There are many factors that contribute to views on peace and conflict in any given area. In this regard, the countries of South and Southeast Asia are no different from anywhere else. What distinguishes this area of the world is the unique interplay of particular cultural, socioeconomic, political, and historical factors that have their own unique features in this region. These are not separate or disparate factors; rather, they influence each other, ultimately impacting how people view the risks of violence, the efficacy of nonviolence, and their response to adversity and conflict. This chapter is devoted to a discussion of definitions of peace and reconciliation provided by participants from South and Southeast Asia. It focuses particularly on India, Pakistan, Laos, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, and the ways in which citizens of those countries define peace and reconciliation.

India and Pakistan share a border, so one might expect commonalities between the two countries. Even though they share a common origin in the aftermath of the British Raj, there has been an unfortunate amount of conflict and tension between them (More, 2006). Given that the partitioning of British India was done along religious demographics, it is not surprising that India and Pakistan developed, to some extent, religious identities that have been an ongoing source of conflict. Even so, religions in India and Pakistan are not perfectly homogeneous, although India is the more religiously diverse of the two.

Terrorism has been a major cause of conflict for India and Pakistan. The other countries have...
also had to deal with the issues surrounding terrorism, some with bombings and others with heightened antiterrorism efforts. However, recent bombings and terrorist activities in Mumbai, coupled with ongoing bombings in Pakistan, have left these two countries at the forefront of terrorist violence for countries in this region.

**Issues Related to Globalization and Regional Development**

Globalization sparks violence in many ways, from the economic hardships of displaced or dispossessed citizens to the wholesale restructuring of societies to a globally interconnected marketplace. However, globalization is also often seen as the best way for countries to develop, particularly when peaceful relations can be nurtured among potential trading partners. The impact of globalization can vary with cultural views of economic activity, social roles, globalization, the internet, etc., along with the current state of economic development and level of sustainability (Barbieri & Reuveny, 2005; Lieber & Weisberg, 2002; Li & Schaub, 2004). Because of these sources of variation, globalization affects every country differently. In each country, there are some people who work against globalization and others who favor greater globalization, and both groups may believe their efforts will lead to more peace.

Foreign Direct Investment, or FDI, is the investment of foreign currency directly into another country for building factories or infrastructure. This initiative is significant because it not only allows a country to acquire foreign currency to balance its trade but also creates ties and interdependence needed for peaceful relationships. Interregional FDI is of particular importance for peace because it creates vested interests in countries that are likely to be pragmatically averse to warring with nations in which they have invested. Furthermore, interregional FDI supports regional trade associations and agreements, such as the South Asian Free Trade Area, which includes India and Pakistan, and the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement, which includes Laos and the Philippines. The effects of FDI are still up for debate, as some view its impact as negative (Blanton & Blanton, 2007; Kosack & Tobin, 2006). Nevertheless, the basic assumption is that remitting money from wealthier areas to poorer areas is important not only for strengthening ties and relations but also for providing economic support that can contribute to regional economic equality. This can be particularly useful for countries like the Philippines, where a large number of families receive earnings from their migrant members who send earnings back to their families.

The pathways to economic development, regional cooperation, and peace have faced challenges both from charges of corruption in the administration of programs and in the occurrence of natural disasters. The issue of corruption is complex because the definition of corruption is culturally dependent. What might seem like corrupt behavior in one culture may appear as a normal and standard practice in other cultures. Nevertheless, corruption can hinder regional economic integration and create needless tensions in international economic activity.

The effects of natural disaster on a region can also be complex. There are many interregional causes of natural disaster, such as typhoons, monsoons, tsunamis, and earthquakes. Although these extreme events are generally detrimental, they can involve regional assistance and integration, elements supportive of peace. However, the response to national disasters may also be detrimental to peace if it is done poorly and particularly if the response leads to blaming or recrimination. The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) indicated that because international responders are volunteers, the humanitarian system has flaws, such as the lack of dependable leadership and accountability. A good example of a natural disaster that generated problems in response was the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami.

These concerns can be seen in more than just natural disasters, as there are varying kinds of regional shared concerns that are supportive of peace if addressed well or undermine peace if the response is insufficient or harmful. There are shared ecological concerns, particularly for countries that border each other, as animal species do not stop at a nation’s borders. This sharing of species and ecosystem applies to fishing, which is both an economic and food security issue. For example, there
is the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, which includes Malaysia and the Philippines, and supports the continued viability of fishing as a food source and as an economic activity (Eng, Paw, & Guarin, 1989). Another issue facing these countries is climate change, which involves economic changes, shared dangers, and political institutions on a regional level. This is a particularly relevant issue for this region, as there are many islands at risk for submerging under rising sea levels. Food security is also an issue, as climate change can threaten the productivity of crops (Gregory, Ingram & Brklacich, 2005).

The smuggling and production of narcotics have been a source of violence in the region, particularly in areas where it is grown as a crop. Food security issues arise from the fact that narcotics compete with agricultural goods for land and similar resources. Therefore, the growth of narcotics means that there are fewer buffer crops to resist shocks to the food supply system, which can create sudden shortages and sometimes famines, particularly when combined with droughts. Moreover, the trade in illegal narcotics creates an underground economy that often involves violence, and that, by virtue of the fact that those involved are unlikely to pay taxes, leads to a weaker government in the affected country. Countries within the region differ in their responses to the issue of narcotics (Fox, Krummel, Yarnsarn, Ekasingh, & Podger, 1995).

Psychological and Political Factors

There are also many psychological and political issues that influence the potential for cooperation in South and Southeast Asia. Cultural factors impact how the people of a region respond to violence. Tensions and exchanges of ideas occur on borders, and often borders are modified to halt the exchanges when those in power are concerned with preserving and reinforcing their own cultural identities. Minority groups in a nation are easier to dehumanize and thus become easier victims of violence, such as the pogroms that occurred in 1984 against the Sikhs in India (Kour, 2006).

One source of strife in the region is changing gender roles (Purkayastha, Subrmaniam, Desai, & Bose, 2003), partly as a result of changing demographics. These roles are changing for many reasons. One is the improving rates of literacy in the adult populations of some of these countries. Another is the spread of better communication technologies, with everything from TV to the Internet exposing societies to different ideas concerning gender roles and structures (Steedly, 1999), possibly changing the culture of a nation in the process. This change can support gender equality through empowerment but can also hurt gender equality with a reactionary backlash. Either way, the tensions surrounding changing gender roles tend to be a source of violence.

The changes in demographics are important, whether viewed through the increases in female participation and advancement in economic activity or through improved sanitation and health care. Overlapping both of these advances is the spread of contraceptives, allowing for better family planning and decreasing average family size (Pachauri & Santhva, 2002). Changes in family size also impact schooling (Maralani, 2008), which can be important for the formation of perspectives on peace in a given country.

The economic growth experienced in these regions may bring about a revolution if the growth is not sustained, as expectations are built up during a period of growth but are not sustained in a recession (Davies, 1962). Gaps between expectations and reality can leave a populace with dashed hopes and susceptibility to revolutions. Given the growth experience by most of the nations surveyed in this region, there are good reasons for concern about the dangers of economic contraction, particularly around issues of sustainability.

All of the countries in this region have seen increasing urbanization and population density. This climate creates new opportunities for violence, as some citizens are unprepared for the challenges of city life. One challenge for the urban poor is how to obtain food, given that subsistence agriculture is unavailable to most city dwellers; the worst forms of poverty in cities have different effects from the worst forms of poverty in rural areas. This is part of the reason for incorporating food security into peace and conflict resolution efforts; another is the correla-
tion between rising food prices and political or social upheaval. These issues are particularly important in low-income countries, such as some of those in this chapter. Generally, the less income people have, the greater is the proportion they must spend on food. A related concern in this region is energy security, which is the ability of a country to supply its economy with sufficient electricity and other fuels (Sàez, 2007).

One response to such problems has been the humanitarian supplying of food, although the record on this has been mixed (Hoffman, Gardner, Just, & Hueth, 1994). Despite good intentions, food aid can undermine food security by further displacing agricultural production in a country. Efforts from both advocates and opponents of globalization have been undertaken to address some of the issues surrounding the transition from low-density rural population patterns to high-density urban population patterns.

Ongoing Disputes and Efforts for Peace

Disputed territory in the region of South and Southeast Asia includes many areas. Kashmir has been a frequent cause of conflict between India and Pakistan and also a source of national pride and symbolic strength for Kashmiris. Ambalat is a disputed area of the ocean between Indonesia and Malaysia, its significance tied to the oil and natural gas under the sea floor. Malaysia and the Philippines, among others, lay claim to parts of the Spratly Islands, primarily for the legal rights to the surrounding waters, not for the land itself. Although these areas are not the only disputed ones, they have the most significance. While only the situation in Kashmir has led to actual violence, territorial disputes are always a dangerous possibility. However, as sources of possible violence, these territorial disputes are relatively easy to solve for the governments involved, through bilateral negotiations, as compared to climate change or poverty, for example, which can demand multinational efforts.

The peace movement led by Gandhi to end the Raj is probably the most well-known peace movement in this region. However, contemporary peace movements are afoot. One is the effort to denuclearize, the focus particularly on resisting nuclear arms buildup in favor of nuclear disarmament. The movement is not restricted to any individual country in this region but is particularly important for peace in India and Pakistan. These two nuclear-armed nations have had tensions and conflict in the relatively recent past, sparking fears of a nuclear exchange. Even if it were a limited exchange, it could result in millions of deaths. Although the two countries do not possess many nuclear weapons in comparison to other countries, particularly the USA and Russia, the destructive potential is still enormous. Rather unique in the world of nuclear-armed states is that India and Pakistan profess to keep their weapons unconstructed or unassembled (Geller, 2003). This is analogous to keeping a gun unloaded: it could quickly be loaded or “assembled,” but if stolen would be of little use to anyone. As a safety measure, this is essential, not only in the case of possible theft, but also as a barrier to planned and authorized official use. Because these weapons are not launch ready, an accidental nuclear launch would be less likely to occur in a crisis.

The countries in this region vary in the structures or situations in which people hold their views on peace and reconciliation. India and Pakistan have each other as frequent combatants and sources of fear. Indonesia and Malaysia are neighbors as well but do not share this sort of consistent tension. The Philippines is the only country in the region to have historical ties to the United States. Laos is the only landlocked country and is the least economically developed, with agriculture having the greatest percentage of subsistence. Thus, there are many reasons for the views in this region to differ from country to country.

Methods

Sample

The sample consisted of 622 participants ranging in age from 18 to 75: 144 from India, 20 from
Indonesia, 14 from Laos, 149 from Malaysia, 57 from Pakistan, 230 from the Philippines, and 8 from Sri Lanka. Thirty-nine participants reported serving in the military, 147 reported having a relative who had served in the military, and 86 said they had participated in an antiwar protest at least once in their lives.

**Procedure**

The participants responded to the Personal and Institutional Rights to Aggression and Peace Survey (PAIRTAPS) (Malley-Morrison, Daskalopoulos, & You, 2006) either in hard copy or online, in their respective languages. The survey included open-ended questions to generate qualitative information concerning the ways in which individuals reasoned about issues of governmental violence and individual rights to peace. It also included items asking for individual definitions of peace and reconciliation. The definitions were coded using coding manuals developed by the Group on Individual Perspectives on Governmental Aggression and Peace (GIPGAP). All definitions were first broken down into codeable units for purposes of coding because some responses contained several units of meaning, each of which could be coded independently based on criteria in the coding manual. (See Chap. 2 for further information re: coding.)

**Definitions of Peace**

**Coding Guidelines**

The definitions of peace and definitions of reconciliation coding manuals were developed using grounded theory methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The manual for coding definitions of peace contains criteria to code participants’ responses into four main categories, each of which has one or more subcategories. The major categories for definitions of peace are negative peace, positive peace, question of achievability/ideal, and perceived reality.

Responses in the negative peace category define peace as the removal, absence, or end of something aggressive or threatening. Negative peace subcategories include (a) no conflict (peace as the absence of conflict), (b) rejecting violence (peace as the absence or end of violence), (c) rejecting terrorism (peace as the absence of terrorism), (d) negative emotions (peace as the absence of negative emotions such as fear), and (e) rejecting intimidation/threat (peace as the absence of threats of intimidation).

The second major coding category for definitions of peace is positive peace. These definitions focus not on the absence of war, terrorism, and other forms of violence but on the kinds of conditions that are necessary for a culture of peace. Our coding manual identifies two principal positive peace subcategories: (a) prerequisites for peace, describing conditions that must be met in order to achieve peace, and (b) outcomes of peace. The prerequisites subcategory includes an additional seven subcategories: (a) granting of human rights, (b) equality, (c) acceptance/tolerance (which includes understanding and solidarity), (d) democratic participation, (e) openness to working toward a mutual goal, (f) security, and (g) access to resources. The outcomes subcategory also includes an additional level of subcategories: (a) positive emotions, (b) calm/tranquility, and (c) harmony.

The third major coding category, question of achievability, was for responses that did not directly define peace but questioned its achievability or identified it as an ideal. The final major category, perceived reality, applied to responses that referred to peace in the current state of the world as seen by the participant rather than providing a definition.

**Distribution of Definitions of Peace Across Coding Categories**

Thirty-five percent of all the definitions of peace were coded into the negative peace category; of these negative peace definitions, nearly half (46%) fell into the rejecting violence subcategory. An example of a response coded for rejecting violence was “the absence of violence, bloodshed” (18-year-old female, Pakistan). Just over half (51%) of all definitions of peace were coded into the positive peace category. The most common theme among positive peace responses was
harmony, which accounted for 15% of the positive peace definitions and 8% of all definitions of peace in the South and Southeast Asia sample. An example of a response in the harmony subcategory was “a period or state of reconciliation and harmony among nations and individuals” (51-year-old female, Philippines). Each of the positive peace subcategories included responses within the range of 1–7% of the definitions of peace.

Only 7% of all the definitions were coded into the question of achievability category. An example of such a response was provided by a 20-year-old woman from Malaysia, who said “peace is an aspiration for the development of a country and its citizens.” Finally, only 1% of the responses were coded for perceived reality; for example, a 20-year-old Filipino man said that peace is “the common idea of good by the majority.” One percent of all the definitions of peace were uncodeable. Table 9.1 indicates the percentages of definitions coded into the major categories and most common subcategories, along with examples and the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

### Exploratory Chi-Square Analyses

Chi-square analyses were conducted to explore the extent to which demographic groups differed in the frequencies of their particular definitions. These analyses were purely exploratory and cannot be generalized to the larger South and Southeast Asian population. To inform future research, marginally significant group differences (α = .10) are included in the following presentation of the findings. Chi-square tests of independence were run to determine whether group differences based on gender and participants’ military service, whether participants had relatives in the military, and whether participants had participated in protests.

Chi-square analyses revealed that there were group differences based on military and protest participation and gender (See Table 9.2). A significantly larger proportion of participants with military experience than those without a military background gave at least one definition coded into the question of achievability category. A significantly larger proportion of protestors than non-protestors and of women than men provided at least one definition coded for negative peace.

### Table 9.1  Major coding categories and examples of definitions of peace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative peace</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>“Cessation of hostilities toward a just resolution of grievances and genuine reconciliation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No conflict</td>
<td>6(16)</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>“A condition without fighting or being enemies”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejecting violence</td>
<td>16(46)</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>“A time of no war and justice prevailing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative emotions</td>
<td>4(13)</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>“No fear in the mind and heart”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonspecific negative peace</td>
<td>7(20)</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>“No fear in the mind and heart”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive peace</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>“Love”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisites</td>
<td>6(12)</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>“Freedom”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive emotions</td>
<td>5(10)</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>“People love each other”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm/tranquility</td>
<td>5(11)</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>“Tranquil, calm”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>8(15)</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>“To live in harmony with people of all backgrounds”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question of achievability/ideal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>“Everyone should have [it]”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived reality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>“Within you not the world because you compose this world”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first number in the percentage column refers to the percent of responses in the specified category or subcategory out of the total set of definitions of peace responses. The second number (in parentheses) in the percentage column refers to the percent of responses in the subcategory out of all the responses in the specific major category for definitions of peace.
Definitions of Reconciliation

Coding Methods

The coding manual for definitions of reconciliation contains criteria to code participants’ responses into five major categories. Each category has one or more subcategories. The major categories to define reconciliation for this manual are (a) process, (b) state, (c) human characteristic, (d) future orientation, and (e) question of achievability/ideal.

The process category includes nine subcategories for more precise identification of themes. These subcategories are (a) move on (which includes active), (b) apology and forgiveness (which includes without forgetting), (c) reparations/compensations, (d) resolve/fix (which includes make amends), (e) recognize/acknowledge/respect, (f) come to terms/agreement/compromise/negotiate, (g) understanding, (h) uniting (which includes healing/reuniting and building new relationship with former enemy), and (i) prevention/preventing. The state category contains responses referring to reconciliation as an end state, a completed process. It has three subcategories: (a) reconciliation as peace, (b) reconciliation as the end of conflict, and (c) reconciliation as an emotional state. The third category, human characteristic, contains responses portraying reconciliation as part of human nature or a human condition. The fourth category, future orientation, has responses portraying reconciliation as an undertaking that extends into the future. Finally, the question of achievability/ideal category includes responses questioning the achievability of reconciliation or referring to it as an ideal. This question of achievability/ideal category has one subcategory, which is strive for. For more details regarding the coding manual or procedure, please see the introductory methods chapter of Definitions of Peace and Reconciliation in this volume.

Distribution of Definitions of Reconciliation into Coding Categories

Sixty-two percent of the South and Southeast Asian definitions of reconciliation described it as a process. Within the process category, responses in the recognize/acknowledge/respect and coming to terms/agreement/compromise/negotiate subcategories were the most common. These subcategories comprised 14% and 22% of the responses in the major process category. A 22-year-old Filipino woman said that reconciliation is “compromise, settlement, and reunion,” which contains three codeable process units, all focusing on coming to terms/agreement/compromise/negotiate themes.

Approximately 27% of the definitions were coded into the state category, and a majority of these state responses (67%) identified reconciliation with peace. For example, a 20-year-old man from Laos defined reconciliation as “resolve by peace.”

Only a few responses were characterized by a future orientation (4%). An example of a response in the future orientation category was “patch up together and have at least one goal in common” (21-year-old woman, India). Definitions coded for question of achievability/ideal made up about 6% of the sample. Table 9.3 provides examples of definitions of reconciliation coded into the major categories and subcategories, along with percentages and demographic descriptors of the respondents providing the examples.
To examine the extent to which response patterns varied as a function of particular demographic characteristics of respondents from the South and Southeast Asia region, exploratory chi-square analyses were conducted; again, to inform future research, marginally statistically significant findings ($\alpha = .10$) are reported. Chi-square tests of independence revealed group differences based on participants’ gender and military service. Specifically, a significantly higher proportion of participants with military experience than their counterparts gave definitions coded into the process category. In addition, a significantly larger proportion of women than men also defined reconciliation as some sort of process, as well as identified reconciliation specifically with peace. See Table 9.4 for results of chi-square analyses.

### Table 9.3 Major coding categories and examples of definitions of reconciliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>“Giving back one’s trust and respect after unwanted war/misunderstanding”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology and forgiveness</td>
<td>6(10)</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>“The ability to forgive and forget past differences in pursuit of healthier future relations for all parties involved”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize/acknowledge/respect</td>
<td>9(14)</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>“Can be achieved when both parties recognized their faults. It is a great start after all the detriments had occurred”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming to terms/agreement/compromise/negotiate</td>
<td>14(22)</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>“An agreement to stop violence”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniting</td>
<td>6(10)</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>“Bringing together of opposing forces to discuss and compromise on disputes, whether perceived or otherwise, so that all parties involved will better understand and be willing to accept/tolerate the viewpoint/grievance that is causing the dispute”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing/reuniting</td>
<td>6(10)</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>“Patch up together and have at least one goal in common”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>“Balance”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>18(67)</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>“The movement toward peace for two conflicting nations/groups”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question of achievability</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>“What everyone deserves”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future orientation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>“A willful decision to learn from the past, let go of negativity, and cooperate for the future”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first number in the percentage column refers to the percent of responses in that category or subcategory out of the region’s total set of definitions of reconciliation. The second number (in parentheses) in the percentage column refers to the percent of responses in the specified subcategory out of the specific major category for definitions of reconciliation.

### Exploratory Chi-Square Analyses

To examine the extent to which response patterns varied as a function of particular demographic characteristics of respondents from the South and Southeast Asia region, exploratory chi-square analyses were conducted; again, to inform future research, marginally statistically significant findings ($\alpha = .10$) are reported. Chi-square tests of independence revealed group differences based on participants’ gender and military service. Specifically, a significantly higher proportion of participants with military experience than their counterparts gave definitions coded into the process category. In addition, a significantly larger proportion of women than men also defined reconciliation as some sort of process, as well as identified reconciliation specifically with peace. See Table 9.4 for results of chi-square analyses.

### Discussion

This study examined definitions of peace and reconciliation in South and Southeast Asia in the countries of India, Pakistan, Laos, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines; 622 participants were included in this sample. One limitation of this study could be the small sample size when one thinks of the population of South and Southeast Asia; however, its strength lies in the opportunity it provided for ordinary people in the region to reflect on the meaning to them of peace and reconciliation. The results indicate that nearly half of the definitions (46%) identified peace with “the absence of violence, bloodshed,” that is, they focused on negative peace. Results such as this indicate a focus simply on ending violence rather than on pursuing the kind of structural social change necessary to
the development of a culture of peace. Given the amount of war and terrorism that this region has experienced, one might not find these results too surprising. Of interest, of course, is the relationship between having either served in the military or having relatives who have served in the military and definitions of peace and reconciliation—particularly the greater likelihood of veterans to question the achievability of peace.

Interestingly, there were also some significant gender differences in definitions, which may be related to changing gender roles in this region. Traditionally, men went to war and women stayed home. As women enter the workforce and are exposed to urban violence, an expanded literacy rate, and simply a move from agrarian lifestyles to urban lifestyles, responses to questions about peace and reconciliation may change.

This region has experienced significant tension around globalization through economic disparity experienced by its peoples. As Lieber and Wesiberg (2002) remind us, globalization impacts each country differently, some countries experiencing globalization as part of a peace movement while others are seeking globalization as economic development leading to greater sustainability for goods and services. Globalization can have similar effects to those of changing gender roles, as people’s day-to-day lifestyles change. Beyond just changing from rural to urban, job security and political clout can change as well. Landed farmers may not have the best quality of life, but barring natural disasters, the land will produce food. Thus, subsistence agriculture provides a floor below which people cannot fall. However, once someone integrates with the global economy, they become affected not only by global upturns but also global downturns. Without a social safety net, global economic shifts can lead to widespread poverty in a region, particularly if they are practicing economic monoculture. For political clout, local constituencies can be displaced when global economic forces move in. This directly applies to peace studies as poverty and political destabilization can both be conducive to changing views on the utility of warfare and someone’s connection with their neighbors, domestically and internationally.

Natural disasters have plagued this region for centuries. Recently, the tsunami of 2004 brought in worldwide relief efforts that helped to bolster the economy and worked to return the region to a more normal state following the disaster. Peace efforts can benefit from collaborative efforts to respond to a natural disaster bringing people together to work toward a common cause.

References


