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(Dis)Trust in the Aftermath of Sexual Violence: Evidence from Sri Lanka

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Abstract
Does exposure to sexual violence during conflict affect ethnic group trust post-war? Despite the prevalence of sexual violence, we know surprisingly little about its social consequences. Furthermore, quantitative research has so far mostly turned a blind eye on the gendered impact of sexual violence. We address this gap by investigating ethnic in- and out-group trust among Tamil women and men in post-war Sri Lanka. Combining survey data of the Tamil population with a list experiment on wartime sexual violence, we find that female victims of sexual violence have higher levels of trust in the ethnic out-group, whereas men's out-group trust decreases. Possible explanations are that both the context of sexual violence and coping strategies differ by gender. Interestingly, the experience of sexual violence significantly erodes both men's and women's trust in the ethnic in-group which points to an aspect of post-war recovery often overlooked: rebuilding trust within ethnic communities.

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1 Introduction

It is commonly argued that (re)building trust between former belligerents is fundamental for reconciliation, especially after ethnic conflicts (Aiken 2014). Ethnicity was the defining marker of separation in the 26-year-long civil war in Sri Lanka: the Tamil rebel group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) fought the government dominated by the Sinhalese ethnic group. At the same time, the conflict was characterized by fear and suspicion within the Tamil community. Sexual violence was widely perpetrated, predominantly against men (Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag 2019). This makes it the ideal case to study two aspects which lack systematic evidence: patterns of inter- *and* intra-ethnic group trust in the aftermath of conflict-related sexual violence for female *and* male survivors.

Zeroing in on the Tamil perspective – as primarily victimized group during the conflict (Samarasinghe 2012) – we address the following research question: Does exposure to sexual violence during conflict affect individual's ethnic group trust post-war? To shed light on this question, we use a sub-sample ($N = 706$) of island-wide representative survey data fielded in 2016 coupled with a list experiment (first introduced in Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag 2019) to elicit individual's exposure to sexual violence during the war.[1]

A growing body of literature investigates the micro-level impact of civil war exposure on social behavior and (to a lesser extent) social attitudes. In their meta-analytical review of literature on 'prosociality' post-war, Bauer et al. (2016) identify an overall positive relationship between wartime violence and most outcomes, such as cooperation or participation, whereas social trust appears to be unaffected. Most studies look at the abstract measure of generalized trust ("Most people can be trusted") which has been identified as a rather stable expectation (Bauer 2015). More informative – and of crucial relevance in this context – is group specific trust.

[1]The data originate from a project on the social and political consequences of the Sri Lankan civil war led by the Chair of Political Sociology at the University of Bern. We are grateful to Markus Freitag, the P.I. of the research project, for sharing his data with us. The survey was first introduced in Fatke and Freitag (2019) and is described in detail in section 3.6. An overview of previous studies which use the same data source to shed light on different research questions can be found in the Appendix A.2.

In the Sri Lankan civil war (1983–2009), one of the most protracted and brutal internal armed conflicts (Höglund and Orjuela 2011), the LTTE have fought a secessionist civil war against the government dominated by the Sinhalese ethnic group. Twelve years have passed since the government forces annihilated the LTTE. Due to the lack of institutional justice following the one-sided victory, Tamil individual's capacity to reconcile not only with their former enemies, the Sinhalese, but also with members of their own group is highly relevant until today. Thus, we analyze Tamils' trust in i) their fellow Tamils and ii) in members of the Sinhalese out-group. Furthermore, we address a gap in the literature which has so far mostly turned a blind eye to the gendered consequences of sexual violence.

The analyses show that female victims of sexual violence have *higher* levels of trust in their ethnic out-group, whereas men's out-group trust *decreases* as result of sexual violence. This is in line with our hypothesized expectation that the distinct context of sexual violence for men and women as well as their differing coping strategies crucially matter for the effect on out-group trust. Interestingly and partly counter to our expectation, the experience of sexual violence significantly erodes both men's and women's trust in their ethnic in-group. We argue that this seemingly counterintuitive finding might be rooted in the type of warfare. The conflict was characterized by a climate of distrust due to denunciations and betrayal within Tamil communities with harmful consequences for in-group cohesion.

This study complements the growing body of literature on prosociality post-war and offers three contributions: First, we explore the impact of sexual violence which despite its prevalence remains understudied. While it has been widely acknowledged that sexual violence is a distinct form of war-related violence (with particularly detrimental effects beyond the crime itself), the social consequences of sexual violence have received little empirical scrutiny.[2] "Rape and sexual abuse are experiences that touch the inner core of the personality" (Gavranidou and Rosner 2003, 132) and constitute a severe trust violation, i.e., a strong violation of one's expectation of others. Therefore, it is particularly important to study its

[2]However, see Koos (2018), González and Traunmüller (2020), Koos and Traunmüller (2022), and Koos and Lindsey (2022) for excellent exceptions. Each study is introduced in detail in section 3.3.

impact on trust in the context of post-war (ethnic) group reconciliation.

Second, and this is the main contribution, we focus on the social consequences of sexual violence for both women *and* men. Numerous studies have called into question the entrenched gender stereotypes which view men as perpetrators, and women as victims of sexual violence during civil wars (see e.g. Cohen 2013; Cohen, Green, and Wood 2013; Schulz 2018; Touquet et al. 2020). A recent study has shown that men were actually twice as likely as women to have experienced sexual assault during the Sri Lankan civil war (Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag 2019). Yet, the social consequences of sexual violence for men have rarely been systematically explored, let alone been contrasted with those of female survivors. To that end, our study is – to the best of our knowledge – the first to build and test theories on the gendered consequences of sexual violence.

Third, the richness of the survey data allows us to study the effects of sexual violence on survivors' ethnic in- and out-group trust rather than on generalized trust. We thereby answer recent calls in the literature to investigate individual's trust towards their relevant in- and out-group (Ingelaere and Verpoorten 2020; Bauer et al. 2016). Distilling these effects, we are able to demonstrate that discrimination *for* the ethnic in-group and discrimination *against* the ethnic out-group are not necessarily two sides of the same coin (Brewer 1999, 430) – not even in conflicts that are clearly fought along ethnic lines.[3] Furthermore, our results point to an important aspect of post-war recovery which receives relatively little attention in the literature: rebuilding trust and cooperation *within* ethnic communities (cf. Hager, Krakowski, and Schaub 2019; Krakowski 2020).

Methodologically, we build on pioneering research by González and Traunmüller (2020) and re-use a list experiment by Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag (2019) to elicit experience of sexual violence during civil war. To circumvent potential underreporting, respondents merely count how many out of three (control group) or four events (treatment group) they

[3]This aspect also distinguishes this study from previous research investigating in-group favoritism (see e.g. González and Traunmüller 2020) or ethnic prejudice (see e.g. Kijewski and Rapp 2019). We elaborate on these conceptual differences in the following sections.

experienced during the war instead of revealing which events they were exposed to. Recent statistical techniques make it possible to use the unobserved response to the sensitive item (i.e., personal experience of sexual violence during civil war) as predictor for post-war group trust (Imai, Park, and Greene 2015). Due to random assignment, individuals' exposure to sexual violence during civil war can be causally linked to their post-war ethnic group trust.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. We begin with a conceptualization of social trust which is followed by a brief introduction of previous research. Based on a discussion of theories of wartime violence and trust and an assessment of the existing empirical evidence, we derive the hypotheses. We then present some background information on the Sri Lankan civil war with particular attention to the prevalence and characteristics of wartime sexual violence. Next, we explicate the empirical design and outline the methods to analyze the list experiment. Subsequently, the empirical results are summarized and discussed, before the final section concludes.

2 Conceptualization of Social Trust

When looking at the growing literature on prosociality post-war, it becomes evident that studies tend to conflate concepts and measurements. For instance, trust (as attitudinal measure) is often equated with cooperation (a behavioral measure) and vice versa (Price and Yaylacı 2021). In this study, we focus explicitly on post-war trust and begin with a conceptualization of the outcome of interest. Trust can be defined as the expectation that others will contribute to the well-being of a person or group, or will at least refrain from harmful actions (Offe 1999). Trust has been identified as prerequisite for functioning and stable societies (Balliet and Van Lange 2013) and is credited with a vital role in reconciliation and seen as safeguard against reoccurrence of conflict. Regarding the foundation of social trust, two competing arguments have been made (Freitag and Traunmüller 2009).

On the one hand, scholars depict trust as dependent on personal predispositions, i.e.,

the trustfulness of the trustor (Uslaner 2002, 2008) and thus argue that trust – especially in strangers – is formed by predispositions such as optimism and is not based on experiences (Freitag and Bauer 2016). On the other hand, scholars have argued that information and experiences are crucial to judge the reputation and trustworthiness of another person (Coleman 1988). Thus, the trustworthiness of actor B is vital to the trust decision of actor A. Moreover, for actor A to trust actor B, A evaluates their past experiences with B as only actors that behaved reciprocally will be trusted (ibid.).

Next to these two opposing positions, scholars have pointed out that a too rigid conceptualization might not be useful as both experiences and personal predispositions are central for the formation of different forms of social trust (Freitag and Traunmüller 2009). Thus, trust is better understood as a combination of psychological dispositions as well as experiences and information about the behavior of the trustee(s) (Torpe and Lolle 2011). Providing empirical support for this view, Freitag and Bauer (2016) show the importance of personality traits for trust, while Filsinger et al. (2021) show that information about trustworthiness increases different forms of trust.

Following this perspective, we argue that extreme events such as exposure to civil war affects individual trust decisions by providing first- or second-hand experiences with others based on which judgements of trustworthiness are formed. Therefore, we anticipate that the expectation that others will contribute to one's well-being or to that of one's group, or will at least refrain from harmful actions, is likely impacted by the exposure to civil war violence, and in particular by the exposure to wartime sexual violence.

While the most common distinction in the trust literature is made between particularized trust (referring to family, friends, or co-workers) and generalized trust in strangers (Delhey, Newton, and Welzel 2011; Freitag and Traunmüller 2009; Uslaner 2002), scholars have suggested that there is an additional dimension – identity-based trust – that captures people who are not known personally but who share certain characteristics with the trustor such as nationality, religion, language, social class, or, in this case, ethnicity (Freitag and Bauer

2013).

Group-based trust is particularly relevant in the context of Sri Lanka's recovery from a conflict in which ethnicity was the defining marker of separation for both the belligerents and the general population (Samarasinghe 2012). As such, this is the dimension we focus on. In particular, we look at two different forms of group-based trust: ethnic in-group and ethnic out-group trust. As out-group distrust does not necessarily imply in-group trust (and vice versa), this separate investigation treats ethnic in- and out-group trust as the conceptually distinct trust decisions they are. By doing so, our investigation adds a different piece to the puzzle of postwar prosociality compared to studies focusing on in-group favoritism (González and Traunmüller 2020) or ethnic prejudice (Rapp, Kijewski, and Freitag 2019).

3 Previous Research

The Impact of Conflict Violence on Trust

It is commonly argued that (re)building trust between former belligerents is crucial for reconciliation,[4] especially in the absence of government-led transitional justice processes as in the case of post-war Sri Lanka (Cronin-Furman 2020). Despite the importance of post-conflict ethnic group relations, empirical evidence on post-war ethnic trust is scarce. When looking at previous research on the impact of conflict violence on social trust two important observations can be made. First, most studies focus on generalized trust rather than group-based trust, such as ethnic in- or out-group trust.

For instance, looking at Uganda, Rohner, Thoenig, and Zilibotti (2013) find that more intense fighting results in lower levels of generalized trust and reinforces ethnic identity. Using the same data, but extending the time frame, De Luca and Verpoorten (2015) find that in districts with violent events, individuals report lower levels of generalized trust immediately

[4]Reconciliation is the transformation of "relations between rival sides from hostility and resentment to friendly and harmonious relations [...] based on mutual trust and acceptance, cooperation, and consideration of each other's needs" (Bar-Siman-Tov 2004, 72).

after conflict, but find evidence for a fast recovery once conflict ends. Calvo et al. (2020) find that violent events significantly decrease generalized trust in Mali. Conzo and Salustri (2019) find that children who lived in regions exposed to WWII have lower levels of generalized trust as adults.

While these studies investigate the effect of contextual violence on individual trust decisions, Kijewski and Freitag (2018) distinguish between individual-level experience of violence and contextual exposure. Their analysis of survey data from post-war Kosovo provides evidence that individual-level experience of violence has a consistent negative effect on generalized trust. The underlying argument is that exposure to violence provides people with clear evidence of the untrustworthiness, uncooperativeness, and hostility of others. Yet, a meta-analysis by Bauer et al. (2016) concludes that there is, on average, no effect of conflict on trust and notes that group-specific effects need to be investigated.

Doing exactly that, Ingelaere and Verpoorten (2020) go beyond generalized trust and explicitly focus on ethnic group trust. Investigating the impact of the Rwandan genocide, the authors emphasize the importance of different (ethnic) groups when it comes to trust decisions. Their analyses reveal important differences between inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic group trust. While the former decreases in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, the latter remains unchanged. Therefore, violence in the context of the civil war decreased trust in the out-group, but contrary to widely held expectations did not increase trust in the in-group.

Behavioral trust games in post-conflict Tajikistan show that exposure to wartime violence reduces trust, but only in areas where political allegiance is split, that is in areas characterized by intra-group fighting where it was difficult to identify friend from foe (Cassar, Grosjean, and Whitt 2013). These findings tie in with two recent studies in Kyrgyzstan and Colombia, respectively, which show that asymmetric war characterized by fear within groups due to denunciations reduces within-group cohesion (Hager, Krakowski, and Schaub 2019; Krakowski 2020). As such, these studies highlight the necessity to account for the specific nature of conflicts and group dynamics when investigating ethnic group relations.

Second, most studies discussed above do not differentiate between different forms of violence but use aggregate levels of violence, such as intensity of fighting or number of deaths in the respondent's area (Rohner, Thoenig, and Zilibotti 2013; De Luca and Verpoorten 2015) or use a battery of survey items on individual experiences of violence (Kijewski and Freitag 2018). However, it is likely that different forms of violence impact individuals differently. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate specific forms of violence separately. While scholars have long acknowledged that sexual violence is a distinct form of war-related violence (with particularly detrimental effects beyond the crime itself), the social consequences of sexual violence have received little empirical scrutiny (Koos 2017). An overview of this important literature is given in the following.

Social Consequences of Wartime Sexual Violence

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), an "ancient problem [...] in conflict zones" (Heineman 2011, 1), has received increasing attention in scholarly literature in the last decade with a growing body of research dedicated to advance our understanding of its causes and consequences. Most political science research investigates its causes and conditions, demonstrating that CRSV is not endemic, but varies across conflicts and armed groups (Wood 2006, 2009). In line with the research question of this study, we focus on research on the consequences of CRSV in the following (but for a comprehensive review on both strands of literature see Koos (2017) and Nordås and Cohen (2021)).

"Rape and sexual abuse are experiences that touch the inner core of the personality" (Gavranidou and Rosner 2003, 132) which have particularly detrimental effects beyond the crime itself. For instance, studies based on survey data and qualitative interviews with victims and their families in eastern DRC (Josse 2010; Kelly et al. 2012; Christian et al. 2011; Schmitt et al. 2021) and Uganda (Woldetsadik 2018) show that survivors often face social stigmatization and rejection which can also extend to their families and communities.

At the same time, other studies shed light on the resilience (female) victims demonstrate.

For instance, based on household surveys and qualitative interviews in Sierra Leone, Koos (2018) finds that households affected by sexual violence actively engage in their community to avoid social exclusion, and that communities have traditional cleansing and reconciliation mechanisms in place to facilitate acceptance of survivors. Providing cross-country evidence and qualitative insights from Colombia, Kreft (2019) shows that in countries with higher prevalence of CRSV, more women are involved in protest activities and argues that women mobilize in response to the collective threat of sexual violence.

Using representative survey data from eastern DRC, Koos and Lindsey (2022) show that household-level exposure to rape by armed groups increases self-reported experiences of stigma. Furthermore, the authors demonstrate that this relationship is moderated by community norms of (female) victim blaming and provide suggestive evidence that humanitarian support interventions focusing on survivors' social reintegration can reduce stigma. Thus, while social stigmatization remains a major issue, scholars demonstrate that there are (community-based) solutions.

Honing in on the political consequences of individuals' exposure to sexual violence during the Sri Lankan civil war, González and Traunmüller (2020) provide the first systematic evidence that personal experience of wartime sexual violence significantly increases political participation. In line with previous research, they identify survivors' social mobilization, captured as participation in civic organizations, as channel through which sexual victimization is linked to political participation (cf. Berry 2018; Koos 2018; Kreft 2019). Interestingly, they find no evidence for a mediating role of altruistic social preferences, post-traumatic growth or in-group favoritism (the difference between average trust in all ethnic out-groups and the own in-group).

Koos and Traunmüller (2022) contrast the consequences of wartime sexual violence in DRC, Liberia, and Sri Lanka for survivors' civic participation, political trust, and interethnic relations (average trust in all ethnic out-groups). They find that sexual victimization increases civic participation across the three post-conflict countries, again highlighting sur-

vivors' social mobilization. However, the evidence for political trust is mixed, and the effect of CRSV on interethnic relations is insignificant across countries.

Research Gap

While the two strands of research briefly introduced above have generated important insights into how wartime violence shapes trust decisions, and how exposure to sexual violence impacts survivors' social environment and mobilization, the question of how the exposure to sexual violence shapes (group-based) trust decisions has received little empirical attention. This study aims to contribute to the literature by taking into account understudied aspects of previous research on the impact of wartime violence on social trust.

Instead of focusing on generalized trust, we investigate ethnic in- and out-group trust separately. To derive meaningful implications for the rebuilding of ethnic relations requires the identification of the relevant in- and out-group. Taking into account the specific nature of the Sri Lankan conflict, we hone in on the perspective of the Tamil population – the primarily victimized group – and investigate i) Tamils' trust in the relevant out-group, members of the Sinhalese ethnicity, and ii) in members of their own ethnic group.

The dynamics of the civil war, and of wartime violence perpetrated and experienced, clearly varied along ethnic lines. The main perpetrator of sexual violence during the Sri Lankan civil war was the Sinhalese-dominated state, and the predominantly victimized group were the Tamil. It is thus likely that the effect of wartime sexual violence is not uniformly observable across groups. Studies that construct averages of out-group trust across all groups thus neglect the specific nature of the conflict, both in their theoretical and empirical approach.

Furthermore, we argue that in order to treat ethnic in-group and ethnic out-group trust as the conceptually distinct trust decisions they are, they must be measured separately. Lumping these two trust forms together assumes that one is conditional on the other, or in other words, that ethnic in- and out-group trust is a zero-sum game. Although it is

commonly assumed that in times of conflict trust in the own ethnic group increases at the expense of trust in other ethnic groups, empirical evidence for this hypothesis is scarce (see e.g. Ingelaere and Verpoorten 2020). Hence, to capture the complex inter- *and* intra-ethnic group relations inherent to the Sri Lankan conflict requires to investigate ethnic out- and in-group trust separately. Thus, we look at Tamil's trust in members of the Sinhalese ethnicity and in members of their own ethnic group as two independent outcomes.[5]

Moreover, instead of measuring the impact of being exposed to any form of violence, or to a number of different events, we specifically explore the impact of personal exposure to sexual violence. It has commonly been argued and demonstrated that sexual violence has a particularly detrimental and lasting impact on survivors. Sexual violence constitutes a severe trust violation, i.e., a strong violation of one's expectation of others. Furthermore, as mentioned above, patterns of sexual violence varied by ethnicity. Therefore, it is particularly important to study the legacy of wartime sexual violence for ethnic group trust in the context of Sri Lanka's post-war reconciliation.

Finally, the pattern of sexual violence not only varied by ethnicity, but also by gender. Numerous studies have called into question the entrenched gender stereotypes which view men as perpetrators, and women as victims of sexual violence during civil wars. For instance, a population-based study from eastern DRC documents that 30% of women and 22% of men experienced conflict-related sexual violence (Johnson et al. 2010). A recent study in Sri Lanka has shown that men were twice as likely as women to have experienced sexual violence during the civil war (Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag 2019).

[5]These two aspects distinguish this study from González and Traunmüller (2020) who study the mediating role of in-group favoritism for political participation of sexual violence survivors. Their broader focus on all ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, and the conceptual approach of defining all ethnic groups apart from the respondent's own as one homogeneous out-group does not allow to capture the specificity of ethnic relations in wartime or post-war Sri Lanka. Our focus on the Tamil population's attitudes towards members of the key out-group, the Sinhalese, accounts for the nature of the conflict which was fought between the Sinhalese-dominated government and the Tamil-dominated LTTE. Furthermore, we acknowledge another important characteristic of this civil war: as in other asymmetric conflicts, the Sri Lankan civil war was characterized by suspicion and fear *within* Tamil communities. How exposure to wartime violence shapes Tamils' trust in their own group thus deserves attention. These patterns cannot be captured when in-group trust is i) averaged across groups, and ii) only evaluated in relation to average out-group trust.

Yet, both the extensive qualitative and the emerging quantitative literature on the social consequences of conflict-related sexual violence predominantly speak to female victimization. Even in the few studies that include both women and men, the framing of survey questions or vignettes often only speaks to female victims (see e.g., Koos and Lindsey (2022): "When a woman was raped, she usually will have done something careless to put herself in that situation" and "The wife of a dear family friend of yours was raped").

As such, the social consequences of sexual violence for men have rarely been systematically explored, let alone been contrasted with those of female survivors. Shedding light on whether and how the social legacies of wartime sexual violence differ for men and women is crucial to inform the designing of policies and programs for survivors. To that end, our study is – to the best of our knowledge – the first to build and test theories on the gendered consequences of sexual violence.

4 The Impact of Wartime Sexual Violence on Ethnic Trust

We investigate the effect of wartime sexual violence on ethnic in-group and ethnic out-group trust. Ethnic in-group trust is "depersonalized, extended to any member of the ingroup whether personally related or not" (Brewer 1999, 433). Similarly, trust towards the ethnic out-group as a whole is evaluated based on their defining identity. During the Sri Lankan civil war (and arguably still today), the society was divided into two significant groups: the majority Sinhalese and the Tamils, the largest minority group. In this study, we focus on the Tamil population's perspective given that they were the primarily victimized group in this conflict.[6] Thus, ethnic in-group trust refers to trust in members of the Tamil ethnic group, while ethnic out-group trust refers to trust in individuals of Sinhalese ethnicity.

[6]This is supported by island-wide representative survey data: only 10% of Sinhalese respondents report that they were directly exposed to any (out of 16) war-related events (Kijewski and Rapp 2019). In contrast, 62% of Tamil respondents were directly exposed to any war-related event (see Table B.1 in the Appendix).

The general expectation is that particularly the exposure to ethnic conflict increases the sense of belonging to one's own group, while at the same time increasing out-group demarcation (Brewer 1999; Horowitz 2001). Evidence that systematically explores inter- and intra-group trust post-war remains scarce, however. One exception is Ingelaere and Verpoorten (2020) who find that inter-ethnic group trust decreases in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, whereas intra-ethnic group trust remains unchanged. This study highlights the importance of looking beyond generalized trust and measuring individual's trust towards their relevant in- and out-group. In a lab-in-the-field public good allocation game in Kosovo Whitt (2021) demonstrates that conflict-related victimization intensifies out-group distrust and increases parochial bias towards the in-group.

Within the specific context of Sri Lanka, the argument for why we would expect out-group trust to diminish is straightforward. The Sri Lankan civil war is strongly characterized by inter-ethnic competition between the Sinhalese and Tamils (Samarasinghe 2012). The minority Tamil experienced marginalization and exclusion at the hands of their out-group, the majority Sinhalese, which ultimately fuelled the secessionist conflict. According to Samarasinghe (2012, 346), "The ethnic conflict dominated every aspect of Sri Lankan society for the past 30 years and has had a devastating effect on the lives of people, especially in the war-torn Northern and Eastern provinces of the island".

Moreover, the experience of sexual violence constitutes a severe trust violation, i.e., a strong violation of one's expectation of others. During the conflict, sexual violence was widely perpetrated by Sri Lankan state forces against members of the Tamil group (OISL 2015; Wood 2009; Meger 2016; Deane 2016; Human Rights Watch 2013). Therefore, we expect that out-group membership serves as a clear marker for untrustworthiness and hostility. Victims of sexual violence have first-hand experiences that the out-group cannot be trusted. Thus, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: Victims of sexual violence have lower levels of ethnic out-group trust.

According to Brewer (1999, 436), "the perception that an outgroup constitutes a threat

to ingroup interests or survival creates a circumstance in which identification and interdependence with the ingroup is directly associated with fear and hostility toward the threatening outgroup and vice versa". As such, it is often assumed that the same (evolutionary) processes that increase inter-group competition simultaneously increase intra-group cohesion and cooperation (Ingelaere and Verpoorten 2020). Research in social psychology shows that trusting members of your in-group can function as a safety net in times of crisis (Hogg, Meehan, and Farquharson 2010; Navarro-Carrillo et al. 2018). Individuals rely on information, assistance, and shared resources from others. In short, the cooperation of fellow in-group members is needed for survival and thus, in-group members are expected to have a high incentive to offer support in times of threat (Brewer 1999). However, these hypotheses have so far received little empirical support.

Two recent studies by Hager, Krakowski, and Schaub (2019) and Krakowski (2020) argue that the mixed or non-findings with respect to in-group trust or cooperation might be explained by different types of warfare. Focusing on Kyrgyzstan and Colombia, respectively, they show that asymmetric war characterized by suspicion and fear within groups due to denunciations and a lack of support reduces within-group cohesion (Hager, Krakowski, and Schaub 2019; Krakowski 2020). Therefore, it is important to account for the specific context of the conflict. The LTTE ran a widespread and well organized intelligence network and the uncertainty about who was LTTE and who was not severely impacted trust within the Tamil community (Thiranagama 2011). Tamils who were suspected of being 'traitors', i.e., disloyal to the LTTE (or merely denunciated as such) were brutally tortured (Gowrinathan and Mampilly 2019). According to Somasundaram and Jamunanatha (2002, 229), "false accusations and revenge were very common" within the Tamil community.

We expect individuals who have experienced sexual violence to have particularly low levels of trust in their ethnic in-group for two reasons: i) during community raids by the Sri Lankan military, a member of the community would be "ordered to identify from a line of fellow villagers anyone suspected of connections with the LTTE" (Derges 2013, 47). As such,

even if the perpetrator belonged to the out-group, survivors of sexual violence might blame fellow Tamils for not keeping them safe. ii) although cases of sexual violence committed by the LTTE were rare, there were instances of sexual torture against members of rivalling Tamil rebel organizations (Wood 2009). Therefore, individuals who experienced sexual violence at the hands of in-group members have reason to distrust the in-group perpetrators, but also members of their community who might have denunciated them as being disloyal to the LTTE. Thus, the second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: Victims of sexual violence have lower levels of ethnic in-group trust.

How does the personal experience of sexual violence during civil war affect women's and men's trust? So far, we have formulated general expectations for how the experience of sexual violence shapes ethnic group trust for the Tamil population. Furthermore, we argue that the experience of sexual violence during civil war influences individual's social trust decisively, but not uniformly. More specifically, we expect women's and men's psychological foundation and social environment to be differently impacted by the experience of sexual violence. We will elaborate on this theoretical distinction in the following.

Previous studies on the impact of conflict-related violence on trust do not account for gendered relationships, therefore it is difficult to base expectations on previous insights. Outside the context of civil war (or victimization more broadly), in a behavioral trust game, Haselhuhn et al. (2015) find that women's trust is less affected by untrustworthy behavior, and women are more likely than men to regain trust following a trust violation.[7] They find no significant differences in trust levels at the beginning. In contrast, a longitudinal study across 91 countries finds that women's levels of trust in others is always slightly below that of men, stating as potential explanation that women are more frequently subjected to discrimination (Cho 2016).

While much is still unknown about how women and men process trauma, we know that coping – "cognitive and behavioral efforts in response to a threat" (Tamres, Janicki, and

[7]Note, however, that the trust violation consisted of not receiving a payment or receiving a faulty delivery and the participants were US American university students, i.e., the contexts are not comparable.

Helgeson 2002, 3) – and help-seeking strategies differ by gender. Women are more likely to seek and to be offered help – be it by their immediate family, their broader community or professionals (Vishnevsky et al. 2010; Strang et al. 2020). The psychological literature offers two explanations for this pattern: differences in gender socialization, i.e., women are encouraged to turn to others for help, whereas men are discouraged because asking for help signifies weakness, or biologically based differences, i.e., whereas women "tend-and-befriend" (Taylor et al. 2000), men "fight-or-flight" and might be more likely to use avoidance and withdrawal if the stressor is perceived as uncontrollable (Tamres, Janicki, and Helgeson 2002).[8]

For instance, Koos (2018) shows that communities in Sierra Leone engage in traditional rituals of healing and reintegration on behalf of women who have been victims of conflict-related sexual violence which ultimately allows women to overcome experienced traumatic events. Especially in the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka, women created grass-roots organizations to offer support to other vulnerable women (Gowrinathan and Mampilly 2019; Somasundaram 2004; Derges 2013). The successful formation of self-supporting community groups was "in part due to the focus on women's health and wellbeing by the various NGOs" (Derges 2013, 60). Receiving social support is particularly beneficial for "physical and mental health during periods of high stress" (Taylor 2012, 190), which the aftermath of sexual violence certainly qualifies for. As such, we argue that women are more likely to feel supported by, and connected to their community and ethnic in-group.

H2A: Female victims of sexual violence have higher levels of ethnic in-group trust.

Men, on the other hand, are generally less likely to rely on external or internal support networks. In Sri Lanka, the social stigma surrounding sexual violence is even more pronounced for men compared to women. In addition, men who come forward are at heightened risk to being criminalized. The Sri Lankan legal framework recognizes exclusively women as

[8] "Tending involves nurturant activities designed to protect the self and offspring that may promote safety and reduce distress. Befriending is the creation and maintenance of social networks, especially those involving other women, that may aid in this process" (Taylor 2012, 201). The behaviors of "fight-or-flight", on the other hand, encompass aggression or withdrawal.

victims of rape and only men as perpetrators. Rape of men is equated with homosexuality, which is illegal in Sri Lanka (Touquet 2018). Apart from not receiving legal support, several male survivors of sexual violence, interviewed by the International Truth and Justice Project, reported that they have not told anyone about their experience due to the fear of being ostracized from their communities (ibid., 44). Furthermore, NGO programs that focus on health and well-being rarely include men – especially in the context of sexual violence – leading to "a greater sense of isolation" among men (Derges 2013, 60).[9] Therefore, we argue that men are more likely to feel alienated from, and excluded by their community and ethnic in-group in the aftermath of sexual violence.

H2B: Male victims of sexual violence have lower levels of ethnic in-group trust.

In a similar vein, precisely because women differently address and are thus better equipped to overcome their traumatic experiences, we expect gendered differences in ethnic out-group trust. Women are more likely to actively struggle with their experience, whereas men are more likely to suppress and avoid their trauma (Vishnevsky et al. 2010). At private or collective healing events "it was the women who seemed to be openly articulating the collective distress through their tears, possession trance states and generally greater willingness to share their stories and those of their brothers, fathers and other male relatives" (Derges 2013, 137). Whereas women verbalized their own experience and that of the men in their lives, especially young men participated in a silent ritual that "seeks to restore through catharsis the power of body, spirit and community" (ibid., 141).

Women's emotion-focused coping strategies embody a process that involves "thinking about the event, trying to make sense of it, and trying to work through it cognitively" (Vishnevsky et al. 2010, 118). These mechanisms are inherent to the development of what is known as post-traumatic growth (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004), i.e., "the subjective experience of positive psychological change reported by an individual as result of the struggle with trauma" (Zoellner and Maercker 2006, 628). As a consequence, we expect that women

[9]For a detailed account on the lack of adequate response and medical care for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, see Chynoweth, Freccero, and Touquet (2017) and Cottet (2020).

are more likely to come to terms with their personal experiences. Furthermore, we expect women to be more likely to reconcile with members of the ethnic out-group.

According to Aiken (2014, 42), "reconciliation after periods of mass group-based violence in divided societies must [...] include a degree of positive 'social learning' between former antagonists". Positive social learning involves social and psychological processes – a transformative moment – that can offer the opportunity to replace former negative beliefs about the out-group with more positive relationships (ibid., 42f). While we have found reports of women's organizations which facilitated inter-ethnic networking and dialogue during and after the Sri Lankan conflict (Tripp 2018; Hewamanne 2009; Satkunanathan and Rainford 2009), allowing women to bond and forge friendships over shared violent experiences, we could not find any accounts supporting inter-ethnic reconciliation among men. Thus, we expect the following gendered relationships:

H1A: Female victims of sexual violence have higher levels of ethnic out-group trust.

H1B: Male victims of sexual violence have lower levels of ethnic out-group trust.

5 Civil War in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan civil war that lasted almost three decades (1983–2009) is a product "of colonial historiography, the racialization of Sri Lanka's diverse population, and postcolonial ethnic conflict and discrimination" (Thiranagama 2011, 21). Ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese (the majority group) and the Tamil (the largest minority group) are a legacy of British colonial rule which favored Sri Lankan Tamils (Wood 2009; Holt 2011; Mampilly 2011). Post-independence, the Sinhalese-dominated government introduced discriminatory policies such as the 'Sinhala-only' policy of 1956 "to redress disadvantages Sinhalese had experienced under colonial rule" (OISL 2015, 12) – and to attract votes of the ethnic majority (Samarasinghe 2012).[10] These policies further sparked ethnic tensions. Mostly non-

[10]This strategy "culminated in the almost total exclusion of the Tamil community from the military, civil service, and academic sectors by the early 1970s" (Mampilly 2011, 101).

violent civil unrest transformed into a violent uprising in the 1970's following numerous state-sponsored anti-Tamil riots (Seoighe 2016; Deane 2016).

By the mid-1970s, increasingly militant Tamil groups started demanding a separate state, 'Tamil Eelam', a Tamil homeland in the northern and eastern provinces of the country, where Tamils constitute the majority of the population. In 1976, the Tamil rebel group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eeelam emerged from its predecessor, the Tamil New Tigers formed in 1972. Competition between different militant Tamil groups resulted in a brutal 'fratricide' (Somasundaram and Jamunanatha 2002, 213) from which the LTTE emerged as most brutal and ultimately successful group (Seoighe 2016; Staniland 2014).[11] This time was characterized by violent clashes of state security forces, Sinhalese gangs and Tamil groups (Holt 2011).

In the end, it was acts of retaliation that escalated into civil war. In July 1983, the LTTE killed 13 soldiers in a revenge attack after government forces had committed a 'cultural genocide' by burning down the Jaffna library (Seoighe 2016). This was then followed by widespread and violent state-sponsored anti-Tamil riots targeting both Sri Lanka and Indian Tamils, killing thousands and leaving at least 100,000 displaced (Wood 2009; Holt 2011; OISL 2015; Deane 2016; Seoighe 2016). These events, commonly known as 'Black July', are generally understood as the beginning of the civil war between the government and the LTTE (Wood 2009; OISL 2015).

In May 2009, Sri Lanka's state forces declared victory and control over the entire island after annihilation of the LTTE leadership. Geographically, the violent conflict was concentrated in the northern and the eastern provinces populated by Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils. Especially in the north, civilians got caught between the government military and rebel forces. In the final stages, many civilians were displaced, trying to flee from the combat zones. The government engaged in gross human rights violations by shelling civilian-inhabited "No Fire Zones" as well as hospitals and aid operations (Gowrinathan and

[11]For a detailed account of the different Tamil militant organizations, their evolution, the brutal intra-group competition and the LTTE's rise to power, see Staniland (2014) and Mampilly (2011).

Cronin-Furman 2015). It is estimated that the civil war killed more than 100,000 civilians, over 50,000 combatants, and left up to 800,000 people displaced (Holt 2011).

Prevalence of Sexual Violence

Sexual violence has been widespread during the Sri Lankan civil war and was primarily perpetrated by armed Sri Lankan state actors (OISL 2015; Wood 2009; Meger 2016; Deane 2016; Human Rights Watch 2013). In addition, members of the Indian Peacekeeping Forces (who were involved from 1987–1990) committed crimes against the Tamil population, including sexual violence against both girls and women as well as boys and men (Thiranagama 2011; Touquet 2018; Wood 2009). While the LTTE committed violence against civilians, sexual violence seemingly was not part of their 'repertoire' (Wood 2009).[12] According to reports, the LTTE had a 'zero tolerance policy' towards sexual violence (Loken, Lake, and Cronin-Furman 2018) which they enforced through severe punishment of disobedient members (Touquet 2018). This leadership strategy is also in accordance with Tamil cultural norms which "condemn sexual relations between unmarried persons, cross-caste relations, and rape of nonspouses" (Wood 2009, 149). The LTTE leadership appears to have made one exception, however: in her review of reports, Wood (2009) found a limited number of cases of sexual torture of members of rivalling Tamil rebel organizations.[13]

According to Meger (2016, 70)'s typology of wartime sexual violence, Sri Lanka serves as typical case of an ideological conflict where government armies and state-sponsored armed groups "employ sexual violence in a campaign of general terrorization and punishment against the uprising and its would-be supporters". In contrast to 'rape as recreation' (to reward troops or for individual pleasure), targeted rape (or targeted sexual violence more

[12]Note that a recent data collection effort found one report of LTTE members raping civilians during one incident in 1995 which was, however, not corroborated by other sources consulted by the authors and never occurred in any of the other conflict years (Dumaine et al. 2021).

[13]Given that the LTTE was characterized by a "unified command structure with top-down control over the entire organization" (Mampilly 2011, 10) it is likely that the use of sexual violence by the LTTE against (suspected) non-supporters was strategic and ordered. Furthermore, these reports are in line with the LTTE's general approach of using "brutal methods for stifling internal dissent" (ibid., 213).

broadly) is part of a national security agenda "directed against civilians as a means of instilling fear into the population to discourage them from supporting the rebel group or to punish civilians for their perceived support of the rebels" (Meger 2016, 72). Sexual violence "may have been part of a broader government effort to instill terror in the Tamil community" (Human Rights Watch 2013, 4) and was frequently used as an instrument of torture against alleged LTTE supporters to gather intelligence or to get them to sign a forced false confession (Human Rights Watch 2013; Meger 2016).[14]

State-sponsored sexual violence during the Sri Lankan civil war can be classified into two categories (Wood 2009): custodial rape and sexual torture of Tamil men and women in detention centers, and the rape of Tamil girls and women at checkpoints and during military or police operations (such as community raids on suspected sympathizers of insurgents). Apart from state-sponsored violence, the civil war exacerbated the "systemic vulnerability" of women (Kostovicova, Bojicic-Dzelilovic, and Henry 2020; Galtung 1990) and reinforced already existing patterns of gender-based violence within Tamil communities (Gowrinathan and Cronin-Furman 2015). During conflicts, women are at heightened risk to experience sexual violence at the hands of different perpetrators, not only by members of armed groups but also within their homes and within their communities (Østby, Leiby, and Nordås 2019; Cohen, Green, and Wood 2013; Derges 2013; Kostovicova, Bojicic-Dzelilovic, and Henry 2020).

Despite considerable efforts to document human rights violations by domestic as well as international organizations, it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable estimates of the prevalence of sexual violence due to underreporting (Somasundaram 2008; Cohen, Green, and Wood 2013; Nordås and Cohen 2021). There are several reasons why sexual violence is underreported in general, and during as well as post-conflict in particular, such as a lack of resources available to human right's groups (who were often prohibited to work in Sri Lanka by the government), scarcity of medical tests (intentionally or unintentionally), and

[14]In many cases, members of the Tamil community deterred by the state were forced to sign a confession in Sinhala, a language most of them are not fluent in (Touquet 2018).

a virtually non-existing legal protection. Laws passed in the early stages of the conflict not only undermined legal protection, but "legalized the violation of human rights" (Deane 2016, 975). The Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1979 allowed for the arrest and detention of anyone "suspected of being involved in any unlawful activities" and the Emergency Regulation of 1983 "gave the military the power to arrest any suspect, interrogate and convict them as they deemed fit" (ibid., 974f.).

Post-war Sri Lanka is characterized by widespread impunity. The government continues to deny allegations of mass atrocities (Loken, Lake, and Cronin-Furman 2018; Cronin-Furman 2020).[15] Only two cases where government forces raped and murdered two Tamil women resulted in conviction of the perpetrators (Loken, Lake, and Cronin-Furman 2018). With respect to cases of state-perpetrated sexual violence against men, "[d]espite credible evidence of sexual violence and consequent international outrage, no wartime or postwar administration has pursued inquiries or investigations into cases of male victims" (Cronin-Furman 2017; Loken, Lake, and Cronin-Furman 2018, 761).

Not only are victims unlikely to receive legal protection and justice, they also face threats of retaliation were they to come forward: "torture survivors are reluctant to complain about torture out of fear for reprisals, re-arrest and torture or harm to relations" (Somasundaram 2008, 11). Survivors of sexual violence are also confronted with severe social stigma and shame due to inherent norms of chastity and virginity (ibid.). Survivors of sexual abuse, both women and men, are perceived to be 'contaminated' (Touquet 2018, 43). Furthermore, the Sri Lankan legal framework recognizes exclusively women as victims of rape and only men as perpetrators. Moreover, homosexuality is illegal in Sri Lanka, meaning that if male victims of sexual violence were to press charges they would likely be themselves charged with sodomy (ibid.). As such, survivors of sexual violence often stay silent. In this context, list

[15]Instead, the Sri Lankan government "created a series of weak accountability institutions" (Cronin-Furman 2020, 123) and reacted to international and domestic pressure by engaging in a small number of high-profile cases of state-perpetrated rape against female Tamil civilians. Loken, Lake, and Cronin-Furman (2018) report a total of 14 cases where the government initiated criminal inquiries, leading to criminal convictions against members of Sri Lanka's security forces in only two instances.

experiments are ideal to elicit individuals' personal experience of sexual violence without them having to reveal (or even elaborate on) their experience to the interviewer.

6 Research Design

The Survey

To examine the relationship between sexual violence and ethnic group trust, we use a subsample of Tamil respondents ($N = 706$) from a representative survey of the Sri Lankan population that was fielded in 2016 (first introduced in Fatke and Freitag 2019).[16] Respondents were sampled using multistage stratified random sample with oversampling of Tamils to ensure sufficient representation of this ethnic minority group central to the Sri Lankan civil war (more details on the survey and sampling can be found in the Appendix A). Face-to-face interviews were conducted at the homes of respondents in all 25 district of Sri Lanka. The average respondent in the Tamil sample is 40 years old and has received a medium level of education. The sample is predominantly Hindu (78%) and 65% female (which corresponds to the spike in female headed households in Tamil-dominated areas). 10% of the respondents have been active members, and 7% assisted armed groups during the civil war. 62% were directly exposed to war events (see Table B.1 in the Appendix for full summary statistics).

In addition to a 16-item battery covering a broad range of questions on direct war experiences, including sexual violence, a list experiment eliciting personal experience of sexual violence was embedded in the survey (Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag 2019). To that end, respondents were randomly assigned to either treatment or control group at the beginning of the interview (see Table D.1 in the Appendix for balance along covariates).[17] Both

[16]The survey includes a total of $N = 1,800$ respondents from the four major ethnic groups: Sinhalese, Sri Lanka Tamil, Indian Tamil, and Sri Lanka Muslim. We only use the subset of respondents who belong to the Tamil ethnic group. While the survey sample is representative of the island-wide population (see e.g. Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag 2019), we can unfortunately not speak to whether the sub-sample of Tamil respondents is representative of the Tamil population as census data broken down by ethnicity are not available.

[17]To further demonstrate that randomization was successful, we show that neither the response to the

groups received the same survey questions covering socio-demographics as well as topics of social and political life during and after the conflict. Following recommendations in the literature, the direct question on sexual violence was asked after the list experiment. Furthermore, the risk of priming effects was reduced by ensuring sufficient time and amount of questions relating to other topics in between the indirect and the direct question on sexual violence (Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag 2019).

The benefit of list experiments is that they offer an unobtrusive measurement, i.e., they reduce social desirability bias by persuading respondents that they can express sensitive information without anyone (including the interviewer) being aware they have done so (Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens 1997, 327). To that end, respondents are randomly assigned to either the control or treatment group. Respondents in the control group are asked to report the number of affirmative items from a list of J control items. Respondents in the treatment group are asked to count the number of affirmative items in the list of $J + 1$ items, containing the same J control items and one additional sensitive item of interest. Let C_i represent the reported count for this list experiment. For the respondents in the control group, C_i takes an integer between 0 and J. For those in the treatment group, C_i is an integer ranging from 0 to $J + 1$.

In the list experiment by Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag (2019) re-used here, the control group was presented with three statements. The treatment group received an additional fourth statement, i.e., the sensitive item asking about personal experience of sexual violence. Thus, the reported count of events experienced by respondents in the control group ranges from 0 to $J = 3$, whereas for respondents in the treatment group the reported count of events experienced ranges from 0 to $J + 1 = 4$. From the difference in the average number of items (i.e., number of events personally experienced) confirmed in each group, we can infer the prevalence of the sensitive item, i.e., sexual violence. Below is the exact wording used in the list experiment (wherein the final statement was only presented to the treatment

direct question on sexual violence nor the level of ethnic group trust is correlated with treatment assignment (see Table D.2 and Table D.3 in the Appendix).

group):

Now we would like to ask you some more questions about what happened during the war. Please refer to the following list and tell me how many of the experiences happened to you during the war. Please don't tell me which specific statements you believe to be true, only how many.

- *I won money in a lottery or competition.*
- *I was involved in an accident.*
- *I received help from a stranger.*
- *I was personally sexually assaulted.*

Thus, respondents were not asked to reveal if they personally experienced sexual assault (as in the direct question), but were merely asked to count the number of experiences that happened to them during the war, and then gave the interviewer that number. Please note that the statements were constructed in a way which made it highly unlikely that any person had experienced all of them to avoid that interviewers could infer respondents' experience of sexual violence from them stating they had experienced the maximum number of events, i.e., 4. Overall, the most common response was that none of these events happened during the war (the median response in both control and treatment group).[18] Only a fraction of respondents had experienced all listed events (1.4% in the control and 0.6% in the treatment group).

Table 1 displays the responses to the list experiment and the direct questioning about sexual violence, replicating the analysis of Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag (2019) for the sub-sample of Tamil respondents. Before we look at the substantial results, we want to highlight the issue of underreporting of sexual violence that is also reflected in the data. When respondents were asked directly if they had been personally sexually assaulted (as part of the 16-item battery mentioned above), 39% chose not to respond. In contrast, all respondents were comfortable to answer the question when asked as part of the list experiment, underscoring the suitability of list experiments to elicit experience of sexual

[18]Please note that the distribution of responses is not ideal and an issue of list design. The objective is to design statements in such a way that both the probability of occurrence of none and of all events is close to zero to ensure respondents' privacy (Ahlquist 2018).

violence as demonstrated in previous research (see e.g. Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag 2019; González and Traunmüller 2020; Cullen 2020; Koos and Traunmüller 2022).

Table 1: Summary of the responses to list experiment and direct question about sexual violence.

	List Experiment				Direct Question		
	Control Group		Treatment Group				
Response value	N	%	N	%	Response value	N	%
0	239	67.13	214	61.14	No	411	58.22
1	92	25.84	94	26.86	Yes	19	2.69
2	20	5.62	33	9.43			
3	5	1.40	7	2.00			
4			2	0.57			
Non-response					Non-response	276	39.09
Total	356		350		Total	706	

Notes: The table displays the number of respondents for each observed response value and its proportions, separately for the control and treatment group, as well as the responses to the direct question. The proportions do not sum to 100% due to rounding. Simple difference-in-means estimation for treatment (mean = 0.540) and control group (mean = 0.413) indicates that 12.7% of respondents experienced sexual violence, which is much higher than the corresponding figure of 2.69% from the direct question.

As noted above, the most striking difference between the direct question and the list experiment is the pattern of non-response (0% in the list experiment vs. 39% in the direct question). The second striking difference becomes apparent if we look at men and women separately: both the degree of non-response and of underreporting varies by gender (see Tables C.1 and C.2 in the Appendix). 47% of male and 35% of female respondents chose not to respond to the direct question. Of those that do respond, among women 3.27% and among men 1.62% state they had personally experienced sexual violence. For women, this figure corresponds closely to that resulting from the the list experiment which reveals that 4% have experienced sexual violence. For men, on the other hand, the result for the direct question diverts drastically from that of the list experiment. The list experiment reveals that 29% of men have experienced sexual violence. Thus, the list experiment demonstrates that men's degree of non-reporting and of underreporting exceeds that of women decisively.

Modelling the List Experiment

Having explored the descriptive group-level differences, we now want to investigate individual's experience of sexual violence as predictor (independent variable) for ethnic in- and out-group trust, the outcome of interest (dependent variable). In general, the model to analyze the list experiment can be expressed in the following, simplified linear regression model (cf. Imai, Park, and Greene 2015, 185):[19]

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta^T * X_i + \gamma * Z^*_{i,J+1} + \zeta * C^*_i + \epsilon_i \tag{1}$$

The main parameter of interest is γ, i.e., the coefficient for the latent response to the sensitive item. Given that we cannot observe individuals' number of affirmative responses to the J control items, $C^*_i = \Sigma^J_{j=1} Z^*_{ij}$, or the number of affirmative responses to the $J+1$ sensitive item $Z^*_{i,J+1}$, we need to make use of a more complex methodology introduced by Imai (2011) and Blair and Imai (2012) to analyze list experiments. The estimation employs modelling techniques developed by Imai, Park, and Greene (2015) which allow to use the predicted (latent) individual experience of sexual violence as explanatory variable in a multivariate regression model (following the approach first used in González and Traunmüller 2020).

To that end, the (unobserved) individual propensity to affirmatively answer the sensitive question in the list experiment (*I was personally sexually assaulted)* as a function of respondent's characteristics is estimated and these predicted values are included into the outcome regression model. The benefit of the one-step maximum-likelihood (ML) estimator offered by the *R*-package 'list' initially developed by Blair and Imai (2012) and extended by Imai, Park, and Greene (2015) is that it allows to simultaneously model the response to the sensitive item, the control items, and the outcome of interest. As such, this one-step estimator incorporates all the information from the data in the likelihood framework and is therefore fully efficient (ibid.).

[19] We follow the notation by Imai (2011), Blair and Imai (2012), and Imai, Park, and Greene (2015).

Despite the many advantages of this methodological approach and the benefits of the ML-estimator, it is not without caveats. Due to constraints of the model, we cannot include interaction terms to measure the distinct effect of sexual violence for men and women. Instead, we split the sample by gender. Furthermore, the ML-estimator is difficult to compute, sensitive to the inclusion of covariates (as the inclusion of either too few or too many can lead to computational instability), and sensitive to list design (Ahlquist 2018). Nevertheless, we argue that for shedding light on the research question studied here, the benefits outweigh the costs. Still, the limitations must be kept in mind when interpreting the results.

Independent Variable

Sexual violence, as defined by Wood (2009, 133), "includes rape, sexual torture and mutilation, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, enforced sterilization, and forced pregnancy". Within the list experiment, respondents were not asked for the specific types of sexual violence they experienced, but merely whether they experienced any form of sexual assault during the conflict. One advantage of that approach is that the measurement here is broader and more inclusive in that it also encompasses non-physical violence such as sexual humiliation, coercion or verbal assault (forms of sexual violence that were frequently used during the conflict to e.g., torture detainees or harass women at checkpoints).[20] Furthermore, survivors of sexual violence do not have to revisit their experiences in such great detail which might also result in triggering unwanted memories.

One caveat of this approach obviously is loss of information and precision: we learn whether respondents have experienced sexual violence during the civil war, but we do not obtain any information about the perpetrators (e.g., members of state militaries, nonstate armed actors, or family members), the location (e.g., within their community, in detention centers or at checkpoints), or the type and frequency of the crime committed against respon-

[20] As such, the definition used here accounts for critique that common definitions which focus exclusively on penetrative rape are "too narrow and may ultimately miss or misrepresent the sexualised nature of violence against men" (Leiby 2009, 137).

dents. As the primary aim was to be able to elicit whether individuals had been subject to sexual violence during war, this method was the most suitable for this objective (confirmed by the perfect response rate for the list experiment).

Dependent Variable

We distinguish between trust in the ethnic in-group and the relevant ethnic out-group, i.e., trust in fellow Tamils or in Sinhalese. We code these two variables based on a survey question that reads as follows: *"I'd like to ask you how much you trust people from various groups in Sri Lanka.*[21] *Could you tell me for each whether you trust people from this group completely, somewhat, not very much, or not at all?"*. The scale ranges from 1 (Do not trust at all) to 7 (Trust completely). This measurement approach allows us to test more fine-grained arguments about the effect of experiencing sexual violence on the two dimensions of group-based trust. The distributions of the two dependent variables, ethnic in-group trust and ethnic out-group trust, are plotted in Figures B.1 and B.2 in the Appendix.

Control Variables

We include a limited set of control variables that plausibly have an impact on both the likelihood to experience sexual violence and trusting behavior for two reasons: a) adding too many predictors may lead to computational instability due to the complexity of the estimation (Imai, Park, and Greene 2015), and b) almost perfect balance along covariates in treatment and control group. We include a dummy variable for personal experience of displacement as this group is particularly vulnerable to experience violence in general, and sexual violence in particular (see Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag 2019). For the same reason, we include the respondent's age and a dummy for whether the respondent had assisted

[21]The groups listed in the questionnaire were Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamil, Indian Tamil, Sri Lankan Muslim, Burgher, Malay, and Indians. We code Tamils' average trust in Sri Lankan Tamils and Indian Tamils as in-group trust, and Tamils' trust in Sinhalese as out-group trust. Trust in the other groups included in the questionnaire is not the focus of this study.

an armed group as control variables. In addition, we include dummy variables for whether the respondent lives in the northern province (where the fighting was most pronounced) and belongs to the group of Sri Lankan Tamils (who were most often targets of sexual violence). Lastly, a measure of respondent's number of traumatic events experienced outside the war and number of direct and indirect war experiences (other than sexual violence) is included. The exact wording for these two survey questions can be found in the Appendix A.3. As these variables are skewed (see Figure B.3 and B.4), we use the natural logarithm of the additive scale. In the full sample models, we additionally control for respondent's gender.

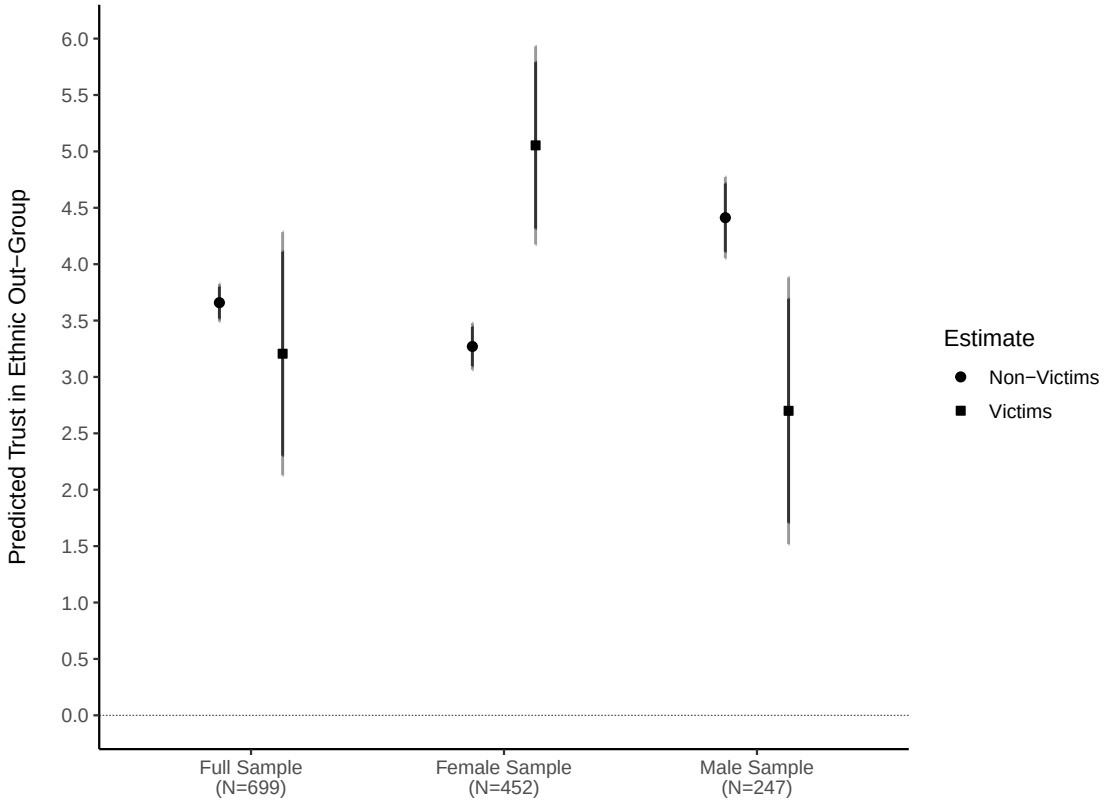
7 Results

In the following, we present our empirical findings for the full sample of Tamil respondents, the sub-sample of Tamil women, and the sub-sample of Tamil men. In all three models, the respective outcome (ethnic out-group or in-group trust) is regressed on individual experience of sexual violence as well as the set of individual-level covariates specified above. The following figures graphically summarize the predicted levels of trust among victims (β_{Z_1}) and non-victims (β_{Z_0}) of sexual violence. The predicted differences in average levels of trust between non-victims and victims (δ) are plotted in Figures E.1 and E.2 in the Appendix. We begin with the results for trust in the ethnic out-group as summarized in Figure 1.

Ethnic Out-Group Trust

In the full sample, we do not find a significant difference ($\delta = -0.45$, 90%CI=-1.37,+0.46) in ethnic out-group trust between victims of sexual violence ($\beta_{Z_1} = 3.21$) and non-victims ($\beta_{Z_0} = 3.66$). When investigating the relationship by gender, it becomes obvious that the null-finding for the full sample is driven by opposing effects for women and men. For female victims of sexual violence, the level of trust in their ethnic out-group increases from $\beta_{Z_0} = 3.27$ to $\beta_{Z_1} = 5.05$. This difference of $\delta = +1.78$ points is statistically significant at the

Figure 1: Trust in Ethnic Out-Group



Notes: The coefficients display the predicted levels of trust in the ethnic out-group for victims of sexual violence (rectangle) and non-victims of sexual violence (dot). Vertical bars display 95% (light grey) and 90% (dark grey) confidence intervals.

95% level (95% CI: +0.88, +2.69). For male victims of sexual assault, on the other hand, the trust in their ethnic out-group decreases from 4.41 to 2.70. The difference of $\delta = -1.71$ points is statistically significant at the 95% level (95% CI: -2.95, -0.47).

Thus, while we do not find empirical support for *H1*, the expectations for the gendered relationships formulated in *H1A* and *H1B* are confirmed by the data. The qualitative difference in effects for female and male victims might be explained by the pattern of sexual violence, i.e., men were often victimized in detention centers where the perpetrator could be clearly identified as member of the ethnic out-group, making them less likely to recover from deeply instilled mistrust toward the Sinhalese. Furthermore, the positive effect for female victims might be explained by women's psychological coping strategies, making them more

likely to reconcile with both their experiences and the members of their ethnic out-group.

To scrutinize the suitability of the list experiment, we additionally run the analysis using the direct question on sexual violence as predictor.[22] Relying on the direct question results in a significant loss of observations due to pronounced underreporting, especially among men. Therefore, the list experiment uncovers effects that would have gone unnoticed had we relied on the direct question (see Table E.3 in the Appendix for the full regression output).

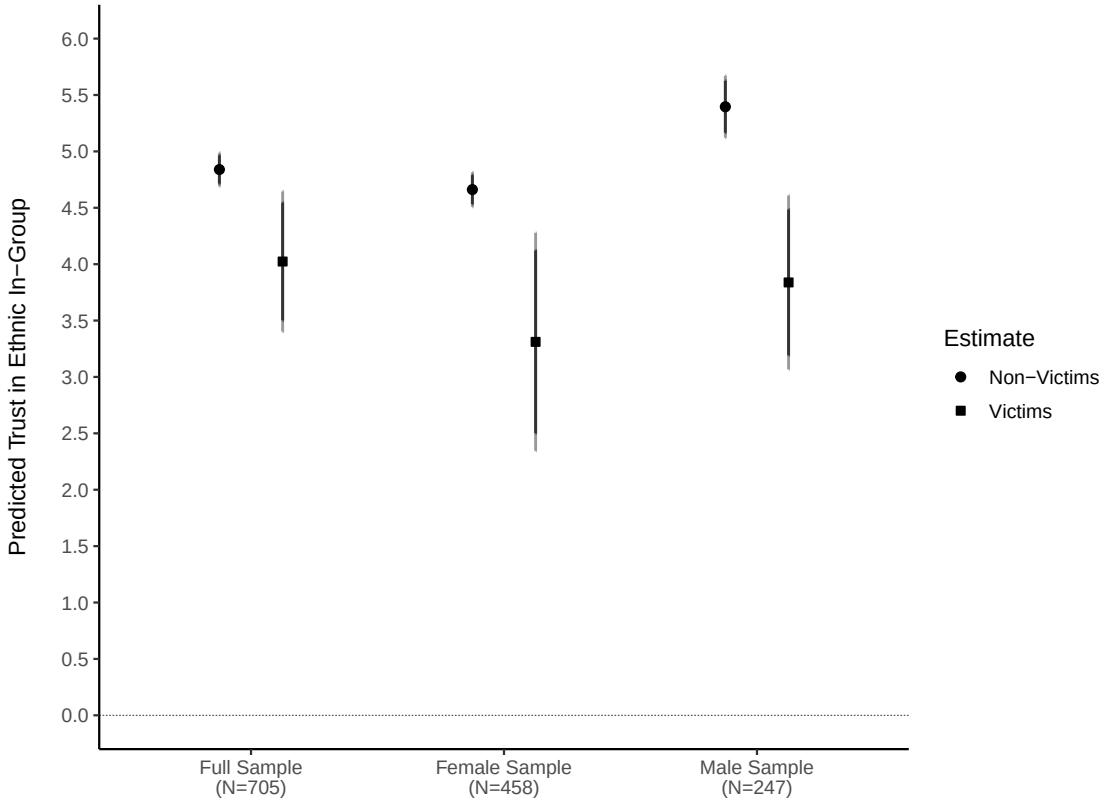
For female respondents, the direct question shows again a positive and significant coefficient for experienced sexual violence on out-group trust. In the sample of Tamil men, however, we find no significant relationship between experienced sexual violence and out-group trust when relying on the direct question, while the list experiment clearly shows a significant negative effect. The strong positive effect for women and the null-effect for men explains why we find a significant positive effect for the full sample when using the direct question. In this regard, the systematic and high non-response rate for the direct question not only results in a significant drop of observations but also fails to show that sexual violence undermines trust in ethnic out-group members for Tamil men.

Ethnic In-Group Trust

In the full sample, the level of trust in ethnic in-groups decreases by $\delta = -0.82$ points for victims of sexual assault, from $\beta_{Z_0} = 4.84$ to $\beta_{Z_1} = 4.02$. This result is statistically significant at the 95% level (95% CI: -1.46, -0.18). When investigating the effects by gender, we find that the negative relationship is driven by female and male victims of sexual violence alike. The average level of trust in ethnic in-group members of women who did not experience sexual violence is $\beta_{Z_0} = 4.66$, whereas that of women who experienced sexual violence is $\beta_{Z_1} = 3.31$. The difference of $\delta = -1.35$ points is statistically significant at the 95% level (95% CI: -2.33, -0.37). We find the same pattern among Tamil men. The average level of

[22]Please note that we again use a linear model, the same control and outcome variables as specified above for the list experiment. The only difference is that the independent variable is based on the direct question on personal experience of sexual violence. The lower N is due to high levels of non-response for the direct question.

Figure 2: Trust in Ethnic In-Group



Notes: The coefficients display the predicted levels of trust in the ethnic in-group for victims of sexual violence (rectangle) and non-victims of sexual violence (dot). Vertical bars display 95% (light grey) and 90% (dark grey) confidence intervals

trust among men who have not experienced sexual violence is $\beta_{Z_0} = 5.40$, whereas it is only $\beta_{Z_1} = 3.84$ among men who have experienced sexual violence. The difference of $\delta = -1.56$ points is statistically significant at the 95% level (95% CI: -2.37, -0.74).

To summarize the findings, we find strong empirical support for *H2*, i.e., on average, victims of sexual violence have less trust in their fellow Tamils compared to respondents who have not experienced sexual violence. Our expectations for the gendered relationships are only partly supported by the data. While we do find that male victims have significantly lower levels of in-group trust (*H2B*), in contrast to our expectation, we find the same pattern for female victims of sexual violence (*H2A*). Interestingly, we find that for both Tamil men and women, the experience of war-related sexual violence results in a drop in ethnic in-group

trust by 29%.

Comparing the results from the list experiment to the direct question, we find that the analyses based on the direct question fail to detect any significant relationships between self-reported sexual violence and ethnic in-group trust. Recall that almost half of the male respondents (47%) and more than one third of the female respondents (35%) preferred not to answer the direct question on sexual violence. Taken together, the significantly smaller sample size reducing statistical power in combination with the seemingly systematic pattern of non-response, likely explains why the list experiment uncovers effects that would not be found when relying on the direct question about sexual violence.

8 Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to analyze the impact of sexual violence during the Sri Lankan civil war on Tamils' social trust post-war. More specifically, we wanted to probe differences between the legacies of war-related sexual violence on ethnic in-group and out-group trust for female and male survivors. To that end, we made use of survey data of the Tamil population coupled with a list experiment that allowed to circumvent under-reporting of individual's experiences of sexual violence. In accordance with previous studies, the results underscore the suitability of using list experiments for sensitive questions as 39% chose not to respond to the direct question, whereas all respondents participated in the list experiment (cf. Cullen 2020; González and Traunmüller 2020; Koos and Traunmüller 2022). We would not have uncovered some of the empirical findings had we relied on the direct question about personal exposure to sexual violence.

We find that Tamil women and men have less trust in members of their in-group if they have experienced sexual violence. As such, we find no evidence for stronger in-group cohesion, but rather the polar opposite. Neither female, nor male victims place their trust in those with a shared ethnic identity. The erosion of trust within the Tamil ethnic group

might be due to the widespread intelligence network introduced by the LTTE (Thiranagama 2011). The results might thus be an indication that those who experienced war-related sexual violence suffered at the hands of in-group members – either directly due to denunciations or indirectly due to lack of protection. As such, our findings tie in with two other recent studies focusing on Kyrgyzstan and Colombia, respectively, that show that asymmetric war characterized by suspicion and fear within groups due to denunciations and a lack of support reduces within-group cohesion (Hager, Krakowski, and Schaub 2019; Krakowski 2020).

Interestingly, and counter to our expectations, we find that Tamil women have higher trust in members of the out-group, the Sinhalese, if they have experienced sexual violence. This might be an indication for women's psychological coping strategies, making them more likely to reconcile with both their experiences and members of their ethnic out-group. However, since we find the opposite effect of exposure to sexual violence for women's in-group trust, other mechanisms might be at play. For instance, to keep Tamil women safe from outside threats, they had been constrained to their home by male relatives or community members, which might inadvertently have subjected them to threats from within (Gowrinathan and Cronin-Furman 2015). Further exploring these mechanisms would be a promising avenue for future research.

Furthermore, it might be that the perpetrators came from within the Tamil community, while assistance and support came from outside the community. The breakdown of social networks through the LTTE intelligence network on the one hand, and through the government's counter-terrorism strategies leading to displacement of civilians on the other hand, created a situation where the "feeling of being part of a community is gone" (ibid.). At the same time, female victims might have had more inter-group contact through NGOs and women's organizations bridging the ethnic divide by focusing on shared experiences and goals. Positive contact – "an essential starting point for the development of mutual trust between former enemies following the end of violence" (Aiken 2014, 46) – might have led women to turn to female out-group members. As such, it might be that female survivors'

heightened levels of ethnic out-group trust are driven by more trust in other women, and not in the Sinhalese group as a whole.

Men, on the other hand, are significantly more likely to distrust members of the ethnic out-group. The qualitative difference in effects for female and male victims might be a result of the gendered pattern of sexual violence during the Sri Lankan civil war. Sexual violence was specifically used as an instrument of torture by Sri Lankan government forces against Tamil men suspected to be members of the LTTE. In these cases, the perpetrators were clearly identifiable as members of the ethnic out-group. In the absence of social support from the in-group or the out-group, male survivors of sexual violence might turn inwards instead. Unfortunately, questions which might allow us to further probe these mechanisms were not part of the survey.

In contrast to the study most closely related by Ingelaere and Verpoorten (2020), we find that among Tamil men, exposure to sexual violence erodes both inter-ethnic, and intra-ethnic trust, while it strengthens inter-ethnic and erodes intra-ethnic trust among Tamil women. Within the scholarly literature on civil war legacies, much attention has been given to the (indisputably crucial) question of how to reconcile former enemies to avoid reescalation of conflicts. The empirical results point to a different important aspect of post-war recovery: rebuilding trust and cooperation *within* ethnic communities. Although the survey was fielded 7 years after the conflict ended, we find no signs of recovery or healing among those who have experienced a particularly heinous form of violence. Thus, it might be beneficial to complement initiatives for establishing inter-group contact with programs that aim to foster positive intra-group contact to rebuild social capital within torn communities.

Despite important contributions and insights, one crucial limitation of this study is that we are unable to distinguish between perpetrators, locations or types of sexual violence. The benefit of the inclusive definition of sexual violence and the broadly posed question in the list experiment is twofold: First, it encompasses all types of sexual violence (including non-physical violence such as sexual humiliation, coercion or verbal assault). Second, survivors of

sexual violence do not have to revisit their experiences in such great detail which might also result in triggering unwanted memories. The perfect response rate underlines the benefit of this approach: all respondents felt comfortable to participate in the list experiment, whereas 39% of respondents refused to answer when they were directly asked if they had been personally sexually assaulted.

These benefits come at the expense of information and precision: we do not obtain any information about the perpetrators (e.g., members of state militaries, nonstate armed actors, or family members), the location (e.g., within individuals' communities, in detention centers or at checkpoints), and the type or frequency of the crime committed against them. Therefore, we can only speculate about mechanisms explaining these findings. It would certainly be a promising avenue for future research to link different forms and contexts of war-related sexual violence to different forms of post-war prosocial behavior and attitudes (or lack thereof). Furthermore, it would be important to further disentangle the gendered effects. For instance, is it positive inter-group contact which leads female survivors to turn to women from the ethnic out-group, whereas men turn inwards due to lack of social support?

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A Survey and Data

A.1 Design and Sampling

The survey was fielded in 2016 using multi-stage stratified random sampling which accounted for the proportions of the different ethnicities in the country. Interviews were conducted in all 25 districts where three lower level administrative units were randomly sampled. Using data of the voter registry of the Election Commissioner Department of Sri Lanka, 24 households were randomly selected in each of the sampled lower level administrative units. The interviews were conducted face-to-face (lasting between 45 minutes and one hour) with the person who had the most recent birthday in the household. The interview language was either Tamil or Sinhala (the country's two official languages). Accommodating the salience of ethnic identity, interviews in Tamil-dominated regions were conducted by Tamil enumerators, whereas interviews in Sinhalese-dominated regions were conducted by Sinhala enumerators.

Regarding approval from an institutional review board, it has to be noted that at the time the population survey was planned and fielded, no review committee for granting ethics approval existed at the partner institution. However, in compliance with local review or permitting requirements, the project was approved by the Board of Management of the Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre at the University of Colombo. To ensure informed consent of participants, respondents were thoroughly briefed before the interviews. This included obtaining informed oral consent prior to the interview (which is consistent with other studies fielded in post-war Sri Lanka, as many respondents are reluctant to sign forms), emphasizing voluntary participation, clearly stating the objectives of the study and the underlying research ethics and lastly ensuring confidentiality and privacy of the provided information. Given the sensitive nature of some components of the survey, respondents were provided with a list of psychologists and doctors to ensure access to professional assistance if needed.

The survey was pre-tested with 26 respondents from different parts of Sri Lanka and the questionnaire was subsequently adapted to accommodate the feedback from participants and enumerators. Prior to the data collection, the project team held workshops with the enumerators and field coordinators to discuss potential issues, interviewing techniques, research ethics, and sample selection (Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag 2019). For further information on the survey and sampling strategy see e.g., Fatke and Freitag (2019) and Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag (2019).

A.2 Previous Studies

To our knowledge, four journal articles – Fatke and Freitag (2019), Kijewski and Rapp (2019), Rapp, Kijewski, and Freitag (2019), and Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag (2019) – and two working papers – González and Traunmüller (2020) and Koos and Traunmüller (2022) – rely on the same data to explore different research questions. To provide a comprehensive overview, these studies are summarized in the following table. We see our study on Tamils' inter- and intra-ethnic group trust in the aftermath of war-related sexual violence as complementary to the work of these earlier studies.

Table A.1: Overview of previous studies

	F & F (2019)	K & R (2019)	R, K & F (2019)	T, K & F (2019)	G & T (2020)	K & T (2022)
Population						
Sinhalese	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Indian Tamil	✓			✓	✓	✓
Sri Lanka Tamil	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Muslim	✓			✓	✓	✓
N	1,800	1,420	500	1,800	1,800	1,800
Dependent Variable						
War-related distress	✓					
Political tolerance		✓	✓			
Sexual violence				✓		
Political participation					✓	
Civic participation						✓
Interethnic relations						✓
Political trust						✓
Independent Variable						
Social transformation	✓					
War experiences	✓	✓	✓			
Individual characteristics				✓		
Sexual violence					✓	✓
Mediator Variable						
Social transformation	✓					
Interethnic attitudes		✓				
Intergroup forgiveness		✓				
War-related distress			✓			
War-related growth			✓		✓	
In-group favoritism					✓	
Political voice					✓	
Ethnic relations					✓	
Civic participation					✓	

Notes: F & F (2019) = Fatke and Freitag (2019), K & R (2019) = Kijewski and Rapp (2019), R, K & F (2019) = Rapp, Kijewski, and Freitag (2019), T, K & F (2019) = Traunmüller, Kijewski, and Freitag (2019), G & T (2020) = González and Traunmüller (2020), K & T (2022) = Koos and Traunmüller (2022).

A.3 Questionnaire

Other traumatic events (unrelated to the war)

Now, you may how experienced other traumatizing events than the war. Below is a list of traumatic events or situations. Which of the following things have you personally directly seen or witnessed with your own eyes and ears happening to you, your family, or community? Please indicate if you have experienced or witnessed any of the following events not related to the war? *(Multiple responses possible)*

Direct war experiences

Now we would like to ask you some questions about what happened during the between 1983 and 2009. These are not questions about your feelings, they are questions about what happened to you and what you experienced. We know that this is very personal, and we are troubled to ask, but we hope that you will think that it will be important to study how many people in this country had such experiences, and how they are related to people's attitudes now. Did you see or witness with your own eyes and ears a war-related event that involved actual or threatened death or injury to you or any member of your household to which you responded with intense fear, helplessness, or horror? *(If the respondent answered with yes, the interviewer asked whether they would be willing to answer further questions concerning the events they had experienced. If they agreed, they were read a list of 16 events and asked which of them they had personally experienced).*

Indirect war experiences

Let us talk about the episodes during the war that you did not directly witness, but you were told about after it had happened. Did any members of your family or friends experience a war-related event that involved actual or threatened death or injury? *(If the respondent answered with yes, the interviewer asked whether they would be willing to answer further*

questions concerning the events they had experienced. If they agreed, they were read a list of 12 events and asked which of them they had personally experienced).

B Descriptives

Table B.1: Sample Characteristics

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Age	706	40.15	14.82	18.00	86.00
Education Level	701	2.74	1.19	0.00	6.00
Female	706	0.65	0.48	0.00	1.00
Christian	703	0.13	0.34	0.00	1.00
Hindu	703	0.78	0.41	0.00	1.00
Muslim	703	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00
Sri Lanka Tamil	706	0.71	0.45	0.00	1.00
Indian Tamil	706	0.29	0.45	0.00	1.00
Income (in 1,000 Rs.)	665	18.54	23.38	0.50	450.00
Children	706	1.97	1.55	0.00	8.00
Eastern Province	706	0.20	0.40	0.00	1.00
Northern Province	706	0.47	0.50	0.00	1.00
Member of Armed Group	706	0.10	0.31	0.00	1.00
Assisted Armed Group	706	0.07	0.25	0.00	1.00
Displaced	706	0.62	0.48	0.00	1.00
Any Direct War Experiences	653	0.62	0.49	0.00	1.00
Total Direct War Experiences	653	5.79	5.00	0.00	16.00
Any Indirect War Experiences	706	0.44	0.50	0.00	1.00
Total Indirect War Experiences	706	3.88	4.72	0.00	12.00
Total War Experiences	706	9.23	8.96	0.00	28.00
Any Other Traumatic Events	706	0.91	0.29	0.00	1.00
Total Other Traumatic Events	706	3.44	2.48	0.00	13.00
Discuss Politics	607	1.34	0.54	1.00	4.00
Trust Family	705	6.57	1.03	1.00	7.00
Trust Stranger	705	2.51	1.58	1.00	7.00
Trust In-Group	705	4.72	1.52	1.00	7.00
Trust Out-Group	699	3.63	1.91	1.00	7.00
Treatment Group	706	0.50	0.50	0.00	1.00

Figure B.1: Density Plot Ethnic In-Group Trust

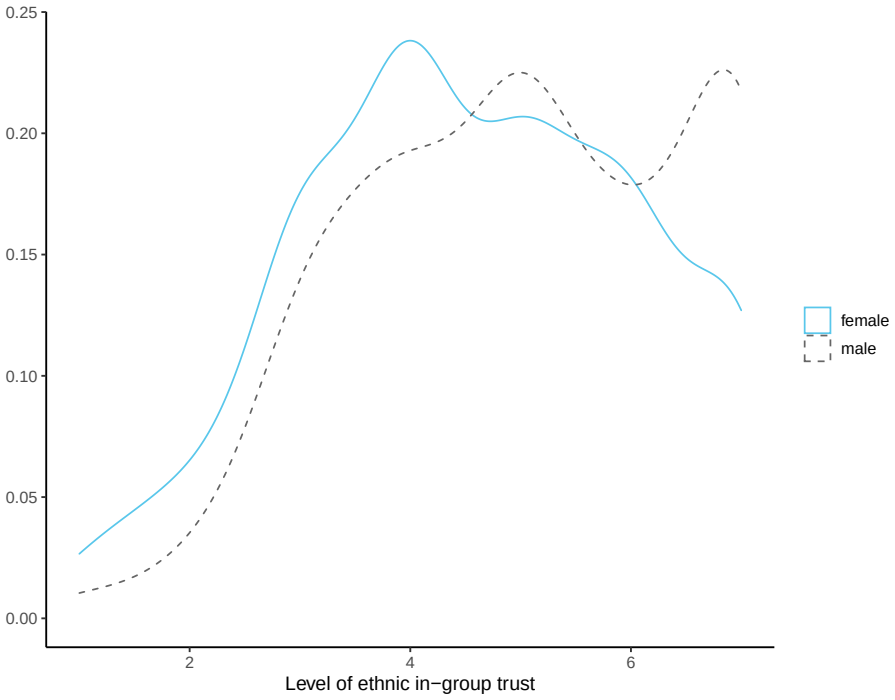


Figure B.2: Density Plot Ethnic Out-Group Trust

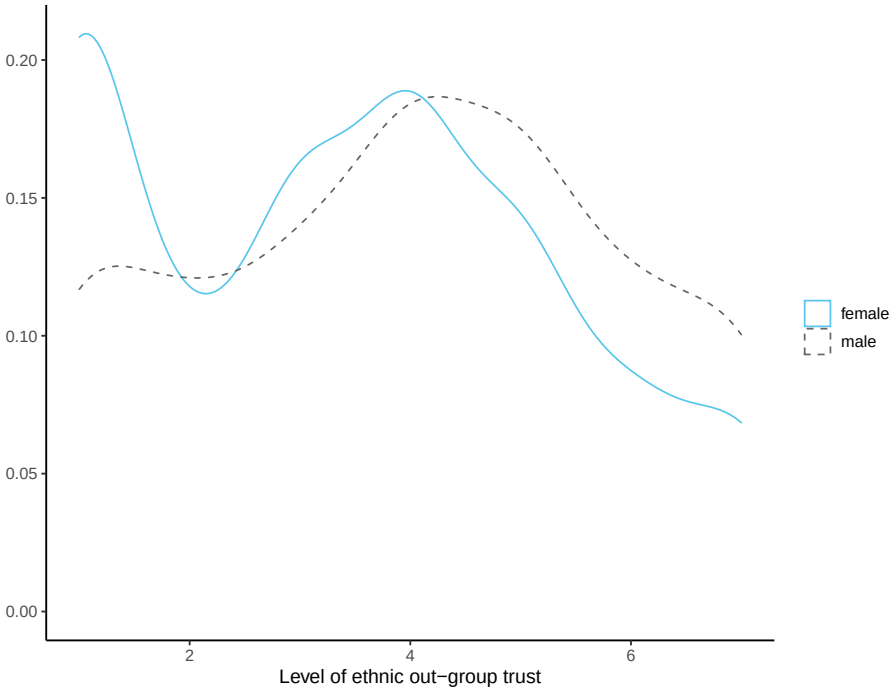


Figure B.3: Density Plot Traumatic Experiences

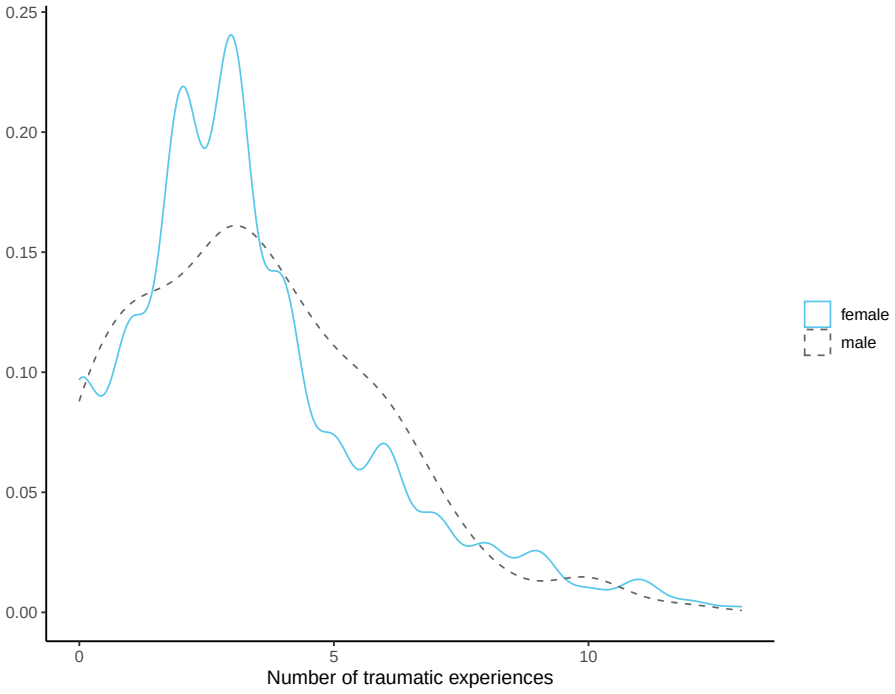
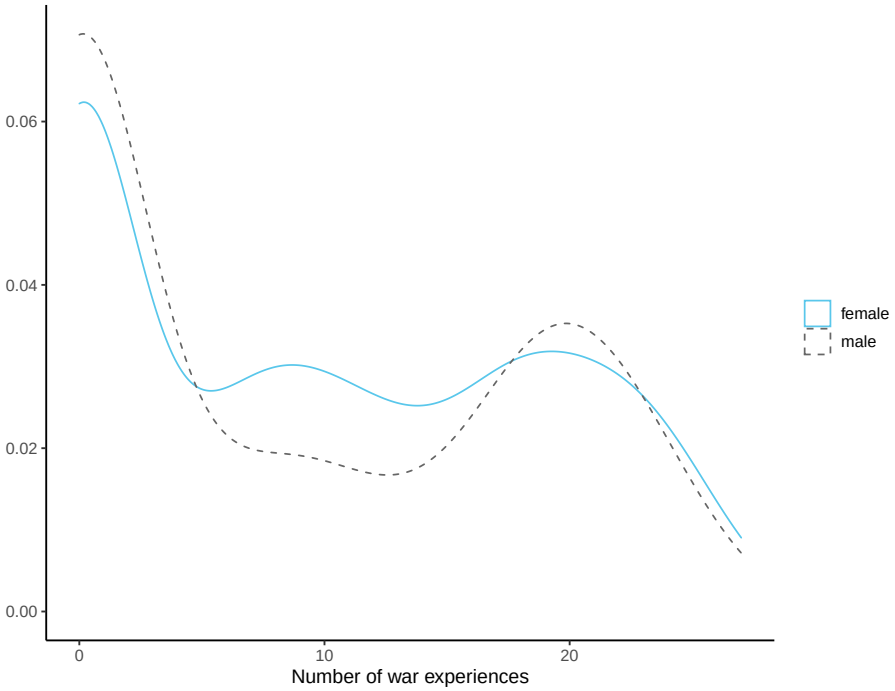


Figure B.4: Density Plot War Experiences



C List Experiment

Table C.1: Summary of the responses to list experiment and direct question about sexual violence for female sub-sample

	List Experiment				Direct Question		
	Control Group		Treatment Group				
Response value	N	%	N	%	Response value	N	%
0	150	64.10	143	63.56	No	284	61.87
1	68	29.06	62	27.56	Yes	15	3.27
2	13	5.56	15	6.67			
3	3	1.28	4	1.78			
4			1	0.44			
Non-response					Non-response	160	34.86
Total	234		225		Total	459	

Notes: The table displays the number of respondents for each value of the observed outcome variable and its proportions, separately for the control and treatment group, as well as the responses to the direct question. The proportions do not sum to 100% due to rounding. Simple difference-in-means estimation for treatment (mean = 0.44) and control group (mean = 0.48) indicates that 4% of female respondents experienced sexual violence, which corresponds closely to the corresponding figure of 3.27% from the direct question.

Table C.2: Summary of the responses to list experiment and direct question about sexual violence for male sub-sample

	List Experiment				Direct Question		
	Control Group		Treatment Group				
Response value	N	%	N	%	Response value	N	%
0	89	72.95	71	56.80	No	127	51.42
1	24	19.67	32	25.60	Yes	4	1.62
2	7	5.74	18	14.40			
3	2	1.64	3	2.40			
4			1	0.80			
Non-response					Non-response	116	46.96
Total	122		125		Total	247	

Notes: The table displays the number of respondents for each value of the observed outcome variable and its proportions, separately for the control and treatment group, as well as the responses to the direct question. The proportions do not sum to 100% due to rounding. Simple difference-in-means estimation for treatment (mean = 0.36) and control group (mean = 0.65) indicates that 29% of male respondents experienced sexual violence, which is much higher than the corresponding figure of 1.62% from the direct question.

Table C.3: OLS Response item count by treatment assignment

	Full Sample	Male Sample	Female Sample
Treatment	0.127**	0.287***	0.040
	(0.055)	(0.099)	(0.065)
Intercept	0.413***	0.361***	0.440***
	(0.039)	(0.071)	(0.046)
Adj. R^2	0.006	0.029	−0.001
Num. obs.	706	247	459
F statistic	5.347	8.402	0.372

Notes: The table reports coefficients from OLS regressions of the list experiment item count (i.e., the number of affirmative responses) on the binary treatment assignment indicator for the full sample, the sample of male, and the sample of female respondents. $^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

D Manipulation Checks

Table D.1: Balance Table Covariates

Variable (Range of values)	Control Group			Treatment Group				
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	Diff	p
Age (18-86)	356	40.04	14.98	350	40.26	14.67	0.22	0.84
Female (0/1)	356	0.66	0.48	350	0.64	0.48	-0.01	0.69
Education Level (0-6)	354	2.75	1.16	347	2.73	1.22	-0.02	0.80
Education High (0/1)	354	0.25	0.43	347	0.25	0.43	0.00	0.98
Christian (0/1)	355	0.11	0.32	348	0.15	0.36	0.04	0.15
Hindu (0/1)	355	0.80	0.40	348	0.77	0.42	-0.03	0.29
Muslim (0/1)	355	0.09	0.28	348	0.07	0.26	-0.01	0.54
Sri Lanka Tamil (0/1)	356	0.74	0.44	350	0.69	0.46	-0.06	0.10
Indian Tamil (0/1)	356	0.26	0.44	350	0.31	0.46	0.06	0.10
Income (0.5K-450K)	335	18.30	18.50	330	18.78	27.49	0.48	0.79
Children (0-8)	356	2.01	1.61	350	1.92	1.48	-0.09	0.46
Eastern Province (0/1)	356	0.20	0.40	350	0.19	0.40	-0.01	0.86
Northern Province (0/1)	356	0.47	0.50	350	0.47	0.50	0.00	0.99
Member of Armed Group (0/1)	356	0.11	0.31	350	0.10	0.30	0.00	0.87
Assisted Armed Group (0/1)	356	0.06	0.24	350	0.08	0.27	0.02	0.34
Displaced (0/1)	356	0.62	0.49	350	0.63	0.48	0.01	0.83
Other War Events (0-27)	356	9.07	8.75	350	9.34	9.12	0.27	0.69
Other Traumatic Events (0-13)	356	3.28	2.36	350	3.61	2.59	0.32	0.08
Discuss Politics (1-4)	305	1.30	0.52	302	1.37	0.56	0.07	0.11
Trust Family (1-7)	356	6.57	1.04	349	6.56	1.02	0.00	0.97
Trust Stranger (1-7)	355	2.52	1.63	350	2.51	1.53	-0.01	0.95
Trust In-Group (1-7)	355	4.71	1.54	350	4.73	1.51	0.01	0.91
Trust Out-Group (1-7)	352	3.71	1.93	347	3.54	1.89	-0.17	0.24
Treatment Group (0/1)	356	0.00	0.00	350	1.00	0.00		

Table D.2: Regressing Sexual Violence (Direct Question) on Treatment Assignment

	Full Sample	Male Sample	Female Sample
Treatment	−0.001	−0.004	0.002
	(0.020)	(0.030)	(0.025)
Intercept	0.045***	0.033	0.049***
	(0.014)	(0.022)	(0.017)
Adj. R^2	−0.002	−0.008	−0.003
Num. obs.	430	131	299
F statistic	0.002	0.019	0.009

Notes: The table reports coefficients from OLS regressions of sexual violence on the binary treatment assignment indicator. The response to the direct question on sexual violence is not correlated with treatment assignment. The intercept corresponds to the value of those assigned to the control condition (treatment assignment = 0), the coefficient treatment (treatment assignment = 1) thus refers to the effect the assignment to the treatment condition has on the likelihood of experiencing sexual violence. $^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Table D.3: Regressing Ethnic Group Trust on Treatment Assignment.

	Out-group trust			In-group trust		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment	−0.17	−0.15	−0.19	0.01	−0.06	0.04
	(0.14)	(0.24)	(0.18)	(0.11)	(0.19)	(0.14)
Intercept	3.71***	4.06***	3.53***	4.71***	5.06***	4.53***
	(0.10)	(0.17)	(0.13)	(0.08)	(0.14)	(0.10)
Adj. R^2	0.00	−0.00	0.00	−0.00	−0.00	−0.00
Num. obs.	699	247	452	705	247	458
F statistic	1.35	0.36	1.17	0.01	0.10	0.09

Notes: The table reports coefficients from OLS regressions of ethnic group trust on the binary treatment assignment indicator for the full sample (columns 1 and 4), the sub-sample of male respondents (columns 2 and 5) and the sub-sample of female respondents (columns 3 and 6). The level of ethnic group trust is not correlated with treatment assignment. The intercept corresponds to the value of those assigned to the control condition (treatment assignment = 0), the coefficient treatment (treatment assignment = 1) thus refers to the effect the assignment to the treatment condition has on ethnic group trust levels. Standard errors are given in parentheses.
$^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

E Regression Results

E.1 List Experiment

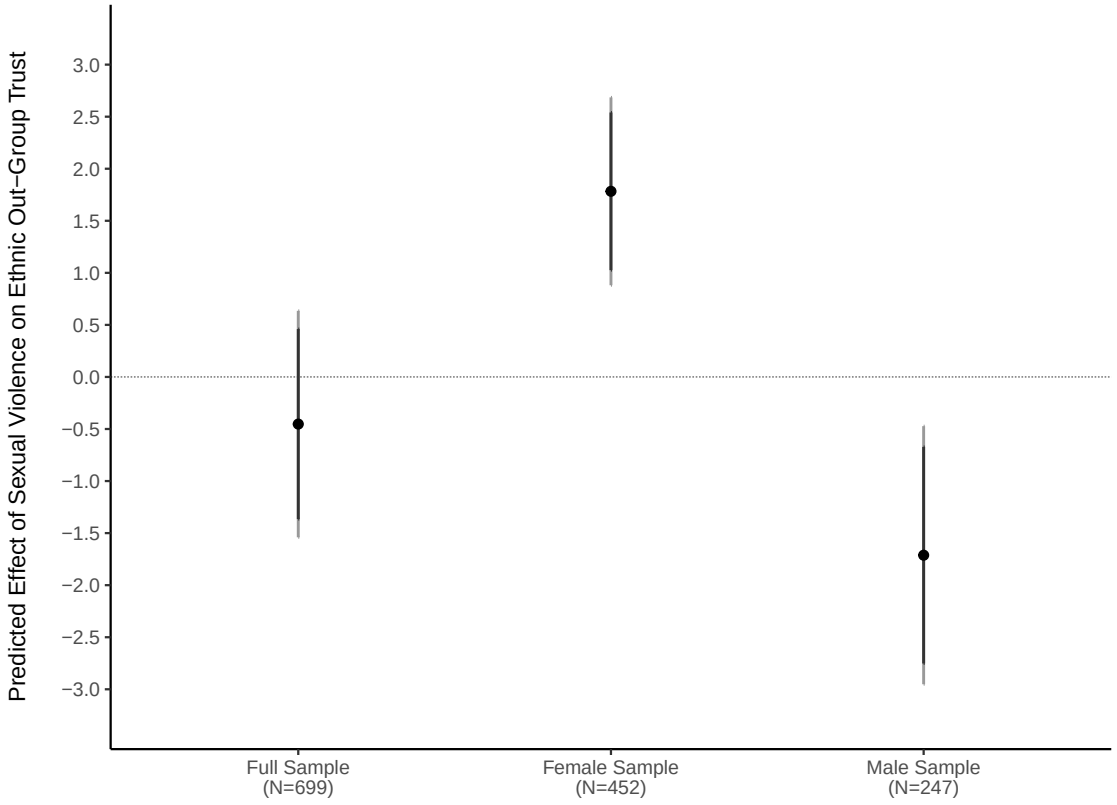
Table E.1: Regressing Ethnic Out-Group Trust on Sexual Violence (List Experiment)

	Full Sample	Female Sample	Male Sample
Sexual Violence	−0.444	1.787***	−1.717**
	(0.593)	(0.474)	(0.702)
Age	0.028	0.086**	−0.070
	(0.025)	(0.038)	(0.047)
Age^2	−0.000	−0.001**	0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Assisted Armed Group	−0.311	−0.910*	0.146
	(0.440)	(0.550)	(0.603)
Displaced	0.333	0.377	0.665
	(0.292)	(0.329)	(0.742)
Female	−0.553***		
	(0.158)		
Other Traumatic Events (log)	0.022	−0.114	0.056
	(0.126)	(0.167)	(0.250)
Other War Events (log)	−0.096	−0.228**	0.039
	(0.087)	(0.102)	(0.221)
Northern Province	−0.783***	−0.673**	−1.803***
	(0.231)	(0.278)	(0.581)
Sri Lankan Tamil	−0.464*	−0.482*	0.292
	(0.238)	(0.271)	(0.460)
Intercept	4.184***	2.814***	6.050***
	(0.550)	(0.800)	(1.012)
Observations	699	452	247

Notes: The table reports coefficients from regressions of ethnic out-group trust on the predicted probability of having personally experienced sexual violence. Standard errors are given in parentheses.

$^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Figure E.1: Effect of Sexual Violence on Ethnic Out-Group Trust



Notes: The coefficients display the predicted effect of sexual violence on trust in the ethnic out-group (i.e., the difference in predicted levels of trust between victims of sexual violence and non-victims of sexual violence). Vertical bars display 95% (light grey) and 90% (dark grey) confidence intervals.

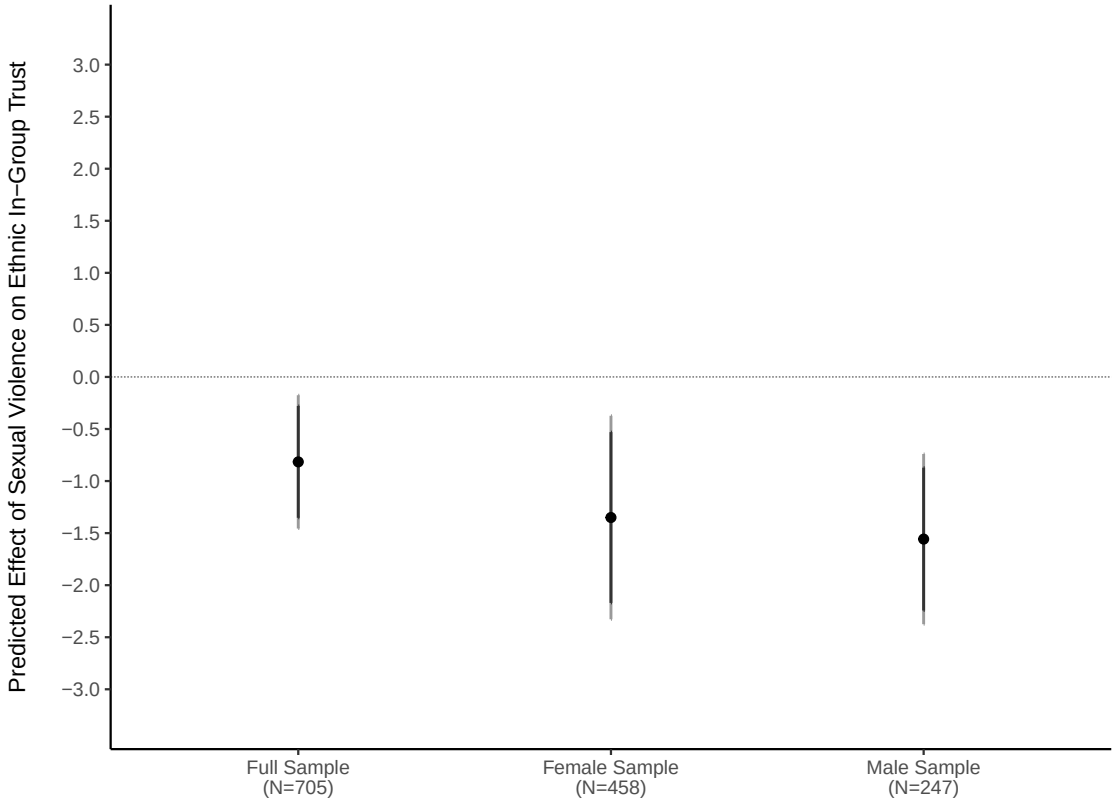
Table E.2: Regressing Ethnic In-Group Trust on Sexual Violence (List Experiment)

	Full Sample	Female Sample	Male Sample
Sexual Violence	-0.813^{**}	-1.345^{***}	-1.560^{***}
	(0.354)	(0.505)	(0.474)
Age	-0.006	0.044	-0.112^{***}
	(0.020)	(0.028)	(0.040)
Age^2	-0.000	-0.000	0.001^{**}
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Assisted Armed Group	0.143	0.084	0.897^{*}
	(0.257)	(0.347)	(0.519)
Displaced	0.394	-0.019	0.814
	(0.251)	(0.265)	(0.614)
Female	-0.560^{***}		
	(0.135)		
Other Traumatic Events (log)	-0.044	-0.224^{*}	0.161
	(0.108)	(0.132)	(0.193)
Other War Events (log)	-0.171^{**}	-0.029	-0.280^{*}
	(0.073)	(0.085)	(0.157)
Northern Province	0.338	0.790^{***}	-0.386
	(0.223)	(0.219)	(0.481)
Sri Lankan Tamil	-0.683^{***}	-1.244^{***}	0.040
	(0.176)	(0.223)	(0.303)
Intercept	5.937^{***}	4.657^{***}	7.879^{***}
	(0.452)	(0.597)	(0.888)
Observations	705	458	247

Notes: The table reports coefficients from regressions of ethnic in-group trust on the predicted probability of having personally experienced sexual violence. Standard errors are given in parentheses.

$^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Figure E.2: Effect of Sexual Violence on Ethnic In-Group Trust



Notes: The coefficients display the predicted effect of sexual violence on trust in the ethnic in-group (i.e., the difference in predicted levels of trust between victims of sexual violence and non-victims of sexual violence). Vertical bars display 95% (light grey) and 90% (dark grey) confidence intervals.

E.2 Direct Question

Table E.3: Regressing Ethnic Out-Group Trust on Sexual Violence (Direct Question)

	Full Sample	Female Sample	Male Sample
Sexual Violence	0.931**	1.451***	−0.950
	(0.435)	(0.474)	(1.004)
Age	0.037	0.079*	−0.000
	(0.033)	(0.043)	(0.057)
Age^2	−0.000	−0.001*	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Assisted Armed Group	−0.621**	−0.814**	−0.349
	(0.307)	(0.354)	(0.593)
Displaced	0.399	0.699*	−0.657
	(0.375)	(0.420)	(0.801)
Female	−0.683***		
	(0.197)		
Other Traumatic Events (log)	−0.092	0.091	−0.371
	(0.173)	(0.196)	(0.357)
Other War Events (log)	−0.032	−0.163	0.170
	(0.156)	(0.180)	(0.304)
Sri Lankan Tamil	−0.401	−0.659	0.658
	(0.396)	(0.430)	(0.924)
Northern Province	−0.791***	−0.570**	−1.014**
	(0.223)	(0.261)	(0.437)
Intercept	3.748***	2.256**	4.287***
	(0.797)	(0.962)	(1.488)
Observations	425	294	131

Notes: The table reports coefficients from regressions of ethnic out-group trust on sexual violence (direct question). Standard errors are given in parentheses.
$^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Table E.4: Regressing Ethnic In-Group Trust on Sexual Violence (Direct Question)

	Full Sample	Female Sample	Male Sample
Sexual Violence	0.258	0.490	−0.474
	(0.342)	(0.383)	(0.757)
Age	0.005	0.030	−0.038
	(0.026)	(0.035)	(0.043)
Age^2	−0.000	−0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Assisted Armed Group	−0.014	−0.283	0.541
	(0.236)	(0.278)	(0.447)
Displaced	0.531*	0.656*	0.109
	(0.295)	(0.339)	(0.604)
Female	−0.504***		
	(0.304)		
Other Traumatic Events (log)	−0.111	0.023	−0.313
	(0.135)	(0.157)	(0.269)
Other War Events (log)	−0.239*	−0.222	−0.361
	(0.122)	(0.145)	(0.229)
Sri Lankan Tamil	−1.151***	−1.361***	−0.294
	(0.304)	(0.337)	(0.696)
Northern Province	0.673***	0.773***	0.509
	(0.175)	(0.209)	(0.330)
Intercept	5.710***	4.524***	6.812***
	(0.664)	(0.765)	(1.175)
Observations	429	298	131

Notes: The table reports coefficients from regressions of ethnic in-group trust on sexual violence (direct question). Standard errors are given in parentheses.
$^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.