, 2017].

change that underpin these activities, the research attempts to provide an understanding of the way participants' relationship with the conflict and the other parties is fundamentally altered and the longer-term effects of that change both within their own societies and potentially on the stability of the peace agreement.

## **Data**

It is likely that one of the reasons for the lack of long term evaluation of these activities is the difficulty in sourcing the data to be able to draw significant conclusions. Search for Common Ground only had a sample of 18 alumni on which to base its long-term impact evaluation in a report evaluating 15 years of activities (Breeze & Feldman, 2008: 9). Encountering a similar problem when conducting my own survey research, I also draw upon a number of other sources including a collation of 118 interviews and accounts that I compiled into an original dataset. This includes interviews with a range of grass-roots peace leaders and activists whose motivations for ongoing participation in peaceful approaches to the conflict are varied;<sup>51</sup> alumni interviews and personal accounts drawn from the Parents' Circle Family Forum (hereinafter PCFF),<sup>52</sup> and Combatants for Peace (hereinafter CfP).<sup>53</sup> Table 5.1 sets out some of the key descriptive statistics of the interview collection. This data is to some extent biased as most of the participants have an ongoing commitment to reconciliation activities, and it does not include the large number of people who have had negative experiences with such activities. Some of the respondents might also have a sense of what they are "expected" to say during in their answers leading to skewed responses. Whilst survey respondents and interviewees appear frank about their previous perceptions of the other and their own history it is important to note that this is based on retrospective self-assessment and could be affected by later experiences. Nonetheless, this research focuses on the identity transformation of people who continue to be involved in such activities, and their accounts of their experiences allow us to draw conclusions on the role of these activities in facilitating their identity change and their ongoing commitment to such processes.

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<sup>51</sup> Activist and leader interviews are available at Just Vision, [www.justvision.org](http://www.justvision.org), [last accessed on 11 May 2017], and The Forgiveness Project, <http://theforgivenessproject.com/stories/>, [last accessed on 11 May, 2017].

<sup>52</sup> Parents-Circle Family Forum, <http://center.theparentscircle.org/WrittenTestimonials.aspx>, [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>53</sup> Combatants for Peace, <http://cfpeace.org/personal-stories/>, [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

**Table 5.1 Descriptive statistics of the Israeli-Palestinian interview collection**

	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Israeli	75	63%
Palestinian	42	35%
Israeli Arab/Palestinian citizen of Israel	2	2%
Male	71	60%
Female	47	40%
Attributed transformation to participation in a reconciliation activity	38	32%
Ongoing involvement in reconciliation activity post participation in a reconciliation activity.	31	26%
Total number of interviewees	118	100%

I also draw upon evaluation reports of individual organisations, as well as the results of my own online alumni survey (hereinafter Alumni Survey IP) disseminated in 2012 via Israeli and Palestinian NGOs to former participants of their reconciliation programmes. The data is sourced from local organisations and focuses primarily on individuals who are over 16 years old and attended some form of reconciliation or joint activity. The political situation, particularly Palestinian opposition to such activities, as well as other concurrent surveys makes it difficult to engage participation both at the organisational and individual level. Table 3.2 below sets out the key descriptive statistics of the alumni survey.

**Table 5.1** Descriptive statistics of the Israeli-Palestinian alumni survey

	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Israeli	16	94%
Palestinian	1	6%
Jewish	11	65%
Other	6	35%
Male	5	29%
Female	12	71%
Continued contact with fellow participants following reconciliation activity	13	76%
Ongoing involvement in work to bring about positive change to the conflict situation	7	41%
Ongoing work aimed at the political level	3	18%
Total number of survey respondents	17	100%

### **Tracing the effects of reconciliation activity**

Reconciliation constitutes a step beyond conflict resolution in that it aims to change the identity of the parties through the removal of the negation of the other as a central component on one's own identity. Through this process parties internalise the new relationship and their old attitudes are gradually replaced. Joint activities have become a natural vehicle to facilitate reconciliation as the final and critical stage of peace-making.

Grassroots reconciliation activity aims to facilitate identity change through addressing the structural and psychological commitment that individuals make to the conflict. Lack of association and normal interaction with people from the other side of a conflict prevent new observations which challenge demonised and dehumanised images (Kelman, 2007: 98; Gross-Stein, 2006: 195-196). Reconciliation activities, consequently, use a range of diverse and creative approaches in order create such association and normal interaction. They take many forms, some to engage the participants in formal psychological education, and others aim purely to increase contact and create positive associations with the other party. Drama, music, and art are vehicles for cooperative activities that help

participants address the past and increase interactions,<sup>54</sup> and cooperative projects in the fields of business, medicine, and academia help cement a joint future.

Underlying all these programmes is the engagement of the parties in relational and cultural transformation. Relational transformation transforms the interaction and communication between the parties in order to increase mutual understanding and confront their mutual interdependence (Rasmussen, 1997: 41). This emerges from the creation of social bonds between groups and common group membership and dependence (Rubin, Pruitt and Kim, 1994: 129-131). Cultural transformation involves the transformation of the deeply embedded values and beliefs that support the mechanisms and interactions in both societies, especially patterns that contribute to the increased incidents of violent conflict (Rasmussen, 1997: 41). Facilitating exposure between parties leading to increased empathy and the development of a mutual acknowledgment of humanity and suffering is critical to enable both relational and cultural transformation. Utilising the process set out in Chapter Three, I highlight the stages of the process from entrenched conflict identities to support for peaceful or non-violent approaches to the conflict. Initially, I examine the presence of the key elements of conflict identities prior to taking part in reconciliation programmes. This is followed by an analysis of the way participation in joint reconciliation programmes provided exposure to other parties, facilitated empathy and the acknowledgment of mutual humanity and suffering. I identify evidence of transformation of the conflict identity, including changing commitment to the maintenance of the conflict and a more multidimensional image of the other. Finally, I highlight the potential ripple-out and trickle-up effects of this transformation such as active participation in spin-off projects and participation in activities aimed at the political level.

### **Conflict Identity**

In order to establish a change of identity, it is necessary to establish the markers of a conflict identity that are present when participants first engage in joint activities. Although many of the accounts are based on retrospective self-assessment, the interviewees and former participants were very candid about their perceptions of the other party. Conflict identities comprise of a combination of collective narratives, emotions and ethos of conflict that lead parties to dehumanise and stereotype the other party. Compounded by lack of contact to dispel these stereotypes, parties fear and mistrust each other, which in turn can lead to continued commitment to the conflict.

#### *Dehumanisation and Deindividuation*

Both Israeli and Palestinian participants recounted previously holding perceptions of the other party that reflected demonised and dehumanised stereotypes. Parents' Circle participants expressed how they initially associated Jews with violence or being "bad" (cf. Abo Saymih, 2011; Abu ayash, 2011). Former Building Bridges participant and counsellor, Inas Radwan (2004), highlighted that before she

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<sup>54</sup> See Beyond Skin <http://www.beyondskin.net> [last accessed on 11 May 2017] and Musicians without Borders <http://www.musicianswithoutborders.org> [last accessed on 11 May 2017] for examples of such programmes.

participated in the Building Bridges programme she believed that “the Jews’ only mission is to slaughter people.” Such demonised perceptions present the other party as part of an overarching national stereotype instead of as individuals. Negative stereotypes designed to engender fear included belief that “all Palestinians spend their time making bombs” (Shapira, 2006), and that anyone who spoke Hebrew was an assassin (Khudiari, 2006). Director of the Society for Women for Hebron, Sara Karajeh (2005), emphasised the lack of interaction:

“...[It] creates a vacuum in which the Palestinians feel all the Israelis carry weapons and want to kill them, destroy their homes, take control over their land and cut down their trees. Simultaneously, the Israelis think all Palestinians are terrorists that are going to blow themselves up and stab them with knives at any moment.”

Similarly, Combatants for Peace (CfP) co-founder Raed Hadar (2006) highlights:

“Many Israelis had wrong conceptions about Palestinians such as their being terrorists and naturally violent...The images of a terrorist and violence are deeply engraved within the Israeli mentality, and I try to convince them that we are not all like that. The fact that there are Palestinians who use violence against Israelis does not mean that we are all violent.”

This mutual formal de-legitimisation that to some extent mirrors each other (Bar-Tal, 1988) can serve to mobilise and motivate parties into violent action and plays a “major role” in preventing peaceful settlement of the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2013: 185).

#### *Selective Exposure*

Most of the interviewees, from all the sources, have previously had very limited contact if any with the other party, and any prior contact has usually been under negative circumstances. Founder of Middleway, David Lisbona (2004), highlights that for many of the participants on their programme it is the first time that they have ever spoken to an Arab and that generally Jews and Arabs do not have and “real, social meaningful contact.” Many of the Palestinians, in particular, have only encountered Israelis either as soldiers or prison guards, and are surprised when they encounter Israelis in civilian clothing without weapons (cf. Radwan, 2004; Mukbal, 2011). Although Combatants for Peace co-founder Raed Hadar (2006) had been arrested and imprisoned by Israelis he felt that:

“[he] had never previously had the chance to meet an Israeli. [He] didn’t know Israelis and had never dealt with them, talked to them or even considered how they might think.”

Similarly, a Parents’ Circle participant highlights that although his school in Jerusalem had only been 200-300 metres away from the ultra-orthodox neighbourhood of Mea Shearim, he had never met a Jewish student (Abu Sarah, 2005). The lack of exposure to the other party compounds the stereotypes and demonised images, a process which was to some exacerbated by the building of the separation barrier which reduced any form of normal contact (Shbita, 2004). Occasionally, this selective exposure was self-imposed. Professor Sami Adwan recounted how he avoided or dropped classes in which there were Jewish students (Adwan, 2005). Even people who are left-wing and

believe in cooperation have often never actually met any Palestinians (Eshkenazi, 2005). This lack of association and interaction prevents either party from forming new observations of the other party and then revising or challenging this image (Kelman, 2007:98; Gross-Stein 2006, 195-196), which in turn contributes to the maintenance of the conflict.

#### *Fear and Mistrust*

The prevalence of demonised and dehumanised enemy images accompanied by lack of opportunity to challenge these stereotypes leads to high levels of mistrust and fear. This is particularly prevalent in Israeli society. Even highly educated and highly informed individuals expressed their fear and mistrust of the other party (cf. Shapiro, 2005). The identification of fear of the other party is a prevalent theme throughout the interview sources consulted. Combatants for Peace co-founder Raed Hadar (2006) describes that when he shares his story with Israelis “[he] see[s] their fear. [The CfP’s] goal is to destroy that fear....usually fear is dominant, but trust is gradually built.”

Fear, anger, shame and humiliation are key emotions that can act as “switch” which can mobilise people into action and damage the prospects of stable peace. (Petersen, 2002; Long & Brecke, 2003). Similarly, Cohen-Chen et al (2014:20) have noted that fear leads to people acquiring selective information to reject peace making opportunities and reinforces cognitive freezing process. A Building Bridges for Peace alum, also noted how “fear, mostly for Israelis, is huge, whether it’s justified or not” (Shbita, 2004). One of the Palestinian respondents to the Alumni Survey IP (Respondent 596155) highlighted that she “learned Jewish people feel threat every day, not only Palestinians living in the West Bank.” Palestinian fear and mistrust is often directed at the nature of the meetings, some even believing that these reconciliation activities are a ruse or filled with intelligence officers.

#### *Commitment to the Maintenance of the Conflict*

One of the most critical identifiers of the conflict mentality of victims of protracted conflict is their commitment to maintaining the conflict as the only solution. This is most acute in people who have lost close friends and family and can often be established at a very young age. Combatants for Peace co-founder, Raed Hadar (2006) reacted to the loss of a school friend through putting “all [his] weight behind resisting the occupation. Feelings of the need to avenge a loved one’s death as well as hatred towards Israelis or wish to kill all Israelis were common among Palestinian participants (cf. Abu Sarah, 2005; Elpaw, 2006; Abu Awwad, 2010). Similarly, disillusionment with the peace agreement or terrorist attacks also led to polarised views and support for radical measures such as suicide bombings or the separation barrier (cf. Mukbal, 2011; Chaviv, 2011). These distorted perceptions of the other compounded by the lack of opportunity to revise such perceptions result in high levels of fear and mistrust. This in turn, maintains commitment to conflict rather than seeking peaceful alternatives.

## **Joint Reconciliation Activities**

One of the structural factors compounding conflict identities is often the lack of available opportunities for parties to engage in normal association or interaction with the other party leaving attitudes and perceptions unchallenged (Kelman, 2007). Joint reconciliation activities provide a variety of fora by which individuals can challenge these attitudes and remove the negation of the other as a central part of their identity. These activities are also different from those providing superficial exposure to the other group. Most of the interviewees of the Just Vision project had come to engage in their activities without having attended a formal joint activity. Many had, however, undergone a defining moment resulting from contact or increased exposure with someone from the other party that resulted in their change in outlook towards the other and the conflict itself. This contact ranges from being a prison warden to Palestinians, to having a child treated on a non-discriminatory basis in an Israeli hospital. This research, however, focuses on the impact of those whose first real contact with the other has been under the auspices of a joint reconciliation activity.

The interviewees from all the sources in my project had participated in a range of joint activities, most of which involved a dialogue component. Both Israelis and Palestinians expressed reluctance, cynicism and in some cases complete opposition to such activities believing it was “collaborating with the enemy” (Abu Nssar 2011). The personal obstacles that need to be overcome in order for some people to participate should not be underestimated. One of the noticeable themes in the interviews is the difficulties for many in agreeing to participate in the first instance as George Sa’adeh (2005) highlighted:

“The hardest part was to meet with people from the other side despite all the pain they caused us. It was difficult to clear our hearts of hatred, to have a clear conscience and face the other side with forgiveness. It isn’t easy to control ourselves, this requires strong determination, deep belief and a high level of forgiveness.”

Similarly, Rami Elhanan (2010) who lost his daughter in a suicide bombing in 1997 described himself as “cynical” when asked to join the Parents’ Circle and that he only went “reluctantly.”<sup>55</sup>

In the majority of cases, the interviewees have been introduced or convinced to attend by a friend, family member or other former participant. Although a smaller dataset, the Alumni Survey IP, which I conducted, reflects this trend in that half of the respondents had come to such activities on the recommendation of a friend, and 18 percent as a friend was also participating. Many express that initially they are reluctant to attend and do so out of curiosity rather than any real intention to participate (Mukbal, 2011). In this section I examine the elements of joint reconciliation activities that provide opportunities or turning points to challenge fixed conflict identities.

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<sup>55</sup> See also Jalal Kudiari (2006).

### *Facilitating Exposure*

As highlighted above, lack of exposure to other parties is a significant contributing factor to the development and maintenance of conflict identities, in particular, the hardening of stereotypes. One of the primary tenets of the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) is to facilitate exposure that in turn challenges the stereotypes. The extent to which this exposure creates a turning point for participants of joint reconciliation activities varies widely. For some the mere sight of people from both sides coming together in peace and compassion is sufficient exposure and powerful enough to sow the seeds of change. Rami Elhanan who lost a daughter in a suicide bombing described his first encounter at a Bereaved Families Forum meeting, as:

“then I saw an amazing spectacle! Something that was completely new to me. I saw Arabs getting off the buses, bereaved Palestinian families: men, women and children, coming towards me, greeting me for peace, hugging me and crying with me” (Elhanan, 2006).

Co-founder of Combatants for Peace Raed Hadar (2006) pinpoints his “change and transformation” to when he met Israelis in 2004 at a Sulha (reconciliation)<sup>56</sup> gathering where he “discovered that there were some Israelis who are very decent and have sincere and balanced positions.” However, Building Bridges alum and counsellor, Inas Radwan (2004) highlighted that she had participated in a classroom exchange with an Israeli school, but they had barely said hello to each other. It was not until she was living in a small place with Israelis during the Building Bridges programme and talking about their lives led to having two or three Jewish friends whom she now considers best friends. Therefore, it is not only mere exposure that has an effect but the quality of the interaction that the exposure allows that leads to transformation.

### *Facilitating Empathy*

Whilst the effect of empathy as a peace catalyst has recently been contested (Halperin, 2016: 120-139), the development of empathy between parties in intergroup conflict has been viewed as fundamental to reversing stereotypes and rehumanising the other party (cf. Pettigrew, 1998). Telling one’s story and hearing stories of others can be an important part of developing cognitive empathy or perspective-taking. For many participants, the turning point comes with the realisation that they have been heard and understood. A Parents Circle participant who had previously resisted attending any type of joint meeting found her turning point when she participated in a joint dialogue meeting and realised that she had “touched them [the Israelis]” and consequently her “natural animosity evaporated” (A Ja’affari, 2011). The realisation that someone that is perceived as the “enemy” and perhaps had wanted to kill you is now listening is extraordinarily powerful (cf. Abu Awwad, 2010; Kalisman, 2010).

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<sup>56</sup> The Sulha Peace Project holds monthly “Tribal Fires” that brings together 100-150 Israelis and Palestinians to pray, sing, and eat together as well as participating in learning circles. See [http://www.sulha.com/our\\_programs](http://www.sulha.com/our_programs). [Last Accessed on 11 May 2017].

However, it is not only being heard that facilitates empathy. In some contexts, the greater challenge is to be able to listen. Building Bridges participant Inas Radwan (2004) recounts that initially she went to joint activities to be able to talk about her own pain and that she wasn't interested in listening about the other's pain.

“I didn't know and wasn't willing to hear that the other side was also in pain. I didn't want to listen to that. I didn't want to understand or imagine that.”

She found that the difference at the Building Bridges activities is that she was made to listen to the stories of Israelis. Whilst she succumbed to listening out of curiosity, not out of a wish to understand or feel their pain, once they started talking she realised “that they were saying the same things only from a different perspective.” She acknowledges that at the beginning she let them talk but she didn't care, but then she started to understand. Similarly, Jalal Kudiari (2006), who had been filled with “hatred of the Jews, blood and war” after watching a friend killed in the Intifada, was inspired to share his story at a joint dialogue activity after seeing “an Israeli feeling pain and loss” at the death of his son in a suicide bombing. This highlights the need to ensure that in order to facilitate empathy, successful joint reconciliation activities should be structured to ensure that both sides have the opportunity to listen to each other and that it is not dominated by only one side telling their story.

#### *Acknowledgment of Humanity and Mutual Suffering*

Many of the participants in such activities cite the recognition and mutual understanding of the other's suffering as being the key turning point. Lisbona (2004) highlights that one of the central problems in the conflict is the complete immersion of each side in its own victimhood and inability to “connect to the feelings of the people on the other side.” One participant shared that he was greatly influenced by the understanding of the other's pain and that there is a “human aspect” which triggered him to feel that he had a “mission” to show the Israeli community that he “holds tightly onto the hand of peace” (Khudiari, 2006). The mutual acknowledgment of suffering is a common theme and clearly articulated throughout the interviews. Activist George Sa'adeh highlighted that through the meeting of the Bereaved Families Forum he now has “an idea about how the Israeli families suffer and they got an idea about what we suffer and go through” (Sa'adeh, 2005). The opportunity and space to be able to express this pain, a “platform to talk without limit about [her] suffering” can for some be the turning point in itself (Abu Awwad, 2010).

The interviews reveal that joint activities can have a significant role in catalysing change. Joint activities can create opportunities for reconciliation in several ways, in particular providing the opportunity for honest self-expression and dialogue. The activities' role in providing exposure to the other side and opportunity to develop empathy and understanding appears to be one of the key drivers of change in this research. It facilitates not only the acknowledgement of the other's pain for past events but also in the present context, Hadar (2006) describes that when he saw the deaths of children and the elderly due to attacks in Israel:

“[he] felt pain. It is painful to see the torn body parts of civilians although they might be part of a people who are occupying us. It is painful to watch from a human point of view. All these elements and the ongoing violence and killing on both sides drives a person to think seriously about these issues and ponder the continuation of such things.”

This turning point for many is like being “awoken from a long slumber” (Chaviv, 2011). In the following section I examine the extent to which experiencing exposure to the other party accompanied by opportunities to increase empathy and develop a mutual acknowledgment of the other’s humanity and suffering translates into a transformation of the conflict identity.

### **Identity Transformation**

The central component of reconciliation is the removal of the negation of the other as central part of one’s identity and for new attitudes to be internalised (Kelman, 2007). Therefore, the long-term impact of joint reconciliation activities is dependent on whether they actually catalyse a change in the participants’ identity. An identity that has often been hardened through generations of perceived suffering, victimisation, and existential threat compounded by indoctrination.

It is important to note that this process to building up trust and confidence is difficult and painstaking, and it can often create great internal tension between acknowledging the victimhood of the other side whilst still being able to express the needs of one’s own side (cf Lisboa, 2005). Shapiro (2005) also highlights the difficulties that lie in the ambiguity that emerges from participation in such programmes, in that “[y]ou are challenging everything that you believe in, but you also don’t know exactly who you trust on the other side.” The potentially destabilising effects of participating on a person’s sense of values and identity cannot be diminished.

#### *Multi-Dimensional Image of the Other*

Contact that facilitates honest communication and mutual understanding allows people from both sides to challenge and transcend stereotypes of the other and consequently see the other party as a human being. As Adina Shapiro (2005), an Israeli teacher who took a position teaching Hebrew at a Palestinian school and is an active member of the Middle East Children’s Association (MECA) recounts the shift in perspective can be quite quick and that there is a “first initial euphoric feeling that everyone goes through when you see someone from the other side and you are shocked to find out they are human and why didn’t you think of that before...”

Similarly, a PCFF participant, shared:

“[s]o I sat in the meeting. It was completely strange for me. They wanted to hear, they wanted to listen, they wanted to talk with you... They want to talk as humans” (Faraj, 2008).

Participants in the Centre for Emerging Future's GVS gatherings reported that the meetings afforded them the opportunity to "see that they are not so scary as we thought and in fact are human just like us."<sup>57</sup>

According to the other party their humanity is a key element of breaking down stereotypes. Recognising that the other has similar emotions and acts upon them in a similar way helps build an image of the other as a human. Part of the requirements in many programmes is to encourage the use of "I" and not "you" or "them" to allow people to connect with individual feelings rather than pre-determined stereotypes (Lisbona, 2004). One participant described how his wife had stated that all Israelis are murderers that don't cry, however, after hearing the stories of bereaved Israeli families said "she felt, for sure, that the pain was the same pain, the suffering the same suffering, and the tears the same tears with the same salty taste." (Abu Ayash, 2007). Kahanoff and Shibli (2012) reported that 71 percent of the participants in the Parents Circle Narrative Project improved their levels of trust and empathy for the other side.

A significant step in breaking a stereotype and according to another their humanity is separating the individual from the group. This has the effect of both recognising that an individual can have beliefs that are different from the mainstream rhetoric, as well as that the entire group cannot be responsible for the act of one individual. Raed Hadar (2006) recounted how, after having met an Israeli mother and daughter at a Sulha meeting:

"[his] view was that Israelis were all the same and shared the same mentality. At that moment [he] realised that wasn't the case and that there were differences in beliefs between them".

This re-individuation process impacts upon the individual's relationship with the other group in its entirety and challenges the sensibility that the group as a whole bears the responsibility for the act of an individual. Another participant recalls how he began to question, "Am I supposed to revenge or hate the whole Jewish nation because of what one Jew did?" (Abu Sarah, 2005). Another participant underwent a similar transition in that he questioned whether if he took the path of revenge, upon whom should he take revenge "the Israeli nation? The Israeli nation did not kill [his] brother!" According to someone an individual identity and humanity individualises death thus rendering it tragic irrespective of community or values (Kelman, 1973: 48-49). This separation of the individual and group/national policy is critical in preventing further violence.

#### *Changed Attitude Towards the Maintenance of the Conflict*

In the Kelman paradigm, mutual acknowledgement of the other's nationhood and humanity, confrontation with history, and acknowledgement of responsibility helps build a common basis for peace, all of which lie at the heart of identity transformation (Kelman, 2008:24). The interviewees,

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<sup>57</sup> Centre for Emerging Futures. See [https://sites.google.com/site/cefmp/home/activities\\_en](https://sites.google.com/site/cefmp/home/activities_en) [Last Accessed on 11 May 2017].

particularly those who engaged in activities with a dialogue component exploring different narratives, reflected retrospectively as to their changed attitude towards the maintenance of the conflict. A former prisoner who did not believe in peace expressed that “the biggest change [she] has undergone is that [she] no longer has any desire whatsoever to avenge” and that they must act to prevent the suffering of future generations” (Al-Ja’affari, 2011). Building Bridges alumna, Inas Radwan (2004) reflects the type of change that Kelman theorises:

“It was my dream to take back all of our land. Palestine as it is on the map on one piece. But after I went to camp and visited where they live, saw they had a life, they had work...their life is just like mine. It’s not like they could move if they didn’t like the place, like some of the settlers do, there are villages and towns that have been established. I don’t want to stay living in fantasies: what I had imagined is now impossible, it’s a fantasy. The only solution is to stop slaughtering each other...The only solution is to accept the idea that this land does not belong to anyone, it belongs to everyone and should be open to everyone to live in it.”

In some cases the change is more limited. One participant felt that he had achieved something that he was not able to achieve with rock throwing, and although he still supports resistance, he now has reservations about civilian targets. He expressed that he would agree to a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders and that this is something completely new to him, a change that he attributes directly to the meetings (Mukbal, 2011). Kahanoff and Shbili (2012), report that on the short-term support for peace among the participants of the narratives project increased by 78 percent. Similarly, 60 percent of the respondents to the Alumni Survey IP reflected that the activities had changed their attitudes towards the conflict.

Ultimately, Aziz Abu Sarah (2005) demonstrates most clearly the process of identity transformation culminating in a changed attitude towards the maintenance of the conflict:

“Maybe I will never see the world restored to perfect humanity, but I still feel obligated to believe that the tools for peace are not tools of violence and hatred. More than this, I feel obligated to use my pain to spread peace, rather than using it to fuel a hatred that would have eventually consumed me.”

***“I learned how to speak authentically and listen compassionately. It changed me a lot!”***

M\* is a 21-year-old woman of Palestinian origin who had participated in several joint reconciliation activities since 2008, first as a participant and subsequently as a group leader. Her motivations for attending included wanting to learn more about the conflict, as well as the fact that friends were participating and she was being encouraged by her community leader. She currently engages in work that promotes change to the conflict situation, that ranged from telling her own story, participating in conferences and organising her own events.

For M attending the camp was *“one of the best things that happened to [her] in [her] life.”* She found the most valuable elements were hearing people’s stories and was surprised how every person had at least one difficult story relating to the conflict. M was surprised by the discovery that there was much that she did not know about her own side of the conflict, but she was most affected by learning that Jewish people also feel threatened daily.

M felt that attending these activities has changed her perceptions about the conflict as she has *“learnt that all you have to do is bring people together and let them talk and listen to each other’s stories.”* She believes that it is in this way that *“we will understand that we all suffer from the same conflict and that it has to end.”* She feels the immediate impact of participation in the activities in that she believes *“[she] came back a better person”* and that learning how to *“speak authentically”* and *“listen compassionately”* changed her. M remains in contact with former participants from both her own and other national or religious groups and recommends that joint dialogue, sporting and social activities are the most effective in bringing people together. Overall, the activities left M more optimistic as to the prospects of potential positive change to the conflict situation.

\*M’s full name has been withheld to protect confidentiality. She answered my survey as respondent 596155.

## **Support for Peaceful/Non-Violent Approaches to the Resolution of the Conflict**

Participation in joint activities can have enormous impact on the individual level and a micro impact on those close to the participant, however the question remains as to the extent that the individual-level transformation can trickle-up and ripple-out to the wider societal level. Whilst there may often be admiration for individual participation in activities, encouraging more widespread participation can be challenging. Activist David Lisbona (2004) noted that the common reaction is “good you’re doing it but I’d never get involved myself.” He noted that even his own partner is in favour of improving internal Jewish-Arab relations but does not feel that relations with the Palestinians is their responsibility.

Continued support for peaceful approaches for the conflict can be challenging for former participants and activists in that they often feel as if they are straddling two worlds – “being on both sides or feeling both sides is a much more complicated situation than being more comfortable in a black and white world” (Lisbona, 2004). Similarly, Inas Radwan (2004) shared that she was originally afraid to tell anyone that she had been involved in such projects and that although her family is supportive, they are always warning her not to talk about certain things. She doesn’t feel able to share about her transformation with those around her “unless [she] finds someone who understands, which is rare.”

Whilst many acknowledge the need to involve the mainstream elements of society, those who have been involved in reconciliation activities acknowledge the challenges in changing viewpoints at the societal level – “it’s difficult to make major changes in the way one looks at the world and in the same way it’s difficult for an individual it’s equally difficult for a society” (Lisbona, 2004). Therefore, the question remains whether individual change can have any wider impact. In the following section, I set out the final stage of the process that I have theorised to examine the trickle-up or ripple effects of participation in reconciliation activities. Assessing the extent to which reconciliation activities lead to further spin-off activities, political activism, reduced propensity to provocation to violence, and reduced perception of vulnerability provides some indication of how transformation on the individual-level can impact the societal-level and potentially create support for peace agreements.

### *Founding or Active Participation in Spin-off Activities*

One of the ways of demonstrating the wider impact of participation in joint activities is to look at whether participants established or actively participate in spin-off activities that are designed to foster support for reconciliation programmes or peace processes. A Combatants for Peace member, who had been sentenced to 15 years in prison for stabbing an Israeli soldier, established the Abu Sakar Center for Peace after participating in Combatants for Peace programmes (al-Khatib, 2013). Similarly, Raed Hadar’s encounter with former Israeli soldiers at an Israeli-Palestinian Sulha led to subsequent meetings and ultimately participating in the formation of Combatants for Peace (Hadar, 2006). This movement is for former combatants from both sides who have decided to lay down

weapons and fight for peace.<sup>58</sup> Following meeting members of Combatants for Peace, David Shilo brought together 30 Israeli disabled war veterans, with Palestinians for joint meetings that subsequently led to the founding of the Wounded Crossing Borders Group. The group continues to operate in spite of opposition and difficult circumstances (Shilo, 2011). In some instances, new activities emerge at the request of the participants. The co-founder of Jerusalem Peacemakers, Eliyahu Maclean (2004), highlighted how participants in a joint dialogue programme in Nablus requested activities beyond dialogue, and consequently an environmental project was organised between the dialogue project, Kibbutz Ketura and the Palestinian Israeli Environmental Secretariat. The project involved 70 Israeli and Palestinian youth engaging in a Gaza beach clean-up day.

The Parents Circle engages many of its members in spin-off activities to great effect. One of its key projects, the dialogue meetings, involves both an Israeli and Palestinian sharing their stories with school students. The project reaches more than 25,000 students in approximately 1000 dialogue meetings annually. In 2002, following the Second Intifada, in response to the general sentiment that there was no one on the other side with whom to talk, PCFF members became involved in manning a toll-free telephone line between Israelis and Palestinians which received over 750,000 calls (Damelin, 2005). Their “Crack in the Wall” Facebook project, which aims to keep their Israeli and Palestinian members connected, has 32,510 “likes” and is followed by 31,943 people.<sup>59</sup>

Kahanoff and Shibli’s short-term impact study revealed that the Parents Circle’s narrative project increased the willingness to be more active in activities supporting peace building by 80 percent (2012). My Alumni Survey IP, drawing on a smaller pool of former participants, asks the former participants of reconciliation activities if they engage in any further work or activity “aimed at bringing a positive change to the conflict situation.” 41 percent of the respondents indicated that they engage in such work both internally within their own society (66 percent), and within their own society and their counterpart society (33 percent). It appears that joint activities do have some impact in creating greater support for non-violent or peaceful approaches towards the conflict through increasing participation in current organisations *and* creating spin-off activities that broaden participation in other areas of society. These contribute to creating a core element in both societies which are active and vocal about their commitment to pursuing a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

#### *Active Participation in Activities Aimed at Directly Impacting Political Process*

Whilst it can be argued that all of the joint activities are aimed at impacting political process through creating a community of supporters for peace which should trickle up through voting patterns, this is difficult to trace. However, there is evidence that participation in joint reconciliation activities can lead to participation in non-violent activities that are more directly aimed at influencing political process both by the nature of its action and the media attention that it receives. Three (18 percent)

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<sup>58</sup> See Combatants for Peace, <http://cfpeace.org>, [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>59</sup> See PCFF Crack in the Wall, <https://www.facebook.com/crackinthewall> [last accessed on 11 May 2017]

of the respondents to my alumni survey continued to engage in activities aimed to impact the political level following participation in reconciliation activities. This is reflected in the collection of interviews and personal stories from which 31 percent were also engaged in ongoing activity designed to impact on the political level.

Some of the organisations that organise dialogue activities also engage members in external activities. Combatants for Peace has met with ministers and politicians on both sides to try to impact the political scene, as well as organising activities such as assisting in the olive harvest for villages affected by the political situation to demonstrate their solidarity.<sup>60</sup> Its alternative Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Day ceremony on 30 April 2017 attracted 4000 Israelis from across the country. Despite protests the event, now in its 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, included several Knesset members, famous music artists and literary figures (Shaham, 2017). This organisation, founded by individuals who met at other joint reconciliation activities, describes its role as working “within Israeli society in a way that will hopefully make it elect a government that believes in negotiations and the creation of an independent Palestinian state...” (Hadar, 2006).

Similarly, in 2004 when there was a high level of violence, Palestinian members of the PCFF came to Jerusalem to donate blood at the Magen David Adom (Israeli Red Cross) whilst Israeli members crossed enemy lines to donate blood in Ramallah. The event was reported on national television highlighting how activities at the grassroots level can take action that is noted on the national level. There is some evidence of alumni of joint activities becoming involved with initiatives that are directly aimed at political change such as giving talks encouraging people to sign alternative framework documents such as Ayalon and Nusseibeh’s<sup>61</sup> the People’s Voice draft agreement (Lisbona, 2004).

A number of the interviews and participants highlighted how their initial involvement with a joint activity has led to more political actions. One participant in a Combatants for Peace joint olive picking activity described how it led him to feel that he must take more action, and consequently he now participates in non-violent demonstrations including those against the expropriation of land for the security fence (Kallai, 2011). Similarly, participation in a joint narratives project for teachers led one participant to become a member of a more politically active group and consequently participating in and organising demonstrations (Sadovsky, 2007). Building Bridges alumna and activist Inas Radwan (2004) highlights that Palestine and Israel are small countries, with 500 alumni from the Building Bridges programme alone there could be an impact in elections, and “[if] there were one or two thousand amongst the Palestinians working for peace, it would make a big difference.” Whilst it is difficult to measure the size of the impact of these activities on political process, it seems that

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<sup>60</sup> See Combatants for Peace, <http://cfpeace.org>, [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>61</sup> Also known as the Ayalon-Nusseibeh initiative, this document was aimed at encouraging a critical mass of Israelis and Palestinians to sign a declaration of principles between themselves. The aim was to collect 10,000 signatures. See <http://www.haaretz.com/ayalon-nusseibeh-launch-people-s-voice-campaign-1.92361> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

one person's involvement in a joint reconciliation activity can be translated to action on the social-political level.

*Evidence of Ability to Resist Manipulation or Provocation to Violence*

In Chapter Two I discussed how stable peace is dependent on parties not wishing to engage in violence. The third of the Anderson and Olson (2003) criteria for gauging the effectiveness of a programme is its transformative role on its participants' ability to resist manipulation or provocation to violence. Several of the Palestinian interviewees and participants have come from backgrounds in which they actively engaged in violence, and on the Israeli side who have served against Palestinians. Many express how following the process of re-humanisation of the other side during the joint activities that they have renounced violence, or restricted their army service activities.

Combatants for Peace is founded on the principle of non-violence, with its Palestinian members eschewing violent activity of any kind, and Israeli members refusing to serve in the Occupied Territories (Kallai, 2011). The ability to resist provocation to violence can be most clearly seen in the case of Bassam Aramim, who co-founded the Combatants for Peace, after a positive interaction with a prison guard whilst he was serving a seven-year sentence for planning an attack on Israeli troops. His commitment to dialogue and non-violence remained firm even after his daughter's death:

“Abir's murder could have led me down the easy path of hatred and vengeance, but for me there was no return from dialogue and non-violence. After all, it was one Israeli soldier who shot my daughter, but one hundred former Israeli soldiers who built a garden in her name at the school where she was murdered” (Aramim, 2010).

In some cases, the ability or inclination to resist provocation to violence is more moderate, such as having greater reservations about civilian targets (Mukbal, 2011). On the Israeli side, some are honest in expressing their uncertainty as to their reaction if army duties should bring them into conflict with their new belief system (Kallai, 2011). However, there seems to be a greater understanding and empathy towards the civilians and a separation between action against the army or combatants and those against civilians. A Combatants for Peace member, who served time in prison for approaching a checkpoint wielding a large knife, expressed how she still “hate[s]” the Israeli Army, however “she doesn't feel violence towards them anymore,” and that “with ordinary Israeli citizens [she]’ll use non-violence as a way forwards” (Musa, 2010)

Overall, former participants in joint activities seem to share a new resilience to stand firm in the face of criticism or peer questioning. Israelis express being viewed as a traitor (*See* Kalisman 2010; Cohen, 2011) and some have even been thrown out of organisations with which they were involved for organising encounters with “terrorists,” however this did not affect resolve to continue to be involved in such activities (Cohen, 2011). Palestinians express similar incredulity and criticism from their peer group (see Shehadah, 2010; Abu Nssr, 2011) and further have to combat fears of being accused as normalisers, and yet stay committed to the path of non-violence and reconciliation.

*Evidence of Reduction of Violence or Perception of Vulnerability*

Another Anderson and Olson (2003) criteria for measuring the effectiveness of joint reconciliation activities is evidence of reduction of violence or perception of vulnerability. Attributing the reduction of violence on a national level to increased participation in these activities is complex. However, when a Palestinian government appointed mayor begins holding meetings between Israelis and Palestinians in his own home and consequently begins to believe in non-violence (Sabarna, 2011), there is a glimpse of the possibility of the effect of contact on the reduction of violence. Similarly, when participants in contact activities subsequently train checkpoint soldiers in “humane checkpoint conduct” resulting in it being one of the quietest periods in that area (Cohen, 2011), the contact activity has been part of the process of reducing violence.

Many of the participants demonstrate a reduced perception of vulnerability and consequently less of a need to use violence, such as wanting “to use the law and not weapons to fight the enemy” (Musa, 2010; cf Abu Awwad, 2010). A number of the Palestinians demonstrate their reduced perception of vulnerability through expressions of compromise such as support for a Palestinian state within 1967 borders (Mukbal, 2011). Israelis also feel a reduced perception of vulnerability as a result of Palestinians recognising their individual and national “needs...desires...and fears...” which leads to a greater support of non-violence (Sarig, 2011). This reduction of existential fear leads to a greater ability to be able to commit to a path of non-violence, and whilst it may be difficult to demonstrate the cumulative impact of each of these individuals on the national levels of violence, their contribution cannot be ignored.

The evolution of joint reconciliation activities has led to projects which involve multiple meetings in order to create more sustained contact between participants. However, the effectiveness of the activity is better measured by the amount of independent contact or sense that the friendships created transcend the meetings. The creation of the type of trust that allows people to open their homes to each other or rely on each other is an enormous achievement of any joint encounter. Participants describe their former opposition to dialogue programmes being transformed into a belief that “in spite all, [he has] managed to create true friends with Israelis” (Abu Nssr, 2011). Similarly, one participant had been so affected by the contact activity that he invited the Israelis to his home and “[he] felt something change in [him]” (Mukbal, 2011).

Continued meetings have included participants organising picnics at the beach with their children, leading to the realisation that they hadn’t discussed education and they consequently organising a work shop in tolerance and education. (Chaviv, 2011; Abo Saymih, 2011). The Alumni Survey IP reflected that 81 percent of the alumni are still in contact with participants from the activity they attended, and 38 percent of the respondents were still in contact with fellow participants from national groups other than their own. Ongoing contact with like-minded individuals from one’s own national group is important in building communities or groups that are committed to peace. People

are more likely to stay committed to an ideology or belief if they are part of a group that supports them in this endeavour.

### **Challenges and Negative Effects**

One of the noticeable features of the interviews is the challenge of breaking the stereotypes and de-individuation. In a number of the interviews there was a contradiction between participant claims to be committed to ongoing joint reconciliation activities and continued attachment to stereotypes and deindividuated images. One interview of an activist revealed attachment to beliefs such as

“[the] Israelis aren’t concerned about the old city of Jerusalem, they are interested in destroying it...Their goal is to kill the values and health of the people in many ways” (Karajeh, 2005).

Similarly, stereotypical views such as “the Jews love Americans” (Radwan, 2004) can persist in even the most committed of activists.

The activists and members of the narrative projects identified a number of challenges beyond physical and political constraints. Lisbona (2004) highlights the apathy of the Israeli public and the role of the mass media reflecting current opinion rather than challenging opinions. Echoing the sense of alienation that many alumni and activists feel, CfP member Kalisman (2010) reiterates that the most difficult element is explaining to his own community, Israelis, the circumstances of his transformation and that “[he] is seen as a traitor by many.” Maintaining commitment to reconciliation activities at times of high political tension is a challenge that many of the alumni and activists encounter. Shapiro (2005) is frank in the difficulties of trying to reconcile multiple conflicting emotions:

“...to be able to be angry and not approve of certain things and at the same time, reach my hand and continue a process. That’s not easy.”

Activists also identify challenges in the provision of reconciliation activities and the need for greater cooperation between organisations and projects. There are often “turf wars” (Maclean, 2004) as everyone is competing for the same funders and puts forward claims that their way of making peace is preferable. Similarly, Middle East Children Association activist Adina Shapiro (2005) highlights that the joint-organisation model has disadvantages as it is impossible to model symmetry that does not exist outside the organisation. She further questions its logic in the sense that the proposed solution is a two-state not one state solution and therefore does the joint organisational model run contrary to reality. Like Maclean, she also identifies that one of the mistakes in the field is that there is not enough support between the organisations and that the “peace camp” in both Israeli and Palestinian societies is extremely fragmented. The challenges of asymmetry and competition for resources closely reflect some of the themes highlighted by Gawerc (2012: 218-219), however as she notes those programmes that survive will be those that can help facilitate peace, justice and security.

## Conclusion

Can making a difference to the conflict identity of individual have a wider impact? Can influencing other people to help create a movement of people sufficient to influence political process? Establishing the causality to answer these questions in full is difficult and flawed. Simply knowing that an organisation held 195 encounters that reached 4000 people in 2012<sup>62</sup> or that it reaches 25,000 students annually is insufficient to theorise on the impact of the activities. As David Lisbona (2005) of Middleway highlights “...one never knows how people are touched. It’s a process” and that there is no recipe for this type of work to ensure that it is successful (Shapiro, 2005). Similarly, evaluating reconciliation activities according to their effectiveness in preventing an intifada or rocket attacks is neither useful nor realistic. This chapter presents an alternative approach by which to view the impact of Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation activities, that is, their role in creating wider ripple effects that increases the support base for peace and adherence to the peace process. It is difficult to access alumni and participants of these activities to gauge the long-term impact of their work, a challenge shared by the organisations themselves. The data for analysis, therefore, only covers a small group former participants, and is unable to really access a large group of people who have had negative experiences in order to redress these biases. However, this research serves as a template for examining the achievements of these activities based on realistic criteria, that is examining the way that participation in a reconciliation activity radiates to have a wider impact. This could be the foundation of a more expanded piece of research that could include a control group based on a representative sample, to gauge the difference between people who have and have not participated in joint reconciliation activities.

There is widespread consensus that peace at the diplomatic level needs to be accompanied by peace on the grassroots level, and Walid Salem challenges the notion that creating such relations constitutes normalisation (Salem, 2006).<sup>63</sup> He believes that such work, as evidenced by the Geneva Initiative’s pressure on Ariel Sharon to withdraw from Gaza, can have a direct impact on influencing people (ibid.). Creating an active and vocal peace constituency is critical for the long-term sustainability of a peace agreement. “If leaders make treaties for which people are not ready, these agreements will not hold, if many people want peace but cannot affect the decisions of their leaders or the perpetrators of war – peace will not come” (Anderson, 2004: 7). As Inas Radwan (2004) emphasises:

“[t]he solution is not up to the leaders. All the revolutions were carried out by people that objected to their situation. No leader ever said ‘I don’t like the situation, so I will change it.’ It’s always the people that make the change. They are the spark.”

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<sup>62</sup> Interfaith Encounter Annual Report Data 2012, <http://interfaith-encounter.org/Data%20Sheet%202012.pdf> [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>63</sup> He asserts that in 1974 the 12<sup>th</sup> Palestinian National Council decided on working with the Israeli public.

However, as the founder of the IEA highlights that creating this cumulative effect takes time as “you can't jump to the 5,000th meeting before you hold the first, second, and 17th meetings” (Stolov, 2005). It may be a slow process but creating a critical mass can have an effect.

In May 2017 a new documentary, “The Field”<sup>64</sup> has been released outlining the journey of Ali Abu Awwad (Abu Awwad, 2010), a Palestinian who had been imprisoned for four years for violent action against Israelis and consequently a participant in the Parents Circle following the death of his brother (Maltz, 2017). The documentary charts how in 2014 he dedicated a corner of his own land that borders with settler land as a place for Israelis and Palestinians to meet. The encounters led to a partnership being formed with Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger from the settlement Alon Shvut who pinpointed his transformation to when he went to one of Abu Awwad’s meetings and saw:

“a group of about 20 Palestinians and 20 to 25 Israelis talking to each other there. You have to understand that this is something that never happens. It was the first time I heard someone talk about being in an Israeli jail and about suffering under occupation with no rights. It was giving me a completely different narrative about the land that we live in” (ibid.).

Together they have since founded the organisation Shorashim (Roots) with the aim of increasing understanding and replacing stereotypes based on fear with understanding of each other’s humanity.<sup>65</sup> Their work ranges from community meetings, work with religious leaders to pre-army academies and at the time of the filming of the documentary over 2500 Israelis and Palestinians have met at “The Field” (Maltz, 2017). It is through instances such as these that we can observe the transfer of individual transformation to the community and society-level, with the potential to influence on the political level.

Whilst the long-term impact of these constituencies may be challenged in times of existential crisis and increased violence, it does not necessarily point to the failure of joint activities. If in the height of some of the worst regional violence, 300 Israelis and Palestinians can participate in a joint rally urging an end to all rockets and violence<sup>66</sup> or settlers and Palestinians can continue to meet in a field, the failure is not that of the joint activities but of the leadership to harness, support and encourage these fledgling peace constituencies.

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<sup>64</sup> “The Field” premiered at the Tel Aviv International Documentary Film Festival on 14 and 18 May 2017. <http://www.docaviv.co.il/2017-en/films/the-field/> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

<sup>65</sup> See Roots <http://www.friendsofroots.net/about-roots.html> [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>66</sup> Post on Combatants for Peace Facebook Page: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2014: <https://www.facebook.com/c4peace?fref=ts> [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

## Chapter 6: Transforming Conflict Identity in Northern Ireland

*“What you find in these situations is a complete absence of trust...they don't believe anything the other says. They assume the worst of the other side. And as a result it infects their own actions.”*

Senator George Mitchell (2002)<sup>67</sup>

### Introduction

The Good Friday Agreement or Belfast Agreement sets out one of the strongest commitments to reconciliation of the agreements examined in the Peace Agreements and Reconciliation Dataset. This commitment is clear from the outset in the Declaration of Support by which the parties undertake to “dedicate [themselves] to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all” (Belfast Agreement 1998, Declaration of Support: Clause 2). The section on “Reconciliation and Victims of Violence” (Belfast Agreement 1998, Chapter 6: Clauses 11-13) set out clear commitments for both funding and institutional support for statutory and community-based organisations in their work with victims and reconciliation. The agreement is notable in being one of the only agreements to unequivocally acknowledge the role of NGOs in “develop[ing] reconciliation and mutual understanding” as well as the impact that this work has in “consolidating peace and political agreement,” and actively commits “positively examin[ing] the case for enhance financial assistance for the work of reconciliation” (Belfast Agreement 1998, Chapter 6: Clause 13). The agreement also reflects the theoretical notions that successful peacebuilding needs to engage all levels of society, “an integrative, comprehensive approach” (Lederach, 1997: 60), in that it states that “essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society” (ibid.).

The Belfast Agreement scores highly on all the reconciliation variables in the Large-N study in that it evidences a strong reconciliation clause, evidence of implementation, and both government and NGO initiated reconciliation activity. On the face of it, the agreement supports the hypotheses that reconciliation work, particularly when supported by both governmental and non-governmental initiatives will be less susceptible to breakdown. In 2008, ten years following the signing of the Belfast Agreement, the EU Commission President Barroso famously claimed that “Northern Ireland has now emerged as an example to the world on how to succeed in promoting peace and reconciliation in a deeply divided community” (quoted in Hughes, 2009: 290). Since the 1994 ceasefire agreement, the EU, through its Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (EUSSPPR), has invested approximately €3 billion, into a model of promoting strategies of social inclusion and political partnership to address structural and psychological issues to support efforts at the elite level emerged Racciopi et al (2007).

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<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Oberschall (2007: 170).

By the late 1990s, this small region of approximately 1.6 million people had cultivated an industry of around 3,000 to 5,000 active voluntary and community organisations with an estimated gross annual income of approximately \$514 million and employing approximately 33,000-35,500 employees (Birrell & Williamson, 2001; Hughes, 2009: 296-297). In this lies the model of which theorists and practitioners of transformational thinking and peacebuilding dream -- the “long term commitment to establishing an infrastructure across all levels of society that empowers the resources for reconciliation from within that society and maximises the contribution from the outside” (Lederach, 1997: xvi). Yet, former US diplomat Dr Richard Haass has warned that Northern Ireland can no longer be cited as “a model of conflict resolution” and that the model reflects “peace without reconciliation” (Nolan, 2014: 11). This opens the question as to whether this is a failure of the joint reconciliation activities model or are other factors preventing a reconciled peace?

The substantial investment into post-conflict reconciliation has yielded more evaluation of activity than in many other post-conflict settings. Reports were commissioned from formal sources such as the accountancy firm Price Waterhouse Coopers (2007), and surveys such as the Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey (NISA) run from 1989 to 1996, and the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILTS) run from 1998, monitored attitudes to community relations. Whilst Byrne et al. (2009: 649) found that 48 percent of the respondents in their study felt that the IFI & PEACE II funded programmes had improved cross-communal relations, there is still a sense that “little meaningful effort has been made to evaluate the success of the programme” (Brück & Ferguson, 2014 n.d. on PEACE II) and that “no research has linked spending to the perceptions of individuals living in the treated regions” (ibid.). Organisations have conducted evaluations of programmes or their operations as a whole, but there is an awareness that there is a need for more longitudinal evaluation (Tausch et al., 2007: 65). This need has become more acute over the years as the surveys suggest that Northern Ireland is still highly segregated both physically and psychologically (Tausch et al., 2007: 66). The continuing disputes, segregation, and tension suggest that reconciliation is “incomplete” (Hamber & Kelly, 2005:14). With approximately 99 “security barriers and forms of defensive architecture” (Belfast Interface Project, 2012), some of which have been built since 1998, and increasingly negative or unmoving attitudes towards community relations or intergroup friendships, questions remain as to what is preventing greater success given the auspicious groundwork laid by the text of the Belfast Agreement.

This chapter examines the development and role of reconciliation activity in Northern Ireland in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of how actively supporting or facilitating reconciliation work may contribute to increasing the sustainability of the peace agreement. This aims to provide additional insights into the potential impact of including commitments to reconciliation into the peace agreement. Understanding the process by which hardened conflict identities can be transformed, through participation in joint reconciliation activities, into identities which actively

participate in peace constituencies which are “instrumental and integral...to sustaining change” (Lederach, 1997: 94) highlights what needs to be captured by architects of peace agreements to enhance their sustainability. Following a brief overview of the history of the conflict and the growth of reconciliation activities, I will apply the process tracing methodology set out in Chapter Three on my own survey data, supported by data from evaluation reports organisations, other academic evaluations (Byrne et al., 2009; Shirlow et al., 2012; Hall, 2007; Morrow et al., 2013; Morrow et al., 2001), and funder reports. This exercise seeks to provide an understanding of the process underlying the impact of reconciliation activity in creating peace constituencies committed to non-violent approaches to conflict resolution in Northern Ireland. The study also aims to provide some insights into the obstacles to implementing successful reconciliation activities and their ability to positively impact the political level in support of the peace agreement.

### **History of the Conflict**

Pinpointing the exact start and source of the conflict in Northern Ireland is almost as contested as the conflict itself. There are those who trace Irish history to 1172 (Foster 1993: 13) whilst others highlight the economic and social divisions in the 1609 Ulster Plantation which were solidified during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the primary causes (Byrne, 2009: 633-634). The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 partitioned the land with the 26 southern counties gaining independence and the six north-eastern counties remaining as a semi-autonomous part of the United Kingdom. This Northern Ireland held an “in-built Protestant majority” of approximately 65 percent which was “chronically insecure” and a Catholic minority which was marginalised in its access to housing and welfare, accompanied by an economy that was declining, resulting in a state of constant political tension (Darby, 2003). The sporadic violence that existed during this period tended to coincide with economic downturns, such as the riots during the 1930s (Hancock, 1998). The divisions between the two societies hardened with faith-based education leading families from each community to live closest to the schools of their faiths, and marriages remained localised and exclusionary (Hancock, 1998; Darby, 1976: 37).

The intermittent violence intensified during the 1960s partly driven by the rise of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) which led a wave of protest activities demanding fair and equal participation for all communities (Hancock, 1998). In 1969, the British government deployed the army in Northern Ireland in an attempt to restore order, however this “traditional Republican symbol of oppression” (Darby, 2003: n.pag.) served only to fuel the conflict. The death of a Catholic civilian, Frances McCloskey during street disturbances in Dungiven, County Derry, heralded an era of low-intensity violence (Brúck & Ferguson, 2014). This led to a “rejuvenated militant Republicanism” in the form of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) (Darby, 2003: no pag.), and 1971 the British Government, unable to restore order, invoked its powers under the Special Powers Act and introduced internment without trial. The internment of 342 men led to anti-internment demonstrations resulting in violent clashes, the worst of which, the Bloody Sunday killings

in 1972, resulted in Britain dissolving the home rule that had been in place and imposing direct rule from Westminster.

This violence, termed “the Troubles,” eventually claimed over 3,500 lives, 50 percent of which were civilians (Darby, 2003: no pag.; Fitzduff & O’Hagan, 2000: no pag.). The violence also deepened the communal rifts, allowed old grievances to surface and contributed to the decline of an already suffering economy (ibid.). Scholars are divided as to the driver for the outbreak of violence. Darby (1995, 2003) roots the violence in the old ethno-nationalist conflict between Catholics and Protestants following the Plantation of Ulster. Similarly, Horowitz (1993:174) highlights that “the very terms nationalist and unionist reveal that the nature of a supra-ethnic national identity is what is at issue in Northern Ireland.” Fitzduff and O’Hagan (2000) find that economic inequalities between the communities was the chief driver of the violence, and Honaker (2010) highlights changes in individual opportunity as the reasons for violence.

There were seven attempts to end the violence between 1972 and 1994, which were all based on some form of power-sharing. The Sunningdale Agreement 1972 was negotiated in the wake of some of the worst violence in the Troubles, which included “500 political deaths 2,000 explosions, 5,000 injured and 10,000 shooting incidents” (Oberschall, 2007: 16). The Northern Ireland Assembly in cooperation with the SDLP and the Alliance party, that is “devolution,” was restored as an incentive (Oberschall, 2007: 166). Although, the agreement was met with extreme Unionist opposition which eventually led to the Ulster Workers' Council Strike and the downfall of the agreement, it established a principle of “power-sharing with an Irish dimension” which defined the basis of future political settlement (Mansergh quoted in Oberschall, 2007: 166).

In 1985, the Anglo-Irish Agreement accorded the Irish government a consultative role in Northern Irish affairs in return for recognition of the Northern Irish state, and the “principle of consent” that Northern Ireland should remain part of Great Britain for as long as the majority so voted (Darby, 2003: no pag.). This agreement led to the foundations of increased security cooperation and developing civil society and was believed to be the most “far-reaching political development since 1920 and the creation of Northern Ireland (Elliot & Flackes quoted in Oberschall 2007: 167). The Unionists once more objected to the involvement of the Irish government in the affairs of Northern Ireland that manifested itself in mass protests, the resignation of 15 Unionist Members of Parliament, and the eventual dissolution of the Northern Ireland Assembly (Oberschall, 2007:167-168).

The violence officially ended with ceasefires declared on 31 August 1994, which had been started by the Downing Street Declaration, 1993. This led to four years of political negotiations resulting in the Good Friday Agreement (Belfast Agreement) in 1998. This agreement established, among other institutions a power-sharing assembly to govern relations in Northern Ireland with all the main parties being part of a coalition government (Darby, 2003). A “complex web of institutions and policies”

(Hughes, 2009: 289) emerged that was intended to reduce perceptions of existential threat and work towards cross-community ties yet simultaneously reinforces ethno-nationalist self-identification and division. According to the Peace Agreements Matrix (Joshi & Darby, 2013), at the 10 year mark, 95 percent of the agreement had been implemented. However, there remains a feeling that the reduction in violence has been replaced with divisions that have become “even more clearly defined and entrenched” (Ferry quoted in Oberschall, 2007: 179). Academics and politicians have identified the need for “parallel bottom-up grassroots institution building for achieving lasting peace” and identified the need for civil society to participate in “resolv[ing] stateness and moderat[ing] ethnic identity, and foster[ing] cross-community cooperation” (ibid). In the following section I examine the development of civil society organisations, particularly those associated with reconciliation activities potentially leading to increased cross-community cooperation.

### **Civil Society Organisations and Reconciliation Activity**

In the majority of post-conflict contexts, reconciliation activity is initiated, organised and operated by civil society organisations/NGOs. The development of a strong civil society and “Track III” actors facilitating a participative democracy has been hailed as one of the great achievements of the PEACE programmes that has helped “sustain the ‘peace process’ during its darkest periods” (Buchanan, 2008: 388). In order to understand the potential ripple effect or “trickle-up effect” of the activities that emerged out of these organisations and their impact on political process, it is critical to understand both the actual and potential size of the sector, the extent to which reconciliation work has been prioritised, as well as its ability to function in the post-conflict context. It is estimated that at the time of the signing of the Belfast Agreement there were approximately 3,000 voluntary and community organisations that employed approximately 33,000 people, and the sector had a gross national income of approximately £500 million (Hughes, 2009: 296-297). This represented more people being engaged in community relations work than in the manufacturing industry (ibid.).

These community organisations originally emerged during the height of the violence around 1969 to 1971 to meet local emergency needs and to develop welfare institutions (Birrell & Williamson, 2001: 206). They flourished as mainstream politics became more “antagonistic and “uncompromising” to the point that “some of the brightest talents [chose] to put their energies into the voluntary sector than formal politics” (Gidron et al., 2002: 52). It is estimated that by 1973 there were approximately 500 community groups and associations in existence (Griffiths, 1975 quoted in Birrell & Williamson, 2001: 206). For the Catholic communities, these organisations were a natural development from the civil rights activist movements, for the Protestants they represented “a new form of social organisation” that continued to grow with the support of the Ministry for Community Relations (established in 1969) and with financial assistance from the Department of Education (Gidron et al., 2002: 52). Organisations such as the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust (NIVT later renamed the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland), founder in 1979, provided funding for organisations that were independent from the government. To some measure the paramilitary organisations have

been termed by some as a form of community organisation emerging in response to the need to defend their communities, which has led to high levels of veterans of these organisations being involved in peace and conflict resolution organisations (Cochrane & Dunn, 2002: 58).

The civil society sector often came into conflict with the government and in 1985, Douglas Hurd, the then Secretary of State, introduced a policy of political vetting of community work. This policy denied funds to any organisation that might have an alleged association to paramilitary groups (Birrell & Williams, 2001: 207), resulting in loss of funding even for nurseries or crèches (The Political Vetting of Community Work Working Group, 1990: 3). The loss of funding was mitigated to some extent by the establishment of the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) in 1986, following the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985). The IFI combined financial assistance from the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK with the aim of encouraging social and economic development as well as greater cooperation between the governments (Byrne et al., 2009: 634; Birrell & Williamson, 2001: 208) although there was no requirement for activities to have a cross-community element (EC paper 2006: 6). The IFI was a source of large-scale funding that received €743million between 1986-2005, 59.9 percent of which was provided by the US (EC paper 2006: 4). It provided funds for a wide range of organisations including the Community Relations Council (CRC), established in 1991, which some believe was “the major development of the era in community relations in Northern Ireland” (Bloomfield, 1997:11).

In July 1995, following the IRA ceasefire, the EU approved a Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (EUSPPR) which was intended to “reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation by increasing economic development and employment, promoting urban and rural regeneration, developing cross-border cooperation, and extending social inclusion” (Racciopi & See, 2007: 369). In the initial phase PEACE I (1995-1999) allocated €500 million, whereas PEACE II (2000-2004) had €531 million in funds and was extended to 2006 with a further €160 million, and PEACE III was valued at approximately €333 million with approximately a third coming from national contributions (Hayward et al., 2011 page no.). The focus on fostering civil society helped to recalibrate the political balance, weakening state control over community relations, and providing alternatives to the divisions caused by the ethnic proportionalism of the consociationalist political solution (Hughes, 2009: 294; Racciopi & See, 2007: 366).

PEACE I received over 31,000 applications and funded over 48 percent of them (Buchanan, 2008: 387-388). Some funding was channelled to projects that aimed to focus on reconciliation work. This included funding of more than £3.6 million for the Community Relations Council, which was responsible for two sub-programmes: Promoting Pathways to Reconciliation and Building Inclusive Communities (Racciopi & See, 2007: 377). Similarly, Cooperation Ireland, whose mandate is to “facilitate business and cultural ties between Northern Ireland and Republic,” was allocated approximately 15 percent of the EU funding under PEACE I (Racciopi & See, 2007: 375). However,

there was a certain level of criticism levelled against PEACE I for the lack of cross-community projects, and the findings that much of the funding was directed at single-identity projects that had no clear impact on inter-communal relations (Racciopi & O'Sullivan See, 2007:374). Hughes (2009: 294) ascribes the failure of PEACE I to address cross-community projects was due to too much emphasis being placed on Robert Putnam's theories on capacity building within the communities instead of cross-community work, that is "bridging" or "bonding" social capital. There were also tensions theoretically and practically as to the best locus for reconciliation work, as in whether it should be focused within Northern Ireland or it should be cross border work, driven by the feeling the cross-border work could not be a substitute for reconciliation within Northern Ireland (Hayward et al., 2011: 200). These tensions between the need to promote social inclusion and reduce poverty as a pre-requisite to successful reconciliation and the need for the correct type of cross-community projects remained as PEACE I transitioned into PEACE II.

PEACE II also had the strategic objective "to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation" (Buchanan, 2008: 394). PEACE II received over 12,000 applications of which approximately 50 percent were funded, 4,000 of which were in Northern Ireland alone (Brück & Ferguson, 2014: page no.). Under PEACE II the CRC was allocated more than £7 million for projects aimed at promoting sustainable peace, most of which went to education and training projects that should have cross-community impact (Racciopi & O'Sullivan See, 2007: 377). Hayward et al (2011: 196) estimated that over 450,000 people took part in PEACE II activities, with over 200,000 people having taken part in cross-border activities a "very high percentage" of which were reconciliation activities. However, Pat Colgan (2012: no pag.), Chief Executive of the Special EU Programmes Body (SPEUPB), used the Northern Ireland Statistic and Research Agency (NISRA) data to report that 868,420 people had participated in PEACE II programmes with 161,599 participating in cross-border activities, but only 42,772 participating in reconciliation activities, and 1,638 organisations involved in reconciliation projects. The discrepancies confirm findings such as those of Racciopi & See (2007: 380) that people were more willing to participate in single-identity activities than cross-community activities. Although PEACE II intended that all projects "demonstrate how effectively they will develop reconciliation and mutual understanding and respect between and within communities and traditions," projects were often funded on the basis that single identity groups should be "ready to participate" in cross-community initiatives (Racciopi & O'Sullivan See, 2007: 382).

Despite the challenges of instituting cross-community work, by 2001 there were a number of organisations promoting diverse activities based on various theories of reconciliation and transformational conflict resolution. These include groups that bring Nationalists and Unionists together for joint prayer, trust-building, forgiveness and relationship building, such as the Columba House of Peace and Reconciliation (CHPR), the Columbanus Community on Reconciliation (CCA),

and the Corrymeela community (Byrne, 2001:8). Other NGOs bring people together to focus on conflict resolution and peace projects rooted in local knowledge, such as the Peace and Reconciliation Group (PRG) and the Ulster People's College (UPC) (ibid.). Similarly, several organisations have projects aimed at creating interdependent relationships involving contact and building mutual respect, such as many of the CRC's projects and integrated schools projects. With 41 percent of Northern Ireland's population being under the age of 25 in 1998 (Ruane and Todd 1998:70), many projects have focused on promoting community programmes among youth, such as the annual "Building for Peace Conference" organised by the National Union of Students in Ireland and the Youth Council of Northern Ireland, the YMCA, the Community of the Peace People (CPP) and the Phoenix Youth and Community projects (Byrne, 2001:11-12). Promoting alternatives to violence is also a key objective for some organisations, including the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC), Enniskillen Together, and Families Against Intimidation and Terror (FAIT), and to build respectful relationships between communities, such as the Dumcree Faith and Justice Group (Byrne, 2001:12-14).

Building upon activities such as these became the focus of PEACE III (2007-2013) which allocated €140 million to reconciliation at the local level and particularly to trying to involve local government in the initiatives (Colgan, 2012: no pag.). Acknowledging and dealing with the past for victims and survivors, in line with theories requiring truth and mercy for reconciliation (Lederach, 1997), was also given priority for funding (€50 million), as well as providing opportunities for contact through focus on creating shared spaces (€80 million). Unlike PEACE I, capacity building was allocated the least funding (€40 million), reflecting the strategic shift from purely building social capital to focusing on "bridging" or "bonding" capital that results from reconciliation. However, this budget for reconciliation activities was 50 percent less than in previous PEACE cycles (Hayward et al., 2011: 203). Furthermore, there was a sense that "the reconciliation bit was a bit of an add-on" and that the way that the reconciliation criteria had to be moulded into a project was a little artificial (Kelly & Hamber, 2007: 26).

Through funding for Priority I, Theme 1 of PEACE III, Building Positive Relations at the Local Level, 308,214 people attended 67,754 events addressing sectarianism, racism or promoting conflict resolution (SEUPB Annual Implementation Report, 2012: 8). Similarly, in 2003 the IFI reviewed its programmes and launched the "sharing space programme" as a strategy for the last five years of the IFI. This programme shifted the IFI's focus from more economic-based activities to "building a sustainable infrastructure for reconciliation," particularly for increasing inter-community understanding and integration between the communities (Report on the International Fund for Ireland, 2006). The most recent cycle of PEACE funding (PEACE IV 2014-2020) aims to continue along these lines with the ERDF contributing €229 million to "supporting peace and reconciliation" through funding projects supporting: shared education; children and young people; shared spaces

and services; and building positive relations at the local level (SPEUPB, PEACE IV (2014-2020) Programme Factsheet: no pag.).

Community organisations have been lauded for being “vibrant and powerful agents of civil renewal” in Irish society (Powell & Guerin, 1997: 25). The Belfast Agreement attempted to build upon this and enshrine principles that would teach people to “live, learn and socialise together free from prejudice, hate and intolerance” (ibid.). At an initial glance, it appears that the agreement helped facilitate the large-scale investment from the EU and IFI into the conflict resolution and reconciliation organisations, however, the it seems that despite the enormous growth in civil society in Northern Ireland, funds had not been directed into activities that were effective in healing the rifts between the parties. Therefore, it opens the question as to whether the fault lies in the activities themselves, the lack of political support for such activities, the lack of financial support for reconciliation activities, or other extraneous factors, such as elite level political instability.

### **Evaluation of Reconciliation Activity**

As in Israel and Bosnia, the level of funding for community activities and reconciliation activities is not reflected in the quality or quantity of evaluations of those activities. Although, evaluations of reconciliation activities in Northern Ireland are more readily available than in many other post-conflict contexts, effective impact evaluation, particularly those evaluating the effect of participation in reconciliation activity on supporting the peace agreement remains a challenge. Similar, to the Israel-Palestine context, there has been significant academic evaluation of the effect of specific types of psychological processes underpinning reconciliation such as forgiveness (Hewstone et al., 2008; Tam et al., 2007) and the effect of contact programmes as a whole (Hewstone et al., 2008b, Paolini et al., 2004; McGlynn et al., 2007; Trew, 1986). However, evaluation, particularly funder evaluations, of the long-term effect of investment into reconciliation work is more difficulty to find. Brück and Ferguson (2014: no pag.) highlight how “little meaningful effort” had been made to evaluate PEACE II and that no research had been undertaken to link “spending to the perception of the individuals living in the treated regions” even if this is the aim of the intervention.

The EU attempted to resolve the gap in their evaluations following PEACE III through the appointment of the accounting firm Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) to conduct an evaluation of the programme (Potter, 2013: 2). Using the “Aid for Peace” evaluation model (PWC) utilised the NISRA 2010/2011 survey to compare participants in PEACE III programmes to the general population and respondents of the 2007 NISRA survey (Potter, 2013: 4). They sought to evaluate change in attitude, improved contact between the communities, and improved levels and trust and tolerance. Whilst their findings provide a certain measure of evidence for contact programmes, it was identified that more longitudinal studies would be the ideal method of evaluation of this work (ibid.)

Numerous challenges have arisen in attempts to measure the impact of reconciliation activities in Northern Ireland. The differing interpretations of reconciliation and successful reconciliation can challenge the analysis of the success of such programmes. Hamber and Kelly in their 2005 study, found a wide variety of interpretations across sectors and even within organisations (Hamber & Kelly, 2005:7). Brück and Ferguson (2014: no pag.) highlight Fearon et al.'s (2008) concerns with measuring change in perceptions and greater cross-community cohesion – that is, that comparing outcomes of programmes implemented in communities with varying levels of cohesion leads to inaccurate estimates of the programme's effects, and that individual perceptions and patterns of social cooperation are difficult to measure. Similarly, Niens and Cairns (2010: 339) question whether any generalisability on the societal level can be drawn from the “modest but relatively consistent” evidence that contact is “positively associated with reducing negative outgroup attitudes.” The 2005 NIAS report highlighted, the additional problem in relation to the results for the PEACE II programmes, that there may be a selection bias in regard to participants who are more positively disposed to the other side. It is likely that those participants were more like to be positively disposed to members of the other community at the outset, and therefore it is difficult to attribute causality. Similarly, Atashi (2011: 220) emphasised that there was a danger that many of the initiatives might only draw in those who are more inclined to reconciliation.

Whilst organisations continue to conduct evaluations of their own programmes, whether for their own use or as part of reporting requirements for their funders, and the NISA and NILT survey continue to monitor attitudes, there is a danger in that there is some evidence that interviewees offer answers that are more moderate than they actually believe (Whyte, 1993:111). The NISA and NISRA surveys are also limited to the extent that questions were not repeated consistently over the years of the surveys, therefore it is difficult to analyse the extent of change over time. There is also a need to account for the fact that programmes can be “differentially effective” to different subgroups and the dynamics of impact might be different, and therefore evaluations need to try to also capture the way that individual perceptions affect the effectiveness of contact programmes (Tausch et al.,2007: 636).

The Northern Ireland experience reinforces the fact that reconciliation is not a process that can be easily quantified for analysis and that it is difficult to use quantitative methods to evaluate the impact funding on reconciliation (Byrne, et al. 2009: 636). A quantitative analysis does not provide the understanding of the process by which change emerges and should be combined with “more qualitative approaches which attend to the fluid nature of the struggle for reconciliation” (ibid: 643). However, analysis should be more rigorous than the “woolly liberalism” of those who argue that such activity is “beneficial regardless of any empirically definable achievements” (Cochrane, 2001: 108). The following analysis aims to provide an evaluation mechanism that can be utilised to expand upon quantitative results to better understand the process by which individual-level transformation that

can emerge from reconciliation activities can trickle-up to have impact the societal-level and help sustain the peace agreement.

### Data

The data for this analysis is drawn from a wide variety of sources. I start with the results of my own online survey (hereinafter Alumni Survey NI), disseminated in 2012 by NGOs in Northern Ireland to former participants of their activities (Table 6.1). The response to the surveys was not sufficiently substantial to draw conclusions, therefore I also utilise individual organisations' programme evaluations, including the evaluation of the Glencree Centre's "Let's Involve the Victim Experience" (L.I.V.E.) programme, and the evaluation of the Glencree Centre's political dialogue workshops.

**Table 6.1 Descriptive statistics of the Northern Ireland alumni survey**

	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
British	9	56%
Irish	5	31%
British Northern Irish	1	6%
Other	1	6%
Male	5	31%
Female	11	79%
Continued contact with fellow participants following reconciliation activity	12	75%
Ongoing involvement in work to bring about positive change to the conflict situation	8	50%
Ongoing work aimed at the political level	1	6%
Total number of respondents	16	100%

The NISA and NISRA surveys, and several other sources that have conducted more in-depth evaluations of attitude change are also used to further triangulate the results. Shirlow et al.'s (2010) study based on 150 interviews with former political prisoners provides a rich source of data for demonstrating many of the stages of this analysis. Although there are many evaluations of the impact of integrated schools, this is not the central focus of this research based on the premise that children being sent to such schools come from backgrounds that are more disposed towards reconciliation. Further, the choice of school may be mandated by other concerns, such as educational aspirations

(Power, 2011:16). However, where there is evidence that being involved in shared education has had an impact on the parents, this data has been used.

### **Tracing the Impact of Reconciliation Activities**

One of the central arguments in this work is that during protracted conflicts, the parties to the conflict develop a conflict identity that becomes independent of the conflict and serves as a driver to the conflict. This conflict identity, which is a blend of “collective memory”, “ethos of conflict” and “emotional orientations” (Bar Tal, 2013: 52), is characterised by eight central themes of beliefs: the justness of one’s own goals, opponent de-legitimisation, self-victimhood, positive self-image, security, patriotism, and unity (Bar Tal, 1998, 2000, 2007 and 2013:175-176). Although in the immediate afterglow of the signing of an agreement, support for the agreement can be high and hopes can quiet the conflict identity, it does not drop away completely. As Oberschall (2007: 184) notes that without “institutionalised peace” and commitment at the government level to implement peace agreements “public disillusionment” can erode support for the agreement and the residual conflict identity can emerge in people moving away from “moderation and accommodation and back to their separate political camps.”

Reconciliation activities provide an opportunity by which parties to a conflict can challenge and reframe some of these beliefs underpinning the conflict identity. Activities aimed at realigning the perceptual and cognitive processes such as stereotyping, ethnocentrism, selective perception, self-fulfilling prophecies and cognitive rigidity (Coleman, 2006; Kelman, 2007), can create empathy, reduce fear and build mutual acknowledgement of the other's humanity. This can support the development of an identity that seeks to influence support of the agreement at the political level and can resist provocation to violence. In the following sections I utilise the process set out in Chapter Three to demonstrate the path by which conflict identities are transformed through participation in joint reconciliation activities, and the way that this individual-level transformation trickles up to influence the societal-level and potentially the political-level.

### **Conflict Identity**

In order to evaluate the impact of joint reconciliation programmes in changing identity, there is a need to establish the elements of a conflict identity that is prevalent within both societies and contributing to the perpetuation of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Collective narratives, the ethos of conflict and emotional orientations (Bar-Tal, 2013) that emerge during the course of protracted conflicts lead to conflict identities based on the dehumanisation and deindividuation of the other, selective exposure that prevents these images being challenged, fear and mistrust of each other, as well as the commitment to the maintenance of the conflict. In the following sections I examine the extent to which we can observe these elements of conflict identity in respondents to my Northern Ireland survey as well in the other accounts of participants in reconciliation activities.

### *Dehumanisation and Deindividuation*

The accounts of participants of joint reconciliation programmes reveal that dehumanised and de-individuated images were very much present in both parties view of the other. De Vries and da Paor (2005: 330) found, in their analysis of the Let's Involve the Victim's Experience (L.I.V.E.) programme that was set up by Glencree in 1999 to bring together former victims and combatants, programme, that "victims/survivors go through life with thoughts and perceptions of the conflict that exacerbate their distress. Demonising the perpetrator and the community they represent keeps hatred and anger alive. 1 Not only does this keep the conflict going, it also fuels the pain, anxiety and anger" (2005: 334). Similarly, the initial contributions of participants in the Glencree Centre's political dialogue workshops, over 50 workshops facilitated by Geoffrey Corry between 1994 and 2007, would often be framed in "positional language" which was "peppered with enemy perceptions and blame against the other" (Corry, 2012: 68). He highlights how a northern Nationalist felt that they were viewed as "animals" (ibid.: 69) and how a Unionist politician revealed that he "hated "Catholics but was puzzled as to how he could carry hatred for someone that he doesn't know" (ibid.: 70).

In their study of former political prisoners, Shirlow et al. (2010: 55) found that people joined their respective paramilitary organisation often as a result of a reinforced "sense of collective identity" which viewed all incidents through frameworks of understanding that highlight difference and division, with the other side being cast as "pernicious, duplicitous, violent, and perverse." That "antagonism towards an identifiable other" was a primary driver of decisions to become involved. Republican casting of the "other" was driven by the view of the historical legacy of the British State and its imperialist role in Ireland that "legitimised" actions and allowed for "that big moral jump" from being opposed to killing to engaging in violent activity (IRA male in Shirlow et al., 2010: 56). Similarly, another IRA male described that

"the sectarianism was there....Protestants were a target in the eyes of the people...I mean there was a stage in my life when I could have justified the IRA bombing of bars and killing Protestants" – it was "to sort a problem out" (Shirlow et al., 2010: 95).

Whereas, an Ulster Defence Association (UDA) male reflected his belief that Republicans saw Protestants as a unified group which they wanted to kill, he believed that Republicans

"were wanting to kill us. It didn't matter what sex we were or what age we were as long as we were Protestants. The people who were bombing were wanting to blow us all up" (ibid.).

There were those who felt that Republicans were "brainwashed with entrenched views" and one UDA former prisoner felt that he didn't "see anything positive about the Irish at all" (Shirlow, 2010: 136).

Whilst there is a dispute among the parties to the conflict as to whether it was a sectarian war and whether it was based on religion or fuelled by economic inequality, there is little doubt that the conflict was characterised by hardened beliefs and perceptions about the other party. These perceptions and misperceptions sufficiently dehumanised the other party and reduced empathy of the other to remove the moral sanction that inhibits killing others. In the following section we examine the extreme selective exposure resulting from segregated communities, and its role in reinforcing these stereotypes and beliefs.

#### *Selective Exposure*

Northern Ireland, particularly Belfast, remains highly segregated in parts with large numbers of “security barriers and forms of defensive architecture,” as the visible evidence of the sectarian divisions that reinforce selective exposure (Byrne, 2010:10). The “Peace Walls” are constructed of concrete, stone and steel, can be over six metres high and are approximately 21 kilometres long. There are between 53 and 99 peace walls depending on how the count is made (Nolan, 2014: 67), although there is a sense that the number of peace walls have increased. However, the Good Relations Indicators report, 2012, states that there have been no new peace walls since 2008 but the perceived increase is due to the re-categorisation of some structures such as the gates in the Derry City walls being counted as seven structures when it was previously listed as one. Whilst the plan is that all peace walls will be removed by 2023, there is not overwhelming support for their removal as reflected in the 2012 Attitudes to Peace Walls Research Report (Byrne et al., 2012: 28-29) which revealed that 69 percent of people feel that the peace walls are necessary to minimise violence and 43 percent of Protestants feel them necessary to protect their identity.



**Peace wall at Cluan Place<sup>68</sup>**

The extent of segregation in Northern Ireland is reflected in the results of the 2012 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILTS), which reported that approximately 66 percent of the population maintain that their close friends share the same religious background as themselves and 60 percent of the population live in neighbourhoods where the majority of people are the same religion as themselves. Only 15 percent of respondents to the survey had attended an integrated school and only 21 percent sent or send their children to integrated schools. As a community group leader highlighted:

“we didn’t know a lot about building bridges. We probably didn’t even know very many people from other communities in our city. We felt safe and secure within our own community, our own confines” (quoted in Skarlato et al., 2013:10).

The prison sector also reflected this type of segregation initially, which while practical, reinforced the collective identities (Shirlow et al., 2010: 55-59).

The selective exposure that results from this type of segregation not only fuels the mistrust between the parties but also serves to reinforce the stereotypes that compound the de-humanisation de-individualisation of people in each community. These physical barriers are reflective of the psychological

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<sup>68</sup> Reproduced with the permission of Frankie Quinn: <http://www.frankiequinn.com/interface-images>.

barriers that prevent people in both communities from engaging fully with each other and the peace process.

#### *Fear and Mistrust*

Whether the result of segregation, experience of violence, or the inter-generational transmission of stereotypes, many of the evaluations of contact activities reflect the fear and mistrust of the other party that is one of the key features of conflict identities. Corry (2012) details how Protestant participants in the political dialogue workshops held immediately after 1994 “came in fear of the demon they were about to meet,” a feeling that was evident to others as a Southern Irish participant recalled “they were afraid to meet us” (2012: 69). This mistrust and fear was so ingrained that it took one Northern Irish Unionist two years until he was able to shake hands with other participants from the Republican community (ibid.). This deep-seated mistrust did not immediately dissipate with the signing of the Belfast Agreement and was also evident in the L.I.V.E. programme when the participants would not allow a Republican from Belfast to make any recordings for fear that it may put them at risk from reprisals from the IRA (de Vries & da Paor, 2005: 347).

Social trust is difficult to establish even when parties may have a good working relations as reflected in Shirlow et al.’s study of former political prisoners note several time IRA members talking of their lack of trust for the other side (2010: 139, 157). One IRA former prisoner indicated that he believed that the other side “pretend they want peace” but would start killing if they thought that the majority would vote for a united Ireland (ibid: 140).

The Good Relations Indicators report (2012) highlighted that housing transfer requests due to intimidation were up 23 percent in 2011/12 compared to the previous year, as each community continues to live in fear of the other. Similarly, in my survey, one Catholic female respondent (NI Alumni Survey Respondent 740545) raised issues of fear for safety around certain areas of Belfast as well as the persistence of fear and worry over all. The selective exposure and mistrust triggers the selective evaluation that construes all action as negative, such as any attempt by the Catholic community to move into empty Protestant areas is interpreted as a “cloak for the aggressive expansionist intentions of Irish republicanism” even if it is triggered by natural growth and genuine lack of alternative space (Shirlow et al. 2010: 157). Upheaval and tension in these areas has been referred to as “ethnic cleansing” or a “sectarian pogrom.” This type of selective evaluation perpetuated by the fear and mistrust between the communities reinforces the conflict identity and consequently the commitment to the conflict.

#### *Commitment to the Maintenance of the Conflict*

A key element of the ethos of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2013) that fuels conflict identities is the commitment to maintaining the conflict. Although it is nearly 20 years since the Good Friday Agreement was signed, low-level conflict persists in Northern Ireland. The PSNI recorded 1,352 sectarian incidents

in 2015/2016,<sup>69</sup> and 4,849 parades being held in 2016.<sup>70</sup> A former political prisoner highlighted the “generational obligation” that exists for many to the conflict and how it can be a family tradition as he described how he “used to learn Republican songs from being a child and [he] had to sing them for [his grandfather] on the way up to Mass on a Sunday” (Shirlow et al., 2010: 50-51). These generational traditions and obligations are difficult to break as reflected in the continued emphasis on the parades and marching bands, which perpetuate the conflict psychologically leaving the possibility of a return to violence ever-present.

### **Joint Reconciliation Activities**

Hewstone et al (2008a: 219) have highlighted that emphasising intergroup contact and dialogue is necessary for building a Northern Ireland that is “no longer deeply divided, sectarian and split along lines of identity, but a mixed, tolerant polity with emerging forms of cross-cutting identities.” Achieving such cross-cutting identities depends upon joint reconciliation activities or intergroup contact activities addressing the elements of conflict identities that prevent the growth of cross-cutting identities. In the following sections I examine the extent to which joint activities facilitating exposure between the parties so that they can overcome the challenges of forced or voluntary selective exposure. I also assess the impact of facilitating empathy and the acknowledgment of the other’s humanity and suffering in helping people move “beyond political narratives and political stereotypes to humanise the Other.”<sup>71</sup>

#### *Facilitating Exposure*

It is clear that lack of contact between the communities is having a significant role in perpetuating conflict identities. 87 percent of respondents to the NILTS felt that better relations between the parties would only come from more mixing. However, it is generally felt that the target for facilitating this is not being met (Good Relations Indicators, 2012). Joint reconciliation programmes have a vital role in facilitating this contact and exposure and despite some programmes reporting that sometimes participants are not ready to meet people from the other side (de Vries and da Paor, 2005: 340) in my Alumni Survey NI, 31 percent of the participants (five of the 16 respondents) indicated that the most valuable part of the activity was meeting people from other groups.

A community group leader from Derry highlighted the role of joint programmes in that:

“Before a Protestant mightn’t have ever met a Catholic....Now they can mix and talk together better...The same Catholic mightn’t have met a Protestant for all his life until he started work....But I think people accept each other more now and work with people and realise that people don’t have horns growing out of their heads just because they are a different religions” (quoted in Skarlato et al: 2013: 12).

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<sup>69</sup> The PSNI’s Statistical Reports: 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016, <https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/news-and-appeals/latest-news/news-stories/2016/may/120516-psni-crime-stats/psni-statistical-press-release-2015-16-final-for-web.pdf> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

<sup>70</sup> The Parades Commission, <https://www.paradescommission.org/Press-Releases/Parades-statistics-2016.aspx> [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>71</sup> Willhelm Verwoerd, Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (quoted in Aiken, 2013: 88).

This dynamic often emerges from informal contact that is facilitated through being part of the programme rather than just in the controlled meetings. In the L.I.V.E meetings, the participants who had been most involved in the discussion regarding the fear of the IRA accessing recordings of the meeting stayed up all night, talked, sang and drank “until their hard feelings dissipated” (de Vries & da Paor, 2005:347). The opportunities that emerge for contact and exposure outside of formal sessions can often be as important as the meeting themselves.

Positive exposure to the other side can be facilitated in unlikely places. A UVF male prisoner recounts that:

“prison and education brought me into more deep contact with Catholics and with Republicans in particular, so you’d get to understand their point of view, what drove them...and their side of the story from prison. It probably opened up my mind a bit more” (quoted in Shirlow et al., 2010: 98).

Whilst there are optimal conditions to contact that can lead to more successful intergroup reconciliation initiatives, sometimes the facilitation of exposure to the other side alone can be of key significance in breaking many of the dynamics that contribute to ingrained conflict identities. Whilst exposure can be the trigger that starts the transformation process, mere exposure or short term contact is often seen as ineffective (*see* Michael Doherty, Director of the Peace and Reconciliation Group quoted in Aiken, 2013: 87). The transformation of conflict identities requires opportunities to develop intercommunal empathy that will lead to a more multi-dimensional image of the other.

#### *Facilitating Empathy*

At its deepest level reconciliation involves empathy as “coexistence without empathy is superficial and fragile” (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004: 570). As the absence of empathy is a defining feature of the dehumanisation process, facilitating empathy becomes a critical part of transforming a perception or image of another party. 81 percent, that is 13 out of the 16 respondents to the Alumni Survey NI stated that the most valuable element of the programmes in which they had participated was “listening to other people’s stories.” This allowed the respondents to find that part of the defining experience of the activity was the ability to now “understand things and see them in a different light”; “see another perspective” and find a way to “question [oneself] and others.” Similarly, in response to the question “What is the most surprising thing that you learnt about the other side?” one 60 year old Irish respondent (NI Alumni Survey Respondent 740364) replied how “they [the other side] feel misunderstood and threatened” demonstrating the increased level of empathy that emerged through the activities. The Parades Forum was seen a mechanism to “enabling a better process of understanding of who I am and what my community is about” (Hall, 2007: 12).

In its more advanced stages, participants attending multiple workshops “got to the point in their own thinking when they could see the difference between “I need to hear how you feel” and “I don’t agree with you” (Corry, 2012: 73). Facilitators of joint activities in Northern Ireland such as Michael

Doherty (quoted in Aiken, 2013: 88) highlight how joint activities with a narrative component allow the parties to leave with “a completely different mindset about the Other...a better understanding as to why some things actually happened.” This ability to acknowledge another’s feelings in spite of difference of opinion and belief results from increased empathy towards the other and is a key step in realigning a polarised view of the other party.

#### *Acknowledgement of Humanity and Mutual Suffering*

In many instances of conflict each party believes that their suffering and victimhood is greater than that of the other with both parties viewing themselves as the victim and the other as the perpetrator (Nadler and Schnabel, 2008: 39). Acknowledging another’s suffering accords the party humanity and consequently contributes to the reversal of negative stereotypes. Respondents to the Alumni Survey NI demonstrated the development of this acknowledgment of humanity and mutual suffering during their experience of reconciliation activities in response to a number of questions. When asked to detail the most surprising thing learnt about the other participants (Question 21) one British respondent (NI Alumni Survey Respondent 740438) answered that “all people from both sides of the community are still suffering.” Similarly, for other participants, the thing that resonated most was understanding the “hurt on both sides,” and that “fear/worry can be found on both sides.” In some cases, the person that they were most inspired or influenced by in the course of the activity was someone who had “been through something of a similar nature” (NI Alumni Survey Respondent 740471).

As observed in other contexts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian context, this acknowledgement of humanity and suffering results in large returns in triggering changes of attitude and challenging conflict identities. The initial processes put in place when attending a joint reconciliation activity is aptly summed up by one of the participants in the L.I.V.E programme who said that: “at first I was nervous, then we got to know each other and then we went deeper and shared the dark stories. The rawness was exposed causing emotions to run deep. Then from the depths balm arose, and in the sharing, healing began” (quoted in de Vries and da Paor, 2005: 341) demonstrating the beginning of identity transformation taking root.

#### **Identity Transformation**

To this point, I have set out the nature of a conflict identity, replete with demonised images of the other and commitment to continuing the conflict, as well as people’s experiences in how this is challenged by participating in some form of joint reconciliation activity. However, in order for these activities to be considered successful and to have some form of long term impact, the effects of exposure to the other side, increased empathy and acknowledgement of the other’s suffering and humanity needs to be translated into changed attitude towards both the other party and towards perpetuating the conflict as a whole. That is the removal the negation of the other as a central feature of their collective identity and through doing so, implicitly accept the identity of the other (Kelman,

2004: 119). According the other party with humanity and legitimacy that in turn makes violent action more difficult (ibid.). As Corry found in the analysis of the political dialogue workshops, there is a “powerful sequential link among new information gained from self-disclosure of the other, new understandings by one party about the other and the emergence of new insights” (2012: 73).

#### *Multi-Dimensional Image of the Other*

There is strong evidence from the evaluations and surveys that joint reconciliation activities serve as a humanising encounter in which participants develop a more multi-dimensional image of the individual other and the other community. That is an image that is free of stereotypes and in which an individual can be recognised as having individual character traits, attitudes and beliefs than those perceived of his or her community. When asked to identify the most surprising thing learnt about the other side, respondents of the Alumni Survey NI demonstrated their change of attitude in responses such as “Not everyone can be perceived as the same. Everyone is different” (British NI Alumni Survey Respondent, 740532). Similarly, one respondent was surprised to learn that for some belonging to a band was because the fellow participant was “just interested in bands” (NI Alumni Survey Respondent, 740553). Based on their own analysis (Question 25), 62.5 percent of the respondents felt that the other party were more honest and broadminded than they had previously believed, and 75 percent felt that the other party was more friendly than they had previously believed. Corry details how participants in political dialogue workshops learn to see the person behind the Unionist or Nationalist labels (2012: 76). Participants learn to accept an image beyond the stereotype, as one southern Irish participant stated, “I am not going to tell you who you are, I am going to accept whom you tell me you are” (quoted in Corry, 2012: 72). This demonstrates participants negating the stereotypes they have of the other.

Another significant step is the move towards viewing members of the other side as individuals with unique beliefs, opinions and positions instead of imbuing them with the characteristics of the group as a whole. A former IRA political prisoner articulated that he had learned that “it’s the same with any grouping or community: there’s you would say, good ones and bad ones” (quoted in Shirlow et al., 2010: 138). Similarly, other former IRA prisoners expressed “there are some people within loyalism who I actually trust” and “I can see a small group of them...have good intentions, do not have bad intentions against Catholics anymore” (ibid.).

The exposure and contact of joint programmes can lead to a complete reappraisal of perspective, as a participant of the L.I.V.E. programme said:

“where I once felt bitterness and hatred I have found an inner peace and tolerance to those I saw as the enemy. I have learned to see another side to beliefs I once had” (quoted in de Vries & de Paor 2005:344).

Similarly, another participant shared:

“I was very surprised to find how little I really knew about the other side. I listened to what the Unionists had said to me about their feelings and fears for the future, and I have now got a better understanding where they are coming from. I somehow got very friendly with people, who, prior to coming here I would have called my enemy” (quoted in de Vries & de Paor 2005:347).

Stepping away from the demonised and dehumanised images can lead to a complete reappraisal of attitude towards the conflict as a whole.

#### *Changed Attitude Towards the Maintenance of the Conflict*

As seen in the Israeli-Palestinian context, sometimes the most dramatic change of attitude emerges from those which are most hardened and seem least likely to change. Often victims/survivors and former combatants are at the forefront of change. As a Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) member said:

“...I firmly believe that there are differences that I have with Republicans and nationalists that are never going to be resolved. But my relationship with them has been transformed from one of demonisation and just wanting to destroy them, to trying to create a society in which we can live together and have those difference” (Shirlow et al.,2010: 106).

It is experiences such as these that demonstrate how increased contact can lead to re-humanising the other party and consequently a reduction of fear that allows for a change of behaviour between the parties.

#### **Support for Peaceful/Non-Violent Approaches to the Conflict**

The changed attitudes to conflict and overall great support for mixing between Protestants and Catholics within society in Northern Ireland would suggest an overall movement towards more peaceful approaches to the conflict and to finding reconciliation between the communities. The final stage of establishing the effectiveness of joint reconciliation programmes is to demonstrate the direct impact that alumni of programmes have on changing the nature of support for the conflict towards non-violent approaches and resolution. This involves the creation of social communities committed to peaceful and non-violent approaches, engaging more people into these processes, impacting political process, and being able to resist provocation to return to violence. The Anderson and Olson (2003:15-18) criteria for measuring the success of reconciliation programmes include whether participants go on to develop their own initiatives; the creation or reform of political institutions which address the grievances fuelling the conflict; people’s subsequent ability to resist manipulation or provocation to violence; and a reduction of threat of violence or a changed perception of vulnerability. Although it is a small sample, my Alumni Survey NI revealed that 73 percent of participants recommended participation in a joint reconciliation programme to others, 64 percent remain in contact with other members of their community who attended the activity and 21 percent remained in contact with members of the other community. Core groups such as these committed to more peaceful solution, in line with Lederach’s (1997) conception of a “peace constituencies” will

be able to exert influence upwards to the macro-level and downwards to the grassroots level (Shirlow et al. 2010, 123), and are the seed that will allow reconciliation to flourish.

#### *Founding or Active Participation in Spin-off Activities*

When trying to measure the impact of these newly created peace constituencies, the degree to which participants remain actively involved in changing the nature of approaches to the conflict has key significance. 57 percent of respondents to the NI Alumni survey work or engage in activity to bring about positive change to the conflict situation and 50 percent of this is cross community work some of it reaching up 1,000 adults. Similarly, the evaluation of the L.I.V.E. programme highlights the difficulties of measuring the ripple effects but that participants remain in contact, recommend the programme to others and initiate other similar programmes (de Vries and da Paor, 2005: 347, 351).

In other cases, the ripple effect can be observed more clearly. Shirlow et al.'s (2010:124) study of former political prisoners revealed the extent that both Republican and Loyalist restorative justice programmes are clear examples of positive involvement of former non-state combatants in their respective communities. Former prisoners are often engaged in work at interface areas. As a former Loyalist political prisoner stated:

“They’ve had the experience. I think they’re absolutely instrumental and why we’ve got devolution today, I mean these groups who work around interfaces and stand like that, whether they be INLA, Provisional IRA, Stickies, UVF, UDA. These guys will all be meeting each and they’d be instrumental in community relations and starting cross-community dialogue and start getting us to a point where we can actually get a bit of peace in interface areas and start to move away from sectarianism and bigotry” (ibid., 125).

Similarly, Gribben et al. (2005: page) highlighted that “former prisoners, who often hold positions of credibility within identifiable working-class communities, are active in a wide range of non-pay-based groups and engaged in a broad spectrum of community work designed to move away from violent conflict.” This dynamic and its growth becomes a critical direct result of joint reconciliation programmes that needs to be supported in order for it to gain the momentum to bring positive change to the situation.

#### *Active Participation in Activities Directly Aimed at Influencing Political Process*

It is not only the development and participation in spin-off activities that becomes relevant in measuring the impact of reconciliation programmes but also the extent that the activities are aimed at affecting the macro level. Whilst an argument could be made that the creation of grassroots peace communities will influence political process in the long term, attempting to measure the more direct impact of alumni of reconciliation programmes on political process is fundamental to establishing the overall ripple effects. In my NI Alumni Survey 12.5 percent of the work of the spin-off activities of the respondents is aimed at politicians and government officials.

The Glencree political dialogue workshops, were premised on influencing political process and over 12 years, 55 workshops were held, involving, 600 participants. Three regulars attended 40 workshops, ten attended about 25 times, and thirty attended 15 times (Corry, 2012, 76). This became “significant in ensuring that the new political learning was retained disseminated and used beyond the workshop setting and into the larger political process” and that these alumni became “change agents” for the peace process within their party structure (ibid.). These types of reconciliation activities have a key role in generating and sustaining momentum when the political realities may be bleak” participants gained a new sense of what was possible, which reenergised them to keep going with their party, particularly when their own political community was disenchanted, these dialogue workshops sustained a political process greater than any one party” (Corry, 2010, 77).

As seen in the Israeli-Palestinian context, in organisations such as Combatants for Peace, former combatants and political prisoners can have a vital role in bringing about change at the social, community and political level. Similarly, Shirlow et al. (2010: 125) found in their study, former political prisoners who have remained engaged in these activities have attempted to influence both on the political and community level, undertaking “key roles to prevent a return to conflict and to inhibit the influence of any potential spoilers of peace” (cf. Fitzduff, 2002: 113). Former prisoners have facilitated intra-community dialogue and attempted to persuade other militants to engage in more peaceful strategies (ibid. 91), as well as searching for funding for local conflict transformation and reconciliation projects (Shirlow & McEvoy, 2008). Overall, Shirlow et al. (2010,120) found that former political prisoners have had significant impact in “translating and embedding political changes made at Stormont” and that they have engaged with the other party “at personal and structural levels” to “minimise political tensions and hostility between communities particularly along the interface areas.” The active demonstration of change of attitude by former fighters, particularly when they have held a position of respect within their communities for their bravery or action within the conflict, can have enormous impact in challenging those who are holding on to their conflict identity.

#### *Evidence of Ability to Resist Manipulation or Provocation to Violence*

Demonstrating the role of joint reconciliation programmes in creating an ability to resist manipulation or provocation to violence, and whether it is due to a qualitative change in the conflict identity of the parties or the impact of being part of a peace constituency can be difficult to ascertain. Shirlow et al’s study (2010) provides the most convincing evidence in the words of a former UDA prisoner:

“The term conflict transformation is about people who have been actively and physically involved in a conflict, that have come to the realisation that it’s over, it has to stop, it’s madness or whatever you want to say. You know killing is futile, murdering people is futile, or we’ve had enough. Whatever, there’s a realisation people come to and they say no we’ve got to move on, we can’t stick here, we can’t stay here” (2010: 123).

Such former prisoners not only demonstrate their own ability to resist manipulation or provocation to violence, but they assist in reducing the violence over all through former providing emergency

assistance through mobile-phone networks in time of heightened tension, committing to projects to help ease those tensions, and policing fault lines (Shirlow, et al., 2010:157). As a member of the Parades Forum highlighted, it is not about getting rid of the other side but finding “shared space” (Hall, 2007: 12).

***“I’m more open to hearing the Unionist perspective.”***

Q\*, is a 60 year old male who identified himself as Irish and secular. He participated in the Purposeful Enquiry workshops under the auspices of the Holywell Trust. His motivations for attending were to learn more about the conflict and wanted others to hear about his side of the conflict. He continues to engage in work to encourage positive change to the conflict situation. This work is primarily focused on adults in his own community with a reach of about 100 people.

The most valuable elements of the workshop for Q were the opportunities to meet people from other national or religious groups and to hear other people’s stories and experience and the opportunity to tell her own story. She felt that the defining moments of the workshops that had the greatest impact on himself were *“when people were being open and willing to look and question their story.”* He found himself to be most influenced or inspired by someone who was traditional, a loyalist and yet broad-minded.

Q found that the workshops provided a greater understanding of the extent that the other party feel *“misunderstood and threatened.”* He was also led to re-evaluate some of his perceptions of people from other national and religious groups finding them more intelligent, honest, broad-minded, friendly, good-hearted, tolerant, and open to change than he had previously believed. He ascribed this change to the open conversation that was exchanged. He remains in contact with other participants that are from different national or religious groups and feels that participating in the activities has had a long-term effect on his life. Q overall feels that joint dialogue and inquiry are the best types of projects and is more optimistic about the possibilities for long-term peace following participating in the programme.

\* Q answered the survey anonymously as survey respondent 740364.

### **Challenges and Negative Effects**

For many in Northern Ireland, the problem lies not in the challenges of the funding structures but by the challenges of sectarian politics. Developing mechanisms within society which make people mutually interdependent should make it more difficult got political actors to hold “untenable or unrealistic political positions” or “ideologies striking in their absence of realism” (Policy Paper, Effective North-South Cooperation, 2005: 6). Yet, despite the overwhelming support for more mixing between people, only 4 percent of the respondents to the 2013 NILTS survey felt that the government had achieved its target of “actively encouraging shared communities where people of all

backgrounds can live, work, learn and play together.” This is reflected in the frustrations felt by participants in joint reconciliation activities, such as the alumni of the L.I.V.E programme who feel that the progress made in their cognitive restructuring is negated by “anger and frustration at how the ‘victim’s cause’ is represented in political circles, which prevent implementations of recommendations made by the Victims Commissioners” (de Vries & de Paor, 2004: 344).

## Conclusion

The detailed provisions for reconciliation set out in the Belfast Agreement have been instrumental in facilitating the development and funding of cross-community programmes. If the surveys are to be believed, the vibrant civil society has had enormous successes in realigning many hardened conflict identities and have had some success in affecting political thought. The 2015 NILT survey reveals that 40 percent of respondents consider themselves to be neither Unionist nor Nationalist.<sup>72</sup> This survey also highlights how respondents are generally more optimistic about the future of inter-group relations with 52 percent believing that relations between Catholics and Protestants were better than five years previously.<sup>73</sup> The respondents were also more open towards mixed workplaces<sup>74</sup>, mixed neighbourhoods<sup>75</sup> and mixed schools<sup>76</sup> than in previous surveys.

The Northern Ireland context to some extent disappointed the international community. It was hailed as the shining star of a new model of peace-building. The theories on the development of civil society and social capital as a critical element of the peace-building process being given their long-awaited chance and funds. More significantly, the theories on cross-community reconciliation programmes were emphasised as key objectives. However, to have “systemic impact” these initiatives must be seized, nurtured and spread through wider political support” (Morrow, 2014: 54). As Monica McWilliams, who was part of the final negotiations of the Belfast Agreement has written:

“The piece that we did not pay attention to – I know we didn’t from being there – was the political dimension of building reconciliation” (Kelly & Hamber, 2005: 56).

She emphasises that the “political dimension” of reconciliation needs to be addressed further (ibid.). Huyse, reminds that long term reconciliation can be impeded by “inappropriate political and economic structures” and that “political, social and economic justice is a foundation of durable reconciliation” (Huyse, 2005: 10-11). The 2015 NILT survey revealed that 65% of the respondents do not believe that the parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly work together to solve the

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<sup>72</sup> Northern Ireland Life and Times, [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Political\\_Attitudes/UNINATID.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Political_Attitudes/UNINATID.html) [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>73</sup> Northern Ireland Life and Times, [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Community\\_Relations/RLRELAGO.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Community_Relations/RLRELAGO.html) [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>74</sup> 84 percent of respondents would prefer to work in a mixed workplace. Northern Ireland Life and Times, [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Community\\_Relations/MXRLGWRK.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Community_Relations/MXRLGWRK.html) [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>75</sup> 71 percent of respondents would prefer to live in a mixed neighbourhood. Northern Ireland Life and Times, [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Community\\_Relations/MXRLGNGH.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Community_Relations/MXRLGNGH.html) [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>76</sup> 55% of respondents would prefer to send their children to a mixed school. Northern Ireland Life and Times, [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Community\\_Relations/OWNMXSCH.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Community_Relations/OWNMXSCH.html) [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

problems<sup>77</sup> emphasising that the grass-roots reconciliation has not yet been adequately reflected on the political level. The joint reconciliation programmes in Northern Ireland have gone a long way in providing support for the Belfast Agreement and the conditions to facilitate the transformation of society. Civil society has shown the political elite their desire to move forward, this “vital part of the jigsaw” needs to be slotted into policy otherwise, like in every other case when reconciliation was “ignored or treated superficially” it will come back to haunt society (Huysse, 2005:11). However, following the Brexit referendum in 2016, there is a certain level of uncertainty to these programmes with the potential return of a hard border and possible withdrawal of EU funding of the peace programmes in Northern Ireland.<sup>78</sup> This could lead to the most testing times since the Belfast Agreement came into force and will likely demonstrate the extent to which societal divisions and hardened conflict identities have been truly transformed.

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<sup>77</sup> Northern Ireland Life and Times, [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Political\\_Atitudes/MLAWKTOG.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015/Political_Atitudes/MLAWKTOG.html) [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>78</sup> For further detail as to the potential ramifications of Brexit on Northern Ireland *see* [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/583116/IPOL\\_BRI\(2017\)583116\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/583116/IPOL_BRI(2017)583116_EN.pdf) [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

## Chapter 7: Transforming Conflict Identity in Bosnia Herzegovina

*“To try, at all cost, to force politicians to follow our path (I think about nongovernmental organisations), which is, I’m sure, far more correct than current official policies.”*  
(BiH Alumni Respondent 747156)

### Introduction

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1995 (the Dayton Accord) was a hard-fought agreement, signed by the belligerents who had chosen to engage in some of the worst violence witnessed in Europe since the Second World War (Kaufman, 2006: 165), rather than create a multi-ethnic democracy (Oberschall, 2007: 120). At an outward glance, if lack of conflict recurrence is the measure for success, the agreement would appear to be a success, as 20 years on, Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) has not slipped back into violence and the Dayton Accord had been 93 percent implemented within ten years (Peace Agreements Matrix). If the measure of success, however, is a positive and sustainable peace in which all parties are committed to the long-term success of the agreement, the answer would be a little less unequivocal.

When considering the role that reconciliation clauses or activities might have on increasing the sustainability of the agreement, an examination of the Dayton Accord and its superficial success might refute the claims being made in this piece of research. Whilst the Dayton Accord provide for a consociational approach that is similar to the political solution reached in Northern Ireland, it does not include any of the commitments to reconciliation included in the Oslo Accords (1992 and 1995) or the Belfast Agreement (1998). There is in fact, a noticeable absence of a cursory nod to reconciliation, social reconstruction, or even peacebuilding that could be construed as a necessary pre-cursor to reconciliation.<sup>79</sup> The agreement includes provisions to reinforce respect for fundamental human rights and non-discrimination (*see* Annexes 6, 7 and 8 of the Dayton Accord), as well agreement “to cooperate in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law” (Article IX, Dayton Accord).<sup>80</sup> In the annexes to the Dayton Accord there are requirements that the institutions comply with the demands of the Dayton Accord, however, the Accord “did not provide any political framework for the process of coexistence, let alone the difficult process of reconciliation” (Burns et al., 2003: 91). Even Annex 10 of the Dayton

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<sup>79</sup> The word “reconciliation” only appears twice in the Dayton Accord and all its annexes. Firstly, in Annex 1A, 2 (c) security and arms control measures are cited as means to “promote permanent reconciliation.” The second appearance of the word reconciliation is in the preamble to the constitution -- “dedicated to peace, justice, tolerance, and reconciliation...” (Annex 4, Dayton Accord).

<sup>80</sup> Although the agreement to comply with the mechanisms to prosecute war criminals would be part of the justice element of Lederach’s reconciliation framework, as Burns notes, this was not framed in a way that it is overtly a reference to promoting post-conflict reconciliation. Whilst compliance with ICTY is a requirement set out in the agreement it is important to note that the ICTY was established in 1993 pursuant to UNSC Resolution 827 and not as a result of the Dayton Accord. Further, the mandate of the ICTY is “for the sole purpose of prosecuting persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia between 1 January 1991 and a date to be determined by the Security Council upon the restoration of peace.” (Section 1, UNSC Resolution 827, 1993). Whilst the preamble refers to contribution of the ICTY to “the restoration and maintenance of peace,” there is no mention of reconciliation.

Accord which addresses “Civilian Implementation” of the peace agreement, makes no mention of reconciliation, peacebuilding or coexistence, instead focusing on the “rehabilitation of infrastructure and economic reconstruction; the establishment of political and constitutional institutions; promotion of respect for human rights; the return of refugees and displaced people; as well as free and fair elections.” The subsequent peacebuilding, reflected the “peace from Ikea” approach which did not sufficiently account for the psychological needs or experiences of the local society (Björkdahl, 2012:78). Therefore, in the context of my argument, the Dayton Accord should have broken down due to the lack of reconciliation provisions, yet against all the predictions of the “troubled and uncertain future” (Malcolm, 2002: 271) the agreement, in spite of its fragility, has endured to date. Does this case provide support for my hypothesis that peace agreements are less likely to break down when accompanied by NGO-led reconciliation activities?

The failure to address the social-psychological consequences of the conflict from the top-down has left the “widespread fear and distrust” (Haider, 2011: 177) that the Bosnian people have of each other since the war unchecked. Surveys show that there are “high levels of suspicion” between the parties (Haider, 2011: 178), which are reinforced by the legitimisation in the Dayton Accord of the ethnic divisions that had been created by the war (Evans-Kent & Bleiker 2003:105). This creates a sense of frustration among many as the institutionalisation of these ethnic divisions gives the sense that it is the “continuation of the war by other means” (NDC Sarajevo & Saferworld, 2010: 29). Children are educated separately “absorbing only their own history, religion and language” (Evans-Kent & Bleiker, 2003: 106; cf. Pickering, 2007: 38) and members of each identity continue to blame the other parties for “causing the war and hindering the peace process” (O’Loughlin, 2010: 30). Post-war homogenisation of neighbourhoods has destroyed the Balkan tradition of *komsiluk* (friendly neighbourly relations) and reduced opportunities for interethnic cooperation (Pickering, 2007: 154; Sekulic, 2006: 799). Successful social reconstruction in the post-war context will be challenged as long as policies are focused on ethnicity rather than on a supra-ordinate identity or positive interethnic relations (Oberschall, 2007: 232).

Unlike in Israel and Northern Ireland, due to its Communist past, there was “little or no independent” civil society in BiH prior to the war (NDC Sarajevo & Saferworld, 2010: 10). This legacy, accompanied by “a post war constitutional structure that does not encourage local initiatives for peacebuilding and is ambiguous about the possibility of reconciliation,” has led to very mixed results (Belloni, 2001: 164). The international community subscribed to the opinion that building a “tolerant and multi-ethnic social environment” would be able to balance out the failures of the Dayton Accord and, consequently, focused on building civil society (ibid.) but without the ability to hold political leaders accountable and to challenge them, it has little impact (Belloni, 2001:170-172). Led by the EU, the largest donor, seeking to prepare the countries for European integration, around \$18 million was committed between 2007 and 2013 to supporting civil society development (Balkans Civil Society

Development Network, 2015: 1).<sup>81</sup> However, the results of the “war, fear and suspicion” led to domestic civil society being limited in the role that it could play in a deliberative democracy (Björkdahl, 2012: 88). Further there has been resistance from the Bosnian people in embracing the concept of a civil society and voluntary organisations which they believed better served the international donors rather than the Bosnian people (Pickering, 2007: 124).

Although the violence in BiH has not returned, it is not hailed as a success story in international peacebuilding and does not bear the hallmarks of a self-sustainable peace (Björkdahl, 2012: 84). Peacebuilding efforts have not dealt sufficiently with the ethnic polarisation and sectarianism within the country, nationalism prevails and large numbers of people in BiH are not able to fully participate in politics (ibid.) reducing their possibilities of contributing stabilising peace at the political level. This situation is perceived to be largely driven by ethnic division which is driving fears of insecurity (ibid.). The sense of insecurity has been compounded by the country’s economic problems, in particular the country’s high employment rate, which leaves people “idle to carry on the hatreds of the past” (Burns et al. 2003: 98) rather than being able to productively contribute to building a vibrant future. Whilst there are micro-projects attempting to bring about coexistence and measures of reconciliation, projects are not able to flourish without political cooperation (Babbitt, 2003:112-13) and there is little opportunity for the effects of the initiatives to trickle up into the political domain to support the peace process (Chigas & Ganson, 2003: 75).

Whether, the extreme brutality and violence was triggered by latent and deep “ancient hatreds” (Sekulic et al., 2006: 799), the secessionist and expansionist fantasies of a few individuals played out by “young urban gangsters in expensive glasses (Malcolm, 2002: 252), or emotions that have been switched on (Petersen, 2002), the lasting result of mobilising these hatreds, fears and ethnicities has been creating hardened conflict identities in each community. These identities are reinforced by a peace agreement that, while currently stable, daily emphasises these divisions politically and socially resulting in a country that lives in fear of renewed conflict – another “powder keg” (O’Loughlin, 2010: 27; Aggestam & Björkdahl, 2012: 199). This chapter examines the role of reconciliation activity in BiH and whether the case provides any insights into my hypothesis that reconciliation activity contributes to increasing the sustainability of a peace agreement. Following a brief introduction to the history of the conflict and reconciliation activity in BiH, I will utilise the process tracing methodology set out in Chapter Three to analyse my own survey data as well as data from evaluation reports from organisations, other academic evaluations (Kappler, 2012; Cehajic et al., 2008; Chigas & Ganson, 2003; Biro & Milin, 2005) and funder reports. This exercise seeks to provide an understanding of the role of reconciliation activities in transforming conflict identities and the potential trickle-up effect of these individual transformations onto the societal level to provide a

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<sup>81</sup> See EU Funds for Supporting Civil Society Development in the Western Balkans 2007-2013. [http://www.balkanccd.net/novo/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/82-1-EU-funds-for-CS-Dev-in-WB-Final\\_A4\\_EN.pdf](http://www.balkanccd.net/novo/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/82-1-EU-funds-for-CS-Dev-in-WB-Final_A4_EN.pdf) [last accessed on 11 May 2013]

stable base for the peace agreement to flourish. The study also aims to provide some insights into obstacles to implementing reconciliation activities in BiH whether reconciliation activities are able to mitigate the divisiveness entrenched in the political structure of the country.

### **History of the Conflict**

As in the conflicts in Israel-Palestine and Northern Ireland, identifying the origins and exact triggers of the conflict is a source of dispute among academics and those who were party to the conflict. There are those who saw the conflict as an inevitable fulfilment of a “tragedy that had been unfolding for five hundred years” (Al Gore quoted in Sekulic et al., 2006: 800) since the medieval kings of Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia (Kaufman 2006: 165), whilst others dispute that “ethnic antagonisms were simply waiting like the magma beneath a volcano” in order to explode (Ignatieff quoted in Evans-Kent & Bleiker, 2003: 105; *see also* Malcolm, 2002: 252) and that rather it was “a question of history violently deployed in the present for contemporary political goals” (David Campbell quoted in Evans-Kent & Bleiker, 2003:105).

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Marshal Joseph Broz Tito had recognised the inherent tensions between the national groups in Yugoslavia and attempted to resolve the problem by establishing a federal system in which the main national groups had some cultural and political autonomy (Kaufman 2006: 165). Malcolm (2002: 202-203) highlights that this decentralisation grounded in a non-democratic system with a weak economy was the basis of wave of resentful nationalist feelings. Whilst surveys in the late 1980s and 1990s revealed that ethnic tensions were fairly low with 57 percent of those surveyed viewing interethnic neighbourhood relations as good and only 6 percent viewed interethnic relationships in the neighbourhood as being difficult (Oberschall, 2000 quoted in Pickering 2007: 20-21), Serb nationalism and sensitivity towards expressions of Muslim religious revival had been on the increase since the 1970s (Malcolm, 2002: 207). As the economic crisis worsened and a new generation of post-communist political figures came of age, political parties began to organise around ethnicity (Malcolm, 2002: 210-211; Pickering, 2007: 22). Mobilising a “crisis frame” that brought memories of the Balkan wars and two world wars, the then President of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, and President of Croatia, Franjo Tudjman, created a frame of fear and existential threat until “old personal ties and friendships crumbled” under the pressure of propaganda that made Serb and Croat people terrified of their Muslim neighbours whom they had believed were “decent people” and who had never harmed them (Oberschall, 2007: 101-103).

By the first multiparty elections in 1990, 76 percent of Bosnians gave their vote to ethnically based political parties (Pickering, 2007: 23). In so doing, the people provided the support to Milosevic and Tudjman to pursue a policy of partitioning BiH into two Serb and Croat states with a small Muslim buffer state in between them (Oberschall, 2007: 105; Pickering 2007: 25). This fragmentation was exacerbated by the secession of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 and their recognition as independent

states (ibid.). By January 1992, Bosnian Serb leaders seceded from Bosnia in the belief that they were entitled to 60 percent of Bosnia (ibid.). A European Commission (EC) backed referendum to support “the sovereign and independent state of equal citizens, the peoples of Bosnia and Hercegovina – the Muslims, Serbs and Croats...” led to the “violent disintegration” of the situation and the closure of Sarajevo (Pickering, 2007: 26). Within 60 days of the EC recognising Bosnia as an independent state, the Serb forces had captured large areas of Eastern Bosnia, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of Muslims and the displacement of more than a million people (Pickering, 2007: 27). It is estimated that by the end of the war, between 150,000 to 250,000 people had been killed and nearly 2.2 million people displaced (Pickering, 2007: 38).

The Dayton Accord that was signed in Dayton on 14 December 1995 managed to bring an end to the violence that had devastated the country. However, it has not been successful in bringing a sustainable peace to the country (Aggestam & Björkdahl, 2012: 201). A positive peace, in which the socio-psychological dimensions of the conflict have been addressed, and all the people are able to be fully invested in the new society without fear that conflict will re-emerge. It is an agreement of irreconcilable aims, seeking to provide for ethnic separation and ethnic integration simultaneously. The country is split into two entities: a Muslim-Croat Federation which encompasses 51 percent of the country and the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska which covers 49 percent of the country, leaving “the fate of Bosnia oscillat[ing] between reintegration and partition” (Belloni, 2001:164). The accompanying “rigid” power sharing structure of a tri-ethnic collective presidency, ethnic-based federalism, a vital interest veto and ethnic quotas in public institutions, resulted in driving ethnically-rooted political conflict (Pickering, 2007: 32-33). The enforced movement of Serbs, from mixed areas such as Sarajevo, by the Serb leadership, alongside a rush to elections with a system that was “fundamentally inappropriate for a multi-ethnic state such as Bosnia” and leaders that did not really support a multi ethnic government prevented multi-ethnicity from ever having a chance (Oberschall, 2007: 122). A 60,000 strong NATO mission that incorporated assistance from 34 countries was required to ensure that the parties upheld the agreement at the 1996 elections (Evans-Kent & Bleiker, 2003: 106). The end result is an agreement that brought a complete end to the conflict on paper (Oberschall, 2007: 123), but was unable to be implemented fully because the provisions of the Dayton Accord are inconsistent with each other (Belloni, 2001: 164) and the envisioned joint institutions “barely functioned” (Holbrooke, 1998 quoted in Oberschall, 2007:123). The implementation of the Dayton Accord has for the most part stalled and following wide-scale protests in 2014 in favour of reform the International Crisis Group has declared that Bosnia is “slowly spiralling into disintegration” (International Crisis Group, 2014: i)

The international community’s post-conflict peacebuilding strategy in BiH, spearheaded by the EU, was very much dependent on interacting with the government and state institutions (Aggestam & Björkdahl, 2012:15), which was inevitably challenging in an environment when the divisive nature of

these institutions inhibits successful peacebuilding. This strategy was driven by the aim of building the structure by which countries will be in a position to accede to the EU. Consequently, the focus was placed on developing institutions, such as those set out in the Dayton Accords, such as human rights, democracy, rule of law, and economic development (Kappler, 2012: 171).<sup>82</sup> In this conception, civil society is an institutional tool which can be utilised to assist implementation (ibid.: 172). This linear and forward looking approach contrasts to the more “processual and dynamic” view of peace held by local society (Kappler, 2012: 175). At the local level peace and peacebuilding is viewed in the context of rebuilding social relationships and being able to “sit with people who killed half my family” (ibid.:177). The international community’s perception of improving the quality of everyday life in BiH has been focused on the long-term visions of European membership that have driven the emphasis on institutional stability, whereas the local vision seeks to rebuild social relationships (ibid.: 180). The lack of focus on the need at the grassroots level to has left the responsibility to rebuild the social fabric of society on other actors, namely local civil society. In 1998, the Peace Implementation Council concluded that the development of civil society was “essential to democratic society and vital “to promote the healing wounds of war, to protect the peace” (Belloni, 2001:164). However, building a civil society without addressing the institutional divisions “deeply embedded in ethno-politics” leaves little opportunity for building the social relationships required for successful reconciliation.

### **Civil Society Organisations and Reconciliation Activity**

I have noted above that the text of the Dayton Accords that was agreed at Dayton in 1995 did not include any provisions, beyond commitments to cooperate with the ICTY, to support or nurture reconciliation at the political level nor at the social level. Compounded by the bitter divisions at the political level, in this context, the burden of trying to introduce reconciliation or coexistence projects has fallen largely to civil society organisations to step in and fill the void. Therefore, in trying to understand the process by which joint reconciliation activities can provide opportunities for parties in conflict to revise their conflict identities so that they are more likely to support peaceful approaches to resolution of the conflict, we need to understand the nature of civil society organisations in BiH and their role in organising reconciliation activities. In contrast to the Israel and Northern Ireland contexts, the legacy of Socialist Yugoslavia had not included a highly developed civil society to take up this burden. Although there was a history of voluntary civic organisations (*udruženje građana*) which focused on sports and culture, these “lacked deep roots” (Pickering, 2007: 115). Such organisations could have had the possibility of creating social capital through increasing communication and creating shared interests among people of different backgrounds, (cf. Varshney, 2002). However, those engaging in civil society projects gravitated towards organisations with members of their own social group resulting in mono-ethnic organisations which were sometimes

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<sup>82</sup> The key funding priorities for the EU CARDS programme were strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law, reform of public administration, promotion of human rights and gender equality, sustainable development and poverty reduction, development of civil society and regional cooperation (Fagan, 2013: 53).

associated with nationalist parties exacerbating the divisions in society, and stronger than multi-ethnic organisations (Pickering, 2007: 115).

In the immediate aftermath of the war and the signing of the Dayton Accord, there was an enormous rise in the number of civil society organisations and NGOs operating in BiH, with the 1998 OSCE report finding over 400 organisations funded by international organisations, embassies and foundations. Many of these, which grew out of providing services to victims of violence, have been funded on the basis of promoting liberal democratic ideals (Pickering, 2007: 123) and have focused on capacity building through the transfer of technical skills (Belloni, 2001: 169). The international community's support of these organisations was seen to be the panacea for the divisions at the elite level, premised on civil society being an "arena where tolerance for others is achieved through exchange, dialogue and compromise, facilitating and sustaining the process of reintegration of the country into a unified polity" (Belloni, 2001: 164). Their strength also lies in the fact that they are linked to and dependent upon the international community and can operate outside of the divided institutional structure (ibid.: 169).

However, the civil society organisations that developed in BiH differed from those in Israel and Northern Ireland in that they were often "service delivery" entities and implementing partners rather than active home-grown advocacy or ideologically driven organisations (Ostojich & Fagan, 2014: 18, 25). This growth of organisations in order to provide a vehicle for foreign funding has led to a situation in which civil society is weaker than it perceives itself to be, lacking in capacity, with minimal impact and little accountability (Ostojich & Fagan, 2014: 29). Although some of the USD 14 billion of international aid that was given for reconstruction efforts between 1996 and 2007 was channelled to developing civil society, donor support for this area has dwindled (Ostojich & Fagan, 2014: 9). For instance, of the EUR 2.2 million assistance given by the British Embassy in 2013 to BiH, only EUR 190,000 was earmarked for civil society (Ostojich & Fagan, 2014: 42). This would suggest that even fewer funds were set aside for reconciliation activities and supporting activities that would overcome the post-conflict identities and societal divisions. USAID supported the creation of a civil society organisation and democracy network, Demnet, which assisted in increasing the strength of 100 organisations (ibid.). Both USAID and UNDP consulted with NGOs in the formulation of strategies, and UNDP kept a database over approximately 300 organisations with which it had cooperated (ibid.: 44). However, due to the lack of high level coordination, the development of civil society is either being channelled through municipalities or support is being given to a few more highly developed organisations that are running projects of a certain size (ibid.: 47-48).

The development of civil society organisations, and therefore any organisations that might be engaging in reconciliation activities, has encountered a number of challenges operating in BiH. Several studies have in fact revealed a public sense of cynicism towards local NGOs (Pickering, 2007: 125). This cynicism has resulted in a lack of participation and commitment from the people of BiH

to these organisations and, consequently, affected the possible impact of their work. One of the primary reasons for this lack of participation is that there is a feeling in BiH that these organisations, particularly advocacy groups, do not meet their needs and do not foster the types of relationships between ordinary people needed to develop the social capital that can lead to reconciliation (Pickering, 2007: 123). There is a sense that activists interact horizontally with other activists rather than vertically with ordinary people and are, for the most part, more interested in the needs of international donors than those of the Bosnian people (ibid.: 124). Similarly, the programmes are often seen as “bizarre or alien” as they do not take into account Bosnian history or society (ibid.). The donor community, are to some extent in agreement with this assessment, having concluded that in some ways many organisations are “empty shells” which are not genuinely dedicated to addressing the needs of the community but are purely “vehicles for implementing donor programmes” (Ostojich & Fagan, 2014: 24-25).

Rather than being focused on causes such as reconciliation, many of the civil society organisations are little more than “consulting companies” (ibid.: 25) and were being used for service delivery rather than advocacy (ibid.: 18). Civil society organisations have disappointed people in Bosnia due to their failing to challenge the political level and that civil society is “apathetic and unresponsive to political crisis” providing “no public reaction to political events” (ibid.: 27). Pickering (2007: 124) similarly found that people in BiH felt that advocacy groups were “impotent” in the face of opposition from authorities. The 2014 protests to some extent reflected the frustration at the lack of impact of peaceful means of demonstrating discontent (Pasic, 2014). Organisations and projects also suffered due to the agendas and timelines of donors, resulting in funding starting a significant period of time after the promises have been made (Chigas & Ganson, 2003: 72). Similarly, as donor organisations have stringent time limits for implementations, many projects, such as the UNHCR coexistence projects, ended when funding ended and were unsustainable on their own (ibid.).

Whereas in Northern Ireland, the growth of the civil society sector opened a new and sustainable arena of employment opportunity, the growth of the NGO sector that was perceived to be disconnected from the needs of the community in BiH seemed to breed more division and resentment. NGOs were seen as being “peace profiteers” that were pawns of the international donors and financially motivated rather than seeking to provide genuine services (Kaldor et al., 2006: 111 quoted in Kostovicova & Bojicic-Dzelilovic, 2013: 9-10). NGO workers were seen as “opportunists driven by high salaries and perks unavailable from the local economy” and social relations were made more difficult by the creation of a new class of “haves” (Pickering, 2007: 124-125). While employment at these IGOs and NGOs provided opportunity to develop contact with members of other ethnic groups, many Bosnians felt that their most vital role was to provide much-needed employment (ibid.: 128). This, however, has become problematic as donors have decreased their aid and presence in BiH and do not provide alternative opportunities for their employees (ibid.).

The resistance to involvement in civil society, and by extension in reconciliation activities organised at this level, is also driven by Bosnian discomfort with the term “civil society” which is frequently equated by “civilised society” (Belloni, 2001: 169). This “normatively loaded concept” (Kostovicova & Bojicic-Dzelilovic, 2013: 8) is considered offensive by many Bosnians who view themselves as intelligent and educated and see this as an “international attempt” to educate them (ibid.). This problem is compounded in organisations’ attempts to build reconciliation activities. In BiH, the term ‘reconciliation’ is a term that is “controversial” and “resented” by much of the population (Haider, 2011: 185). Many feel that the aim to try to reconcile large groups of people in BiH is not useful and that not all people need to engage in reconciliation activity such as Esma, a woman who survived the siege of Sarajevo who stated that:

“it’s them over there who should reconcile, those politicians, those, excuse my language, pieces of shit! Who am I to reconcile with, I never argued with anyone to begin with!” (Franović, 2008: 24).

Further, there was a sense that donor policies that were forcing a focus on ethnic reconciliation within organisations that were striving to remove the salience of ethnicity could be harming the rebuilding of relationships (Pickering, 2007: 125).

The many tensions within the development of civil society organisations and their acceptance within the communities in BiH presented a challenging environment in which to encourage activities aimed at improving coexistence and reconciliation. In order to overcome these barriers, projects aimed at reconciliation were reframed to encourage basic, functional cooperation that would also provide safe spaces for dialogue and discussions of collective experiences (Haider, 2011: 186). Pickering found in her study (2007:125) that civic organisations with the greatest success in cutting across ethnic lines were those that responded to local needs and interests which were not necessarily associated with ethnicity. This could involve networks of smaller groups of one ethnicity to overcome the problem of the intensified homogeneity of villages that emerged from ethnic cleansing measures and forcible relocations (ibid.: 126; cf. Varshney, 2002). Some donors attempted to link economic reactivation and interethnic reconciliation, such as USAID’s microenterprise projects which they found “generate[d] in a limited fashion, interethnic cooperation, thus promoting tolerance and understanding” (Kumar, 1999: 17). However, the overall findings showed that such projects had only “a modest effect” on social reconciliation due to the lack of sufficient opportunity for generating interethnic interaction (ibid.).

Overall, the development of civil society organisations and, consequently, organisations which promote reconciliation in BiH has been a path fraught with difficulty. The lack of effective institutions and political infighting continues to prevent projects such as UNICEF’s social inclusion project being established through delays to approvals at the parliamentary level (Ostojich & Fagan, 2014: 17). Similarly, opposition from Republika Srpska on a juvenile justice programme led to the

Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) allocation in 2013 being cut in half and the IPA II (2014-2020) programme being conditional on the establishment of a national coordination body for implementation (ibid.: 17-18). NGOs and civil society organisations in BiH are being forced into a position to try to compensate for the failure of state actors, but they face a number of barriers to success (Francović, 2008: 39-40). Peace groups that strongly oppose nationalist rhetoric are unable to empathise with those “ordinary people” who have been swayed to hold such attitudes and therefore can act against the people whose support they seek (Francović, 2008: 40). International NGOs need to be more realistic as to their own role and limitations to order to contribute properly to building civil society (ibid.: 41). Belloni (2001:173) highlights that the dependency of local NGOs on external donors has a strong impact on their “functioning, agendas, and effectiveness” and that use of NGOs as service providers is at the expense of “genuine political and social participation.”

To some extent the international community’s focus on building a civil society that is a “technical enterprise that lacks political vision” and acts as an alternative to state-building has further entrenched ethno-political divisions and limited the development of democratisation and reconciliation (Belloni, 2001: 175). Ultimately, civil society will continue to have limited effect unless it can engage in the political struggle and hold political leaders accountable (Belloni, 2001: 170-172). In the following sections I examine the extent to which reconciliation activities have a role in developing a civil society that can impact political process, and the path by which individual transformation can lead to societal-level transformation with the potential to increase the sustainability of the peace agreement.

### **Evaluation of Reconciliation Activity**

I have previously discussed a number of the challenges facing sound evaluation of reconciliation activity in relation to the Israel-Palestine and Northern Ireland cases. Similar, problems exist in the BiH case, Belloni (2001: 173) highlights the difficulty of evaluating NGO activity in BiH beyond the provision of services. It is an even greater challenge to determine the success of reconciliation activities or the success of coexistence, which are dependent on measuring changing attitudes that are very “difficult to codify” (Burns et al., 2003: 96).

There have been a number of studies evaluating activities associated with reconciliation. Eileen Babbitt (2003: 113) utilises process tracing and project impact analysis to evaluate the “improved relationships” between previously warring parties in the 40 projects that were part of UNHCR’s “Imagine Coexistence” programme. She found that the time frame for the period of implementation was too short to notice any lasting change (ibid.: 118) and that greater study was needed of the “process” by which “things are done” and not just focus on the outcome. Chigas and Ganson (2003: 68) also conducted analysis of the outcomes of the Imagine Coexistence initiative, in which they found that the project’s success was due to agreement among participants not to tackle the “difficult issues” such as their experiences during the war, fears or hopes for the future. Individual organisations such as the Nansen Dialogue Centre, the Centre for Non-Violent Action, and OKC

Abrašević in Mostar provide some evaluation of their activities, but they are either donor oriented reports or more anecdotal than systematic.

Ostojich and Fagan's study (2014) involved 84 semi-structured in-person interviews and aimed to gain greater understanding of the rationale underpinning donor commitment and their interaction with civil society. However, this was not specifically focused on reconciliation. Similarly, Kumar's (1999) evaluation of USAID's experiences with social reconciliation is largely anecdotal in its analysis of the projects' contribution to reconciliation and the focus was primarily to provide lessons to donors rather than rigorous analysis on the impact of reconciliation activities.

There are a number of studies that have attempted to measure levels of reconciliation in BiH included Wilkes et al.'s study (2012) of reconciliation and trust-building in BiH in which the popular attitudes in four areas of Banja Luka, Bugojino, Mostar and Sarajevo were measured. Similarly, Biro and Milin (2005) conducted a study of 400 people from Vukovar and 400 people from Prijedor to measure readiness for reconciliation. Both studies, however are evaluating an end result and not the process by which attitudes are transformed and the role of reconciliation activities in bringing about this change of attitude. Bakke et al. (2009) conducted a study of 4000 people in Bosnia and North Caucasus with the aim of trying to conclude whether ethnicity influences social distance (2007: 11). Whilst this study yields important insights in regards to the implication that attitudes cannot be attributed to ethnicity alone, it is a snapshot in time (*ibid.*) and does not provide any insights as to whether or how these attitudes may have developed or changed. Dyrstad et al's study (2015: 20) on the effect of ethnic composition and exposure to violence on ethno-nationalism provides support for one of the key arguments of this study that "popular opinion and polarisation at the grassroots level" needs to be taken into account when considering the duration of peace and conflict recurrence. The study establishes that in BiH both minorities and majorities demonstrate more ethno-nationalism the larger the group (2015: 19) which whilst lending some insights into the effect of selective exposure, overall the study does not provide an understanding of how attitudes can be changed.

As in both the Israel and Northern Ireland cases, scholars have raised the problem of the need for longitudinal models to be able to draw stronger inferences regarding the causality of reconciliation activity (Cehajic et al., 2008: 363). The process tracing exercise that follows attempts to provide greater insights into the way that participation in reconciliation activities has a role in transforming attitudes that could be mobilised to support violent conflict into those that support peaceful approaches to conflict resolution. Although, individuals and organisations have had limited impact in BiH in being able to effect change on the political level, the process tracing exercise aims to demonstrate the potential that encouraging attitude change and reconciliation could have in the formation of peace constituencies. Constituencies that, given the right circumstances, could eventually challenge the divisive elite-driven politics.

## Data

The data for the analysis is drawn from multiple sources. The primary material is drawn from the responses to my surveys disseminated in BiH (hereinafter Alumni Survey BiH) in 2012 through the network of NGOs associated with Catholic Relief Services. This network includes the Mozaik Foundation focused on socio-economic projects with youth,<sup>83</sup> and the Caritas network<sup>84</sup> which focuses on peacebuilding among other projects providing a wide range of programmes from which respondents could be found. The 81 respondents to the survey come from a range of backgrounds including pensioners, students and professionals, aged between 18 and 67. The respondents included individuals who identified as Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), Bosnian Croat, and Bosnian Serb, with the majority of respondents (48 percent) being Bosniak. The most underrepresented groups was the Bosnian Croat group which comprised of only 22 percent of the respondents, and the Bosnian Serb group represented 27 percent of the respondents. Most of the respondents had attended a number of reconciliation-oriented activities, with 21 percent of the respondents having attended an activity more than 10 times. Whilst many of the respondents to the survey are currently connected to some form of advocacy or are open to joint reconciliation activities, which biases the sample, the survey addresses their overall process of transformation and therefore can still provide useful insights into the role of reconciliation activities in creating a “trickle-up” effect and helping to sustain the peace agreement.

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<sup>83</sup> See Mozaik Foundation, <http://mozaik.ba/en/home-2/#home-2> [Last accessed 11 May 2017].

<sup>84</sup> See Caritas, <http://www.caritas.ba/index.php> [Last accessed 11 May 2017].

**Table 7.1** Descriptive statistics of the Bosnia Herzegovina alumni survey

	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Bosniak	38	47%
Bosnian Croat	18	22%
Bosnian Serb	22	27%
Other	3	4%
Male	50	62%
Female	31	38%
Continued contact with fellow participants following reconciliation activity	76	94%
Ongoing involvement in work to bring about positive change to the conflict situation	54	67%
Ongoing work aimed at the political level	14	17 %
Total number of respondents	81	100%

This data is also supported by first-hand accounts and evaluations collected by organisations who have conducted and managed reconciliation activities, including those conducted under UNHCR’s “Imagine Coexistence” programme (Chayes & Minow, 2003). The Nansen Dialogue Centre and Saferworld’s report “The Missing Peace: The need for a long-term strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (2010) which is based on a series of focus group discussions and informant interviews in 16 local communities across BiH in order to gain a more community-level perspective, provide insights into the views of 18 to 30 year olds and particularly the nature of their conflict identity. The Centre for Non-Violent Action’s report, “Four Views. How I Found Myself in War. How to Reach Sustainable Peace” (2002) provides useful insights into the transformation of being a participant in the conflict to finding a path to a sustainable peace. The Wilkes et al. study (2012) on “Reconciliation and Trust Building in Bosnia-Herzegovina” provides a survey of 616 people’s attitudes in Banja Luka, Bugojno, Mostar and Sarajevo, which provides some data as to which factors might affect the effectiveness of reconciliation activity. Biro and Milin’s study (2005) provides valuable data on the nature on levels of stereotypes, xenophobia and ethnocentrism that assists in establishing the nature of the conflict identity in BiH. In the following sections I utilise this data to analyse the process by which reconciliation activities can transform these fundamental elements of conflict identities and

the extent to which this can lead to societal-level transformation that can potentially impact on the political level.

### **Tracing the Impact of Reconciliation Activities**

This research is grounded upon the proposition that in the course of a conflict, the participants to the conflict develop a “shared repertoire” with its underlying “culture of conflict” (Bar Tal, 2013: 257). This new collective identity – a “conflict identity” becomes “frozen, resistant to change, and inhibits the de-escalation of the conflict and its peaceful resolution” (Bar Tal, 2013: 17). This conflict identity results in a structural and psychological commitment to the conflict which becomes independent of the conflict itself (Kelman 2007: 90-99; Bar Tal, 2013: 24).

Reconciliation is perceived by international actors as a solution to the extreme polarisation at the political level, however in the BiH case it has been viewed as “locally inappropriate” (Wilkes at al., 2012: 12). In order to establish whether reconciliation work is in fact “locally inappropriate” and unable to effect change at individual, societal and political levels, in the following sections I will examine the effect that participation in joint reconciliation activities on individual level transformation and whether that transformation trickles up to effect change on societal and political levels. To this end, I first establish the elements of conflict identity that are perpetuating the divisions in society in BiH. This followed by tracing the process of participation in joint reconciliation activities and the effect of exposure, developing empathy and mutual acknowledgment of humanity and suffering on stereotypes and commitment to the conflict. Finally, we examine any evidence that this participation and transformation creates peace constituencies that are able to cross the divisions that are being reinforced at the political level and help sustain the peace agreement.

### **Conflict Identity**

The extent to which there was a widespread conflict identity in Bosnia prior to the outbreak of the violence is contested. In Kaldor’s (1999; cf. Spencer, 2015) conception, the identities became constructed through the war, with identity and ideology being developed through fighting and being forced to self-identify. Bringa (1995: 3-4) highlights that the tendency to self-identify according to ethnic group was stronger amongst older generations than younger ones, and varied between urban and rural settings. There were generally high rates of intermarriage with approximately 30 percent of marriages being “mixed marriages” by the 1980s and being Muslim often little more than a set of cultural rather than religious practices (Malcolm, 2002: 202). Bringa (1995: 3-4) highlights that the rates of intermarriage between communities were higher among the urban educated classes and that socioeconomic position was more important than nationality. Oberschall (2010: 989-990) notes, however, that in Yugoslavia there were two frames a “normal” frame which Tito had encouraged and a “crisis frame” which Tito had tried to eradicate. The “crisis frame” is similar to a conflict identity in that it mobilises an identity that relates to past memories of the Balkan wars and the First and Second World Wars (ibid.). Mobilising the “crisis identity,” according to Oberschall (2010: 989-990)

relies on “manipulating existential fear” which in turn results in hate leading to the dehumanisation and demonisation of the other parties. It was this dynamic that allowed neighbours to rationalise turning on neighbours. Bringa (1995: 4) found this reflected when she was told by one of her interviewees “[we] always lived together well; and got along well; what is happening now is created by something stronger than us.”

Although, as discussed above, the Dayton Accord brought an end to the killing in the conflict, it did not address the nuances of this “crisis frame” or conflict identity. In fact, the complex consociational structure has solidified the “conflict identity” into the post-conflict context contributing to the stagnation of the system at the elite level and the obstacles that are preventing a sustainable peace taking hold.

Identifying conflict identities in the Bosnian context is a little more complex than in the other cases. The Alumni Survey BiH reflected Bringa’s (1995) finding that levels of ethnocentrism vary according to age, as one 47 year old Bosniak survey participant highlighted:

“...for those of us who were born before the war, and lived at least a few years as a conscious human being before the war, we can say previously we lived nicer, better, more social lives together....Those of us who are a little bit older, still have better and more meaningful mutual communication and collaboration that it is displayed in public” (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 746989).

Dyrstad et al. (2015), Wilkes et al. (2012: 21) and Biro & Milin (2005) have found that in BiH the attitudes towards the other party are dependent upon whether a person is part of the minority or the majority. When in the minority, reconciliation work is taken more seriously (Wilkes et al., 2012: 23), whereas the majority group demonstrates “high authoritarianism, ethnocentrism and xenophobia and low readiness for reconciliation” (Biro & Milin, 2005: no pag.). These perceptions are increasingly resistant to change over time and reinforced through transgenerational transmission such as textbooks which only provide one narrative in which that group was the primary victim and the other groups were the perpetrators (Pickering, 2007:38). The manifestation of this conflict identity which is, in the case of BiH, premised on ethnicity is clear from the 1999 USIA survey results on the question of willingness to marry someone from another ethnicity, in which only 21.6 percent of Bosniaks, 7.1 percent of Bosnian Serbs and 7.6 percent of Bosnian Croats expressed that they would be willing to marry someone of a different ethnicity. This dynamic emerges in part from the constituent elements of a conflict identity, including the dehumanisation of the other parties, fear and mistrust of the other parties and continued commitment to the maintenance of the conflict.

#### *Dehumanisation and De-individuation*

The mobilisation of the “crisis frame” in order for war to occur in BiH was dependent on the successful demonisation and dehumanisation of other parties to the conflict (Oberschall, 2000: 989). The war facilitated neighbours changing their perceptions and redefining their view of the others as “dangerous and untrustworthy” (Sekulic et al., 2006: 821). Dehumanised images of the other

pervaded all levels of society. Biljan Plavsic, who was a Professor of Biology at Sarajevo University before becoming a Bosnian Serb leader, wrote that “rape is the strategy of Muslims and Croats against Serbs. Islam considers this something normal” (quoted in Oberschall, 2000: 991). This demonstrates that the intellectual elite were equally bound by and manipulated dehumanised and de-individualised images. Similarly, the Prijedor<sup>85</sup> police chief claimed that "Muslims would kill all Serbs over three and put all women aged fifteen to twenty-five into harems to breed janissaries" (quoted in Gutman, 1993: 113).

There is evidence of extreme dehumanised images with some Serbs who admit that they had had good relationships with Muslims and believed that they were “decent people” still being influenced by the rhetoric that Muslims would put Serb women into harems (quoted in interviews by Maas, 1995:113). Similarly, current textbooks used by Bosniaks provide vivid images of the Bosniaks’ desperation and the violence that had been used against them that seem to have the aim of maintaining the horror and sense of victimhood as well as perpetuating the image of the Serb enemy (Pickering, 2007: 39). This is ingrained and manifested from an early age. At an annual “Kids Festival” in Sarajevo, which brought together children who do not have a chance to meet each other, the children in the audience booed when children from Republika Srpska were introduced (Franović, 2008:7). Whilst, ethnic distance in BiH also correlates highly with low education levels, authoritarianism, and age (Biro & Milin, 2005: no pag; *see also* Bringa, 1995.), the continued demonisation of the other party acts as a key driver of the conflict identity.

#### *Selective Exposure*

BiH is more highly segregated following the Dayton Accord than before the war, with less opportunities for cross-ethnic ties that can challenge the dehumanised and demonised stereotypes being promulgated at the political level. Prior to the war, neighbourhoods were allocated by employer rather than by choice and therefore many, particularly in urban centres, lived in neighbourhoods that comprised of many ethnicities (Pickering, 2007:14). The Balkan tradition of neighbourhood (*komisluke*) encouraged cooperation and exposure between ethnicities. The homogenisation of neighbourhoods following the war has removed opportunities for exposure between ethnicities and consequently opportunities to challenge the dehumanised stereotypes of the other parties. Biro & Milin (2005) concluded that young people demonstrate greater ethnic distance as they have little opportunity to meet their peers who may be members of the "enemy people" and they have a “purely abstract” perception of other ethnicities. Similarly, O’Loughlin’s (2010: 38) study of ethnic distance found that 54 percent of the individuals surveyed have most of their friends from their own nationality, with only 18 percent of Bosnian Croats and 29 percent of Bosnian Serbs interacting with other ethnicities on a daily basis.

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<sup>85</sup> Prijedor was the site of the second largest massacre during the Bosnian war. Approximately 5,200 Muslims and Croats were killed, and 14,000 people from the region were moved.

This selective exposure is being perpetuated through separate education and the dramatic “two schools under one roof” facility by which minorities which encompass 10 percent of the population in a municipality have a right to education in their own language (Pickering, 2007: 39). This leads to the minority group being segregated, having a separate entrance, separate teachers, and their own text books (ibid.). The lack of opportunity for interaction at this level further reinforces stereotypes and removes opportunities to challenge them.

#### *Fear and Mistrust*

Conflict identity is also characterised by strong emotions that drive extreme reactions within the conflict. Shared collective emotions such as fear, hatred, humiliation, indignation, rage and righteousness as well as pride and hope shape the direction and intensity of intractable conflict (*See* Coleman, 2006: 539; Bar Tal 2013: 219-244). As noted above, the leadership manipulated fears in order to bring a sense of crisis sufficient to propel people to fight each other (Oberschall, 2010: 989-990), a process that is now extended into the post-conflict democratic arena. Participants in “The Missing Peace” (2010) focus groups recounted how fear is being utilised as part of the electoral process. A 20 year old participant from Mostar shared the opinion that “politicians use nationalism to create fear among people and that is how they are getting votes” (The Missing Peace, 2010: 15), similarly another participant aged 60 from Brčko shared how politicians “create a fear of each other....[they] retain their positions using hate speech” (ibid.). Levels of fear are also associated with the lack of prosecution of individuals of accused of committing war crimes, a fear that is particularly high in the returnee community (The Missing Peace, 2010: 16). There is also continued fear that issues underpinning the conflict have not been resolved and may reignite, as a key respondent from Brčko respondents expressed, they

“...don’t really feel safe. It is a fake safety. The war never really ended. It was stopped. It’s like a football match...always feel like [they’re] waiting for the other half” (ibid.).

A 23 year old Bosniak participant (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 743048) expressed that one of the most surprising things that he had learnt about the other participants was that “a lot of people have a dose of fear which they have been carrying since the war.” A 28 year old Bosnian Serb participant also expressed surprise at the levels of fear and mistrust in that “some participants still had ‘steel armour’ in relation to other nations.” Similarly, a Bosnian Croat former war detainee (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 746903) highlighted how, even during the reconciliation activities, he observes fear when people talk in mono ethnic groups and rarely do people oppose it. The respondents to the Alumni Survey BiH also confirmed the view that the leadership is perpetuating these fears as one 63 year old Bosnian Serb respondent expressed:

“one needs to remove all the politicians that are in power today because their work is based on hate, division and nationalism...” (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 742519).

The levels of fear, which appear to be being maintained through the constitutional design of the country, contribute to the commitment to the maintenance of the conflict leaving many feeling that the peace in BiH is extremely fragile.

#### *Commitment to the Maintenance of the Conflict*

Continued commitment to the maintenance of the conflict is one of the core elements of the ethos of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2013) and at the heart of conflict identities. As noted above, there is a strong sense in BiH that the public institutions “continue the war by other means” through the exclusion of minorities when local municipalities are dominated by a majority group, leading to “frustration and resentment” (The Missing Peace, 2010: 29). Further, the rise of youth nationalism, or “second generation nationalism” reflected in youth demonstrating ethno-nationalist behaviour, adds another generation committed to the maintenance of the divisions which could be manipulated to fuel conflict (The Missing Peace, 2010:24). Whilst one of the key drivers for the discontent of youth in BiH is the insecure economic situation, a respondent in Brčko shared how family influence is one of the largest drivers of radicalisation and ethno-nationalism in young people, in that “their dad will get drunk and tell them stories about the war” (The Missing Peace, 2010: 24). Similarly, a participant from Brčko also expressed how young people are “looking for things that make us closer; [their] parents are creating ethnically based divisions between [them]” (ibid.). This is compounded by teachers and peers within the education system discouraging friendships between children from other ethnic backgrounds (The Missing Peace, 2010: 25).

The Missing Peace report (2010: 29) also highlighted that lack of awareness of others’ suffering and a sense of monopoly over suffering was also contributing to the maintenance conflictual divisions. Similarly, a continued belief that their own group did not commit aggression and, without any shared narrative of the war, “feelings of fear and injustice constitute a powerful fuel which can be used for mobilisation around ethno-nationalist causes” (ibid.). Respondents to the Alumni Survey BiH also highlighted some of these factors that contribute to the maintenance of conflictual divisions. In response to being asked to identify the most surprising thing learned about one’s own national group, a number of responses evidenced that they had been unaware of their own nationalities’ involvement in committing aggression, such as a 43 year old Bosniak participant (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 741906) shared that she did not know that the Bosnian army had raped, and another Bosniak participant (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 744215) also expressed surprise that “the army of BH also committed crimes.” Similarly, one of the Bosniak participants (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 743043) expressed that it had been surprising to learn “that individuals from [her] national group committed atrocities and acted immorally.” The lack of opportunity to revise or challenge a sense of victimisation, accompanied by loud ethno-nationalist mobilisation at the elite level, keeps the conflict at the forefront of everyone’s minds. The question remains in the BiH context as to whether joint reconciliation programmes can have any effect in helping to re-shape these elements of the conflict

identity so that a critical mass of former participants can generate any change on the elite political level.

### **Joint Reconciliation Activities**

There are many factors that are driving the divisions in society in BiH, some of which could be challenged through encouraging reconciliation activities. In the following section I present evidence that explores the extent to which joint reconciliation activities address the elements of the conflict identity which is prevalent in BiH. Through facilitating exposure, facilitating empathy, and acknowledging humanity and mutual suffering, reconciliation programmes can help transform the negative stereotypes, collective myths, and lack of disconfirmatory evidence that creates the fear and mistrust between the parties. As Cehajic et al (2008: 361-362) found, positive intergroup contact can lead to greater forgiveness and consequently social distance can be reduced.

#### *Facilitating Exposure*

It has been established that post-conflict BiH is riven with stark divisions even when multiple ethnicities may be living in the same region. There are divided cities such as Mostar in which Bosniaks and Croats live on either side of a bridge and schools in which students from different ethnicities are educated separately. As former member of the Bosnia and Herzegovina army, Adnan Hasanbegovic stated there are “concrete problems in the fact that the people in these regions don’t know enough about each other” (Four Views, 2002: 7). Facilitating exposure between the parties is a critical step on the long path to reducing social distance, creating bridging ties and working towards reconciliation. Whilst, Pickering (2007: 126-130) has found that the workplace can be good for facilitating exposure and creating social ties, Babbitt (2003: 107-108) found that something beyond the work environment needs to be included for positive co-existence to eventually take root. However, given that the decision to even participate in such activities can be more difficult than the actual experience (Chigas & Ganson, 2003: 63), expanding the opportunities for simple exposure is vital.

One of the significant differences between the case of BiH and those of Israel and Northern Ireland is that many people may live in extremely close proximity but may still not have exposure to another party. A Muslim, female participant in the UNHCR Imagine Coexistence initiative had returned to her native town of Prijedor, after she had been driven out and her family killed, and was “unwilling to make the first overture to her neighbours.” She was greeted in silence from people with whom she had been close to before the war (Chigas & Ganson, 2003: 67-68). During the course of participating in a joint training programme on strawberry production she was “re-introduced” to her neighbours, which allowed her to reignite the basic contact that had been lost (ibid.). War veteran, Adnan Hasanbegovic, expressed how participating in a joint activity was like a “labyrinth of confronting the hurt and oneself as a participant and witness of wars.” He continued that to:

“sit with the people from ‘the other side’ and start talking first about yourself and your war experience and motive, to hear each other and to try to understand and

learn the things [one doesn't] know...this is exactly what leads to a road to lasting peace, the peace as a condition in which people not only put up with each other, but feel each other, accept and mutually strengthen each other" (Four Views, 2002: 8).

Although, the respondents to the Alumni Survey BiH had no doubt attended the activities with the aim of meeting people from other backgrounds, 40 percent answered that they found the most valuable element of the joint activities was "meeting people from another national/religious group." Respondents also noted the effect of exposure on the change of perceptions of members of another group. When asked what had brought about their change of perception, a number of participants highlighted that it was "communication," "conversations," and that "interactions, conversations can bring about trust and toleration." A 38 year Bosnian Croat respondent shared that after two seminars she had talked and met with people that she didn't want to see for 18 years, but then went for coffee with them. A 63 year old participant also shared that without mutual contact, progress cannot be achieved. The effect of facilitating exposure can reap enormous rewards, as a 54 year old Bosnian Croat (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 747194) shared that as a result of participating in a joint activity she does not "feel the fear, or hate, or intolerance towards others anymore."

#### *Facilitating Empathy*

Long processes of dehumanisation and demonisation of other groups leads to a lack of empathy. This in turn removes one's sense of self-condemnation making it easier to mistreat others. Reversing this process and facilitating empathy is a critical element in transforming enemy images that will allow for reconciliation. The Centre for Non-Violent Action Report (2002: 26) bases its activities on trying to encourage this process:

"[giving people a chance what it is like for the others, Croats, Bosniaks, Albanians, Serbs, them, what their problems are, their fears, and hopes, it is a very important step towards mutual understanding, and thereby towards peace building. These stories are very much alike, mostly hard and simply human. They inevitably initiate compassion and feelings of solidarity, demystification and humanisation of the enemy. It also causes people to lose their prejudice, that they are all the same, chetniks, ustasa, balia."

Similarly, Cehajic et al. (2008: 362) found that it was empathy for the outgroup brought about by good quality-contact with members of the other group that helped bring about increased readiness in Bosnian Muslims to forgive actions committed by Bosnian Serbs.

The effect of the joint reconciliation programmes in increasing empathy is reflected in the responses to the Alumni Survey BiH. As in both the Israel-Palestine, and Northern Ireland contexts, the respondents felt that the most valuable element of the activities was "hearing other people's stories/experiences." In the Alumni Survey BiH, 81 percent identified that "hearing other people's stories/experiences" was the most valuable and 48 percent identified that having the opportunity to "tell" of their own story was valuable, thus seeking the empathy of the other participants. Participants

identified that the value of the joint activities because “it is an ideal way to get to know and understand differences and breakdown of stereotypes.” A number of participants stated that they had more “compassion” for the other parties following their participation in the activities. A striking response that was observed in the Bosnian context more than in the other two cases, is acknowledgment of the strength that it takes others to tell of suffering. A Bosnian Croat participant (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 747194) remarked that the most surprising element she learnt of the other group is “the strength to tell their stories even if they were about suffering and not at all pleasant.” Similarly, a Bosniak participant (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 747179) was surprised by:

“the fact that people coped with all the hardships that have befallen them during the war, and remained positive and optimistic.”

This enhancement of empathy and personalisation of others provides for greater self-condemnation making it more difficult to mistreat those people.

#### *Acknowledgement of Humanity and Mutual Suffering*

In the BiH context, there is still a very strong sense in each community in that they each carry the burden of victimhood. The maintenance of a collective memory of victimhood and a “self-righteous and ethno-centric narrative” hides one’s own group’s wrongs and blocks information about the humaneness of the rival group (Bar Tal, 2013: 172-173). Recognising another’s victimhood, or shared victimhood, therefore accords humanity to the other, helping to break the perpetuated negative stereotypes. One of the most noticeable themes in the responses to Alumni Survey BiH is the recognition of mutual suffering. The respondents include a number of people who are concentration camp survivors who shared their stories in the various activities that they attended. A 20 year-old Bosniak woman found the story of a fellow participant who had been in a concentration camp<sup>86</sup> as a child during the war particularly inspiring. She said that “what influence[d] me most was when I learned how overjoyed he was when he got his teddy bear in the camp. I drew up an image in my head of that boy.” Similarly, when asked as to “the most surprising thing...learnt about other participants” a number of respondents expressed that having met fellow participants who had been in camps as children as being surprising.

A number of the respondents expressed clearly an acknowledgement of mutual suffering, such as that of a 38 year old Bosnian Croat participant who expressed that the most surprising thing that she had learned was “that there was so much suffering and so many victims for the country...” Similarly, a Bosniak participant (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 742724) reflected that he found it surprising

“that the pain and suffering of all participants had been roughly the same” and that “pain does not recognise/know religion, tradition/customs.”

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<sup>86</sup> There were four main Serb run concentration camps that operated between 1992 and 1995. Omarska and Keraterm were the scene of killings, torture and interrogations. Trnopolje was a staging area for deportations of women and children. Manjaca was supposedly a “prisoner of war” camp. (Srebrenica Genocide Blogspot, <http://srebrenica-genocide.blogspot.co.il/2008/08/concentration-camps-in-bosnia.html> [Last accessed: 11 May 2017]).

In both the Israel-Palestine and Northern Ireland context, I have observed the effects of acknowledging humanity and shared suffering in transforming the change of identities. The sharing of personal stories and honesty in conversation “raised awareness that the others also had, and still, have hard times.” More acutely, the process that accords a fully dimensional humanity to others facilitates the beginnings of a joint working relationship to change the future, a 56 year old Bosnian Serb noted:

“people from all national groups are realising and recognising that we are all the same and that we have the same needs and that we all feel pain, love, suffering and compassion and that we need to fight together” (BiH Alumni Respondent 741944).

Similarly, a 27 year old Bosnian Serb participant expressed that the element that resonated most with her was learning that “we are all the same and have the same problems” (BiH Alumni Respondent 747243). Widespread understanding such as this might contribute to explaining studies such as Bakke et al. (2009) which have found that there are no observable ethnic divisions on issues such as religion, separatism, nationality and trust in BiH (2009: 239).

***“The Country is like the Worst Stepmother”***

A\*, is a 38 year-old woman who identified herself as a Bosnian Croat and traditional Roman Catholic. She participated in three workshops under the auspices of the Catholic Relief Services over the space of a year. Her motivations for attending the workshops included wanting to learn more about the conflict, wanting to learn more about the other side of the conflict and the influence of family and friends. She works with female victims of the war, refugees and displaced persons with the aim of changing the lives of children and adults that impact on the wider level, approximately 3000 people.

The most valuable elements of the workshop for A were the opportunities to meet people from other national or religious groups, to hear other people’s stories and experience and the opportunity to tell her own story. She felt that the defining event of the workshops that had the greatest impact on herself was the development of “*a lot more understanding of the problems of others as the experience is the same.*” The workshops provided a greater understanding of the extent of the suffering and victims across the communities in Bosnia, as well as of the accountability of her own community as she was surprised to have learned that the Croats had opened camps in Central Bosnia.

Through participating in the activities, A was able to re-evaluate some of her perceptions of people from other national and religious groups finding them more honest, friendly, good-hearted, considerate, and open to change than she had previously believed. She ascribed this change to experiencing the honesty of others and of hearing others talk of their experiences and hopes for the future. The activities led to her talking and meeting people that she had not wanted to talk to for 18 years, and even going out for coffee with some. She remains in contact with other participants that are from different national or religious groups and feels that participating in the activities has had both a short and long term effect on her life. A has recommended the activity to friends and feels that joint dialogue and joint educational activities are the most effective form of activities.

\* A answered the survey anonymously as survey respondent 743848.

**Identity Transformation**

In order to break cycles of intractable conflict, the conflict identity that is fuelled by stereotypes, mistrust and fear needs to be transformed to one in which parties can recognise and celebrate each other’s differences and envision a shared future in spite of those differences (Ramsbotham et al., 2005: 245). The increased exposure, increased empathy, and humanisation of the other party needs to be internalised so that a new identity emerges that is not defined by stereotypes, collective memories, and emotional orientations that keep parties invested in the conflict. The Alumni Survey BiH complements current evaluations and reports by providing a larger pool of respondents demonstrating how participation in reconciliation activities has facilitated a softening of their conflict identity.

*Multi-Dimensional Image of the Other*

The development of a multi-dimensional image of the other, that is an image beyond a stereotype associated with an ethnic label and an appreciation of the differences between individuals is a critical

element of the reconciliation process. It is reflected in seeing members of other groups as individuals, with unique characteristics and possibly belonging to a larger group to which all parties belong. Cehajic et al. (2008: 362) found that “a preference for identifying with a superordinate, relative to subordinate level of inclusion positively predicted reconciliation processes.” Respondents to the Alumni Survey BiH reflected this process in responses such as that of a 63 year old Bosnian Croat respondent, who shared that:

“when [he] heard the true stories of victims/survivors, [he is] certain that there are only good and bad people regardless of all other divisions” (BiH Alumni Respondent 746903).

In this, the respondent is redefining individuals as good or bad based on action and not ethnicity or religion. Similarly, this respondent distinguished between the “mercenaries, murderers [who] disgraced the whole nation” and the general population. He acknowledged that “all ethnic people have good and honourable people” and that “it’s time to start dividing people to good people and those who are not good.”

This appreciation of difference was reflected in the response of a 28 year old Bosniak participant who identified that one of the key elements that she had learned about the other side was:

“How similar we all are and how we basically have the same problems. But we are also different in some ways and that we respect each other.”

Similarly, when asked to identify change in perceptions or attitudes towards the members of the groups as a result of the activities, a 28 year old Bosnian Serb responded that the participants are “simply new people in [his] life and each one is a beautiful person in their own way.” Overall, following participation in the reconciliation activities, 59 percent of the respondents identified that they found members of the other groups more honest than they had previously believed, 43 percent believed that other participants were more friendly than previously believed; and 58 percent responded that members of other groups were more open to change than previously believed.

#### *Changed Attitude towards the Maintenance of the Conflict*

The greatest change towards the maintenance of the conflict often comes from those from who it is least expected. In the Israeli-Palestinian case and in the Northern Ireland case, former combatants and political prisoners who were often surprisingly vocal in their change of attitude towards the maintenance of the conflict. Sasa Dujovic, a former member of the Serbian Guard and the Republika of Srpska Army (1991-1995) and currently active in the Association of Invalids of War, was candid about his changed attitude towards continuing the conflict:

“I’m not all for peace, but it’s time for that story to be opened. I don’t want our children to experience anything like that. It wasn’t easy to face men from Bosnia and Croatia, that took strength. I do wish no war would ever happen again, believe me,” (Four Views, 2002: 13-14).

Similarly, Stanislav Krezic, a Bosnian Croat who fought with the Croatian Defence Forces against the Bosnian army around Mostar, and was subsequently captured and held as a prisoner of war, following attending a joint reconciliation activity and hearing of how Bosnian Croats had raped the wife and daughter of a participant, “realised that retaliation was not the way.” (Krezic, 2014).

Respondents to the Alumni Survey BiH also demonstrated a change attitude towards the maintenance of the conflict. A 35 year old Bosnian Serb respondent identified the need for “the development of a unanimous stand that the war will never happen again” (BiH Alumni Respondent 744195). Similarly, a 23 year old Bosniak participant (BiH Alumni Respondent 742762) identified the need for “all to join in for a better life and a better future.” Whilst these changes of attitude are a significant when considering the effectiveness of joint activities, the final stage of impact would be the extent to which these attitudes are transformed into support for peaceful approaches to resolve the conflict.

### **Support for Peaceful/Non-Violent Approaches to the Conflict**

The 2010 Balkan Monitor Survey revealed that 49 percent of the respondents to the survey felt that there would not be war in the region in the near future and that a further 29 percent felt that it was highly unlikely (Gallup Balkan Monitor Summary of Findings, 2010: 11). This reflects a strong optimism in finding non-violent approaches to resolve the conflict in BiH. In a similar vein, Wilkes et al.’s (2012) survey of popular attitudes towards reconciliation and trust-building in BiH revealed that 88.2 percent affirmed that building trust and honest relationships would be important to BiH’s future. Creating this level of support for non-violent options can emerge from joint reconciliation activities as was the experience of Adnan Hasanbegovic who found that the activities in which he participated

“caused so many emotional reactions and that [he has] new inspiration and motives for work on peace-building...” (Four Views, 2002: 8).

Similarly, Sasa Dujovic, who participated in the same activities said “I don’t want to fight any more wars and I suggest the same to everyone.” (ibid.: 15). Similarly, one of the Bosnian Serb survey respondents (BiH Alumni Respondent 747243) highlighted how participation in reconciliation activities had influenced her to be “more tolerant, more willing to compromise and face the past.” This reflects one of the Bosnian Croat participant’s (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 747194) reactions that after participating in the reconciliation activities she does not “feel the fear, or hate or intolerance to others anymore.”

Peace constituencies that advocate support for peaceful resolution of the conflict is a key element in establishing the effectiveness of joint reconciliation programmes and the direct impact of its alumni. The Alumni Survey BiH revealed that 89 percent of the participants would recommend participation in a joint reconciliation programme to others, with 94 percent of the respondents answering that they stayed in touch with participants from the programme, 75 percent of the respondents remained in

touch with former participants from both their own and other groups. As one of the Bosnian Serb participants highlighted, “great friendships were formed” (BiH Alumni Respondent 744002).

#### *Founding or Active Participation in Spin-off Activities*

The successful impact of a reconciliation activity can be measured by the degree to which participants remain actively involved in promoting non-violent approaches to resolving the conflict. Following participating in a reconciliation activity, Stanislav Krezic joined an association for former detainees with the aim of reaching out to others to think differently of their war experience and “to try to stop the cycle of violence” (Krezic, 2014). Similarly, a Bosniak respondent to the Alumni Survey BiH highlighted how his participation in the reconciliation activities had

“motivated [him] to continue to work in [his] own community and to try to motivate people in some way that there will be a better tomorrow.”

This is reflected more widely in that 67 percent of the respondents to the Alumni Survey BiH replied that they were engaged in further activity aimed at bringing about positive change to the political situation. 89 percent of that continued activity is designed for all communities and the projects’ estimated reach was up to several hundred thousand people. These spin-off programmes cover a range of initiatives including further joint reconciliation activities, transitional justice, work with victims and camp survivors, sports clubs and joint activist networks. The ripple effects of these activities and their potential to create networks of people committed to education, tolerance and seeking interactions demonstrates the positive impact of joint reconciliation programmes. As one Bosnian Croat former camp detainee expressed:

“if I plant one seed, several will grow, that’s how it goes, I believe in people” (BiH Alumni Respondent 746903).

#### *Active Participation in Activities Directly Aimed at Influencing Political Process*

It has been noted above that the consociational structure that was implemented post-Dayton that has fuelled ethnic division has created numerous practical and psychological barriers to reconciliation. Wilkes et al’s study (2012: 21) revealed negative attitudes across BiH when it came to the role of politicians and reconciliation at the national level. This is reflected in the fact that of the spin-off activities in which respondents to the Alumni Survey BiH were involved, only 17 percent of these activities were aimed at politicians and government officials. Such activities aimed at influencing political process were directed at trying to influence legal changes regarding the treatment of detainees and camp survivors as well as transitional justice. A number of respondents highlighted the need to try to effect change to the political establishment. However, there seems to be frustration at not being able to impact the elite level sufficiently, as one Bosnian Serb respondent (BiH Alumni Respondent 742519) commented “people are positive but their hands are tied by the nationalistic parties in power.” Given these difficulties in impacting the political level directly, a number of respondents identified that their spin-off activities focused on empowering young people as the vehicles to eventually bring about social and political change. However, the respondents recognise

the potential role that they can have in influencing the political level, as one Bosnian Serb participant (BiH Alumni Respondent 747156) reiterated:

“we have to be persistent with the struggle for a better tomorrow for all of us. We have to think of the generations to come, and never again allow misfortune that happened to us. We will succeed only by joint forces of the non-governmental sector-civil society, which seem to grow stronger, every day more and more.”

#### *Evidence of Ability to Resist Manipulation or Provocation to Violence*

The direct role of reconciliation activity in helping to resist manipulation or provocation to violence is more difficult to ascertain in the Bosnian case than in the other two cases. This, to some extent reflects the nature of the survey respondents and the fact that there is less data from former combatants. However, respondents identified the challenges inherent in the election law that favours “nationalistic and fascist actions” and the need to:

“stop nationalistic provocations made by politicians, who are consciously the biggest nationalists, especially during their pre-election activities” (BiH Alumni Respondent 746989).

Another Bosnian Croat camp survivor (BiH Alumni Respondent 746903) highlighted similar themes, in expressing understanding as to how his own nation became involved in the violence: “when masses are seduced by smooth words and everyday politics, then people become sheep to be slaughtered.” A Bosnian Serb participant (BiH Alumni Survey Respondent 742519) echoed these sentiments in highlighting that:

“one needs to remove all the politicians that are in power today – in BiH & Republika Srpska because their work is based on hate, division, nationalism, then everything will be different.”

This awareness of the potential for manipulation by politicians suggests greater understanding of the mechanisms underlying provocation to violence and the likelihood of greater ability to resist it.

#### *Challenges and Negative Effects*

The reconciliation process does not always impact individuals at the same rate and there can be challenges when people who are at different stages in their identity transformation are brought together. A number of respondents to the Alumni Survey BiH articulated surprise and a certain element of frustration and surprise at the way people from the other group “still did not face their own past and are locked in their pens” (BiH Alumni Respondent 746903). In this instance, the respondent is a 67 year old Bosnian Croat who is an active advocate on behalf of wartime detainees and expressed surprise at participants from other backgrounds who “still live in the past and are dealing with issues from the past, rather than thinking about the future ways to be creative.” This was echoed by a 47 year old Bosniak respondent (BiH Alumni Respondent 742647) who expressed surprise at encountering that participants “to this day are not capable of admitting/recognising certain facts” and a sense of frustration that not all participants “accept the necessity of a life together as the

only available option for BiH.” This highlights perhaps one of the practical inadequacies of organisations focusing on the number of people that they bring together rather than the stages of identity transformation of the people that they bring together, and reflects some of the criticisms of the growth of the civil society sector in BiH not always being targeted towards the correct segments of society.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the process by which conflict identities in BiH can be softened and transformed through joint reconciliation activities in order to create people willing to be part of peace constituencies that seek to overcome the divisions in society in BiH. It is this process that can help to support peace settlements in order to prevent their breakdown, and it is through this process that support for a multi-ethnic state “beyond one’s own narrow ethnic group could work as a bulwark against chauvinist elite mobilisation, eventually paving the way for lasting peace” (Dyrstad et al., 2015: 5). The process tracing above exercise demonstrates that joint reconciliation activities provide the opportunity for conflict identities to be revised sufficiently that they participate in peace constituencies which can support peace processes.

Despite studies that reveal that social distance based on ethnicity is less pronounced than originally presumed (Bakke et al., 2009), BiH remains a divided society. Events such as the recent floods in 2014 enabled some unification of the people against a common enemy:

“we stand as one in trouble and will kill each other in boredom. Now is the time of trouble, so we will love each other for a while and defeat the rivers together” (Cook, 2014: no pag.).<sup>87</sup>

It would be interesting to assess whether the effect of the flood on reconciliation on the long term. However, as the author notes “[to] be honest, I am aware that the boredom will come and we will carry on hating each other” (ibid.) reinforcing the need for a more systematic programme of reconciliation. Reduced social distance based on ethnicity or participation in reconciliation programmes is still not able to impact the political level sufficiently. A Balkan analyst driving through Republika Srpska noted that:

“[t]he public discourse filling the radio waves for almost two hours sounded like the country I was driving through had just exited a war the day before... or was about to enter a new one the day after. It brought back bad memories of public discourse full of threats and counter-threats made by wartime leaders in the Parliament of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 1991. On that damp and foggy night, the country I was driving through seemed locked in a horrible limbo that was neither war nor peace” (Latal, 2014).<sup>88</sup>

Academics, practitioners, and participants in reconciliation programmes have noted the extreme difficulty in trying to create a ripple effect from reconciliation activity when the political dynamic is

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<sup>87</sup> See <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/blog/it-s-a-pity-we-have-to-learn-to-love-through-misery> [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

<sup>88</sup> See <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/blog/neither-war-nor-peace-in-bosnia>, [last accessed on 11 May 2017].

reinforcing division in the populations. Chigas and Ganson (2003: 74) noted that in BiH “profound personal changes, successful cooperative activities, and changes in relationship across conflict lines did not lead to changes in political attitudes or have a demonstrable impact on the peace process.” They highlighted that in Bosnia the trickle-up effect could even have negative ramifications in that “once the activity reached a certain threshold it was explicitly perceived as a threat and the authorities (or other spoilers) took actions to undermine it” (ibid.: 76). This was reflected in a number of responses to the Alumni survey BiH, as one respondent stated “people are positive but their hands are tied by the nationalistic parties that are in power.” Another respondent shared the opinion that “the politicians are the ones who are inciting intolerance, in order to generate hatred as a permanent category in mutual relations” and reiterated the need for politicians to “stop nationalistic provocations” particularly during election campaigns. This emphasises the difficulty of trying to operate reconciliation programmes in a “political vacuum” (Chigas & Ganson, 2003: 77).

The strategy to empower civil society to try to fill the gap that emerged from “tensions caused by the constitutional schizophrenia” (International Crisis Group, 2014: i) is not the long-term solution. As Belloni (2001: 177-178) highlights “[c]ivil society is not a panacea. It cannot solve Dayton’s underlying ambiguities, transcend the separation of the country into distinct ethnic territories...” As Burns et al. (2003:98) also identified “a sprinkling of grassroots projects can have only a minimal influence on a community that lacks a national peace oriented programme in politics, employment, education and the media.” Kumar (1999: 20) notes that the USAID sponsored programme in the Middle East survived because of the support of the Egyptian and Israeli commitment to its success and that “[s]uch political commitment – at both the national and local levels was often missing for social reconciliation initiatives in Bosnia, and blunted the projects’ effectiveness.”

These assessments of the obstacles facing the trickle-up effects of reconciliation activity link to the hypotheses tested in the quantitative section of this research. The Large-N study highlighted the role of governmental reconciliation activities in sustaining peace agreements, and the effect of NGO reconciliation is strongest when accompanied by high level governmental commitments. Dyrstad (2015:21) highlights that the “role of institutions in shaping post-war attitudes should be addressed.” Although the Dayton Accord has not broken down BiH is currently paralysed, and unless the Constitutional Court amends the election law it is unlikely that the current legislature or executive can be replaced in October 2018 when their terms expire (Prelec, 2017). The civil society based reconciliation efforts can only have limited effect without support from the institutional level. As Edwards (2009 quoted in Kostovicova & Bojicic-Dzelilovic, 2013: 9) highlighted, “civil society alone cannot be depended upon to promote just and effective policy.” If a constitutional design, set out in a peace agreement, reinforces ethnic division at the national level rather than promoting reconciliation, it is virtually impossible for multi-ethnicity and tolerance to become widespread (ibid.). Until civil society is able to interact better at the leadership level independently, it will not be able to

bring about any social or political change and any “trickle-up” effect of reconciliation activity will likely to be limited. Building commitments into peace agreements to address reconciliation is one measure that can direct the parties into creating this support, and facilitating better direction of the international community’s peacebuilding efforts.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

על שלושה דברים העולם עומד: תורה, עבודה, וגמילות חסדים (פרקי אבות, פרק ב, א)

*“The world stands on three pillars: law, work, and acts of kindness” (Ethics of the Fathers, 2:1)*

### Introduction

The motivation for this research was driven by a question that emerged whilst working in the field on reconciliation programmes. Whilst designing and evaluating various programmes, the question as to the role that reconciliation programmes have in helping to sustain peace agreements, and their overall impact, remained a constant nagging question. Given the remarkable number of peace agreements that have not brought about stable peace, can their chances of success be improved by formally committing parties in the peace agreement to engage in post-conflict reconciliation activities? Conversely, in the aftermath of a conflict, well-meaning local and international organisations rush to initiate civil society projects, many with aim of bridging conflict divides and reconciling former enemies. Are these programmes and activities able to deliver on their promises to transform identities that are committed to conflict and, if so, how do these micro-level changes trickle up to the societal level to create support for a peace agreement?

In the context of the persistent conflicts that are prevalent in the world today, we see parties willing to take up arms and engage in conflicts even after witnessing the horrors of conflict because in the course of these conflicts a conflict identity develops that shapes their continued commitment to the conflict. This conflict identity that is composed of collective narratives, heightened emotions, and cognitive distortions of the other party rarely seems diminished by the military, political, and economic provisions included in peace agreements. Reconciliation is often seen as the panacea to this dynamic. However, reconciliation is not a “normative model or magic solution that can be applied to any conflict” (Rosoux, 2013: 487), and reconciliation activities may not have the same effect in all contexts.

Consequently, this thesis sought to investigate the relationship between reconciliation provisions in peace agreements, reconciliation activities and their effect on the sustainability of a peace agreement. As an initial starting point, I conducted a Large-N statistical analysis on a new Peace Agreements and Reconciliation dataset, to test five hypotheses relating to whether including reconciliation clauses and subsequent reconciliation activity has any impact in preventing the breakdown of peace agreements. Complementary to the statistical analysis, in order to gain a more holistic understanding as to how reconciliation work could impact on the sustainability of peace agreements, I conducted a process tracing exercise using the cases of Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland and Bosnia Herzegovina. This exercise provides insights into the process by which parties in conflict who have hardened conflict identities are able to transform their identities through participation in reconciliation activities. The qualitative case studies also demonstrate how individual-level transformation can trickle up to create

groups of people committed to non-violent approaches to resolving the conflict and ripple effects at the wider societal level that could influence government commitment to sustaining the peace agreement. Using this mixture of methods, I attempt to an answer to Hermann's (2004: 47) question as to whether reconciliation activities that take place in controlled environments provide any understanding as to the way reconciliation processes work in the uncontrollable contexts of the real world.

### **Reconciling Agreements and Activities**

Owen Felltham (1629) wrote that "it is much safer to reconcile an enemy than to conquer him. Victory deprives him of his power but reconciliation of his will..." The Large-N section of this thesis examines this concept to assess whether reconciliation clauses in peace agreements and reconciliation activities remove the will of the parties to continue the conflict and therefore commit to sustaining peace agreements. The following section sets out the key results of the quantitative analysis and the lessons that can be drawn for architects of peace processes.

*Are peace agreements that include commitments to reconciliation less likely to break down than those that do not contain such provisions?*

Initially I hypothesised that peace agreements that include commitments to reconciliation clauses are less likely to break down than those that do not contain such provisions (H1a). The statistical analysis confirmed the theoretical expectations that peace agreements with reconciliation clauses are less likely to break down. This was statistically significant for both breakdown by abrogation of the agreement and breakdown as a whole. Overall, expected probability of breakdown decreases by 14% with the inclusion of a reconciliation clause. Although the results might be an indication that parties who are able to include reconciliation clauses are more amicable than those who do not and therefore the agreement would be more likely to succeed at the outset, the effect of commitment to psychological disarmament through reconciliation as part of the peace process cannot be discounted. This first look into the effect of reconciliation clauses provides a springboard for wider study of their effect on agreements from all conflicts, as well as the nature of the process by which the agreement is reached.

*Does the strength of the reconciliation clause matter?*

As reconciliation clauses are not of equal complexity with both broad and specific phraseology and commitments, my second hypothesis proposed that a strong reconciliation clause would lead to a decreased likelihood of the breakdown of the agreement (H1b). The Belfast Agreement 1998 typifies an agreement with strong reconciliation clauses that provide for the development of reconciliation activities, the positive effects of which are observed in the Northern Ireland case study (Chapter Six). The results were statistically significant in all the models and confirmed the hypothesis that agreements with strong reconciliation clauses would be less likely to break down than those that do not have such clauses. The models also revealed that there is little difference between including a weak reconciliation clause and no reconciliation clause at all. From a practical perspective, this points to the need for detailed and comprehensive reconciliation clauses in order to bring about the change

that can promote the sustainability of the agreement. However, as noted above, the inclusion of such detailed clauses might only happen in cases in which the parties are already sufficiently determined to terminate the conflict and therefore the agreement was more likely to be sustainable as a whole.

*What is the effect of reconciliation activities on agreements?*

In 2005 Fijian lawyer Graeme Leung highlighted to Prime Minister Laisenia Qarese that “[r]econciliation and forgiveness are matters of the heart. They cannot be forced upon people.”<sup>89</sup> Therefore, I also consider, in my second set of hypotheses, what is the effect of reconciliation activities on the sustainability of peace agreements, as well as whether government-led or NGO-led activities have a greater impact. The analysis reveals that reconciliation activity, particularly government-led reconciliation activity is important in preventing the breakdown of peace agreements. In fact, government-led reconciliation activities can reduce the expected risks of agreement breakdown by 25%. This is in line with the theorised argument (H2a) that institutionalising reconciliation activities will create opportunities for reconciliation to trickle down to all levels of society.

The second of these hypotheses (H2b) argued that the rebuilding of social networks and transformation of conflict identity requires communal level reconciliation activities. It is proposed that NGO/IGO reconciliation activity creating new cross-cutting bridging ties lead to networks supportive of the peace process and influence commitment to the peace process. Contrary to expectations, NGO-led reconciliation had no statistically significant impact. The Israel-Palestine case (Chapter Five) provides some insights into the obstacles facing NGO-led reconciliation activities that prevents their effects fully impacting the political level. This is also evident in the BiH case (Chapter Seven) and while the agreement is currently technically intact there is widespread consensus that the negative peace does not bode well for Bosnia’s future stability. Overall, however, combined government-led and NGO-led reconciliation is associated with a 44% decrease in the likelihood of breakdown of an agreement. This confirms my final hypothesis (H2c) that peace agreements will be less likely to break down when accompanied by top-down and bottom-up reconciliation measures, like in Northern Ireland, that provide the funding and political climate for both grassroots and governmental initiatives to thrive.

The question of the endogeneity in the relationship between government-led and NGO-led reconciliation was tested through examining their interaction effects. The finding that there is no government-led reconciliation when there is no NGO-led reconciliation points to the role of civil society in paving the way for government-led initiatives. It would suggest that providing opportunities for reconciliation programmes at the grassroots level can trickle up to impact government level activity that is supportive of the peace agreement. This is part of the basis of

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<sup>89</sup> Letter from Graeme Leung to Prime Minister Laisenia Qarese opposing the Reconciliation, Tolerance and Unity Bill, 23 May 2005.

examination in the case studies of the dynamic between individual-level transformation and societal-level transformation that could influence governmental commitment to support peace agreements.

*Reconciliation clauses or reconciliation activities – which is more important?*

As the quantitative analysis revealed that both reconciliation clauses and reconciliation activities help decrease, the likelihood of the breakdown of peace agreements, it raised the additional question of which of these might be more significant. In testing the interaction effects between the two (cf. Table 4.6) it appears that including reconciliation clauses in peace agreements is strongly significant in decreasing the likelihood of settlement. However, the combination of the both can lead to a 37% decrease in the likelihood of settlement breakdown.

The more significant impact of reconciliation clauses could be attributed to the fact that the strongest reconciliation clauses often include commitments to government-led reconciliation activities. As government-led reconciliation activities have a significant effect on the probable decreased likelihood of agreement breakdown, reconciliation clauses would have a stronger effect than activities alone. It also suggests that reconciliation clauses provide for a post-conflict environment in which all reconciliation activities can thrive and therefore be more successful than those activities being initiated in environments that have fewer government-level commitments. This is reflected in the case studies, in which we can observe that reconciliation activities are able to develop more easily in Northern Ireland where the agreement had detailed reconciliation provisions.

*Physical and Psychological Disarmament*

One of the noticeable results in all the models is the effect of the inclusion of DDR provisions in peace settlements on the sustainability of the settlement. In virtually all of the models the inclusion of DDR provisions is significant in some degree in predicting the decreased likelihood of agreement breakdown. Whilst the role of DDR in preventing breakdown of agreements is still contested in the literature (Collier et al., 2003; Knight & Özerdam, 2004; Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007), and this research only examines the inclusion of the clause rather than the implementation of the clause, we can begin to see the potential impacts of providing for both physical and psychological disarmament in peace agreements. The recent “Knife Intifada” (2015-2016) in Israel and the use of cars and trucks as weapons of terror activities in Nice (2016), Berlin (2016), and London (2017) highlights how ordinary objects can become weaponised. Further research into the levels of implementation of DDR provisions and reconciliation provisions would provide a more complete picture of this dual effect, however, removal of the will of the parties to engage in conflict, psychological disarmament through reconciliation, appears to be a key companion to the physical disarmament process.

*Uncivil society?*

In many post-conflict contexts the majority of reconciliation activities are initiated by NGOs rather than governments and therefore this research places heavy emphasis on the role of civil society. When conducting robustness checks on the models testing for the effects of NGO-led reconciliation

or government led reconciliation, civil society strength was included as a control variable to account for general civil society work possibly having a reconciliation effect. In all of the models (cf. Table 4.5, Table 4.6, and Table 4.8) the findings showed that a strong civil society could potentially increase the likelihood of agreement breakdown. While these findings are not significant, it lends support for arguments that society is not always civil (Kostovicova & Bojicic-Dzelilovic, 2013) and that strong civic life can also promote extremist agendas (Chapman, 2009: 160). Further research into classifying the type of civil society organisations present in each context would provide greater insights into these findings and the effect of insular civil society groups as spoilers in the post-conflict context.

### *Limitations*

The Peace Agreements and Reconciliation dataset builds upon existing datasets to include provisions on reconciliation clauses, the implementation of reconciliation activities, and the role of NGOs in reconciliation. It covers 259 agreements in 41 conflicts that are persistent conflicts to which the core issues remained unresolved and therefore the conflicts are either active or frozen in a state of cold peace. As the primary emphasis of this research is the need for reconciliation to transform conflict identities, most of the conflicts in the dataset are those that engage the generational, collective memory and emotional orientation elements that are the basis of conflict identities. An argument could be made that to fully investigate the effects of the inclusion of reconciliation clauses in peace agreements, the dataset should be expanded to include all peace agreements since 1945. Whilst this was beyond the scope of the current project, it would be a fruitful avenue for further research.

### **The Process of Transforming Conflict Identities**

In a Der Spiegel interview in 2010, Rwandan president Paul Kagame highlighted that “[r]econciliation takes time. Sometimes many decades, as the example of Europe shows. It is hard work” (Knaup, 2010). The process tracing exercise in the case studies builds upon the findings of the quantitative study to examine the intervening psychological disarmament process that helps explain the correlation between reconciliation clauses, reconciliation activity and the sustainability of peace agreements. The case studies aimed to provide deeper insights into the hard work of reversing conflict identities and the trickle-up and ripple-out impact of the development of peace constituencies. They also shed light on the relationship between NGO-led and government-led reconciliation to provide guidance for practitioners and policymakers engaged in promoting reconciliation activities.

One of the most interesting results of the surveys that I conducted in the three case studies was the surprising similarities in answers despite the different geographic locations, conflict history, and post-conflict political context. In this section I set out some of the key common themes that can be drawn from the cases. Although the respondents were not drawn from a random sample and in some cases the sample size is small, the similar themes that emerged provide useful guidance to policymakers

and practitioners in considering the design of joint reconciliation activities, as well as contributing to the literature on the effectiveness of types of contact activities

#### *The Most Valuable Element of Joint Activities*

Many early joint reconciliation activities were based on the theory that providing contact between parties from opposite sides of a conflict was sufficient if the activities were conducted in accordance with Allport's (1954) guidelines for optimal contact. More recently researchers such as Maoz (2011) have been examining the effectiveness of elements of intergroup encounters, in particular the effectiveness of the coexistence model, the joint projects model, the confrontational model and the narrative storytelling model. The participants to the surveys were asked to identify what they felt was the most valuable element of the activity in which they participated (cf. Question 16, Alumni Survey). This question was included in order to provide further insights into this path of research not only as a contribution to the social-psychological literature. Although, the participants had engaged in a range of different activities, the overwhelming consensus across the cases was that "hearing other people's stories and experiences" was of the greatest value. To some extent this is surprising, as particularly the interviews in the Israeli-Palestinian case reflect a motivation for participating in these activities being a need to tell one's story and to be heard. This reflects the need for acknowledgment of victimhood and the need to be individualised and humanised.

In each of the case studies, I observed the role of these stories in helping to increase empathy and mutual acknowledgment of suffering, and consequently contribute to the transformation of the conflict identities of the respondent. Whether it is learning of how a little boy was overjoyed to have his teddy bear in a concentration camp (p.160), learning how participation in bands is about the enjoyment of being in a band rather than a political statement (p.133), or discovering that those you most fear are also afraid (p.98), we see how that narrative story telling increases empathy (Bar-On, 2002, 2006) and leads to intergroup acceptance (Maoz, 2011:120-121).

#### *The Most Effective Joint Activities*

Similarly, participants were asked to identify which type of activities they found to be most useful. They were presented with the choices of joint dialogue, joint social activity, joint professional activity, joint educational activity, joint sports activity or other types of activity (cf. Question 39, Alumni Survey). These reflect the predominant types of activities used as joint reconciliation activities and, to some extent, reflect Maoz's four models. In all three cases, the participants had an overwhelming preference for joint dialogue projects. This reflects a preference for the opportunity for more narrative/storytelling and possibly even confrontational models over the more superficial models of contact. As highlighted above it is the personalisation of stories that often triggers the empathetic response required for transformation of conflict identities. This is an interesting outcome given that the narrative and confrontational models are generally considered to be the more distressing and potentially destructive models (Maoz, 2011:120).

### *Creating Peace Constituencies*

One of the key questions underpinning this research is the extent that individual level transformation can lead to societal reconciliation, which, in turn, contribute to the sustainability of peace agreements. The transformation of conflict identities through joint reconciliation activities is theorised as leading to the creation of peace constituencies or social networks (Lederach, 1997; Goodhand & Hume, 1999; Bar-Tal, 2013) which in turn support more peaceful approaches to the resolution of the conflict or the maintenance of the post-conflict context. Joint reconciliation activities can also result in the type of bridging capital (Putnam, 2000) or cross-cutting networks (Varshney, 2002) that can lead to the development of institutionalised peace systems. The surveys sought to capture this through asking the respondents to identify the following:

- a) Did you recommend participating in the activity to anyone else? (Question 18)
- b) Has participating in the activity changed your perceptions about the conflict and its potential for a positive solution? (Question 27)
- c) Has participating in the activities influenced your life/actions in the long term? (Question 29)
- d) Are you still in contact with any of the other participants in the activities? (Question 31)
- e) Do you undertake any work or engage in any further activity that is aimed at bringing about positive change to the conflict situation? (Question 33)

**Table 8.1      The Long-Term Impact of Joint Reconciliation Activities**

	<b>Bosnia</b>	<b>Israel/Palestine</b>	<b>Northern Ireland</b>
Recommend activity	89%	93%	73%
Changed perception of possibility of positive solution to conflict	68%	60%	61%
Long term effect of activities on life/actions	67%	62%	78%
Contact with other participants	100%	81%	100%
Work to bring positive change to political situation	78%	43%	57%
Total number of respondents	81	16	18

The results show that in all three contexts the joint activities result in the creation of peace constituencies that demonstrate the trickle-up effect of individual transformation to the group level and consequently the potential to contribute to the sustainability of the peace agreement. The lower numbers for the ongoing work to bring about positive change in the Israel-Palestine and Northern Ireland context may either reflect the low number of respondents or the obstacles created by the political reality. The large number of people working to bring about positive change to the political situation in BiH could be reflective in the lack of faith in the abilities of the government to effect change (p.156). Although these are relatively small samples, they provide a valuable initial look at the long-term impact of reconciliation activities.

The qualitative responses to the surveys, interviews, and third-party reports yielded rich accounts of how individual conflict identities had been transformed through participation in reconciliation activities and how this had led to ongoing participation in reconciliation promoting activities. The basic elements of conflict identities such as dehumanisation and fear of the other parties were clearly discernible across as all the accounts, as well as the transformative impact of facilitating exposure, empathy and the acknowledgment of mutual suffering. The vignettes of individual experiences provide more in-depth insights into the operation of this overall process.

### *Challenges and negative effects*

The case studies also reveal a number of challenges that can help inform practitioners and policymakers of the challenges facing participants in reconciliation activities and their post-participation attempts to facilitate the trickle-up and ripple effects of reconciliation activity. In both the Israeli-Palestinian and Bosnian cases, there was disillusionment expressed as to the adherence of some participants to highly polarised views. The Israeli-Palestinian case highlights some of the challenges facing activists in creating support for reconciliation due to widespread apathy and media negativity. In all three cases, the qualitative data confirmed theoretical arguments that the effect of reconciliation activities in supporting peace agreements is hampered by political structures that promote ethnic divisions rather than a supra-ordinate national identity committed to peace.

The cases suggest that more concrete institutional structures are required in order to facilitate reconciliation activities so that they can provide support for the peace agreement. This confirms the findings in the quantitative study that the combination of NGO-led and government-led reconciliation activity is required in order to maximise the effect on the sustainability of a peace agreement. It also points to a circularity in the relationship, in that if government supported structures are put in place through a peace agreement to support reconciliation activities then the reconciliation activities can have greater impact in supporting the agreement and bringing about stable peace.

### *Limitations*

One of the challenges facing organisations facilitating reconciliation activities is the ability to gather data that reflects the long-term effects of participation. Even well-established programmes face obstacles in garnering effective responses from alumni. Similarly, I encountered a mixed response rate to the surveys of participants of reconciliation activities, with Bosnia yielding the highest number of responses and Israel-Palestine yielding the fewest. This may be partially due to significant academic interest in these cases that has led to survey fatigue for both organisations and participants, as well as, in the Israeli-Palestinian context the inability of Palestinians to respond for fear of repercussions following various bans on participation in such activities. Fortunately, in the Israel-Palestine and the Northern Ireland cases the results of previous surveys and evaluations provided additional sources to supplement the survey results. The surveys that were completed, however, offered an enormously rich source of qualitative data, in particular of the participants' attitudes, experiences, and emotions which is what they had intended to capture.

It is important to note that the surveys are not a random sample and they were distributed by organisations running the activities themselves. This raises a number of issues in that participants might be hoping to gain prestige for the organisation that distributed the survey and therefore answered questions more favourably. Further, there is the question as to whether the transformation of their conflict identity had already started before their engagement with the reconciliation activity,

as participation in such activities is always voluntary, most participants in such activities would be on the cusp of at least the initial stages of attitude change. For the purposes of this research, the interviews with individuals such as former combatants who were forced into contact situations, such as in prison, provide a rich source of data that balances these biases.

A number of the questions on the surveys require the respondents to evaluate their opinions at a time prior to participating in reconciliation activities. This relies on the respondents' memory which may have been influenced by a myriad of factors ranging from time taken to answer the question, the order of events recalled as well as subsequent events that may affect the reliability of the response (Pearson & Ross, 1992; Belli, 1998). The narratives and interviews also reflect the same problem, although interestingly respondents seem to be unsentimental and unequivocal about their previous feelings towards other parties in the conflict.

### **Implications for Further Research**

The findings in this study have generated several questions that could provide avenues for further research. As highlighted above, the Peace Agreements and Reconciliation Dataset could be expanded to include all agreements in all conflicts to ensure that there is no selection bias. During the course of conducting the analysis, I noticed that there is a question as to whether third parties who are assisting in drafting the agreements influence the inclusion of reconciliation clauses. A potential interesting spin-off of this research would be to analyse whether the mediators, or specific mediators, are influencing the inclusion of reconciliation clauses.

Long & Brecke (2013) and Brounéus (2008) have examined the impact of national reconciliation initiatives, in particular, acts by leaders at the national level that are aimed at bringing about reconciliation. It would be useful to build these acts into the database to be able to provide further analysis as to the impact of leadership level reconciliation acts, in contrast to non-governmental activities.

A third avenue of potential further research highlighted by Rosoux (2013) is that the success of reconciliation initiatives can be dependent on the timing of those initiatives, and that there is a dynamic of "reconciliation ripeness". The Peace Agreements and Reconciliation dataset could be expanded to examine the timing of reconciliation initiatives and activities to investigate whether there is a most propitious time for introducing reconciliation activities.

The Northern Ireland and Bosnia case studies both highlighted the challenges of reconciling divided societies when the political structures reinforce divisions. In both contexts, there is no overarching supra-ordinate identity and it opens the question as to how conflict identities can be transformed into a new national supra-ordinate identity, the extent that organisations have been able to succeed in this regard, and whether they are able to have any impact on political process to build a stable peace.

The focus of surveys in this study was to try to gain insights into the process of the transformation of conflict identities, however, the analysis of the surveys pointed to the potential value of conducting wider national level surveys of randomly selected respondents to assess participation in reconciliation activities, the type of activities attended, and subsequent engagement in activities in support of the peace agreement, or political activism. This would facilitate greater examination of reconciliation activities with political and social change.

## **Conclusion**

The continued cycles of agreement breakdown witnessed over recent decades demonstrated that the disarming of minds or transformation of conflict identities does not naturally emerge from the presence of peacekeepers, third party guarantors, DDR or even the presence of civil society. The transformation level of Kelman's (2008) paradigm rests on a "third pillar" – reconciliation. In his National Sorry Day address in 2003, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser stated that "[r]econciliation requires change of heart and spirit, as well as social and economic change. It requires symbolic as well as practical action."<sup>90</sup> Peace agreements often in their preambles or objectives claim to be seeking reconciliation, however the agreement itself rarely have fully developed mechanisms that can induce the change of heart and spirit required for reconciliation to take root.<sup>91</sup>

In this thesis I have shown that the inclusion of reconciliation clauses, especially strong clauses, into peace agreements can contribute to a decreased likelihood of the breakdown of the agreement. I have also demonstrated that reconciliation activity, in particular government-led reconciliation activity, can have a positive effect in transforming conflict identities and can contribute to sustaining peace agreements. Further, the combination of the inclusion of reconciliation clauses and reconciliation activities significantly decreases the likelihood of agreement breakdown. The case studies also reflected that the success of reconciliation activities is determined by the strength of governmental institutions and structures that create the environment in which reconciliation can flourish.

However, there is no reconciliation tool kit for stabilising peace and it cannot alone "crack the enigma of peace-making and peacebuilding" (Hermann, 2004: 40). Architects of peace agreements should be guided by the role that reconciliation activities can play in transforming the conflict identities that can fuel conflict and the breakdown of the agreement. Including provisions to facilitate the growth of reconciliation activities and the development of peace constituencies should contribute to a more sustainable peace agreement. However, the "trickle-up" effect of peace constituencies actively supporting peace that emerge from reconciliation activities cannot become a flood without the transformation of the leadership. Therefore, peace agreements need to provide for both leadership

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<sup>90</sup> Speech by Malcolm Fraser, Great Hall of Parliament, Canberra, 26 May 2003. Full text available at the Malcolm Fraser Collection, <http://archives.unimelb.edu.au/malcolmfraser/resources/postparliamentspeeches/national-sorry-day-2003> [last accessed 11 May 2017].

<sup>91</sup> In my paradigm, law equates with Kelman's pillar of settlement, work with Kelman's pillar of resolution, and acts of kindness or reconciliation with Kelman's pillar of transformation.

and grassroots level reconciliation initiatives, as well as the institutions to support them. Sustainable peace agreements, like the world, stand on three pillars: military provisions, political provisions, and socio-economic provisions. Reconciling conflict identities through facilitating parties to engage in acts of kindness with each other is a critical element of the third pillar and without which stable peace will remain elusive.

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## **Annex A: Interviews and Personal Stories**

### **Interviews**

Interview with Rando Abo Saymih by Yigal Mosko, 2011  
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## Personal Stories

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## Annex B: Coding Decisions for Variables Used in Quantitative Analysis

Variable	Coding	Sources	Notes
<b>Breakdown</b>	1 = Agreement broke down for any reason 0 = Agreement in place		Coded as 1 if any of the variables Breakdown: violence, Breakdown: non-implementation, Breakdown: other coded as 1.
<b>Breakdown: violence</b>	1 = Resumption of violence within 5 years. 0= No resumption of violence within 5 years	Battle Deaths Dataset (v. 3.0) UCDP Armed Conflict Dataset (v.4) Accord conflict reports. Independent historical records.	Coded as 1 if the best estimate of annual battle fatalities in the Battle Deaths Dataset was over 25 battle deaths, or if the Start Date 2 variable of the Armed Conflict Dataset was within 5 years of the agreement being signed.
<b>Breakdown: non-implementation</b>	1= Agreement broke down due to non-implementation of agreement. 0= Non-implementation of agreement not cause of breakdown.	Peace Accords Matrix Project 2013. Accord Conflict Reports. Independent historical records.	Coded as 1 if the parties do not implement the major terms of the agreement, or if the agreement is formally abrogated or repudiated. This includes instances when parties repudiate the agreement due to parties being left out of the negotiation process.
<b>Breakdown: non-violent action</b>	1= Agreement broke down due to reasons other than violence or non-implementation of agreement. 0= Other reasons not cause of breakdown.	Accord Conflict Reports. Independent historical records.	Coded as 1 if agreement broke down due to civil dissatisfaction that did not result in immediate violence.
<b>Reconciliation Clause</b>	1= Reconciliation clause in the agreement. 0= No reconciliation clause in the agreement.	UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset (v.2.0) 1975-2011. Peace Accords Matrix Project 2013. Independent examination of agreement text.	Coded as 1 if any mention of reconciliation, national reconciliation, transitional justice mechanisms, or social reconciliation activities.
<b>Reconciliation Strength</b>	2= Strong reconciliation clause 1= Weak reconciliation clause 0= No reconciliation clause	Independent examination of agreement text.	Coded as 2 if reconciliation measures are clearly specified. These include provisions for mechanisms to be established; measures for implementation of mechanisms such as sources of

Variable	Coding	Sources	Notes
			funding, or bodies to be responsible for implementation; time frame for implementation.  Coded as 1 if reconciliation given cursory mention as an aim or objective but no concrete measures specified.
<b>Government-led Reconciliation Activity</b>	1= Government-led reconciliation activity 0= No government-led reconciliation activity.	United States Institute of Peace Truth Commission Collection.  UN Documentation: International Law.  Foreign ministry websites for individual countries.	Coded as 1 if evidence of implementation of reconciliation programmes at the government level, including establishing a truth and reconciliation commission and subsequent publication of report; cooperating with international tribunals; local criminal justice mechanisms; or government departments established to oversee aspects of reconciliation such as victims' commissions.
<b>NGO-led Reconciliation Activity</b>	1= NGO-led reconciliation activity 0= No NGO-led reconciliation activity	Country specific NGO forum reports. Insight on Conflict Country Guides to Conflict and Peacebuilding. Infrastructure for Peace Country Reports. Reports from INGO's managing or funding reconciliation activities.	Coded as 1 if evidence of strong local and international NGOs instituting reconciliation activities.
<b>Reconciliation Activities</b>	1= Either government-led or NGO-led reconciliation activities. 0= No reconciliation activities of any type.		Coded 1 if evidence of either government-led or NGO-led reconciliation activities.
<b>Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR)</b>	1= DDR clause in the agreement. 0= No DDR clause in the agreement.	UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset (v.2.0) 1975-2011. Peace Accords Matrix Project 2013.	

Variable	Coding	Sources	Notes
		Independent examination of agreement text.	
<b>Withdrawal</b>	1= Clause providing for withdrawal of territory in the agreement. 0= No clause providing for withdrawal of territory in the agreement	UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset (v.2.0) 1975-2011. Peace Accords Matrix Project 2013. Independent examination of agreement text.	
<b>Third-Party Guarantor</b>	1= Clause providing for third party guarantor in the agreement. 0= No clause providing for third party guarantor in the agreement.	UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset (v.2.0) 1975-2011. Peace Accords Matrix Project 2013. Independent examination of agreement text.	
<b>Peacekeeping Operations</b>	1= Clause providing for peacekeeping operations in the agreement. 0= No clause providing for peacekeeping operations in the agreement.	UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset (v.2.0) 1975-2011. Peace Accords Matrix Project 2013. Independent examination of agreement text.	
<b>Power sharing Provisions</b>	1= Clause providing for political power sharing. 0= No clause providing for political power sharing.	UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset (v.2.0) 1975-2011. Peace Accords Matrix Project 2013. Independent examination of agreement text.	
<b>Conflict Intensity High</b>	1= Over 1000 battle deaths in the year that the peace agreement was signed. 0= Fewer than 1000 battle deaths in the year that the peace agreement was signed.	Armed Conflict Dataset v.4-2013, 1946-2012.	Coded as 1 if the Intensity variable was 2.
<b>GDP (per capita)</b>	GDP per capita in the year of the agreement in USD.	World Bank Development Indicators.	

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coding</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Democracy</b>	Polity scale ranging from +10 (strongly democratic) to -10 (strongly autocratic) for government for year in which agreement was signed.	Polity 2 variable, Polity IV Project (Marshall & Jaggers, 2013)	In the cases of inter-state conflict, the lower of the Polity scores was used as a baseline.
<b>Civil Society Strength</b>	2 = Strong civil society. 1= Weak civil society. 0= No evidence of active civil society.	Civics Civil Society Index Country Reports. Accord Conflict Reports. Infrastructures for Peace Country Reports.	Coded as 2 if evidence of strong and active civil society organisations operating with minimal government restriction.  Coded as 1 if civil society organisations are restricted or not active.

## Annex C: Strength of Reconciliation Clauses

Name	Peace Agreement	Date	Reconciliation Clauses
India: Pakistan	Simla Agreement	02/07/1972	Strong
Israel: Palestine	Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities Between Israel and the PLO	29/08/1994	Weak
Israel: Palestine	Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip/ Oslo B	28/09/1995	Strong
North Korea: South Korea	North-South Joint Statement	04/07/1972	Weak
North Korea: South Korea	Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation between the South and North	13/12/1991	Weak
North Korea: South Korea	South-North Joint Declaration	15/06/2000	Strong
Nepal: Government	Decisions of the Summit Meeting of the Seven-Party Alliance and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)	08/11/2006	Strong
Nepal: Government	Comprehensive Peace Agreement, 2006	21/11/2006	Strong
Sudan: Government	Addis Ababa Agreement between the GOS and the SLLM/Anyar Nya	27/02/1972	Very Strong
Sudan: Government	Protocol Between the GOS and SPLM on Power Sharing	26/05/2004	Weak
Sudan: Government	The Protocol Between the GOS and SPLM on the Resolution of Conflict in Abyei Area	26/05/2004	Weak
DR Congo (Zaire): Government	Lusaka Accord	10/07/1999	Weak
DR Congo (Zaire): Government	Declaration of Fundamental Principles in the Inter-Congolese Political Negotiations	04/05/2001	Weak
DR Congo (Zaire): Government	Political agreement on consensual management of the transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	16/04/2002	Weak
DR Congo (Zaire): Government	Global and Inclusive Agreement on the Transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Pretoria Agreement)	16/12/2002	Strong
DR Congo (Zaire): Government	Inter-Congolese Political Negotiations - The Final Act	02/04/2003	Very Strong
DR Congo (Zaire): Government	Peace Agreement between the Government and the CNDP (and the Implementation Plan)	23/03/2009	Strong
Burundi: Government	Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi	28/08/2000	Very Strong

Burundi: Government	The Global Ceasefire agreement between Transitional Government and the Forces pour la defence de la democratie (CNDD-FDD) of Mr. Nkúrunziza	16/11/2003	Very Strong
Burundi: Government	Agreement of Principles Towards Lasting Peace, Security and Stability	18/06/2006	Strong
Columbia: Government	The Uribe Accords	28/03/1984	Weak
Columbia: Government	Accord between the National Government, the Political Parties, the M-19 and the Catholic Church in the capacity of a moral and spiritual guide for the process	09/03/1990	Weak
Cambodia (Kampuchea): Government	Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict "The Paris Agreement"	23/10/1991	Weak
Philippines: Mindanao	Mindanao Final Agreement	02/09/1996	Strong
Sudan: Government	Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement	09/01/2005	Weak
Sudan: Government	Declaration of Principles for the Resolution of the Sudanese Conflict in Darfur	05/07/2005	Weak
Sudan: Government	Agreement between the GoS and the NDA (Cairo Agreement)	18/06/2005	Strong
Sudan: Government	Darfur Peace Agreement	05/05/2006	Very Strong
Uganda: Government	Agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation between the Government of the Republic of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army/Movement	29/06/2007	Very Strong
Uganda: Government	Annex to the accountability and reconciliation protocol	19/02/2008	Very Strong
United Kingdom: Northern Ireland	Anglo-Irish Agreement	15/11/1985	Weak
United Kingdom: Northern Ireland	Downing Street Declaration	15/12/1993	Very Strong
United Kingdom: Northern Ireland	Framework Documents	22/02/1995	Strong
United Kingdom: Northern Ireland	Propositions on Heads of Agreement	12/01/1998	Weak
United Kingdom: Northern Ireland	The Good Friday Agreement	10/04/1998	Very Strong
United Kingdom: Northern Ireland	St Andrews Agreement	13/10/2006	Very Strong
Cyprus: Government	Agreement of 8th July 2006	08/07/2006	Weak
Angola: Government	Gbadolite Accords	22/06/1989	Weak
Angola: Government	The Lusaka Protocol	20/11/1994	Strong
Angola: Government	Angola Government's Peace Plan	13/03/2002	Weak

East Timor: Government	Dili Peace Accord	21/04/1999	Weak
Somalia: Government	Addis Ababa Agreement	27/03/1993	Weak
Somalia: Government	Nairobi Declaration on National Reconciliation	24/03/1994	Weak
Somalia: Government	The Cairo Declaration on Somalia	22/12/1997	Weak
Somalia: Government	Djibouti Agreement	19/08/2008	Weak
Somalia: Government	Decision of the High Level Committee, Djibouti Agreement	26/11/2008	Weak
Liberia: Government	Accra Ceasefire Agreement	17/06/2003	Weak
Liberia: Government	Accra Peace Agreement	18/08/2003	Very Strong
Indonesia: Aceh	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement	15/08/2005	Strong
Rwanda: Government	The Protocol of Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front on the Repatriation of Refugees and the Resettlement of Displaced Persons,	09/06/1993	Weak
Rwanda: Government	Arusha Accords	04/08/1993	Weak
Rwanda: Government	The Protocols of Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front on Power-Sharing within the Framework of a Broad-Based Transitional Government,	09/01/1993	Strong
Sierra Leone: Government	Abidjan Peace Agreement	30/11/1996	Strong
Sierra Leone: Government	Lomé Peace Agreement	07/07/1999	Strong
Georgia: Abkhazia	Concluding statement on the outcome of the resumed meeting between the Georgian and Abkhaz parties, 17-19 November 1997	19/11/1997	Strong
Georgia: Abkhazia	Istanbul Statement of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides on confidence building measures	09/06/1999	Strong
Georgia: Abkhazia	Yalta Declaration of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides	17/03/2001	Very Strong
Georgia: South Ossetia	Memorandum on Measures of providing safety and strengthening mutual confidence between the sides in the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict	16/05/1996	Weak

Guatemala	Esquipulas II Accord	07/08/1987	Strong
Guatemala	The Oslo Accord	30/03/1990	Weak
Guatemala	The Framework Agreement for the Resumption of Negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity	10/01/1994	Weak
Guatemala	The Agreement for the Establishment of the Commission to Clarify Past Human Rights Violations and Acts of Violence that have Caused the Guatemalan Population to Suffer	23/06/1994	Weak
Guatemala	The Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples	31/03/1995	Very Strong
Guatemala	The Agreement on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and the Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society	19/09/1996	Very Strong
Guatemala	The Agreement for a Firm and Lasting Peace	29/12/1996	Strong
Guatemala	The Agreement on the Implementation, Compliance and Verification Timetable for the Peace Agreements	29/12/1996	Weak
Chad: Government	Donya agreement	07/05/1998	Weak
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Serb	The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Dayton Agreement)	14/12/1995	Strong
Israel: Egypt	Camp David Accords	26/03/1979	Weak

## Annex D: Sample Online Survey Form

Alumni Survey –Northern Ireland

*Thank you for participating in this survey.*

*The survey should take you about 15 minutes.*

*No question is compulsory. If you do not feel comfortable answering a question, please leave it blank and move on to the next question.*

*There are no right or wrong answers, so please take your time and answer each question honestly.*

*You are free to withdraw your participation at any time, and doing so will not affect you in any way.*

*The surveys are completely anonymous unless you choose to share information about yourself or your work. There is no way of identifying you otherwise.*

*This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee: (Project ID 3017/001)*

*Any questions about this study should be directed at: Melanie Garson-Sweidan (m.garson-sweidan@ucl.ac.uk)*

*Thank you.*

*All data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998*

1. Which organisation sent you this survey? (Optional)

2. Name (Optional)

3. Organisation/Place of Employment (Optional)

4. Position (Optional)

5. Age:

6. Gender:

Female

Male

7. Nationality:

8. National/Cultural Group:

Republican

Unionist

Nationalist

Loyalist

Ulster-Nationalist

Other (please explain)

9. Religion:

Christian - Anglican/Church of Ireland

Christian - Catholic

Christian - Presbyterian

Christian - Other

Other religion (Please detail)

10. Religiosity:

Very religious/Orthodox

Traditional

Secular

Atheist

Other (please detail)

11. Which joint activities did you attend: (Please include dates if possible)

12. What was your motivation for attending these activities? (Please mark all that apply.) If "Other", please detail below.

- I wanted to attend
- Friend recommended it
- Friends also participating in it
- Wanted to learn more about the conflict
- Wanted to learn more about the other side of the conflict
- Wanted people on the other side to learn more about my side of the conflict
- My friends/family wanted me to participate
- My community leader wanted me to participate
- My school wanted me to participate
- To make professional/business contacts with people from my own national group
- To make professional/business contacts with people from other national groups
- Other

13. How often did you go?

- Once
- 2-5 times
- 5-10 times
- More than 10 times

14. How many other participants were there with you usually?

- 1-5
- 5-10
- 10-20
- More than 20

15. Were the other participants mostly from your own or another national/religious group?

- Mainly from my own national group

- Mainly from another national group
- Evenly divided between national groups

16. What did you feel was the most valuable element of the activities? (If "Other" please explain below)

- Meeting people from my own national/religious group
- Meeting people from another national/religious group
- Hearing other people's stories/experiences
- Having the opportunity to tell my story/experiences
- Making professional/business contacts
- Learning the information provided by the organiser/speaker
- Other

17. Was there anything in the activity that you felt was negative or not useful? (If yes, please detail below)

- Yes
- No

18. Did you recommend participating in the activity to anyone else? Please explain your reasons.

- Yes
- No

19. Was there a single defining moment or event during the activities that you feel had great influence or impact on yourself and your subsequent work? (If, yes please detail below.)

- Yes

No

A rectangular text input field with a light gray background and a thin border. It contains no text. On the right side, there are three small square buttons stacked vertically, with the top and bottom ones having small upward and downward arrows. On the bottom left, there are two small square buttons, with the left one having a left-pointing arrow and the right one having a right-pointing arrow.

20. Was there any person that you met during the activity who particularly inspired or influenced you? If,so how did they influence or inspire you?

A rectangular text input field with a light gray background and a thin border. It contains no text. On the right side, there are three small square buttons stacked vertically, with the top and bottom ones having small upward and downward arrows. On the bottom left, there are two small square buttons, with the left one having a left-pointing arrow and the right one having a right-pointing arrow.

21. What do you remember being the most surprising thing you learnt about the other participants?

A rectangular text input field with a light gray background and a thin border. It contains no text. On the right side, there are three small square buttons stacked vertically, with the top and bottom ones having small upward and downward arrows. On the bottom left, there are two small square buttons, with the left one having a left-pointing arrow and the right one having a right-pointing arrow.

22. What do you remember being the most surprising thing you learnt about your own side?

A rectangular text input field with a light gray background and a thin border. It contains no text. On the right side, there are three small square buttons stacked vertically, with the top and bottom ones having small upward and downward arrows. On the bottom left, there are two small square buttons, with the left one having a left-pointing arrow and the right one having a right-pointing arrow.

23. What did you learn about the other side that resonated with you the most or stayed with you the most immediately after the activity?

24. Did participating in the activity change your perceptions about your own national/religious group and society? (If yes, please detail below)

Yes

No

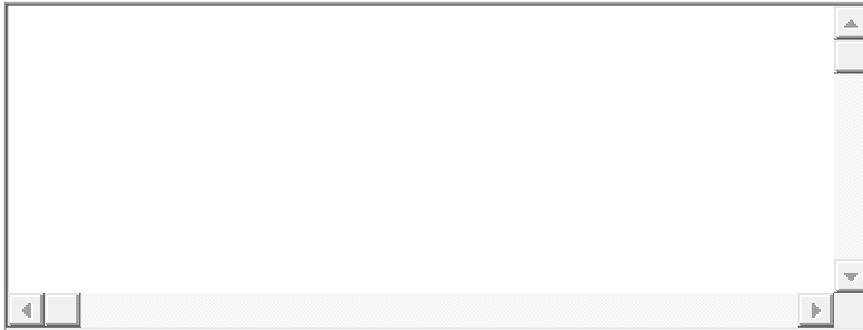
25. What do you feel changed about your attitudes or perceptions of those from other national/religious groups from participating in the activities?(Please mark all that apply. If "Other" please detail below)

- More intelligent than I previously believed
- Less intelligent than I previously believed
- More honest than I previously believed
- Less honest than I previously believed
- More broad minded than I previously believed
- Less broad minded than I previously believed
- More friendly than I previously believed
- Less friendly than I previously believed
- More good-hearted than I previously believed
- Less good-hearted than I previously believed
- More likely to keep promises than I previously believed
- Less likely to keep promises than I previously believed
- More tolerant than I previously believed
- Less tolerant than I previously believed
- More generous than I previously believed

- Less generous than I previously believed
- More considerate than I previously believed
- Less considerate than I previously believed
- More open to change than I previously believed
- Less open to change than I previously believed
- More willing to sacrifice for peace than I previously believed
- Less willing to sacrifice for peace than I previously believed
- Other



26. Was there anything specific in the activity that you feel brought about this change?

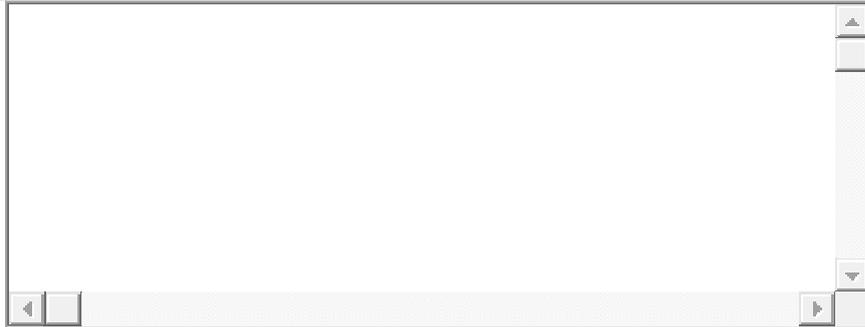


27. Has participating in the activity change your perceptions about the conflict and its potential for a positive solution for all parties? Please explain your answer.

- Yes
- No



28. Did participating in the activities impact your life/actions immediately after leaving the programme (short term)? (If "Yes", please detail below.)



29. Has participating in the activities influenced your life/actions in the long term? (If no, please proceed to question 31)

- Yes
- No

30. If yes, in what context?

- Socially
- Professionally
- Through other joint activities
- Other (Please detail below)



31. Are you still in contact with any of the other participants in the activities?

- Yes
- No

32. These participants are:

- Mainly from my own national/religious group
- Mainly from other national/religious groups
- From both my own and other national/religious groups

33. Do you undertake any work or engage in any further activity that is aimed at bringing about a positive change to the conflict situation? (If no, please proceed to question 39)

Yes

No

34. Is your work/activity aimed at internal change within your own society or external change within another society?

Internal

External

Both

35. How many people approximately does your work influence/affect?

36. Who is your activity/work aimed at? (Please mark all that apply)

Politicians & government officials

Children

Young adults (11-16 years old)

Students

Business people/professionals

Adults

37. Please detail your primary activities related to bringing positive change to the conflict situation?

38. Do you monitor the wider effects of your work? If yes, please provide further detail

Yes

No

An empty rectangular text input box with a thin black border. It features a vertical scrollbar on the right side and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom, both with standard arrow and track icons.

39. In your experience, what type of joint activities do you believe to be the most effective and why?

- Joint Dialogue
- Joint Social Activity
- Joint Professional Activity
- Joint Educational Activity
- Joint Sports Activity
- Other (Please Describe below)

An empty rectangular text input box with a thin black border. It features a vertical scrollbar on the right side and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom, both with standard arrow and track icons.

40. Following participating in the activities are you more optimistic or pessimistic about potential positive change to the conflict situation?

- More optimistic
- More pessimistic
- No change

41. Any additional comments:

