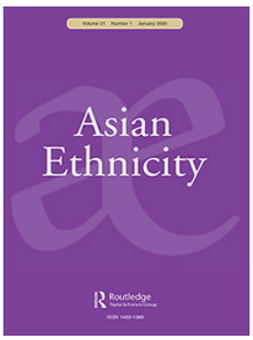

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Buddhist extremism, anti-Muslim violence and civil war legacies in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

A post-civil war country may cease military activity, but the social rupture impacts political discourse and ethnic relations, and can lead to collective violence against minorities. Sri Lanka has witnessed multiple examples of anti-Muslim sentiment and violence since the civil war termination, most infamously in 2014 when ethnic riots affected large numbers of people. Buddhist monks appeared to play a prominent role. The lengthy war and ethnonationalist ideologies have produced politico-religious shifts associated with 'Buddhist extremism', implicated in these riots and other aggressions. This paper uses interview data to explore the question: what causal mechanisms link post-civil war and extremist ideologies, and how this can lead to ethnic rioting. Interview respondents argue that promoting a monolithic national identity in a heterogeneous country enhances divisions, which can be politically expedient. An outright war victory, militarization of society and lack of peacebuilding sustain ethnic tensions that can be mobilized for further anti-minority violence.

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Sri Lanka; Buddhist extremism; ethnic riots; Muslims; post-civil war

1. Introduction

In recent years, Sri Lanka has experienced a rise in anti-Muslim sentiment and organized violence. One study[1] lists more than 650 separate attacks on Sri Lankan Muslims just from 2011 to 2015. The anti-Muslim aggression shows some level of mobilization and is not confined to geographically localized areas. One of the most significant instances of violence occurred in 2014 when deadly ethnic riots mostly targeted Muslims, affecting tens of thousands of people.

This paper uses data from a series of interviews with religious leaders from the country's four major religions, undertaken shortly after the 2014 ethnic riots, to investigate how Buddhist extremism and ideologies of nationalism in Sri Lanka are linked to outbreaks of communal violence against ethnic minorities, particularly Muslims, in the post-civil war environment. Conflict can produce political victimization and scapegoating of minorities that continues after a successful military victory, as civil war creates damaging long-term legacies for inter-group relations which may be deepened in the absence of any rigorous reconciliation processes. The Sri Lanka case

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illustrates how certain ethnicities are 'securitized' and considered by state apparatus and non-state actors to be a potential or manifest threat to the nation.

The war between the state and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) created long-lasting divisions and mistrust that affected all the ethnic and religious groups in the country. The causal factors of the civil war were not originally linked explicitly to religion and were based on ethno-territorial claims, reference to historical events and perceived discrimination in the twentieth century, both during and following the British colonial period. The argument presented here is that legacies from the civil war, militarization of society, unitary nationalist identities and valediction of violence have deepened long-lasting trauma and divisions between the country's social groups (ethnic, national and religious). This has contributed to the phenomenon of using communal violence against minorities, and hyper-nationalism feeding into that discriminatory and targeted violence. These elements existed both before and during the war, but have been adapted and augmented in the post-war socio-political environment.

This paper contextualizes the current anti-Muslim bias through examining the aftermath of the civil war and recent ethnic riots, and the contested positions of Buddhism and Sinhalese nationalism in Sri Lankan society. The primary research question here is: what causal mechanisms link a post-war environment with religious and nationalist extremism, and how can this lead to outbreaks of ethnic rioting? The interview respondents overwhelmingly argue that the legacies of the civil war, and a political environment that promotes nationalism and triumphalism, are explicitly connected to the anti-Muslim ethnic riots. This environment appears to be facilitated and enabled through a biased media, distortion of religious teachings in public discourse and tacit government acceptance.

This article proceeds in seven sections. Following this introduction, the next section discusses the research methodology and data collection processes. The third section is an overview of previous research covering civil war legacy, Sri Lankan Buddhism and nationalism, and ethnic riots. The fourth section examines the phenomenon of anti-Muslim violence and its linkages with the termination of the civil war. The fifth section explores some characteristics of Sri Lankan Buddhist extremism and nationalism and contextualizes these with regard to the civil war and the post-conflict environment. The sixth section gives an overview of the connections between post-war relations, the mainstream media, and the government's position regarding the ethnic violence. The seventh and final section provides concluding remarks on the arguments presented here; that the causes of ethnic riots and religious extremism are primarily embedded in ethno-political grievances, particularly in a volatile post-conflict environment.

2. Research methodology and data collection

In the capital city Colombo, and Galle, a major town in the South West, the author conducted 16 interviews with leaders and activists of different faith organisations, and two religiously inspired non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in peacebuilding and conflict transformation activities. The four major faiths in Sri Lanka were all represented: Buddhists, Christians, Muslims[2] and Hindus. There was also a focus group discussion comprising six representatives from Buddhism, Catholicism and Islam.

The Buddhists were mostly ordained monks,[3] and the Christians were ordained Catholic priests. Hindu ordination is less formalistic, but their priests are known as

kapurāla or *kapuwa* in Sinhala. The Catholic respondents referred to themselves interchangeably as Christians or Catholics and this paper does likewise. 'Faith' and 'religion' are used interchangeably here. The interviews were normally held in the respondent's place of worship or in an office, but all were private and no members of the public were present.

Several respondents were recommended to the author by their own peers, in a standard snowballing selection process that facilitated engagement with actors involved in fostering peaceful relations. The interviews were generally conducted in English, but a Sri Lankan field assistant helped with translation as needed and was also instrumental in contacting potential interviewees in advance. None of the respondents represent extremist groups and all of them were identified through their activities against the culture of conflict and ideologies of violence. Many of them explicitly stated that Buddhist extremists would not consent to an interview with a researcher, particularly a foreigner, and that even attempting to meet such people could pose a security risk.

Many of the arguments presented here come from these various faith-based actors opposed to extremist organisations such as the '*Bodu Bala Sena*' [BBS- Buddhist Power Army]. This is a Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist group that promotes anti-Muslim boycotts, agitates against halal foods and Muslim dress, and has been implicated in violence against the country's ethnic minorities. The BBS is an extremist fringe; many of Sri Lanka's other Buddhist organisations (such as the National Bhikku[4] Front) are in opposition to the values held by the BBS.

A research design such as this may be subject to methodological defects, as it is heavily dependent on interview data and does not examine documents or publications in Tamil or Sinhala. English-speaking respondents are more likely to be educated and may hold more liberal political views, and those who are not fluent in English may struggle to express their feelings fully and accurately, which could reduce the objectivity of the data. The interview respondents do not claim to offer a dispassionate and objective overview of the BBS and its activities. As only a minority of domestic faith organisations are overtly involved in conflict transformation work,[5] these respondents are not representative of the average religious leader and their views are not indicative of the average member of any particular faith. Instead, individuals were actively sought with a critical and informed view of recent religious extremism and who claim to be unafraid of criticizing the government, if as they suggest, it was implicated in fomenting ethno-nationalist ideologies. Given the political sensitivity of the subject and the potential for further violence, around half the respondents requested anonymity and several claimed to be in danger from being targeted by extremists.[6] However, full anonymity was provided for all respondents and their names, ethnicities and organizations are not referred to here. Only their religious affiliation has been recorded.

The interviews were open-ended and semi-structured, and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The prompting questions covered the influence, rise and impact of Buddhist extremism, and the victimization and scapegoating of Muslims. Other questions explored relations with government and other religions; the strengths, approaches and limitations of faith leaders; and challenges and future developments for peacebuilding and dialogue, all within the context of post-war violence against Muslims in general and particularly the ethnic riots of summer 2014. Notes from each interview were shared afterwards with the relevant respondents to check accuracy and ensure that

the transcripts reflect what each interviewee intended to say. With regard to the author's positionality, he previously worked in Sri Lanka from 2005 to 2007 for humanitarian aid agencies implementing post-Tsunami reconstruction programmes mostly in the North and East of the country with communities from Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim backgrounds.

3. Review of previous research

The distinction between religious and ethnic identity is often fluid, and there is evidence that ethnic conflicts are more intractable and long-lasting than non-ethnic conflicts.[7] Similarly, political grievance is a more salient factor in civil war than ethnic division alone[8]; 'conflicts last longer when ethnicity is charged with ethnonationalist grievances'.[9] Military activity may cease following a civil conflict, but collective memories preserve the legacies of violence.[10] The damage that civil war causes can increase the chances for protracted conflict and persistent violence, which Collier labels the 'conflict trap'.[11]

Ethnic and nationality boundaries in Sri Lanka are not consistent, but there is some overlap. Ethnicity here refers to three main groups: the Sinhalese majority, Tamils, and Muslims. Although Muslims generally speak Tamil as a first language they comprise a distinct social group, where their ethnicity and faith are often conflated. Some Muslims may identify as ethnically Tamil, meaning there are non-Tamils who speak Tamil in the country. Although Sinhalese and Tamils have often blamed each other for creating the conditions for war,[12] Sinhalese Buddhists' perceptions of threats to their identity in their own 'homeland' was a key factor in the conflict.[13] Ethnicity is a highly emotive and integral factor in personal and group identity, being 'based on a myth of collective ancestry'.[14] Anderson[15] likewise argues that a nation comprises an 'imagined' community, based on the shared perceptions of its members, of who is within the nation, and who is outside of it; group anxieties and frustrations may be subsumed under discourses of ethnic survival and threatened identities. As Holt frames it, how can minorities fully belong in a state that insists on 'religious, cultural and linguistic homogenization?'[16]

Horowitz uses Sri Lanka as a prime example in his argument that ethnically related conflicts tend to be intractable.[17] This is due to pervasive and lengthy rivalries between ethnic groups engaged in zero-sum power struggles that see their interests being challenged; ethnicity and religion are frequently conflated as a marker of 'otherness'.

Issues that are collectively referred to as the 'Muslim Question'[18] were overshadowed by the war and the violence of LTTE separatism, and the suffering, displacement and loss of Sri Lanka's Muslims have not been sufficiently acknowledged in the post-conflict era. Sri Lankan Muslims tended to oppose the separatism of Tamil Eelam[19] and sought to preserve the country's territorial integrity.[20] Muslims in Sri Lanka are not the only social group experiencing discrimination, as Christians and Hindus have been persecuted by Sinhalese ethno-nationalists, but on a smaller scale.[21]

Devotta[22] traces the erosion of the country's democratic institutions and the imposition of increasingly authoritarian governance to the outbreak and lengthy duration of the civil war. The institutionalization of identity politics and state rule that sharply divided Sinhalese and Tamil were major causes for the civil war. It was not primarily a religious conflict; the separatist ideology of the LTTE was based on ethnic rather than religious identity and the significance of faith was secondary to ethno-historical grievance as a causal factor in the war.[23]

Targets for grievances and scapegoating may be displaced onto other groups, whereby a multitude of social evils are projected along with justifications for violent action.[24] Sri Lanka's war was notable for the number of accusations on both sides of deliberate targeting of civilians: Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims.[25] The practice of targeting civilians is noted for its influence on conflict duration.[26]

Mainstream conflict resolution theory holds that conflicting parties will benefit from a negotiated settlement and that preventing conflict would be in their own interests.[27] However, in Sri Lanka, the triumphant Rajapakse government demonstrated little or no political will to address the root causes of the war or confront issues of political reform, but instead focused on consolidating power and suppressing opposition.[28] These triumphalist and authoritarian ideologies have been tolerated and promoted in Sri Lanka's post-conflict environment,[29] and this 'victor's peace' has eroded political space for meaningful reconciliation and interethnic peacebuilding.[30]

British colonial policy prioritized centralized executive and legislative control over power-sharing among ethnic groups, which often resulted in a unitary state operating within a multi-ethnic society.[31] The military victory over the LTTE ended any power-sharing discourse and permitted an aggressive and nationalistic agenda that endorsed the use of armed violence over negotiations or dialogue for conflict transformation,[32] and the rights and dignity of minority ethnic groups have not been adequately protected.[33]

When examining the national identity of modern Sri Lanka, the image of the 'nation' rests primarily on a foundation of (re)constructing a Sinhalese Buddhist identity.[34] However, while Buddhists are the majority religious group, they are not overwhelmingly dominant demographically. The 2012 census recorded Sri Lanka's population of 20 million as 70.1 per cent Buddhist, with the Sinhalese population at 74.9 per cent. Muslims were 9.7 per cent. Catholics and other Christians comprised 7.6 per cent and Hindus were 12.6 per cent.[35] The Muslim population of nearly 10 per cent comprises several distinct ethnicities such as Malay, Moor and Tamil. Beyond their faith, these groups may have little in common and there has been minimal progress towards a unified national identity of Islam,[36] in contrast to Sri Lankan Buddhism, for example. The country's Muslims are thus highly heterogeneous despite the history and influence of ethno-nationalism and conflict.[37] Domestic accusations against Muslims have tended to focus on their economic power, higher birthrates, halal cruelty, and the globalization of political Islam.[38]

Uncovering the linkages between historical events and current lived experiences is essential to understand how religious identities are articulated.[39] In Sri Lanka's case, this pertains most pertinently to the sacred Buddhist texts, the origin myth of the Sinhalese people and the foundations of the religion. The main such text is the *Mahavamsa*, which although not canonical, was written in Sri Lanka and relates specifically to the importance of the island's religious role in affirming its historical identity as a Buddhist nation. In Pali, Sri Lanka is named *Dhammadipa* (island of Buddhist teachings) and *Sinhadipa* (island of the Sinhalese).[40] A strict interpretation of such scripture leaves little cultural or social space for non-Buddhist minorities, and furthermore leads to claims that Sinhalese Buddhism should be protected,[41] as Sri Lanka is the only place where that faith now exists, unlike all the other religions present on the island which have homelands elsewhere. This contributes to Sri Lankan Buddhist perceptions of persecution and claims of both internal and external threats.[42]

Ethnic riots occur in politically charged environments. Scholarly analyses of ethnic riot causation highlight the salience of political uncertainty and transitions.[43] As non-random events, they are simultaneously both organized and contain spontaneous elements. While riots often overlap with street protests in academic studies,[44] there is consensus that much depends on the type and timeliness of state response[45]; to what extent the state accommodates, prevents or encourages ethnic group violence. Cases from Indonesia suggest that ethnic riots tend to occur in ethnically divided districts, experiencing weak local-level political engagement, and continued dominance of a government regime.[46] Security forces such as the Police, and local officials, have a significant influence in either preventing or tolerating ethnic riots.[47] Hindu-Muslim riots in India, which have a long history, occur more often when political parties do not consider that they need to rely on minority votes (Muslims, in this case), and ethnic riots there can be politically expedient for elected politicians.[48]

4. Anti-Muslim violence and the termination of the civil war

In June 2014, Sri Lanka witnessed a severe eruption of ethnic rioting primarily targeting Muslims, more severe than the anti-minority hate incidents that had occurred over the previous few years. The main affected areas were Aluthgama, Beruwala and Dharga Town in Kalutara District in the South West of the island, at the opposite end of the country from the areas of the civil war in the North and East. Around 10,000 people were displaced by the rioting, 80 per cent of them Muslims.[49] Four people were killed, 80 injured and large numbers of houses and businesses were destroyed. This violence attracted international attention, which was partly due to parallels with similar anti-Muslim attacks in Myanmar[50] and partly due to the prominent and visible role played by saffron-robed Buddhist monks.[51] Throughout the war years, extremist Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka had been notorious for attacking peace demonstrations, opposition political party rallies and religious minorities.[52]

The government imposed curfews across several towns, but in general, the security forces were slow to respond. Even four days after the rioting, no arrests had been made. The BBS was accused of being overtly involved in the physical violence and mobilizing rioters, but it vehemently denied organizing the Aluthgama rally on 15 June 2014 where violent rioting broke out[53] and has consistently rejected being responsible for any of the violence. The country's leader at the time, President Rajapakse, publicly blamed foreign forces for the 2014 riots, claiming that they threaten post-war peace and reconciliation in the country, without specifically identifying who they are or why they wished to harm Sri Lanka.[54]

Unlike the LTTE, for example, Muslim organisations in Sri Lanka have no history of agitating for secession or territorial autonomy. There is very little history of violent Islamic extremism on the island and only weak circumstantial and unsubstantiated evidence for the presence of foreign or domestic Jihadis.[55] Sri Lankan Islam is notable more for factionalism and intra-Muslim struggles.[56] Despite this, then Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapakse, who is President Rajapakse's brother, had claimed that the country was vulnerable to Muslim extremism and that Islamic radicals had been discovered there.[57] In contrast, evidence emerged in 2014 of communications and visits between Buddhist extremists in Sri Lanka and those operating in Myanmar.[58] In October 2014, formal ties appear to have been established between the Buddhist extremist group '969' operating in Myanmar, and

the BBS, following a joint meeting in Sri Lanka's capital.[59] Both these groups claim that Buddhism is under threat globally. President Rajapakse granted the 969 monk leader Ashin Wirathu a visa in September 2014, despite protests by Islamic organizations and other Sri Lankan civil society groups.

Under President Rajapakse, the state was victorious over the LTTE in 2009, ending 26 years of civil war. The war terminated with massive destruction of life and bombing of civilian areas, events which are still highly contested. The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) rejected appeals for an international inquiry and announced it would conduct its own inquiry that would be impartial and independent, despite the fact that it was one of the warring parties.[60] The Rajapakse government then carried out the 'Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission' examining the final stages of the war. This was denounced as lacking impartiality and rigour by various international human rights organizations.[61]

In March 2014, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution[62] to investigate allegations that Sri Lankan troops had killed up to 40,000 non-combatants during the final stages of the war. Further war crime allegations included rape as a weapon of war, desecration of dead bodies, shelling of hospitals and areas identified by the Red Cross as no-fire zones, and extra-judicial killings of surrendered LTTE fighters. As a result, relations between UN agencies and the Sri Lankan government became tense, with criticisms and charges being levelled by both. During his decade as President (2005–2015), Rajapakse repeatedly denied any allegations of government war crimes or deliberate targeting of civilians.[63]

Within Sri Lanka's militarized society, various administrations, most conspicuously the Rajapakse regime, legitimized the use of violence as a problem-solving mechanism and gave a clear demonstration of its efficacy by defeating the LTTE after three decades of war, which no previous Sri Lankan government had managed to do. This resulted in significant levels of popularity and political capital for the Rajapakse government.[64] With ethnic Tamil separatism removed as a threat (the Tamil National Alliance, the largest Tamil political party in the country, dropped its demands for a separate state in 2010), the Rajapakse government sought to consolidate the Sinhalese vote bank. More than half the interview respondents claimed that the government endeavoured to stay in power through scapegoating and highlighting the threat from a different ethnic group, namely Muslims, following its success in defending the country from the LTTE threat. The 2010 General Election was comprehensively won by Rajapakse on a wave of post-war relief, and economic growth in the Southern and Central areas of the island.

The Rajapakse government sought to minimize international censure of its military operations through emphasizing the nature of its struggle against an intransigent terrorist enemy, which necessitated activities beyond the mandate of accepted legal norms in times of war.[65] The state enjoyed such a level of popular support to terminate the war with a military victory, coupled with the lack of third-party observers or forces, that it was able to impose both a defeat on the LTTE and continue the suppression of ethnic minority rights. The government deepened its militarization of Sri Lankan society and consolidated state power, without requiring recourse to any political settlement or negotiation.[66] This military victory established the basis for continued persecution of minority groups, under the same discourse of consolidating the Sinhala Buddhist nation against internal enemies.[67]

5. Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lankan society and post-war tensions

Sri Lanka is an ancient nation-state and its Buddhists often consider the island to be home to a 'pure Buddhism'.[68] *Theravada* Buddhists[69] have traditionally maintained that their religion represents the Buddha's teachings in a more authentic form. However, while Theravada Buddhism enjoys demographic supremacy and state patronage, Sri Lanka does celebrate various religious festivals from different traditions, religious schools from all faiths are eligible to receive government spending, and Buddhist temples often feature Hindu iconography and shrines. This presence, and toleration, of multiple religions in the island, is not, for example, analogous to the situation in several Islamic countries, which prohibit even the construction of other faiths' shrines or the import of their religious texts.

The recent waves of anti-Muslim violence in Sri Lanka need to be contextualized within the broader religious and conflictual history of the island. Kapferer's pioneering study[70] in 1988 was one of the first to claim a link between some of the norms and values pervading Sinhalese social life, nationalist ideologies, and Sri Lanka's numerous examples of collective ethnic violence. The 'deep hegemony' of Sinhalese nationalism and the salience of a monolithic ethnic identity contributed both to the multiple failed peace talks during the war and the subsequent lack of power sharing.[71] Despite almost a millennium of peaceful relations between Muslims and Sinhalese, unparalleled in Asian history,[72] modern Sri Lankan Buddhism has an ideological basis which overtly makes reference to its purity in ancient times, allowing its practice and ideologies to be distorted in the modern era[73] through reference to an 'imagined' previous state of virtuousness. Similar reimagining occurs in all religions, but it is a key aspect of Buddhism that links it to broader conflictual dynamics on the island. The use of state-sanctioned violence to 'protect' Buddhism has a long history in different regions, and the situation in Sri Lanka does have historical precedents elsewhere.[74]

The overt conflation of Buddhism with Sinhalese culture and Sri Lankan nationalism started around the second half of the nineteenth century.[75] During the 20th century following independence from British colonial rule, this link was made explicit.[76] From 1972, the *Jathika Sangha Sammelanaya* [National State Assembly] made alterations to the Constitution that elevated the position of Sinhalese language and Buddhism. In Sri Lanka's Constitution, Buddhism has the 'foremost place' in society, and it is the duty of the State to protect and foster it.[77] The combination of Buddhist nationalism and ethnocentrism has been institutionalized as state policy, but the British colonial administration is partly responsible for laying the foundation of Sinhalese grievances through perceived discrimination against Buddhism.[78]

Sri Lanka has a political party comprising Buddhist monks, the *Jathika Hela Urumaya* [JHU: National Sinhalese Heritage Party, founded in 2004]. It was formed by monks with nationalistic ideals of territorial integrity and a refusal to concede any land to the LTTE, even as part of a peace process. The rise of the JHU highlights the divisive and long-term impacts of the civil war, which significantly affected Sri Lankan polity and eroded the governance structures that had previously established the country as a regional leader in political representation, inclusivity and democratic legitimacy. Of the JHU's 12 main doctrines, the first is that Sri Lanka should be ruled according to Buddhist principles and the government's principal duty is to protect the Buddhist religion. The BBS was established by monks who broke away from the JHU in 2004.

Such divisions draw attention to the lack of a unified voice in contemporary Sri Lankan Buddhism.[79] The BBS headquarters in Colombo were formally inaugurated by President Rajapakse in 2011. However, the BBS has faced increased criticism, especially since the 2014 Aluthgama violence.[80]

Buddhism in Sri Lanka has been co-opted through an aggressive militarism that simultaneously sees itself as a victim and justifies aggression in response to its perceived victim status. Following the argument in Bartholomeusz's 'just-war' analysis,[81] some Buddhists perceive their religion to be under attack from a variety of threats and can therefore justify using violence to defend it. This cognitive dissonance, of Sinhalese Buddhism's dearth of meaningful contributions to the formation of nonviolent ideologies within Sri Lanka, has been explored by Uyangoda.[82] Mainstream Sri Lankan Buddhism extols its nonviolent virtues while often not translating those ideals into concrete behaviour for its adherents. Within the faith, there is tension between those believers that adhere to strict nonviolence and those who paradoxically rationalize armed violence as a means to defend it. The apparently self-contradictory philosophy is that promoting a safe and protected environment for Buddhism allows it to continue practicing nonviolence that would not be possible if it faces enemies who employ force. The Sangha[83] contains multiple voices and viewpoints, some in opposition to each other, but there has long been a tension inherent in the concept of a religion that calls for nonviolence, using violence to 'protect' itself from enemies.[84]

The democratically elected Rajapakse government, the victorious armed forces and a co-opted Buddhist nationalism were unhindered in their efforts to construct a narrative that demonized Tamils and portrayed the LTTE as a group that could not be negotiated with, only destroyed.[85] This occurred through nationalist discourse that elevated the mythological and historical importance of Sri Lanka as a pure land that preserves the Buddha's teachings whilst emphasizing a victim mentality whereby the island has suffered at the hands of a series of invaders, including Tamils from India, Portuguese, Dutch and of course the British and now from Muslims. The cessation of the war permitted a resurgence of Sinhalese nationalism, which exulted in the long-overdue vanquishing of the LTTE terrorists but also denied other minorities their own suffering in the conflict. Muslim communities in the North and East suffered terribly in the war from LTTE atrocities of mass murder and ethnic cleansing,[86] and are now victimized by an aggressive Buddhist nationalism from certain extremists under a very similar ideology of purity and ethno-nationalism.

The interview respondents overwhelmingly claim that although the war was won, conflict persists in Sri Lanka. Several discuss in detail the idea that conflict in Sri Lanka never ceased, only the State is now engaged in fighting a different enemy. Respondents explicitly drew causal linkages between the devastating civil war and the recent ethno-religious violence. Muslims have replaced Tamils in the media and popular discourse as the greatest perceived threat to national stability and prosperity. The civil war was fought by enemies who had mutually incompatible and non-negotiable political positions, ensuring that facilitating any mediation or peace processes would be extremely challenging. The state's ultimate military victory and perceived collective punishment of Tamil civilians that bypassed any negotiated and mediated solutions, served as a clear reminder that bellicose rhetoric and concentrated armed force proved to be more effective tools to defeat the LTTE than any previous peace talks or dialogue. Sri Lanka's political and military elites have

continued to view the civil war and its termination through a purely conflict lens,[87] diminishing opportunities for meaningful reconciliation. 'The government's argument for this is: need constant vigilance, to prevent LTTE returning. Need to protect national security... [and] create this "threat" in the minds of the people.'[88]

Religion as a pivotal foundation of social identity is highly important and growing in Sri Lanka, especially outside urban areas. 'Religiosity is high… it's easy to approach people through faith… Faith is one of the main ways to mobilize and inspire people in Lanka'.[89] As a mostly traditional and hierarchical society, it has 'limited identity roles' for people[90] and faith as a marker of ethnic identity has become more prominent.

The Muslim respondents all argued that since 2009 accusations and allegations against Muslim Sri Lankans have increased. Two prevalent domestic criticisms against Muslims relate to their high demographic growth and establishment of lucrative businesses, but as one (non-Muslim) respondent suggests,[91] even if these charges were accurate, neither is illegal. The double accusation that Muslims are rapidly increasing in number and are often successful entrepreneurs points to deep-seated concerns of inadequacy on the part of the accusers, and the charge that Muslims are increasing rapidly in number is not supported by official census statistics.[92] One Buddhist monk argues against the prejudice facing Muslims, claiming that:

> A well-known argument is Muslims don't use birth control, as it's against their religion, and this is easy to believe. The evidence from other countries shows birth rate is connected to education and women's rights, not just religion. So the Muslim high birth rate is due to their social economic situation …when Buddhists are told that Muslims' numbers are growing, and Buddhists will be in minority soon, people believe this.[93]

Social divisions during the war were mostly split ethnically between Sinhalese and Tamil, but now divisions are more likely to be faith-based. 'In the future…. ethnic conflict will not be the main conflict, it will be religious', states a Catholic Priest.[94] Conversely, respondents of all faiths concur that Islamic dress in Sri Lanka has altered over recent years. Muslims' dress in Colombo, for example, is now more visibly Arab-influenced, with more women wearing hijabs and niqabs. This can easily feed into charges that Muslims have increased in number in the Colombo area purely because they are more visibly Islamic. Two Muslim interviewees[95] highlight how Sri Lankan Islam differs from that in Pakistan and Arab countries, but this very visible change in clothing strengthens accusations that Muslims seek to make Sri Lanka more like the Middle East through their move away from the traditional Lankan garments that they wore previously. The causes of such changes in clothing are complex and deserve further examination.

More Muslim umbrella organizations have emerged in recent years as an overt response to Buddhist extremism and prejudice.[96] Such organizations advise self-preservation and safety over pressuring the government or agitating for rights and freedoms. There is a belief that if Muslims react to recent attacks, even non-violently, it will provoke more attacks from extremists.[97] There are very few demonstrable linkages between these Sri Lankan organizations and others of a similar type from the Middle East. Likewise, there is little concrete evidence of violent Islamic extremism in Sri Lanka, despite the claims of some Parliamentarians and media outlets.[98]

Organizations like the BBS can enhance existing domestic fears of Muslims and Islamic ideologies, which are likewise influenced by global events, in particular, the anti-minority massacres and victimization occurring in several Muslim-majority countries. Buddhist extremists refer to ethnic cleansing of Christians in the Middle East[99] or Buddhists being targeted in Bangladesh and elsewhere, to illustrate what might happen in Sri Lanka if Muslim expansion is not contained. Such fears play into local Buddhist perceptions of insecurity and being overwhelmed. As Christians are often better educated and internationally connected, they tend to feel more secure and embedded as an integral part of Sri Lankan society, enjoying a position of authority and influence that remains from colonial times.[100] There is growing interfaith activity happening, yet Muslim and Christian organizations appear to be less involved in politics, particularly at the national level.[101] People from different ethnicities 'will generally be separate. [They] don't mind being together, but wouldn't do it normally. On their own, they wouldn't intermingle', claims a Catholic Priest.[102] Muslim respondents report a tendency to isolate themselves and engage less in intercommunal relations.[103] They also make reference to the perceived anti-Muslim discrimination globally[104] which justifies and legitimates public sentiment and even violence against Muslims in a country such as Sri Lanka.

A Buddhist monk states,

> Originally, in Sinhalese versus Tamil conflicts, Muslims were victims. But since 2009, other conflict dynamics come to the fore. During the war, these were overlooked. But now these are more visible, such as attacks on Muslims. We need intelligence to understand this. Society is still infused with military thinking; violence is still part of Lankan society. After conflict, [we] need to discharge the mindset of conflict, but this hasn't happened in Sri Lanka. Government says they did reconciliation, but not really [sic]. Society still retains some violent elements. It still hold impacts of the war.[105]

Muslims report being prosecuted for offences that are overlooked by the Police if they were committed by Buddhists,[106] indicating entrenched legal impunity coupled with a lack of political will to implement the law and the Constitution. 'Muslims are across the island, but often in small communities… if they react [to Buddhist oppression], there will be a big clash against them.'[107] Several respondents argue the importance of achieving some level of internal peace before engaging with others. But within faiths, local people often don't want their leaders engaging in interfaith dialogue, particularly Muslims.[108] A Catholic priest emphasizes the importance for minority groups to understand and be sensitive to the needs of the Buddhist majority, which can perceive itself as a minority.[109] Various respondents of different faiths similarly suggest that minorities should be more sensitive to how their actions are perceived by Buddhists, a majority group that often feels persecuted.

6. Post-war relations, the state and the media

The pessimistic mood of many respondents reflects uncertainties and insecurities in Sri Lanka about the likelihood of further ethnic riots and violence. These fears were realized in 2018 with further outbreaks of anti-Muslim rioting, albeit on a smaller scale than the 2014 violence. One major discussion point emerging from the interviews refers to a direct causal relationship between the civil war and post-war ethnic violence, with widespread agreement that the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) government was heavily implicated and benefited

from interfaith and interethnic strife. This was the political party in power from 2005 to 2015 under President Rajapakse. One charge that was stated repeatedly is that the BBS operated with tacit acceptance or even encouragement from the UPFA, which is an extremely delicate issue domestically. One indicator of this sensitivity is the domestic media blackout imposed by the GoSL surrounding the 2014 riots.[110] After the bloodshed of the war, the UPFA had lost significant popularity with Lankan minorities. Very few Tamils supported it, and the Buddhist vote bank was also divided. In an effort to strengthen the Sinhalese Buddhist vote bank, the UPFA employed fear and scapegoating to mobilize against internal 'enemies.'[111] 'If Buddhism has a common enemy, then the Buddhists will be united against the threat and vote to keep the UPFA in power.'[112] Individuals, especially within the Sangha, faced severe challenges speaking out against the state or the prevailing UPFA ideology.[113]

A Muslim scholar argues,

> Why does the Lankan government tolerate BBS? They are aware that Lankan minorities, including Muslims, will not support this current government. If there were elections, the current government has to depend on Sinhalese Buddhist votes. So to enhance the vote bank they need to show strong Buddhist policies, to show strongly pro-majority, not pro-minority. Laws give protections to minorities, so the government needs to work against this to send a message.[114]

'Politicians create divisions and benefit from divided communities. There are no initiatives from the top for communal harmony. Politicians interfere and disrupt peacebuilding activities'.[115] This is a direct accusation that the government was actively undermining its own legal frameworks in an effort to win the next election. However, in January 2015 a new government was elected, led by President Sirisena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, whose policies were more reconciliatory towards ethnic minorities.

As a senior monk says, 'war victory creates hatred'.[116] The interview respondents explicitly linked the legacies of the civil war with the recent ethnic riots, with the militarization of society and the normalization of violence as a problem-solving tool. 'BBS is not the main problem, it's a symptom of larger problems', claims another monk.[117] Following the overwhelming defeat of the LTTE and subjugation of many Tamil civilians, faith groups and civil society organisations report[118] that they are worried about the direction of the government's approach to inter-communal relations. 'It took 30 years to finish the LTTE conflict. It could erupt again, if minorities are not accommodated'.[119]

The Muslims respondents in particular were understandably critical of the enabling environment allowing Buddhist extremism. 'The BBS could not operate without tacit government acceptance, and the media gives prominence to BBS and extremist groups.'[120] 'BBS hate speech is not censored',[121] whereas similar inflammatory remarks from Muslims are punished. The violent incidents in Aluthgama and elsewhere were generally not carried out by local people, but by outsiders that were brought in on buses organised by the BBS.[122]

The importance of interfaith dialogue and outreach has often been overlooked in Islamic communities.[123] However, the recent ethnic riots have highlighted the importance of interfaith dialogue for self-preservation and to build stable and peaceful societies. Interviewees report a significant increase in Muslim engagement in interfaith dialogue following the end of the civil war and from witnessing its positive impacts when carried out by other faiths, even if 'some people nowadays are frightened by interfaith dialogue'.[124]

People who are unfamiliar with interfaith programmes tend to be mistrustful. Regarding one interfaith dialogue programme, 'Muslims said it's a Buddhist initiative; Buddhists said it's a Muslim initiative! [leading to] lots of suspicion'.[125]

Local Buddhists who do engage with interfaith activities are pressured to desist by right-wing monks.[126] Even if Buddhist monks start to participate, as staff from one interfaith peacebuilding NGO explain, 'some monks are told they will be excluded from Buddhist rituals etc, so they become afraid… and withdraw from interfaith dialogue initiatives.'[127] Similarly, a monk in the focus group[128] explained how one senior monk and his followers were leading 'a peace meditation group in Polonaruwa,[129] and some monks protested it, [but] they weren't BBS, not as extreme… they thought this event was to support the LTTE.' Some positive stories of interfaith activities emerged. A Muslim peacebuilding activist explained how,

> One day after the [Aluthgama] violence, I called a monk to go there together. Curfew [was] in place. We went to Muslim area of displaced people. People were angry against the BBS. [We intended] to show people that a monk wants to see them and listen to them, to show that not all monks are BBS. Also to show Buddhists that not all Muslims are fanatics.[130]

A Buddhist monk and a Muslim preacher in the focus group[131] described how,

> After Aluthgama, we wanted to make sure [such violence] will not happen in Galle, so we got Muslim reactions. When they first see a monk, the Muslim community get belligerent at first. Then they handled it calmly and peacefully, and the Muslim leaders appreciated that monks had come to visit them. The Muslim preacher followed up by calling his people in the village, and found out the problem was not the presence of the monks, but some intra-religious disputes within the Muslim community. Tension is how people reacted to the monks' visit.[132]

However, such peacebuilding actions appear isolated, and require exceptional levels of bravery and self-sacrifice. One major insight from the interviews concerns the similarities between respondents from different faiths, and significant agreement across a range of issues, which may indicate the temperament of religious leaders involved in peacebuilding work who are willing to be interviewed on such topics. 'Faith agencies have no political goal, only to bring together warring factions… but their efforts are limited and are stopped, when other forces become more powerful: political, business, military'.[133]

Particularly following the Aluthgama riots, laypeople and monks were afraid to draw attention to themselves, so they tended to stay quiet and only very senior monks can expect to be above criticism.[134] As one senior monk explains, most monks receive little secular education and have an inadequate understanding of modern socio-political realities:

> The monks' cultural exposure is too limited at present. They don't understand other cultures. They are Sinhalese educated only, so don't have a broad enough outlook. They cannot understand Tamil or English, so don't relate to Lankan ethnic minorities. So most monks are easily swayed by politicians. JHU came to power stating Buddhism is in danger from non-Buddhist peoples, from outside elements. JHU wants to make Dhammadipa,[135] but do nothing to promote monks' education. JHU would not benefit from more educated monks![136]

Much modern Buddhist teaching in Sri Lanka is not grounded in real-world concerns and Dhamma[137] teachings tend to remain at an abstract level. '[We] need to change monks first, then the general public', claims a senior monk.[138] These observations tend to be linked to accusations that monks are too far removed from everyday realities to provide consistent and applicable guidance to address the worries and grievances of laypeople:

> The clergy have little concept of social responsibility… and live in the past…. It's too easy to blame monks. Many monks don't get time to do Dhamma practice, too many worldly issues. Monks leave behind their families, but then have to take on responsibility for many families (deaths, births etc). So many worldly demands on them, no time or energy for spiritual matters.[139]

Monks working for peaceful change in communities may find themselves labelled LTTE supporters or Muslim apologists.[140] For example, during a post-war multi-ethnic Sport Week, representatives from three faiths attended, but no Buddhist monks as they were afraid of their names coming into disrepute through association with peacebuilding activities.[141] While 'monks have an undue amount of political power and are connected to state power structures' suggests a Muslim scholar,[142] a Catholic Father claims 'there is a shortage of monks able and willing to stand up for peace.'[143] There is thus a lack of mainstream criticism against BBS, including from within the Sangha: 'The Police and local people are afraid to take action against the robe, as it represents the sacred Sangha.'[144]

The domestic media excludes peaceful voices while providing considerable exposure for the more right-wing monks.[145] A Muslim preacher states, 'Media give prominence to BBS and extremist groups, [there's] no balanced reporting. They don't report voices of peace. People see the media and believe this one-sided version.'[146] The media has a prominent role in instigating violence, and is accused of selective reporting.[147] The mainstream media appears biased and reports extensively on government achievements and suffering of Buddhists: 'Media and politicians only report the violence. Make too much out of small violent incidents, [they] exaggerate it. Only report what is going wrong… every TV channel is affiliated to a political party'.[148] A senior Catholic Father explains, 'the media is under intimidation. Some reporters now in exile, some killed, some threatened… those who stay on and survive… need self-imposed censorship.'[149]

The Rajapakse government showed little interest in conflict transformation or peacebuilding, only a triumphalist, security-focused style of post-conflict celebrations built on Sinhalese Buddhist ascendancy.[150] 'The government spent a lot on war, but spent little on peace…. No recognition of reconciliation needs, people's grievances etc.'[151] Sri Lankan people in general live with significant levels of fear[152] as a result of the forced disappearances, erosion of free speech, state violence and so on. Muslim respondents were generally more pessimistic about the possibilities for a peaceful Sri Lanka, an attitude which stems from the recent riots and Muslim victimization during the war. Illustrating the militarization and securitization of Lankan society, the military often responds to incidents when it is theoretically a Police matter, as the GoSL needed to keep the army occupied and justify its existence after the war finished. "We are a militarized country. We see tanks and army everywhere, but we don't realise it. Militarization is taking place."[153]

One of the Buddhist monks explains,

> Their [military] presence helps control the population. Don't need guns; uniform and presence is enough to send a message. Society is charged; Police and army shoot more openly. This started after 2009. Military has changed role in society, since 2009.'[154]

Under the pretext of protecting Sinhalese people, the GoSL established army camps inside many villages,[155] and yet the Police have ignored attacks on Muslim homes and shops.[156] Religious actors need to be very careful how they frame their actions and to what extent they can be critical of the GoSL. Interview respondents describe the risk they face of being

targeted by extremists as a result of their peacebuilding activities. The GoSL employed a range of obstacles to reduce the peaceful impacts of faith actors, ranging from a complete lack of support, to overt hindering of activities. Even for senior monks, outspoken criticism of the GoSL may not be possible. One respondent[157] was once invited to a live programme on state TV, in June 2014, following the Aluthgama incident. He was told discussants would be able to debate the riots and how to prevent further outbreaks of violence. But when he arrived there, he was ordered not to mention names, or locations, or even refer to the incident. He was only permitted to provide an overview of Buddhism and explain how leniently Buddha viewed other religions.

7. Conclusion

The socio-ethnic tensions in modern Sri Lanka need to be contextualized with regard to the social changes resulting from the civil war, and the promotion in mainstream discourse of a monolithic national identity. One of the principal claims emphasized repeatedly by interviewees is that Sri Lanka's conflict history and the social impacts of a prolonged civil war helped create the conditions for the anti-Muslim ethnic riots of 2014, among other violent incidents and oppressions. The war exacerbated social divisions and cemented identities along ethnic and religious lines, hindering an inclusive Sri Lankan national identity that all citizens could equitably claim and contribute to. Returning here to the research question, 'what causal mechanisms link a post-war environment with religious and nationalist extremism, and how can this lead to outbreaks of ethnic rioting?' The interview data strongly indicate that the war in itself was not a sufficient cause for subsequent ethnic violence, but that the post-conflict ethnic and political polarization facilitated the emergence of extremist ideologies and a tacit acceptance of the use of violence against specific minority groups. These factors include the style and tone of post-war political discourse, particularly in the mainstream media, linked with governmental consent of extremist organizations' presence and influence. These factors occur in a wider socio-political environment that has witnessed numerous examples of collective violence against minorities over recent decades. Overall, the interview respondents refer to events and activities under two distinct but interlinked topics:

(1) Following a decisive military victory, the absence of any reconciliation process or peacebuilding efforts, or at the minimum an official acknowledgement of wartime sufferings, allows for ethno-national divides to be re-emphasized and redrawn;
(2) The promotion in public discourse of a monolithic ethno-nationalist identity has repercussions for ethnic minorities. This division can then facilitate and trigger acts of collective violence.

The socio-political uncertainty in Sri Lanka has been both caused and co-opted by elements in government, and people close to government, that seek to amplify the potential for ethnic violence. The efficacy and usefulness of violence have been proven; its role in society amply demonstrated in the final defeat of the LTTE after decades of military failures and perceived capitulation. The absence of a sincere reconciliation or truth-finding commission, which is partial and ineffective, hinders peacebuilding and

recovery from the damaging legacies of civil war. The state's comprehensive military victory legitimized violence as an effective political tool and social norm, whose impacts continue after the overt conflict has ceased. The interview respondents argue that the UPFA administration did not do enough to win the peace, or adequately include ethnic minorities in post-conflict Sri Lanka, or guarantee Tamils and Muslims their place in mainstream pluralistic society.

A nation beset by perceived threats, both internal and external, has need of identifiable enemies and scapegoats; Muslims have supplanted the LTTE as the new target for violent nationalism and extremism. A compliant mass media and the silencing of dissenting voices have further permitted mass mobilization against minorities, with ethnic rioting one visible consequence of this. All of the Buddhist monks interviewed highlighted the Buddha's teaching of compassion and nonviolence. They describe how the BBS has perverted this teaching into justifying violence, ostensibly with the aim of protecting the Dhammadipa, the land of Buddhist teaching, from non-Buddhist threats. Paradoxically, the Buddhist extremists' singular view of Sri Lankan ethno-national identity has much in common with similar philosophies espoused by extremists from other religions elsewhere in the world. The interviewees express pessimism about various obstacles to peace: the government repression, mainstream media, impunity for nationalist and Buddhist extremist groups, repeated acts of organized civil violence and the potential for further outbreaks of ethnic riots.

These findings challenge the narrative that mobilization for ethno-religious violence depends on radical interpretations of scripture, and instead indicate the salience of the ethno-political context. Buddhist extremism may have roots in the origin myths of Sri Lanka's religious and secular history, but the street violence of recent years, some of which is apparently orchestrated or at least supported by fanatical monks, adds to the argument that such ideologies are not primarily based on contested interpretations of historical scripture but on ethnic tensions and grievances, linked to a political structure that minorities feel does not represent them adequately. The continued militarization of society and a triumphalist political discourse sustain conflictual social relations that lead to further rhetoric against minorities and outbreaks of organized violence.

In the absence of any state-led reconciliation efforts, one mechanism to reduce further violent conflict is interfaith dialogue and promotion of fraternity between ethnic groups. Sri Lanka's progress from fractured and conflicted social relations to genuine post-conflict transformation will require concerted political will and a demonstration from all ethno-religious groups that multi-ethnic heterogeneity and diversity is in the country's long-term interests. The interviewees share some optimism that ethnic and national identity conflicts are not intractable; although they are extremely difficult, and the rise of Buddhist extremism is deeply problematic, at the same time there are multiple grassroot initiatives challenging these ideologies.

Notes

1. Gunatilleke, *The Chronic and the Acute.*
2. In Sri Lanka, it is common to refer to Muslim priests as Maulavi, an honorific title meaning Islamic scholar but also applied to any Muslim preacher.
3. Monks in Sri Lanka are generally called '*Bhikku*' or '*Hāmuduruwo.*'
4. See note 3 above.

5. Many of the respondents, especially those with some media visibility, discuss the dangers of such work.
6. For example, interview 17, Catholic priest or interview 7, Buddhist monk.
7. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*; and Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds*.
8. Sambanis, "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?" 259–82.
9. Wucherpfennig et al, "Ethnicity, the State and the Duration of Civil War," 111.
10. Paez and Liu, *Collective Memory of Conflict*.
11. Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap*.
12. Gombrich, *Is the Sri Lankan war a Buddhist fundamentalism?*
13. Deegalle, *Buddhism, Conflict and Violence*.
14. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 52.
15. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
16. Holt, *Buddhist Extremists and Muslim Minorities*, 2.
17. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*.
18. Uyangoda, "Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka," 27.
19. The LTTE used the term '*Tamil Eelam*' to refer to a large area of the island's North and East that they claimed as the Tamils' homeland, and which would achieve autonomy through violent struggle. For several years, the LTTE had de facto control over parts of this territory. Eelam is the ancient Tamil name for Sri Lanka.
20. Imtiyaz and Amjad, "Muslims in Post-War Sri Lanka," 186–202.
21. Devotta, "Religious Intolerance in Post-Civil War Sri Lanka," 278–300.
22. Devotta, "From civil war to soft authoritarianism," 331–43.
23. Bouma, Ling and Pratt, *Religious Diversity in Southeast Asia and the Pacific*.
24. Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*.
25. Lilja and Hultman, "Intraethnic Dominance and Control," 171–97.
26. Wood and Kathman, "Too Much of a Bad Thing?" 685–706.
27. Höglund and Orjuela, "Winning the Peace," 19–37.
28. Ibid.
29. See note 22 above.
30. Höglund and Orjuela, "Hybrid Peace Governance and Illiberal Peacebuilding," 89–104.
31. Uyangoda, "Ethnic Conflict, Ethnic Imagination and Democratic Alternatives for Sri Lanka," 959–88.
32. Uyangoda, "Ethnic Conflict, Ethnic Imagination and Democratic Alternatives for Sri Lanka," 959–88; and Uyangoda, "Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka."
33. Sarjoon, Yusoff and Hussin, "Anti-Muslim Sentiments and Violence," 1–18.
34. See note 20 above.
35. All figures from Department of Census & Statistics 2012.
36. Klem, "Politics and Violence in Eastern Sri Lanka," 730–53.
37. Ibid.
38. Jones, *Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism and Islamophobia in Contemporary Sri Lanka*.
39. Hirst and Zavos, *Religious Traditions in Modern South Asia*.
40. Devotta, "Religious Intolerance in Post-Civil War Sri Lanka," 278–300. Also see note 135.
41. See note 21 above.
42. See note 22 above.
43. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*.
44. Wilkinson, "Riots," 329–43.
45. Wilkinson, "Riots," 329–43; and Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*.
46. Toha, "Political Competition and Ethnic Riots in Democratic Transition," 631–51.
47. Brass, *Theft of an Idol*.
48. Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence*.
49. Sunday Leader, "The Human Tragedy of Aluthgama."
50. Gravers, "Anti-Muslim Buddhist Nationalism in Burma and Sri Lanka," 1–27.
51. Aliff, "Post-War Conflict in Sri Lanka," 109–25.

52. Gravers, "Anti-Muslim Buddhist Nationalism in Burma and Sri Lanka,' 1–27; and Aliff, "Post-War Conflict in Sri Lanka," 109–25.
53. See note 49 above.
54. Ibid.
55. Klem, "Politics and Violence in Eastern Sri Lanka," 730–53; and Geopolitical Monitor, *Islamic State in Sri Lanka - Situation Reports.*
56. Gunatilleke, *The Chronic and the Entrenched.*
57. Reuters, "Sri Lanka sees New Threats of Terrorism, Muslim Extremism."
58. Time, "How an Extremist Buddhist Network Is Sowing Hatred Across Asia"; and Gravers, "Anti-Muslim Buddhist Nationalism in Burma and Sri Lanka," 1–27.
59. Colombo Telegraph, "Butchers of the Muslims Get Together."
60. BBC, "Sri Lanka MPs Receive Controversial Civil War Report."
61. BBC, "Sri Lanka: UN says Army Shelling Killed Civilians."
62. United Nations Association UK, "Human Rights Council Mandates Investigation into Sri Lanka War Crimes."
63. BBC, "Sri Lanka army 'Killed Civilians'."
64. Goodhand, "Sri Lanka in 2011," 130–37.
65. Lewis, "The Failure of a Liberal Peace," 647–71.
66. See note 64 above.
67. See note 33 above.
68. Berkwitz, "Recent Trends in Sri Lankan Buddhism," 57–71.
69. *Theravada* (School of the Elders) refers to the school of Buddhism found mostly in South East Asia, which relies on Pali texts from India that are generally older than the Sanskrit texts held as canonical by later Mahayana schools. Theravada tends to be more austere, monastic and orthodox than the Mahayana.
70. Kapferer, *Legends of People, Myths of State.*
71. Rampton, "Deeper Hegemony," 245–73.
72. Ali, "Political Buddhism, Islamic Orthodoxy and Open Economy," 298–314.
73. See note 70 above.
74. Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons.*
75. Devotta, *Sinhalese Buddhist Nationalist Ideology.*
76. Devotta, "Parties, Political Decay and Democratic Regression on Sri Lanka," 139–65.
77. Government of Sri Lanka, *The Constitution.*
78. See note 75 above.
79. See note 68 above.
80. Deegalle, *The 'Army of Buddhist Power' in Sri Lankan Politics.*
81. Bartholomeusz, *In Defense of Dharma.*
82. Uyangoda, *Militarization, Violent State, Violent Society.*
83. The monastic community of ordained monks [and nuns in some countries].
84. See note 81 above.
85. Barnes, "Making Torture Possible," 333–58.
86. See note 21 above.
87. Bopage, "Sri Lanka: Is there a way forward for peace and reconciliation?" 355–64.
88. Interview 5, Buddhist monk.
89. Interview 6, Catholic priest.
90. Interview 4, secular humanist.
91. Interview 14, Catholic priest.
92. Dept. of Census and Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing of Sri Lanka.*
93. Interview 3, Buddhist monk.
94. Interview 12, Catholic priest.
95. Interview 9, interview 11.
96. Interview 9, Muslim scholar.
97. Interview 1, Muslim.
98. See Reuters, "Sri Lanka sees New Threats of Terrorism, Muslim Extremism."

99. Interview 15, Catholic priest.
100. Focus group discussion.
101. Goodhand, Klem and Korf, "Religion, Conflict and Boundary Politics in Sri Lanka," 679–98.
102. Interview 6, Catholic Priest.
103. Interview 1, Muslim; interview 9, Muslim scholar.
104. Ibid.
105. See note 88 above.
106. See note 96 above.
107. See note 97 above.
108. Interview 11, Muslim Maulavi.
109. See note 99 above.
110. Reporters Without Borders, "Sectarian Violence in South Declared Off-Limits for Media."
111. See note 96 above.
112. See note 93 above.
113. Interview 7, Buddhist monk.
114. See note 96 above.
115. Interview 16, Catholic priest.
116. See note 93 above.
117. See note 88 above.
118. For example, the focus group discussion; interview 7 with a Buddhist monk leading an interfaith peace association; interview 5 with Buddhists working for a peacebuilding NGO; and interview 4 with secular humanists working for another peacebuilding NGO.
119. Interview 2, Muslim leader of interfaith NGO.
120. See note 108 above.
121. See note 96 above.
122. See note 88 above.
123. Interview 9, Muslim scholar; Interview 8, Catholic sister.
124. See note 89 above.
125. See note 90 above.
126. Interview 10, Hindu priest.
127. See note 90 above.
128. Focus group discussion, Buddhist monk speaking.
129. Ancient town in North Central Province.
130. See note 119 above.
131. Focus group discussion, Buddhist monk and Muslim Maulavi.
132. Focus group discussion, Muslim Maulavi.
133. See note 119 above.
134. One senior Buddhist monk (interview 7) openly working for a peaceful Sri Lanka was labelled a 'Tamil Tiger' i.e. a terrorist sympathiser.
135. The Island of the Buddha's Teaching, in Pali. A metaphor for planet Earth, or at least the regions where Buddhism flourished.
136. See note 93 above.
137. *Dhamma* is a Pali word (*Dharma* in Sanskrit) word referring to the collection of Buddhist teachings, and can also refer to all phenomena, or truth itself.
138. See note 93 above.
139. See note 90 above.
140. See note 113 above.
141. See note 126 above.
142. See note 96 above.
143. See note 115 above.
144. See note 97 above.
145. See note 93 above.
146. See note 108 above.
147. Ibid.

148. See note 88 above.
149. See note 91 above. Priest.
150. See note 21 above.
151. See note 88 above.
152. See note 102 above.
153. See note 100 above.
154. See note 88 above.
155. Interview 17, Catholic priest.
156. See note 96 above.
157. See note 93 above.

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