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Intra-Ethnic Electoral Violence
in War-Torn, Divided Societies:
The Case of Sri Lanka

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by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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What form does electoral violence take in war-torn divided societies, and what explains the variation in this type of violence? Using statistical and historical analyses, this study examines patterns of election-related violence in the war-torn, ethnically divided context of Sri Lanka. This study shows that electoral violence in Sri Lanka is more often the result of inter-party and intra-ethnic competition than it is the result of inter-ethnic rivalries. Since most Sri Lankan districts are ethnically homogeneous and because the Sinhalese constitute the vast majority of the population, most electoral competition occurs between rival Sinhalese parties. Specifically, this dissertation demonstrates the significance of inter-party competition within one ethnic group by showing that there was generally more violence in areas where the vote differences between the top two contenders were smallest, even when both were from the same ethnic group. This holds when comparing violence with the vote difference from the previous

election cycle as well. When vote differences were small in the previous election, there was more violence in the following election in that district.

In order to illustrate the intra-ethnic nature of much of the violence, I describe the planned, systematic and organized nature of the violence, which indicates that violence was not a spontaneous outburst of inter-ethnic animosity. Instead, it was planned – sometimes by politicians themselves – in order to harm rivals’ chances of victory. In addition, this analysis shows that there was more violence in heavily Sinhalese and heavily Tamil districts than in more mixed ones. This pattern indicates that most electoral competition at the district level was likely occurring within ethnic communities, between parties representing the same ethnic groups. In addition, most violence took place between supporters of the two main Sinhalese parties, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the United National Party (UNP). In terms of accusations, both Sinhalese and Tamil parties accused their co-ethnic parties of much more violence than they did parties of the other ethnicities, suggesting that much more violence took place within rather than between these groups.

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To my Sadruddin, for showing me,
time and again,
that even the most incredible dreams can and do come true.

&

To my Nani, whose model of hard work, courage and faith has always shown me the way
forward. I pray for her spirit to walk beside me ever more.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2009, the Sri Lankan military defeated the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and killed its long-elusive leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran. For President Mahinda Rajapakse, it was the stuff of legends. For more than a quarter of a century, three past presidents had tried but failed to defeat the rebels. Now history would credit President Rajapakse for finally bringing peace to the island. In fact, a string of popular songs released after the battlefield victory described Rajapakse as a “king” who performed a “miracle” (Nessman 2009). Riding high on his popularity, Rajapakse decided to call elections early, hoping to extend his term. It came as a rude surprise, then, when he found himself faced with a true threat. General Sarath Fonseka, commander of the Sri Lankan army at the time of the military victory over the rebels and national hero, announced his decision to run as the opposition candidate. Here was the only man who had a real chance of defeating Rajapakse. In fact, Fonseka had managed to win the backing of not just two of the three most dominant Sinhalese political parties but also a large part of the Tamil and Muslim population in the long-held rebel territory in the northeast of the island. What followed was a bloody electoral campaign, after which Rajapakse declared victory amidst opposition allegations of fraud and a stolen election.

Against the backdrop of newfound peace on the island, this election violence was especially striking. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expressed his concern over the violence, which Sri Lankan monitoring groups described as the worst in at least twenty years (BBC 2010). Ahead of a political rally in Puttalam, a shooting incident injured three people and killed one. In retaliation for the incident, which was said to have been carried out by an opposition politician, government supporters set fire to the elite’s house as well as to a hotel owned by him (Sunday Times 2010). In another incident, gunmen on a motorbike fired into a

bus, killing a woman activist heading for a rally in support of the opposition (BBC Sri Lanka pre-election 2010). Election monitors pointed out the involvement of more senior politicians as well. The CMEV reported that the Minister of Textile Development, Mahinda Rathnathilaka and his supporters, who were carrying firearms, assaulted UNP supporters, threatening to kill them if they put up posters (CMEV 2010). Opposition candidate Tiran Alles was woken from sleep when unknown attackers lobbed a bomb over the wall surrounding his house. The explosion was so strong that it destroyed Alles's car and set the house aflame. He accused President Rajapakse for the attack, which was preceded by a series of warnings and death threats (Sara 2010).

Given the end of the civil war, this extreme election violence begs questioning. What provoked the violence? Sadly, this situation is nothing new for Sri Lanka. Since independence, elections have been fraught with severe violence and successive governments have made moves to increase executive powers while eroding democratic institutions.

This dissertation takes an in-depth look at the case of Sri Lanka, setting the stage for further inquiry that may lay the basis for broader generalization relating to ethnic and other forms of cultural violence in deeply divided developing countries. Overall, this study is about electoral violence in war-torn, ethnically fragmented societies. While it is easy to assume that elections taking place in the midst of an ongoing ethnic conflict are fraught with violence precisely because of that broader conflict, this is not always the case. Instead, there may be several factors causing the violence, some of which are only partially related to or even completely unrelated to the larger-scale dispute. What do the patterns of violence look like in such scenarios? Who are the actors involved and what roles do they play?

As I demonstrate below, electoral violence occurring in the midst of ongoing, inter-ethnic or inter-religious strife is not always related to the larger political conflict. Instead, in a political

context of normalized violence, election-related bloodshed can be a simple manifestation of inter-party competition, a “tool of the trade.” I show that election-related violence is an integral part of the campaigning process -- used in much the same way as other campaign tools -- to demonstrate power, intimidate rivals and win as many votes as possible. Although the violence takes place against the backdrop of ongoing armed conflict, it is not always a product of that conflict. While the ongoing war may indirectly facilitate the use of violence by motivating the government to consolidate power and thereby weaken the very democratic institutions that could be critical to checking political violence, the conflict that caused the war does not necessarily drive the electoral bloodshed. Furthermore, I argue that while there may well be inter-ethnic violence during elections, there is also an important but often neglected phenomenon of intra-ethnic election violence. This may be especially true when there is more than one party vying for the votes of the same ethnic group. In such an environment, inter-party competition and any accompanying violence occur within that one ethnic community. Using Sri Lanka as a case study, this dissertation seeks to illustrate this phenomenon.

Sri Lanka is an appropriate case for two reasons. First, fully half of its independence has been colored by a civil war (1983 – 2009) between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil communities, politicizing ethnic identity in the country. Second, elections in Sri Lanka are notoriously bloody. In the 2000 general election, for instance, the Colombo-based Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) reported that the 39 total days of campaigning were marked by 2,044 incidents of violence, including 66 murders and 41 attempted murders (CMEV 2000, 1). This political context makes Sri Lanka an optimal case for investigation. If I find that, even during the ethnic civil war, a substantial part of Sri Lankan electoral violence occurred

between members of the same ethnic group then it seems likely the same would also be true in less extreme cases.

My analysis is divided into two parts. In order to explain the phenomenon of electoral violence, I first conduct an historical analysis of the growth of a Sri Lankan political “culture of violence,” which was due in large part to an overly powerful executive branch, arms proliferation, and a weak and ineffective police force. I then use statistical regression analysis to examine the patterns of violence during the three parliamentary elections of 2000, 2001 and 2004 and the two presidential elections of 1999 and 2005. These election years were chosen because they took place during the civil war and because the CMEV only began monitoring elections in 1999. Given the long history of the Sri Lankan civil war, which is taken up in detail in the next chapter, it is not surprising that casual observers of Sri Lankan politics assume that the staggering amount of electoral violence is inter-ethnic in nature. Surprisingly, however, my analysis reveals that a large amount of the violence occurs between supporters of the two largest political parties, both of which represent the Sinhalese community.

Specifically, I argue that the growth of a culture of violence resulted in the normalization of general political violence, including election violence. Election-related violence became a “tool of the trade,” used in much the same way as other campaign tactics to intimidate rivals and sway voter opinion. Inter-party rivalries often erupted into violence, but this violence occurred mostly between political parties representing the same ethnic group. Thus, most violence occurred within ethnic groups, not between them. Since the violence was more a manifestation of inter-party competition than inter-ethnic animosity, there was generally more violence where inter-party competition was most intense.

HYPOTHESES

The statistical analysis in this study tests the following hypotheses:

- **H1: There was more violence in areas where the difference in votes won by the top two parties was the smallest.**
 - This is because election violence was more about inter-party competition than it was the result of inter-ethnic hostility. As such, politicians worked harder and possibly used more extreme means in highly competitive areas.
- **H2: There was more violence in areas that experienced party turnover.**
 - This is because incumbents would have had more resources to allocate, especially in areas where they felt threatened, than the opposition parties. Since violence was more a campaign tool than it was a spontaneous outburst of inter-ethnic hatred, incumbents would have targeted their most extreme methods, including violence, towards areas where they were most prone to lose.
- **H3: There was more violence in areas where incumbents' vote shares were larger.**
 - This is because incumbents would have used their plentiful resources to intimidate opposition supporters. As a result, opposition supporters would have stayed away from the polls, thereby increasing incumbents' vote shares.
- **H4: Most violent incidents that occurred during Sri Lankan election periods were planned, systematic and organized.**
 - Since the election-related violence was used to try and prevent each rival's victory, parties would have targeted people and areas that they felt posed the greatest threat.
- **H5: Higher rates of violence were correlated with the more ethnically homogeneous districts.**

- This is because, contrary to what one would expect in a war-torn society, most Sri Lankan electoral violence occurred *within*, not between ethnic groups.
- **H6: Most electoral violence involved the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the United National Party (UNP), the two largest and most dominant Sinhalese political parties.**
 - This is because most election-related violence was occurring within the Sinhalese community. These two parties are mainly representative of Sinhalese interests, and the large majority of party members are Sinhalese. Since it is these two parties that have controlled government since independence, they have had more capacity for violence.
- **H7: Most electoral violence in Sinhalese districts took place between Sinhalese parties while most violence in Tamil areas took place between Tamil parties.**
 - This is because most electoral violence was occurring within and not between groups. Since parties tended to campaign most heavily in areas where there were large populations of their co-ethnics, there would have been more violence occurring between supporters of those parties, the large majority of whom came from the same ethnic group. Even where Sinhalese and Tamil parties were both contesting, violence would have largely remained within communities.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Definitive conclusions regarding the role of ethnicity in electoral violence ideally require detailed information identifying perpetrators' and victims' personal and partisan characteristics. Since such data is not consistently available, I rely on several sources to explain as much about patterns of ethnicity and electoral violence as possible.

First, reports from the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) provide counts of the incidents of violence per election, per district as well as the partisan identity of perpetrators and victims (where possible). These reports also code the severity of each incident. Such data allow for an assessment of the amount and intensity of violence committed by each party. Second, analyses from the Department of Elections report each party's vote share and the identity of the victor per election, per district. I use these data to identify districts and years with more competitive elections. Third, the Department of the Census has data regarding the ethnic distribution and total population per district. I use these data in statistical regressions of the amount of violence on percent of each ethnic group per district in order to test whether or not violence increases depending on the concentrations of certain ethnic groups. The Department of the Census also provides data for my control variables, which include poverty, education and unemployment rates. Fourth, I include anecdotes of the role of ethnicity in election violence as well as explanations of the political context of specific elections from personal interviews conducted with Sri Lankan policy experts, academics and government officials.

While there are several groups that send monitors into the field for election observation, CMEV is the only organization to systematically count the number of incidents per district and make efforts to be present in all districts. CMEV monitors record incidents occurring throughout the election campaign, beginning with the commencement of nominations and ending several days after the polls close. Unless otherwise specified, the counts of district-level violence reflect per 10,000 capita rates, from the pre-election through the post-election periods. The CMEV follows the Sri Lankan police force's crime classification system, organizing incidents into categories of "major" and "minor." The former includes threat & intimidation; robbery; arson; murder; attempted murder; hurt and assault; while the latter includes damage to property;

election offenses; mischief and threat (CMEV 2004, 110-111). Since both minor and major incidents can involve violence and injury to individuals, I count all these incidents as “violence.”

Ideally, the statistical tests described in Chapter 4 would have included data on each variable from every election year under review, but for most districts 2001 was the most recent census. The data on ethnic distribution should be reasonably accurate in most districts, however, because large cross-district movements of ethnic groups between 2001 and 2005, which is the last election under review, have been rare. Notably, the only figures of the ethnic distribution and population for the northeastern districts of Batticaloa, Jaffna, and Trincomalee were from 2007, because the war prevented census officials from conducting fieldwork there in 2001. Using district-level average annual growth rates, I adjusted the 2007 population figures back to estimated 2001 population figures.

The statistical regressions in Chapter 4 include controls for 2001 district-level education, poverty and unemployment rates. The primary reason these particular controls were chosen is that many scholars contend that significant numbers of poverty-stricken youth with little opportunity for employment contribute to high rates of violence in poor, divided societies (Bates 1983; Gellner 1983). My measure of poverty is the census department’s 2001 calculation of the percent of the population living below the poverty line. Unfortunately, however, this data was not available from the northeastern districts in 2001. For these districts, then, I use the 2001 poverty rate from the southeastern district of Moneragala, which was 37 percent. At that time, Moneragala had the worst poverty rate in the country. Having been wracked by the battles of war for two decades, I assume that the northeastern districts would have had a poverty rate at least as high as Moneragala. Table 1.1 shows the relationship between the control variables and violence. As expected, higher poverty rates correspond with more violence. Indeed, if a district

like Matara, where the poverty rate was close to the average poverty rate in the country, were as poor as the poorest district, it would experience about 46 more violent incidents per election cycle. For education rates, I use 2001 figures for the percent of the population between the ages of 5 and 34 attending school. Since this data was again unavailable for the northeast, I rely on NGOs' field reports, which state that at least one-third of children were not in school during the war (Sri-Jayantha, 2003). Indeed, if Moneragala, where the education level was about average, were able to enjoy education levels close to the highest in the country, it would experience about 43 fewer violent incidents. Following the literature, I also tested the relationship between unemployment and violence. Surprisingly, however, it appears that violence decreases as unemployment increases. In fact, in an average-sized Sri Lankan district, the highest unemployment rates in the country correspond with about 68 fewer violent incidents per capita. This pattern may be explained by the fact that partisan "thugs," who are often recruited from among the unemployed in other countries, are actually regularly employed by the state sector in Sri Lanka. In fact, Chapter 3 describes partisan thugs as members of labor unions and as politicians' personal bodyguards/security personnel. It could also be the case that the war-zone districts skew the results, because unemployment rates there were so high during the war. Since many of those areas were also controlled by the LTTE, they tended to experience less electoral violence. Controlling for Tamil-dominant districts, however, did not change the effect of unemployment. Notably, however, poverty and unemployment are correlated, with a correlation coefficient of .281. This relationship likely explains the surprising relationship between violence and unemployment.¹

¹ This relatively low correlation might be explained by the fact that the underemployed are not counted as unemployed. Thus, it could well be that there are many poor Sri Lankans who, because they do have some amount of work, are not categorized as unemployed.

Finally, the elections covered here include the 1999 and 2005 presidential elections as well as the 2000, 2001 and 2004 parliamentary elections. In Sri Lanka, presidential and parliamentary polls are held every six years, but the latter can be called earlier, if the president deems it necessary. While it would have been ideal to include all elections conducted during the years of the civil war (1983-2009), data on election violence was only available from these years.

TABLE 1.1: THE EFFECTS OF THE CONTROL VARIABLES ON AVERAGE VIOLENCE

Control Variable	Coefficient	R ²	N=110
Unemployment	-.100	.419	
Education	-.058**		
Poverty	.060**		

*95% confidence; **99% confidence; ***99.9% confidence

LITERATURE REVIEW

Elections as Political Institutions

Institutions provide society with a critical sense of order, engendering patterned regularity in political life through a set of rules. These rules offer order in three ways. First, they constitute social, economic and political situations in which human agents interact to realize mutual gains. Second, they invest human agents with situation-specific identities in terms of roles and expectations, thereby defining their social persona. Third, they prescribe, proscribe and permit people's choices of goals, strategies and behavior (Mozaffar 1995, 43). In sum, institutional rules describe people's roles and positions in society, and they offer bounds for appropriate behavior. Institutions are also important, because they configure organizational mechanisms like political parties and elections, which aggregate and articulate political interests (Mozaffar 1995, 53). The form of these mechanisms corresponds to the underlying pattern of social (including ethnic) differentiation and the accompanying power asymmetries that divide political actors.

One central political institution is the election, which acts as a channel of communication between citizens and political elites. Free and fair polls offer politicians a chance to convince voters of the merits of their policy objectives. At the same time, they offer citizens an opportunity to express confidence or doubt in proposed plans. Moreover, in representative democracies, elections lend legitimacy to and ensure a certain degree of responsiveness from the government, they facilitate the installation of officials, and they offer choices to citizens with regard to who is best suited to rule (Katz 1997, 102-105). Indeed, many analysts define democracy largely around elections (Barro 1999 and Huntington 1991). In fact, Staffan Lindberg goes as far as to say that despite the fact that elections can co-exist with highly undemocratic practices, they are “a causal variable in democratization,” facilitating the institutionalization of civil liberties (Lindberg 2006, 2). He contends that the process of holding an uninterrupted series of participatory, competitive and legitimate elections enhances the democratic quality of the electoral regime and has positive effects on the spreading and deepening of civil liberties (Lindberg 2006, 3).

Even those scholars who adopt a more complex definition of democracy note the importance of elections. Dankwart Rustow for instance, lays out a set of conditions for democratization that includes elections, among others: a group of nationalist literati for the task of unification; a mass movement of the lower class for the task of preparatory struggle; political leaders who have expertise in negotiation for the formulation of democratic rules, which include elections, and a range of “organization men and their organizations” to help politicians and laymen learn and become accustomed to the new rules of the political game (Rustow 1970, 361). Charles Tilly, despite the fact that he does not include national polls in his own understanding of democracy, notes the centrality of elections in his typology of the definitions of democracy:

“Most procedural observers center their attention on elections, asking whether genuinely competitive elections engaging large numbers of citizens regularly produce changes in governmental personnel and policy” (Tilly 2007, 8). Even process-oriented definitions, such as that of Robert Dahl, despite their attention to a minimum set of processes that are continually in motion, include procedures of equal voting (Dahl 1998, 37-38).

Electoral Engineering: The Mitigation and Provocation of Violence

Political institutions play especially critical roles in divided societies, for stable inter-ethnic competition is based upon well-established and accepted rules. Since electoral institutions can be crafted to respond to the specific needs of various societies, many researchers and policy-makers argue that, given the proper set of conditions, polls can start to heal societal divisions (Lijphart 1977; Reilly 2002; Sisk and Reynolds 1998; Horowitz 1985). Indeed, Arend Lijphart’s consociational model, which is based on proportional representation and power-sharing, was, for many years, the dominant model of democracy for divided societies. Now, however, “centripetal” models have gained ground. Instead of replicating existing ethnic divisions in the legislature, centripetal electoral systems, which rely on preferential voting systems, encourage politicians to make broadly based centrist appeals beyond their core supporters by making electoral success dependent on the transfer of preference votes from other ethnic groups (Horowitz 1985, 1991; Reilly 1997, 2001). Harvey Glickman and Peter Furia also argue for power-sharing in the form of multi-ethnic coalitions and forms of federalism that allow for regionally strong ethnic parties to find coalition partners in the central government. They contend that such democratic institutions may themselves cause, rather than be caused by, a trusting civic culture of tolerance and compromise (Glickman and Furia 1995, 23, 27).

Of course, elections can also be violent occurrences, threatening the legitimacy of political representatives as well as the link between citizens and the state. Unfortunately, however, political scientists have paid scant attention to “the neglected paradox” of elections and violence. Despite the fact that no subject receives as much attention as elections, the links between ballots and bullets are largely unexplored (Kumar and Ottaway 1998, 231; Rapoport and Weinberg 2001, 16). In their review of the matter, Rapoport and Weinberg offer an historical overview of the myriad ways in which violence can arise around elections as well as a preliminary typology of the causes of electoral violence, which includes a rejection of the principle of elections; disagreement with the application of polls; or the perception that a particular instance of polling is unfair (Rapoport and Weinberg 2001, 33).

In some ways, it is unsurprising that elections often go hand in hand with violence. After all, the electoral stakes are often high, and the vast amount of political power that comes with victory is tempting. An electoral process is an alternative to violence as much as it is a means of achieving governance. It is when an electoral process is perceived as unfair, unresponsive, or corrupt, that its political legitimacy is compromised and stakeholders are motivated to go outside the established norms to achieve their objectives. Electoral conflict and violence become tactics in political competition (Fischer 2002, 2).

Indeed, an investigation of the link between elections and violence reveals that several factors have a bearing on this relationship, including the nature of the actors involved, the type of electoral institution² in use and the stakes of victory/defeat. For example, specifically, violence may be a byproduct of manipulative political elites who can take advantage of the public’s lack

² Proportional representation, for instance, is said to be more accommodative of diverse interests than first-past-the-post (Horowitz 1985). Within the family of proportional representation, open-list systems may provoke more violence than closed-list systems, because the former encourages more open *intra*-party competition in addition to the already extant *inter*-party competition.

of awareness of elite-level negotiations. For instance, when incumbent elites have a tenuous hold on power and there is fear among the citizenry, who are uncertain about the true intentions of others, these elites may be willing to incite violence to maintain power. Citizens, who fear for their lives, livelihoods and families, then support violence in exchange for protection. Using the cases of Serbia and Rwanda, Rui J.P. de Figueiredo, Jr. and Barry Weingast explain that citizens, who have no way of knowing what the other side's true intentions towards them are, follow leaders because it is their best chance of protection against a group that, for all they know, intends to harm them:

Serbian citizens can only observe whether negotiations succeed or fail. If negotiations succeed, Serbians know that the Croats are not bent on violence and Milosevic is not treacherous. Yet, if negotiations fail, pivotal constituents can never really know why. Perhaps it failed because aggressive Croats sabotaged peace, or perhaps it failed because a treacherous Milosevic sabotaged it. Thus, the pivotal Serbian constituencies face a critical *causal ambiguity* as to why a new pact failed to preserve Yugoslavia...The failure of a pact allows Serbians to rule out the best possible world – the combination of cooperative Croats and a nontreacherous Milosevic. This failure raises the probability of the other possible scenarios, implying an increased probability that the Croats are bent on violence. (de Figueiredo, Jr. and Weingast 1999, 265)

Elections can also turn bloody because of the particular electoral system in use. For instance, the multi-member constituencies used in certain types of list-PR systems tend to create incentives for intra-party fighting and factionalization, because candidates from one party are competing against candidates from the opposing party as well as candidates from their own party (Hicken 1). Indeed, several analysts and government officials blame the open list-PR system, which pits members of the same party against each other, for Sri Lankan electoral violence (Edrisinha 2010; Dissanayake, 2010; Dissanayake 2011).

When incumbents decide to incite fear and mistrust within the population, it can sometimes lead to violence. Elites can then use that fear to justify their retention of power (Klopp 2001; Snyder 2000; Wilkinson 2004). Finally, electoral competitors may resort to

violence when one party is permanently excluded from access to political power and when the party in power has little incentive to compromise or include the opposition in any significant way. Such a perpetually adversarial political relationship between the opposition group and the ruling group is more likely to turn violent (Birnie 2007, 11).

Clearly, extant societal divisions give political elites opportunities to win electoral support by manipulating fear and mistrust within the population. As the scholars above have made clear, inter-ethnic hostility and violence can largely be attributed to elite action. What is less clear, however, is the effect of such tactics on intra-ethnic relations, largely because few scholars have investigated it. While he does not offer a detailed analysis, Timothy D. Sisk asserts,

Although deep cleavages among ethnic groups often result in severe ethnic conflict, there is increasing recognition that one important variable in determining whether ethnic relations are based on pragmatism and reciprocity... is the nature of within-group differences. Some suggest that cohesive and confident ethnic groups—with clearly legitimate and broadly supported leadership—can deliver at the bargaining table, fostering moderation across ethnic lines. Others suggest that strong splits within an ethnic community ultimately facilitate conflict management because moderates within the group will form multiethnic coalitions with moderates of other groups, resulting in a broad and tolerant multiethnic core. (Sisk 1996, 16)

One study, however, does offer a detailed analysis of within-group relations in the context of a divided society. Kenneth Bush's study of Sri Lankan politics begins with the explicit criticism that because many studies simply count up the number of incidents of violence, they end up conflating different types of violence and different types of victims (Bush 2003, 12). Bush posits that there is a link between inter- and intra-group violence; they affect each other. His argument states that sets of mediating structures and processes work to condition inter- and intra-group relations, making them more or less conflictual. These structures include mobilization and politicization of group identity; mobilization and competition for resources within and between

groups; changing economic, social and political contexts; and the variable role of state actors (Bush 2003, 17). Applying inter-group and intra-group models of interaction to “critical junctures” in Sri Lankan history, he seeks to explain when and why inter-group polarization, conflict escalation and intransigence are caused by intra-group rather than inter-group relationships (Bush 2003, 17). While Bush’s investigation raises the critical point that inter-group interactions can impact intra-group relations, his study focuses on a few specific periods of Sri Lankan history, neglecting vast amounts of time in between what he identifies as “critical junctures.” His study also does not systematically consider *electoral* violence.

OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION

Chapter 2 serves as an introduction to Sri Lankan political history, setting the context and providing an initial description of the relevant actors. While it includes an explanation of the emergence of inter-ethnic hostilities and the outbreak of civil war, it also discusses the history of political rivalries within the Sinhalese community, focusing on the divisions between the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the United National Party. The chapter also includes an overview of the Sri Lankan electoral system, with an explanation of the ways in which the island’s experiences with first-past-the-post and proportional representation have affected ethnic relations.

In Chapter 3, I introduce the theory of a political culture of violence, which is explained by Jayadeva Uyangoda, and discuss how Sri Lanka’s history of overly powerful executives, who weakened the very institutions that could have helped to check violence, as well as small arms proliferation contributed to the normalization of political violence, including election violence. The chapter focuses on the actions of Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Junius Jayawardene, who established a pattern of state-sanctioned violence in the service of their personal political ends.

As a point of comparison, I offer an analysis of the Palestinian case, where concentrated executive power, small arms proliferation and weak democratic institutions have also contributed to election-related violence.

Chapter 4 discusses the results of the statistical tests. Here, I systematically test the hypotheses listed above and show that patterns of district-level electoral violence during the 1999 and 2005 presidential and during the 2000, 2001, 2004 parliamentary polls did not usually reflect inter-ethnic hostility. Instead, statistical analyses show that violence during these war-time elections was more indicative of *inter*-party and *intra*-ethnic competition.

In Chapter 5, I look closely at districts that consistently appeared as outliers in the statistical tests. In order to assess why these areas tended to experience extraordinarily high levels of violence, I look closely at the districts' political history. Additionally, I suggest that the ethnic heterogeneity in these areas, combined with the proportional representation electoral system, provide incentives for inter- as well as intra-ethnic conflict.

Finally, Chapter 6, the conclusion, compares Sri Lanka with the experiences of two similarly divided societies. Here, I examine the possibilities for intra-group rifts and violence in Kenya and Iraq. I identify the sources of intra-ethnic competition and conflict and also examine sectarian religious and ethnic violence. While there is not always an abundance of systematic evidence for such conflict, there is some anecdotal evidence that suggests that such patterns exist beneath the surface. This chapter highlights the importance of further research on within-group conflict and suggests topics to pursue in that direction.

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Chapter 2: Sri Lankan Political History

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation focuses on intra-ethnic electoral violence in Sri Lanka. In order to fully comprehend this phenomenon, it is important to consider the context within which elections take place. In particular, it is useful to examine Sri Lankan inter- and intra-ethnic relations, for they play a significant role in shaping electoral politics. Thus, in this chapter, I provide an overview of the trajectory of communal relations, with an emphasis on the growth of inter-ethnic hostility and the outbreak of civil war. Specifically, this chapter discusses the early political party system in Sri Lanka, illustrating how the need to win mass support motivated Sinhalese politicians to embrace the growing nationalist movement, which was fuelled by chauvinistic, anti-minority attitudes. This is important, because the deterioration of Sinhalese-Tamil relationships was closely related to Sri Lankan presidents' centralization of power, which in turn contributed to the growth of a "culture of violence" and the normalization of political violence. This chapter also provides a description of the war itself, the resolution of which eventually came to be a central part of Sinhalese parties' electoral platforms. These issues all impact electoral politics, and an understanding of each of them sets the stage for the remainder of the analysis in this dissertation.

ELECTORAL POLITICS AND THE CIVIL WAR

It is impossible to discuss Sri Lankan history without devoting significant attention to the inter-ethnic civil war, which pitted the Sri Lankan government against Tamil rebels, mainly the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), for 26 years (1983-2009). The war was brutal, marked by the LTTE's use of suicide bombings, recruitment of child soldiers, assassinations of high-ranking elites, massacres of Sinhalese and Tamil civilians and ethnic cleansing in areas it regarded as its territory. The government forces were also guilty of heinous crimes, including

but not limited to the rapes of Tamil women and the torture and “disappearing” of scores of civilians allegedly suspected of having links to the LTTE. By the time government forces militarily defeated the LTTE in 2009, Sri Lanka had lost between 80,000 and 100,000 lives, and today the country continues to reel from the after-effects of the war (AFP 2009).

Origins on the Island

The island of Sri Lanka spans approximately 25,000 square miles and is home to roughly 20 million people (DeVotta 2004, 21). The population is ethnically and religiously diverse (See Table 1).

Table 2.1: Sri Lanka’s Ethnic Population

Sinhalese	82%
Tamil	9.40%
Muslims	7.90%
Burgher	0.20%
Malay	0.30%
Veddhas	0.20%
TOTAL	100%

Source: Neil DeVotta. 2004. Blowback. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

Both the Sinhalese and Tamil communities claim to have been Sri Lanka’s first inhabitants. Indeed, the debate is controversial, with the Sinhalese, who are largely Buddhist, pointing to the *Mahavamsa*, a historical chronicle from the sixth century, as evidence that their ancestors arrived 2,500 years ago. According to this text, Prince Vijaya, the founder of the Sinhalese race, arrived in Sri Lanka from India with seven hundred followers after his father drove him into exile. The story of Vijaya also implies that Sri Lanka was destined to be a Buddhist sanctuary (DeVotta 2004, 25). The Tamils, who are mostly Hindu, claim that it was their ancestors who first settled the island, and in fact some historians argue that Dravidians were travelling to Sri Lanka from the “earliest historical times and probably before” (Basham 1952, 167). In fact, it is “unlikely

that South Indians were unaware that a large island was situated just twenty-two miles across the shallow Palk Strait” (DeVotta 2004, 25). Whichever group actually arrived first, today’s Sri Lankans are “of utterly hybridized stock,” the result of centuries of conversion, acculturation and miscegenation (DeVotta 2004, 25).

In addition to the Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamil populations, Sri Lanka is home to Indian Tamils, Muslims, Burghers, Malays and Veddhas. Indian Tamils came from India in the 19th and early 20th centuries, brought by British colonizers to work on Sri Lanka’s tea plantations (de Silva 1998, 9). While the two Tamil groups share a language, there is little convergence of political attitudes among them. In fact, Indian Tamils were not involved in the struggle for a separate state.

Sri Lanka’s Muslim population has also been resident for centuries. Despite the group’s minority status and the fact that its members are Tamil speakers, it has feared Tamil domination and has thus been strongly opposed to the establishment of a separate Tamil state. In fact, there have been several notable incidents of violence between the Muslims and the Tamils, especially in the eastern province, where a large proportion of the Muslim community lives (de Silva 1998, 9-11). This is taken up in detail in Chapter 5.

Sri Lanka is also home to small Burgher and Malay communities, the former of which are descendants of Dutch and Portuguese settlers while the latter arrived in Sri Lanka with the Dutch colonizers. Finally, there are the Veddhas, an indigenous community that has been excessively marginalized (DeVotta 2004, 24).

Colonization and the Seeds of Inter-Ethnic Hostility

While there were of course some battles between the Sinhalese and Tamil kingdoms in pre-colonial times, it was European colonizers who highlighted inter-ethnic differences and

created enduring inter-ethnic divisions. Sri Lanka endured three periods of colonial rule, including by the Portuguese (1505-1568), the Dutch (1568-1796) and the British (1796-1948), but it was only the latter that managed to unite the island's disparate kingdoms and rule the entire area as one country. All of these groups, in their own ways, created inter-religious and inter-ethnic antagonism, mainly through the use of missionaries and forced conversions. While Sri Lankans of various faiths suffered under the Portuguese and the Dutch, it was the British that played the most distinctive role in attacking local traditions (Little 1994, 12). By establishing a new system of government- and church-run schools, the British stripped the Buddhist monks of their primary functions in Sinhala society. The traditional curriculum was replaced with the study of Christianity and western science and humanities. Moreover, colonial rulers blatantly ignored obligations to respect the Buddhist tradition and maintain and protect its rites and places of worship, which had been agreed upon in specific conventions (Little 1994, 13-14). While the monks were initially accommodating and even helpful to the missionaries, going so far as to assist with translation, lend out their scriptures and even host itinerants, a Buddhist revivalist movement began to grow by the latter half of the nineteenth century. This movement would gain strength as independence neared, eventually turning into a Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist program.

Through the use of their infamous "divide and rule" policy, British colonizers also created enduring societal divisions between the majority Sinhalese community and the minority Tamil group, the latter of which was favored with access to coveted government jobs and higher education (Sahadevan and DeVotta 2006, 36). In fact, non-Buddhists and ethnic minorities were over-represented in the bureaucracy, civil service, and primary and secondary educational institutions. In addition, American missionary and educational efforts in the North, where many Tamils live, ensured that a large number of this minority group became conversant in English.

By 1930, English literacy in the Northern Province was second only to that in Colombo, the capital city (Sahadevan and DeVotta 2006, 36).

These divisions did not really come to a head, however, until preparations for independence began. Specifically, the Special Commission on the Constitution, better known as the Donoughmore Commission, issued a report in 1928 that recommended universal suffrage for Sri Lanka. While this was a progressive step for a colony, it sparked fears of majority domination within minority communities. Tamil politicians were opposed to it, because the communal electorates that had existed prior to the reforms had allowed Tamils to wield a disproportionate influence in the legislature. In fact, the Tamils had enjoyed parity of representation prior to these reforms and had considered themselves, along with the Sinhalese, to be the island's two majority communities (DeVotta 2004, 35). In the face of these reforms, then, they agitated for "fifty-fifty" representation, whereby they and the Sinhalese would enjoy "balanced" representation. Given that such a scheme would give the Sinhalese, who were roughly 70 percent of the population at this time, only 50 percent representation, this idea was rejected (DeVotta 2004, 36).

Property and educational qualifications, combined with communal electorates, had allowed the Tamil elites in the National Assembly to function on an equal footing with their Sinhalese counterparts. The Donoughmore constitution changed that. Indeed, the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress's attempt to get...a "fifty-fifty" representation scheme in the mid-1940s was a clear signal that Tamil elites recognized that universal suffrage had made them and their community a marginalizable minority. (DeVotta 2006, 67)

This anxiety on the part of Tamil elites continued, and there were several attempts to modify rules of electoral representation. Muslims were also fearful of the prospect of majority rule, and they, sometimes together with Tamils, offered several counterproposals to try and provide safeguards against the danger of a majority dictatorship (Little 1994, 53).

Tamils and Muslims were not alone in their fear of majority rule. In fact, British policies had created divisions within the Sinhalese community as well, and certain factions pressed for separate representation. Specifically, the Kandyan Sinhalese, who hailed from the hilly, interior region of Kandy, felt threatened by Colombo reform leaders, and they feared that the nationalism articulated by the latter would result in the extinction of Kandyan culture and tradition (Wickramasinghe 2006, 56). This fear had been planted, at least in part, by British rulers who had treated the Kandyans as distinct from low-country Sinhalese. British colonizers saw the Kandyan region as the epitome of tradition and tended to take a paternalistic attitude towards issues regarding the region and its people. Unlike the southern areas, which had been changed by commercial development, Kandyans were less literate and still led lives based mainly on the village and the ownership of land (Wickramasinghe 2006, 54). They were registered as a separate group in the 1901 census, and there is evidence that certain British governors felt particular sympathy for Kandyan elites, who did not agree that low-country Sinhalese reformers understood their needs and could adequately represent them. These elites felt that they were distinguishable from low-country Sinhalese by manners of dress, their names and the dialect of Sinhala that they spoke. With the help of the British, they formed a separate identity and tried their best to win their own legislative representatives (Wickramasinghe 2006, 53).

It was, however, to no avail. Colonial authorities feared communal strife, and they believed that any form of representation based on ethnicity would perpetuate sectionalism, retarding the development of a modern multiethnic society. Sinhalese politicians and members of the Donoughmore Commission believed that minority groups' pleading for such privileges was nothing more than the self-interested obstruction of progress (Little 1994, 53-54). Thus, by the time of independence in 1948, the British had left little in the way of minority protections.

Instead, the constitution enshrined the principles of unitary government and majoritarian rule. In fact, the constitutional drafting commission rejected the idea of a bill of rights, convinced that the British Westminster model was perfectly suited for Sri Lanka just as it was suited for Britain (Little 1994, 55). This model, however, would prove weak in the face of the growing nationalist movement.

In addition to poor minority protections, Sri Lanka also began its independent life with weak political parties. While there are several dozen political parties in Sri Lanka now, the party system was initially slow to take root. There are myriad reasons for this. First, the conservative elites of the time, drawn from all ethnic communities, enjoyed quite a bit of comraderie. Together they considered themselves a part of the indispensable, educated ruling class, and there was thus little need for differentiation into political parties (DeVotta 2004, 38). Also, individual landlords had cultivated patron-client ties with farmers who worked on their land, making it unnecessary for organizational structures like parties to try and establish such relationships. The most important reason, however, was tied to the Donoughmore Constitution, which created an executive committee system. In this system, all members of the legislature sat on committees overseeing the business of the legislature and the executive. All the committee chairmen together formed the Board of Ministers, which ran the government. Thus, there was no “Government” and “Opposition.” Instead, there were simply 58 independents. This arrangement, where individual members decided on issues in a “clannish culture” was simply not conducive to generating political parties (DeVotta 2004, 39). Indeed, the weakness of political parties can be seen in the number of independents in early elections. In 1947, for instance, 181 out of 360 candidates contested as independents. As parties established themselves and grew

stronger, the number of independents dwindled such that in 1952 and 1956, independent candidates numbered 85 out of 303 and 64 out of 249, respectively (DeVotta 2004, 40).

When political parties did form, one significant problem was that they struggled to draw in the rural masses. For instance, the country's first party, the Ceylon Labour Party, was founded in 1928 by trade union leader A.E. Goonesinha. Although it claimed membership of 40,000 at one point, the party failed to penetrate the rural interior of the country. In the first Parliament of independent Sri Lanka, the Ceylon Labour Party had just one member (its founder) and after 1952, it effectively ceased to exist (de Silva 1987, 215). The Marxist parties had similar issues in that they failed to successfully fuse Marxist philosophy with traditional culture. Their westernized leaders did not understand that attacking indigenous religions, for instance, would alienate the masses who lived in rural areas (de Silva 1987, 216). It is also important to note that beginning fairly early on there was an entirely separate party system operating in the Tamil areas of the north and east. Soon after independence, the Tamil Congress and Federal Party were the most popular, especially because the latter came to espouse calls for a separate state. With the outbreak of the war and the growth of the LTTE, Tamil parties faced serious difficulties. This was largely because the LTTE violently eradicated anyone they deemed to be a threat. Thus, any political party that wished to operate in Tamil areas either had to gain explicit LTTE permission to do so or face annihilation.

Early Electoral Politics in Independent Sri Lanka

Within the first few years of independence, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) had established their dominance. It has always been these two parties, both of which represent different segments of the Sinhalese group, that have dominated

the electoral scene. Even today, it is only these two parties that have a realistic chance of winning elections.

During its first two decades of existence, the UNP was associated with liberalism, pro-Americanism and anti-Communism (Wickramasinghe 2006, 157). As time went on, the UNP also became an ardent advocate of an open economy and ingratiated itself with the wealthier segments of the population. In the initial eight years of its rule, for instance, the UNP concentrated on building the infrastructure necessary for economic development and made efforts to stimulate the private sector (de Silva 1987, 230). In terms of development, its major drive was in agriculture. Here, it implemented multi-purpose irrigation schemes to encourage settlement in drier areas; village expansion projects to provide State land to landless farmers; and agricultural extension schemes to promote the use of fertilizer, better seed and better cultivation practices (de Silva 1987, 230). In contrast to the UNP, the SLFP has traditionally drawn its support from the more disadvantaged parts of the population as well as from Buddhist monks. Indeed, its *raison d'être* has been the protection of Buddhism and Sinhala culture (Wickramasinghe 2006, 157). It has also promoted a home economy, emphasizing state control and redistribution. SLFP presidents have thus controlled external trade with quotas and licenses, and industrialization has been the major means of generating employment. (de Silva 1987, 231). Since it relies so much on rural constituents, the SLFP has also had to retain a strong commitment to agricultural development and land distribution programs (de Silva 1987, 233).

With the elimination of communal electoral rolls, the introduction of universal suffrage and the implementation of first-past-the-post, it soon became clear that politicians would have to find a way to appeal to the Sinhalese masses to win elections. Given that most of this rural population had embraced Sinhalese nationalism and its anti-Tamil stance, it was relatively easy

for willing political elites to use anti-minority rhetoric for the purposes of electoral victory. Early on, this strategy was used most effectively by Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike, who founded the SLFP and oversaw the passage of the Official Language Act, which made Sinhala the sole national language and was a pivotal point in the deterioration of inter-ethnic relations. In this section, I provide an overview of early electoral politics, highlighting the use of Sinhala nationalism to win votes and pass the first of what would become a long history of discriminatory legislation.

The most successful Sinhalese party in these early days was the UNP, which won the 1947 elections and formed the first independent government. Even this party, however, was extremely elitist and would eventually be defeated by the populist Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). Indeed, even though it won the 1947 election, it did so with only approximately 40 percent of the total vote. Don Stephen Senanayake, who led the UNP to victory in 1947 and carried Sri Lanka into independence, was one example of a leader who was largely out of touch with the masses. Senanayake was hand-picked by the British for his elite family background, liberal thinking and commitment to minimizing ethnic tension in the process of advancing Sri Lankan democracy. Hailing from a wealthy family that made its money in coconuts and graphite, Senanayake had been educated in liberal, multiethnic schools modeled on the British school. In fact, he and his peers were more comfortable in English than in their indigenous languages. Men like this had been groomed by the British elites to “carry on in the best British tradition” when the time came (Little 1994, 51-52). While some of Senanayake’s policies, such as the disenfranchisement of the country’s Indian Tamil population, did endear him to the Sinhalese masses to a certain extent, at the end of the day he did not understand the need to reach out beyond the upper classes. He thus failed to create a mass political culture that would allow

average citizens to understand and embrace pluralist democracy. Senanayake's particular brand of "secular nationalism" failed largely because he was unable to connect with the average citizen (Little 1994, 58).

Although the UNP retained power for the first nine years of independence, it was heavily defeated in 1956. In this election, the new SLFP would rise to the fore, led by the immensely popular S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. Like Senanayake, Bandaranaike also came from an elite family that closely identified with the British. Named after a British governor, Bandaranaike attended some of the same schools as Senanayake and then completed his higher education at Oxford. Upon his return to Sri Lanka in 1925, however, Bandaranaike set about changing his persona. He turned his back on his family's Anglicanism, converted to Buddhism and took to learning Sinhala in order to be able to communicate with the masses. Bandaranaike's particular brand of Buddhism, however, was quite a bit more extreme than the average, and coupled with his support for nationalism, it would turn virulent. At this time, he began wearing the national dress and dedicated himself to finding ways to restore the "ancient, simple Sinhala Buddhist way of life in Sri Lanka" (Little 1994, 60).

Whatever the personal motives for Bandaranaike's conversion, the political setting and consequences were also of great importance...The pattern of de facto communal representation and of electoral domination by the Sinhala that followed from Donoughmore and universal suffrage, as well as the lack of incentives for ethnic cooperation, all led directly to the rise of communalism...Communalism represented precisely what Bandaranaike had been waiting for: the opportunity to break loose from the dominance of the Senanayakes...and to build his own distinctive political organization loyal primarily to him. (Little 1994, 61)

Despite this new identity, Bandaranaike did not always espouse discriminatory policies. In fact, he had argued against a Sinhala-Only policy in 1944, pointing out the need to promote inter-ethnic amity (DeVotta 2004, 62). Once he realized, however, that attracting the votes of the conservative interior was critical, he capitalized on the growing anti-minority feelings within

large segments of the Sinhala community and committed himself to establishing Buddhism and Sinhala culture as the foundation of Sri Lanka's identity. In one public speech, he told a gathering of people that he was prepared to sacrifice his life for the sake of the Sinhalese community and that if anybody were to hinder the community's progress, he was "determined to see that he is taught a lesson he will never forget" (Little 1994, 61). After the speech, Bandaranaike was compared to Hitler.

In 1951, Bandaranaike formed the SLFP, which, from the beginning, "offered a home to those who rejected the concepts of a polyethnic polity, of a Sri Lankan nationalism, and of a secular state" (de Silva in Little 1994, 63). The party was strongly backed by radical monks, who were largely responsible for creating the party's identity as a Sinhala-Buddhist party (Little 1994, 64). By the time of the 1956 elections, then, Bandaranaike had solidified his pro-nationalist support base and his SLFP rode to victory on a platform of "Sinhala Only and in twenty-four hours" (DeVotta 2004, 66). The promise to make Sinhala the exclusive official language was essential for nationalists, who resented what they perceived as years of Tamil dominance and educational advantage. Moreover, they felt that the deep interconnectedness of Sinhala culture, religion and language meant that the Sinhalese way of life could achieve its rightful preeminence only if the Sinhala language was predominant (Little 1994, 69).

The 1956 election coincided with the Buddha Jayanthi, the 2,500th anniversary of Lord Buddha's death, and the Sinhala-Only supporters expertly used this occasion to emphasize the unique Sinhalese religio-linguistic identity and to promote the idea that the Sinhalese, as inheritors of the *Sihadipa* (the island of the Sinhalese) and *Dhammadipa* (the island ennobled to preserve and propagate Buddhism), were entitled to make Sinhala the country's sole national language (DeVotta 2004, 64-65). This strategy worked; Bandaranaike's coalition won 51 of the

60 seats it contested while the UNP was reduced to a paltry eight legislative seats (Wickramasinghe 2006, 223). Clearly, Bandaranaike's ability to relate to the masses was successful.

Despite the extreme rhetoric, Bandaranaike intended to moderate his position and the Sinhala Only legislation once in office. Thus, in response to Tamil fears and opposition to the bill, Bandaranaike announced that the SLFP was committed to the "reasonable use of Tamil" and he sent the Sinhala-Only committee to meet with Tamil parliamentarians to determine how best to accommodate the use of Tamil (DeVotta 2004, 77). When he did not implement the Sinhala Only policy in the promised 24 hours and when it became clear that he was trying to draft a bill that Tamils would find tolerable, however, his extremist backers began to criticize him. In fact, when he said that the legislation would not preclude minorities from conducting day-to-day transactions with the state in their respective languages, he "drove the Sinhalese extremists into paroxysms of rage" (DeVotta 2004, 78).

As for the Tamil community, it had been opposed to the Sinhala Only policy from the beginning, fearing what it would mean for non-Sinhalese employment, especially in the state sector. They also worried that the bill was little more than a Sinhalese conspiracy to make Tamils into Sinhalese and was just the beginning of more discriminatory legislation. With radical monks demanding increased influence in the government and insisting that much needed to be done to enable the Sinhalese to regain their "rightful superordinate position," the Tamils' fears were justified (DeVotta 2004, 87). Most importantly, however, Tamil opposition was based on the perception that by denying them the use of Tamil, the Sinhalese were trying to challenge their history, culture and civilization. Especially in light of the fact that Tamil and Sinhalese elites had together struggled for independence and that Sinhalese elites had always

promised them equal status, the Tamil community felt betrayed by the Sinhala Only policy (DeVotta 2004, 88). P. Kandiah, the Tamil member of parliament from the northern city of Point Pedro, articulated the Tamil community's feelings most poignantly when he said,

When you deny me my language, you deny me everything that I, as a Tamil national of this country, have and can have. You present me with a decision, which you have arrived at in your wisdom, that I and my people should cease to exist, should cease to be. You will not be surprised, therefore, if I refuse to efface myself until with your superior strength, not of logic, not of reason, but of might and weapon, you remove me and my people from the face of this fair land. There is no people servile enough to suffer without resistance the rape of their language, the dearest thing of their lives" (Ceylon House of Representatives in DeVotta 2004, 89)

All the opposition was, however, to no avail. Bandaranaike, despite his intentions, was unable to control the extremists' push for anti-Tamil policies. Thus, when Tamil elites called for an anti-Sinhala Only *satyagraha* (peaceful protest) in front of the parliament building on June 5, 1956, extremist Sinhalese attacked the peaceful gathering of 200 Tamils. The *satyagrahis* were beaten and pelted with stones. One Tamil was thrown into the nearby Beira Lake and another's ear was bitten and torn off. The police, who had been ordered not to act, stood by as passive observers (DeVotta 2004, 83). The violence soon engulfed Colombo, with Tamil businesses and civilians targeted. It then spread to other parts of the country, where Tamils were assaulted and murdered (DeVotta 2004, 84). When one Tamil politician called attention to the violence against his fellow Tamils going on outside of the parliament building on that June day, Bandaranaike sarcastically retorted, "Honourable wounds of war" (DeVotta 2004, 85). It is no surprise, then, that it was around this time when Tamil elites began calling for federalism or a completely separate Tamil state (DeVotta 2004, 81).

The Sinhala Only legislation, known as the Official Language Act, No. 33 of 1956 was passed after fifty-two hours of debate on the morning of June 15, 1956. It made Sinhala the "one

official language of Ceylon,” and it passed with sixty-six in favor and twenty-nine opposed. The following day, the bill also passed in the Senate, by a vote of nineteen to six.

The Official Language Act’s passage in both houses was the first signal that Sri Lanka had now officially embarked on a particularistic trajectory. It made it powerfully clear that if the Sinhalese parties joined forces, they could ride roughshod over the Tamils, even while claiming that they were operating democratically and constitutionally. (DeVotta 2004, 90)

The passing of the Sinhala Only legislation was the beginning of the end for amicable Sinhalese-Tamil relations in Sri Lanka. Efforts by the government to moderate its position were met with severe disapproval from hardliners, and over the years, the UNP and the SLFP found that the way to win elections was to prove their loyalty to the Sinhalese nationalist cause. Electoral campaigns thus became ethnic outbidding wars, as each party tried to prove its own and discredit its rival’s prioritization of “protection” of the Sinhalese. The effects of the Act were striking. In 1956, Tamils constituted 30 percent of the Ceylon Administrative Service, 50 percent of the clerical service, 60 percent of engineers and doctors, 40 percent of the armed forces and 40 percent of the labor forces. By 1970, those numbers had dropped precipitously to 5 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent, 1 percent and 5 percent, respectively (DeVotta 2004, 125-126). After more anti-Tamil riots and failed attempts to pass legislation that would at least allow the continued use of Tamil in the northern and eastern provinces, Bandaranaike was assassinated in 1959 by Talduwe Somarama, a Buddhist monk.

[Bandaranaike] had persuaded himself that the extremists could be muzzled once he was in power, but they turned out to be intractable and made insatiable demands on him. A more principled man would have eschewed scapegoating the country’s dominant minority, even while trying to rectify the legitimate grievances the Sinhalese harbored. But this would have been the hard route and would most likely have not guaranteed him the premiership. Bandaranaike therefore took the easy, albeit unprincipled, path that gradually began corroding the country’s institutions and laying the foundation for a separatist movement. (DeVotta 2004, 121-122)

Bandaranaike was succeeded in office by his widow, Sirimavo, who embraced her husband's extremist allies and continued to pursue nationalist policies. During her rule and that of her UNP successor, J.R. Jayawardene, the executive office took on increasing powers and the use of state-sanctioned violence became common. These issues are explained in detail in the following chapter. For now, suffice it to say that by the time Jayawardene came to power in 1977, Tamil militancy in the north was growing and state repression, helped largely by laws which gave security forces relatively unlimited powers with regard to "terrorists," was becoming the norm.

The Rise of Tamil Militancy and the Outbreak of War

Indeed, inter-ethnic relations worsened as time went on, particularly under Jayawardene. After more anti-Tamil riots in 1977 and 1981, in which hundreds of Tamils were murdered, Tamil militant groups became ever more active. For the Tamil community, the 1977 riots were especially vile because it was then that government forces burned down the Jaffna Municipal Library, destroying nearly 100,000 ancient and rare documents. "On the Buddhist side it was an unparalleled act of barbarism, since rarely in Sri Lanka's recorded history (and perhaps even in the larger history of Buddhism) was there an example of book burning of this magnitude" (Obeysekere in DeVotta 2004, 150). Unsurprisingly, then, by the time of the 1977 election, Tamils had begun to explicitly demand separatism. When the UNP came to power under Jayawardene, they were faced with parliamentary opposition in the form of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), an explicitly separatist party that occupied 18 legislative seats. Relations in the legislature were strained. In 1983, the Jayawardene regime passed the Sixth Amendment, which required all parliamentarians to swear an oath of loyalty to the constitution. Since the constitution upheld the unitary state structure and was thus a sign that there would be

no consideration of a federal solution, all 18 TULF legislators refused and boycotted parliament (DeVotta 2004, 170). Despite the ground-level violence and elite-level tensions thus far, it was not until 1983 that all hope was lost. It was those riots that are seen as the watershed in Sinhalese-Tamil relations (DeVotta 2004, 150).

By the late 1970s, Tamil militancy was growing and violence against Tamils seen to be cooperating with the Sinhalese government as well as against Sinhalese police/military personnel was on the rise. In July 1983, Tamil militants killed thirteen Sinhalese government soldiers in the north. When their bodies were brought to Colombo for a funeral, mob violence broke out. This violence, however, was more intense than the previous riots. In fact, these riots are now taken to be the marker of the official beginning of the Sri Lankan civil war. While the immediate cause of the riots was the death of the soldiers, the violence was also a manifestation of continuing resentment of Tamils' upward mobility. In particular, the UNP's post-1977 open market reforms had allowed Tamils to use their ethnic and business connections with Indians to become upwardly mobile, effectively displacing their once-dominant Sinhalese counterparts from trade and industry. By the end of these riots, however, the Tamil entrepreneurial classes were more or less wiped out (DeVotta 2004, 151).

The riots took place in two stages. The first targeted Tamil property, with rioters looting and burning. The second stage, which began in response to a rumor that the LTTE was in Colombo to avenge the anti-Tamil violence, saw the targeting of Tamil persons.

Supervised by the most chauvinistic Sinhalese ministers in the Jayawardene cabinet, and with the police out of harm's way, armed gangs picked out Tamil homes and firebombed them. The frightened and screaming inhabitants were doused in petrol and set on fire in hellish fury. Those who tried to run were chased, caught and put to death...The mob dragged out two Tamil girls by their hair. One was 18 years of age and another around 11. As the older one watched in horror, a man chopped her younger sister with a knife. When the elder one screamed and begged the man not to kill her sister, another miscreant

beheaded the younger one with an axe. The mortally terrified girl was then stripped and raped by around 20 men. When the savagery was over, they contemptuously poured kerosene over her and burnt her. (Swamy 2003, 80, 82)

Government culpability was clear. In at least one instance, Minister of Industries Cyril Mathew led the rioters. Other rioters were transported in government vehicles and provided with electoral registration forms to more easily pick their targets. In some cases, rioters were accompanied by extremist monks. In the country's maximum-security jail, Sinhalese prisoners and guards murdered two groups of Tamil prisoners, numbering 35 and 17, on two successive days (DeVotta 2004, 152).

Shockingly, President Jayawardene did not impose an immediate curfew nor did he address the nation until three full days after the violence. When he finally did, he spoke out against terrorism but offered no sympathy to the Tamil people nor did he utter a word against what had occurred. Neither he nor any of his cabinet visited any of the 70,000 Tamils made homeless. Moreover, the government hid the fact that the security forces in Jaffna had killed almost 60 Tamils after the militants' attack against those 13 soldiers. This fact alone might have mitigated the anger over the soldiers' deaths (DeVotta 2004, 152). When the minister of trade addressed the nation, he described what had gone as "serious inconvenience." Given what Tamils had just endured and the fact that many Tamils were still in hiding to save their lives, "the comment was little short of monstrous" (DeVotta 2004, 152). Jayawardene, unwilling to admit that he had failed to act expeditiously and that some of his own party were responsible for unleashing violence, blamed Maoist forces for trying to topple the government and banned three political parties (DeVotta 2004, 153). All in all, between 400 and 2,000 Tamils were murdered, and thousands became refugees. As Tamil youth fled north, what had been a marginal separatist movement turned into a "redoubtable rebel force" virtually overnight (DeVotta 2004, 153). Thus

began the Sri Lankan civil war, which would last for more than a quarter of a century, ending with the killing of the LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, in 2009.

The LTTE

For the large majority of the Sri Lankan civil war, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were the sole rebel group. It was, however, not always this way. In the early days of the rebellion, there were more than 40 Tamil militant groups, with four of them being predominant. These included the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), which was a break-away group of the LTTE; the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO); the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS) and the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). Eventually, however, the LTTE eradicated TELO and marginalized the others. It thus became the only group fighting for a separate state (DeVotta 2004, 168).

The LTTE was officially founded in 1976 by Velupillai Prabhakaran, who renamed the Tamil New Tigers, which had itself been in operation since 1970. The LTTE revolved around Prabhakaran, who demanded absolute loyalty. All LTTE cadres took an oath of loyalty to Prabhakaran, and because he believed that cadres would succumb if tortured enough, they all carried cyanide capsules around their necks, which enabled them to commit suicide if captured (DeVotta 2004, 170). While Prabhakaran's cause was credible in its original form, over the years it seemed that the struggle became subservient to "his personal megalomania and madness for power" (Swamy 2003, xi).

Under Prabhakaran, the rebels were a highly disciplined force. In fact, the LTTE's original constitution was more a code of conduct than it was the blueprint for a new nation. Men and women cadres were forbidden from premarital and extramarital sexual activities as well as from the consumption of alcohol and drugs. Prabhakaran demonstrated the severity of his rules

when he ordered the execution of two of his bodyguards, a man and a woman, for having had sex while on duty (Swamy 2003, xi).

This then is the LTTE. The members do what the leadership says. There is [*sic*] not to ask why, there is [*sic*] to do and die. Matters little what the directive from the leadership is; the leader is always right, he is god, he alone knows what is good for the Tamil community. If the leader order to kill, it will be carried out – without any question. Those who question have no place in the LTTE. They have to leave – if they want to live. (Swamy 2003, xv)

The discipline carried over onto the battlefield. For 26 years, Prabhakaran’s guerilla force was undefeated by the Sri Lankan military. Not only did the rebel group master guerilla warfare, bringing the government forces to its knees as it attacked from its jungle hideouts, the LTTE perfected the use of suicide bombers. Prabhakaran’s “Black Tigers,” as they were known, were considered an elite corps. Comprised of men and women, the Black Tigers’ dedication to both the cause and to Prabhakaran is “fanatical” (Swamy 2003, 233). Prabhakaran himself described the suicide bombers in this way:

This is a voluntary group. Whenever there is a specific operation, we select someone from the group. By carrying out suicide assaults, we can terrorize the enemy, and demonstrate that though small, we have the potential to inflict heavy damage on them...That commitment comes from discipline...From the beginning I felt that for a person to dedicate his life to a cause, he must be free from self-centered, egoistic existence. He has to renounce personal pleasures.” (Swamy 2003, 233)

Indeed, the Black Tigers are one with the cause.

Sri Lankan Brigadier Vijaya Wimalaratne...recounted an incident that provides a clue to the Tiger psyche. Sentinels reported an armoured bulldozer driving into the garrison. Soldiers opened fire to stop it. But unmindful of the fire, the bulldozer hurtled towards the garrison as if it were on autopilot...After waiting awhile, the soldiers went to examine the armoured monstrosity that had been badly mutilated by the fire it had braved. The autopilot turned out to be a Tigress. She was a bloodied mess. Both her arms had been blown away, bullets had ripped off her cheeks. Her shoulders were red pulp...According to Wimalaratne, she could not have been more than fifteen years old. She was still conscious though life was ebbing out of her..She did not scream, just moaned softly...Wimalaratne sent for some water, and tried to pour a few drops into her parched mouth. The dying girl reacted with ferocity...Her eyes suddenly focused, and she spat out the drops. She was dying, her body was wracked by excruciating pain and fatal

dehydration, but she would not take water from a Sri Lankan soldier!...With her final breath, this fatally wounded Tigress called out, not to her mother, not to her father, not even to God, but to “Annai, Annai (Prabhakaran!)” (Pratap 2001, 104)

The Tigers were ruthless in their attacks, which targeted not only government forces but Tamil moderates as well. Their numerous assassinations were so successful that eventually few Tamils dared to oppose the Tigers publicly. In fact, by the time of the 2001 Sri Lankan elections, almost all participating Tamil parties only did so after acknowledging that the LTTE was the Tamils’ main representative organization (DeVotta 2004, 174). The LTTE was also responsible for the deaths of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, UNP presidential candidate Gamini Dissanayake, and Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa. Former Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga nearly lost her life when a suicide bomber targeted her in 1999. She did, however, lose one eye in the attack. The list goes on and includes several Sri Lankan government ministers.

The LTTE also instituted an impressive administrative structure, effectively creating its own government in areas under its control. Its political wing covered the courts, economic development, healthcare, education, and arts and culture. Its military wing, on the other hand, oversaw policing, recruitment, finance, intelligence gathering and special operations. The LTTE also had enormous wealth, mostly as a result of voluntary and forced contributions from the international Tamil diaspora. The LTTE was thus able to invest in gas stations, restaurants, grocery stores, farms, real estate, stock and money markets, finance companies, phone card companies, the gold trade, export-import businesses and ships (DeVotta 2004, 172). The rebels and the government did cease hostilities to participate in peace talks several times over the course of the war. More than once, however, the LTTE used the talks as time to retrench, acquire more weapons and launch new battles. The most successful talks occurred in 2001, with

the help of Norwegian mediators. In addition to the first public appearance by Prabhakaran in 12 years, the talks also resulted in the opening of the A9 road, which connects the southern part of the island to the northern Tamil stronghold of Jaffna. This road had been closed for 18 years. Even these talks fell apart, though, as a result of the inability of the UNP Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe and SLFP President Chandrika Kumaratunga to work together and the LTTE's failure to commit. The war only ended in 2009, when the Sri Lankan military finally defeated the rebels and killed Prabhakaran.

Ethnic Outbidding

In recent times, and especially during the civil war, the ideological differences between the SLFP and UNP have broken down. This is largely because communal relations and the war have dominated the political landscape. For many years, especially as Tamil militancy was growing, SLFP and UNP politicians resorted to ethnic outbidding, each side competing to prove its loyalty to the Sinhalese, mostly by promising increasingly extreme anti-Tamil policies. As time went on, the parties made resolution of the conflict their focus during elections. Once this occurred, the UNP and SLFP modified their strategy, now taking turns advocating peace talks versus espousing nationalist rhetoric during their election campaigns. When one party campaigned on the promise of peace, the other did so by degrading the rival's proposed peace plans and portraying the plans as a betrayal of the Sinhalese. In the next election, the parties reversed positions. Ideological differences faded as the two parties regularly reversed course, championing the very policies and positions they had opposed in the previous election cycle. For instance, while the SLFP-led People's Alliance (PA) supported peace talks with the LTTE in 1994 and the UNP said such talks amounted to a betrayal of the Sinhalese community, in 2001 each party argued the exact opposite position. In the latter election, the UNP advocated talks and

the PA accused it of setting up a secret deal to empower the LTTE (Schaffer 1995, 422 and DeVotta 2002, 95). This could be seen again in the lead-up to the 2004 polls. Even though PA candidate Chandrika Kumaratunga defined her entire 1994 campaign by advocating for peace with the LTTE, when rival UNP Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was making headway during the 2003 peace talks, she used her power as president to take over key ministries, dissolve parliament and call for new elections while the prime minister was abroad. Her public justification for disrupting the talks revolved around vague “national security” issues, making it apparent that her primary motivation was the prevention of the UNP gaining credit for achieving peace (Waldman 2004).

Kumaratunga loathes the prime minister and is especially angry that she, despite bringing in the Norwegians to facilitate the peace process, has been sidelined since the [Memorandum of Understanding] was signed. As the *Financial Times* noted in an editorial, ‘It is hard to escape the conclusion that Mrs. Kumaratunga could not bear to see her bitter rival Ranil Wickremesinghe...succeeding where she had failed.’ (DeVotta 2004, 184).

CONCLUSION

Sadly, Sri Lanka’s post-independence history has been fraught with violent conflict. Since the end of the war in 2009, the government has been reluctant to face its past, refusing to allow an investigation into its human rights record during the final days of war and unwilling to confront the incredible psychological trauma that many of its citizens, especially in its minority populations, have endured. Instead, stories from Jaffna recount the government’s new “Sinhalization” of Tamil lands in the north, characterized by the building, for instance, of Buddhist statues in Jaffna neighborhoods. Such moves hardly contribute towards national healing. Time will tell whether such attitudes spark yet another rebellion.

The remainder of this dissertation focuses on the violence that marred elections after the end of the JVP insurrection. Specifically, I examine the presidential elections of 1999 and 2005

and the parliamentary elections of 200, 2001 and 2004 in order to identify causes of election violence. In the following chapters, I explain electoral violence in Sri Lanka as it occurred during the civil war, focusing on how it was that while the violence was facilitated in part by the ongoing war, it was not always directly related to the conflict.

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Chapter 3: The Centralization of Power, Deteriorating Political Institutions and the Normality of Political Violence in Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

Political violence in divided societies is unsurprising. After the fall of the USSR and Yugoslavia, Samuel Huntington asserted,

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future. (Huntington 1993, 22)

Other political scientists have also been quick to point out the ubiquity of inter-ethnic violence (See Moynihan 1993 and Horowitz 1985). Similarly, political violence in countries that have recently been ravaged by or that still are in the midst of armed conflict is not wholly unexpected. After all, lingering mistrust of the other side can sometimes provoke spontaneous episodes of aggression. Clearly, a certain amount of politically motivated violence is almost “normal” in deeply divided and/or war-ravaged societies. This point is perhaps most clear when it comes to one particular type of political violence, election-related violence. After all, winning and/or maintaining political power is especially critical when former or current battlefield adversaries are unsure of their opponents’ intentions. Violence around elections can often be a reflection of societal divisions, but is it always a reflection of the larger political conflict?

I contend that electoral violence is not always related to the larger political conflict. As I explain in more detail below, election violence can be a simple manifestation of inter-party competition. In a political context of normalized violence, election-related bloodshed is simply a “tool of the trade.” In this chapter, I explain the development of the Sri Lankan “political culture of violence,” which grew out of years of state-sanctioned violent methods to achieve various

goals. Within that context of societal tolerance for a certain amount of everyday violence, I illustrate how the perks of political office, the proliferation of small arms and an ill-equipped police force contributed to an environment of highly violent polls. In order to explore how a similar set of conditions might result in election violence elsewhere, I then examine the case of the 2006 post-election violence in Palestine. While the two cases are not identical, the ongoing conflicts in both areas, along with small arms proliferation and a poor police force, do seem to create an environment that fosters electoral violence.

There are several theories regarding the particular causes of Sri Lankan electoral violence. First, there is the patronage system, whereby politicians deliver individualized and community-wide goods in return for votes and general electoral support. In their case study of a Sri Lankan village, Kristine Höglund and Anton Piyarathne find that patronage is the primary reason for violence. Constituents vote for politicians who use violence, and in some cases even commit violent acts on behalf of the politicians, because of the expected payout after the election. The prominent politician in the village examined by Höglund and Piyarathne, for example, gave lucrative jobs in the state-owned Petroleum Corporation to selected loyalists who had “proven themselves” during critical points in the election campaign (Höglund and Piyarathne 2009, 298). They also found that since the incumbent party has the resources to reward political loyalty and the power to remain protected from liability for the violence, supporters of the opposition are especially vulnerable (Höglund and Piyarathne 2009, 301). Second, there is Sri Lanka’s preference-voting system³, which adds an intra-party dimension of competition to the extant inter-party electoral contest. According to some scholars, these extra axes of competition create more opportunities for violence (Dissanayake 2010). Third, small arms proliferation is a

³ In a preference-voting system, voters rank candidates in order of relative preference. In this way, voters can express, for example, their first, second and third choices within a party.

serious problem in Sri Lanka, with 40 percent of household survey respondents reporting some degree of illegal weapons trafficking in their areas (NCAPISA 2008, 66). Due to a combination of ease of accessibility, difficulty in tracking and a culture of impunity, all of which will be explored below, acts of violence are relatively easy to commit. The problem of state-supported or politician-backed “thugs,” who carry and use these small arms at the behest and with the blessings of their government patrons, is another dimension of the small arms proliferation problem. As such, some Sri Lanka experts claim that electoral violence is far from surprising (Dissanayake 2010, Abeywardene 2010). Fourth, several policy experts and academics cite the character of politicians as a reason for elevated levels of election violence. Since many contemporary political elites lack the advanced education, professional experience and commitment to democratic norms that supposedly characterized previous generations of politicians, the argument is that they are simply “more willing” to use violence to achieve victory. Coupled with this are the benefits that come with political office. Unlike previous generations of elites, most of whom were independently wealthy, today’s politicians seek office as a money-making scheme. Because the “perks” of office are plentiful and include armed guards, subsidized travel, housing and education for politicians’ children, there is an argument that using violence to win and/or keep those perks is now “worth it” (Edrisinha 2010). Fifth, many policy experts, academics and common citizens blame Sri Lanka’s political institutions for the high levels of election violence. The police, for instance, are notoriously inefficient and closely aligned with the incumbent party and thus all too willing to look the other way when members of the opposition are targeted. While this issue will be taken up in more detail below, one example illustrates the point concisely.

My shop was attacked with a petrol bomb during the night of the election day. The police were hitting the people who went to make complaints about these incidents, worsening

the situation. The Ministers did all these activities with a hand in the affairs of the police too. The OIC [Officer in Charge] of the police station supported the PA before the election, but overnight he shifted his policies in favour of UNP, making us more vulnerable. (Höglund and Piyarathne 2009, 300)

The police are not alone. Other key governing institutions, including the Election Commission and the judiciary, are also weak. In fact, prior to the 2004 parliamentary poll, the Election Commission had little power to take action against violence, and the commissioner was himself often held hostage to the demands of the incumbent party. In 2001, a constitutional amendment created a new, more empowered Election Commission. By 2003, however, the commission had yet to be established. In the run-up to the 2004 elections, when Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake, after having survived five heart attacks, wanted to retire he was ordered by the Supreme Court to remain in office because the constitution required him to do so until the commission was set up. It was widely understood that President Chandrika Kumaratunga was loath to establish the new commission in the critical pre-election period, when being able to exert influence over the commissioner was invaluable (Lanka Business Online 2005). Even the judiciary is ineffective, with court cases from the 2000 and 2001 elections still pending in 2007 (Höglund and Piyarathne 2009, 300).

While these theories do point to certain drivers of violence, they do not identify root causes of violence. For instance, even if police are ineffective and arms are readily available, what motivates perpetrators of violence to actually threaten rivals, forcibly stuff ballot boxes or throw hand grenades on behalf of a party?

While the above theories focus on factors that facilitate the use of violence, I hypothesize that one of the primary problems is that violence is now a regularized part of elections. In fact, it is an integral part of the campaigning process -- used in much the same way as other campaign tools -- to demonstrate power, intimidate rivals and win as many votes as possible. Taking place

against the backdrop of ongoing armed violence, it is not always a product of that conflict. I contend that while the ongoing war may indirectly facilitate the use of violence by motivating the government to consolidate power and thereby weaken the very democratic institutions that could be critical to checking political violence, the conflict that caused the war does not necessarily drive the electoral bloodshed.

ELECTION VIOLENCE IN SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka has experienced electoral violence for more than three decades, although its intensity has severely increased in recent years. One reason for this increase is the war with the LTTE. Campaigning politicians have been relatively easy targets for the rebels, and some Sri Lankan election violence can be understood as a direct result of the war. The LTTE assassinated President Ranasinghe Premadasa in the provincial election campaign of 1993. In 1994, the LTTE killed the UNP presidential candidate and a number of other party leaders. In the 1999 presidential election campaign, an LTTE suicide bomber blinded People's Alliance candidate Chandrika Kumaratunga in one eye. During the years of the second JVP insurrection, those rebels also targeted elections, taking the lives of several candidates.

On the other hand, a large proportion of election-related violence has had nothing to do with the war. Instead, it has been largely a function of inter-Sinhalese party competition. Indeed, almost all Sri Lankan political parties, especially the two most dominant parties, regularly use violence at poll time. In fact, electoral violence in Sri Lanka has become a normal part of the campaigning period, election day and the immediate aftermath of the announcement of poll results.

Most Sri Lankan election violence can be understood as campaign conflict, as defined in the International Foundation for Electoral System's taxonomy of electoral violence, which

includes five different types of poll-related conflict. These types include identity conflict, campaign conflict, balloting conflict, results conflict and representation conflict. An IFES 2001 survey of election violence suggests that campaign conflict, which occurs as rivals try to disrupt each other's campaigns, intimidate voters and use threats and violence to influence participation in voting, is the most common form of conflict (Fischer 2002, 9-10). Sri Lankan electoral violence includes all the IFES types, but campaign conflict is the most common. For instance, battles over turf for posters are common. While it is illegal to paste posters in public places, the law is regularly flouted. Candidates with few financial resources, who cannot afford electronic media publicity, as well as candidates with limited name recognition will engage in poster campaigns during election time. The result is a number of "turf battles," occurring between workers of different parties or different candidates. Election monitors have recorded such battles resulting in serious injury and even death (Saravanamuttu 2008, 53). While this may seem severe, in the context of regular violence, it is just another way of competing for "ad space."

In order to try and prevent opponents' supporters from turning out to vote, parties also use various intimidation tactics during the campaign period and on election day itself. One example of this is the forcible snatching of polling cards. Even though voters who are on the register do not have to show their polling cards in order to vote, this tactic tells voters that they will be impersonated and will have to go through the trouble of proving their identities if they want to cast their votes (Saravanamuttu 2008, 53). Another strategy is the erection of roadblocks to obstruct voter access to polling stations. Party workers or hired thugs will cut down trees and burn rubber tires for this purpose. Armed thugs will also position themselves in the vicinity of polling booths (Saravanamuttu 2008, 54). In addition, parties' workers engage in threats, intimidation and assault to keep polling agents from being present in the polling booths. The

most extreme type of polling booth tampering is the actual capturing of a booth, which is usually orchestrated by armed party workers and includes the stuffing of ballot boxes. In the Sri Lankan political context, such acts can be seen as candidates' tactics to assert their own superiority or their dominance in a particular area. In areas that are closely divided between two parties, such tactics may be used to show one party's "take-over" or another party's "defense" of a district.

THE CASE OF SRI LANKA: A STORY OF POLITICAL DECAY

In this section, I describe Sri Lankan experience in order to consider the usefulness of the "culture of violence" theory for explaining events there. The culture of violence theory asserts that after a society is exposed to ongoing violence for a number of years, a certain amount of it is "normalized" and accepted by that society. The routine use of violence to "get things done" simply becomes a part of daily life. Sri Lankan society has certainly been in the midst of violent conflict for decades, having experienced the JVP rebellion and the civil war with the LTTE. Moreover, violence has not been confined to war zones. As the section below will illustrate, as threats to the state increased, successive Sri Lankan governments responded with concentration of executive power and a degree of state-sanctioned violence that impacted ordinary citizens. After more than 30 years of this pattern, it could certainly be said that there is a degree of normalization of every day violence in Sri Lanka; ordinary people have come to expect a certain amount of violence to "get things done" (Uyangoda 2000). The following section examines the regimes of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, from 1970 to 1977, and Executive President Junius Jayawardene, from 1977 to 1989. These governments are critical to this analysis for two reasons; first, it is during this era that a pattern of Sri Lankan governments' use of violence to institute their will emerges, and second, it is these regimes that were in power when electoral

violence went from being contained in pockets of local constituencies to a nation-wide phenomenon.

In 1970, Bandaranaike's United Front (UF) coalition rode to victory with the support of a powerful, multi-class voter base, which included the "secondary stratum" of Sri Lanka's capitalist class, the urban working class, vast sections of the rural peasantry and the intermediate social strata (Uyangoda 2010, 37). In July, the UF made history as the first party/coalition to win enough parliamentary seats to command a two-thirds legislative majority. In addition, the UF won "an unprecedented mandate" to abolish the existing constitution and replace it with a new one.

This opportunity "to change a country's Constitution on the pretext of a popular mandate is no ordinary moment for any ruling party. It secures for the regime a hugely interventionist role, and a unilateral advantage, to determine the future shape of the state, state-society relations, state-regime relations, and the distribution of state power among different social classes as well as ethnic communities. (Uyangoda 2010, 38)

Despite this popular mandate, in less than a year of assuming office, Bandaranaike was faced with the JVP rebellion. As explained in Chapter 2, the youth-driven JVP insurrection terrorized the country in two phases, from 1971 to 1977 and from 1987 to 1989. At 11pm on April 5, 1971, under the cover of night, the JVP insurgents staged a coordinated attack against 92 police stations across the country. In its aftermath, as Bandaranaike moved to suppress any lingering support for the insurgents, she used the new constitution and a set of emergency regulations to arrogate increased powers for the executive. In response to the April insurgency, the Prime Minister declared a state of emergency, which she found extremely useful for responding not just to the JVP threat but also to growing Tamil militancy and the UNP opposition (Richardson 2005, 359). The powers were far-reaching, giving her government the freedom to repress criticism and intimidate opponents. Despite intentions to use the new

regulations only to assist the police and armed forces in the capture of JVP insurgents, the laws were soon extended to apply to non-insurgency related activities as well.

In 1977, the Bandaranaike government was voted out of office and replaced by J.R. Jayawardene and the United National Party. There is wide scholarly consensus that President Jayawardene's personal style of rule was a major contributing factor to the decline of the liberal democratic state in Sri Lanka (Warnapala 1994; DeVotta 2004; Bush 2003; Höglund and Piyarathne 2009). The anti-state violence that had plagued Bandaranaike had not faded, and Jayawardene was immediately faced with increasing threats to his rule. In fact, growing Tamil disenchantment had provoked a series of terrorist attacks in the years immediately preceding the 1977 election that brought Jayawardene to power, the most severe of which was the 1975 LTTE ambush that killed the pro-government mayor of Jaffna, followed by a succession of attacks on Tamil policemen and Tamil public officials in the Northern Province. In 1978, Tamil militants carried out a series of bank robberies and murdered even more police officers. In Jayawardene's view, increased state power was necessary to confront this ongoing violence. In this vein, he promulgated the second republican constitution, which created the position of executive president. As Executive President, Jayawardene commanded almost dictatorial powers, and he bragged that the only thing he could not do was turn a man into a woman and vice versa (De Votta 2004, 147). Indeed, Jayawardene followed in the footsteps of Prime Minister Bandaranaike, retaining and even expanding upon many of the repressive measures she initiated.

Both Bandaranaike and Jayawardene faced a certain amount of opposition to their new, suppressive laws. In response, they used various degrees of censorship, selective arrests and general intimidation to keep dissenters quiet. At the same time, though, both executives also used relatively high levels of violence to enforce their wills. In his work, John Richardson

graphs levels of state-sanctioned violence from 1970 through 1983, illustrating how increasing intensity of such violence corresponded with the passage of anti-terrorist legislation and other restrictions (Richardson 2005, 494). This pattern can be seen clearly by examining the fate of the media and political opposition under Bandaranaike and Jayawardene.

Media and Public Expression

As the Bandaranaike and Jayawardene regimes passed new, increasingly restrictive emergency laws, public expression and the media suffered immensely. After all, it was critical to control public access to information regarding state-sanctioned violence as well as public dissent, if not merely for the sake of foreign aid. “Decades-long traditions of free speech, free elections, parliamentary debates, strikes and demonstrations were not so easy to suppress...Moreover, when seeking foreign aid and investments, officials knew it was important to have Sri Lanka present a democratic face to the world” (Richardson 2005, 499).

Bandaranaike did her best to clamp down on the press and public expression, applying the new emergency laws to matters wholly unrelated to the JVP rebellion. The list of information subject to government censors was long. In fact, a ‘competent authority’ had the authority to review all news reports, feature stories and editorial comments. Government censors were especially rigid about matters relating to the security forces, striking any critical comments about them, especially those regarding reports of human rights abuses (Richardson 2005, 361). In 1973, the Press Council Bill made censorship a permanent government function and laid out a detailed set of rules governing criticism of officials, economic reporting and reporting of government policy discussions (Richardson 2005, 362). Over the course of several months, Bandaranaike also nationalized the Times group of newspapers and Lake House, the nation’s largest newspaper group. With the closing down of the Independent Newspapers of Ceylon in April 1974, she

succeeded in placing the country's entire newspaper industry under government control (Richardson 2005, 362). Censorship was enforced with state-supported violence. When the government issued orders to prevent the distribution of a certain newspaper or to close down the presses of publications that did not abide by censorship rules, police were responsible for enforcing the orders. Given the impunity the police enjoyed, they were free to enforce government orders using whatever means they preferred (Richardson 2005, 364).

Just as it had under the rule of Bandaranaike, the Sri Lankan media and public expression more generally suffered at the hands of Jayawardene. As Executive President, he passed the Proscribing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and Similar Organizations Bill, giving him the power to ban organizations that, in his opinion, advocated violence or which were directly or indirectly concerned with unlawful activity. Criminal conduct included the protesting of a ban and the publishing of any material, without government permission, related to a proscribed organization. Suspects charged with "inciting change otherwise than by lawful means or promoting hostility between classes" could be detained for a year without trial and without bail. They also risked long jail terms and forfeit of all their property (Richardson 2005, 497). In addition, Jayawardene ensured that the Lake House Group, taken over by the government under Bandaranaike, remained in his hands, making it a UNP "house organ" (Richardson 2005, 504). After the UNP government rescued the Times of Ceylon from bankruptcy, it took over the paper's editorial control. By 1978, government-owned newspapers controlled 75 percent of the English language market, 77 percent of the Sinhala language market and 55 percent of the Tamil language market. While the constitution protected the freedom of expression, it also gave political leaders the power to restrict that freedom for the sake of "racial and religious harmony or in relation to parliamentary privilege, contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an

offense” (Richardson 2005, 504). Indeed, government leaders applied pressure on publishers in a variety of ways, including the withholding of advertising, slowing of the shipments of newsprint and the disruption of distribution channels for offending issues and even sealed presses and padlocked offices (Richardson 2005, 504-505). The end result was that news coverage overwhelmingly favored the government, and media outlets were severely restricted in their ability to act as a public check on the government by keeping the public aware of the regime’s actions.

Political Opposition

Opposition political parties were not spared, either. In fact, their attempts to exercise their rights to free speech were especially threatened. One of the most notorious examples of this can be seen in the Jathika Seva Sangamaya (JSS), the trade union associated with the UNP. Under Jayawardene, the JSS became synonymous with state-sponsored violence, and he used the union to retain control over government.

The JSS was nothing more than a fraternity of goondas run by Cyril Mathew, an inveterate Sinhalese bigot who was also the minister of industries and scientific affairs. Those targeted included members and supporters of the SLFP and Marxist parties, Buddhist and Christian clergy who dared oppose government policy, and student unionists and non-UNP trade unionists... The goondas usually traveled about in state-owned vehicles to make it clear that they operated under the government’s imprimatur and attacked protesters and picketers with stones, clubs, knives, swords, and occasionally with bombs as well. (DeVotta 2004, 145-146)

Incidentally, the JSS leadership, which promoted Sinhalese Buddhist political ideology, played a critical role in the 1983 anti-Tamil riots, which are now seen as the spark that ignited the civil war against the Tamils. With the overt participation of certain government officers, they actively assisted in the organization of the riots and played key roles in committing acts of violence. In

fact, the JSS leader Cyril Mathew was a strong advocate of “low key ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Colombo” (Warnapala 1994, 166-167).

The JSS was not the only tool at the UNP’s disposal. The government was also successful in severely restricting the activities of its main competition. For instance, the Presidential Commission of Inquiry (Special Provisions) Bill targeted the main opposition figures, former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Felix Dias Bandaranaike. This commission examined Prime Minister Bandaranaike’s decision to postpone parliamentary elections for two years, from 1975 to 1977. It criminalized her act, despite the fact that it had not been illegal at the time. As a result, Bandaranaike’s civic rights were suspended until 1987, making it impossible for her to run for president or campaign for her party. In this way, Jayawardene was able to eliminate the threat of his most effective opponent in the 1982 presidential elections (DeVotta 2004, 147).

Despite the fact that anti-terrorist laws had been designed to fight Tamil militancy in the northeast, the laws were used against Sinhalese opposition threats in the south as well. Between 1978 and 1980, police intervened to break up strikes and peaceful demonstrations by opposition labor unions several times. When a poster campaign criticized the government, police were ordered to suppress it. Over the summer of 1980, more than 30 political and labor union leaders, three of whom were eventually “disappeared,” were arrested for participating in anti-government demonstrations (Richardson 2005, 499). Characteristic of this time was the arrest of Vivienne Gunawardena, a left-leaning women’s activist. Gunawardena was beaten for protesting, and when the Supreme Court ruled in her favor, the Jayawardene government promoted the officer responsible for assaulting her. Thereafter, government thugs harassed and damaged the property of the three Supreme Court justices who had ruled against the police (DeVotta 2004, 146). In

fact, it was common for police to stand by or simply fail to respond to pleas for help while government thugs beat up government opponents (Richardson 2005, 503). In this political environment, the opposition was hardly able to fulfill its democratic responsibility of acting as a check on the party in power. With criticism of the government virtually outlawed, there was little the opposition could do to balance the growing powers of the ruling UNP.

In response to internal threats, both the Bandaranaike and Jayawardene governments increased state coercive power. In order to enforce the laws that facilitated this consolidation, however, these governments often resorted to state-sanctioned violence against ordinary political opposition. Especially under Jayawardene, emergency regulations were used to quash politically significant groups and smash non-government-allied trade unions. The government controlled the media, and it used expulsions and intimidation to control student communities in the country's universities. As the ruling party worked to eliminate competition for power, it relied more and more on violence, thereby weakening democratic institutions and forms of non-violent protest (Warnapala 1994, 163).

All varieties of political violence began to surface in the system, and this process of violence, besides creating an environment of lawlessness in the country, threatened the foundations of the democratic political order in Sri Lanka. Violence came to be used to meet criticism and political dissent in the country as a whole... The use of violence by the party in power as a legitimate weapon to counter and meet political dissent... led to an unprecedented growth of political violence in the country. (Warnapala 1994, 167)

Thus established, political violence became a norm. This can perhaps be seen especially clearly through election-related violence, one particular category of political violence. Indeed, once there exists a prevailing pattern of political violence, election-related bloodshed is just another tool of the trade. In this vein, Gurr proposes,

States involved in recurring episodes of violent conflict tend a) to develop and maintain institutions specialized in the exercise of coercion; and b) to develop elite political cultures that sanction the use of coercion in response to challenges and perceived

threats... To the extent that coercive strategies lead to conflict outcomes favorable for the political elite, their preference for those strategies in future conflict situations is reinforced. (Gurr 1988, 50)

Once a particular group of political leaders succeeds in obtaining its preferred outcome through the use of violence, it will continue to use violence in response to a broad array of threats or challenges. Since elections can be a formidable challenge, a certain amount of government-supported violence is hardly surprising. Since violence is used broadly, however, election-related violence does not necessarily have to do with the armed conflict or the dominant societal cleavages of the day (Kalyvas 2003, 475). It is just another tool of the trade, and a political culture of violence grows out of years of this pattern.

At the same time, though, a political culture of violence does not necessarily explain the entire phenomenon of electoral violence. While it is true that in every election under review, incumbents were accused of the lion's share of incidents, opposition culpability was hardly minor. In 2001, for instance, the incumbents committed nearly 2/3 of the violence that analysts could attribute to one side or the other. In the face of government resources and command of repressive laws, how is it possible for the opposition to exert such force? In Sri Lanka, rampant violence by both sides is facilitated by the wealth associated with political office, the proliferation of small arms and the inefficiency of the police.

The politicization of employment in the large state sector contributes to the violence. State employees do not wish to lose valuable government jobs, many of which have come from local politicians' personal recommendations. As a result, they may be willing to participate in or support politicians' violent behavior (Höglund and Piyarathne 2009). A look at the size of the Sri Lankan public sector over the years shows that state employment has indeed been plentiful; a large proportion of Sri Lankans depend on government jobs. In its first year in power,

Bandaranaike's United Front government added more than 100,000 new government jobs, which was a 50 percent increase from the previous year. By the end of her rule, the size of the government work force had almost doubled. Moreover, employment in "semi-government institutions" such as public corporations, universities, boards and banks grew from 170,000 in 1970 to 617,000 in 1977 (Richardson 2005, 327). In the mid-1990s, the World Bank showed that government employment was 11.6 percent of total employment in the economy; this was three times the average for Asia (Schiavo-Campo 1997). As recently as July 2011, the Sri Lankan public sector included 1.2 million state employees, about six percent of the total population (World Bank 1). With unemployment ranging from between 7.6 percent and 13.8 percent between 1993 and 2002, it is hardly surprising that people would be willing to go to extremes to keep or win jobs. These stakes are explored in Höglund and Piyarathne's case study of a Kandy village. Candidates' constituencies are spread over large geographical areas, and they count on local party workers and local influential elites for support. Constituents, especially from the middle and lower classes, are eager to demonstrate their loyalty by assuring more votes for the candidate.

The competition created among the people in obtaining these opportunities has direct links with the escalating violence. The downside is that a person who was rewarded under a SLFP or UNP government can become a target of violence. For instance, several people in the village who were targeted had been given jobs, or had been hoping to get jobs for themselves or their family members through their political involvement. (Höglund and Piyarathne 2009, 302)

The stakes are also high for politicians, who either do not want to give up the perks of office or wish to attain them. In fact, political office in Sri Lanka is known to be a lucrative money-making endeavor (Dissanayake 2010). In addition to perks such as duty-free cars, allowances for travel, security guards and personal assistants, members of parliament are entitled

to privileges such as a certain number of liquor licenses. By distributing these to certain “political cronies,” they stand to earn “huge sums of money” (Edrisinha 2010).

A third reason for electoral violence is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons over the last several decades, due largely to the JVP insurgency and the civil war between the government and the LTTE. The Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence administers two armed organizations known as Home Guards and the National Armed Reserve. The former, comprised mainly of poorly-educated Sinhalese villagers, carry shotguns issued by the government. After the signing of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord in 1987, the government attempted to dismantle the organization. Despite successfully recovering about 8,000 out of the more than 10,000 shotguns issued to the Home Guards, they were rearmed when the conflict resumed. Less is known about the National Armed Reserve. Meant to supplement the manpower of the regular army, it is comprised of roughly 15,000 personnel. Moreover, the police force and its anti-guerrilla unit known as the Special Task Force contribute an estimated 34,000 small arms to the Sri Lankan scene (Smith 2003, 16). There are no definitive figures regarding the total number of small arms in Sri Lanka, but a standard estimate is that the regular uniformed personnel under the control of the Ministry of Defense carry about 355,000 small arms. Assuming both the Home Guards and the National Armed Reserve are fully armed, they contribute a further possible 79,000 small arms (Smith 2003, 16).

This myriad of arms sources is highly problematic, because the arms are not confined to the battlefield. Instead, rising crime rates in areas outside of the war zone attest to the growing rates of non-war-related demand for arms, especially during election time (Foster and Abeywardana 2006, 1). Indeed, outside of the war, the easy availability and frequent use of small arms can be most clearly seen in the nexus between organized crime and politicians’

personal security needs. Heightened fear of the JVP initially legitimated the Sri Lankan government's indiscriminate issue of firearms to politicians for personal protection. It is estimated that the government issued at least 11,000 pistols to politicians' bodyguards during this time, but authorities were never able to recover these firearms. Indeed, of the firearms issued to politicians by the Ministry of Defense, 64 repeater guns and 637 firearms issued to 21 Members of Parliament have not been recovered (Foster and Abeywardana 2006, 5). Some politicians are still issued firearms, but those are not consistently recovered when terms of office are over. One major obstacle is that licenses for arms are issued to politicians free of charge, and such licensing is governed by parliamentary privileges rather than by legislation. Many politicians then pass their arms on to their bodyguards (Foster and Abeywardana 2006, 5). These firearms contribute to growing crime rates, especially outside of the warzone. An increase in crimes involving firearms is a cause for concern among several communities, who cite a marked increase in contract killings, rape, robberies, grievous hurt and assault facilitated by firearms. Much of this criminal activity is linked to gangs, 26 of which operate in and around Colombo. Since there is political involvement in criminal activity, partly because political bodyguards themselves are directly involved in or are closely linked to gangs, police cannot do much to deal with perpetrators (Foster and Abeywardana 2006, 6). Indeed, communities surveyed about small arms proliferation expressed concern that private security guards, police and security forces regularly hire small arms out to criminal gangs (Foster and Abeywardana 2006, 7).

During elections, politicians can easily direct their bodyguards to distribute arms to certain supporters, and they can also use their guards' underworld connections to ensure that arms are available for the purpose of intimidation and violence. Finally, army deserters increase the availability of weapons. They are "a prime source of criminal activity in the country and the

community consultation identified deserters' involvement in organized crime as a key concern in the South" (Foster and Abeywardana 2006, 6). While experts seem to agree that only a small number of deserters escape with their weapons, many do carry grenades, which are then used in later criminal activity and electoral violence (Foster and Abeywardana 2006, 7).

A final reason for electoral violence is the national police force, which has historically been controlled by the incumbent party. Indeed, police loyalty is known to change as quickly as election results are announced, with officers switching allegiances overnight. This phenomenon was exemplified in 2001, when the Sri Lanka Freedom Party lost power to the United National Party. The incumbents were accused of committing 47 percent of all pre-election and Election Day violence, but in the post-election period, it was the UNP that was accused of committing 67 percent (CMEV 2001). In 2004, a similar pattern emerged, with incumbents being accused of 47 percent of pre-election and Election Day violence (compared to the opposition being accused of 27 percent). In the post-election days, however, it was the newly elected incumbents that were accused of 58 percent while the defeated party was accused of only 20 percent (CMEV 2004). This post-election violence is largely comprised of "revenge attacks," committed by the former opposition against the former incumbents. It is a way for the winners to assert their newfound power and inflict retaliation against those who terrorized them in the run-up to elections. While such patterns show that the police are quite loyal to incumbents, a look at the historical evolution of the relationship between the Sri Lankan government and the national police force reveals important strains.

For instance, neither government devoted resources to proper training, salaries or equipment. As a result, many police officers, constantly looking for ways to supplement their salaries, were vulnerable to bribery and corruption. Thus, while the force was largely controlled

by the incumbent party, individual officers often strayed to cooperate with the opposition if payoffs were worthwhile.

Bandaranaike began by changing the composition of the police force, revoking the commissions of some senior police officers so that she could replace them with SLFP loyalists who were also Sinhalese and Buddhist. Also, the Prime Minister made it clear that police were to treat her United Front political allies preferentially while ignoring violence and intimidation directed at government opponents (Richardson 2005, 364). Police were ordered to play overtly political roles, such as during certain election campaigns and non-violent protests (Robertson 2005, 366). After the JVP rebellion, she gave police the responsibility of manning roadblocks, conducting searches, supervising detention camps and interrogating detainees. At the same time, though, Bandaranaike failed to equip the force with the tools necessary to carry out their new mandates. In addition to budgets that lagged behind inflation rates, police officers suffered from insufficient training, inadequate pay, outdated equipment and poor working conditions (Richardson 2005, 363). As a result, they lacked the skill and resources to carry out the administration's increasingly challenging and complex assignments. As a result, this state of affairs made many police officers look for outside sources of revenue. In fact, after the JVP rebellion was defeated, some police officers teamed up with local politicians to establish authoritarian and exploitative mini-regimes in their areas of control. Bandaranaike's emergency regulations and censorship laws gave these officers and politicians nearly unlimited power to act against anyone who dared oppose them (Richardson 2005, 364).

By and large, Executive President Jayawardene continued Bandaranaike's pattern, empowering police with more responsibility and impunity but failing to equip the force to carry out their new duties in a professional manner. Police were the principal enforcers of new laws

that suspended constitutional guarantees, and they were also called upon to stand aside or actively participate in attacks against political opponents by pro-government thugs (Richardson 2005, 495). In the south, police were ordered to suppress a poster campaign criticizing the government, and the new Prevention of Terrorism Act justified the arrest of more than 30 political and labor union leaders who participated in anti-government demonstrations (Richardson 2005, 499). This era of UNP rule was also characterized by elaborate use of political thugs, drawn largely from the National Workers Organization (Jathika Seva Sangamaya), the JSS. Jayawardene's regime established this union as an arm of its state-sanctioned violence establishment, and the use of the JSS to enforce its will gave the UNP greater flexibility in dealing with political opponents, including other labor unions, student activist groups, opposition politicians, human rights advocates and uncooperative jurists. There was close collaboration between police and thugs during this time, the two often acting cooperatively in attacks (Richardson 2005, 503). Government responses to citizens' complaints confused police missions further. For example, after the Supreme Court ruled in favor of a woman who had been assaulted in a police station after being arrested for her involvement in a protest, the government promoted the officers involved (Richardson 2005, 500).

As Bandaranaike had done before him, Jayawardene also worked to turn the police into his party's personal stooges. During this UNP era, all phases of police life, including recruitment, assignments, promotions and enforcement, were politicized. Indeed, by the end of 1982, one critic noted that "it simply did not pay to enforce the law against ruling politicians, their thugs and supporters" (Richardson 2005, 506). Indeed, police were bound to the whims of politicians. Many police had secured their jobs only through the "chit system," or the personal recommendation of a local politician who doled out government jobs to certain supporters. Most

officers also believed that promotions and transfers were based more on political influence than they were on performance of duties (Richardson 2005, 507). At the same time, however, the Jayawardene government did little to improve conditions for police. By 1982, wages had been severely eroded by inflation, and police officers and their families were worse off than they had been at the beginning of UNP rule in 1977. Among 100 constables interviewed by ethnographer Nandasena Ratnapala, 87 were in debt. Most lived in rented housing and found that providing their families with basic necessities such as nutritious food, clothing and school uniforms was a struggle (Richardson 2005, 507). As a result, although the police force was beholden to UNP politicians in many ways, they were also incredibly vulnerable to bribery and corruption, desperate for money from wherever they might access it. In many areas, police developed symbiotic relationships with local gangs who controlled illicit trading, loan sharking and the production of bootleg spirits. “Resisting bribes was made more difficult by the fact that gangs often had ties to local politicians, who used them as enforcers at political rallies and on polling days” (Richardson 2005, 508). It is important to remember that incumbents did not necessarily have control over all local constituencies. Certain opposition MPs were powerful in their own right, controlling gangs and various underworld elements in their areas. During election time, then, these MPs and their supporters would have the power and resources to “run the show,” which might include committing violence to sway the election in their favor.

Electoral violence in Sri Lanka is the result of a combination of factors. First, years of state-sanctioned violence facilitated the growth of a political culture of violence, where a certain amount of everyday violence became normal. Second, elites and ordinary citizens were more willing to engage in and/or tolerate poll violence because of the opportunities political office could bring. Third, an ongoing civil war facilitated electoral violence by providing a steady

source of arms for political leaders and their selected supporters. Fourth, the Sri Lankan police force was not consistently able to control the violence because officers were poorly trained and underpaid, making bribery relatively easy.

WAR, WEAK INSTITUTIONS AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN PALESTINE

In Sri Lanka, ongoing intra-state conflict, weak institutions and tremendous executive power created the opening for electoral violence. Does this or a similar combination of factors lead to the same situation elsewhere? It is difficult to answer this question, because there are few other cases that include elections held in the midst of an ongoing civil war. Instead, most governments choose to hold polls only after violence has ceased. Despite some differences, however, one case that does merit some discussion is that of Palestine. Like Sri Lanka, the Palestinian Territories have been embroiled in violent conflict for decades. Although the conflict engages an external party, Israel, much of the conflict physically takes place within Palestinian land, the borders of which are contested. In this way, it bears some resemblance to an intra-state conflict. At the same time, internal violent conflict has sporadically raised its head over the years, perhaps most dramatically from 2006-2011, in the aftermath of the 2006 legislative elections. In the wake of this election, the scenario was similar to the Sri Lankan post-election context. The incumbent party, Fatah, was loath to accept the Hamas victory, and Hamas was eager to assert its newfound control. As each side struggled to assert its self-perceived superiority, violence ensued. Gun battles between each side's security forces broke out on the streets, public rallies of support for one side or the other were targeted by rivals and slowly the Palestinian Territories became divided into pockets, controlled by Hamas and Fatah gunmen. It is also important to note that like Sri Lanka this conflict is colored partially by ethno-religious divisions. While neither the internal nor the external conflict is shaped entirely by such rifts, the

hard-line Islamists who use terrorist tactics do stand in opposition to both the Israeli, Jewish side and to more moderate Palestinians, including other Muslims and Christians.

Of course, there are important differences between the cases. Indeed, one of the most significant differences is that the conflict in the Palestinian territories led to much more post-election violence than was the case in Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, pre-election violence has always been more severe than post-election turmoil. Still, however, given the other similarities, it is worth considering that Palestine may be only just embarking on a path similar to the one Sri Lanka has tread for decades. In both cases, ongoing conflict had facilitated the proliferation of and ease of access to small arms. Also, the Palestinian police force was riddled with corruption and largely beholden to the Fatah party; it was thus unable to act as impartial keepers of the peace. This environment, colored by a general sense of insecurity born of illegal arms circulating freely through society and little to no police protection, contributed to a Palestinian culture of violence, where society tolerated and even expected a certain degree of everyday violence.

One reason for such societal acceptance was the availability of arms. As a part of the 1994 Oslo Agreements, the newly created Palestinian Authority was authorized to establish security forces for the purpose of maintaining law and order and overseeing internal security. These forces were to be equipped with 15,000 automatic rifles and pistols, 240 heavy machine guns, 45 armored vehicles and lightly armed shore patrol vessels (citation 4 in small arms report). There is evidence, however, that the number of arms in the territories far exceeds this limit, perhaps by as much as 40,000 pieces (Luft 1999). Part of the problem is the myriad of sources for arms. First, there is evidence that the Palestinian security forces run manufacturing workshops for the production of grenades and ammunition. Second, terrorist groups, of which

there are several, also manufacture their own weapons, including “Qassam rockets” (PHRMG, 8). In addition, there is a thriving black market for arms. Members of the Palestinian Authority are known to have smuggled weapons into Palestine for resale, and in some areas members of the security forces are known to be the first source of acquisition of weapons (PHRMG, 7). Fourth, the black market also includes Israeli underworld figures, who coordinate shipments of illegal rifles and Uzis into the West Bank and Gaza. These elements, along with Israeli soldiers who steal weapons from army depots and then sell them to Palestinians for sizeable profits (PHRMG 7). Finally, there is a system of traditional ownership of weapons by Palestinian clans and families, but research documenting the details of this system is lacking. Thus, while it is known, for example, that certain areas which are home to the larger clans and families have an especially large number of weapons, the exact amount is unknown (PHRMG 5).

Such ease of access to arms has contributed to a general lack of respect for the rule of law and a certain willingness of the part of Palestinian civilians to take the law into their own hands, often using violent means. In addition to inter-family or inter-clan disputes being settled with violence, some families/clans also use arms against security forces who have either arrested or disarmed one of their own. In fact, some families/clans are so well armed that Palestinian police are unable to break their blockades for days at a time (PHRMG 10). Such actions display a certain rejection of the sovereignty of the Palestinian Authority and mistrust in its ability to serve and protect the people. Moreover, armed civilians have used increasing amounts of violence to overcome even bureaucratic hurdles. Arms have allowed them to threaten ministers and other government officials with the aim of obtaining a job, freeing a prisoner or accessing other forms of patronage. Members of vigilante groups have also targeted the judiciary, in various attempts to eliminate perceived collaborators (PHRMG 11). This general atmosphere of violence is

striking in its similarity to Sri Lanka. Having endured several decades of violent conflict, both societies have come to use a certain amount of violence on an everyday basis.

In addition to these factors, violence in the Palestinian territories is difficult to control because of the inefficiency and poor organization of the police. In 1994, the Oslo Accords created the General Security Service (GSS), to be controlled by the Palestinian National Authority and itself in charge of ten operational services, including civil policing (Bennett 2006, 1-2). Unfortunately, these forces were beset by problems from the beginning of their existence. Although Oslo limited the number of security personnel to 30,000, by the end of the century the actual number exceeded the limit by 5,000 to 20,000. Such a bloated force was difficult to maintain, and in fact they were underpaid, badly disciplined, poorly organized and largely unreliable (Bennett 2006, 3). Over the years, it became clear that Yasir Arafat, head of the Palestinian Authority, was willing to tolerate mismanagement, corruption and even unnecessary brutality against Fatah opponents as long as his position was not threatened. Indeed, the heads of the individual units of the GSS “were a law unto themselves” (Bennett 2006, 5). To make matters worse, training was sorely lacking. While states supporting the Palestinian struggle happily used security personnel in their proxy war against Israel, none were willing to offer any kind of long-term training. Moreover, since the Palestinians expected their police to protect them and engage in operations against their enemies, even they were unwilling to accept long educational trips that would require the police to be away (Bennett 2006, 10). As a result, Palestinian security officials were ill prepared for their jobs. In fact, in July 2005, the deputy chief of the General Intelligence Service said that 70 percent of the security services personnel needed political and security education (Bennett 2006, 11).

After the death of Arafat, Fatah's new head, Mahmud Abbas, undertook reform of the security sector. Not long after these reforms began, however, Hamas gained a majority in the 2006 election. Fatah and Hamas, longstanding enemies, were now expected to cooperate in the national legislature and share power. Given the historical animosity between these groups, however, Palestinians could hardly count on objective police protection. Twelve years of Fatah rule had ensured that police were loyal first and foremost to Fatah; Hamas had not been given any role in Palestinian security. As tensions increased in the run-up to and immediately after elections, Fatah went ahead with new appointments, many of which were "uncontrolled factional appointments," which rose from 57,000 in 2005 to 81,000 in 2006 (Bennett 2006, 9). Indeed, there was good reason for Fatah to fear Hamas's newfound power. Over the years, Hamas had accused Fatah of torturing and killing their fighters, corruption and collaboration with Israel. As the two parties argued over appointments within the security sector, Hamas established its own security service. Despite President Abbas's decree abolishing it, Hamas moved ahead and declared the force operational (Bennett 2006, 9). Soon, Fatah and Hamas security forces were operating in opposition to one another, with Hamas becoming a serious rival in terms of personnel and financial resources.

The Fatah-Hamas rivalry erupted into serious violence after the closing of the polls. Although it began with sporadic, small-scale attacks that targeted funeral processions of the rival party's members and the like, the violence eventually became more systematic, including assassinations of prominent members of both sides (Myre 2006). Over time, there were street battles between each side's security forces, and in 2006 alone there were 345 Palestinians killed (ynet 2006). Unlike in Sri Lanka, this post-election violence turned into a civil war. Like Sri Lanka, however, the violence had little to do with Palestinians' religious or ethnic identity.

Instead, it was a power struggle between the two main contenders in the elections, a way for each side to try to achieve control of the resources of the state. Since the Palestinian territories have not had many elections, it is difficult to claim that such patterns of violence will be ongoing in the future. What is clear, however, is that a long-standing violent conflict combined with the proliferation of easily accessible small arms and inefficient police can create the conditions under which a power struggle can take on violent overtones.

CONCLUSION

Governments regularly centralize their powers during war time. Furthermore, as threats to national security rise, politicians in power often deem it necessary to increase their control over the flow and use of information. Over time, as these governments militarize and engage in the ongoing war, they may begin to use violence even outside of the battleground. As such state-sanctioned violence continues over a number of years, it can develop into a political culture of violence, characterized by societal tolerance of a certain amount of everyday violence “to get things done.” In this political context, where a certain amount of political violence is expected by the people, election violence becomes more likely. The stakes are high during elections, and candidates are willing to go to extremes to win or maintain their positions.

This story of war time centralization, decaying political institutions and gradual rise in political violence can be clearly seen in Sri Lanka’s political history. Sri Lankan heads of state Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Executive President J.R. Jayawardene, who ruled as internal threats against the government were on the rise, began and consolidated the pattern of increased executive power and state-sanctioned violence. In that context, election violence was simply another example of the regular use of violence by the state. Unrelated to the ongoing civil war, this violence was part of regular campaigning. It was just another form of the violence that was

used in the broader political arena. Violence was a tool parties used to compete over constituents' votes. At the same time, violence was facilitated by the large size of the public sector, the proliferation of small arms and a police force that was lacking in its ability to exert full control. Parts of this story can also be seen in Palestine, where post-election violence was facilitated by an ill-equipped police force and ease of access to arms. While the cases do not share identical political contexts, they do illustrate that inter-party rivalry can turn violent in the context of weakened institutions and ongoing war.

In the next chapter, parties' and candidates' use of violence as a campaigning tool will be explored further.

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Chapter 4: Results from the Field: Inter-Party Competition and Intra-Ethnic Election Violence in Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

Given the extreme politicization of ethnic identities in postcolonial Sri Lanka, it is hardly surprising to note that election campaigns focus on identity. Indeed, during the civil war years, ethnic identities took center stage at election time as ethnically based political parties, trying their best to win seats through the proportional representation electoral system, often framed their campaign rhetoric around championing the rights of their own groups. In fact, during the 1994 presidential campaign, SLFP candidate Chandrika Kumaratunga based her campaign largely around plans to resolve the ethnic conflict with the island's Tamil community. In this vein, the Kumaratunga campaign prioritized the portrayal of its candidate as a woman of peace and ethnic harmony, distributing posters depicting her with a white dove (Schaffer 1995, 416; 421). In response, the UNP campaign brought out the communal card, seeking to portray Kumaratunga's platform as a betrayal of the Sinhalese people.

UNP leaders alleged that by taking an accommodating approach to the LTTE, Kumaratunga was selling out to the [*sic*] Sinhalese majority. A vote for her, they said, was a vote for the Tigers. To dramatize that point, UNP supporters surreptitiously painted a forehead dot – a Hindu symbol – on the prime minister's poster picture in some Colombo neighborhoods. (Schaffer 1995, 422-423)

Indeed, this type of SLFP-UNP competition was the centerpiece of Sri Lankan electoral campaigns during the war. Interestingly, however, despite the rhetoric that smacked of the "Tamil threat," the violence that tainted Sri Lankan elections was usually not directed against the Tamil community. Instead, electoral violence occurred primarily within ethnic groups, especially within the Sinhalese population. This was primarily because Sri Lankan electoral districts were highly segregated, and most were dominated by the Sinhalese community. In these districts, parties representing minority groups did not stand a chance of winning. In fact, they

rarely even campaigned in Sinhalese-majority areas. As such, electoral violence in these districts occurred largely between rival Sinhalese parties. In areas where Tamil or Muslim parties did stand a chance of winning, the situation was similar. Since many of these areas were in the heart of the war zone, Sinhalese parties rarely ventured here for electoral activity. Thus, in general, violence was mostly happening within those communities. In this chapter, I will show that election violence in Sri Lanka was largely intra-ethnic, a “normal” part of campaigning and that it was more a “tool of the trade” than it was a manifestation of inter-ethnic hostility. I also explain why violence between partisan competitors for the Sinhalese vote was so high.

Before examining the results of the statistical tests, it is important to understand Sri Lankan demography, which changed dramatically after the 1983 anti-Tamil riots. The violence sparked mass migration within the country as Tamils fled to the north and east, areas they considered to be their traditional homeland. It caused many others to leave the country all together, creating an international Tamil diaspora. As a result, ethnic groups are largely segregated now, and Sri Lanka’s 22 electoral districts are mostly dominated by the Sinhalese population. In Figure 4.1 below, which shows the size of the largest community in each of Sri Lanka’s electoral districts, it is clear that the Sinhalese constitute at least 90 percent of the population in 8 districts. In another 8 districts, members of the Sinhalese ethnic group make up anywhere from 70 to 89 percent of the population. It is only in historically Tamil districts in the north and the east that the Sinhalese are a minority, ranging anywhere from 0 to approximately 40 percent of the population. Sri Lankan Tamils are largely concentrated in the northern and eastern provinces, areas the LTTE claimed for a future Tamil state, or *eelam*. They constitute an absolute majority in three districts: Batticaloa in the east and Jaffna and Wanni in the north. In the other electoral districts in the southern, western and central parts of the country, Sri Lankan

Tamils are a small part of the population, constituting anywhere from 0 to 11 percent of the total population. It is also important to note that the Sri Lankan Muslim community is a significant part of the population in the eastern districts, especially in Trincomalee and Ampara, where they make up 45.4 percent and 44 percent of the population, respectively. Muslims are also an influential group in the western coastal district of Puttalam, where they are 18.8 percent of the population. Table 4.1 provides a more detailed account of the population per district.

FIGURE 4.1: PERCENT OF LARGEST ETHNIC GROUP IN SRI LANKA'S ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

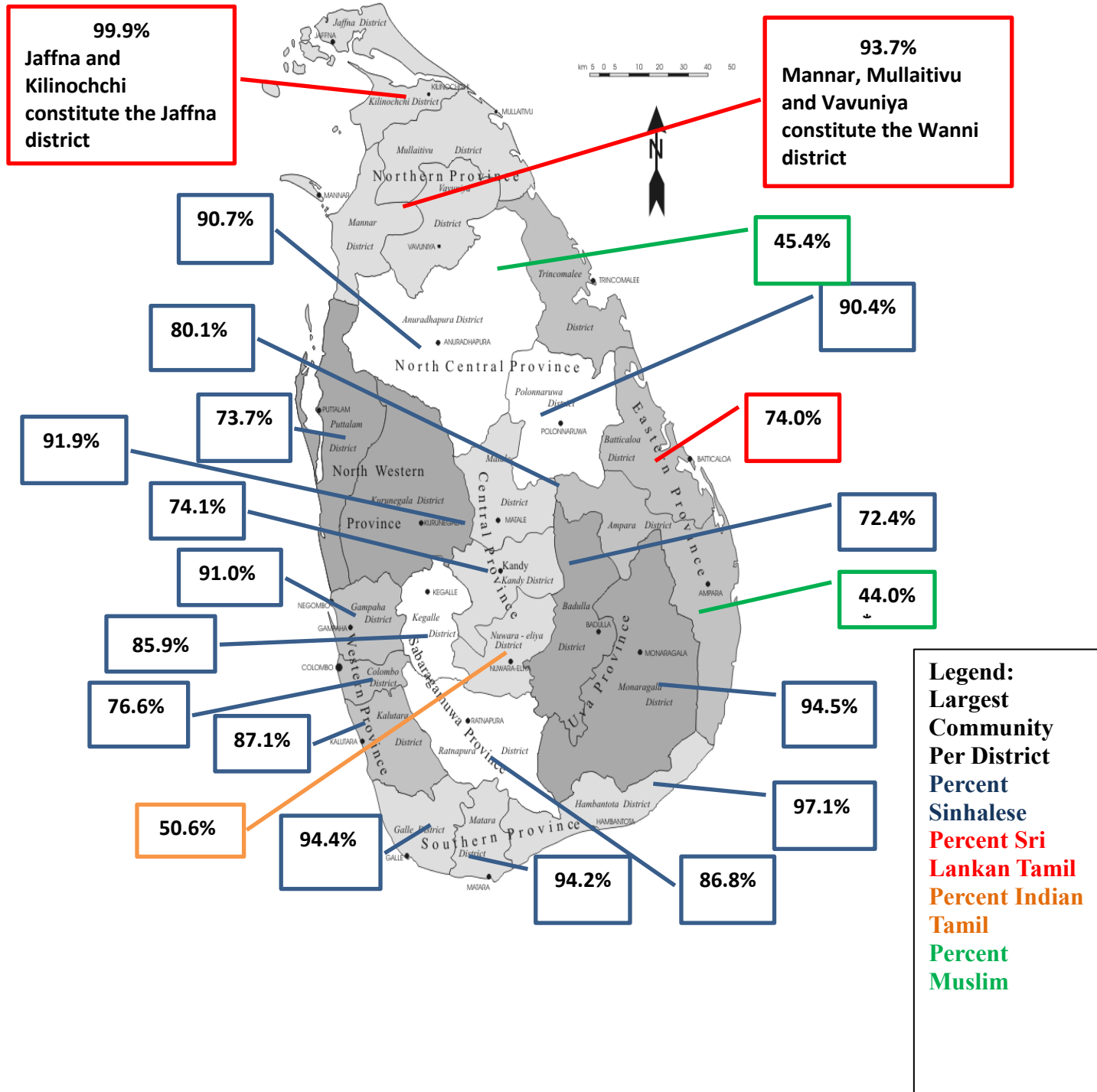


TABLE 4.1: ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF DISTRICTS, 2001

District	Total Population	Percent Sinhalese	Percent Sri Lankan Tamil	Percent Indian Tamil	Percent Muslims	Percent Other
Hambantota (HA)	526,414	97.1 (510,965)	0.4 (1,869)	0.1 (424)	1.1 (5,646)	1.4 (7,510)
Moneragala (MO)	397,375	94.5 (375,691)	1.4 (5,754)	1.9 (7,493)	2.0 (7,800)	0.1 (637)
Galle (GA)	990,487	94.4 (934,751)	1.1 (11,079)	0.9 (9,275)	3.5 (34,688)	0.0 (694)
Matara (MA)	761,370	94.2 (716,974)	0.7 (5,161)	2.2 (16,672)	2.9 (22,133)	0.0 (430)
Kurunegala (KU)	1,460,215	91.9 (1,341,237)	1.2 (17,585)	0.2 (2,972)	6.5 (94,544)	0.2 (3,877)
Gampaha (GM)	2,063,684	91.0 (1,877,545)	3.2 (65,302)	0.4 (7,621)	3.8 (78,705)	1.7 (34,511)
Anuradhapura (AN)	745,693	90.7 (676,073)	0.7 (5,073)	0.1 (443)	8.3 (61,989)	0.2 (2,115)
Polonnaruwa (PO)	358,984	90.4 (324,403)	2.0 (7,034)	0.1 (194)	7.5 (27,075)	0.0 (278)
Kalutara (KA)	1,066,239	87.1 (928,914)	1.2 (12,665)	2.7 (28,895)	8.7 (93,293)	0.3 (2,472)
Ratnapura (RA)	1,015,807	86.8 (882,017)	2.8 (28,740)	8.1 (82,591)	2.0 (20,690)	0.1 (1,769)
Kegalle (KE)	785,524	85.9 (674,665)	1.9 (14,908)	5.6 (44,202)	6.4 (50,419)	0.1 (1,330)
Matale (MT)	441,328	80.1 (353,579)	5.5 (24,320)	5.3 (23,493)	8.7 (38,462)	0.3 (1,474)
Colombo (CO)	2,251,274	76.6 (1,724,459)	11.0 (247,439)	1.1 (24,821)	9.0 (202,731)	2.3 (51,524)
Kandy (KN)	1,279,028	74.1 (947,900)	4.1 (52,052)	8.1 (103,622)	13.1 (168,049)	0.6 (7,405)
Puttalam (PU)	709,677	73.7 (523,116)	6.8 (48,072)	0.3 (2,227)	18.8 (133,134)	0.5 (3,128)
Badulla (BA)	779,983	72.4 (564,752)	3.8 (29,542)	18.4 (143,535)	5.0 (38,798)	0.4 (3,356)
Nuwara Eliya (NE)	703,610	40.2 (282,621)	6.5 (46,066)	50.6 (355,830)	2.4 (16,555)	0.4 (2,538)
Ampara* (AM)	610,719	37.5 (228,938)	18.3 (111,948)	0.0 (58)	44.0 (268,630)	0.2 (1,145)
Trincomalee* (TR)	334,363	25.4 (84,766)	28.6 (95,652)	0.1 (490)	45.4 (151,692)	0.5 (1,763)
Batticaloa* (BT)	515,857	0.5 (2,397)	74.0 (381,841)	0.0 (143)	25.0 (128,964)	0.5 (2,512)
Jaffna* (JA)	559,619	0.0 (67)	99.9 (559,142)	0.0 (46)	0.1 (350)	0.0 (14)

Wanni** (WA)	550,942	4.8 (49,530)	93.7 (975,789)	0.3 (2,847)	1.2 (12,673)	0.0 (124)
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Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2001.

*Figures for these districts are from 2007

**Since Wanni was at the heart of the LTTE-controlled areas, there are no recent, official statistics available. The figures for Wanni are based on a 2001 estimate of the average ethnic composition of the districts of Jaffna and Wanni together. It can be reasonably assumed that there are more Sri Lankan Tamils and less Sinhalese than what is estimated here.

In the following sections, employing data from various reports and interviews, I use statistical regressions and anecdotal evidence to show that patterns of district-level electoral violence during the 1999 and 2005 presidential and during the 2000, 2001, 2004 parliamentary polls did not usually reflect inter-ethnic hostility. Instead, statistical analyses show that violence during these war-time elections was more indicative of *inter-party* and *intra-ethnic* competition. Specifically, I test the following hypotheses:

H1: There was more violence in areas where the difference in votes won by the top two parties was the smallest.

This proposition is based on the assumption that election violence was more about inter-party competition than it was the result of inter-ethnic hostility. As such, politicians worked harder and possibly used more extreme means in highly competitive areas. Moreover, since there were not always reliable voter opinion polls during campaigns, it is possible that candidates were not able to reliably predict how they would do. As such, there may also have been more violence in areas where the difference in votes won by the top two parties in the *previous* election was smallest. This is because politicians would have used the previous election results as a gauge of how well they might do in the current election.

The data indicate that there was indeed more violence in areas where vote-shares of the two highest vote earners per district were closest. When comparing violence in one year with

parties' vote-shares in the previous election year, tests show that there was more violence in districts where the difference between the top two parties' vote-shares was the smallest.

H2: There was more violence in areas that experienced party turnover.

This is because incumbents would have had more resources to allocate, especially in areas where they felt threatened, than the opposition parties. Since violence was more a campaign tool than it was a spontaneous outburst of inter-ethnic hatred, incumbents would have targeted their most extreme methods, including violence, towards areas where they were most prone to lose.

The data show that, controlling for education, unemployment and poverty rates, there was more violence in districts where incumbents were displaced. It seems, however, that turnover was not nearly as influential as the control variables, which suggests that politicians were unable to get a reliable sense of what the results would be during the campaign period.

H3: There was more violence in areas where incumbents' vote shares were larger.

This is because incumbents would have used their plentiful resources to intimidate opposition supporters. As a result, opposition supporters would have stayed away from the polls, thereby increasing incumbents' vote shares.

Data analysis shows that violence did tend to increase as incumbents' vote-shares increased from one election to the next, by as much as 80 incidents in an election cycle when going from the smallest to the largest change in incumbents' vote shares. In all likelihood, this means that incumbents' use of violence deterred opposition supporters from casting their ballots.

H4: Most violent incidents that occurred during Sri Lankan election periods were planned, systematic and organized. Since the election-related violence was used to try and prevent each rival's victory, parties would have targeted people and areas that they felt posed the greatest

threat. Indeed, anecdotal descriptions of the violence indicate that it was highly organized, designed to impede rivals from winning votes.

H5: Higher rates of violence were correlated with the more ethnically homogeneous districts. This proposition is based on the assumption that, contrary to what one would expect in a war-torn society, most Sri Lankan electoral violence occurred *within*, not between ethnic groups. The data show that violence increased as the percent of Sinhalese per district increased and as the percent of Muslims per district increased. As the population of Tamils per district increased, violence seems to have decreased. This can be explained by the fact that the LTTE, operating in the most Tamil-dominant areas, eliminated most political competition, making intra-ethnic violence unnecessary.

H6: Most electoral violence involved the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the United National Party (UNP), the two largest and most dominant Sinhalese political parties. This is because most election-related violence was occurring within the Sinhalese community. These two parties are mainly representative of Sinhalese interests, and the large majority of party members are Sinhalese. Since it is these two parties that have controlled government since independence, they have had more capacity for violence. Analysis reveals that while it is true that virtually all political parties involved in Sri Lankan election campaigns take part in electoral violence, it is the two largest and most dominant parties, the SLFP and the UNP (and the coalitions they sometimes lead), that are responsible for the lion's share of violent acts.

H7: Most electoral violence in Sinhalese districts took place between Sinhalese parties while most violence in Tamil areas took place between Tamil parties. This is because most electoral violence was occurring within and not between groups. Since parties tended to campaign most heavily in areas where there were large populations of their co-ethnics, there

would have been more violence occurring between supporters of those parties, the large majority of whom came from the same ethnic group. Even where Sinhalese and Tamil parties were both contesting, violence would have largely remained within communities.

Indeed, analysis of CMEV reports shows that the majority of the violence occurring in Sinhalese-dominant districts is between Sinhalese parties and most of the violence occurring in Tamil-heavy districts is happening between Tamil parties, suggesting that there is little interaction between different ethnic parties' workers.

After a brief introduction to Sri Lankan demography, I use statistical tests to reveal that there are generally increased rates of violence in areas where the electoral contest is or has a history of being extremely close and where there is party turnover, suggesting that violence is correlated more with inter-party competition than it is with inter-ethnic tensions. The next section focuses on intra-ethnic violence, and analyses of political parties' rates of participation in violent acts show significantly more violence perpetrated by the dominant Sinhalese parties against each other and against other Sinhalese parties and relatively little blame directed by any one party against a party representing a different ethnic group. Moreover, the fact that Sinhalese parties accuse each other of more violence than they do Tamil parties (and vice-versa) suggests little inter-ethnic party interaction, thus lessening the chances of inter-ethnic violence. This section also examines the relationship between violence and the concentrations of various ethnic groups per district in order to show that there is generally more violence in ethnically homogeneous areas than there is in ethnically heterogeneous areas.

INTER-PARTY COMPETITION

Decades of war and weak democratic institutions have contributed to popular acceptance of a certain level of political violence. In the context of Sri Lankan elections, however, violence

has particular attributes wholly unrelated to the war. This violence was and still is strikingly intense. Indeed, the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV)'s records show that murders and attempted murders were regular occurrences during polls. Table 4.2 shows the rate of such crimes per election.

TABLE 4.2: MURDERS AND ATTEMPTED MURDERS IN THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

Election Year	Number of Murders (Percent of Total Violent Incidents in Pre-Election Period)	Number of Attempted Murders (Percent of Total Violent Incidents in Pre-Election Period)
1999	47 (3.17%)	11 (.74%)
2000	66 (3.23%)	41 (2.01%)
2001	48 (1.76%)	82 (3.00%)
2004	5 (.29%)	13 (.74%)
2005	5 (1.03%)	10 (2.07%)

Source: CMEV Final Report on Election Related Violence 1999; 2000; 2001; 2004; 2005

Of course, there is an array of other types of violence. Sri Lankans who ventured out during elections witnessed ballot box stuffing, voter impersonation and general intimidation. They were also at risk for getting caught in grenade attacks or for getting injured as polling agents and monitors were chased out of polling stations. In fact, in 2001, violence was so severe that the CMEV criticized the European Union for its endorsement of the poll as free and fair.

CMEV regrets that this time too the European Union (EU) Observer Mission saw fit to endorse the election on the basis of inadequate information, insufficient preparation and flawed methodology. This is all the more so since, for the first time, four of CMEV's own international monitors (in addition to many local monitors) were subjected to threats and intimidation on election day in areas that have been endorsed by the EU. (CMEV 2001, 1)

An important indication of the intra-ethnic nature of election violence is the pattern of violence at the district level. In this section, I examine the sole effects of inter-party competition

on rates of violence. In the next section, I take up the role of ethnicity and compare its effect alongside that of inter-party competition in order to provide a more complete analysis of the situation.

My first hypothesis is that if electoral violence was more a manifestation of inter-party competition than it was the result of inter-ethnic hostility, there should have been more violence in areas where the difference in votes won by the top two parties was the smallest. This is because politicians would have worked harder and possibly used more extreme means in highly competitive areas.

If a district was closely divided between supporters of the SLFP and the UNP and if electoral violence was a “normal” part of the campaign, it would follow that such closely contested districts would have seen more violence because parties would have worked harder to retain or win seats there. A test of violence on difference in vote shares shows that there was indeed more violence in areas where vote-shares of the two highest vote earners per district were closest. For every ten percent increase in the difference between votes won by the two major parties, average violence decreased by .15 violent incidents per ten thousand people. In Sri Lanka, where the mean district population is about 844,000, this translates to about 13 more violent incidents for every ten percent decrease in the top two parties’ vote-share difference. Interestingly, regressions of violence and vote differences in each individual year under review show that there was generally more violence in areas where the difference between the top two contenders’ vote-shares was larger. This is the opposite of what I would expect and the opposite of what the pooled data set showed. Perhaps, however, this might be explained by the fact that, in the absence of regular opinion polls, it is difficult for contesting parties and candidates to truly know how well they are doing relative to their competitors before final results are released. In this case, parties may have used as much violence as they felt necessary to be sure of victory.

When comparing violence in one year with parties' vote-shares in the previous election year, there was more violence in districts where the difference between the top two parties' vote-shares was the smallest. The effect of the prior election's vote differences per district influenced violence relatively strongly, followed closely by poverty rates. Education and unemployment rates also impacted violence rates, but this effect was weaker. In an average-sized district, going from the largest to the smallest difference in the top two contenders' vote shares from the previous election would have increased violence by about 160 incidents. Going from the lowest to highest poverty rates in the country would have increased violence by about 128 acts, perhaps because the jobs and other forms of patronage that come with victory are more important in the poorer areas. These opportunities might make people in these areas more likely to engage in violence to ensure their party's victory. Indeed, research shows that poor youth are more likely to engage in violence in poverty-stricken, divided societies (Bates 1983; Gellner 1983). In comparison, going from lowest to highest education and unemployment rates would have decreased violence by about 59 or 81 incidents, respectively. This pattern suggests that there may have been more violence in districts that previously experienced very close electoral competitions, because politicians in these areas, remembering prior contests, exerted extra effort to win these seats.

Of course, education, unemployment and especially poverty rates also contributed to electoral violence, but their effect was not nearly as strong. In fact, in an average-sized district, there would have been about 106 more violent incidents in an election cycle where the difference in the top two parties' vote shares was lowest, compared to where it was highest. In comparison, going from the lowest to highest unemployment rates seen in the country only decreased violent incidents by about 11. This was the strongest of all the controls.

TABLE 4.3: VIOLENCE AND VOTE DIFFERENCES (IN THE SAME YEAR) COEFFICIENTS

Election Year	Vote Difference	Education	Poverty	Unemployment	R ²	N
1999	.003	-.057*	.060*	-.222	.389	22
2000	.019	-.085*	.117**	-.265*	.395	22
2001	-.015	-.017	.027	-.175	-.128	22
2004	.002	-.017	.054	-.098	.027	22
2005	.004	-.022	.026*	-.017	.182	22
Pooled	-.015	-.027	.052*	-.137*	.113	110

*95% confidence; **99% confidence; ***99.9% confidence

TABLE 4.4: VIOLENCE AND VOTE DIFFERENCES (IN DIFFERENT YEARS) COEFFICIENTS

Election Year	Vote Difference	Education	Poverty	Unemployment	R ²	N
1999 Election and 1994 Vote Differences	-.008	-.040	.053	-.207*	.400	22
2000 Election and 1999 Vote Differences	-.001	-.087*	.117**	-.249*	.393	22
2001 Election and 2000 Vote Differences	-.105	-.043	.037	-.084	-.095	22
2004 Election and 2001 Vote Differences	-.001	-.014	.053	-.094	.025	22
2005 Election and 2004 Vote Differences	.002	-.016	.024*	-.021	.168	22
Pooled	-.020*	-.022	.049*	-.128*	.147	110

*95% confidence; **99% confidence; ***99.9% confidence

TABLE 4.5: VIOLENCE AND CHANGE IN VOTE DIFFERENCES COEFFICIENTS

Election Year	Change in Vote Difference	Education	Poverty	Unemployment	R ²	N
Pooled	.005	-.036*	.056**	-.146*	.104	110

*95% confidence; **99% confidence; ***99.9% confidence

Similarly, if violence during elections was a manifestation of inter-party hostility, there should have been more violence in areas that experienced party turnover. In districts where incumbents were displaced, there should have been more violence because incumbents would have fought harder to retain their power. They would have been able to marshal the state resources under their control to try and intimidate opponents, keep opposition supporters away from polling stations and create favorable conditions for their own victory.

My second proposition is that if electoral violence was more a manifestation of inter-party competition than it was the result of inter-ethnic hostility, there should have been more violence in areas that experienced party turnover. This is because incumbents would have had more resources to allocate, especially in areas where they felt threatened.

Controlling for education, unemployment and poverty rates, there was more violence in districts where incumbents were displaced. It seems, however, that turnover was not nearly as influential as the control variables, which suggests that politicians were unable to get a reliable sense of what the results would be during the campaign period. While an average-sized district going from the lowest to the highest poverty rates would have experienced 152 more violent incidents, turnover would only have added an additional 32 incidents of violence to such a district.

Third, I contend that if electoral violence was more about inter-party competition than between-group tension, there would have been more violence in areas where incumbents' vote shares were larger. This is because incumbents would have used their plentiful resources to intimidate opposition supporters. As a result, opposition supporters would have stayed away from the polls, thereby increasing incumbents' vote shares.

In order to assess whether there was more violence in areas where incumbents were strongest, I tested the relationship between incumbents' vote shares and violence per district. It appears that violence tended to increase as incumbents' vote-shares increased from one election to the next, by as much as 80 incidents in an election cycle when going from the smallest to the

largest change in incumbents' vote shares. In all likelihood, this means that incumbents' use of violence deterred opposition supporters from casting their ballots. Indeed, it could be the case that incumbents, who had more state resources than opposition candidates, used those resources to commit violence to ensure their victory. After all, incumbents committed more violence than opposition parties in all years reviewed here (See Figure 4.2 below).

TABLE 4.6: VIOLENCE AND PARTY TURNOVER COEFFICIENTS

Election Year	Party Turnover	Education	Poverty	Unemployment	R ²	N
1999	.174	-.059*	.058*	-.233*	.393	22
2000	.244	-.099*	.125**	-.243*	.398	22
2001	.047	-.026	.032	-.163	-.139	22
2004	.444	-.017	.053	-.118	.078	22
2005	.185	-.017*	.021*	-.015	.235	22
Pooled	.378	-.046*	.058**	-.161**	.111	110

*95% confidence; **99% confidence; ***99.9% confidence

Overall, then, it does appear to be the case that the difference in parties' vote-shares and party turnover at the district level impacted rates of electoral violence. While turnover was not nearly as strong a predictor as the difference between the parties' vote-shares in the previous election, it did have some effect. Since turnover and the difference in parties' vote-shares (from the same election year as the measure of violence) had a smaller effect than what I expected, I suggest that it could be the case that these variables, because they measure an effect that was not actually present until the completion of the election, could not fully capture the entire election. For instance, turnover was often accompanied by violence largely perpetrated by the victors. While the pre-election and election day violence was committed mostly by incumbents, if power changed hands the electoral victors often engaged in revenge attacks. In the aftermath of the announcement of results, violence consisted of the former opposition party exerting its newfound power against those former incumbents who attacked them in the run-up to the polls. In the regression, however, turnover could not predict this violence because "election violence" had

already been committed by the time turnover had occurred. Of the control variables, unemployment and poverty had the largest effects. Surprisingly, the more unemployment a district experienced, the less violence there was. One possible explanation for this is that some of the highest unemployment rates are found in the districts of Jaffna and Wanni, in the heart of the war zone. As will be evident in the next section, areas such as these, which were held by the LTTE for long periods, tended to experience less electoral violence than other districts because the constant threat of rebel attacks prevented much electoral activity from occurring.

Fourth, I contend that if electoral violence was more a reflection of inter-party competition than it was the result of spontaneous outbursts of latent inter-ethnic hostility, most violent incidents would have been planned, systematic and organized. This is because parties would have had specific targets in mind.

Indeed, Sri Lankan election violence during the years covered here was systematic and organized, designed to impede rivals from winning votes. One way in which this is evident is the array of chosen targets. During the 1999 election, Anuradhapura experienced the highest rate of violence per ten thousand people, and the district witnessed polling agents being chased out of polling stations as well as systematic stuffing of ballot boxes (CMEV 1999, 46). In Gampaha, the CMEV recorded the presence of mobile gangs, “blatant impersonation on an organized scale,” and “organized intimidation and impersonation on a large scale” (CMEV 1999, 41). In 2000, some of the less severe incidents included the public intimidation by “20 well-built men” of a UNP candidate in front of the president’s residence in Colombo. Police were standing by but did nothing (CMEV 2000, 29). The incumbent PA coalition also made its presence known in several districts, surrounding polling centers and chasing other parties’ polling agents away with weapons (CMEV 2000, 30-31). These cases illustrate that perpetrators’ targets seem to be the polling agents and ballot boxes themselves; the focus is on the election materials. In the same

vein, candidates from rival parties are important targets, because they pose a threat with regard to electoral victory.

It also seems relatively apparent that much of the violence was organized and led by politicians themselves, suggesting that the motives are at least partly related to winning the election. In 1999, in Kurunegala, MP Salinda Dissanayake was seen participating in ballot box stuffing, and in Puttalam supporters of MP D.M.D. Dissanayake were involved in ballot box stuffing and injuring people inside the polling station (CMEV 1999, 38; 40). Since it was politicians themselves who were leading violent acts at the polls, it seems likely that their actions were meant to do little other than influence the results. Indeed, CMEV noted the power politicians had and used to force events to go their way. For instance, CMEV described the increased use of firearms in 1999, which included not just homemade guns but also automatic weapons.

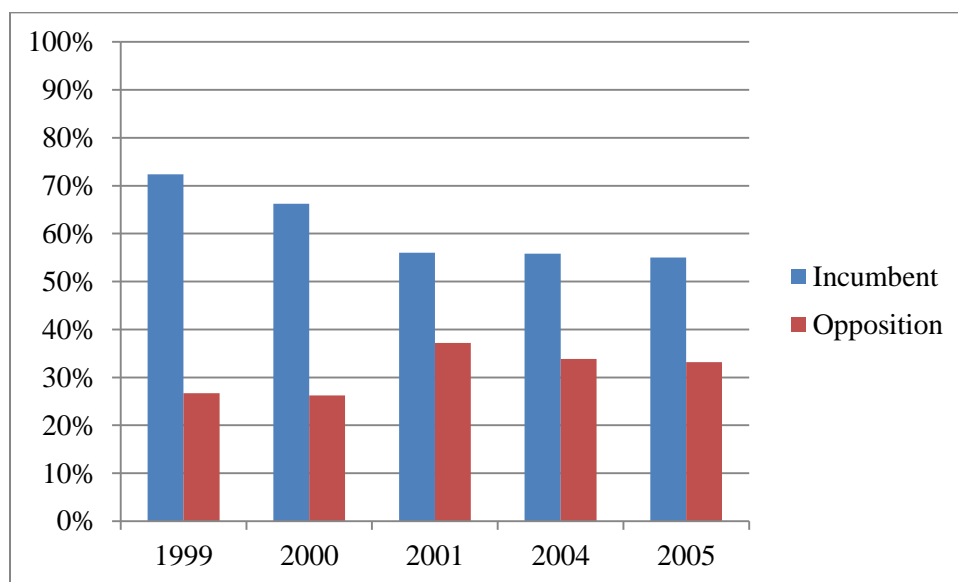
This in turn indicates that the perpetrators may have access either to military resources and/or to weapons provided both officially and unofficially for the ‘protection’ of parliamentarians. The high degree of violence during the Presidential election campaign, both qualitatively and quantitatively, cannot therefore be dismissed as the work of fringe or extreme elements within the major parties, or as the mischief of rabble-rousers and lumpens who are out of control. (CMEV 1999, 4)

Even the Election Commissioner described the involvement of politicians. In districts such as Anuradhapura, Ampara, Puttalam and Polonnaruwa, Commissioner Dissanayake said that politicians are renowned for their use of election violence. He added that even in these areas, which are home to more ethnically diverse populations, violence does not occur inter-ethnically. “[There is] nothing of that nature,” he said (Dissanayake 2011).

It is also important to note that incumbents committed much more violence than did members of the opposition, which indicates that access to a wealth of resources, such as state-owned vehicles and arms as well as state coffers, made violence much easier to commit. If

violence was more a spontaneous outburst of inter-ethnic tension, there would likely be less of a gap between the amount of violence committed by incumbents and the opposition. Instead, however, Figure 4.2 shows that in all years, incumbents committed most of the violence.

FIGURE 4.2: INCUMBENTS AND OPPOSITION SHARE OF VIOLENCE



Source: CMEV Final Report on Election Related Violence 1999; 2000; 2001; 2004; 2005

Overall, evidence indicates a significant amount of inter-party competition during the election years covered here. In the next section, I add ethnicity to the regressions to explore its effect on violence.

INTRA-ETHNIC ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN SRI LANKA

Despite the ongoing civil war, election-related violence – by and large – did not involve Sri Lankan Tamils. Instead, it occurred largely between Sinhalese Sri Lankans. Even the violence that did not involve the Sinhalese tended to occur within ethnic groups such that elections were also marred by intra-Tamil and intra-Muslim incidents. In this section, I will present evidence pointing to the prevalence of such intra-ethnic electoral violence.

My fifth hypothesis is that if most electoral violence was the result of inter-party competition, occurring largely within communities, it is likely that higher rates of violence were correlated with more ethnically homogeneous districts.

In the following statistical regressions, I show that in general, there was more electoral violence as ethnic homogeneity increased. As will become evident, there are a few districts that consistently appear as outliers in the regressions. In order to control for the most prominent of these, I included dummy variables for the districts of Ampara and Anuradhapura. There are several reasons for this, which include the unique ethnic composition of these areas as well as their value to the LTTE. These factors will be explored further in the next chapter.

There is also a control included for the year 2004, because there was significantly less violence that year. One possible explanation for this exception is the new election laws that were in effect in that year. In 2004, the government implemented the 17th constitutional amendment, which provided for the establishment of an Elections Commission, Police Commission and Public Service Commission. Despite the fact that the Elections Commission was not actually appointed by the time the election took place, the acting Elections Commissioner, Dayananda Dissanayake, was empowered to exercise all the powers of the Commission (CMEV 2004, 40). These powers were broad and sought to depoliticize the conduct of elections. In that vein, Commissioner Dissanayake was empowered to prevent the misuse of public property by prohibiting the use of state property; issue guidelines to the media to ensure unbiased election coverage; and deploy police and armed forces to curb violence and keep the peace (Welikala 2008, 8). In combination with the appointment of a Deputy Inspector General to be the senior police officer in charge of the Police Elections Secretariat, the new laws contributed to the more peaceful electoral atmosphere in 2004 and 2005. With such controls in place, patterns of violence were prevented and/or disrupted more easily. At the same time, however, violence was

not eradicated completely. Indeed, it was still used as a campaigning tool. In 2004, three candidates were shot dead in the east and there were two attempted murders in Colombo (CMEV 2004, 4). In areas under LTTE control and/or influence, there was also significantly more intra-Tamil violence, especially in the form of intimidation aimed at forcing voters to follow the line of the LTTE-approved Tamil National Alliance (TNA) party (CMEV 2004, 40). In both 2004 and 2005, there was impersonation, intimidation of voters, intimidation of polling agents and monitors and attacks on candidates.

Percent Sinhalese and Violence

A regression of the effect of the percent of Sinhalese per district on violence over all reviewed years shows that violence increased as the dominance of the Sinhalese increased, controlling for closeness of elections and the other variables described above. For every 10 percent increase in Sinhalese population per district, the amount of violence increased by about one-tenth of a violent incident per 10,000 people. The mean population of a Sri Lankan electoral district is approximately 844,000 people, and a population this size would experience an increase of about 8 violent incidents for a 10 percent increase in Sinhalese population. The control variables also contributed to higher rates of violence, although it was only poverty that had a stronger effect than percent Sinhalese. Indeed, an average sized district with the highest percent Sinhalese would have experienced 82 more incidents of violence than one with the lowest percentage of Sinhalese. The same extremes in poverty would have added 102 violent incidents to an average-sized district. Inter-party competition was also relevant, but its effect was not as strong as percent Sinhalese. Neither party turnover nor difference in parties' vote shares would have added as much violence to the average district as percent Sinhalese did.

This pattern holds at the level of individual years as well, except in the year 2004, when it appears that violence actually decreased as the proportion of Sinhalese per district increased.

When the district of Ampara, which is an extreme outlier, is removed from the regression, violence again increased as the percentage of Sinhalese per district increases (See Figure 4.3).

FIGURE 4.3: VIOLENCE 2004 VS. PERCENT SINHALESE PER DISTRICT

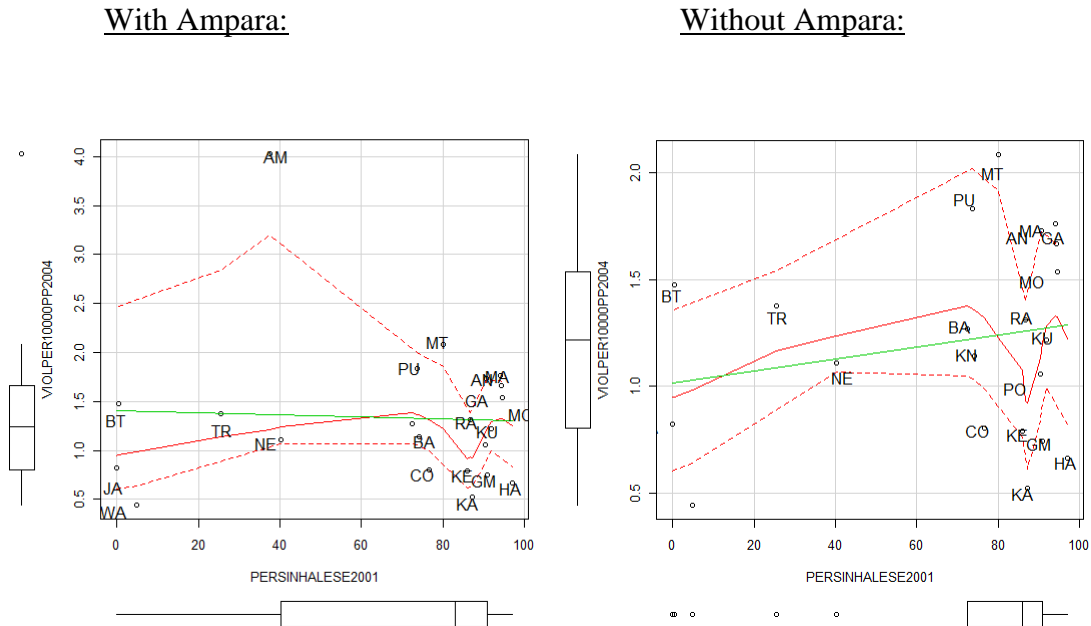


TABLE 4.7: EFFECT OF PERCENT SINHALESE ON VIOLENCE PER DISTRICT

Variable	Coefficient
Percent Sinhalese	.010
Vote Difference (Same Year)	-.008
Turnover	.492
Poverty	.039
Education	.002
Unemployment	-.177**
AM	1.42
AN	.842
2004	-.497
R2	.163
N	110

*95% confidence; **99% confidence; ***99.9% confidence

AM: Dummy for Ampara

AN: Dummy for Anuradhapura

2004: Dummy for 2004

Percent Tamil and Violence

A similar test, regressing violence on the size of the Tamil population, shows a similar result as above. While the effect of the percent Tamil variable did not exert as much influence on rates of violence as the other variables, it still did play a role. While an average-sized district with the highest concentration of Tamils would have experienced 34 less violent incidents than one with the highest concentration of Tamils, extremes in poverty rates would have had a much larger impact. In fact, an average-sized district with the highest poverty rates would have suffered from 123 more violent incidents than one with the lowest poverty rates. This might be partially explained by the fact that the electoral stakes for Tamil parties are not as high as they are for Sinhalese parties, because the former can never hope to be the dominant party in government. Inter-party competition was also important in these areas. The effect of turnover was almost the same as the effect of percent Tamil, but the difference in parties' vote-shares was stronger. In an average district, the smallest vote-share difference would have added an additional 78 incidents of violence per election cycle, compared to an average district where the difference in vote shares was the largest seen in the country. The control variables in the test also played a role, but poverty was by the far the strongest.

TABLE 4.8: THE EFFECT OF PERCENT TAMIL ON VIOLENCE

Variable	Coefficient
Percent Tamil	-.004
Vote Difference (Same Year)	-.011
Turnover	.440
Poverty	.047**
Education	-.021
Unemployment	-.140
AM	.894
AN	1.08
2004	-.462
R2	.151
N	110

*95% confidence; **99% confidence; ***99.9% confidence

AM: Dummy for Ampara

AN: Dummy for Anuradhapura

2004: Dummy for 2004

At first glance, then, it seems that intra-ethnic violence was not a significant problem in Tamil areas. It is important to consider, however, that the most Tamil-dominant areas were in the heart of the war zone, where the LTTE was able to use its power to scare voters and candidates from going against its wishes. The LTTE's history of violence directed against competitors eventually meant that there was little electoral activity in rebel-held areas. For instance, the main Sinhalese parties did not venture into LTTE-controlled areas for any election-related activity, except in years when peace talks were going well and agreements with the rebels regarding election activity had been established. In 2005, for instance, the LTTE call for a boycott resulted in 1.5 percent voter turnout in Jaffna district (CMEV 2005, 38). Overall, then, the LTTE's past of violence meant that electoral activity in the most heavily Tamil areas was minimal, and thus there was little reason for the rebels to keep using violence.

This is not to say that Tamil areas were entirely peaceful. There was considerable violence, and it was intra-Tamil in nature. In 2005, the CMEV expressed concern about the situation in areas under LTTE control, citing intimidation of voters, attempted murders and

several grenades thrown at polling stations. Again, however, all of the incidents were aimed at disrupting other Tamil parties' activities. For instance, several grenades were thrown at rival Tamil party offices, such as those of the EPDP. There were also attacks that targeted army posts, but even these were related primarily to obstructing the election, for they were located directly in front of rival party offices (CMEV 2005, 20-21; 38-39).

Percent Muslim and Violence

There was also more violence as the percentage of Muslims in a district increased. An average-sized district which went from having the lowest to the highest proportion of Muslims would have experienced 8 more violent incidents in an election cycle. As in the regressions of other ethnic groups on violence, the effect of the Muslim presence is small. Of course, this is partly because Muslims are only 8 percent of the national population, and even where they are the most dominant they only constitute at most roughly 45 percent of a district's population. Taken in this context, 8 more violent incidents in an election cycle is not as small as it first appears. In comparison, the extremes in poverty would have added 136 violent incidents to an election cycle. In fact, all the control variables exerted a bigger influence on the rates of violence. Vote-differences also played a role, although it was not as strong as poverty. The lowest difference in vote-shares would have added about 85 incidents to the average district, compared to a district with the largest difference. Also similar to the other regressions involving ethnicity, the effect of Ampara is apparent.

TABLE 4.9: THE EFFECT OF PERCENT MUSLIM ON VIOLENCE

Variable	Coefficient
Percent Muslim	.002
Vote Difference (Same Year)	-.012**
Turnover	.416
Poverty	.052*
Education	-.034
Unemployment	-.138
AM	.727
AN	1.120
2004	-.448
R2	.149
N	110

*95% confidence; **99% confidence; ***99.9% confidence

AM: Dummy for Ampara

AN: Dummy for Anuradhapura

2004: Dummy for 2004

Overall, then, a larger Sinhalese and Muslim presence at the district level did contribute to higher rates of violence. At the same time, a larger Tamil presence was correlated with lower levels of violence because of LTTE control of these districts. In the percent Tamil and percent Muslim cases, the effect of ethnicity was not as important as other variables, especially poverty, which had the strongest effect. In all the tests which include ethnicity, inter-party competition was still relevant. While it would not have added as many violent incidents to the average district as high poverty or low unemployment, it did still play a role. At the same time, regression analysis does not tell the whole story.

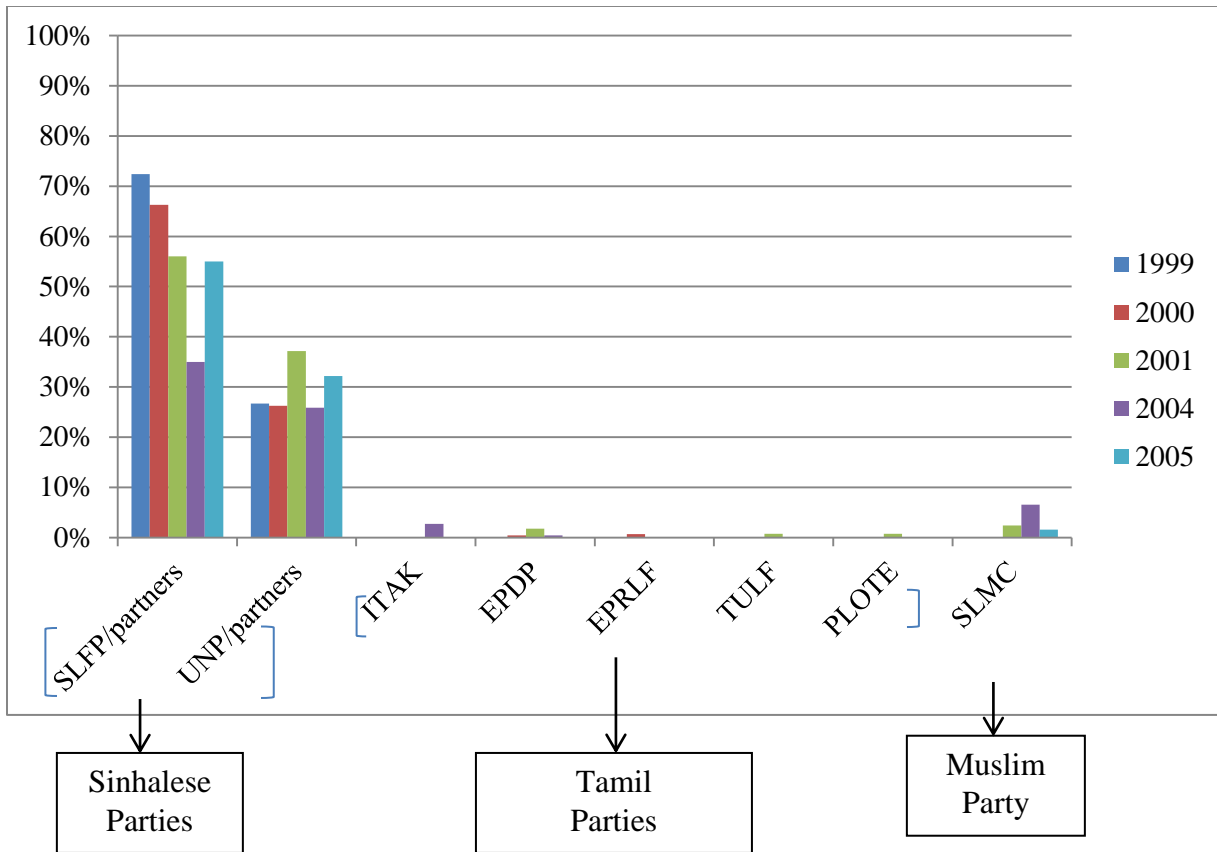
My sixth hypothesis is that if electoral violence was mostly intra-ethnic, most violence should have occurred between the SLFP and the UNP, the two largest and most dominant political parties. This is because these two parties are mainly representative of Sinhalese interests, and the large majority of party members are Sinhalese. Additionally, if electoral violence was mostly intra-ethnic, there would have been more intra-group than inter-group accusations of violence. For example, Tamil parties would have accused other Tamil parties more than they did non-Tamil parties.

While it is true that virtually all political parties involved in Sri Lankan election campaigns take part in electoral violence, it is the two largest and most dominant parties, the

SLFP and the UNP (and the coalitions they sometimes lead), that are responsible for the lion's share of violent acts. Indeed, in 2001 alone, when considering only cases in which the perpetrators were identified by party affiliation, it is these two dominant parties that stood accused of 92.9 percent of all violations (CMEV 2001, 2). When considering *all* cases for all years under review, including those crimes committed by perpetrators whose party affiliation was unknown, responsibility for between 64 percent and 73 percent of all violence was attributable to these two parties.

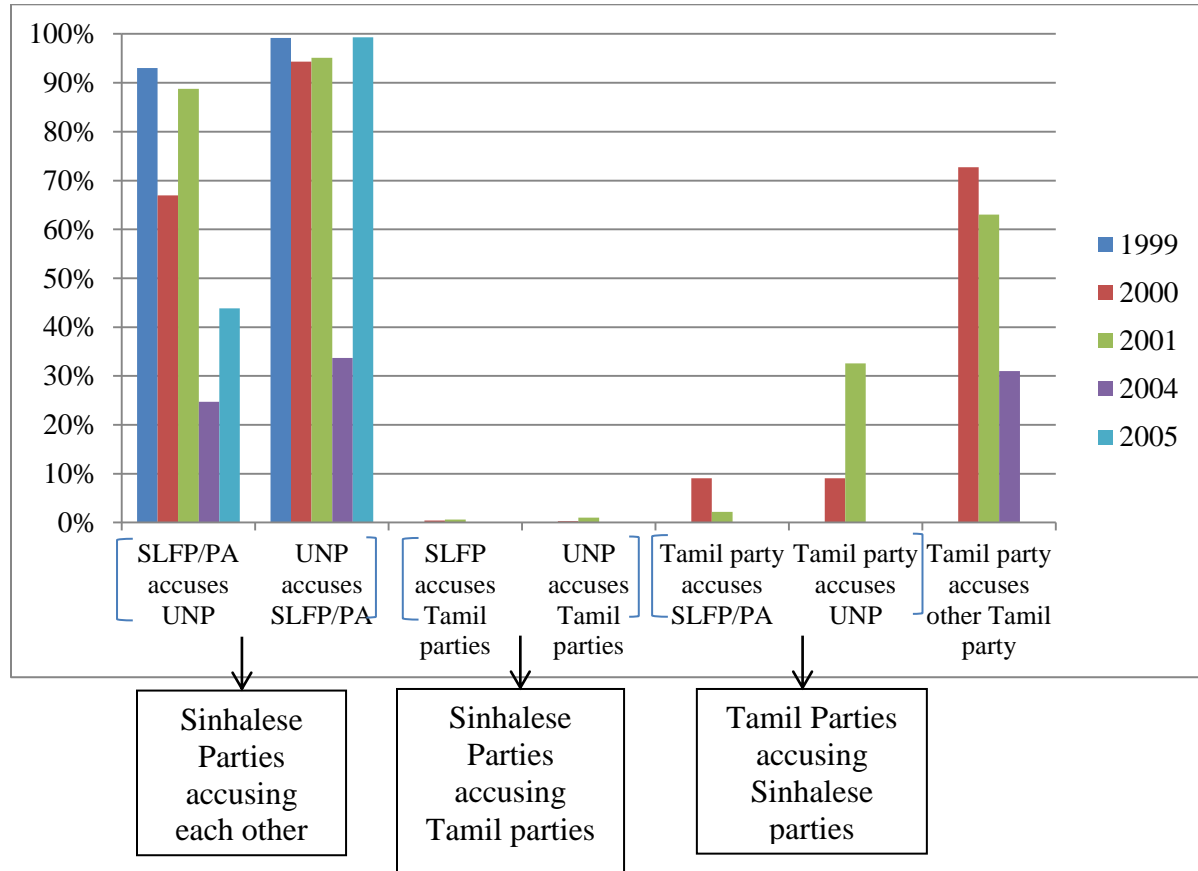
Moreover, a look at who these political parties accuse of perpetrating violence against their own members is revealing. In all the years under review, in the run-up to Election Day, the two main Sinhalese parties accused each other of anywhere between 63 and 100 percent of violence inflicted on their members. The SLFP and the UNP only accused Tamil parties of violence between .3 and 1 percent of the time. Similarly, in all the elections reviewed here, Tamil parties accused each other of between 67 and 100 percent of violence but they only accused the Sinhalese parties of between 0 and 67 percent of violence. While this latter figure may seem high, it is only because one Tamil party in 2000 accused the UNP and SLFP of one violent incident each, out of a total of three accusations for the entire election (See Figures 4.4 and 4.5).

FIGURE 4.4: PARTIES ACCUSED OF VIOLENCE



Source: CMEV Final Report on Election Related Violence 1999; 2000; 2001; 2004; 2005
 PNG: Parties Not Given (Unidentified)

FIGURE 4.5: PARTIES' ACCUSATIONS OF VIOLENCE IN THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD



Source: CMEV Final Report on Election Related Violence 1999; 2000; 2001; 2004; 2005

This pattern suggests that the violence is occurring largely within and not between ethnic political factions, especially because the Sinhalese and Tamil parties accused each other of such little violence. If the groups were targeting each other at a high rate, there would likely be more retaliatory attacks and thus a higher rate of accusations. Even if the Sinhalese, as the numerically superior group, were perpetrating more attacks against Tamils, there would probably be more retaliation by the Tamil factions. Looking at the rate at which Tamil parties were accused of violence, though, this scenario seems unlikely. In fact, none of the Tamil political parties was accused of more than 1 percent of the total violence. Political Science professor Jayadeva Uyangoda and Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, the Executive Director of the Centre for Policy

Alternatives in Colombo and a founder of the CMEV, both agree that intra-ethnic violence during Sri Lankan elections is much more common than inter-ethnic hostility (Uyangoda 2011 and Saravanamuttu 2011). “Definitely the violence is happening primarily within and not between communities. If you look at the numbers of murders in the northeast, most are by the LTTE against moderate Tamil candidates. The intra-ethnic component is much more prevalent than the inter-ethnic” (Saravanamuttu 2011).

Seventh, I posit that if electoral violence was mostly intra-ethnic, most violence occurring in Sinhalese districts would have taken place between Sinhalese parties while most violence occurring in Tamil-heavy districts would have taken place between Tamil parties. This is because ethnically-based parties campaigned largely within their spheres of influence, having little opportunity to interact with parties representing different ethnic groups.

Indeed, CMEV reports show that the majority of the violence occurring in Sinhalese-dominant districts is between Sinhalese parties and most of the violence occurring in Tamil-heavy districts is happening between Tamil parties, suggesting that there is little interaction between different ethnic parties’ workers. In the eight districts that are more than 90 percent Sinhalese, a large majority of the violence is being perpetrated by the UNP and the SLFP or the coalitions they lead (Table 4.4 shows the breakdown). In the two districts that are more than 90 percent Tamil, between 34 and 70 percent of the violence is occurring between Tamil parties. While this latter figure may seem low, it is important to consider that CMEV monitors are not able to verify the perpetrators’ identities in many cases from these districts. Thus, many incidents cannot be linked with a specific faction.

TABLE 4.10: RATES OF ACCUSATIONS IN THE DISTRICTS WITH HIGHEST SINHALESE AND TAMIL CONCENTRATIONS

Districts with the Highest Percentage of Sinhalese	Percent Sinhalese	Amount of Intra-Ethnic Accusations
Hambantota	97.1%	97.1% (N=173)
Moneragala	94.5%	96.3% (N=267)
Galle	94.4%	98.4% (N=245)
Matara	94.2%	99.2% (N=242)
Kurunegala	91.9%	98.6% (N=634)
Gampaha	91.0%	98.1% (N=563)
Anuradhapura	90.7%	98.8% (N=518)
Polonnaruwa	90.4%	98.3% (N=238)
Districts with the Highest Percentage of Tamils	Percent Tamils	Amount of Intra-Ethnic Accusations
Jaffna	99.9%	69.1% (N=15)
Wanni	93.7%	33.8% (N=71)

Source: CMEV Final Report on Election Related Violence 1999; 2000; 2001; 2004; 2005

This pattern of accusation is hardly surprising. After all, there was little electoral activity in heavily Tamil districts because most of those areas were held by the LTTE. Given the rebels' willingness to direct violence against parties they did not approve of, Tamil and non-Tamil parties both restricted their electoral activities in LTTE areas. Those who did campaign without LTTE approval risked their lives by doing so. Moreover, as Table 4.2 showed, there are few districts outside the northeast that are home to sizeable amounts of Tamil civilians. As a result, Tamil political parties also did not conduct much election activity outside of the northeast. This lack of inter-ethnic party interaction is one reason for the pattern of accusations described above.

Where possible, it is also important to examine the ethnic identities of the victims and perpetrators of violence. After all, systematic documentation of this factor can provide clear evidence of how much of Sri Lankan electoral violence is intra- and inter-ethnic. Unfortunately, such documentation only exists sporadically. In 2005, for instance, the CMEV did include names of some perpetrators and victims in its final report. Since most Sri Lankan names can be

linguistically recognized as belonging to particular ethnic groups, it is possible to broadly identify the ethnic backgrounds of perpetrators and victims in the report. In the district of Nuwara Eliya, Sinhalese UNP supporters Jayalath Dissanayake and Ranjith Dissanayake assaulted and threatened Sinhalese UPFA Minister of the Central Province Provincial Council (CMEV 2005, 47). In Matara, the violence was also intra-Sinhalese, occurring as JVP Provincial Council member Saman Kumara assaulted UNP supporters M. Munasinghe and H. Gamage. Sinhalese UNP MP Mahinda Wijesekara and his supporters damaged the vehicle of Sinhalese JVP MP Premasiri Manage (CMEV 2005, 48, 49). Indeed, throughout the report, there is no description of any incident involving perpetrators and victims of different ethnicities.

Additionally, it is important to investigate outliers more closely. Certain districts such as Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee experienced a great deal more violence than others. While it is difficult to provide a definitive explanation for this, one interesting point is that many of these districts are home to a higher than average proportion of Muslims. Indeed, a closer look at the relationship between ethnicity and violence reveals the importance of the Muslim presence. A regression that takes the relative proportions of the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities per district into account shows some surprising results. As expected, violence increased as the percentage of Sinhalese relative to Muslims and relative to Tamils increased. As the Sinhalese became more dominant in a district, there was more electoral violence. What is striking, however, is that the Muslim presence seems to have a larger effect. As the percentage of Muslims increased relative to Sinhalese and relative to Tamil, violence increased more. Why?

TABLE 4.11: COMPARATIVE EFFECTS OF ETHNICITY ON VIOLENCE

Variable	Coefficient	N
Percent Sinhalese	.008	110
Percent Muslim	.014	
Percent Sinhalese/Percent Muslim	-.003	
Poverty	.049*	
Education	-.020	
Unemployment	-.127*	
Vote Difference (Same Year)	-.010	
Turnover	.355	
R ²	.110	
N	110	

*95% confidence; **99% confidence; ***99.9% confidence

Scholars have offered various explanations for this phenomenon, which include these districts' proximity to the war zone; the deep but fractured historical Tamil-Muslim relationship in these areas; and the presence of Sinhalese settlers in these districts. All of these issues will be explored in detail in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION

Despite Sri Lanka's post-independence record of violent, inter-ethnic strife, election-related violence on the island seemed, during the civil war, to operate in a sphere all its own. Indeed, CMEV reports indicate that political parties representing different ethnic groups barely accused each other of committing any violence. The reports also show that it was the two dominant Sinhalese parties that were accused of involvement in the large majority of violent acts. Analysis also reveals that in general, there seems to be more violence in areas that are more ethnically homogeneous. The exception to this pattern is that there is evidence of violence occurring in areas where there are sizeable numbers of Muslims, Tamils and Sinhalese. Was the violence occurring here actually inter- rather than intra-ethnic? It is likely that both types of incidents were occurring, particularly because ethnic minorities had realistic chances of winning elections here. At the same time, however, it is important to remember that much of this

violence was also occurring between various factions *within* each of these communities, especially as Muslim refugees filtering into Sinhalese-dominant districts formed their own political parties and then battled against each other. This will be taken up in the next chapter. Of course, this alone does not conclusively show that all Sri Lankan electoral violence was intra-ethnic in nature. Considering, however, that there are higher rates of violence in areas where there is more intense inter-party competition indicates that ethnic tension is not the primary motivating factor in election-related violence.

As is always true in the real world, there are exceptions to the trends described above, especially with regard to the year 2004 and the district of Ampara. In 2004, new laws appear to have brought much of the violence under control, disrupting previous years' patterns. Ampara is an exception because of its unique ethnic composition and history, which is explored in the next chapter. As will be investigated in the following chapter, however, even this violence is not necessarily related to the underlying causes of the war.

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Chapter 5: Election Violence in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

In north-central Sri Lanka sits the ancient city of Anuradhapura, renowned as the seat of Sinhalese civilization. Brimming with Buddhist temples and other ancient ruins, the city has been declared a UNESCO world heritage site. In September 2011, a crowd of about 100 monks and ordinary citizens descended upon a 300-year-old structure situated in the midst of the Buddhist ruins, reducing it to rubble. Although the structure was a Muslim shrine, it was a site of reverence for members of many faiths. The monk who organized the destruction justified it by alleging that local Muslims were illegally planning to convert the shrine into a mosque, proudly noting that he had even managed to recruit Buddhist monks from overseas to join him in his mission (Haviland 2011). Internet responses to the news included condemnations of the event but disturbingly also included “thank you” messages and sentiments expressing gratitude to the monks for “protecting” Buddhism. The incident clearly evoked strong emotions. Indeed, Muslims in Anuradhapura stayed away from the site in the aftermath of the attack, fearing communal violence.

While this incident may seem extreme, it is important to understand its contextual background. Anuradhapura sits in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka, which encompasses the northeastern parts of the island. During the war, Dry Zone districts were hotbeds of conflict for several reasons. First, they were targeted by successive governments as the sites for waves of Sinhalese settlement schemes. Such projects often caused resentment and hostility within the already-established Tamil and Muslim communities resident there. Second, many Dry Zone districts bordered the war zone, making them prime targets for rebel incursions and attacks. Such incidents eventually soured relations between the Tamil and other communities in the area.

Indeed, the ethnic heterogeneity of many Dry Zone districts eventually also became a source of conflict, especially after Muslims in the east became more politically active and formed their own political party. My statistical analysis in Chapter 4 only considered the ethnographic makeup, political competitiveness, poverty, education and unemployment rates in each district. In these models, districts such as Anuradhapura, Ampara, Batticaloa and Puttalam, all of which are in the Dry Zone, consistently appeared as statistical outliers, experiencing extremely high levels of violence despite not having extreme scores on the factors that predict violence elsewhere.

This chapter explains why these districts in the Dry Zone experienced more violence than the rest of the country and also offers possible avenues for further research. During the war, unlike in most districts that were dominated by the Sinhalese, many Dry Zone districts experienced both inter- *and* intra-ethnic violence, making the baseline level of conflict in these areas more elevated than in the rest of the country. This was because of the inter-group tensions raised by waves of Sinhalese settlements and LTTE attacks on villages located close to rebel territory. Also, the ways in which these districts' ethnographic distribution interacted with the electoral system meant that there was significant inter-group *and* intra-group competition during polls. During elections, as parties vied for power, conditions were thus ripe for violence. This was because all these factors were already causing more bouts of sporadic violence in communities and motivating ordinary citizens to take up arms. When election campaigning began, it was easier for politicians to mobilize their thugs and to use violence, because ground-level tensions and armed citizens were already present.

In the next section, I provide an overview of state-sponsored settlement schemes and their effect on community relations. In the following section, I offer an historical summary of the

political development of the island's Muslim community, which then leads into an analysis of Sinhalese-Muslim relations in Puttalam. I then offer an explanation of how the Sri Lankan electoral system affects levels of inter- and intra-ethnic electoral violence in the more heterogeneous districts of the Dry Zone.

SINHALESE SETTLEMENTS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES IN THE DRY ZONE

There are several districts that consistently experienced extremely high levels of electoral violence, often appearing as statistical outliers in regression analyses. Most commonly, these included the central and western districts of Anuradhapura and Puttalam and the eastern districts of Ampara and Batticaloa. Why were these areas so prone to violence? While a lack of resources prevented me from finding data to provide a definitive answer, there are several possibilities, including the inter-ethnic hostility sparked by the history of state-sponsored Sinhalese settlements in the area, these districts' proximity to rebel-held territory and increased vulnerability to rebel attacks, and the ethnic heterogeneity of the districts, which has meant fierce inter-ethnic electoral violence, in addition to the type of intra-ethnic violence seen elsewhere in the country.

In this section, I focus on the consequences of state-sponsored Sinhalese settlements and the effects of spill-over violence from the civil war. In fact, James Fearon and David Laitin address these factors in their "sons of the soil" theory, which states that groups that have a regional base and that face demographic pressure through internal migration are more likely candidates for rebellion than immigrant groups. Fearon and Laitin defined groups to have a regional base if their ancestors lived in the region where they now live and if they constitute the predominant population of that region. These groups are referred to as "sons of the soil" (Fearon and Laitin 2001, 1). "Long-term connection with the land, high levels of geographic

concentration, and competition with other groups for vacant land within the concentrated areas are all linked to a propensity to rebel” (Fearon and Laitin 2001, 2). The authors explain that when governments begin settlement schemes, the autochthonous population fears “demographic suicide (with the concomitant loss of representational power).” At this point, they organize their co-ethnics into self-help militias, and violent incidents soon become the stuff of daily life (Fearon and Laitin 2001, 16; 18). Fearon and Laitin found Sri Lankan Tamils living in the north and east to be sons of the soil, and they argued that part of the reason for their rebellion was the demographic challenge posed by waves of Sinhalese settlers in their “regional base” (Fearon and Laitin 2001, 10). Indeed, they asserted:

In the Eastern Province, from the early periods of Sinhalese settlement, violence occurred in those divisions where Tamil-speaking people are in the majority and where Sinhalese settlements were established by the government or proposed by the government to be established. Areas that had formerly been Sinhala majority were largely free of violence. “Had the government targeted these Sinhalese-majority divisions...rather than Tamil-majority divisions, for the establishment of Sinhalese settlements, the violence of the last two decades may have been avoided” (Manoragan 1994, 116). (Fearon and Laitin 2001, 11)

As will be explained below, the political environments in many Dry Zone districts mirror this sons of the soil theory.

Sinhalese Settlements in the Dry Zone

The outlier districts of Anuradhapura, Ampara and parts of Batticaloa lie in what is known as the Dry Zone in Sri Lanka, so called because the area receives less than 75 inches of rainfall per year and the majority of it falls between October and January. During the rest of the year, the area receives very little precipitation. This means that land in Dry Zone districts tends to be less arable than elsewhere in the country, and farming villages in the area have historically huddled around artificial lakes in the area. In order to help increase agricultural productivity in

the area, successive Sri Lankan governments have targeted Dry Zone districts to be the sites of massive irrigation schemes. These schemes have included state-sponsored settlements, mainly benefitting the Sinhalese. The resulting change in the ethnographic make-up of the districts has angered Tamils and Muslims alike, causing inter-ethnic tension with the settlers. These districts also stand out, because they are located close to rebel territory, which means they experienced significant levels of war-related violence, including attacks from the LTTE.

By the time Sri Lanka gained independence, land use patterns and high rates of population growth were together causing problems. In fact, between 1946 and 1953, the population increased by the highest-ever annual average rate of 2.8 percent, and by 1962 a striking 53 percent of all agricultural families were landless. Part of the reason for this pattern was the concentration of people in the southwestern parts of the island. While agricultural land in this Wet Zone was almost fully exploited, only approximately 16 percent of the Dry Zone land was being used. This was especially problematic because the Dry Zone encompassed two-thirds of the island's land area but was home to only one-third of the total population (Bandarage 2009, 48). In order to encourage more agricultural activity and migration into the Dry Zone, Sri Lankan governments began various settlement schemes.

It is possible that settlements contributed to increased levels of electoral violence for several reasons. First, in many ways they created resentment and hostility within the Tamil and Muslim groups that were already living in the area. For one, government rhetoric regarding the schemes was steeped in the sentiments of Sinhala nationalism at a time when such policies were causing significant inter-ethnic rifts. Indeed, the first Sri Lankan prime minister, D.S. Senanayake, and successive governments were intent on using the settlements and accompanying irrigation schemes to reclaim the glories of what was perceived as the "seat" of ancient Sinhalese

civilization, located in the Dry Zone (Bandarage 2009, 48). In fact, the three pillars of traditional Sinhala Buddhist society – *wewa* (irrigation tank), *ketha* (paddy field) and *dagoba* (temple) – were consciously invoked to legitimize the settlements (ICG 2008, 4). “The widespread belief that Sri Lanka was *Sihadipa* and *Dhammadipa*, the island of the Sinhalese who were ennobled to preserve and protect Buddhism, also contributed to the zeal for resettlement” (DeVotta 2004, 130). By attempting to spread the same national characteristics of the dominant group to other groups and “rationalize” the state culturally, the state further threatened ethnic minorities. “Sending people of the majority culture into minority regions can be part of a strategy of assimilation, or nation building, that is making all permanent residents of the state into a shared nationality group through strategic assimilation” (Fearon and Laitin 2001, 23). The settlements also engendered negative communal relations, because they were clearly instruments of the state’s project to create a particular type of Sinhala-Buddhist state. Indeed, the settlers were part of a state-sponsored synthetic community, they themselves playing the roles of “frontiersmen.”

In many of these settlements, there were attempts by the state to create explicit identities as Buddhist. A Buddhist temple was built with state patronage and a priest was installed. Community development programs, electrification schemes, roads and schools were built while the Tamil and Muslim farmers on the other side of the fence were languishing without basic amenities. This form of discriminatory state intervention further alienated the new settlers from the rest of the farmers and indirectly integrated them even more into the realm of the state. (Thangarajah 2003, 26).

As previously barren land was cleared and made arable by new irrigation schemes, minority fears were deepened because it was Sinhalese settlers who were the primary beneficiaries (ICG 2008, 4). Riding on the popularity of these “poverty alleviation” schemes, the government chose to ignore the outcries from the indigenous minority groups. Unsurprisingly, such moves created a new dimension of resentment (Thangarajah 2003, 26). State authorities focused on projects like the creation of state-owned plantations developed for settler occupation,

mainly to cultivate new cash crops such as sugar cane. It was Sinhalese settlers who were the main beneficiaries of this sugar crop, which was then sold at state-guaranteed prices. A side-effect of such schemes was the reduction of water supplies for the less lucrative paddy production by Tamil and Muslim farmers nearby. In fact, the bulk of the settlers were given land to the west of existing Muslim and Tamil villages and were thus closer to water supplies. That Sinhalese settlers received more and more consistent water was a constant source of frustration for Tamil and Muslim farmers in these areas (ICG 2008, 5). In some cases, the government even took over Tamil and Muslim land in the eastern province to parcel out to the settlers, creating open hostility between the settlers and the native inhabitants (Thangarajah 2003, 25). Fearon and Laitin state,

...governments may be appeasing the vocal elements in their support base by giving poor members of the dominant ethnic group opportunities to get land. Thus, the migration policy of the state could well be popular within the heartland of the country, and help legitimate the government...State authorities may also be interested in inducing economic development, and that might entail the development of regions in the country that have vast economic potential that the autochthonous population did not exploit. The state may thus be reluctant to give in to autochthonous demands. (Fearon and Laitin 2001, 24).

A second reason for resentment on the part of those already living in these areas was that it was clear to them that the government was intent on changing the ethnographic balance of the east so as to be able to counter the claim of a Tamil homeland. In the 1970s, the Bandaranaike government introduced permanent settlements of migrant Sinhalese fishermen in the middle of Tamil villages. "Such action further ethnicised yet another community, the fishermen, who until now lived in a symbiotic relationship with the Tamils of the area and were not seen as a challenge in ethnic terms. Once they were seen as obtaining state assistance for permanent settlements, they were also integrated within the realm of the Sinhala-Buddhist state" (Thangarajah 2003, 27). As Tamil frustrations with government language policies were on the

rise and talks of separatism were on the horizon, Tamils, especially those in the Dry Zone, saw the settlement schemes as little more than attempts to dilute their numerical strength and to delegitimize their claims regarding a distinct Tamil geographical entity (DeVotta 2004, 129). Their fears were not entirely unfounded. Indeed, the influx of Sinhalese settlers allowed the government to create entirely new Sinhalese-majority electorates, which it did in Ampara and Trincomalee (ICG 2008, 5). As early as the 1950s, dramatic changes in the ethnic demography of the eastern province were already evident. Between 1946 and 1971, in Ampara and Batticaloa, the Sinhala population increased from 5.9 percent to 17.7 percent while the Tamil population decreased from 50.3 percent to 46.4 percent. In Trincomalee, the Sinhalese population went from 20.6 percent to 28.8 percent while Tamils went from constituting 44.5 percent of the population to 38.2 percent (Bandarage 2009, 47). “Independent land clearance by peripatetic swidden farmers had once been common in these regions, but the clearance and land development projects advocated by Sinhalese elites...were undoubtedly aimed at creating Lebensraum for the Sinhalese” (DeVotta 2004, 129). Indeed, the settlement schemes were so successful that by the 1960s, the government was able to carve out an entirely new district that was almost 80 percent Sinhalese. Thus, the district of Ampara was born, taken from the southern part of the district of Batticaloa, which had been a majority Tamil district even at independence (DeVotta 2004, 130). “...[T]he manner in which [Sinhalese] dominance in Ampara, once the only stronghold of Muslims, was diluted by a sudden increase of Sinhala settlements has compelled some Muslims to an open expression of their fears” (Sivathamby 1987, 209).

Overall, state settlement schemes instigated inter-ethnic hostility in a variety of ways. By giving Sinhalese settlers newly cleared and arable land – many times at the expense of indigenous Tamil/Muslim farmers – the Sri Lankan government laid the foundation for inter-

group animosity. Moreover, the government rhetoric of Sinhala nationalism that accompanied the new settlements reinforced ethnic minorities' fears of being subsumed by the Sinhalese and losing any chance of the advancement of their political goals.

The LTTE and War-Related Violence in the Dry Zone

Some Dry Zone districts were also volatile because of their proximity to the war zone and to rebel-held territory. As such, they were easily attacked by rebels, and the rebels saw them as legitimate targets. After all, as explained above, the settlement project was clearly a part of the Sinhala nationalist movement and the Tamils saw it as little more than a way to dilute their numbers and make their claims for "Tamil Eelam" harder to justify. Additionally, however, it is important to consider that many settlers were armed and/or were accompanied by state-supported military/police guards, making them appear to the rebels and even to their non-settler neighbors as extensions of the state's military offensive against Tamil political aspirations.

This transformation of the space as a threatened one ascribes to these people not only as a group to be defended but the peasants themselves are forced to have a duty to defend the territory and themselves against the disgruntled other who resent their presence. This duty further integrates them into the state's defense establishment in that they can even be armed for their duty...directly integrating them into a defensive scheme and protecting the territory. (Thangarajah 2003, 27)

Moreover, the government made moves to assert its presence in the area, setting up an Air Force farm in the Eastern province, with a commanding position over the sea. Also, all the Sri Lankan security forces built major camps and training academies in Trincomalee (Fearon and Laitin 2001, 11-12). Over time, these military posts as well as the eventual employment of settlers as home guards⁴ blurred the distinction between a peaceful and offensive community. Tamil militants began to attack eastern settlements, and government forces also attacked Tamil villages

⁴ Home guards were Sinhalese villagers, armed by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defense, for the purpose of defending state territory. They were not regular soldiers. Rather, they were civilians empowered to act on behalf of the state.

adjoining Sinhalese settlements as part of their large-scale military offenses in the east. Of course, this provoked even more attacks by Tamil rebels (Thangarajah 2003, 30). The arming of the settlers and the provision of special protective forces for them depicted the settlers, in the eyes of the previous inhabitants of the area, as tools of the state. Since the rebels were waging war against the state and its policies, this arm of the state was also a valid target. In fact, the rebels purposely targeted homeguards. In 2007, for instance, Tiger cadres opened fire on a police checkpoint and killed four homeguards (AP 2007). Some settlements were created less for agricultural and more for military purposes. One settlement of hundreds of Sinhalese prisoners at Kent and Dollar farms involved the forcible abandonment of several nearby Tamil villages and was established to act as a front line of defense for the Sri Lankan military. This particular settlement provoked the LTTE's first massacre of Sinhalese civilians. The rebels attacked the prisoners, which was then followed by the further eviction of 2,000 Tamil families (ICG 2008, 6). LTTE attacks on settlers became increasingly common as time went on. After the Sri Lankan army killed more than 40 civilians in an LTTE-held area in the late 1990s, the rebels attacked and killed 50 Sinhalese settlers in Ampara district (Chandrasekharan 1999). In 1999, the Tigers entered the Gonagala village of settlers in Ampara. They hacked to death 50 Sinhalese settlers, most of whom were asleep. The list of victims included 27 men, 17 women and 10 children. One man who tried to protect himself had his hand severed and skull pulverized. This was in retaliation for the Sri Lankan Air force bombing of a Tamil village, which killed 22 Tamils (Sambandan 1999).

THE ELECTORAL LOGIC OF THE DRY ZONE

While Sinhalese settlements brought on a certain amount of inter-ethnic tension, it is also important to consider the ways in which the electoral system provoked or mitigated inter-group

hostility. This was especially relevant in the more mixed-ethnicity districts, because it was only here, where sizeable numbers of ethnic minorities lived, that political parties representing those groups had a chance of winning. Before exploring the details of the electoral system and the ways in which it fostered inter-group competition, however, it is worth reviewing the history of the Muslims in Sri Lanka. This is because much electoral competition in this part of the country involves Muslim parties, and an overview of the group's relationship with others on the island is critical to understanding the inter- and intra-ethnic community relations here.

The Muslims of Sri Lanka

As of the 2001 census, Sri Lanka's Muslim population numbered roughly 1.5 million, which is about 8.3 percent of the total population. The community is thinly scattered across the country, save for large concentrations in the eastern province. The population is traditionally divided into five subgroups, consisting of the Memons, the Borahs, the Indian Moors, the Sri Lankan Muslims and the Malays. Recently, however, the Malays have begun to be classified and counted as a separate group. Both the Borahs and Memons are traditionally business communities, having arrived from northern India during British rule. Generally speaking, today many Borahs run textile shops and other small businesses, while members of the Memon community are mainly involved in trade (Nuhman 2007, 19-20). Borahs and Memons speak dialects of the Indian language Gujarati as their mother tongue, although they are also conversant in Tamil, Sinhala and English.

Indian Moors, as they were called by the British, came from the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu during British rule. Unlike other immigrant communities in Sri Lanka, many Indian Moors returned to India after working in Sri Lanka for a certain time. Indeed, between 1911 and 1971, their numbers in Sri Lanka decreased from 33,000 to 27,400 (Nuhman 2007, 25). Mainly

because so many Indian Moors were traders, a rivalry soon developed between Sri Lankan Muslims and Indian Moors, with prominent leaders of the former group claiming ethnic superiority to the latter (Nuhman 2007, 27). In the post-independence period, various new laws required most Indian Moors to leave Sri Lanka permanently (Nuhman 2007, 31).

The Sri Lankan Muslim community, previously known as the Ceylon Moors or Sri Lankan Moors, is the largest and most dominant Muslim community on the island. The elite of the community claim “pure” Arab origins, although this is unlikely (Nuhman 2007, 32). The community has deep historical roots on the island, beginning as early as the 7th century, when Arab traders arrived and began to create settlements in various coastal towns and even in some central parts of the country. Today, the Sri Lankan Muslim community is distributed throughout the island, although their highest concentrations are in Ampara and Trincomalee in the east and in Puttalam in the west. Although their mother tongue is Tamil, many Muslims who live outside of the east also speak Sinhala. Despite their high concentration in the east, the Sri Lankan Muslim community was not concerned about distinguishing itself as a separate ethnic and political group until just before independence. Before this point and even well into the post-independence era, the community enjoyed cordial relations with the Sinhalese and Tamil groups, especially since they lived interspersed amongst them. Gradually, however, as the civil war raged on the Muslim community began to see the need to assert its own political voice. At the same time, both Tamil and Sinhalese politicians tried their best to take advantage of rifts between the Muslims and other communities for their own political gains.

Since just before independence, the Sri Lankan Muslim community has been used by the Sinhalese and Tamil groups for their own purposes. As Tamils began to assert their desire to be considered as a separate group, eventually calling for secession, Muslims were – by and large –

happy to remain as they were, a minority among the Sinhalese. In this vein, they did little to assert a distinct ethnic identity, choosing instead to integrate themselves within the Sinhalese population. Part of the reason for this choice on the part of the Muslim community was its widely scattered distribution. It is only in the east that they have significant numbers, although even here they are not a majority. In the rest of the country, they are a very small minority, often less than their national proportion (de Silva 1986, 443). As a result, it would have been difficult for the community to come together to assert collective rights or demands. In this vein, they sought and obtained membership in all the Sinhalese national political parties, especially the UNP and the SLFP. Even more striking is that for many years, Muslim candidates were able to win seats in districts where they did not constitute a majority. In 1960, SLFP Muslim candidate Abdul Jabbar won a seat in a single-member constituency which was only 4 percent Muslim. M.H. Mohammed won several elections in the Borella constituency of Colombo, which at the time was only 5 percent Muslim, despite the fact that he faced Sinhalese opponents. “In brief, the Muslims [were] regarded as being so clearly integrated into the Sri Lankan political community that Sinhalese vote[d] for them on party grounds against Sinhalese opponents” (de Silva 1986, 445-446). In response, Sinhalese politicians were happy to accommodate certain Muslim requests. In the early post-independence years, the Sinhalese government agreed to establish training colleges for Muslims, to implement the option of Arabic in government schools and to pay for special Muslim religious teachers to teach the language. Certain aspects of Muslim law were also recognized by the state, including special provisions for marriage and divorce. Additionally, the constitutions of the first and second republics preserved Muslim personal law (de Silva 1986, 448).

Of course, it is not as if there was never any communal tension. Sporadic problems with the dominant Sinhalese community often led to talk of a separate Muslim political party. Beginning well before independence, there were particularly severe anti-Muslim riots, stemming from Sinhalese resentment of the Muslim community's domination of retail trade (de Silva 1986, 455). In the 1970s, there was more anti-Muslim agitation, apparently sparked by Sinhalese charges of favored treatment of Muslims in the sphere of education (de Silva 1986, 450). Overall, however, Sinhalese politicians were grateful for the Muslim position.

[Tamil] politics were perceived as a threat both to the legitimacy of majority rule and the integrity of the nation. Muslim politics offered a complete contrast to this. They deferred to the will of the majority on most occasions (such as the ready acceptance of Sinhalese as the single national language) and were deferred to in turn (on education, for instance). (de Silva 1986, 445)

The Muslims were a "good minority," asserting little in the way of group demands. Sinhalese politicians only had to make small sacrifices for Muslim acquiescence to majoritarian politics and policies.

In the early post-independence years, Tamils also saw advantages in maintaining good relations with the Muslims, especially in the eastern province, where they had lived together peacefully for generations. Indeed, the Sri Lankan Tamils and Muslims share many cultural similarities, including matrilineal and matrilocal family patterns. For many generations, relations were so interwoven that they even participated in each other's religious rituals (McGilvray 2001). This is not to say that there were no inter-ethnic tensions. As independence dawned, the island's various ethnic groups began to mobilize, each seeking a certain amount of political security in the new system of representative democracy. Tamil politician and nationalist leader Sir Ponnabalam Ramanathan argued, in a speech and academic article, that Muslims could be considered "Islamic Tamils." Apart from religion, he said, the Tamils and Muslims shared many

cultural and linguistic traits. While this was true, Muslims felt that Ramanathan was purposely downplaying group differences in order to sabotage the Muslim hopes for a separate seat on the Legislative Council. “Even though Ramanathan’s strategy failed, and a Moorish seat was created, his essay seemed to embody the patronizing Tamil outlook found in many areas of the island...where even today some high caste Tamils look down upon the Muslims as their inferior and uneducated neighbors” (McGilvray 2001, 8). Also, in the 1950s, scarcity of land and economic competition in the east resulted in local Tamil-Muslim clashes (Nuhman 2007, 151). Overall, however, relations in the east were relatively harmonious. As early as 1948 the Federal Party, which was formulated to promote Tamil ideas regarding a federal state, developed the idea of “Tamil Speaking People” to include the Muslims (Nuhman 2007, 151). Several Muslim politicians even contested and won elections on the Federal Party ticket. As late as 1977, Muslim candidates in the east were contesting elections on the TULF ticket, a party committed to the separate state of Tamil Eelam (Nuhman 2007, 152). Moreover, when Tamil rebel groups first began sprouting in the early 1980s, several Muslims from the northeast joined the movements (Nuhman 2007, 152). The rebels found this extremely useful, for there was strength in numbers. Their position was only stronger with the support of the Muslims.

Over time, however, the civil war and especially the LTTE’s position regarding the role of the Muslims in the political arena led to the deterioration of the Tamil-Muslim relationship. After certain Muslim cadres deserted the Tigers, the rebel leaders’ suspicions grew and several remaining Muslim cadres were executed (Farook 2009, 134). During this period, Tamil militants began to kidnap Muslims for ransom and impose taxes on them. Over time, they forcibly took over Muslim agricultural property, eventually occupying more than 100,000 acres of Muslim land (Farook 2009, 78). At the same time, Muslims grew tired of the rebels’ ambivalent stance

regarding their position in the proposed Tamil homeland. With the help of the Special Task Force, an elite counter-insurgency unit of the Sri Lankan Army, Muslims destroyed a large number of Tamil villages in Batticaloa and Ampara. Some also informed on alleged Tamil militants. In the 1990s, during the army's operation to recapture the north and east, Muslims were enlisted to identify and eliminate Tamils linked with the LTTE. In some cases, Muslims were seen in military vehicles identifying and interrogating "suspects."

With every pile of burnt bodies...the anger towards the Muslims who were seen as collaborating in the elimination of Tamils mounted...The Muslim home guards, a paramilitary group armed and supported by the state were also allegedly enlisted in this killing spree. Entire Tamil villages, particularly in the Ampara district were destroyed. (Thangarajah 2003, 32)

In response, there were massacres of Muslim civilians. In July 1990, Tamil militants killed 60 pilgrims returning from Saudi Arabia, and in August of the same year they killed 66 Muslims who were in prayer. Within the next month, hundreds more were killed (Farook 2009, 78). After the LTTE found a cache of weapons in a Muslim-owned shop, the rebels expelled the entire Muslim population of the area at gunpoint. This type of ethnic cleansing of areas that were home to mixed populations of Muslims and Tamils became routine in the eastern province.

Perhaps the most dramatic act, however, was the LTTE's decision to expel Muslims from the northern district of Jaffna. On October 30, 1990 at 11:30am, armed LTTE cadres used loudspeakers to announce that all Muslims were to assemble at Osmania College by noon. Addressing the assembled crowd, a senior LTTE leader declared that the rebels were ordering all Muslims to leave Jaffna within two hours. Any failure to obey would result in severe punishment. Questions from the crowd were met with gunshots fired into the air. After Muslims rushed to their homes to collect their valuables and belongings, a fresh order was issued. They were to queue up at a certain road intersection, which was manned by LTTE soldiers. Here, all

departing Muslims were made to hand over all belonging, including money and jewellery. Each person was permitted to keep 150 Rupees and one set of clothes. Cadres used beatings and torture to extract information regarding the whereabouts of businessmen's and jewelers' stock and cash (Farook 2009, 140). Once the Muslims had left, the rebels looted Muslim homes, stealing everything from cash and vehicles to doors, windows and wooden frames. Even roof tiles were pilfered. These goods were then sold to Tamils in LTTE shops known as "Makkal Kadai," or "People's Shops." Jaffna Muslims were made to exit through a pre-planned, LTTE-manned route such that by the time they had cleared all the rebel checkpoints, they had nothing but the clothes on their backs.

This ethnic cleansing has since come to be known as the Eviction, and the community of Muslims created by this act, formally known as Internally Displaced Persons, refer to themselves as 'northern Muslims' and...refugees. The Eviction created a whole new demographic pattern, in the aftermath of an unthinkably traumatic event that broke one set of communities in the north and created another – that of the refugees. (Thiranagama 2008)

As relations soured, every day violence became more common. When a Muslim man allegedly snipped off the braided hair of a Tamil woman who had rejected him in the market, an innocent Muslim bystander lost his ear and there were communal ambushes and roadblocks for a week (McGilvray 2001, 19). Violence also flared during elections. There were post-election reprisal attacks, which were typically directed against members of the opposite community for failure to deliver blocs of votes to candidates representing the opposing ethnic group, which had been purchased in advance with money or alcohol.

Sinhalese politicians took advantage of the opportunity to build the Muslims up as a counter to the Tamils. The government distributed leaflets to mobilize Muslims against Tamils, and Muslims became increasingly dependent on the government and security forces for their safety and security (Nuhman 2007, 153-154). It was during this time, in response to this

changing relationship with the Tamils, certain Muslim elites thought it in the best interests of the community to form a separate political party.

In 1988, M.H.M. Ashraff, a lawyer with significant political experience, succeeded in establishing the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), a political party dedicated to promoting Muslim demands and addressing Muslim needs (Farook 2009, 81). Unfortunately, the SLMC was wracked with problems from its inception, mostly stemming from Ashraff's desire for power. After Ashraff died in a helicopter crash in 2002, the intra-party rifts appeared almost immediately and a power struggle ensued. After failed attempts by the SLMC Treasurer and the SLMC National Organizer to take over party leadership, a meeting of the party's senior leaders and SLMC parliamentarians took place. At that meeting, it was decided that Ashraff's widow, Ferial Ashraff, and senior SLMC politician Rauf Hakeem would jointly take over as head of the party. Wanting to take advantage of the internal party problems for her own purposes, however, President Kumaratunga offered Mrs. Ashraff a ministerial portfolio under the banner of the National Unity Alliance (NUA), a party that Ashraff had himself started with the hopes of it becoming a secular platform from which he might aspire to the position of prime minister (Farook 2009, 92, 94). With Rauf Hakeem heading the SLMC and also holding a ministerial portfolio, a power struggle between the two began. After Hakeem was made Minister of Ports and Shipping, Muslim Religious Affairs, and Eastern Development and Rehabilitation, senior SLMC members led by SLMC Treasurer A.L.M Athaullah accused him of grabbing all the ministries for himself. Athaullah broke off, forming the All Ceylon Muslim Congress Ashraff Group. Roughly two years later, Hafiz Nazeer Ahmed, the Director of the SLMC International Affairs division broke away to form the Democratic Unity Alliance (DUA). "All splinter groups claimed to serve the community, but...they served themselves and left the community high and

dry. What was common to all these groups was that they all made use of the SLMC to come to power, accepted positions and enjoyed perks and forgot the community” (Farook 2009, 97). Unfortunately, as party elites struggled for leadership, the actual needs and priorities of the Muslim community were sidelined. Over time, these factions gained strength in various Muslim strongholds around the country, and intra-Muslim electoral violence began to increase (Kariapper 2010). In 2004, the CMEV reported that police in Ampara had to fire into the air to break up clashes between the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress and break-away faction National Unity Alliance outside of a polling station (CMEV 2004, 42). In the same year, SLMC Ampara district candidate Uthuma Lebbe Uvais and his supporters were seen attacking Muslim candidates contesting as independents (CMEV 2004, 74). The competition between these intra-Muslim factions contributed to intra-ethnic electoral violence in areas where Muslims made up significant proportions of the district population. One such district was Puttalam, and this phenomenon is taken up below.

Muslims and Sinhalese Relations in Puttalam

The district of Puttalam, situated in the northwest of Sri Lanka, also appears as a statistical outlier, consistently having experienced high levels of violence. While it has, over the years, seen various settlement schemes within its borders, its defining characteristic during the war years was its large proportion of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Indeed, Puttalam’s largest influx of people occurred in October 1990 as a direct result of the LTTE’s expulsion of Jaffna Muslims (Thalayasingam et al. 2009, 9). Now, out of a total district population of 709,677, approximately 62,000 residents (about 9 percent) of Puttalam are IDPs. A striking 99 percent of the IDPs are Muslim (Thalayasingam et al. 2009, 2).

This most recent influx of IDPs caused various problems with the host Sinhalese community. Specifically, the increased competition for land and resources strained relations between the communities. For instance, there is a Special Commission for the North and East responsible for providing dry rations, electricity, water, transport, schools and hospitals to IDPs in Puttalam (Thalayasingam et al. 2009, 47). Given the pre-existing poverty in the area, the presence of these institutions created a certain barrier between the IDPs and the host community. It is not surprising that with a poverty rate of 31 percent in 1995 before the influx of IDPs, the district resources were insufficient to support the suddenly bloated population (Thalayasingam et al. 2009, 5). Because the IDPs were provided with various relief benefits, the host communities were forced into a state of competing for resources and benefits with the IDPs. This has pushed the proportion of the host community population that was on the edge of poverty to fall into poverty and made the poor poorer (Thalayasingam et al. 2009, 7). In the Vanathavillu division of Puttalam district, where there were 585 IDP families, the host community viewed the continuous supply of dry rations to the IDPs as unfair, special treatment, especially because the IDP community had been resident there for nineteen years. Resource-based conflicts were common. When a group of Muslim fishermen had to move away because of an attack on a navy camp nearby, another community with a better relationship with the navy took over their fishing grounds, leading to a resource-based conflict (Thalayasingam 2009, 23). NGO work was also a source of resentment within the host population, as those organizations targeted only the IDPs, even though poverty and development was a problem for the entire population of the area (Thalayasingam et al. 2009, 9).

Land was another source of contention, especially because much of what was available in Puttalam was not suitable for agriculture. As mentioned above, a certain amount of arable land

was set aside for settlement and village expansion schemes. Apart from that, however, it was difficult to find land that will sustain crops. As a result, land prices were relatively low before the arrival of IDPs. As it became clear that the IDPs would not be able to return to their home districts in the near future, they began selling whatever assets they might have had left in their home areas in order to buy land in Puttalam (Thalayasingam et al 2009, 32). As a result, land prices soared. Moreover, IDPs' elected representatives bought land and developed it specifically for IDP housing. Some IDPs were also given land belonging to the Land Reform Commission, which was supposed to be used to address the problems the host community was having well before the arrival of the IDPs. Overall, members of the Sinhala host community felt that Muslim IDPs were taking over their land.

There are Muslim villages right around our village. It's their empire in these areas. First they came to IDP camps as refugees and then they bought land from this area. People in these areas partition the land and sell it, to be paid in installments. We are the ones who are facing problems and suffering because of this. They are using our resources. We can't tell anybody about this problem, even if we did the ones at fault will eventually be us. (Thalayasingam et al. 2009, 33)

Indeed, disagreements over land have resulted in violence. When a group of Muslim businessmen and representatives from a Buddhist temple disagreed over who had the rights to a certain plot of land, the shops and merchandise of one of the men involved were attacked, resulting in approximately Rs. 200,000 worth of damages (Thalayasingam et al. 2009, 20-21). There were also other types of violent incidents. One incident involved a dispute between Sinhalese and Muslim three-wheeler drivers. When they could not agree on how to share a parking area, violence erupted. Another incident involved a piece of land where a Hindu temple was built. Disagreements resulted in clashes between Hindu and Catholic youth (Thalayasingam et al. 2009, 16).

Yet another problem was the fact that many IDPs made little effort to integrate themselves into the community. Instead, they preferred to live in enclaves that were separate from the Sinhalese neighborhoods. Within these enclaves and perhaps at least partially because of the tension-ridden relationship with the host Sinhalese community, the Muslim IDPs preferred to remain within the confines of the group of co-IDPs with which they had lived in their home areas. Such decisions furthered inter-ethnic tensions. Indeed, a study conducted by a Sri Lankan NGO found that there was more conflict in areas where IDPs lived separately (Thalayasingam et al. 2009, 4).

While it is clear that these Sinhalese-Muslim tensions did result in violence during non-election times, it is less clear that inter-ethnic violence was an *electoral* issue. After all, IDPs elect their own parliamentary representatives, separately from the host community. As a result, the host community did not have to fear that it would not be able to elect representatives to look out for its own needs. Moreover, there is little CMEV evidence of inter-ethnic electoral violence. In all three parliamentary elections covered here, it was the SLFP and the UNP (or the coalitions they led) that were accused of approximately 98 percent of all pre-election violence in the district. Of course, Muslim parties did contest in Puttalam, because there were a certain amount of Muslims that were living there before the arrival of the IDPs. Out of these, however, only one Muslim party (the SLMC) was accused of just one incident across all three elections. This pattern suggests that there was little inter-ethnic electoral violence occurring, because Muslim parties would have accused or themselves been accused of more violence if they were involved. Moreover, there were hardly any Muslim candidates on the tickets of the two main Sinhalese parties so it was unlikely that Muslims representing those parties were involved in violence, either. It was only in 2004 that the UPFA ticket included two Muslim candidates and

the UNP ticket included one Muslim candidate. In 2004, then, it is possible that there was some Sinhalese-Muslim violence in the district.

Similarly, there is scant statistical evidence of intra-Muslim electoral violence in Puttalam. CMEV reports did not show intra-Muslim accusations of violence in Puttalam specifically. On the other hand, however, there is evidence of intra-Muslim tension. The IDPs' elected representatives treat their constituents differently, depending on where their home areas were. One IDP stated, "Jaffna IDPs don't have an MP for them but Mannar IDPs do. An MP should be responsible for all. This is unfair as the priority of the Mannar MP goes to the Mannar people" (Thalayasingam et al. 2009, 48). Such preferential treatment for some constituents caused hostility within the IDP community, which may have escalated during poll time when voters were hoping for the victory of a representative who would respond to their needs. Second, there were various Muslim factions that competed for power. In 2004, there were three separate Muslim parties vying for seats in Puttalam, as well as several independent groups with Muslim candidates. Just as in Ampara, supporters of these factions used violence against each other (Kariapper 2010). Further field research is necessary to confirm amounts of inter-/intra-ethnic electoral violence. Given the inter- and intra-group hostilities described above, however, it is likely that both contribute to rates of violence in Puttalam.

Ethnographic Distributions and Elections in the East

The steadily growing inter-group tension during the war years made the eastern province a volatile area. Indeed, some Sinhalese settlements were located in "border areas" between government-controlled territory and what became rebel land by the early 1990s. As such, it was relatively easy for the rebels to stage attacks against the settlements and against other communities as well. Indeed, Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) Deputy Secretary-General

Nizam Kariapper described the constantly shifting borders of the “safe areas” in Ampara, explaining how local Muslim leaders would try and warn the community when LTTE attacks started, announcing the violence on local mosques’ loudspeakers. Muslims would then “throw all their belongings into a shopping bag and run into the interior, to the homes of friends of relatives” (Kariapper 2010).

This inter-ethnic hostility sometimes spilled into elections. Indeed, the combination of ethnic demography and parliamentary seat allocation spurred both inter- and intra-ethnic violence. Inter-ethnic violence was likely primarily because of the proportions of the various ethnic groups. In Ampara, for instance, there were almost exactly equal percentages of Sinhalese and Muslims (See Table 5.1). In Trincomalee, it was the Sinhalese and Tamils that were almost equal in proportion. This distribution meant that each group’s chances of electing a co-ethnic to parliament were virtually equal. In addition, the Muslim community was wary of too many Tamil electoral victories, because they feared that such a situation would result in Tamil leaders attempting to deny the Muslims’ their separate ethnic/political identity. Given that in most of the rest of the country, it was really only the Sinhalese parties that had a realistic chance of winning, the stakes for minority groups in these more heterogeneous districts were quite high. As a result, competition between the groups in these areas was fierce, and parties and their supporters may have been willing to use violent means to ensure their victory. CMEV reports provide some evidence of this inter-ethnic violence. For instance, in 2001, the Tamil party Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front accused the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress of being responsible for 50 percent of the violence directed against it (CMEV 2001, 13).

Of course, the ethnic distribution combined with parliamentary seat allocation also increased the chances of intra-ethnic violence. Table 5.1 shows the ethnic distribution and

number of available parliamentary seats for each of the three eastern districts, all of which are more heterogeneous than the rest of the country and all of which appeared as outliers in some of the statistical regressions in Chapter 4.

TABLE 5.1: EASTERN ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION AND PARLIAMENTARY SEAT ALLOCATION

District	%Sinhalese	%Tamil	%Muslim	Number of Available Parliamentary Seats	Minimum Percentage of Votes Required for 1 Parliamentary Seat
Ampara	39.9	18.4	41.3	7	14.3
Trincomalee	25.4	28.6	45.4	4	25.0
Batticaloa	0.5	74.0	25.0	5	20.0

Source: Sri Lanka Department of Elections; Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics

In Ampara, each of the three main ethnic groups stood to win at least one seat, because each group constituted more than the minimum percentage of votes required for one parliamentary seat. In fact, there were enough Sinhalese and Muslims in the district to elect more than one co-ethnic to parliament, which opened the door for the emergence of multiple competing Muslim and Sinhalese parties in Ampara. Indeed, in all three parliamentary elections reviewed here there were at least nine Sinhalese parties in the Ampara race. Table 5.2 shows that there were also usually multiple Tamil and Muslim parties contesting parliamentary polls.

TABLE 5.2: NUMBER OF ETHNIC PARTIES PER EASTERN DISTRICT

District	# Sin Parties 2000	# Tam Parties 2000	# Mus Parties 2000	# Sin Parties 2001	# Tam Parties 2001	# Mus Parties	# Sin Parties 2004	# Tam Parties 2004	# Mus Parties 2004
Ampara	9+	0	1	9	2	2	9	2	2
Trincomalee	9+	4	2	8	2	2	6	2	2
Batticaloa	9+	4	1	7	2	2	6	2	2

Source: Sri Lanka Department of Elections

In Trincomlaee, each ethnic group could also elect at least one co-ethnic to the national legislature, although Muslims stood a much better chance of doing so than Tamils or Sinhalese. In all three elections, there were multiple Muslim parties in the electoral race, but surprisingly there were also multiple Sinhalese and Tamil parties.

In Batticaloa, it was only Tamil and Muslim candidates who stood a chance of electoral victory. In fact, in this district Tamils were so dominant that it is not surprising to note the multiple Tamil parties competing for seats. Surprisingly, however, there were several Sinhalese parties in all three elections as well. While it does not seem to make sense that groups with little chance of even one victorious co-ethnic would have had multiple parties in the race, it is important to note that there was no guarantee that any one party would secure the minimum number of votes required for a seat. For instance, in 2001, in Batticaloa, the highest percentage of votes won was 12.32 percent, secured by the Muslim candidate on the National Unity Alliance ticket. This was well below 20 percent, the amount of the vote technically needed to secure one seat in a five-seat district. As a result, all the elected members of parliament from Batticaloa won their seats with less than 20 percent of the vote. In fact, the winner from the PA only received 4.90 percent of the vote.

The presence of multiple parties representing each of the three main ethnic groups in these districts provides support for my claim that these districts did witness significant levels of intra-ethnic violence. In fact, it is important to point out that the two main Sinhalese parties, the SLFP/PA and the UNP, strategically included ethnic minority candidates on their party tickets in these areas, which further increased chances of intra-ethnic violence. In fact, in the 2001 contest in Ampara, there were three Muslims elected from the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress and one

Muslim elected from the PA. In the 2000 Batticaloa election, there were two Tamils who were elected from the Tamil United Liberation Front and one Tamil elected from the PA.

Indeed, CMEV reports provide ample evidence of intra-ethnic violence. In all three parliamentary elections reviewed here, approximately 24 percent of all Muslim parties' accusations of violence were directed against other Muslim parties while approximately 54 percent of all Tamil parties' accusations of violence were directed against other Tamil parties. Since the SLFP/PA and the UNP sometimes included ethnic minority candidates on their tickets, it is possible that the actual intra-ethnic violence rates were higher than what I have noted above. It is impossible to know for sure, however, because the data are not coded to indicate which particular candidates were perpetrators and victims. Instead, it is coded simply by party affiliation. Thus, for instance, violence between the SLMC and the PA could have been inter- or intra-ethnic in nature. The percentages given above are accusations made between Muslim and Tamil parties that only include co-ethnics of their tickets.

Taken together, these conditions made the Dry Zone districts particularly vulnerable to conflict. Although some of the violence described above was occurring largely between and not within communities and it was unrelated to elections, I suggest that it did impact intra-ethnic electoral violence. Since the baseline level of violence was already relatively high, it was likely easier for politicians to mobilize more violence when necessary. After all, settlers were armed, as were their police/military guards.

While more research is necessary to confirm, it is possible that the extant communal tensions also gave campaigning politicians an issue for their platforms. Perhaps campaigning politicians from within the same ethnic group tried to outdo each other with regard to promises

for better protection for the people. LTTE attacks in these districts also might have spurred competition within the Tamil community, many members of which opposed the Tigers' tactics.

CONCLUSION

Finally, it is difficult to conclusively explain the reasons behind the extreme levels of violence in the districts of Anuradhapura, Ampara, Batticaloa and Puttalam. Their location in the Dry Zone, however, links them together in notable ways. Over the years, Sinhalese settlements in Dry Zone districts caused a significant amount of inter-ethnic strife. As successive governments lavished preferential treatment on settlers, native inhabitants of the area grew increasingly frustrated. Moreover, the settlers changed the ethnographic distribution of the Dry Zone in sometimes drastic ways. This angered historically established Muslim and Tamil communities, who were already struggling to make their voices heard at the national level. The fact that the settlers were often armed or given armed protection exacerbated tensions even more and made them prime targets for rebel attacks. Moreover, the ethnic distribution of many of these districts differed from most areas in the rest of the country, because it was only here that the Sinhalese did not always constitute a majority of the population. The ethnic heterogeneity of these areas, especially in the eastern province, meant that there were opportunities for parties representing ethnic minorities to win seats. This possibility gave rise to inter- and intra-ethnic competition, because in some cases ethnic minorities were numerous enough to split their support between more than one party.

The sporadic bouts of violence that occurred in the Dry Zone over the years seems to have impacted patterns of electoral violence. Since the ground level conditions were already laden with hostility between communities, it was probably easier for politicians to mobilize violence. After all, arms were readily available and many citizens were resentful of each other.

As politicians from different groups competed for votes by making various promises to their constituents, it is possible that inter-ethnic violence between supporters of different groups flared. This was in addition to the regular intra-ethnic violence that was already occurring within the various communities in these areas.

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Chapter 6: Conclusion and Implications for Further Research

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I have used the Sri Lankan case to illustrate that intra-ethnic divisions and violence can be important but often neglected phenomena in deeply divided societies. In fact, intra-ethnic fighting can be a significant factor, impacting and impacted by a larger, inter-ethnic civil war. My analyses have shown that electoral violence in Sri Lanka is more often the result of inter-party and intra-ethnic competition than it is the result of inter-ethnic rivalries. Since most Sri Lankan districts are ethnically homogeneous and because the Sinhalese constitute the vast majority of the population, most electoral competition occurs between rival Sinhalese parties. Specifically, I have demonstrated the significance of inter-party competition within one ethnic group by showing that there was generally more violence in areas where the vote differences between the top two contenders were smallest, even when both were from the same ethnic group. This held when comparing violence with the vote difference from the previous election cycle as well. When vote differences were small in the previous election, there was more violence in the following election in that district.

In order to illustrate the intra-ethnic nature of much of the violence, I have described the planned, systematic and organized nature of the violence, which indicates that violence was not a spontaneous outburst of inter-ethnic animosity. Instead, it was planned – sometimes by politicians themselves – in order to harm rivals' chances of victory. In addition, my analysis has shown that there was more violence in heavily Sinhalese and heavily Tamil districts than in more mixed ones. This pattern indicates that most electoral competition at the district level was likely occurring within ethnic communities, between parties representing the same ethnic groups. In addition, most violence took place between supporters of the two main Sinhalese parties, the Sri

Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the United National Party (UNP). In terms of accusations, both Sinhalese and Tamil parties accused their co-ethnic parties of much more violence than they did parties of the other ethnicities, suggesting that much more violence took place within rather than between these groups.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to know how generalizable the Sri Lanka case is, because research on intra-ethnic and intra-group violence is sparse. One reason for this is that it is much easier to research inter-ethnic conflicts; they are abundant. Another problem is that it is difficult to find data that systematically identifies perpetrators and victims of violence by ethnicity. Analysts often assume that violence occurring in divided societies is interethnic when the data do not specify identities. As a result, it could well be that cases which are currently identified as inter-ethnic in nature also include significant intra-ethnic components. More research is necessary to uncover such cases.

In this chapter, I briefly examine two additional cases of deeply divided societies: Kenya and Iraq⁵. In both of these cases, the dominant conflicts have been *between* groups, as is true in Sri Lanka. At the same time, however, there is evidence – albeit limited – of *within*-group conflict as well. Not all of the conflicts in these cases are ethnic. In Iraq, for instance, there is ethnic conflict but there is also significant religious conflict. While this dissertation has focused solely on ethnic violence, I argue that conflicts that revolve around other forms of cultural pluralism – such as religion – work in much the same way. That is, party cleavages within religious groups can affect and be affected by the larger inter-religious conflict. In certain contexts, which include religiously homogeneous electoral districts or areas and an electoral

⁵ These cases are similar to that of Palestine, which was taken up in detail in Chapter 3. All three societies are divided at least partially along ethnic or religious lines, and they all have experienced significant electoral violence, including inter- and intra-group violence. Palestine and Iraq are also similar in that elections and accompanying violence there take place against the backdrop of a larger, ongoing armed conflict. That larger conflict sometimes feeds electoral violence, especially through the proliferation of arms.

system that provides incentives for more than one political party to compete for the loyalty of the same group, those intra-religious tensions could erupt into violence.

In the following sections, I will illustrate that intra-ethnic or intra-group violence is most likely in the midst of a broader inter-group conflict when a certain set of conditions exists. Once incumbent political elites create a culture of violence, other political groups tend to use the same technique to influence election outcomes. Within this context of normalized political violence, first, intra-group electoral violence is most probable when there are electoral institutions that encourage the proliferation of political parties. This is because in such an environment, there are increased chances of multiple parties attempting to represent the same ethnic group. Second, when there are electoral districts that are dominated by one ethnic group, intra-ethnic violence is more likely. In Kenya, where first-past-the-post is used in single member, mostly ethnically mixed districts, inter-ethnic conflict is much more common than intra-ethnic violence. In Iraq, on the other hand, proportional representation and a majority Shi'a population has facilitated the proliferation of several Shi'a-based parties, which have engaged in violent intra-group electoral conflict.

THE CASE OF KENYA

Kenya is a heterogeneous society, comprised of more than forty different ethnic groups. While no one group makes up a majority of the population, the Kikuyu form a plurality, at 21 percent of the population. The other two largest groups are the Luhya and the Luo, at 14 and 13 percent, respectively. In addition to these indigenous groups, Kenya is home to small populations of Indians, Arabs and Europeans (HRW 1993, 5). Largely as a result of patronage-based politics, which has allowed ruling elites' co-ethnics to grow disproportionately wealthy at the expense of all other groups, latent inter-ethnic tensions have sometimes erupted into violence

during election periods. In this section I will first provide some background on Kenya's ethnic politics and conflict. Then I will discuss violence within groups.

Kenya is divided into eight provinces, which are further divided into 210 single-member electoral districts. The national legislature and the president are elected through first-past-the-post, whereby the candidate with the most votes is the victor. While there are some areas that are relatively homogeneous, the country's heterogeneity means that most areas are quite ethnically mixed. Given this situation, inter-ethnic electoral violence is unsurprising. In the context of a patronage-based political system, ethnically-based political parties competing in single member districts has meant that ethnic groups have sometimes been driven to take up arms to try and ensure that their co-ethnic will win and therefore direct state patronage to their areas. The situation is similar for presidential elections. Since the polity is so heterogeneous, presidential candidates form multi-ethnic coalitions to contest elections. Thus, Kenyan election violence has also been between ethnic groups supporting different coalitions. Indeed, inter-ethnic electoral violence has been an issue since 1992, when multi-party elections were re-introduced for the first time in 26 years. In that year, as well as in 1997 and 2007, inter-ethnic violence marred the national polls.

The death and destruction left in the wake of the 1992, 1997 and 2007 violence prompted high-profile investigations, which found that senior politicians were behind much of the bloodshed, goading their co-ethnics into fearing and terrorizing other groups (Barkan 2008; Keller 12, 2012). In 1992 and 1997, politicians from the ruling KANU (Kenya African National Union) party took such actions in order to dissuade opposition supporters from casting their votes, while in 2007 the post-election violence was driven by opposition supporters' resentment of the incumbents, who were seen to have stolen the election (Barkan 2008). In Kenya, as in Sri

Lanka, this inter-ethnic aspect of the violence has received much attention. At the same time, evidence suggests that Kenyan election violence has also included some within-group bloodshed. In the following sections, I will illustrate how patterns of patronage distribution have sown the seeds of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic hostilities, and I will use anecdotal evidence to show the patterns of resulting election violence.

Inter-Ethnic Fragmentation in Kenyan Society

Patronage politics have been the norm in Kenya since independence, and elites' uneven distribution of the spoils of office is at least partially to blame for inter-community hostilities. For instance, by the time of the 1992 elections, Kenya's second president (of the KANU party), Daniel arap Moi had cemented the privileged position of members of his own Kalenjin community. Following in the footsteps of first President Jomo Kenyatta, who had blatantly favored his own Kikuyu group, Moi assumed office and replaced Kenyatta's Kikuyu cabal almost man to man. When Moi took power in 1978, 35 of 41 District Commissioners (DCs) were Kikuyu, 5 of 8 Provincial Commissioners (PCs) were Kikuyu and 8 of 13 Permanent Secretaries (PSs) were Kikuyu. In 1991, 45 out of 66 DCs were Kalenjin, 4 of 8 PCs were Kalenjin and 17 of 28 PSs were Kalenjin (Amutabi 2009, 61). Moi also actively targeted the Kikuyu, poaching the best teachers from Kikuyu-dominant districts and transferring them to Kalenjin areas (Amutabi 2009, 62). By 1990, most senior positions in government, the military, security agencies, and state-owned corporations were held by Kalenjins (HRW 1993, 8). In this way, the Kalenjin were able to grow wealthy and enjoy access to better jobs and other facilities.

Such was the pattern for most of Moi's rule. When international donors began pushing him to democratize and open the political system to more parties, he feared it would lead to his end. Thus, as preparations began for the 1992 poll, Moi and his fellow Kalenjin elites began

implementing a plan to weaken the opposition and their supporters. The centerpiece of this plan was a call for *majimboism*, or federalism. Kalenjin and Maasai elites, along with other pastoral groups from the Rift Valley province asserted that the Rift Valley, home to Kenya's most valuable and fertile farmland, was traditionally Kalenjin/Maasai territory and that other ethnic groups living there should not be able to express differing political views (HRW 1993, 16).

While *majimboism* originally referred to a federal system, whereby semi-autonomous states would share power with a central government, this new call for *majimboism* was little more than

...a means of undermining the...political liberalization and...a way of demanding the expulsion of all ethnic groups from the Rift Valley except for those pastoralist groups--Kalenjins, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu--that were on the land before colonialism. If implemented, *majimboism* would mean the expulsion of millions of members of other ethnic groups who have settled there since the 1920s and who have legally purchased land since the 1950s. (HRW 1993, 16)

Overall, the calls for *majimboism* were calls for the expulsion of the Kikuyu, Luhya and Luo who had settled in the Rift Valley and were supporters of the opposition and multi-party politics. In the lead-up to the election, Kalenjin and Maasai politicians held rallies, and in their speeches Kikuyus and others were referred to as "aliens" and "foreigners," as opposed to the "natives" (HRW 1993, 18). These politicians also issued threats to those who supported a multi-party system, warning them that KANU supporters would be ready to "fight to the last person" to protect the Moi government and that Kalenjins were not cowards and were ready to counter any attempt to remove them from power (HRW 1993, 20).

President Moi and his Kalenjin supporters have consistently portrayed the calls for political pluralism and a multi-party system as an anti-Kalenjin movement. Accordingly, President Moi and his inner circle have been able to mobilize the Kalenjin community on ethnic grounds as a means of consolidating their economic and political power base. The Maasai and the Turkana, traditionally pastoralist groups, have also been aligned with Kalenjin political aspirations. (HRW 1993, 21)

In the lead-up to the election, violence between Kalenjins and others became increasingly frequent. In 1992 and 1997, “Kalenjin warriors” attacked villages, primarily in the Rift Valley -- looting, killing and burning – ultimately driving members of other ethnic groups away from their homes and land. Members of the Kalenjin and Maasai groups were then allowed to occupy land that had been abandoned by groups displaced by the violence in order to ensure their loyalty to Moi and his KANU party (Kagwanja 2001). While the violence was initially confined to the Rift Valley province, it eventually spread to many other parts of Kenya. Members of other ethnic groups also eventually mobilized and staged retaliatory attacks against Kalenjins around the country.

This inter-ethnic violence was a way for Moi and his KANU party to try and weaken opposition support. At the time, the Rift Valley province was allocated the most parliamentary representation (44 out of 188). By ensuring that all, or at least most of these seats were held by KANU politicians, Moi would have been able to maintain his party’s power and start to sideline the opposition. Indeed, this is why the Kalenjin warriors were targeting members of ethnic groups seen to be supporting the opposition.

When Mwai Kibaki and his National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) finally defeated KANU in 2002, he returned to the pattern of Kikuyu privilege. In the run-up to the election, Kibaki’s non-Kikuyu coalition partners were promised “equal” cabinet posts, should they win. Raila Odinga, the prominent and popular Luo politician, was promised the position of prime minister. After winning the election, however, Kibaki reneged. The position of prime minister was not created at that time, and most of Kibaki’s non-Kikuyu coalition partners were forgotten. Instead, he relied heavily on a group known as the Mt. Kenya Mafia, so called because its members come from the Kikuyu-dominant area around the base of Mt. Kenya (Barkan 2008, 2). Kibaki relied

on and was heavily influenced by these co-ethnics, and it engendered a great deal of hostility among his former allies in NARC (Barkan 2008, 2).

As a result of Kibaki's failure to deliver on his promises, NARC began to disintegrate and various elites formed their own, ethnically-based parties. By the time Kibaki's first term was over, the two major contenders were Kibaki and his Party of National Unity (PNU) and Odinga and his Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). While the former was seen to be a largely Kikuyu party, the latter was much more multi-ethnic. In fact, by the time the 2007 election campaigns had begun, Odinga had successfully rallied a majority of Kenyans against Kibaki. Odinga campaigned on a platform of change, promising to distribute the fruits of the country's economic resurgence more equally across communities (Barkan 2008, 2). Odinga's appeal was great.

While over 90 percent of the Kikuyu and Meru residents around Mt. Kenya voted for Kibaki, a similar percentage of Luos in Nyanza voted for Odinga. Odinga also rolled up large majorities of between 55 and 70 percent of the vote in Western Province, the home of the Luhya people; in the Rift Valley Province, the homeland of the Kalinjin and a half dozen other small tribes; in Coast Province, which is also inhabited by smaller ethnic groups, as well as most of Kenya's Muslim population; and in North-Eastern Province. Odinga also obtained a narrow majority in Nairobi. (Barkan 2008, 2)

Indeed, ODM won 99 seats in the National Assembly, as compared to 43 for Kibaki's Party of National Unity. Eighteen ministers, more than half of Kibaki's cabinet, were defeated in the election. Early polls indicated that Odinga carried the lead by 370,000 votes with 90 percent of constituencies reporting (Barkan 2008, 1).

It was little surprise, then, that tensions soared when the Election Commission of Kenya suddenly declared Kibaki the winner. Kibaki was hurriedly sworn in for his second term amidst increasing allegations of fraud. Evidence included scores of suspicious tally sheets, mostly from Kibaki's stronghold of central Kenya. Within minutes of the announcement of Kibaki's victory,

rioting and targeted violence against Kikuyus broke out across the country, much of it driven by resentment of Kikuyus, who were seen to be unfairly trying to keep power to themselves (Barkan 2008, 1). This was followed by several protests, many of which were violently suppressed. Just as in 1992 and 1997, the Rift Valley was particularly affected, with Kikuyus there being attacked and driven away (Gettleman 2007). Eventually, however, Kikuyus organized retaliatory attacks. Violence was extreme. Survivors recounted incidents of gangs going house to house, dragging out people from certain ethnic groups and clubbing them to death. In Mathare slum in Nairobi, Luo gangs burned more than 100 Kikuyu homes (Gettleman 2007). In contrast to the pre-electoral violence in 1992 and 1997, most of the violence in 2007 occurred after the election. Similar to the other two elections, however, this violence was also organized by elites. In fact, evidence has shown that elites had organized and prepared armed gangs to carry out violence, depending on election results (Rice 2010). Politicians such as Uhuru Kenyatta, Francis Muthaura and William Ruto were all accused by the International Criminal Court of planning ethnic violence and/or authorizing security forces to use excessive force against supporters of their rival parties (Rice 2010).

Intra-Ethnic Electoral Violence

Patterns of patronage distribution did not only impact between-group relations. Within-group relations were also affected. Specifically, years of patronage directed to small segments of certain favored ethnic groups created rifts within these communities. There is no recent available data on the ethnic composition per district or province in Kenya, but the country's various ethnic groups are traditionally linked to certain areas. Kikuyus, for instance, tend to be dominant in Central Province, while the Luhya community is most populous in Western Province. Without census figures, it is difficult to conduct analyses of intra-ethnic violence.

Given Kenya's single-member districts and use of first-past-the-post, I would not expect much intra-ethnic violence. In this scenario, there is little incentive for multiple parties to attempt to win over the same ethnic group, because the dominant group would have to be at least twice as large as the next most numerically dominant group in order to support more than one such party. Yet given the intra-ethnic divisions created by Kenyan presidents, there still might be some intra-ethnic violence when the competition is between candidates who represent different factions within the same ethnic community. In this section, I first explain how political elites created the within-group divisions and then provide some anecdotal evidence of intra-group electoral violence.

First, the Kenyatta years sowed the seeds of discontent within the Kikuyu community. While it is true that Kenyatta ensured Kikuyu dominance by favoring them for prized civil service jobs, government posts and prime land allocation, these benefits only went to a certain segment of the Kikuyu community. Indeed, Kenyatta mostly favored Kikuyu from his home area of Kiambu. Kikuyus in other parts of the country did not reap the same benefits, and this situation caused a great deal of resentment among Kikuyu outside Kiambu.

Those from Nyeri, in particular, were always jealous of the privileged position enjoyed by their Kiambu brothers; they felt, with good reason, that they had borne the burden of the Mau Mau rising against imperial rule, but that Kiambu had reaped the benefits..." (Hodder-Williams 1980, 477)

The so-called "Kiambu clique" was accused of corruption and manipulating the president to benefit their district alone (Clough 1979, 6).

This favoritism became an issue during election periods, especially in Central Province. Central Province is the ancestral home of the Kikuyu community, and other than in areas close to Nairobi, it is overwhelmingly Kikuyu in composition. In November 2007, there were reports of violence between supporters of two Kikuyu candidates for parliament, some of which caused

several injuries (Mars Group 2008, 206). In December 2007, supporters of James Nderitu Gachagua attacked and injured supporters of rival Peter Ngibuini Kuguru (Mars Group 2008, 207). Both candidates were Kikuyu. This is not to say that there was no inter-ethnic violence. There were multiple reports of inter-ethnic clashes, including instances in which Kikuyus targeted non-Kikuyus who had fled to Central Province in order to escape from violence in their own districts (Mars Group 2008, 206-211).

Kikuyus were not the only group that experienced in-fighting. When he assumed office, President Moi continued Kenyatta's pattern of political cronyism. As a member of the Kalenjin community, Moi made sure that his co-ethnics received the same types of privileges that the Kikuyu had enjoyed under Kenyatta (See above section). Like Kenyatta had done with regard to the Kikuyu community, however, Moi's policies engendered intra-group hostility. Instead of distributing favors to the entire Kalenjin community, he favored his own Tugen sub-group and his own home area, which enjoyed disproportionate economic development and investment (Barkan and Chege 1989). In Eldoret, for instance, he built an international airport and a university (Bannon, Miguel and Posner 2004, 16).

Moi was not the only political elite who distributed disproportionate patronage to his own small subgroup. Nicholas Biwott, who was the Minister of Energy in the Moi regime, was also a Kalenjin. Like Moi, he chose to deliver favors to his Keiyo subgroup.

The President's Kalenjin power base was far from entirely solid. Certain Nandi and Kipsigis leaders, who had been politically active in the 1960s and 1970s, had never been fully reconciled to Moi's political rise and resented the leadership of the president's Tugen and Biwott's Keiyo coterie, drawn from two of the smallest and least-developed Kalenjin subgroups. (Throup and Hornsby 1998, 199).

The resentment these policies engendered within the Kalenjin community was an issue during election time. During the 1992 elections, for instance, Moi knew that he would have to win over

the neglected Nandi and Kipsigis groups in order to secure their votes. Thus, he worked hard to pacify them in the lead-up to the polls. Minister Biwott faced a similar situation, because his actions in the years before the 1992 election had created especially negative feelings. In 1988, Biwott had used his power to eliminate potential rivals in Kalenjin areas, going so far as to use paramilitary units to rig the 1988 polls. As a result of his actions, there was the danger that many Nandi and Kipsigis voters would defect to KANU's rival parties in 1992 (Throup and Hornsby 1998, 199).

Long after the end of the Moi era, intra-Kalenjin divisions were still apparent. In 2007, for instance, the American embassy in Nairobi reported intra-Kalenjin violence. This was the result of factionalization within the ODM party, with certain Kalenjin subgroups, namely the Tugen and Kipsigis clans supporting one faction and other Kalenjin sub-groups supporting other factions. Moreover, after Moi announced his support for Kibaki, there was a small group of Tugen who backed Kibaki. Other Kalenjin then targeted them for attacks (Wikileaks 2007). Kalenjin sub-groups were also divided over the repossession of European land. Internal conflicts among the Sabaot sub-group led to unprecedented violence in the lead-up to the 2007 election (Lafargue 2009, 369).

In Kenya, then, most electoral violence has been inter-ethnic. Since the country uses first-past-the-post in single member districts, this is not surprising. At the same, time, however, intra-ethnic divisions, created by presidents' selective distribution of patronage, have sometimes turned violent during election periods. This has occurred in ethnically homogeneous pockets of the country. While it is clear that patterns of patronage distribution are at least partly to blame for the inter- and intra-ethnic violence, further research is necessary to uncover the other possible dynamics at work.

THE CASE OF IRAQ

Iraqi society is divided between Shi'a Muslims, Sunni Muslims and Kurds. While the former two groups are religiously based, the latter is a distinct ethnic community. Communal tensions have been high in Iraq, largely as a result of former president Saddam Hussein's discriminatory policies, but reinforced recently by the current government. Hussein severely repressed the Shi'a majority and the Kurdish minority during his rule, instead favoring his own Sunni group. Thus, Sunnis were given top governmental posts and enjoyed a variety of other privileges. In the aftermath of the American invasion, death of Hussein and national elections, latent inter-group tensions rose to the surface. In particular, Sunnis were apprehensive about how newly empowered Shi'a groups would treat them after they had enjoyed decades of privilege and dominance under Hussein. Indeed, "disputes over the relative claim of each community on power and economic resources permeate almost every issue in Iraq, including security, elections, economic decision making, and foreign policy" (Katzman 2012, 1). The American occupation and aftermath of the departure of most foreign troops have been marked by bloody battles, pitting various communal militias against each other. Elections, also, have been bloodied by continued fighting.

The Iraqi societal divisions are based on religion and ethnicity. Thus, there are inter- and intra-religious tensions as well as inter- and intra-ethnic antagonisms. I argue that in the same way that inter-ethnic violence is given much more attention than intra-ethnic problems, inter-religious fighting is focused on more than is intra-religious battling. In Iraq, especially, given the history of Shi'a suppression and Sunni dominance, inter-religious hostilities and violence have been highlighted, much to the exclusion of the important intra-religious divisions.

Like Sri Lanka, Iraq uses proportional representation to elect its national legislature. The country is not divided into electoral districts. Instead, the entire country is treated as one district. Since parties are allocated seats depending on how much of the vote they won and how much of the population their group comprises, it is natural to expect that all but the smallest groups might have multiple parties attempting to represent them. In Iraq, Shi'as, Sunnis and Kurds make up roughly 60 percent, 30 percent and 15 percent of the total population (CIA World Factbook 2012). Thus, Iraq has been the site of inter- and intra- religious/ethnic electoral violence. In this section, I describe the inter-religious and inter-ethnic electoral violence that have marred Iraqi elections. I then explain the significant intra-Shi'a factionalization and violence as well as the intra-Kurd divisions and violence.

Pre- and post-election violence have marked the Iraqi polls. For instance, the first Iraqi parliamentary elections of 2005 were marred by at least 100 armed attacks on polling places, which killed at least 44 people across the country. These attacks were mostly perpetrated by Sunni former supporters of Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath party as well as by armed Sunni groups opposed to democratic elections. In 2010, Iraqis again headed to the polls to elect their parliament. Again, pre-election violence cast a pall over the country, and voter turnout was low. Bombs and mortar shells in Baghdad dissuaded many from attempting to cast their votes (Parker 2010). In Iraqi Kurdistan as well, heightened Arab-Kurdish tension along a disputed boundary threatened to erupt into violence (Arraf 2010). Post-election violence was also a significant problem, as suicide car bombs and gunmen wreaked death and destruction in Baghdad. The violence intensified as the newly elected parliamentary members struggled to form a government. Various militias used violence to express that their co-ethnics should ascend to leadership positions (Lyon 2010).

Elections also brought out within-group rivalries. In the lead-up to the 2010 national poll, for instance, there were significant incidents of intra-ethnic violence between rival Kurdish parties. In fact, shootings and stabbings between supporters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Goran (Change) political parties raised concerns within American embassy circles in Iraq (Ahmad 2011). A PUK elite reported that the Goran party was planning to arm and pay low-level members to “stir up trouble” and that they would be given clearance to shoot at will (Ahmad 2011). In the lead-up to the poll, supporters of both parties also exchanged gunfire on the main thoroughfare of the northern Iraqi city of Sulaimani (Ahmad 2011).

Iraq also has its share of intra-Shi’a strife, with several factions contending for power. These factions represent important intra-group divisions and demonstrate that between-group hostility is just one of the issues that the newly independent Iraqi government must face. The factions include Da’wa, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, the Sadrists, Fadhila and the Najaf Hawza. The Da’wa is a Shia Islamist party, formed in opposition to communism, Arab nationalism and socialism in the 1950s. Suppressed during the Saddam Hussein era, it now derives its power from its control of the prime minister position (Katulis, Lynch and Juul 2008, 3). The Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) is led by Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, and it is supported by a large middle-class base. In opposition to the wealthier supporters of the ISCI, the Sadrists – led by Muqtada al-Sadr – are largely dispossessed urban Shia underclass. They were traditionally repressed by Sunni-led governments and ignored by Shia elites. They now see al-Sadr as a defender of their interests. In addition to representing a challenge to the ISCI, they are looked down upon by the Shia religious establishment, which does not approve of Sadr’s lack of formal religious training and his underclass following (Katulis, Lynch and Juul 2008, 4). Fadhila is also an Islamist party, but it is Basra-based and aims for the creation of a three-province

“southern region,” which places it at odds with ISCI’s aim to create a nine-province “Shiastan” region. Fadhila fears that such a super-region would threaten its own Basra-centered power base. Moreover, Fadhila controls the governorship of Iraq’s oil-rich province, where more than 70 percent of the country’s oil is produced. This makes Fadhila an important player and makes the party a target for other factions who may wish to gain access to the wealth of that area (Katulis, Lynch and Juul 2008, 4). Finally, the Hawza is a collective term for the Shia scholarly-religious establishment, led by Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. Along with other clerics, Sistani expresses opinions on issues relating to the correct Islamic practice (Katulis, Lynch and Juul 2008, 4).

Clearly, each of these groups has different priorities, and the animosity between the groups shows how fractured the Shi’a are. As these factions attempt to gain ground during elections, the competition often turns violent. For instance, in 2008, pre-election, intra-religious fighting broke out between Sadrists and the ISCI. Dozens were killed and hundreds were wounded in the fighting. As explained above, this particular rivalry has much to do with class differences, with the Sadrists struggling to gain economically. Another important cleavage revolves around the prime minister’s newly created “support councils,” which are government-sponsored militias that are loyal to the prime minister. They provide him with an army of loyalists in areas dominated by ISCI, Sadr and the Kurds, all of whom are in opposition to his own Da’wa party. In addition, he established an elite counter-terrorism force that reports directly to him. These were used to carry out raids ahead of provincial council elections. (Katulis, Lynch and Juul 2008, 14). Such violence was intra-religious and inter-ethnic, as the support councils targeted other Shi’as and Kurds.

In newly independent Iraq, it seems that the opportunity for long-suppressed groups to finally assert their aspirations has brought out intra-group divisions. As these groups vie for

power in an environment full of political violence, their competition also sometimes turns violent.

CONCLUSION

Electoral violence in divided societies is often assumed to be a manifestation of inter-group hostilities. While inter-group antagonisms may often come to the surface during polls, it may also be the case that within-group tensions erupt into violence. Indeed, in divided societies, there may well be more than one axis of conflict. In Sri Lanka, for instance, both the Tamil and Sinhalese communities were internally fractured. In fact, both the SLFP and the UNP regularly based their electoral platforms around how to address the issues underlying the civil war. It was never the case that the entire Sinhalese community agreed on whether to engage in peace talks or continue the war. Similarly, the Tamil community was divided on how much to cooperate with the Sinhalese, if at all, as well as on how much support to give to the LTTE.

The cases in this chapter have illustrated that such intra-group rivalries are not uncommon. More attention to such rifts could enhance our understanding of ethnic conflict, especially because it is often the case that within-group rivalries are closely related to issues that underlie the broader, between-group conflict. While it is clear that more research is necessary in this area, it is difficult to carry out because data regarding intra-group conflict is scarce.

Going forward, however, researchers investigating inter- and intra-group violence might examine records of violence for the names of perpetrators and victims. In some cases, ethnic or religious identities are identifiable through names. A systematic review of the names of those involved in violence might reveal more intra-ethnic or intra-group violence than what is commonly assumed. It would also be useful to look closely at patterns of violence in areas that are relatively homogeneous, ethnically or religiously. Here, it might well be the case that

violence is more commonly occurring within a group. At the micro level, certain neighborhoods might be dominated by certain communities. Researchers might look at records of violence here and find that hostilities are mainly within, rather than between groups. Analysts studying divided societies might look at the historical development of a conflict to identify factions within each group. Many times, certain factions (political moderates) will have supported peace talks or reconciliation while other factions (political hardliners) will have been opposed to such developments. In addition to the between-group rivalries that may come to the surface during election, it could be that tensions between these within-group contingents might erupt into violence. Moreover, there are certain groups that earn profit from ongoing war or violent conflict. Such groups might be opposed to political parties who seek to end the conflict. They may be driven to turn to violence in order to prevent such parties' electoral victory. Finally, it is worth looking at intra-group divisions related to economic class and caste. Antagonisms between these members of these groups, who might all be from within the same ethnic or religious community, could also erupt into violence during election periods. This might especially be the case during periods of severe unemployment or economic downturns.

In Kenya today, the headlines often focus on the upcoming polls. Amazingly, two of the suspects due to be on trial at the Hague for their role in organizing the 2007 electoral violence plan to run for the office of president. It is a sad portent of what may transpire. At the same time, however, things are slowly changing. In 2007, Odinga was able to win the votes of not just his own Luo community but several others as well. In fact, a significant portion of Nairobi Kikuyus voted for Odinga instead of their co-ethnic, Kibaki (Barkan 2008, 3). Further research could well reveal interesting within-group dynamics here, which may help prevent violence in the future.

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