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ISLAMISM AND MUSLIM MINORITY IN SRI LANKA

by

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ISLAMISM AND MUSLIM MINORITY IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Less than a decade since the end of Sri Lanka's grueling civil war in 2009, the country may once again find itself threatened by communal violence. Sri Lanka's Muslim minority population is mobilizing around Islamist politics. Conversely, Buddhist Nationalists, inspired by instrumental politicians and the perceived threat of Islamization, are mobilizing against the Muslim population. This thesis asks: how and why is Islamism growing among the Muslim minority population of Sri Lanka? This thesis will test two hypotheses: first, the Muslim minority population in Sri Lanka is mobilizing around Islamism in reaction to growing Buddhist Nationalism; second, the Muslim minority population in Sri Lanka is mobilizing around Islamism as a result of external actors promoting religious extremism. Limiting the impact of international influences is a challenge in addition to religious extremists of both Buddhist and Islamist parties in Sri Lanka. Thus, controlling the strong external Islamization process is important to ensure ethnic harmony in Sri Lanka. Because Sri Lanka's progress as a developing democracy depends on the confidence of international diplomatic partners, identifying and rectifying the driving factors of religious and ethnic disharmony in Sri Lanka is of the utmost importance to the security and development of the country.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BBS	Bodu Bala Sena
JHU	Jathika Hela Urumaya
ICG	International Crisis Group
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SLMC	Sri Lanka Muslim Congress
TJ	Tablighi Jamaat

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I. INTRODUCTION

The longstanding harmony between the Muslim minority and Sri Lankan society, which dates to the late eighth century CE, has become fragile due to ethno-religious nationalism and Islamization in recent years. It is a distinct departure: When Muslims initially reached Sri Lanka from the Arabian Peninsula, none of the other ethnicities in Sri Lanka—the Sinhalese majority, Tamils, and Veddas—opposed the arrival and settling of Muslims in Sri Lanka; in fact, the Sinhalese majority welcomed Muslims and did not object to their settling in the island. Yet, with the arrival of external religious sentiments, starting in the 19th century, some disputes arose attached to religious identity and differences in religious practices that created a schism between Muslims and other ethnicities in Sri Lanka.

After the long separatist war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ended in 2009, Sri Lankan Buddhist nationalists raised the alarm about the spread of contemporary global Islamization and related issues in Sri Lanka (for example, the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIS). The Buddhist nationalist rhetoric has put a certain pressure on Sri Lanka's Muslims. At the same time, an increase of instrumental politics by Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim political leaders has ignited increasingly exclusive nationalism in the name of winning the popular vote in domestic elections. Furthermore, incentives from the Islamic world, including Iran, Qatar, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, have encouraged the Sri Lankan Muslims to pursue Islamization. Islamization espouses the standardization of civil society through strict devotion to religious observance of Islamic laws and construction of unique Muslim identity —almost all facets of human life are enforced by a stringent and inflexible set of religious rules and regulations.¹ Thus, Muslims actively began to demand the application of certain external Islamic laws and practices in Sri Lanka.

¹ Peter G. Riddle, "Islamization, Civil Society, and Religious Minority in Malaysia," in *Islam in South East Asia: Political Social and Strategic Challenges in the 21st Century*, ed. K. S. Nathan and Mohommad H. Kamali (Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies, 2005), 162–167.

While dominant Islamist demonstrations have not taken place in Sri Lanka, anti-Muslimism sentiments and Islamophobia manifested in hatred and violence directed at Sri Lanka Muslims could spark instability in the island.² This thesis considers how and why the growing Islamist extremism, as well as the rising Buddhist nationalism, are putting Sri Lanka's security at risk.

A. BACKGROUND

The initial influx of Muslims into Sri Lanka consisted of transnational traders. According to Barbara Metcalf, Persian Muslims arrived in South Asian countries, including Sri Lanka, in the seventh and the eighth centuries for the spice-trade in the Indian Ocean.³ The first permanent settlements of Muslim people appeared in Sri Lanka after the arrival of Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan traveler, in the 13th century CE.⁴ Some of the slaves, traders, and other travelers on Ibn Battuta's ship stayed in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon).⁵ According to Argus Mohammad and Hussein Nordin, Muslim groups had settled in port-areas of the country and lived harmoniously within the communities.⁶ According to Amir Ali, until the Portuguese arrived in 1505, at Galle port city, the Ceylon Muslim community did not have any rivalry.⁷ On the arrival of Dutch in Sri Lanka in 1640, Muslims were chased out of the port areas for the spice trade monopoly, and some of them settled in the eastern part of the country.⁸ As Marina Ismile describes, Sri Lankan Muslims embraced a mix of Tamil and Sinhalese culture and created a unique Sri Lankan Muslim culture unlike the culture in

² Robin Lewiston, "Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism and Islamophobia in Contemporary Sri Lanka" (Honors Thesis, Bates College, 2015), 126, <http://scarab.bates.edu/honorstheses/126>

³ Barbara D. Metcalf, "Sri Lanka and the Southern Coasts," *A Historical Overview of Islam in South Asia*, 1, <http://assets.press.princeton.edu/chapters/i9061.pdf>

⁴ Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2012), 241–250.

⁵ Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta*, 244–247.

⁶ Mohammad Agus Yusoff, Nordin Hussin, and Athambawa Sarjoon, "Positioning Muslims in ethnic relations, ethnic conflict and peace process in Sri Lanka." *Asian Social Science* 10 (2014): 199–211.

⁷ Ameer Ali, "Political Buddhism, Islamic Orthodoxy and Open Economy: The Toxic Triad in Sinhalese-Muslim Relations in Sri Lanka," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 49, no. 3 (2013): 299, doi:10.1177/0021909613485708.

⁸ Frank Broeze, *Gateways of Asia: Port Cities of Asia in the 13th - 20th Centuries* (London: Kegan Paul, 1997).

other Islamic countries. Muslims in Sri Lanka do not speak Arabic; for example, they speak Tamil or Sinhalese and do not practice extreme radical Islam, but remain followers of a moderate form of Islam.⁹ A healthy relationship formed between them and other ethnic groups such as the Sinhalese and the Tamils, marking a flourishing cultural, socio-economic, and political landscape in Sri Lanka.¹⁰

Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948, which was followed by the advent of ethnicized political affairs beginning in 1956.¹¹ Under this system, Buddhist nationalist politicians gave priority to the Sinhalese language, and ignited ethnic riots especially against Tamils.¹² Even then, Sri Lankan Muslims did not have an “ethnic problem” with the Sinhalese majority. Muslim and Sinhalese led riots in Puttalam in 1976 as a reaction to the removal of a Muslim, Badiuddin Mahmud, from the cabinet ministry and against the socialist economic policies of the government.¹³ Thereafter, no major disputes occurred until M.H.M. Ashraf came to prominence, demanding a power-sharing arrangement in 1994.¹⁴ Ashraf and his followers wanted to establish an Islamic religious identity and application of Islamic practices in Sri Lankan politics; by the time of his entrance into religious politics, contemporary Muslim politicians did not use Islam or Muslim ethnicity for political purposes; thus, he exploited Islam to gain favor with Muslims.¹⁵

⁹ Marina Ismail, “Muslims of Sri Lanka,” Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs,” 2012, Accessed April 17, 2018, <http://muslimaffairs.gov.lk/muslims-of-sri-lanka/>

¹⁰ Mahinda Deegalle, “Politics of the Jathika Hela Urumaya Monks: Buddhism and Ethnicity in Contemporary Sri Lanka,” Academia.edu, www.academia.edu/960928/Politics_of_the_Jathika_Hela_Urumaya_Monks_Buddhism_and_Ethnicity_in_Contemporary_Sri_Lanka

¹¹ Rapti Siriwardena, “War, Migration and Modernity: The Micro-Politics of the Hijab in Northeastern Sri Lanka” (Department of Political and Cultural Change, University of Bonn, 2014), 2.

¹² Zarin Ahmad, “Contours of Muslim nationalism in Sri Lanka,” *South Asian History and Culture* 3, no. 2 (March 2012): 270, doi:10.1080/19472498.2012.664435

¹³ Ameer Ali, “Muslims in Harmony and Conflict in Plural Sri Lanka: A Historical Summary from a Religio-economic and Political Perspective,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 34, no. 3 (2014): 237, doi:10.1080/13602004.2014.939554.

¹⁴ Mohammad Yusoff, Zawayyah Zain, and Athambawa Sarjoon, “Positioning Muslims in Ethnic Relations, Ethnic Conflict and Peace Process in Sri Lanka,” *Asian Social Science* 10, no. 10 (2014): 6, doi:10.5539/ass.v10n10p199.

¹⁵ Vellaithambi Ameerdeen, *Ethnic Politics of Muslims in Sri Lanka* (Wattala: Kribs Printers (P) Ltd, 2006), 106–110.

Despite threats from Tamil nationalists, Muslim political leaders gained an advantage through exploitation of Islam in politics, and sought to build their Islamic nation. The Sinhalese and the Muslims in the East were targeted and harassed throughout the separatist war between the government security forces and the LTTE from 1982 to 2009.¹⁶ According to Dennis B. McGilvray, Tamil extremists disrupted the Muslim population and evicted them from North.¹⁷ As an answer to the LTTE threats against Muslims, Eastern Muslim political leader Ashraf mobilized the Muslims around the religious polity of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC).¹⁸ Research by Athambawa Sarjoon and his colleagues, which examined the Muslim movement for territorial autonomy in eastern Sri Lanka, recommended that reforms should be established at the procedural and institutional levels to provide guidance, and to actively monitor the activities of religious groups, mobilizing groups, and even smaller collectives in an effort to maintain the ethnic harmony.¹⁹

B. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis examines how and why Islamism is growing among the minority Muslim population in Sri Lanka. Driving this examination are two hypotheses: first, that the Muslim minority population is mobilizing around Islamism in reaction to growing Buddhist nationalism; and second, that the Muslim minority population in Sri Lanka is mobilizing around Islamism as a result of external actors promoting religious extremism.

¹⁶ Shantha Hennayake, "Sri Lanka in 1992: Opportunity Missed in the Ethno-Nationalist Crisis," *Asian Survey* 33, no. 2 (1993): 158, <http://as.ucpress.edu/content/33/2/157>; A.R.M. Imtiyaz, "Conflict and Constitutional Solution in Sri Lanka," *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* 17, no. 2 (2004): 23–42.

¹⁷ Dennis B. McGilvray, "Sri Lankan Muslims: Between Ethno-nationalism and the Global Ummah," *Nations and Nationalism* 17, no. 1 (2010), 50–64, doi/abs/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2010.00460

¹⁸ Ameerdeen, *Ethnic Politics of Muslims in Sri Lanka*, 106–110.

¹⁹ Mohammad Yusoff, Nordin Hussin, and Athambawa Sarjoon, "Muslim Demand for Territorial Autonomy in Eastern Sri Lanka: An Analysis of its Origin, Development and the Present Stance," *Asian Social Science* 10 (2014): 76–88, file://comfort/pfernand\$/Downloads/ASSsecondarticle.pdf

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarly work on Buddhist nationalism and radicalization provides the idea that Buddhist Singhalese are radicalized and ill-treating other communities.²⁰ At the same time, Islamization taking place in Sri Lanka is changing the Muslim society to a more radical path and alienating Muslims from Sri Lankan society.²¹ This thesis finds both the Islamization and Buddhist nationalist movements are becoming ever more radicalized and creating divisions in the Sri Lankan society. Within their radicalization process, Sri Lankan Muslims are responding to global *Ummah* (the concept of gathering all of humanity into one Islamic community) and adopting contentious attitudes to other ethnicities.²² Farhad Khosrokhavar points out that radicalized Islamist terrorism targets all who do not conform to the establishment of true Islamic global citizenship (which is Radical *Ummah* centered Islamism), and only true Muslims who accept their ideology are spared.²³ When emphasizing *Ummah*, this movement directs Muslims and other minority ethnicities to submit to strict Islamic practices through enforcing dominant harsh and inhumane treatment such as killings and injuring any who refuse to do so.

1. Radicalization

Radicalization has been defined in many different ways. According to Eitan Alimi, radicalization emerges from a process of “social movement-led episodes” of ongoing politics, and thereby, it is affected by the multifaceted and mutually reinforced rational dynamics in the process.²⁴ These social movements are less organized sustainable campaigns that achieve common aims by pledging to maintain or conserve the communal

²⁰ M.A. Nuhman, “Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism and Muslim Identity in Sri Lanka,” in *Buddhist Extremists and Minorities*, ed. John Clifford Holt (UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), Chapter One.

²¹ Amir Ali, “Wahhaby Threat to Traditional Cultures in the Sunni-Muslim World: A Neglected Theme in Cultural Globalization,” IRHSR: *International Review of Humanities*, accessed August 24, 2018, <http://www.irhsr.org/papers/Feb2017-9.pdf>

²² McGilvray, “Sri Lankan Muslims, 45

²³ Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Radicalization Why Some People Choose the Path of Violence* (New York: The New Press, 2017), 68–70

²⁴ Eitan Y. Alimi, Chares Demetriou, and Lorenzo Bosi, “*The Dynamics of Radicalization: a Relational and Comparative Perspective*” (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 24–54.

values or by reforming the collective behavioral practices using different approaches. Khosrokhavar, referring to radicalization, provides that alienation from the dominant culture, joblessness, and discrimination in a marginalized community are the main causes of radicalization.²⁵ People who have been incarcerated for minor crimes have often ended up being radicalized at the end of their prison terms because of their religious awakening during their incarceration.²⁶ Feelings that develop through imprisonment, such as “uncertainty, perceived hostility, and perceived injustice,” are identified as the three most important overriding feelings and psychological factors that, when embraced by religious fundamentalism, create radicalization among Muslims.²⁷ Maajid Nawaz similarly cites discrimination, ill-treatment, negative image, misunderstanding of Quran teachings, and extremist encouragement to violence as factors that bring Salafist radicalization.²⁸ The Salafists are the Sunni Islamic revivalists who enforce the strict practice of Islam in the community, and this practice can grow into Jihadism.²⁹

2. Islamization

Transnational religious communities in the globalized context pose a major issue in the literature review, along with the regional push and pull factors for radicalization and Islamization. According to Amir Ali, Islamization has nothing to do with extremism; it is only a strict adherence to religious practices.³⁰ The process of Islamization in Sri Lanka is ensured by two main Islamic organizations, Tabligh Jamaat and the Wahhabi group

²⁵ Khosrokhavar, *Radicalization Why Some People Choose*, 127–131.

²⁶ Khosrokhavar, *Radicalization Why Some People Choose*, 127–131.

²⁷ Maykel Verkuyten, “Religious Fundamentalism and Radicalization among Muslim Minority Youth in Europe,” *European Psychologist* 22, no. 3 (September 2017): 198–204, <https://econtent.hogrefe.com/doi/10.1027/1016-9040/a000314>.

²⁸ Majeed Nawaz, *My Journey out of Islamism Extremism*, (London: First Lyons Press, 2013), 65–70.; Majeed Nawaz, Salafist is an Islamic resistance movement that embraces extremist beliefs and inculcates radical ideas in Muslims.

²⁹ Andrew Wilmhurst, “Nothing to Do with Islam: The Historical Origins, Ideology and Strategic Threat of Global Salafi-Jihadism,” Department of Defence, Australian Government, November 2016,1, [http://www.defence.gov.au/ADC/Publications/IndoPac/Wilmhurst_IPSP_Nov16_\(updated\).pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/ADC/Publications/IndoPac/Wilmhurst_IPSP_Nov16_(updated).pdf).

³⁰ Ameer Ali, “Political Buddhism, Islamic Orthodoxy and Open Economy: The Toxic Triad in Sinhalese–Muslim Relations in Sri Lanka,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 49, no. 3 (2014): 311, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0021909613485708>.

(*Ummah* Islamia/Thawheed Jamath).³¹ These groups have introduced political advisory mechanisms, Islamic banking and finance systems, Arab dress codes, marriage for underage girls, emphasis on Halal food, and intolerance of non-Islamic religious practices, all of which are the ingredients of Islamization in Sri Lanka.³² In comparison to recent Islamic politics in the world, Shmuel Bar argues that Islamic extremist leaders justify this fundamentalism through religious-centered ideologies and orientation.³³

In Sri Lanka, Muslim groups have always been allowed to express their religious views and follow their ethnic, cultural, and economic practices according to their religion, without any hindrance.³⁴ Thilak Samaranayake discusses that the Muslims' demand for the application of religious means to the legal system in Sri Lanka cannot be accepted, however, as these are not a guaranteed right for legal justice.³⁵ Angel Rabasa defines that Wahhabism is the Islamic refining sector of Saudi Arabia, fathered by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, and it conveys a strict Islamic fundamentalist interpretation of Islam.³⁶ Fundamentally, Wahhabis would require all Muslims to follow the strict practice of religious interpretation and subversive way of Islamists.³⁷ The process of Wahhabism

³¹ Ali, "Political Buddhism, Islamic Orthodoxy and Open Economy," 311

³² M. A. Nuhuman, "Ethnic Identity, Religious Fundamentalism and Muslim Women In Sri Lanka," *Women Living Under Muslim Laws*, 1999, 4,5,6,7, https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=Ethnic+Identity%2C+Religious+Fundamentalism+and++Muslim+Women+In+Sri+Lanka++M.A.+Nuhuman&btnG=

³³ Shmuel Bar, "The Religious Sources of Islamic Terrorism," in *The Theory and Practice of Islamic Terrorism*, ed. Marvin Perry and Howard E. Negrin (United States: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 11–20, doi:10.1057/9780230616509_2.

³⁴ Ameer Ali, "Islamic Revivalism in Harmony and Conflict: The Experience in Sri Lanka and Malaysia," *Asian Survey* 24, no. 3 (1984): 303, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2644068?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

³⁵ Thilak Samaranayake, "Understanding The Causes of The Sinhala-Muslim Conflict in Sri Lanka," *Colombo Telegraph*, last modified May5, 2013, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/understanding-the-causes-of-the-sinhala-muslim-conflict-in-sri-lanka/>.

³⁶ Angel Rabasa et al., *The Muslim World After 9/11*, Project Air Force, Research Report (Santa Monica, California: The RAND Corporation, 2004), xx–xxii, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2004/RAND_MG246.pdf.

³⁷ Llyn P. Smith, "Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice Among ' Muslims in A Southern Sri Lankan Town," (PhD diss., Department of Anthropology University College London, 1997), 163, <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1317642/1/265119.pdf>.

corresponds to the extremist ideology of *takfir* (“accusation of other Muslims as infidels”) and extremist religious intolerance toward other ethnicities or religions.³⁸

The rise of Wahhabism under the patronage of Saudi Arabian funds has become the main issue for divisions among ethnic minorities in Sri Lanka. Wahhabis in Sri Lanka propagate its expansion through the Thawheed organization.³⁹ The teachings of the Wahhabi schools of thought depart from the conventional Quranic version, creating extremism and unrest.⁴⁰ In 2014, the Sri Lankan police requested a restraining order to stop the conflicting groups, the Thawheed Jamath and Bodhu Bala Senawa (BBS), from demonstrating against one another; the Magistrate Courts Colombo granted the restraining order.⁴¹ This newly arrived Thawheed Jamaat preached Wahhabism, a different, and a more radical custom of Islam, which has pitted the primary schools of thought—Wahhabism, Sharia, and Salafism—against the Sufism in Sri Lanka. The question remains whether the fundamental principle of submission to God and global *Umah* will mobilize the Muslims against other communities.⁴²

The literature also considers the sense of nationalism among the ethnoreligious groups that surfaced in the recent past as well as radicalization of Muslim groups in Sri Lanka. Mohamed Faslan and Nadine Vanniasinkam say that the motivations and functions of Islamic groups operating in Sri Lanka mainly stem from historical issues, ideological

³⁸ Michael R. Dillon, “Wahhabism: Is it a Factor in the Spread of Global Terrorism?” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2009), <https://www.nps.edu/documents/105988371/107571254/DillonWahhabismThesis.pdf/23fc46fb-17a6-41da-83b8-8e312191b5bb>.

³⁹ Mohamed Faslan and Nadine Vanniasinkam, *Fracturing Community Intra-group Relations among the Muslims of Sri Lanka*, ICES Research Paper (n.d.), 14, <https://www.scribd.com/doc/302814544/Fracturing-Community-Intra-group-relations-among-the-Muslims-of-Sri-Lanka>

⁴⁰ Rohan Gunaratna, “Annual Threat Assessment Global Threat Forecast,” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, Journal of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research* 7, no. 11 (January 2016): 72, <http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/resources/docs/RSIS%20CTTA-January-2016.pdf>

⁴¹ Chaturanga Pradeep, “Restraining orders issued against demonstration in Colombo today,” *Daily Mirror*, August 13, 2013, 03, <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/restraining-orders-issued-against-demonstration-in-colombo-today-51004.html>.

⁴² Emmanuel Karagiannis, “The New Political Islam | Emmanuel Karagiannis,” University of Pennsylvania Press, last modified 2017, <http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/15749.html>.

disputes, global Islamization, and political motivations.⁴³ Pakistan based Jamaat-e-Islami is considered the head of radicalized Islamic groups with branches in South Asia, including Sri Lanka.⁴⁴ Tablighi Jamaat, which has been operating since the 1950s, has been exerting its extremist religious influences to enhance *dawah* (encouraging non-Muslims to convert) in Sri Lanka.⁴⁵ It could thrust once hardline Muslims in Sri Lanka further into radical clusters such as "*Hizb ut-Tahrir* and *Jamaat-e-Islami*" that emerged in the UK.⁴⁶ Many scholars find that, other than during the Sri Lankan separatist war, only a few jihadist groups have operated in Sri Lanka, in the Batticaloa and Amparai districts.⁴⁷ There are two major schools of thought in Muslim ideology in Sri Lanka—Sunni Sufism and Shia Wahhabism.⁴⁸ As per Djavad Nurbakhsh, Sufism can be understood as the individual's appreciation of God through devotion to truthful, ethical, and mystic beliefs or qualities.⁴⁹ Wahhabism, on the other hand, claims to seek the purification of Islam by Sunnah and is a rigid practice of Sunni Muslims; Wahhabism delivers underlying ideological assistance for extremism. Nevertheless, although it does not have a sufficient mandate to justify violent-radicalization in Sri Lanka, it does provide a hidden network of financial support to facilitate fanatic clusters expecting Islamization.⁵⁰

⁴³ Faslan and Vanniasinkam, *Fracturing Community Intra-group*, 1,2, and 3.

⁴⁴ "Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-i Islami," Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, September 10, 2014, <http://www.pewforum.org/2010/09/15/muslim-networks-and-movements-in-western-europe-muslim-brotherhood-and-jamaat-i-islami/>

⁴⁵ "Sri Lanka: Colombo Orders Islamist Clerics to Leave," Future Directions International, January 28, 2016, www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/sri-lanka-colombo-orders-islamist-clerics-to-leave/.

⁴⁶ "Sri Lanka: Colombo Orders Islamist Clerics to Leave."

⁴⁷ Sriskanda Raja, "Chapter Four, Unleashing Jihadism and Starving the Enemy," in *Government and Politics in Sri Lanka, Biopolitics and Security* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

⁴⁸ Izeth Hussain, "A Case for Extirpating Wahhabism, Sri Lanka," NewsRescue.com, last modified February 28, 2016, 4, <https://newsrescue.com/a-case-for-extirpating-wahabism-by-izeth-hussain>

⁴⁹ Djavad Nurbakhsh, "Sufism and Psychoanalysis Part Two : A Comparison Between Sufism and Psychoanalysis," *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, September 1978, 213, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/002076407802400310>

⁵⁰ Michael R. Dillon, "Wahhabism: is it a Factor in the Spread of Global Terrorism?" (PhD diss, Naval Postgraduate School, September 2009) v, <https://www.nps.edu/documents/105988371/107571254/DillonWahhabismThesis.pdf/23fc46fb-17a6-41da-83b8-8e312191b5bb>

Fear of increase in the Muslim population and possible future trends could damage the unity of the Sri Lankan community. Dr. Rohan Gunaratna has posited that minority discrimination is growing among the Sinhalese because the Muslim growth rate (1.9 percent) finally surpassed that of the Sinhalese (1.1 percent) in 2012.⁵¹ Michel Breen projects that Buddhist domination over proponents of other religions stems from the fear of a diminishing Sinhalese culture that has seen Sri Lanka as the one and only Buddhist Sinhalese country in the world.⁵² Research by Robin N. Jones reveals that after the civil war, the groups of Muslim minorities became a focus of hatred and violence among right-leaning Buddhist monks with underlying ethnoreligious motives.⁵³ As Nils Gleditsch and Ida Rudolfson explain, the rapid increase in human rights violations and Islamists armed conflicts have been expected all over the world, in Islamic countries as well as non-Islamic countries, compared to the previous years.⁵⁴ The attempt of Buddhists for domination of Muslims needed to be refined as fear and reaction of growing Islamist violence and their strength. This fear is also not born in all Sri Lankan Buddhists as whole, but, a section of Buddhist activists associate the issue. Furthermore, literature will find the extent of implication of Islamism and extremist activities in Sri Lanka.

Jones and John assert that the group of right-leaning Buddhist monks represents the fear that global forces could degrade Sinhalese ethnoreligious domination since the Sri Lankan Muslim community has connections to external Islamic power through religious bonds.⁵⁵ The Muslim landscape has been changing over the last decade.⁵⁶ According to

⁵¹Rohan Gunaratna, "Sinhala-Muslim Riots in Sri Lanka: The Need for Restoring Communal History," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, Journal of the International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research* 10, 4 (April 2018), 1–4, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26402133.pdf>

⁵² Michael G. Breen, *The Road to Federalism in Nepal, Myanmar and Sri Lanka: Finding the Middle Ground* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 22, accessed June 2, 2018, Books on Google Play.

⁵³ Robin N. Jones, "Sinhala Buddhist nationalism and Islamophobia in Contemporary Sri Lanka" (master's thesis, Department of Anthropology, Bates College, 2015), 10 <https://scarab.bates.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1158&context=honorsthesis>.

⁵⁴Nils P. Gleditsch and Ida Rudolfson, "Are Muslim Countries More Prone to Violence?," *Research & Politics* 3, no. 2 (2016): 4,6, doi:10.1177/2053168016646392

⁵⁵ Dan Arnold and Alicia Turner, "Opinion | Why Are We Surprised When Buddhists Are Violent?," *New York Times*, last modified June 5, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/05/opinion/buddhists-violence-tolerance.html>

⁵⁶ Gunarathne, "Sinhala-Muslim Riots in Sri Lanka," 3–4.

Nuhman, the fear built within the Sri Lankan Buddhist population of the Muslim group has remained firm, because the leadership of intellectuals in the Islamic community, and actively argued the significance of establishing their ethnic religious identities.⁵⁷ Yet, as Animesh Roul explains, the death of Sri Lankan Muslims in Syria by airstrikes is the nearest example of the Sri Lankan Muslim community's connection to ISIS and the outreach of the Islamic State into Sri Lanka.⁵⁸ To resolve such misunderstandings and disproportionate fears requires an understanding of the perspectives of all sides has to be taken up at different levels without prejudice, but the most important objective is to identify how to preserve peace and stability in Sri Lanka at any cost.

3. Growing Buddhist Nationalism in Sri Lanka

Buddhist and Tamil nationalists want to maintain their majority as unique to them for their superiority in Sri Lanka for political gains.⁵⁹ Andreas Johansson predicts that the Buddhist extremists need to secure Sri Lanka from foreign forces, particularly Islamists that change the country's homogeneity.⁶⁰ According to Tessa Bartholomeusz and Chandra De Silva, the Buddhist Sinhalese-Buddhist ideology seeks to control the profile of other racial and religious identities in Sri Lanka.⁶¹ Furthermore, Gunarathna, points to the uncompromising Sinhala Buddhists, who refer to the destruction of temples, and to the attacks and killings of Buddhist monks in Afghanistan by Muslims, as a way to justify their cause against Muslims in Sri Lanka.⁶² Neil DeVotta and Jason Stone describe that the Buddhist nationalism created by characters such as Anagarika Dharmapala and Venerable. Soma have inspired the monks to agitate against other communities.⁶³ The opposing ethnic

⁵⁷ Nuhman, "Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism and Muslim Identity in Sri Lanka," 18–53.

⁵⁸ Animesh Roul, "Islamic State's Sri Lankan Outreach," Jamestown, last modified December 2, 2015, <https://jamestown.org/program/islamic-states-sri-lankan-outreach/>

⁵⁹ Andreas Johansson, "A Third Way the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress Discourse Struggle between Islamism and Nationalism" (master's thesis, Lund University, Denmark, 2007), 6–12, <http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordId=1318908&fileId=1318909>

⁶⁰ Johansson, "Andreas Johansson, "A Third Way, 30.

⁶¹ Neil DeVotta and Jason Stone, "Jathika Hela Urumaya and Ethno-Religious Politics in Sri Lanka," *Pacific Affairs* 81, no. 1 (2008): 32, doi:10.5509/200881131

⁶² Gunaratna, "Sinhala-Muslim Riots in Sri Lanka," 2.

⁶³ DeVotta and Stone, "Jathika Hela Urumaya and Ethno," 35.

parties in Sri Lanka mobilize against the majority Sinhalese due to the observance of Sinhalese communal political illustrations reinforced by Buddhist nationalism that has cultivated multiethnic political parties along majority and minority lines.⁶⁴ Andreas Johansson's *Third Way* offers the idea that the thinking of the Sinhalese is that "Sri Lanka, as a Buddhist nation, should follow the Buddhist way."⁶⁵ Just after the separatist war in 2009 Sri Lanka, Sinhalese extremist Buddhist monks activated anti-Muslim campaigns that grew out of Islamophobia. Ven. Galgodaaththa Gnanasra led this Buddhist extremist group, the BBS.⁶⁶ These scholarly perspectives provide the shape of Buddhist nationalism and its implications for the multiethnic environment.

4. Muslim Radicalization in Sri Lanka

The changing dynamics of religious beliefs, practices, and differences between Buddhism and Islamism create a rivalry in Sri Lanka. James Turner concludes that Islamist politics has the ability to disrupt countries with arguments about how religion is understood in relation to the political community, norms, and the conduct of affairs in the contemporary world.⁶⁷ Thus, the justification of protecting the rights of Buddhists in Sri Lanka cannot be ruled out in association with notions that stir fear.⁶⁸ With new technology such as the Internet and social media, the globalization effect has increased extremist tendencies and behavior among youths in the Muslim community.⁶⁹ In the recent past,

⁶⁴ Dennis B. McGilvray and Mirak Raheem, "Muslim Perspectives on the Sri Lankan Conflict," *Policy Studies* 41, 2007, 25, <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/muslim-perspectives-sri-lankan-conflict>.

⁶⁵ Johansson, "A Third Way," 48.

⁶⁶ M. Imtiyaz and Amjad Mohamed-Saleem, "Muslims in Post-war Sri Lanka: Understanding Sinhala-Buddhist Mobilization against Them," *Asian Ethnicity* 16, no. 2 (2015): 186, doi:10.1080/14631369.2015.1003691.

⁶⁷ James T. Johnson, "Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions," Google Books, last modified 2002, https://books.google.com/books/about/Holy_War_Idea_in_Western_and_Islamic_Tra.html?id=IoEjpRsvuzUC&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button#v=onepage&q&f=false

⁶⁸ Padmasiri De Silva, "The Psychology of Emotions in Buddhist Perspective: Sir D. B. Jayatilleke Commemoration Lecture, Colombo, 1976," Access to Insight, last modified 2007, <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/desilva-p/wheel237.html>

⁶⁹ Amanda Taub and Max Fisher, "Where Countries Are Tinderboxes and Facebook Is a Match," *New York Times*, last modified April 21, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/21/world/asia/facebook-sri-lanka-riots.html>

extensive use of social media for global Islamist campaigns has been a common phenomenon in Sri Lanka.⁷⁰ In referring to the SLMC as an Islamist party, Johansson describes them essentially as revolutionary radicals who seek change and challenge the governance, but he notes that some radical reformers enter the political stream.⁷¹ So, there is no clear-cut identification for radicals who operated in disguise when considering the Islamist activities in 2003, such as attacking innocent Tamils and own Muslims with different religious ideologies.⁷² According to Amir Ali, the Islamic revivalist drive in Sri Lanka is a contrast between “Iman-centered and *Ummah*-centered”; however, both the concepts are either radical or semi-radical.⁷³ Further describing both paths Ali assesses that “Iman-centered [Islam is]: radical, fanatical, aggressive, and socially intolerant; and *Ummah*-centered: radical, politically militant, and socially divisive.”⁷⁴ Thus, the movement has created a backlash in the form of a global requirement for a campaign against the Islamization of societies and the terrorist affiliates that continue to control these situations.⁷⁵

The literature describes different debates on religious differences that could assist in identifying the shortcomings of established ideas and could benefit the current situation in Sri Lanka. Faslan and Vanniasinkam represent the idea that “controversies are also a sign that Muslims are extremely pensive around their identity, origin, and religiosity. These efforts are not only driven by material gains, but also by the prerequisites of protecting global *Ummah* Islam.”⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Ameer Ali, “Wahhaby Threat to Traditional Cultures in the Sunni- Muslim World: A Neglected Theme in Cultural Globalization,” *International Review of Humanities and Scientific Research* (2017), 99, file:///comfort/pfernand\$/Desktop/Red%20Articles%20for%20Research/Chapter%20One/Amir%20Ali.pdf.

⁷¹ Johansson, “A Third Way,” 27–28.

⁷² Johansson, 27–28,

⁷³ Ali, “Islamic Revivalism in Harmony and Conflict,” 299–312.

⁷⁴ Ali, 312.

⁷⁵ Anna Sroka, Fanny Castro-Rial Garrone, and Rubén Darío Torres Kumbrián, “Radicalism and Terrorism in the 21st Century: Implications for Security,” *Studies in Politics, Security and Society* (2017), 9, 104, file:///comfort/pfernand\$/Downloads/[9783653069747%20-%20Radicalism%20and%20Terrorism%20in%20the%2021st%20Century]%20Radicalism%20and%20Terrorism%20in%20the%2021st%20Century.pdf

⁷⁶ Faslan and Vanniasinkam, “Fracturing Community,” 8–16.

Bart Klem argues that ethnic war has contributed to Muslims seeking identity in paradoxical and divergent interpretations of Islam.⁷⁷ During the civil war, the LTTE separatists in North and East Sri Lanka threatened the Muslim population who lived in northern and eastern coastal villages, forcing them to leave the areas.⁷⁸ Since Muslims left those villages, different interpretations of Islam have interfaced with global *Ummah* and Islamist concepts and have been extended by interested political or religious parties to create cleavages among Muslims and within other communities in eastern Sri Lanka.⁷⁹ Two Islamic opposition groups clashing with each other to inculcate their ideologies and the strict opposition to building Buddhist statues in eastern Sri Lanka illustrate these cleavages.⁸⁰ Klem explains that the avoidance of Muslim communities from active participation in the democratic process and the expression of political views will increase the radicalization process, which may end with clashes between communities and grow into terrorism.⁸¹ Moreover, in the case of Muslim youth in eastern Sri Lanka, if these homegrown issues continue, these young men may become radicalized, not necessarily to adopt Islamic fundamentalism but it may provide the inspiration.⁸² These claims define the political violence; the radicalized behavior of Islamist leaders with political agendas can destroy nation states.⁸³

The radicalization of individuals or groups has many dimensions and factors; therefore, finding the solution to them is complicated in a multi-ethnoreligious

⁷⁷ Bart Klem, "Islam, Politics and Violence in Eastern Sri Lanka," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 70, no. 3 (2011): 730–53. doi:10.1017/s002191181100088x.

⁷⁸ A.R.M. Imtiyaz, and M.C.M. Iqbal, "The Displaced Northern Muslims of Sri Lanka: Special Problems and the Future," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 46, no. 4 (2011): 375–89, doi:10.1177/0021909611399733.

⁷⁹ Klem, "Islam, Politics and Violence in Eastern Sri Lanka," 731–734.

⁸⁰ Melani M. Perera, "SRI LANKA The Muslim Party's Demands and Islamisation in Sri Lanka," AsiaNews, last modified September 23, 2011, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/The-Muslim-party%E2%80%99s-demands-and-Islamisation-in-Sri-Lanka-22720.html>

⁸¹ Klem, "Islam, Politics and Violence in Eastern Sri Lanka," 750.

⁸² Klem, 750.

⁸³ Amritha Venkatraman, "Religious Basis for Islamic Terrorism: The Quran and Its Interpretations," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 3 (2007): 78, doi: 10.1080/10576100600781612.

environment like the one in Sri Lanka.⁸⁴ Ismail Jezima discusses that the Muslim people in Sri Lanka had maintained peaceful relationships and a sense of coexistence with other ethnicities in the country for centuries, and Sri Lankan Muslims supported the political leadership and trusted the rulers of the country.⁸⁵ The Islamic polity that rejects the validity of a recent secular independent nation-state and establishes a pan-Islamic policy or renews a caliphate also emphasizes the violent bid to pursue political change.⁸⁶ Traditional Islamic fundamentalism can be defined even more specifically as the will to have Sharia law and only Sharia as the law.⁸⁷ According to Olivier Roy, the fact that constitutionally active Islamists cannot endure the suppressive control of state governance has driven many Muslims who are not relevant toward this increasingly nonpolitical and fundamentalist view.⁸⁸ Besides this criticism concerning why radicalization or Islamization occurs, there is room for more explanation and definition of the phenomenon.

Radicalization as the process by which individuals move from normal behavior, when simply holding radical beliefs escalates to the point of extremist ideology, and where Muslims at the upper end of this extremist ideology use it to justify violence to instigate social and/or political change.⁸⁹ Furthermore, Fathali Moghaddam argues that the new age of globalization has created a situation of insecurity over the issue of religion and it has

⁸⁴ Upali Pannilage, "Globalisation and Construction of Local Culture in Rural Sri Lanka," *Sociology Study* 6, no. 7 (July 2016): 457, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310047456_Globalisation_and_Construction_of_Local_Culture_in_Rural_Sri_Lanka

⁸⁵ Jezima Ismail, "A Tribute to the Cordial Relations between Muslims and Sinhalese in The Past," *Colombo Telegraph*, last modified 23, 2013, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/a-tribute-to-the-cordial-relations-between-muslims-and-sinhalese-in-the-past/>.

⁸⁶ Peter Mandaville, *Islam and Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 15–65.

⁸⁷ M. A. Nuhuman, "Women Living Under Islamic Law," *Dossier 21* (September 1998):108, <http://www.wluml.org/sites/wluml.org/files/import/english/pubs/pdf/dossier21/D21.pdf>

⁸⁸ Olivier Roy, *Islamic Radicalism in Afghanistan and Pakistan* (Switzerland: UNHCR, Emergency and Security Service, 2002), <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3c6a3f7d2.pdf>.

⁸⁹ Andreas Dafnos, "Lone Wolf Terrorism as Category: Learning from the Breivik Case" (master's thesis, Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, 2011),10, https://www.academia.edu/4041137/Lone_Wolf_Terrorism_as_Category_Learning_from_the_Breivik_Case.

indirectly forced them to engage in radical, extreme behavior.⁹⁰ Karen Keys-Turner's research on the violent Islamic radicalization process proposes a framework for understanding this process, and identifies that radicalization could be minimized by developing a common understanding through proper informing, training, messaging, and engaging.⁹¹ Furthermore, it is important to understand that Muslims have been inspired by their unique religion to trust in Islam, to become "one who submits" (a Muslim), and so "one must accept the will of the one true God and the message of Muhammad, which is encapsulated in the shahada: There is no God but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet."⁹² Although Sri Lankan Muslims' origins are closer to Tamil than Arabic, Muslim revivalism in Sri Lanka has encompassed a curiosity in Arabic relevancy for Sri Lankan Muslim community, and thus, it has amplified learning Arabic as the foundation for comprehending the Quran. These efforts have also emphasized the establishment of Islamic schools for Muslim children, which has further distanced them from other ethnicities.⁹³

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The growth in extremist or radical Islamic activities in the contemporary world has spread its tentacles into Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese fear for the moment centers on the image of contemporary Islamist issues in the southern Asian region.⁹⁴ As the preceding literature review established, generalizing and associating Islam with terrorism is a way of reinforcing the notion that those Islamic extremist groups should be eradicated because of the violence they are perpetrating. Several arguments have stated that external Muslim activists who promote Islamist Sharia have influenced some Muslim and Sunnah

⁹⁰Fathali M. Moghaddam, "The Psychology of Democracy," American Psychological Association, 2016, 130–131, http://fathalimoghaddam.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Moghaddam_2016_Psychology-of-Democracy.pdf, 2016).

⁹¹ Karen D. Keys-Turner, "The Violent Islamic Radicalization Process: A Framework for Understanding," (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2011), 79.

⁹² It is found that many authors have explain same idea as Russel argued; Russell R. Ross and Andrea M. Savada, *Sri Lanka A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division Library of Congress, 1988), 98, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a225801>.

⁹³ Ross and Savada, *Sri Lanka A Country Study*, 99, 100.

⁹⁴ Gerald H. Peiris, "A Study of Contemporary Buddhist-Muslim Relations in Sri Lanka," Thuppahi's Blog, last modified September 25, 2017, <https://thuppahi.wordpress.com/2017/09/14/a-study-of-contemporary-buddhist-muslim-relations-in-sri-lanka/>

movements in Sri Lanka.⁹⁵ The growth of Islamic extremism may have roots in the invasion of Islamist groups, under the cover of expansion of the religion. The underlying social motives in such activities seem to be due to grievances that express Muslims' desire to become autonomous in certain areas of Sri Lanka. Thus, this thesis tests the hypothesis, Growing Buddhist nationalism has contributed to the Muslim minority population in Sri Lanka unifying around Islamism and external Islamist influences have contributed to the growing radicalization of Muslims in Sri Lanka.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis ranges over several subtopics: the background of the Muslim Sri Lankan population; Islamization in Sri Lanka; radicalization of Sinhalese Buddhist monk groups in Sri Lanka; and the influences of Muslim radicalization in Sri Lanka. This study builds on my 30 years of military experience in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka, where the Muslim majority is settled. This survey also finds that scholarly publications such as “Sri Lankan Muslims: Between Ethno-nationalism and the Global *Ummah*” by Dennis McGilvray, which provide insight on the effects of global Islam, and the works of Bart Klem, can be considered as essential to this thesis because their sources confirm the interest of the majority of the population in Sri Lanka.⁹⁶ Klem, in particular, has provided a comprehensive understanding of the underlying political and religious issues that drive the internal struggles of Sri Lanka Muslims.⁹⁷

This research study follows the qualitative research method to analyze its data. I tried to avoid getting into a one-sided outcome by combining an equal number of publications from all four sides—the Muslim and Buddhist viewpoints, the common majority viewpoint, and the academic viewpoint. The paper compares multiple sources regarding the issues of radicalization, anti-Muslim sentiments, the growth of Buddhist nationalism, and the growth of Islamic extremism in Sri Lanka and its links to the south

⁹⁵ Athambawa Sarjoon, Mohammad Yusoff, and Nordin Hussin, “Anti-Muslim Sentiments and Violence: A Major Threat to Ethnic Reconciliation and Ethnic Harmony in Post-War Sri Lanka,” *Religions* 7, no. 10 (2016): 13–14, doi:10.3390/rel7100125

⁹⁶ McGilvray, “Sri Lankan Muslims: Between Ethno-nationalism and the Global *Ummah*,” 45–64.

⁹⁷ Klem, “Islam, Politics and Violence in Eastern Sri Lanka,” 730–753.

Asian region. Such comparison allows the creation of a further comprehensive output, assimilating the relevant viewpoints into one account. More specifically, this means that the paper concerns the external issues and recognizes the underlying factors pertinent to the combination of ideas. Consequently, the cultural, social, and political factors, and the interplay of such factors are considered when creating assumptions and conclusions regarding the issue. In order to effectively tackle and address the issue and its related concerns, it is essential to explore the history of the issue as well as the evolution of the relationship between the ethnic groups being studied.

For a deeper study of the issue as well as its associated concerns, the paper examines different forms of sources. This thesis includes scholarly papers and articles to provide a historical account of the issues and to identify the historical relevance to certain contemporary factors. Furthermore, considering the impartiality of this paper, newspaper articles provide objective information as well as editorial opinion to assess the situation. Books that actively promote the theories and ideologies of the groups studied are taken into account in order to represent diversity in the perspectives being considered. A wider perspective allows the prevention of certain preconceived notions as well as innate biases towards certain groups.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

The research is organized into four chapters. The first chapter offers the major research question, historic background, major literature review, including definitions of and background on radicalization, Islamization in Sri Lanka, and growing Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka, as well as potential explanations for and hypotheses related to the topic. Chapter I also describes the research design. Chapter II offers a discussion of how domestic factors influence Muslim mobilization in Sri Lanka. This chapter that discusses the history of Muslims in Sri Lanka, their settlement patterns, anti-Muslim sentiment, and their limited mobility. In addition to tracing the development of a Muslim political party, the chapter examines LTTE terrorism and its influences on the Muslim community, growing Buddhist nationalism. The origins of religious political parties in Sri Lanka and instrumental politics are considered, as are the effects of social media. Chapter

III discusses how the international factors are driving Muslim mobilization in Sri Lanka, through foreign financial aid, education, immigration and refugees, and how Islamic organizations have promoted Islamization in Sri Lanka. The final chapter presents analyses and provides conclusions with recommendations for further studies.

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II. MUSLIM MOBILIZATION IN SRI LANKA: DOMESTIC FACTORS

This chapter discusses how the Muslim mobilization process in Sri Lanka took root in relation to domestic factors. The study focuses primarily on groups and individuals who arrived in Sri Lanka from different countries at various historical points. The chapter examines the indigenous factors that influenced the pattern of Muslim settlements in the multi-ethnic culture of Sri Lanka. Furthermore, to understand the present situation between Sinhalese Buddhists and the Muslims, the analysis highlights discrimination against Muslims and other hindrances to the social mobility of Muslims in Sri Lanka. While most Muslims are well integrated into Sri Lankan society, these impediments can loom large in any discussion of inequality or discrimination and, thus, merit further attention in these pages.

A. THE HISTORY OF MUSLIMS IN SRI LANKA

The history of Muslims in Sri Lanka opens with the settlement of Middle Eastern traders in Ceylon in the eighth century CE.⁹⁸ Early Muslims began to migrate across the world, following “the birth of Islam in Arabia [and] followed by the Persian military invasion, trade, pilgrimage, and missionaries.”⁹⁹ According to Metcalf, the advent of Muslims in Sri Lanka begins with the exploitation of sea power in the trade expansion by Arab countries.¹⁰⁰ According to Sri Lankan history, there were three main native ethnic groups who lived in Sri Lanka when Muslims came in eighth century: Sinhala, Tamils, and Veddas. The majority of the population was Sinhalese, the followers of Buddhism; Tamils were Hindus, and Veddas followed animism.¹⁰¹ *Islam in South Asia* reveals that the Muslims arrived in the South Asian region through the inception of trans-economic centers

⁹⁸ Ali, “Political Buddhism, Islamic Orthodoxy and Open Economy,” 299.

⁹⁹ Hugh Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live In* (Princeton, NJ: Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic, 2008), 372, https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Great_Arab_Conquests.html?id=nV28i9Ticz0C&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button#v=onepage&q&f=false.

¹⁰⁰ Metcalf, “A Historical Overview of Islam in South Asia,” 1–4.

¹⁰¹ Ali, “Muslims in Harmony and Conflict in Plural Sri Lanka,” 228.

in the Indian Ocean.¹⁰² Muslim traders, called “Moors,” arrived in Sri Lanka by the eighth century.¹⁰³ The Arab sailors who passed Sri Lanka en route to far eastern countries stopped in Sri Lankan ports to resupply and to perform ship maintenance.¹⁰⁴ Middle Eastern sailing ships also anchored in Sri Lanka to wait until the monsoon winds settled for sailing.¹⁰⁵ In addition, the Dutch East Indian and British East Indian Companies brought south Indian Muslims (called Mohamedans) and Indonesian Muslims (called Malays) to the island after the 15th century for trade assistance, considering the trade connections that Muslims had with the Indian Ocean trade centers.¹⁰⁶

1. Muslim Settlement Patterns in Sri Lanka

Scholars have recognized and distinguished the Muslim populations in Sri Lanka according to their origins, the different eras of their arrival, and their dispersal through the country.¹⁰⁷ The earliest influx of Muslims came after the Sinhalese kings allowed some of the deportees of Medina in the eighth century (these Muslims were expelled by the fifth Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malik bin Merwan) to settle in Sri Lanka.¹⁰⁸ In the 13th century CE, the arrival of Ibn Battuta also brought Muslims to Sri Lankan shores, and they settled in the country with the approval of Sinhalese kings. Ever since, there have been Muslim settlements established in Sri Lanka.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² Metcalf, “A Historical Overview of Islam in South Asia,” 1.

¹⁰³ Metcalf, 5.

¹⁰⁴ A. M. Shukri, “Arab Contact with Sri Lanka - Sindbad and ibn Batuta,” 5, (2010) https://fr.unesco.org/silkroad/sites/silkroad/files/knowledge-bank-article/arab_contact_with_sri-lanka_-_sindbad_and_ibn_batuta.pdf

¹⁰⁵ Osmund Bopearachchi, “Maritime Trade and Cultural Exchanges in the Indian Ocean: India and Sri Lanka,” last modified 2012, 1–16, http://ignca.gov.in/mausam/Mausam_Paper_Prof_Bopearachchi.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Ali, “The Genesis of Sri Lanka Malay as a Multi-Layered Process,” *The Genesis of Sri Lanka Malay* (n.d.), 70, <file:///C:/Users/pfernand/Desktop/Red%20Articles%20for%20Research/Ch%20Two/Amir%20Ali,%20Genesis%20of%20Muslim-community-in-Ceylon.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ I The different scholars that I use in this research work are Amir Ali, Velliayathambi, Metcalf and Smith.

¹⁰⁸ M.M.M. Mahroof, “Muslims in Sri Lanka: The Long Road to Accommodation,” *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs Journal* 11, no. 1 (1990): 88, doi: 10.1080/02666959008716153.

¹⁰⁹ Albert Gray, *Ibn Batuta in the Maldives and Ceylon* (Maldives: White Heron Books, 1882), accessed April 17, 2018, <https://www.whiteheronbooks.com/products/ibn-batuta-in-maldives>.

Smith, McGilvray and many other historians argue that Muslims initially settled as traders in harbor cities by establishing small societies.¹¹⁰ These Muslim settlements were allowed by the king and they were settled according to trade preferences; access to such trade goods as gems, ivory, pearls, or spices; and their own choice of place.¹¹¹ Some Sri Lankan Muslims continued to trade in the ports, but many of them settled in rural coastal areas and started farming, fishing, and other occupations. As M.M.M. Mahroof discloses these Muslims ended up largely in “the sea-ports and coastal areas of the north, northeast, west and southern seaboard, viz, in Colombo, Jaffna, Mannar, Mantota, Puttalam, Trincomallee, Coodramalie, Barberyn, and Point-de-Galle (now Galle).”¹¹²

According to Amir Ali, the initial wave of Muslims arrived in Sri Lanka with commercial rather than religious materials: “the religion of Islam and the Quran followed not the flag, but the weights and measurements of traders.”¹¹³ Although the earliest Moors in Sri Lanka did not propagate Islamic religious ideologies, they were believed to have been converted to Islam shortly after its rise in the Middle East.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, Ali illustrates that the advocates of Abbasid Caliph Bagdad emerged with Islamic teaching and beliefs in 940, spreading Islam among the Muslims as an expansion of the Caliph.¹¹⁵ The arrival of Islamic religion-centered ideologies and culture reshaped the local Arab merchant communities.¹¹⁶ Sri Lankans began to convert to Islam from the tenth century, but they experienced a dearth of religious teachers.¹¹⁷ At the time, Buddhist monks and other religious parties did not object to the arrival of Islam, the construction of mosques, and the propagating of Islam. Ali says of the spread of Islam in Sri Lanka: “Although Islam had fundamental theological differences with Buddhism, [due to] the attitudes, outward

¹¹⁰ Smith, “Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice,” 17, 49.

¹¹¹ Smith, 30.

¹¹² M.M.M. Mahroof, “Muslims in Sri Lanka,” 88; (The late M.M.M. Mahroof is a reputed scholar who carried out studies on Muslims, Muslim societies, Islam, and Islamic law, from 1967 to 2000.)

¹¹³ Ali, “Muslims in Harmony and Conflict in Plural Sri Lanka,” 228.

¹¹⁴ Smith, “Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice,” 24.

¹¹⁵ Ali, “Muslims in Harmony and Conflict in Plural Sri Lanka,” 228.

¹¹⁶ Mahroof, “Muslims in Sri Lanka: the long road to accommodation,” 87–89.

¹¹⁷ Ali, “Muslims in Harmony and Conflict in Plural Sri Lanka,” 228.

appearances and the overall charisma, the two religions lived together with harmony.”¹¹⁸ As per A.G. Zulkiple and M.I.M. Jazeel, although there were differences between the two religions of Buddhism and Islam, the Buddhists themselves broadly tolerated the outsiders.¹¹⁹

Sri Lankan society and Sri Lanka’s Muslims, in particular, experienced Western colonial influences from the 15th to the 19th centuries due to its lucrative natural resources and its important strategic location in the sea lines of communication.¹²⁰ The Dutch brought Muslims of Javanese origin as political convicts in 1658.¹²¹ These Javanese were expelled from Indonesia by the Dutch during their political and trade domination in Indonesia. Furthermore, some other Javanese Muslims (Malays) were brought to Sri Lanka by the British East India Company as soldiers for trade security in 1796.¹²² These Malays, too, settled in Sri Lanka and integrated with Sri Lankan society.

2. Anti-Muslim Sentiment Begins

The multiethnic harmony that had prevailed in Sri Lanka began to shift during colonial rule through the segregation of ethnicities, communities, and religious groups.¹²³ The peaceful coexistence ended in discrimination due to outside influences, fault lines among Sri Lankan Muslims, and through colonial forces. In the early 13th century, the Moors assisted a plunderer who came from Turkey to steal pearls and poach elephants by use of force in Chilow area.¹²⁴ This incident led to the killing of the bandit as well as many

¹¹⁸ Ali, “Muslims in Harmony and Conflict in Plural Sri Lanka,” 230.

¹¹⁹ A.G. Zulkiple and M. I.M. Jazeel, “History, Distribution and Affiliation of Mosque in Muslim Minority of Sri Lanka,” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3, no. 12 (June 2013);, University of Kebangsaan Malaysia, last modified 2007, 449–45, http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_12_Special_Issue_June_2013/21.pdf

¹²⁰ Smith, “Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice,” 57–68.

¹²¹ Ricci Ronit, “Remembering Java’s Islamization: A View from Sri Lanka” (working paper, Asia Research Institute, 2011), 7,8, http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/wps/wps11_153.pdf.

¹²² Ronit, “Remembering Java’s Islamization: A View from Sri Lanka,” 8.

¹²³ Smith, “Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice,” 32.

¹²⁴ B. Gunasekera, ed., *The Rajavaliya or a historical narrative of Sinhalese kings from Vijaya to Vimala Dharma Suriya II* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, and Government Printer Ceylon 1995), 72.

Moors who abetted the looting, by troops of King Parakrama Bahu; thereafter, a certain distrust of Muslims began to take hold. The Muslim traders had to give up their trade in the main ports when the Portuguese arrived in Galle in 1505, because the Portuguese started harassing Muslims over trade control.¹²⁵ Muslims who performed well in trade were targeted and evicted from trading cities by the Portuguese.¹²⁶ Portuguese anger with Muslims deepened because of their trade rivalry and the spread of Islam among Sinhalese *Dawah* (who attracted converts to Islam).¹²⁷ The early Moors who settled in urban areas and closer to harbors had been totally driven out by the Dutch, who dominated the spice trade from 1640.¹²⁸ Many of these desperate and displaced Muslims sought refuge in Batticaloa, Kalmunai, Trincomalee, etc., in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, and a few went deep into the countryside to places like Kandy and Kurunegala.¹²⁹ In 1643, the Portuguese began persecuting Muslims in Colombo and Mathara, with killings, the burning of mosques, and the expulsion of 4,000 Muslims from trade cities.¹³⁰ Subsequent to the Mathara riots, the Sinhalese Buddhist leader Senarath Konappu Bandara settled the refugees expelled by the Portuguese on the eastern coast.¹³¹

Amid the discrimination and often persecution by colonial powers, Sri Lanka's Muslims sought strength for their communities by allying themselves with the Sinhalese, which further underscored their integration into Sri Lankan society. During the Portuguese and Dutch period, Muslims counted as the rivals of the colonists in trade and religious missions; thus, they were oppressed.¹³² The Portuguese, in their own version of divide-

¹²⁵ Marco Ramarini and Dietrich Koster, "The Portuguese in Ceylon: The Portuguese in Sri Lanka Before the War with the Dutch," Colonial Voyage, last modified February 18, 2014, <https://www.colonialvoyage.com/portuguese-ceylon-portuguese-sri-lanka-before-war-dutch/#>.

¹²⁶ Smith, "Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice," 46–47.

¹²⁷ Smith, 44–45

¹²⁸ Ali, "Muslims in Harmony and Conflict in Plural Sri Lanka," 231–232.

¹²⁹ Ali, "The Genesis of the Muslim Community in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) - A Historical Summary Amber Ali," Asian Studies, Scribd, accessed November 11, 2018, 80.

¹³⁰ Smith, "Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice," 47, 48, 49; Ali, "Muslims in Harmony and Conflict in Plural Sri Lanka," 232.

¹³¹ Ali, "Muslims in Harmony and Conflict in Plural Sri Lanka" 231.

¹³² Ali, 231.

and-conquer, also distinguished among the Moors, Indo Muhammadans, and Arab Shia Muslims.¹³³ Still, the Sri Lankan Muslims ultimately and overwhelmingly embraced the larger Tamil and Sinhalese cultures and created a unique Sri Lankan Muslim culture.¹³⁴

After the Portuguese epoch, the British conquest began in 1796, and the Muslims and Sinhalese enjoyed different relations with the colonial rulers.¹³⁵ British rule increased the arrival of Indian Muslim traders (Mohammedans) during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.¹³⁶ In the event, the British gave more precedence to Indian Muslims traders, prizing particularly their assistance in trade expansion and the conquest of Sri Lankan rulers.¹³⁷ Specifically, the native Muslims provided information to the British for capturing Keppetipola (District Head of Sinhalese) of the last Sinhalese Kingdom in 1818. This episode became legendary as a grave offense done by Muslims against the Sinhalese nation, precipitating the rift between Sinhala and Muslim.¹³⁸ The Muslims plot to provide secret information to the British enabling the latter to capture the Sinhalese leaders and the Kingdom of Kandy, cooled the relationship between the Sinhalese and Muslims—a division that the British continued to cultivate.¹³⁹

The trade agreements between the British and Sri Lankan Muslims sidelined the Sinhalese businesspersons, exacerbating the ethnic divide. Although Muslims controlled Sri Lanka's external trade, the Sinhalese controlled the country's internal trade.¹⁴⁰ According to Smith, "Muslims [who] dominated the main market in towns were granted special charters by the Kings," and thus the Muslims had their trade freedom and gained a

¹³³ Ali, "The Genesis of the Muslim Community in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)," 80.

¹³⁴ Marina Ismail, "Muslims of Sri Lanka – Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs," Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs, last modified 2014, <http://muslimaffairs.gov.lk/muslims-of-sri-lanka/>

¹³⁵ Victor De Munck, "Islamic Orthodoxy and Sufism in Sri Lanka," *Anthropos*, Bd. 100, H. 2. (2005), 401–414, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40466546.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Aab82e76aaca618dc9b783a5d04dac92>.

¹³⁶ De Munck, "Islamic Orthodoxy and Sufism in Sri Lanka," 405.

¹³⁷ De Munck, 405.

¹³⁸ De Munck, 404.

¹³⁹ De Munck, 404.

¹⁴⁰ Smith, "Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice," 33.

monopoly.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, Smith notes “the Muslims who wanted to engage in interior trade needed the concurrence of Buddhist monks” because the monks believed that the encroachment of an alien faith would exacerbate the issues with Christianity that had already started spreading with colonialism.¹⁴²

Reference to ethnic and religious identities by Tamil and Muslim political elites has often formed social disputes in Sri Lanka. In an effort to unify the Tamil-speaking population in 1885, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan (a prominent Tamil nationalist political leader in the British Ceylon Congress) claimed to the Ceylon legislative council, “Sri Lankan Muslims are a group of Tamils who were converted to Islam and shared the same language and culture.”¹⁴³ On the other hand, Arabi Pasa, a rebel Muslim nationalist exiled by British colonial power from Egypt, arrived in Sri Lanka in 1883¹⁴⁴ proclaiming an Islamic religious identity distinct from Tamil ethnicity. His proclamation initiated a Muslim “identity crisis” (especially between Muslims and Tamils) as he sought to unify Muslim populations against the Hindu and Buddhist communities.¹⁴⁵ With rousing Islamic teachings, Arabi Pasa inculcated the Muslims of Sri Lanka to stress their religious identity and ultimately to proclaim their identity as Arab Muslims (Moors) in 1888.¹⁴⁶

The emergence of nationalism among ethnicities under British rule strengthened the ethnic identities in Sri Lanka. The continued peaceful appeals for a separate identity of Muslims soon descended into rivalry between Tamil and Muslim.¹⁴⁷ In the 1880s, such characters as Muhammad Iqbal advanced Islamic voices and a growing nationalist sense of community with Muslims in India—against British colonial power.¹⁴⁸ Similarly,

¹⁴¹ Smith, 44.

¹⁴² Smith, 60–65.

¹⁴³ Smith, 76, ; Mahroof, “Muslims in Sri Lanka,” 95.

¹⁴⁴ Yasmin Helal, “Here’s how this 19th century Egyptian revolutionary impacted Sri Lanka Orabi Pasha became a local hero,” Stepfeed.com, 2017, <https://stepfeed.com/here-s-how-this-19th-century-egyptian-revolutionary-impacted-sri-lanka-3904>

¹⁴⁵ Helal, “Here’s How This 19th Century.”

¹⁴⁶ Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan was a Tamil lawyer who served in legislative council of Ceylon during the British Colonial period.

¹⁴⁷ Smith, “Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice,” 74–76.

¹⁴⁸ Metcalf, 26.

Ramanathan's calls to form the Tamil-speaking population into one nation in late 1870s are considered as the beginning of Tamil nationalism.¹⁴⁹ In turn, Muslim elites started expressing their religious identity in opposition to Tamil nationalism, while forming religious educational institutions and political elites in Sri Lanka.¹⁵⁰ F. Zackariya and N. Shanmuganatham note that in 1905, Muslims even began to challenge the British legal structure to formalize their cultural practices. These demands included the implementation of Sharia law, which ultimately gained recognition in the legislature.¹⁵¹

The Muslim domination of trade did not meet with particular Sinhalese objections, by contrast, until well into the colonial period.¹⁵² Trade domination by Mohammedan Muslims, Islamic revivalism, and ethnic differences under British rule worsened the Sinhala and Muslim relationship.¹⁵³ Although there were disputes, the general rule was tolerance and accommodation in Sri Lanka until the 1915 uprisings of Muslims (Mohammedans) and Sinhalese.¹⁵⁴ The riots in 1915 began with Mohammedans throwing stones at an annual Buddhist religious procession when it was passing by a newly built mosque in Kandy.¹⁵⁵ According to Victor De Munck, thereafter the Sinhalese organized riots against Muslims everywhere in the country.¹⁵⁶ The Sinhalese rioters targeted the South Indian traders because of religious conversions, Muslim revivalism, trade priority received by Muslims, and British encouragement of Islamic religious culture as an opposition to Buddhist nationalism.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁹ Smith, 74–76

¹⁵⁰ F. Zackariya and N. Shanmugaratnam, "Communalisation of Muslims in Sri Lanka, An Historical Perspective," Internet Archive, last modified 2017, <https://archive.org/details/CommunalisationOfMuslimsInSriLankaAnHistoricalPerspectiveF.ZackariyaAndN.Shanmugaratnam/page/n39>.

¹⁵¹ Zackariya and Shanmugaratnam, "Communalisation of Muslims in Sri Lanka."

¹⁵² I. Jazeel et al., "History, Distribution and Affiliation of Mosque in Muslim Minority of Sri Lanka," 182–183.

¹⁵³ A. P. Kannangara, "The Riots of 1915 in Sri Lanka: A Study in the Roots of Communal Violence," *Past and Present* 102, no. 1 (1984): 130–135, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/650762.pdf?>

¹⁵⁴ De Munck, "Islamic Orthodoxy and Sufism in Sri Lanka," 405.

¹⁵⁵ Kannangara, "The Riots of 1915 in Sri Lanka," 158.

¹⁵⁶ De Munck, 405.

¹⁵⁷ Faslan and Vanniasinkam, "Fracturing Community," 9.

3. Limited Social Mobility

In 1885, the Muslim leaders began their social political process when they were included in the Ceylon Legislative Council by the British colonial rule in Sri Lanka. The Ceylon Legislative Council was established as a countermeasure when opposition arose among all ethnicities in Sri Lanka, demanding ethnic rights against the British ruler.¹⁵⁸ The social and political organizations came together as the “Moors Union” on August 29, 1900, and as the “Ceylon Muslim Association” in 1903, uniting Muslims.¹⁵⁹ These organizations were the foundation for the social, cultural, and political establishment of Muslims and demonstrated the freedom that they enjoyed in Sri Lanka.¹⁶⁰ When the Ceylon National Congress was established under British colonial administration in 1919, several Muslim leaders were appointed as committee members, and TB Jaya became the Vice President in 1925.¹⁶¹ The “increased number of educated Muslims and their rising economic status strengthened the shared Muslim identity in the country.”¹⁶² The Ceylon National Congress formed amid separate nationalist movements among Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims.¹⁶³ These significant events assisted the mobilization of Muslims as a nation and their identity became very prominent in Sri Lanka.

The social and political affiliations—and discontents—among Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims in the nationalist movements carried through to the independence of Sri Lanka in 1948. Despite the fact that there had been unity among multi-ethnic political elites in achieving independence, by 1956 disparities began over the proposal to enshrine

¹⁵⁸ Smith, “Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice,” 76.

¹⁵⁹ Mansoor M. Fazil, “The Muslim Factor in the Sri Lanka Conflict,” Researchgate 16 (January 2005): 164, file://comfort/pfernand\$/MyDocs/The_Muslim_factor_in_the_Sri_Lankan_conf.pdf.

¹⁶⁰ Fazil, “The Muslim Factor in the Sri Lanka Conflict,” 164.

¹⁶¹ J. M. Rilwan, “Role of Muslim Leaders’ in Sri Lanka’s Independence Movement (1919-1948),” *First International Symposium*, 2014, FIA, SEUSL (2014), 1–3, [https://scholar.google.com/scholar?safe=strict&um=1&ie=UTF-8&lr&q=related:FciDtnZBwUi-M:scholar.google.com/J](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?safe=strict&um=1&ie=UTF-8&lr&q=related:FciDtnZBwUi-M:scholar.google.com/J;); ; TB Jaya was a graduate of London University and considered as one of great leaders Muslim personalities who dedicated to Muslim education and multi ethnic cooperation.

¹⁶² Andreas Johansson, “Sri Lanka Muslim Congress’ Rise to Power,” *History and Anthropology of Religions*, (February 2012), 77, http://www.ctr.lu.se/fileadmin/user_upload/ctr/pdf/rit/13/77_-_Sri_Lanka_Muslim_Congress_Rise_to_Power.pdf.

¹⁶³ Sir Ivor Jennings, *The Approach to Self-Governance* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 4, 8, <https://academic.oup.com/pa/article-abstract/X/1/121/1473390?redirectedFrom=fulltext>.

“Sinhala as the only official language” in Sri Lanka.¹⁶⁴ Buddhist nationalism, propagated by some monks and instrumental politicians, soon led to riots. This language issue created further divisions and led to nationalism among Tamil and Muslim political elites.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, development projects conducted by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) after independence introduced Sinhalese settlements in North and East crown lands, including the new irrigation project “Galoya” in 1953 in Amparai. Muslims saw these development projects as encroachment by the Sinhalese into Muslim areas.¹⁶⁶ By the mid-1970s, the Sri Lankan government enforced closed trade policies to minimize foreign exchange commitments, which restricted the entire trading community, but which most severely affected the Muslim traders.¹⁶⁷ Again, it seemed to some Muslim Sri Lankans that official policy and even the law was designed to disadvantage them.

B. MOBILIZATION SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Sri Lankan Muslim political elites began to mobilize Muslims through Islamic politics against their challengers.¹⁶⁸ Toward the late 1970s, a new, global Islamist revival began to reshape Muslim identity as “*Ummah*-centered”¹⁶⁹ and Muslims became increasingly drawn to radical Islam.¹⁷⁰ In Sri Lanka’s case, at the apparent cost of integration with global Islamism, the Muslim political elites started to advance by applying Islamic politics. This section attempts to explain the mobilization of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress in the 1980s and the instrumental politics of the Muslim political elites. Finally, it traces how Muslims reacted to the internal tensions in Sri Lanka while addressing contemporary global Islamization. Muslims, in the face of political disparities with the

¹⁶⁴Zarin Ahmad, “Contours of Muslim nationalism in Sri Lanka,” *South Asian History and Culture* 3, no. 2 (2012): 270–274, doi:10.1080/19472498.2012.664435

¹⁶⁵ Ahmad, “Contours of Muslim nationalism in Sri Lanka,” 270; Buddhist nationalism and Islamic revivalism are discussed in detail in Chapter III.

¹⁶⁶ Ameerdeen, *Ethnic Politics of Muslims in Sri Lanka*, 101.

¹⁶⁷ Government of Sri Lanka, “Five Year Plan to Develop Home Industries,” UoM IR (Colombo, Government Gazette, 1972–1976), <http://dl.lib.mrt.ac.lk/bitstream/handle/123/9935/post-text.pdf?sequence=11>.

¹⁶⁸ Ali, “Islamic Revivalism in Harmony and Conflict,” 297.

¹⁶⁹ Ali, 299.

¹⁷⁰ Ali, 299.

Sinhalese state, sought to emphasize their ethno-religious nationality in order to earn (or, in some cases, earn back) their socio-political status. Although the political situation was tense by the early 1980s with the rise of the LTTE, the Muslims and Sinhalese communities had a close relationship, and they enjoyed their cultures and religions, while maintaining their ethnic identities in Sri Lanka.¹⁷¹ Indeed, Johansson states that Muslims never engaged in a separatist conflict as the Tamils did.¹⁷²

1. The Muslim Congress

The foundation for mobilizing Muslims to seek autonomy developed through religious-based politics that began in eastern Sri Lanka.¹⁷³ The conversion of nonpartisan religious institutions started in the early 1980s; and culminated in the birth of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) in 1986.¹⁷⁴ The SLMC began its political path as the symbol of the Tamil-speaking Muslim people in the Eastern Province.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, the SLMC had organized its campaign island-wide to mobilize Muslims in the same year. The SLMC initiated its journey from eastern Sri Lanka, the mostly densely populated Muslim community in the country, under the leadership of the late Mr. Muhammad H.M. Ashraf.¹⁷⁶ Such concerns as ethnic conflict, religious exposure, cultural differences, and self-alienation have been the drivers of Islamic politics in Sri Lanka. The SLMC was formed to counter threats from the LTTE.¹⁷⁷ Additionally, the SLMC served to address the identity crisis felt by Eastern Muslims among Tamils, and to gain political advantage in eastern Sri

¹⁷¹ A.R.M. Imitiyas and Amjad M. Saleem, "Muslims in Post-war Sri Lanka: Understanding Sinhala-Buddhist Mobilization against Them," *Asian Ethnicity* 16, no. 2 (2015), 192, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14631369.2015.1003691?needAccess=true>

¹⁷² Johansson, "Sri Lanka Muslim Congress," 77.

¹⁷³ Andreas Johansson, *Pragmatic Muslim Politics: The Case of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress* (Sweden: Media-Tryck, Lund University, 2016), 64.

¹⁷⁴ Mohammad A. Yusoff, Athambawa Sarjoon, and Zawiyah M. Zain, "Analyzing the Fragmented Sri Lankan Muslim Politics in Post-Ashraff Era," *Journal of Politics and Law* 11, no. 3 (2018): 18, doi:10.5539/jpl.v11n3p17.

¹⁷⁵ Ameerdeen, *Ethnic Politics of Muslims in Sri Lanka*, 108–112.

¹⁷⁶ Yusoff et al., "Analyzing the Contributions of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress."

¹⁷⁷ Johansson, "Sri Lanka Muslim Congress," 3–4.

Lanka.¹⁷⁸ Aside from this political mechanism, armed jihadist groups began forming, as Fara Mira explains, in response to the difficulties faced by Eastern Province Muslims in the face of LTTE threats during the separatist conflict in Sri Lanka (1989–2009).¹⁷⁹ The jihadist groups formed throughout the Muslim community were used for protection by the Muslim community, counting as a deterrence against Tamils in Muslim and Tamil bordering villages. The LTTE's strategic negotiator, Anton Balasingham, reported to the peace committee on Muslim jihadist operatives in 2001.¹⁸⁰ M.H. Ashraf, as the SLMC leader, had cautioned the LTTE to stop ethnic violence; otherwise, he would convene a holy war with the full participation of jihadists.¹⁸¹ Srikantha Raja, confirming the presence of jihadists in Sri Lanka, notes, "Muslims armed themselves due to the suffering they underwent at the hands of the LTTE, not to oppose the government or to carve out a separate state."¹⁸² Despite their stated purpose to provide Muslims from LTTE threats, these armed jihadist groups attacked and killed several innocent citizens, including Sinhalese and Tamils, in eastern Sri Lanka.

By 1990, there were eight jihadist groups in Sri Lanka: Jihad group, Al Fata group, Saddam group, Osama group, Knox group, Mujahadeen group, the Jetty group, and the

¹⁷⁸Johansson, 2–4.

¹⁷⁹ AP, "Tamils Kill 110 Muslims at 2 Sri Lankan Mosques," *New York Times*, last modified August 5, 1990, <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/08/05/world/tamils-kill-110-muslims-at-2-sri-lankan-mosques.html>; "Farah Mihlar," *The Guardian*, accessed April 19, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/profile/farahmihlar>

¹⁸⁰ Dennis B. McGilvray and Mirak Raheem, "Muslim Perspectives on the Sri Lankan Conflict," *Policy Studies* 41 (2007), 42, <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/3527/ps041.pdf>.

¹⁸¹ Shantha K. Hennayake, "Sri Lanka in 1992: Opportunity Missed in the Ethno-Nationalist Crisis," *Asian Survey* 33, no. 2 (1993): 160, doi:10.1525/as.1993.33.2.00p02502.

¹⁸² Sriskanda R. Rajah, *Government and Politics in Sri Lanka, Biopolitics and Security*, last modified 2004, 89,

[https://books.google.com/books?id=xDAIDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA89&lpg=PA89&dq=In+Sri+Lanka++i+n+2004,+the+Jihad+Group,+the+Al+Fatah+Group,++the+Osama+Group+\(named+after+Osama+bin-Laden\),+the+Jetty+Group,+the+Knox+Group,+the+Mujahadeen+Group+and+the+Islamic+Unity+Foundation+\(IUF\)+\(see+Lun+stead,+2004:+also+see+Asian+Tribune,+2007\).&source=bl&ots=zVpz3YLb2x&sig=4UAmU01YactNygtxGakL-QNhbgo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjDo5iH6ZrdAhVpCDQIHZB1D_oQ6AEwAXoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=In%20Sri%20Lanka%20in%202004%2C%20the%20Jihad%20Group%2C%20the%20Al%20Fatah%20Group%2C%20the%20Osama%20Group%20\(named%20after%20Osama%20bin-Laden\)%2C%20the%20Jetty%20Group%2C%20the%20Knox%20Group%2C%20the%20Mujahadeen%20Group%20and%20the%20Islamic%20Unity%20Foundation%20\(IUF\)%20\(see%20Lun%20stead%2C%202004%203A%20also%20see%20Asian%20Tribune%2C%202007\).&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=xDAIDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA89&lpg=PA89&dq=In+Sri+Lanka++i+n+2004,+the+Jihad+Group,+the+Al+Fatah+Group,++the+Osama+Group+(named+after+Osama+bin-Laden),+the+Jetty+Group,+the+Knox+Group,+the+Mujahadeen+Group+and+the+Islamic+Unity+Foundation+(IUF)+(see+Lun+stead,+2004:+also+see+Asian+Tribune,+2007).&source=bl&ots=zVpz3YLb2x&sig=4UAmU01YactNygtxGakL-QNhbgo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjDo5iH6ZrdAhVpCDQIHZB1D_oQ6AEwAXoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=In%20Sri%20Lanka%20in%202004%2C%20the%20Jihad%20Group%2C%20the%20Al%20Fatah%20Group%2C%20the%20Osama%20Group%20(named%20after%20Osama%20bin-Laden)%2C%20the%20Jetty%20Group%2C%20the%20Knox%20Group%2C%20the%20Mujahadeen%20Group%20and%20the%20Islamic%20Unity%20Foundation%20(IUF)%20(see%20Lun%20stead%2C%202004%203A%20also%20see%20Asian%20Tribune%2C%202007).&f=false)

Islamic Unity Front.¹⁸³ The SLMC represented the savior of Islamic rights by stimulating Islamic identity, and that has become the strong appeal for religious unity. Stated in another way, it created greater challenges for other Muslims elites who enjoyed playing power politics with Sinhalese political parties.¹⁸⁴ The Muslim leaders who worked with the Sinhalese majority political parties became unpopular among Muslims.¹⁸⁵ The Muslim political leaders who affiliated with Sinhalese majority parties were considered as *Kufirs* or infidels by extremists. Johansson concludes, “SLMC politics arises from an antagonism between different nationalistic discourses and Islamism.”¹⁸⁶ Fortunately, moderate Muslim political figures, according to McGilvray, were largely able to contain the armed violence of nationalists and Islamists.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, Muslims lived in eastern Sri Lanka have mobilized their power through Islamization and spreading their Islamist views around the country.¹⁸⁸

According to separate works by Andreas Johansson and M.A. Nuhman, the international revival of Islam in the 1970s gave rise to the highest appearance of Islamism throughout the world.¹⁸⁹ Against this backdrop, the Islamic politics of the SLMC are clearly defined by its constitution as a process of inoculation of Muslim society and state governance with Islamic religious rules, aiming at “global *Ummah*” (universal Islamic polity). Thus, the SLMC mobilized Muslims for political gains by using religion and ethnicity.¹⁹⁰ The use of ethnic nationalism in Muslim politics was a common phenomenon, but that was not the case for religious-associated politics in Sri Lanka. The SLMC marked the first such instance by affiliating Quranic-based politics with its party.¹⁹¹ Alternately,

¹⁸³ Rajah, *Government and Politics in Sri Lanka*, 89.

¹⁸⁴ Johansson, “Sri Lanka Muslim Congress’ Rise to Power,” 1, 2, and 3.

¹⁸⁵ Klem, “Islam, Politics and Violence in Eastern Sri Lanka,” 746.

¹⁸⁶ Johansson, 3.

¹⁸⁷ McGilvray and Raheem, 43.

¹⁸⁸ Klem, 743–747.

¹⁸⁹ M. A. Nuhman, “Sinhala Buddhists Nationalism and Muslim Identity in Sri Lanka,” in *Buddhist Extremists and Muslim Minorities*, ed. John C. Holt (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2016), 24–30.

¹⁹⁰ Klem, 734.

¹⁹¹ Sarjoon, Yusoff, and Hussin, “Anti-Muslim Sentiments and Violence,” 12.

Vellaithambi Ameerdeen argues that Sri Lankan Muslims regained the discrete social formations that they had lost in the colonial period by establishing SLMC.¹⁹² The SLMC structure has become an Islamic-based polity through institutions, such as establishing the authority of a *majlis-i-shura* (religious advisory council) for the resolution-making process through religious interpretations and the requirement that each party member follow Sharia law.¹⁹³ Thus, the SLMC has extended the access of global Islamism to Sri Lanka's politics through the *majlis-i-shura*, which is a member of the Arabic *majlis-i-shura*, and the legislative council for global Khalifa.¹⁹⁴

The SLMC based its political ideology on the Quran, Sunnah, and Sharia laws in Sri Lanka.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, the SLMC flag depicts “la ilaha illallah muhammadur rasulullah”¹⁹⁶ meaning “for the name of Allah, we praise him, seek his help and ask for his forgiveness.”¹⁹⁷ The connection between Islam, social behavior, and political behavior reaches back to the words of the Prophet Mohamed: “al-Islam din wa dawla” (Islam is not only a religion; it is also a matter of state governance). This means it has the control over governance.¹⁹⁸ According to Jaydeva Uyangoda, grievances demanded Sri Lankan Muslims to mobilize; the SLMC, thus became supreme among minority political groupings—a political force perhaps even greater than the respective portion of the population made up of Muslims.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹² Ameerdeen, *Ethnic Politics of Muslims in Sri Lanka*, 114.

¹⁹³ Johansson, “A Third Way,” 43.

¹⁹⁴ Mohammed A. Al-Muhanna, “The Saudi Majlis Ash-Shura: Domestic Functions and International Role, 1993–2003” (PhD diss., University of Durham School of Government and International Affairs, 2005), 211, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/109008.pdf>

¹⁹⁵ Ameerdeen, 114–117.

¹⁹⁶ Ameerdeen, 114.

¹⁹⁷ Ameerdeen, 113.

¹⁹⁸ Gudrun Kramer, “Islamist Notions of Democracy,” *Middle East Research and Information Project*, 183 (August 1993): 133, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3012570.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Aa103692cfbd88c21db19d0d5cb8de227>

¹⁹⁹ Jayadeva Uyangoda, “The Dynamics of Coalition Politics and Democracy in Sri Lanka,” *Coalition Politics and Democratic Consolidation in Asia*, 2012, 176, doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198079392.003.0004

McGilvray notes that Muslims who oriented themselves toward the global *Ummah* also distanced themselves from their Sinhalese and Tamil fellow citizens, creating tension.²⁰⁰ Similarly, Amir Ali opines that Sri Lankan Muslims were and are self-alienating, due to their embrace of a foreign religious culture; they must decide whether they are Muslims who live in Sri Lanka or Sri Lankan Muslims.²⁰¹ McGilvray further describes that the pan-Islamic influences for global *Ummah* further distance Muslims from the Sinhalese and Tamils.²⁰² Islamic politics formed the SLMC and included the Islamic code of conduct in its political cause.²⁰³ The Islamic religious rule of “loving or hating Allah” has become a political concept for the SLMC to unite Muslims and adhere to religionist leadership.²⁰⁴

2. Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE)

The separatist LTTE became more active in the early 1990s, exercising terror against Sri Lankan Muslims, including some notorious massacres.²⁰⁵ On August 3, 1990, for example, the LTTE massacred 147 innocent Muslims inside the Kaththakudi Mosque while they were praying; on October 15, 1992, a separate incident took place at Palliyagodella, where the LTTE killed 285 Muslims.²⁰⁶ The power-sharing demands in the adjoining North and East provinces instigated a rivalry between LTTE and Muslim political leaders, which further divided the populations.²⁰⁷ Muslims in the East, who trusted the state government, remained with the government; other Muslims who did not have trust

²⁰⁰ MacGilvray, “Sri Lankan Muslims,” 12–13.

²⁰¹ Asian Tribune, “Muslims in Sri Lanka Are Self-alienating Themselves from the Mainstream Community – Dr Ameer Ali | Asian Tribune,” Asian Tribune | :: Internet Daily Newspaper ::, last modified July 23, 2013, <http://asiantribune.com/node/63186>

²⁰² MacGilvray, 54.

²⁰³ Johansson, “A Third Way,” 12.

²⁰⁴ Johansson, 36.

²⁰⁵ AP, “Tamils Kill 110 Muslims at 2 Sri Lankan Mosques.”

²⁰⁶ Barbara Crossette, “Tamils Kill 110 Muslims at 2 Sri Lankan Mosques,” *New York Times*, August 5, 1990, 06, <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/08/05/world/tamils-kill-110-muslims-at-2-sri-lankan-mosques.html>, ; The initial death total reported in the New York times rose to 147 after few days.

²⁰⁷ Ahmad, “Contours of Muslim Nationalism in Sri Lanka,” 279.

in the state government joined the Tamil United Liberation Front (a Tamil political party), the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), and ultimately the LTTE.²⁰⁸

The LTTE targeted all political parties and populations who did not ally with them, especially those who were in the governmental and political mainstream.²⁰⁹ The Muslims had the leading businesses in most towns, limiting the Tamils' capacity to engage in trading; for this reason, the LTTE intimidated Muslims.²¹⁰ Tamils also protested that Muslims had intruded on their farming lands during the war and eventually forcing the owners to become laborers.²¹¹ Furthermore, the LTTE began agitating against Muslims because some of their number served in the Sri Lankan armed forces, especially as intelligence agents collecting vital information.²¹² Meanwhile, the Muslims who were living in southern India alongside Hindus, Christians, or Muslims were deemed as Indian Tamils, but with the growth of strict Islam among Muslims in Sri Lanka, wanted a separate identity from the Tamils; this division distanced Tamils and Muslims.²¹³ Thus, Muslims who lived in the North and in the northeastern provinces felt the impact of the LTTE terrorist threat on their lives and properties in the late 1980s.²¹⁴

Ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population in the northern and eastern provinces by the LTTE mobilized the Muslims against the Tamil extremists. Specifically, the LTTE evicted the Muslim population from their dwellings in the North and the East, including

²⁰⁸ Ahmad, 278–279.

²⁰⁹Osantha Thalpapwila, "The Escalation of the LTTE's Violent Activities and the Civil War in Sri Lanka," Department of Economics, University of Kelaniya, May 2017, 03, <file:///C:/Users/pfernand/Downloads/ArticleforPhilosophydept..pdf>.

²¹⁰ Fazil, "The Muslim Factor in the Sri Lanka Conflict," 171–172.

²¹¹ Fazil. 172- 173.

²¹² International Crisis Group, "SRI LANKA'S MUSLIMS: CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE Asia Report," International Crisis Group, last modified May 29, 2007, <https://www.google.com/search?q=SRI+LANKA%E2%80%99S+MUSLIMS%3A+CAUGHT+IN+THE+CROSSFIRE+Asia+Report+N%C2%B0134+%E2%80%93+May+2007&oeq=SRI+LANKA%E2%80%99S+MUSLIMS%3A+CAUGHT+IN+THE+CROSSFIRE+Asia+Report+N%C2%B0134+%E2%80%93+May+2007&aqs=chrome..69i57j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

²¹³ International Crisis Group, "Sri Lanka's Muslims: Caught in the Crossfire Executive Summary and Recommendations, Asia Report," International Crisis Group, 2007, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/465d2a942.pdf>.

²¹⁴ Johansson, "A Third Way," 11.

Jaffna; moreover, the LTTE carried out horrible massacres in Sammnthurai, Kalmunai, Palliyagodella, Kaththankudi, and elsewhere in Sri Lanka.²¹⁵ Muslims, who were evicted from the North by the LTTE, were welcomed by the Sinhalese and accommodated them in their homes, gardens, temples, and schools wherever possible.²¹⁶

The decisions taken by SLMC leadership and their political elites with respect to the separatist terrorism were ambiguous and paradoxical. The SLMC leader A.H.M. Ashraf took different approaches to the LTTE threats against Muslims; first, he raised jihadism against the LTTE; second, while working earnestly with Sri Lankan government, he earned political power in the provincial council, and finally, he sought straight discussion with LTTE leadership.²¹⁷ All the while, the LTTE's indiscriminate attacks continued against the Muslims and Sinhalese who lived in the regions that bordered Tamil-populated areas, and so the Muslim political leadership demanded the establishment of self-security forces for Muslims, sanctioned by the Sri Lankan government.²¹⁸ During 2001–2004, direct negotiations took place between the SLMC leader Ashraf and the LTTE leader Prabhakaran for power sharing. The negotiations also considered Muslim self-rule for Eastern Province, as well as SLMC demands for a separate entity in the international peace process, independent from government, which signified Islamic identity and autonomy.²¹⁹ Meanwhile, Buddhist nationalists saw these independent efforts as the second opposition arising against the nation state.

²¹⁵ MacGilvray, 22.

²¹⁶ Mohammad Yusoff, Athambawa Sarjoon, and Zawiyah Mohd Zain, "Resettlement of Northern Muslims: A Challenge for Sustainable Post-War Development and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka," *Social Sciences* 7, no. 7 (2018): 7, 3.2.2., doi:10.3390/socsci7070106

²¹⁷ Johansson, 67.

²¹⁸ International Crisis Group, "Sri Lanka's Muslims: Caught in the Crossfire Executive Summary and Recommendations," 21.

²¹⁹ Gerald Peiris, "A Study of Contemporary Buddhist-Muslim Relations in Sri Lanka," University of Peradeniya (August 2017), 4–5, file:///comfort/pfernand\$/Desktop/Red%20Articles%20for%20Research/Buddhist%20Nationalism/BMFinal Bookletversion.pdf

C. GROWING BUDDHIST NATIONALISM

The rise of Buddhism nationalism against external and internal forces was intended to maintain a unified Sri Lanka. A growing sense of fear and eventual isolation led the Sinhalese Buddhists to go against the idea of cultural pluralism, propounding a nation in which being the majority was a way to become entitled.²²⁰ In other words, there emerged a distinct and muscular Buddhist nationalism. As per Umar Farooq, scholars have different interpretations of nationalism; it may be rooted in religion, language, or ethnic superiority.²²¹ Out of these causal factors, ethnoreligious identity has been an overarching factor in creating nationalism in Sri Lanka.²²² Stephen Berkwitz writes, “Buddhist nationalism has become articulated as a discursive program for religious, political, and cultural reform, against external forces that are commonly seen as threatening the integrity and survival of Sinhala culture and Buddhism in Sri Lanka.”²²³ Berkwitz describes Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka as a response to external issues affecting Buddhist culture—a partial analog to Muslim identity politics in Sri Lanka finding their impetus in external factors.²²⁴

1. Origins of Religious Political Parties

Buddhist nationalism responded to perceived threats against the Buddhist nationalist state, either global issues or domestic threats. According to Volker Grabowsky, Buddhism provides a basis of rationality for the nation-state, often against non-Buddhists: “Buddhism is the dominant religion in large parts of East, South, and Southeast Asia

²²⁰ Neil DeVotta, “Engaging Sinhalese Buddhist Majoritarianism and Countering Religious Animus in Sri Lanka: Recommendations for the Incoming U.S. Administration,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 2016, 76–85, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/15570274.2016.1184440?needAccess=true>.

²²¹ Umar Farooq, “Nationalism Meaning Definition Origin Characteristics & Symbols,” Study Lecture Notes, 2016, <http://www.studylecturenates.com/international-relations/nationalism-meaning-definition-origin-characteristics-symbols>.

²²² World Bank Group, *Root Causes of the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*, (2004), 1–6, <https://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSRILANKA/Resources/App1.pdf>

²²³ Stephen C. Berkwitz, “Resisting the Global in Buddhist Nationalism: Venerable Somas Discourse of Decline and Reform,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67, no. 1 (2008): 74–76, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20203311?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

²²⁴ Berkwitz, “Resisting the Global in Buddhist Nationalism,” 98.

including SL [Sri Lanka] [and] has played a crucial role in Asian nationalist movements against European colonialism and imperialism.”²²⁵ This role became more political under British rule, when Christian missionaries undertook to convert Sri Lanka’s Buddhists. After independence, the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress, which had been established in the colonial era, requested to restore the religious priorities that Buddhism had prior to the colonial era in 1951.²²⁶ Consequently, the implementation of new constitutions in 1972 and 1978 gave Buddhism priority over other religions.²²⁷ Politics came to Sri Lanka’s Buddhist clergy by force during the war; the killing of 37 monks in Aranthalawa on June 2, 1987 was one of many attacks launched against Buddhist monks by LTTE terrorists.²²⁸ On January 25, 1998, the LTTE carried out a truck bomb attack in the Dalada Maligawa, the Buddhist temple of tooth relic making Buddhist monks more responsive. By 2004, Sri Lanka witnessed the radicalization of a vocal subgroup of Buddhist monks. Specifically, some radical Buddhist monks’ inaugurated “Jathika Hela Urumaya” (the National Heritage Party, or JHU) with a platform that argued, “Minority rights threatened the interests of the Sinhalese-Buddhist majority community and unitary state.”²²⁹ That year, ten monks became Members of Parliament.²³⁰ Furthermore, the negative image of Buddhist monks, created through the demonstrations staged by young Buddhist monks against Sri Lankan

²²⁵ Volker Grabowsky, “Buddhism and Nationalism - Buddhism,” Oxford Bibliographies, last modified October 19, 2018, <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-9780195393521-0249.xml>.

²²⁶ Benjamin Schonthal and Asanga Welikala, *Buddhism and the Regulation of Religion in the New Constitution: Past Debates, Present Challenges, and Future Options* (CPA Working Papers on Constitutional Reform, University of London : Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2016), 6, <https://www.cpalanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Buddhism-and-the-regulation-of-religion-in-the-new-constitution-Working-Paper-3.pdf>.

²²⁷ Wiswa Warnapala, “Sri Lanka’s New Constitution,” *Asian Survey* 20, no. 09 (September 1980): 917, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2643737.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A57c876db48ec319d34a56dc1b398bf27>.

²²⁸ Walter Jayawardhana, “Sri Lanka Tamil Tigers Shoots at Buddhist Monks, Scandal-plagued South Korea Buddhist Order Elects New Leader,” *Buddhist Channel*, July 13, 2006, <http://www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=43,2917,0,0,1,0#.W2yrV->.

²²⁹ DeVotta and Stone, “Jathika Hela Urumaya and Ethno-Religious Politics in Sri Lanka,” 78.

²³⁰ James J. Hughes, “Buddhist Monks and Politics in Sri Lanka - 1987,” *Change Surfer*, accessed November 12, 2018, <http://www.changesurfer.com/Bud/Sri/Sri.html>.

campus authorities, persisted toward all monks.²³¹ Despite this, until the end of the separatist war in 2009, radical Buddhist monks were not seen rallying against Islamists in Sri Lanka.²³²

2. Instrumental Politics

Only after the war did Sri Lankan Buddhist nationalism acquire the more or less open anti-Muslim stance that is associated with Buddhist nationalism in such other places as Myanmar. A faction separated from the JHU party, calling itself BBS, which was led by Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara, a radical Buddhist monk.²³³ He had headed anti-LTTE movements during the separatist war and launched its anti-Muslim campaign in 2012.²³⁴ In addition, another Sinhalese Buddhist organization, Ravana Balaya, also promoted anti-Muslim sentiments.²³⁵ Although these monks insisted that they challenged global political Islamism, they represented the local and national agendas of instrumentalist nationalist politicians.²³⁶ Ranjith Devasisri argues that all these monks and Sinhalese Buddhist organizations are politically motivated and backed by previous government leaders and their politicians who manipulate the monks and their platform as political instruments.²³⁷

The instrumental politics of the previous government allowed BBS to clash with the Muslim community. The BBS challenged the use of *abaya*, the Halal certification of foods, and encouraged people to refuse to shop in Muslim owned enterprises in Sri

²³¹ Nirmal R. Dewasiri, "New Buddhist Extremism and the Challenges to Ethno-Religious Coexistence in Sri Lanka," *Journal of International Centre for Ethnic Studies*, October 2016, 25, <http://ices.lk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/New-Buddhist-Extremism-and-the-Challenges.pdf>.

²³² Devon Haynie, "The Regional Reach of Buddhist Nationalism," U.S. News, last modified November 7, 2017, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2017-11-07/buddhist-nationalism-reaches-beyond-myanmar>

²³³ Buddhist monk Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara is presently serving a six-year sentence in prison for threatening people.

²³⁴ Rohan Gunaratna, "Sinhala-Muslim Riots in Sri Lanka: The Need for Restoring Communal History," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 10, no. 04 (April 2018): 1–4, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26402133.pdf>

²³⁵ Dewasiri, "New Buddhist Extremism and the Challenges," 12.

²³⁶ Dewasiri, 12, 13.

²³⁷ Dewasiri, 12.

Lanka.²³⁸ The implementation of the Arabian dress code (*hijab*, *Niqab*, and *burkar*) for women is considered in most Western countries to be part of the Islamization process, and some countries have banned it.²³⁹ In contemporary Sri Lanka, Buddhist nationalists have challenged this style of dress that conceals the whole body from top to bottom, and enables an individual to avoid security checks. Furthermore, the BBS instigated the idea that concealing Muslim women from head to foot is an introduction of Islamist culture by foreigners and represents the early signs of radical Islam spreading in Sri Lanka that will change indigenous Islamic practices.²⁴⁰ In 2014, this conflict spread all over the country, especially in areas such as Aluthgama, Beruwla, Kaluthara, and Kandy. In this connection, the U.S. State Department reports, “BBS extremists attacked and assaulted civilians and members of religious minorities and burned their property and riots started by the BBS resulted in at least three deaths.”²⁴¹ On June 12, 2014, these riots began in Beruwala and Aluthgama as a response to Muslim youth insulting and assaulting a Buddhist monk in Darga Town Kaluthar, a Muslim populated area.²⁴² Although police arrested the three suspected Muslim youths, the protest began as a response to the incident and escalated into a riot, killing three people, damaging houses, shops, and displacing both Sinhalese and Muslims (8,000 and 2,000), respectively.²⁴³ Furthermore, in contemporary Sri Lanka firm beliefs and practices have mirrored the growing radical Islamization process conducted by radical Islamist organizations and contributed to these incidents.²⁴⁴

²³⁸ Sarjoon, Yusoff, and Hussin, “Anti-Muslim Sentiments and Violence” 4, 6.

²³⁹ “The Islamic Veil across Europe,” BBC News, last modified May 31, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13038095>.

²⁴⁰ Patali C. Ranawaka, “Islamist Issues Spread from Saudi and Qatar are Increasing in Sri Lanka” YouTube (June 12, 2017), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6F6PUwZ1IWE>; Champika Ranwaka is the power and energy Minister of Sri Lanka and one of the inaugural members of BBS. (You tube video).

²⁴¹ Bureau of Public Affairs, The United States of America, “Sri Lanka,” U.S. Department of State, last modified June 15, 2015, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2014/sca/236650.htm>

²⁴² John Holt, *Buddhist Extremists and Muslim Minorities: Religious Conflict in Contemporary Sri Lanka* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 166.

²⁴³ Holt, *Buddhist Extremists and Muslim Minorities*, 166–167.

²⁴⁴ Aboobacker Rameez, “Sociology of Sri Lankan Muslims: Dealing with Different Dimensions of Muslim Society,” *Journal of Engineering and Applied Science*, 2018, 1791, <http://ir.lib.seu.ac.lk/bitstream/handle/123456789/3073/My%20published%20article%20on%20Sri%20Lanka%20Muslims%20at%20Medwell%20publication.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=1>

3. Social Media

BBS associates, as well as Islamist groups, have used social media such as Facebook to spread information that has created divisions between the ethnicities in Sri Lanka.²⁴⁵ According to Athambawa Sarjoon, Mohammad Agus Yusoff, and Noordin Hussin, there were a series of attacks on Muslim religious places in the year 2012 that were propagated and mobilized through social media by BBS.²⁴⁶ The BBS has extensively used Facebook as their platform to spread global radical Islamist videos to spark Islamophobia among Sinhala Buddhists, which motivated Sinhalese against Muslim radicals.²⁴⁷ The latest clashes occurred between Sinhalese and Muslims in Kandy on March 8, 2018, following a road assault incident.²⁴⁸ Following the assault, a Sinhalese youth died after two weeks of treatment at the hospital. The Facebook communications, which Buddhist monks were suspected of propagating subsequent to the death, escalated the riots in Kandy, with Sinhalese burning and vandalizing Muslim shops and houses. Ultimately, the Sri Lankan government blocked social media, including Facebook, to control the situation.²⁴⁹ The Sinhalese riots ended with further death on each side, bringing the death total to three—two Buddhist Sinhalese and one Muslim.²⁵⁰

D. CONCLUSION

The progressive integration of Muslims in Sri Lankan society had many cultural, economic, and political fault lines, formed by ethno-religious factors that shaped a fractured Sri Lankan community. The strict code of foreign Islamic affiliations combined

²⁴⁵ James J. Stewart, "Muslim–Buddhist Conflict in Contemporary Sri Lanka," *South Asia Research* 34, no. 3 (2014): 242, doi: 10.1177/0262728014549134

²⁴⁶ Sarjoon, Yusoff, and Hussin, "Anti-Muslim Sentiments and Violence," 5.

²⁴⁷ Robin Noel B. Jones, "Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism and Islamophobia in Contemporary Sri Lanka," (PhD diss., Bates College, 2015), 37, <https://scarab.bates.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1158&context=honorstheses>

²⁴⁸ Adam Dean, "Where Facebook Rumors Fuel Thirst for Revenge," *New York Times*, April 22, 2018, 1; Amanda Taub and Max Fisher, "Where Countries Are Tinderboxes and Facebook Is a Match," *New York Times*, last modified April 21, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/21/world/asia/facebook-sri-lanka-riots.html>.

²⁴⁹ Dean, "Where Facebook," 1.

²⁵⁰ "Anti-Muslim Riots in Sri Lanka Signal a New Social Fissure," *Economist*, March 8, 2018, <https://www.economist.com/asia/2018/03/08/anti-muslim-riots-in-sri-lanka-signal-a-new-social-fissure>.

with these factors to mobilize and unite a growing Muslim population in Sri Lanka. These changes developed into a behavioral pattern of Muslims and constituted a schism among ethnicities, enabling extremist ideologies to enter Muslim society. Along these lines, such radical ideologies mobilized Buddhist nationalists and Islamist groups against each other. Certainly not all Muslims and Sinhalese have embraced extreme ideologies. Nevertheless, ethno-religious politics threaten multi-ethnic harmony in Sri Lanka. These issues have typically extended the distance between Sinhalese and Muslims, and between Muslims and Tamils; furthermore, these issues have destabilized the political structure and exacerbated the ailing economy—which not only feeds more domestic extremism but also has paved the way for foreign actors to influence the Muslim community.

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III. MUSLIM MOBILIZATION IN SRI LANKA: INTERNATIONAL FACTORS

This chapter identifies the international influences on the Muslim community in Sri Lanka. Further, it examines how foreign actors acquire and retain access to the community through various organizations. Ultimately, this chapter finds that this foreign involvement has activated the Muslims in Sri Lanka through the Islamization process to mobilize against other communities. According to Klem, Islamization in eastern Sri Lanka emphasizes Islamist politics through religious revivalism, which has already created rivalries among Muslims, as well as with other ethnicities. Armed Islamists, in particular, can be seen as jihadism.²⁵¹ The presence of active Wahhabi groups from outside Sri Lanka and other armed religious groups have further extended the Islamist discourse within the boundaries of Kaththankudi,²⁵² the most densely Muslim-populated village (of approximately 600,00) that has been affected by external Islamist influences (Sunni and Sufi/Shia Islamists) in eastern Sri Lanka.²⁵³ This chapter explores the economic connections, social and religious organizations, and political groupings that, together, effect this foreign influence in the name of Islamic unity.

Over time, the influences of Islamization have prevented Muslim students from expanding their knowledge of science, math, and technological studies.²⁵⁴ The teaching of Arabic, Islamic-oriented studies, and radical Islam with different Quranic interpretations in madrassas has led to feelings of isolation among Muslim students in society and has inculcated radical Islamic ideas.²⁵⁵ In 1982, the dress code of Gulf countries, which was not a practice of Sri Lankan Muslims, was adopted, and the *hijab* (headscarf) and head caps

²⁵¹ Klem, "Islam, Politics and Violence in Eastern Sri Lanka," 735–736

²⁵² Klem, 736–737.

²⁵³ Champika Liyanaarachchi, "Kaththankudi Clashes: Local Feud Given Sinister Twists By Champika Liyanaarachchi," The Eight Man Team, last modified November 10, 2004, <https://lrrp.wordpress.com/2004/11/10/kaththankudi-clashes-local-feud-given-sinister-twists-by-champika-liyanaarachchi/>

²⁵⁴ Ali, "Islamic Revivalism in Harmony and Conflict," 300–304.

²⁵⁵ Ali, 304.

were formally announced as part of the school uniform for girls and boys in eastern Sri Lanka.²⁵⁶ Arabic and Islamic education reforms by Muslim elites, based on Pan Islamic influences, prevented Muslim students from exposure to general education, whereas Sinhalese and Tamils had their education in English and had the opportunity to study technology and science.²⁵⁷ There were more than 205 Muslim private madrassas registered for teaching Arabic and Sharia law by 1999, and the *All Ceylon Jammiathul Ulama* (the Islamic religious body of theology) continues to prepare the teaching guide and syllabus for Arabic colleges in Sri Lanka.²⁵⁸ There are more than 1,000 government schools designed for Islamic, Quranic, and Arabic education, including 751 pure Muslim schools. State testing is carried out for all three levels in the Sri Lanka education system common to all ethnicities.²⁵⁹ Furthermore, all Sri Lankan universities that have religious faculties include a separate Islamic faculty.²⁶⁰ Ranga Jayasuriya, a journalist and international politics scholar, has reported that the young Mawlawis, who returned after their studies in Pakistan and the Middle East, not only campaigned for a radicalized Salafi path for Muslims in Sri Lanka, but also built new mosques all around the country under Gulf donor projects, and these mosques are serving as madrassas.²⁶¹

A. FOREIGN ECONOMIC FACTORS

Foreign economic assistance has mobilized the Muslim community with implications for growing Islamization through ethno-religious nationalism in Sri Lanka. This section refers to the elements of Islamization in an Islamic state that have appeared in

²⁵⁶ Ahmad, "Contours of Muslim nationalism in Sri Lanka," 281.

²⁵⁷ Smith, "Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice among," 63.

²⁵⁸ Nagoor Gafoordeen, Zamri Arifin, and Kasheh Abu Bakar, "Brief Study on Practices of Arabic Language in Sri Lanka," *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* 9, no. 6 (March/April 2013): 44, <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol9-issue6/I0964247.pdf>

²⁵⁹ Gafoordeen, Arifin, and Kasheh, "Brief Study on Practices of Arabic Language in Sri Lanka," 44.

²⁶⁰ Chandra Gunawardena, "Improving the Quality of University Education in Sri Lanka: An Analysis of Quality Assurance Agency Council's Reviews," *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences* 40, no. 1 (2017): 40, [file:///C:/Users/pfernand/Downloads/7497-26459-1-PB%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/pfernand/Downloads/7497-26459-1-PB%20(1).pdf).

²⁶¹ Ranga Jayasuriya, "Sri Lanka's ISIS Militant: Why We Should Be (very) Worried," *Daily Mirror* - Sri Lanka, last modified July 28, 2015, <http://www.dailymirror.lk/81155/sri-lanka-s-isis-militant-why-we-should-be-very-worried>.

the recent past in Sri Lanka—including an Islamic form of finance, Islamic law, Arabic Islamic education, open clashes over Islamic theological beliefs, and Islamic religious practices inculcated by external religious teaching. The modern phenomenon has at least half a century of history: foreign financial assistance for Islamization in early the 1950s established youth movements aimed at global *Ummah* through teachings of *Al Quran* and *Sunnah*.²⁶² Donor countries like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iran, Turkey, and Qatar regularly provide financial assistance to Sri Lankan Muslims—with certain strings, or at least expectations, attached, specifically organization promoting the religion.²⁶³ Amir Ali, explaining the implications of Middle East funding for the propagation of Islamization, says that “petrodollars bring the passion of activities of Islamizing economic and political proportions in Sri Lanka” similar to other Islamic countries.²⁶⁴

1. Foreign Aid

This foreign finance has literally changed the social behavioral setting of the Sri Lankan Muslim population. Meghan O’Sullivan states that Sri Lankan Muslims were embroiled in the Islamic revival process through funding from the Islamic world.²⁶⁵ For example, Iraqi financial assistance approved for flood relief in 1978 was utilized to build a village, including 100 houses and a mosque; the so-called model village was named for Saddam Hussein.²⁶⁶ As the initial step, the Muslim political elites influenced the government to established separate funds for the Muslim community through a mandatory deduction of 4 percent from wages of Muslim government servants. Later these Muslim political elites, led by M.H. Mouhammed and A.C.S. Hameed, managed to convert the

²⁶²M. I. Jazeel et al., “Islam and Muslim Youth Movements in Sri Lanka: an Assessment,” *Dakwah & Pembangunan Belia Islam*, 2007, 449–450, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321975095>.

²⁶³ Meghan O’Sullivan, “Conflict as a Catalyst: The Changing Politics of the Sri Lankan Muslims,” *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 20, no. sup001 (1997): 303–304, doi:10.1080/00856409708723316; “ISF Adopts New Financial Aid for Development Projects,” *Daily Pakistan Observer*, July 20, 2018, <https://pakobserver.net/isf-adopts-new-financial-aid-for-development-projects/>.

²⁶⁴ Ali, “Political Buddhism, Islamic Orthodoxy and Open Economy,” 308–209.

²⁶⁵ O’Sullivan, “Conflict as a Catalyst,” 306.

²⁶⁶ “BBC NEWS South Asia Gloom in Saddam’s Sri Lanka Village,” BBC, December 16, 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3323455.stm

funds into direct Arab nation funds, while the contributions of government servants continued to improve regularly.²⁶⁷

After 2004, development projects conducted in Kaththankudi with Saudi Arabian funds rebuilt the town in the image of an Arabian village.²⁶⁸ Specifically, Kaththankudi now has permanent gateways on all road access points, symbolizing borders to the village.²⁶⁹ Within these boundaries, Islam (Sunnah and Sharia) predominates,²⁷⁰ and strict local rules prevent other ethnicities from living there—the elements of Islamization.²⁷¹ Similarly, in 2017, Qatar completed a housing project exclusively for the Muslim population in Mannar district, which included 150 houses as well as religious and educational facilities.²⁷² The exclusion of non-Muslim Sri Lankans from these improvement projects itself represents a step away from multi-ethnicism.²⁷³ It also may lay the foundations for undue Islamist influence in these regions of Sri Lanka. In 2017, a Qatar non-governmental organization (NGO) “the Foundation Sheikh Ibn Abdullah for

²⁶⁷ O’Sullivan, 302.

²⁶⁸ “Kattankudy in Eastern Province is located in Sri Lanka,” The World Directory of First Impressions, n.d.https://www.google.com/search?q=kaththankudi+town&rlz=1C1CHXU_en&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=eSTbmUwQldd6eM%253A%252C9GSq24PcHJDA8M%252C_&usg=AI4_-kRekh8H_NVJEt8N35HRzXP3-5B4eQ&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjnuPnkm_LdAhWEHzQIHTsnBZkQ9QEwAXoECAQQBg#imgsrc=M6voCiC9cKeKuM.

²⁶⁹ “Kattankudy in Eastern Province Destination Guide Sri Lanka,” Tripmondo, 2014, https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+Kaththankudi&rlz=1C1CHXU_en&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiQ25Sgyf_dAhUCHzQIHRHMDUMQ_AUIDigB&biw=1680&bih=939#imgsrc=H3Ik0DLq5I7sxM. ; https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+Kaththankudi&rlz=1C1CHXU_en&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiQ25Sgyf_dAhUCHzQIHRHMDUMQ_AUIDigB&biw=1680&bih=939#imgsrc=eE5VMcGdSyemxM

²⁷⁰ UK Border Agency, *Country of Origin Information Report Sri Lanka* (Country of Origin Information Service, 2008), 130, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1294351/1329_1215088171_1229-1214983423-k-sri-lanka-130608.pdf.

²⁷¹ Christian Pelras, “Religion, Tradition and the Dynamics of Islamization in South-Sulawesi - Persée,” Persée : Accéder à Des Milliers De Publications Scientifiques, last modified March 14, 2016, https://www.persee.fr/doc/arch_0044-8613_1985_num_29_1_2226.

²⁷² “Village Built for Poor Muslims in Sri Lanka at a Cost of QR3.3m,” *Peninsula Qatar*, June 20, 2017, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/20/06/2017/Village-built-for-poor-Muslims-in-Sri-Lanka-at-a-cost-of-QR3.3m>.

²⁷³ Marit Busto, “The Politics of a Second Largest Minority - or the Fragmentation of Sri Lankan Muslim Politics after Year 2000” (PhD diss., University of Oslo, 2007), 81, <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/14738/Master.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

Humanitarian Services” built the biggest mosque in the North Eastern Province of Sri Lanka and another village consisting of 200 houses and a mosque in 2012.²⁷⁴ These continuous funding efforts from the Islamic world are mobilizing the Sri Lankan Muslim community toward strict Islamist religious practices.

Although today Islamist organizations often mischaracterize themselves as welfare organizations in Sri Lanka,²⁷⁵ most of them are the very same organizations that RAND Europe identified as funding Islamization in the Netherlands.²⁷⁶ For example, the Saudi Arabian-funded NGO Al Haj Adul Jawad Alim Valiyullah Trust was registered in the year 2009 as an official donor trustee to handle all the direct foreign financial funds aimed at developing the Islamic community in Sri Lanka.²⁷⁷ Yet, this organization had worked earlier—without an official capacity—to propagate Islamization by providing monetary and material benefits to poor Muslims in Sri Lanka, using welfare activities to promote Islamic separatism.²⁷⁸ P.K. Balachandran figures that such organizations as the Saudi-funded Centre for Islamic Guidance, established in the early 1990s, are sowing Wahhabism.²⁷⁹

Such scholars as Amir Ali insist that Saudi Arabian Wahhabism in Sri Lanka is neither Islamist politics—say, equivalent to ISIS, Al-Qaeda, or Taliban—nor the agency

²⁷⁴ “Sheikh Thani Foundation Ibn Abdullah for Humanitarian Services,” I Care!, December 13, 2017, <https://www.icare2015.eu/sheikh-thani-foundation-ibn-abdullah-humanitarian-services/>

²⁷⁵ O’Sullivan, 304.

²⁷⁶ Stijn Hoorens et al., *Foreign Financing of Islamic Institutions in the Netherlands* (Cambridge, UK: Rand Corporation, 2015), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR900/RR992/RAND_RR992.pdf

²⁷⁷ Freedom House Board of Trustees, “Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Invade American Mosques,” Center for Religious Freedom, Freedom House, last modified 2005, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Saudi%20Publications%20on%20Hate%20Ideology%20Invade%20American%20Mosques.pdf

²⁷⁸ ACT, No. 46 (2009) Gazette Notification Sri Lanka, [https://srilankalaw.lk/YearWisePdf/2009/AL-HAJ_ABDUL_JAWAD_ALIM_VALIYULLAH_TRUST_\(INCORPORATION\)_OF_2009.pdf](https://srilankalaw.lk/YearWisePdf/2009/AL-HAJ_ABDUL_JAWAD_ALIM_VALIYULLAH_TRUST_(INCORPORATION)_OF_2009.pdf)

²⁷⁹ P. K. Balachandran, “Search Rise of Wahabism in Eastern Sri Lanka,” *Hindustan Times*, April 26, 2007, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world/rise-of-wahabism-in-eastern-sri-lanka/story-AJuC17hu8Dt2bEvky3FarO.html>.

or even evidence of Islamization.²⁸⁰ Nevertheless, because Wahhabism dictates extreme religious practices that have not previously existed in Sri Lanka,²⁸¹ such as piety banking, application and enforcement of Sharia law, Tawhi Jamaat and Tabligi Jamaat, it depicts the Islamization process. Furthermore, Saudi Arabian money promotes Wahhabism among Muslims in Sri Lanka. This effort is achieved through their dedicated media including “Darussalam Global Publishes,” printed handbills, and newspapers dispensed via island-wide mosques; these efforts have indirect and direct influence in the Islamization effort.²⁸² As O’Sullivan found in her research, the externally employed Moulavis (honored Islamic scholars or *Ulama*) are paid by Saudi Arabia, and they have been employed in Sri Lankan mosques to preach according to Middle Eastern practices.²⁸³

There seems to be something of an arms race for sowing Islamization between Iran and Saudi Arabia, both of which use extensive financing to promote strict Quranic practices and values among local Muslim populations in South Asia and South East Asia.²⁸⁴ Most of these aid programs invest money without any formal agreements and do not have accountability or transparency. Several such organizations are at work in Sri Lanka today. For example, the Saudi Arabian funded Al Huda (The Correct Path) International Welfare Foundation operates in Sri Lanka, notably to finance the building of many madrassas.²⁸⁵ Al Huda was founded by Farhat Hashmi, a Pakistani and former Jamaat-e-Islami activist with clear extremist proclivities.²⁸⁶ Furthermore, since 1994 Al Huda funding for Muslims

²⁸⁰ Amir Ali, “Islamism=Wahhabism - Confused Cassandras,” *Colombo Telegraph*, last modified March 25, 2018, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/islamismwahhabism-confused-cassandras/>.

²⁸¹ Shenali Waduge, “Challenges to Peaceful Co-existence: Question of Tolerance in Sri Lanka,” LankaWeb, last modified January 4, 2013, <http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2013/01/04/challenges-to-peaceful-co-existence-question-of-tolerance-in-sri-lanka/>.

²⁸² Michaela Prokop, “Saudi Arabia: The Politics of Education,” *International Affairs* 79, no. 1 (January 2003): 48, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1468-2346.00296>

²⁸³ O’Sullivan, 304.

²⁸⁴ Ronald L. Bull, Amanda Pandich, and John P. Woods, “Islamization as Part of Globalization: Some Southeast Asian Examples,” *Journal of International and Global Studies*, 2010, 34–36, <http://www.lindenwood.edu/files/resources/32-46.pdf>.

²⁸⁵ James M. Dorsey, “Pakistan’s Lurch Towards Ultra-Conservatism Abetted by Saudi-Inspired Pyramid Scheme,” *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, March 2018, 69, 70, 71, doi:10.2139/ssrn.2954341.

²⁸⁶ Farhan Zahid, “Understanding the Al-Huda Ideology,” Mackenzie Institute, last modified August 2, 2016, <http://mackenzieinstitute.com/4852-2/>.

has encouraged Sri Lankan Muslims to deal exclusively within the community, including trade, Islamic piety banking, and insurance schemes for Muslims in Sri Lanka.²⁸⁷

Sri Lankan politicians are often unable to enforce the law in the face of massive foreign financing. For example, in 2015, a Saudi-funded development in Wilpaththu National Park was approved by issuing a special government note (which delegated official authority using executive powers), which is illegal.²⁸⁸ The forest sustained significant and permanent devastation in the process.²⁸⁹ Even ancient Buddhist relics in Deegavapiya were bulldozed to make way for the construction of 500 houses by Saudi Arabia for people displaced by the tsunami in the East.²⁹⁰ Despite a restraining order, the houses were distributed among Muslims in 2018.²⁹¹ Saudi Arabia executes direct funds through loans for the development of important infrastructure as well.²⁹² In the face of such economic advantage, the Sri Lankan government cannot effectively stop these Islamic isolationist or separatist settlement programs.²⁹³

The external forces of Islamic politics capitalize on every aspect of Sri Lanka's economic situation. For example, Sri Lanka mostly relies on remittances from nationals employed overseas—overwhelmingly in Middle Eastern countries. There are nearly a half-

²⁸⁷ Zubair Mughal, "Al Huda," Al Huda Centre of Islamic Banking & Economics (CIBE), last modified January 15, 2008, <http://www.alhudacibe.com/AlhudaMagazine/Issue-024/article02.php>.

²⁸⁸ EJOLT, "Land Grabbing for Human Settlements in Wilpattu National Park, Sri Lanka | EJAtlas," Environmental Justice Atlas, last modified August 7, 2015, <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/land-grabbing-in-forestland-for-human-settlements>.

²⁸⁹ Environmental Foundation Limited, "Challenging the Destruction of Wilpattu Forest Complex: EFL Takes Legal Action," Environment Foundation (Guarantee) Limited, last modified April 21, 2017, <http://efl.lk/v3/2017/04/21/challenging-destruction-wilpattu-forest-complex-efl-takes-legal-action>; Nathasha De Alwis, "Exposé: Truth Sprouts After Alleged Mass Destruction in Wilpattu," Newsfirst, last modified December 24, 2017, <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2017/12/24/expose-truth-sprouts-alleged-mass-destruction-wilpattu/>.

²⁹⁰ Indika Sri Aravinda, "Officials Ordered to Distribute Saudi Built Homes," *Sunday Leader*, November 14, 1, <http://www.thesundayleader.lk/2017/10/01/officials-ordered-to-distribute-saudi-built-homes/>.

²⁹¹ Aravinda, "Officials Ordered to Distribute Saudi Built Homes."

²⁹² News Desk, "Saudi Arabia commits \$300 mn for Sri Lanka development projects," Colombo Page, last modified September 26, 2018, http://www.colombopage.com/archive_18B/Sep26_1537982802CH.php

²⁹³ Yusoff, Sarjoon, and Zain, "Resettlement of Northern Muslims," 20.

million Sri Lankans working in Saudi Arabia alone.²⁹⁴ Similarly, famous Ceylon tea forms one of Sri Lanka's major exports, also in exchange for Middle Eastern oil,²⁹⁵ making Colombo sensitive to issues of concern to these states and their populations, including Sri Lanka's Muslims.²⁹⁶

2. Social and Religious Organization

Reviving religious-cultural traditions through Arabic education has become fundamental to Muslim identity in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan Muslims used Sinhalese and Tamil as their languages until the 1890s.²⁹⁷ To teach Islam, even the Holy Quran was translated into Tamil and Sinhalese, as there was little use of Arabic among the Muslim population.²⁹⁸ Initially, imams from Turkey and Egypt were sent to expand Islamic education in Sri Lanka in 1890's.²⁹⁹ After Arabi Pasha's arrival and the advent of revivalism in Sri Lanka, however, Islamic educators began to promote, and then demand, the use of Arabic.³⁰⁰ The Arabic emphasis on Quranic studies spread to schools in Sri Lanka by the end of the 19th century.³⁰¹ In the recent past, the emphasis on Arabic or Islamic dress code has increased among the Sri Lankan Muslim women. These dress codes and other gender-based controls promoted by social movements and mosques have prevented Muslim

²⁹⁴ Rasika Jayasuriya and Brian Opeskin, "The Migration of Women Domestic Workers from Sri Lanka: Protecting the Rights of Children Left Behind," *Cornell International Law Journal*, 2015, 584–587, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CMW/JointGC_CRC_CMW/Jayasuriya_Opeskin.pdf.

²⁹⁵ Julianne Geiger, "Sri Lanka Looks to Pay for Iranian Crude with Tea," Oilprice.com, last modified July 23, 2018, <https://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/Sri-Lanka-Looks-To-Pay-Iranian-Crude-With-Tea.html>

²⁹⁶ Ali, "Political Buddhism, Islamic Orthodoxy and Open Economy," 310.

²⁹⁷ Smith, "Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice," 23.

²⁹⁸ Ameerdeen, *Ethnic Politics of Muslims in Sri Lanka*, 38.

²⁹⁹ Nagoor G. Gafoordeen, "Brief Study on Practices of Arabic Language in Sri Lanka," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 9, no. 6 (2013): 45–46, <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol9-issue6/I0964247.pdf>.

³⁰⁰ Arabi Pasha was able to inspire the adoption of a strict practice of the Islamic religion and Arabic studies for Sri Lankan Muslims, and by introducing strict practices he propagated the Islamic identity for Muslims in Sri Lanka.

³⁰¹ Ali, "Islamic Revivalism in Harmony and Conflict," 299–301.

women from social interaction with other communities.³⁰² The ensuing Arabic and Islamic education reforms prevented the exposure of Muslim students to general national education, where Sinhalese and Tamils had their education in English.³⁰³ The differentiation of Sri Lanka's Muslims, which served British political aims at the time, presently became one of the bases of Islamist social and religious separation.³⁰⁴

3. Immigrants and Refugees

Illegal and atypical immigrants became a threat to Sri Lanka with the rise of Islamist religious extremism. In contrast to the centuries of tolerance and mutual accommodation, the recent Muslim refugees from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Maldives are seen as a greater threat to Sri Lanka because of the advent of contemporary Islamist terrorism in the world;³⁰⁵ Sri Lanka is particularly sensitive to terrorism threats since the recently ended war.³⁰⁶ In 2014, the Department of Immigration and Emigration in Sri Lanka reported an increase of asylum seekers and refugees, 1,562 and 308, respectively to the handful of refugees in previous years, because of the conflicts between Sunni and Ahmadiyya Islamic sectors in Pakistan and Afghanistan and Buddhist radicals and Muslims in Myanmar.³⁰⁷ These events have created an influx of Pakistani and Afghanistani nationals, including Sunni Muslim refugees, in Sri Lanka from 2007 to 2014, particularly in the Puttalam and Negombo areas.³⁰⁸ To control the situation, the immigration authority stopped the on-arrival visa entry process for Afghan and Pakistani

³⁰² Farzana Haniffa, "Piety as Politics amongst Muslim Women in Contemporary Sri Lanka," *Modern Asian Studies* 42, no. 2-3 (2008): 347-349, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20488023?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

³⁰³ Smith, "Islamic Ideology and Religious Practice," 63.

³⁰⁴ Zackariya and Shanmugaratnam, "Communalisation of Muslims In Sri Lanka," 8, 9.

³⁰⁵ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, "Chapter 2. Country Reports: South and Central Asia Overview" (Washington, DC: Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, 2015), <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257518.htm>

³⁰⁶ Mahroof, "Muslims in Sri Lanka: The Long Road to Accommodation," 88.

³⁰⁷ Melani M. Perera, "Sri Lanka, UN to Government: Stop Deporting Pakistani and Afghan Refugees," AsiaNews, 2014, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Sri-Lanka,-UN-to-government:-Stop-deporting-Pakistani-and-Afghan-refugees--31848.html>.

³⁰⁸ Economist, "Paradise Lost-Asylum-seekers in Sri Lanka," *Economist*, last modified 4, 2014, <https://www.economist.com/banyan/2014/07/04/paradise-lost>.

immigrants to Sri Lanka in 2014.³⁰⁹ Muslim refugees were seeking asylum in Sri Lanka or waiting to reach other destinations for asylum; however, few of them were deported using diplomatic assistance from Pakistan.³¹⁰ Some radicalized Buddhist monks and nationalist politicians, like Udaya Gmmanpila (leader of Pivithuru Hela Urumaya), have protested against admitting refugees, stating that they would have come with predisposed hatred against Buddhists given their previous experiences in Myanmar.³¹¹

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan defense authorities and the immigration department suspected that ISIS radical Islamists from Pakistan and Afghanistan had used Sri Lanka as a conduit to enter Syria and Western countries.³¹² Moreover, Turkish embassy sources reported that a group of 16 Sri Lankan Muslims, who joined ISIS headed by Abu Suayah al Silani, (a Sri Lankan ISIS leader who died in an airstrike in 2015), arrived in Syria in December 2014.³¹³ Adding to this fear was the fact that a Lakshar-e-Taiba member, Mirza Himayat Baig, who was convicted for a bombing in a German bakery in Pune India in 2011, injuring 64 and killing 17, had planned the attack and trained to make IEDs in Sri Lanka.³¹⁴ On August 31, 2018, Australian police arrested a Sri Lankan Muslim suspected as an ISIS member and charged him with planning a series of terrorist attacks in

³⁰⁹ “New Travel Policy: Sri Lanka Cancels On-arrival Visa for Pakistan,” *Express Tribune*, last modified June 28, 2014, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/728174/new-travel-policy-sri-lanka-cancels-on-arrival-visa-for-pakistan/>

³¹⁰ Thomson Reuters Foundation, “Court Orders Sri Lanka to Stop Deporting Pakistani Asylum Seekers,” Reuters, last modified August 15, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sri-lanka-refugees-pakistan-idUSKBN0GF1PK20140815>.

³¹¹ Matt Schissler, Matthew J. Walton, and Phyu P. Thi, “Reconciling Contradictions: Buddhist-Muslim Violence, Narrative Making and Memory in Myanmar,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 47, no. 3 (2017): 382, doi:10.1080/00472336.2017.1290818; P. K. Balachandran, “Sri Lankan Muslims and Buddhists Hold Counter Demonstrations on Rohingya Issue,” *Southeast Asian Monitor*, last modified September 17, 2017, <https://southeastasianmonitor.com/2017/09/17/sri-lankan-muslims-buddhists-hold-counter-demonstrations-rohingya-issue/>

³¹² United States Department of State, “Country Report,” 259, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/258249.pdf>.

; U.S. Department of Justice, last modified August 2017, https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/pages/attachments/2017/08/02/dos-terrorism_2016_final.pdf.

³¹³ Animesh Roul, “Islamic State’s Sri Lankan Outreach,” *ResearchGate*, December, 2, 2015, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286451306_Islamic_State%27s_Sri_Lankan_Outreach.

³¹⁴ “German Bakery Blast Convict: Who is Mirza Himayat Baig?,” *Firstpost*, last modified April 16, 2013, <https://www.firstpost.com/india/german-bakery-blast-convict-who-is-mirza-himayat-baig-699134.html>.

Australia.³¹⁵ The investigation centers on the connections with other parties who assisted him. These events have kept Muslims under suspicion for aiding and having connections with Muslim extremism outside of Sri Lanka.

B. ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Islamic education in Arabic was new to Sri Lanka's Muslims and to the state's education system. This trend was established in the past and continues to date. In the past, Muslims began with learning the English, Tamil, or Sinhalese language; later on, once they established themselves in Sri Lanka, they resisted learning in these languages and instead enlisted imams from the Middle East, India, and Malaysia, according to their needs.³¹⁶ They wanted to establish an education system that would prevent Muslims from being baptized as Christians or becoming Hindus. Under the leadership of revivalist Siddi Lebbe, Islamic education was introduced for the Muslim population.³¹⁷ Arabic Islamic education have inculcated religious-cultural traditions of Muslims and changed their behavior to shape Islamic identity in Sri Lanka.

1. Madrassas in Sri Lanka

External Islamic influences have driven the opening of madrassas to teach Arabic and Islamic culture in Sri Lanka. In 1892, an Egyptian assisted in the creation of Zahira Madrassa (present-day Zahira College of Colombo) for teaching Arabic and Islamic education; this marked the establishment of Islamic Schools in Sri Lanka. Subsequently, Arabic, Quranic, and Sharia education have become more rigorous in contemporary Sri Lanka.³¹⁸ Baduidin Muhmud (a Muslim politician who worked with Sinhalese majority governments) became the education minister for two terms from 1970 to 1977, he himself and Mr. Dhahanayake (a Sinhalese politician) enhanced the Arabic and Islamic education

³¹⁵ "Sri Lankan Faces Terror Charge in Australia," *Straits Times*, last modified August 31, 2018, <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/australianz/sri-lankan-faces-terror-charge-in-australia>

³¹⁶ M. A. Nuhman, *Sri Lankan Muslims: Ethnic Identity within Cultural Diversity* (Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 2007).

³¹⁷ Nuhman, *Sri Lankan Muslims*.

³¹⁸ Ameerdeen, *Ethnic Politics of Muslims in Sri Lanka*, 42, 43; Ali, "Islamic Revivalism in Harmony and Conflict" The Experience in Sri Lanka and Malaysia, *Asian Survey* 24, no. 3 (1984): 302–304,

to greater extents, and even they allowed external Mawlawis in Sri Lanka.³¹⁹ Baduidin Muhmud, as a student at Aligarh University had met Muslim nationalists such as Moulana Shaukat Ali, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and Mohammad Iqbal, many others who involved in establishing the Islamic State in Pakistan, and Buduidin Muhmud was inspired himself for Islamic religious nationalism in Sri Lanka, which led to his removal from his ministerial appointment.

The curriculum of the madrassas promotes the Islamic way of life, Islamic religious matters, Arabic, Islamic dress codes, and less formal education.³²⁰ By the end of the 19th century, Arabic and Quranic lessons were part of the Muslim school curriculum in Sri Lanka.³²¹ Other than promoting loyalty to Islam and religious observance, all levels of Saudi Arabian education in Sri Lanka contribute to enforcing Sharia, denouncing other religions, and inculcating contradictory ideas through strict religious interpretations, such as encouraging fighting the enemy to establish Tawhid (one God for everyone).³²² These Islamization influences have prevented the Muslim students from expanding their knowledge of science, math, and technology.³²³ Teaching of Arabic Islamic-oriented studies and radical Islam with different Quranic interpretations in madrassas, as well as their lack of exposure to general education, have led to feelings of isolation in Muslim students in relation to Sri Lankan society—this is because of their failures in academics, thus inculcate radical Islamic ideas.³²⁴

Externally funded madrassas are partially responsible for teaching and spreading Islamic fundamentalism in Sri Lanka. The external funding for the spread of Wahhabism through the Islamic education system in Sri Lanka has anticipated shaping religious, political, social, and economic arenas toward Islamic polity. According to Michaela

³¹⁹ Ameerdeen, *Ethnic Politics of Muslims in Sri Lanka*, 38.

³²⁰ Ahmad, "Contours of Muslim nationalism in Sri Lanka," 279–281.

³²¹ Zackariya and Shanmugaratnam, "Communalization of Muslims In Sri Lanka," 16, 17, and 18.

³²² Michaela Prokop, "Saudi Arabia: The Politics of Education," *International Affairs* 79, no. 1 (2003): 79, doi:10.1111/1468-2346.00296

³²³ Ali, "Islamic Revivalism in Harmony and Conflict," 300–304.

³²⁴ Ali, 304.

Prokop, Saudi Arabian institutions provide financial assistance when they see the need of funds for education in other countries, and they involve condemning Shia and Sufi beliefs.³²⁵ The external influences that are interested in the use of Arabic language among Sri Lankan Muslims are conducting scholarly evaluations.³²⁶ According to former Sri Lankan Defense Secretary, most of the schools registered for Islamic and Arabic education, both private and government institutions, spread Saudi Arabian Salafist-Wahhabi fundamentalist ideas of contemporary radical Islam, which destroys the ethnic harmony in Sri Lanka.³²⁷

As an example of the spread of Salafist-Wahhabism, Maulavi Inthikab disclosed in a speech that Islamic teaching has included different interpretations rather fundamentalist practices and promoting radical Islam at Ilma International Muslim Girls College.³²⁸ In his speech, he refers to the foreign Islamic preachers who visited the school to conduct radical fundamentalist lectures. Moreover, the current President of As-Sunnah Trust and a leading Islamic scholar, revealed that external groups influenced by Saudi Arabian Wahhabism conduct radical teachings that change the discourse of Muslims in Sri Lanka.³²⁹ The Saudi-funded Al Haj Adul Jawad Alim Valiyullah Trust has been involved in building madrassas and mosques for teaching Wahhabi fundamentalism, especially in eastern Sri Lanka.³³⁰ As per Muslim community leader Riyaz Salley, if the money allocated for community

³²⁵ Prokop, "Saudi Arabia: The Politics of Education," 81–82.

³²⁶ Gafoordeen, Arifin, and Kasheh, "Brief Study on Practices of Arabic Language in Sri Lanka," 44–45. (The study was conducted by the Kebangsaan University in Malaysia to evaluate the quality of Arabic learning in Sri Lanka; these studies are conducted to monitor and evaluate programs for further funding for the use of the Arabic language in Sri Lanka.)

³²⁷ Colombo Telegraph, "Fundamentalism Creeps Into Muslim International Schools," *Colombo Telegraph*, last modified February 12, 2016, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/fundamentalism-creeps-into-muslim-international-schools/>.

³²⁸ "A Parent Who Took His Daughter out of Ilma International School-Ahmed Inthikab," YouTube, September 18, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syFZP3m3Kzc>.

³²⁹ Ghulam R. Dehlvi, "Communal Violence in Sri Lanka Targets Muslim Minorities," *Asia Times*, last modified March 7, 2018, <http://www.atimes.com/article/communal-violence-sri-lanka-targets-muslim-minorities/>

³³⁰ Dr. Daya Hewapathirane, "Muslim Wahhabi Menace Undermining Amiable Community Relations in Sri Lanka," LankaWeb, last modified March 17, 2018, <https://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2018/03/17/muslim-wahhabi-menace-undermining-amiable-community-relations-in-sri-lanka/>.

development is being used for the propagating Tawhid Jamaat extremism through private-international schools, the Saudi Arabian government is responsible.³³¹ Wahhabism teaching has created deep separations among inter-Muslim societies as well as between Muslims and Sinhalese. According to International Crisis Group, the Wahhabi notions³³² inculcated to Muslims by the Middle Eastern countries and Saudi Arabian religious organizations has created separations between Muslims in eastern Sri Lanka.³³³ Cleavages built among Muslims and Sinhalese are the result of the Wahhabi fundamentalist groups monetarily incentivizing Catholics and Buddhists to convert to Islam.³³⁴

There is evidence of the violence created by Wahhabi teaching in Sri Lanka. These violence's represent underlying efforts of the strict extremist Islamic fundamentalism, which induce monotheism, and theology. One incident involved Wahhabi followers armed with swords, clubs, rods, and knives storming the Beruwala Rahuman Mosque to seize it. These Wahhabis attacked the Muslims who were inside the mosque celebrating the annual Buhari feast (130th Anniversary celebrations of a Sufi Saint), killed two people, and damaged the mosque and a few vehicles.³³⁵ The attackers, who were inspired by Wahhabism for Tawhid (only one God), attacked the Rahuman Mosque to end the practice of celebrating saints. In another incident, in December 2006, Tawhid jihadi militants destroyed 117 houses, a library, and a meditation center in Kaththankudi, all of which

³³¹ Riyaz Sally, "Threat of Islamic extremists propagating fundamentalism in Sri Lanka: No cause for alarm, assures leaders," Sri Lanka Muslim Enlightenment & Rational Thinkers' Forum-UK, last modified September 28, 2010, <https://enlightenmentthinkerforum.blogspot.com/2010/>

³³² ICG, "Sri Lanka's Muslims: Caught in The Crossfire," Crisis Group Asia Report N°134, May 2007, 23, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/465d2a942.pdf>; Wahhabi notions- Wahhabi Salafist movement is a branch of Sunni Islam which ensure the strict adherence of Islamic practice according to Wahhabi practices through violence Jihadism, that started in Saudi Arabia.

³³³ Rohan Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Muslims: Caught in the Crossfire-Asia Report*, (Colombo/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2007), 23, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/465d2a942.pdf>

³³⁴ Daya Hewapathirane, "Muslim Wahhabi Menace Undermining Amiable Community Relations In Sri Lanka," Lanka Web, last modified March 17, 2018, <http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2018/03/17/muslim-wahhabi-menace-undermining-amiable-community-relations-in-sri-lanka>

³³⁵ Satarupa Bhattacharjya, Chris Kamalendran, and Asif Fuard, "The Divided Brotherhood, Jihad in Lanka: Sectarianism takes root as Muslim groups battle it out in Beruwala," *Times Online*, last modified August 2, 2009, http://www.sundaytimes.lk/090802/News/news_18.html

belonged to Sufis.³³⁶ These jihadi militants threatened the Sufis with firearms and swords saying that they would gun down the Sufis if they did not adhere to Sharia, and took away the body of a Sufi saint after unearthing it from a mosque grave.³³⁷ Furthermore, the militants abducted one person; later his body was found with gunshot injuries.³³⁸ In still other incidents in Kaththankudi, in 2017, extreme Wahhabis staged violence: two extreme Islamist groups linked with Tawhid Jamaat and other orthodox extremist religious groups clashed injuring several of them as well as innocent civilians.³³⁹ Earlier, in 2006, Tawhid Salafist youth groups attacked a Sufi mosque with hand grenades, and damaged the minaret of the mosque.³⁴⁰ Reports indicate that Sri Lankan Tawhid organizations operating in Kaththankudi share transnational Saudi Arabian Salafist and Wahhabi connections.³⁴¹

Beyond instituting Wahhabi teachings in mosques, Saudi Arabia has also been successful in instituting universities. Shenali Waduge, referring to the establishment of Saudi Arabian-funded Malik Abdulla University College in Kattankudy, questions why it is necessary to establish Muslim-only universities in Eastern Province, while there are no Sinhala-only universities in Sri Lanka.³⁴² In addition to this new university, Oluvil State National University in Eastern Province is designed solely for Muslims.³⁴³ According to Eugene Cotran, “Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries are funding for propagation of

³³⁶ Asif Fuard, Chris Kamalendran, and Saman Kariyawasam. “Unholy Tension in Lanka’s Muslim East,” *Insight, Sunday Times*, August 16, 2009, www.sundaytimes.lk/090816/News/nws_23.html.

³³⁷ Fuard, Kamalendran, and Kariyawasam, “Unholy Tension in Lanka’s Muslim East.”

³³⁸ Fuard, Asif, and Saman Kariyawasam.

³³⁹ Colombo Telegraph, “Ugly Head of Islamic Radicalization Continues to Terrorize Kattankudy,” *Colombo Telegraph*, last modified March 14, 2017, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/ugly-head-of-islamic-radicalization-continues-to-terrorize-kattankudy/>.

³⁴⁰ ICG, *Sri Lanka’s Muslims: Caught in The Crossfire*-Asia Report No. 134 (Colombo: International Crisis Group, 2007), 24, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/465d2a942.pdf>.

³⁴¹ ICG, *Sri Lanka’s Muslims: Caught in The Crossfire*.

³⁴² Shenali D. Waduge, “Why There Should Not Be an Ethnic-based Arabic University in Sri Lanka,” *ONLANKA News*, last modified July 13, 2013, <https://www.onlanka.com/news/why-there-should-not-be-an-ethnic-based-arabic-university-in-sri-lanka.html>; Shenali is a scholar who received her Bachelors and Master’s degrees from the University of Delhi India.

³⁴³ University of Kelaniya Sri Lanka, *Annual Report & Accounts 2013* (Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: University of Kelaniya, 2013), <http://www.parliament.lk/uploads/documents/paperspresented/annual-report-university-of-kelaniya-2013.pdf>.

Wahhabi teachings through establishment of madrassas and mosques in Sri Lanka.”³⁴⁴ The Turkish NGO IHH (İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri) has spent \$55,000 to establish the Quran Memorization Center in which Sri Lankan children began receiving their Islamic studies, such as Qur’an and Hadith classes.³⁴⁵

2. International Scholarships

Libya and Saudi Arabia promote the Islamic revivalist-centered education through awarding financial aid and scholarships for Sri Lankan Muslims.³⁴⁶ In August 2003, the Egyptian government provided ten scholarships for Sri Lankan Muslims to pursue Quran, Sharia, Sunnah, and other Islamic studies in Egypt, Dubai, and Malaysia.³⁴⁷ Mohamed Muhsin Sharfaz Nilam, the Sri Lankan ISIS member who was killed in an air raid in Raqqa between May and July 2015, was a scholarship student of Sharia law from Pakistan’s International Islamic University.³⁴⁸ In addition, there are many scholarships funded by foreign sources that are designed to foster such professionals as engineers, doctors, etc., among the Muslim community in Sri Lanka.³⁴⁹ For example, the Islamic Development Bank in Saudi Arabia provides scholarships to Sri Lanka’s Muslim students to study in

³⁴⁴ Dr. Abdel Omar Sherif, “*Yearbook of Islamic And Middle Eastern Law*,” Google Books, last modified 2004, 129–130 https://books.google.com/books?id=syaVd9K8YBIC&pg=PA129&lpg=PA129&dq=Wahhabi+teaching+in+mosques+and+schools+in+sri+lanka&source=bl&ots=SQPnDDwF7_&sig=BcFYRi2bgvdWB5eYedHcnn9vLZ0&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi6rseypjeAhXkyVQKHduQAg04ChDoATABegQICRAB#v=onepage&q=Wahhabi%20teachings%20in%20mosques%20and%20schools%20in%20sri%20Lanka&f=false.

³⁴⁵ “IHH Builds a Quran Memorization Center in Sri Lanka,” IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, last modified February 2013, <https://www.ihh.org.tr/en/news/ihh-builds-a-quran-memorization-center-in-sri-lanka-2537>

³⁴⁶ Ali, “Islamic Revivalism in Harmony and Conflict,” 296–313.

³⁴⁷ Ahmad, “Contours of Muslim Nationalism in Sri Lanka,” 278.

³⁴⁸ Animesh Roul, “(PDF) Islamic State’s Sri Lankan Outreach,” ResearchGate, last modified December 3, 2015, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286451306_Islamic_State%27s_Sri_Lankan_Outreach

³⁴⁹ Kholoud T. Hilal, “Between the Fears and Hopes for a Different Future for the Nation-states: Scholarship Programs in Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates from a Public Policy Standpoint,” *International Journal of Higher Education* 2, no. 2 (2013): 42, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314553690_Between_the_Fears_and_Hopes_for_a_Different_Future_for_the_Nation-states_Scholarship_Programs_in_Saudi_Arabia_and_United_Arab_Emirates_from_a_Public_Policy_Standpoint

Saudi Arabia in different fields, but all courses are designed along Islamization lines.³⁵⁰ M.C.A. Hameed, the president of the All Ceylon Thareekathul Muflieen (a religious Sufi society) once stated that, “Those who returned from Saudi Arabia after their academic studies and employment had brought down the Wahhabi Ideologies and stress them to implement strict Islamism in Sri Lanka culture.” Today, there are 749 madrassas, one university, and ten major mosques involved in teaching Wahhabism, and Wahhabis are gaining control of almost all the mosques in Sri Lanka, except for a few strong Sufi-controlled ones.³⁵¹

C. ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS IN SRI LANKA

There are different types of Islamic organizations and they contribute to all areas of Muslim lives and communities in Sri Lanka, but at the foundation of most of these organizations is Islamism. Most of these groups or organizations have a common agenda of Muslims subordinating to Islam.³⁵² In short, as De Munck observes, “Muslims are associated with Islam and Islam with Jihad and ultimately, inevitably with a battle between civilizations.”³⁵³ Modern Islamist agendas have persuaded Sri Lankan Muslim leaders to join the Pan Islamic Arabic NGO Rabitatul Alsmul Islami since its inception in 1962.³⁵⁴ Furthermore, Muslim politicians have arranged official visits by Islamist propagators such as Dr. Said Ramadan (son-in-law of Sayyed Qutb) to address Sri Lanka Muslims on Islamization and brotherhood in July 1965.³⁵⁵ Furthermore, Johansson has observed that Islamist revitalization organizations like Jamaat-e-Islami and Tablighi Jamaat arrived in the 1970s to expedite Islamization and increase the number of mosques in Sri Lanka.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁰ “Scholarships,” Sailan Muslim – The Online Resource for Sri Lanka Muslims, last modified January 25, 2015, <https://www.sailanmuslim.com/category/youth/education/scholarships-education/page/2/>.

³⁵¹ Padma Rao, “Wahhabism on the Rise in Sri Lanka, WION Report,” Adaderana, last modified March 17, 2018, <http://www.adaderana.lk/news/46450/wahhabism-on-the-rise-in-sri-lanka-wion-report>.

³⁵² De Munck, “Islamic Orthodoxy and Sufism in Sri Lanka,” 401.

³⁵³ De Munck, 414.

³⁵⁴ A.H.M. Aswer, “Parliament Erupted over the Controversial Visit of Said Ramadan to Sri Lanka,” *Sunday Times Sri Lanka*, October 04, 2015, www.sundaytimes.lk/.

³⁵⁵ Aswer, “Parliament Erupted.”

³⁵⁶ Johansson, “Sri Lanka Muslim Congress’ Rise to Power,” 2–3.

1. Jamaat-e-Islami

Sri Lanka's Jamaat-e-Islami is an offshoot of the Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami, which was established in 1947 as a Muslim Brotherhood organization. Sayyid Abdula Mawdudi professed this organization for the Islamization of everything.³⁵⁷ Pakistan-based Jamaat-e-Islami is proud to be the core of radicalized Islamic groups with branches in South Asia, including Sri Lanka.³⁵⁸ Radical Buddhist monks claim that, "Jamaat-e-Islami is an Islamist political party which assisted to divide India and establish the Islamic State in Pakistan, and their branch in Sri Lanka continue its Islamization efforts."³⁵⁹ This organization has been working in Sri Lanka to transform the Sufi traditions indigenous to Sri Lankan Muslims into radicalized Islamism and has made efforts to enforce political Islam.³⁶⁰ McGilvray writes that the global *ulema* arrange the funding from Pan Islamic organizations for Jamaat-e-Islami and issue *fatwa* (Sharia interpretations).³⁶¹ Furthermore, the Salafism and Wahhabism preached in Kaththankudi is expected to change Muslims according to Quran and *Hadith* teaching for the revival of Islamic fundamentalism.³⁶² These internal factors show that Islamist efforts in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan have generated Muslim radicalization in Sri Lanka. Consequently, the BBS has created an ethnic awakening among Sinhalese Buddhists by highlighting the Islamization efforts of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic terrorism.³⁶³ Islam as a traditional religious practice in Sri Lanka does not pose any threat to the society, but extremist groups that engage in political Islamism, seeking to implement Sharia and enforce strict Islamic-based practices, are harmful because they violate human rights.

³⁵⁷ M.A. Nuhuman, "Dossier 21: Ethnic Identity, Religious Fundamentalism and Muslim Women in Sri Lanka | Women Reclaiming and Redefining Cultures," Women Living under Muslim Laws, last modified February 1999, <http://www.wluml.org/node/322>.

³⁵⁸ Metcalf, "Sri Lanka and the Southern Coasts," 29.

³⁵⁹ Husnul Amin, "The Islamist Politics in the Era of Neoliberal Globalization The Case of Jamaat-E-Islami Pakistan," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 15 (2014): 509, <http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/viewFile/3259/3213>

³⁶⁰ Gunarathne, "Sinhala-Muslim Riots in Sri Lanka," 2–3

³⁶¹ McGilvray, "Sri Lankan Muslims," 54.

³⁶² McGilvray.

³⁶³ Gunarathne, 2–3.

2. Tablighi Jamaat

Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) is an Islamist reformist organization, which was founded by Muhammad Ilyas-Kandhlawi in 1926 in India, for the purpose of converting people through strict imposition of Sharia.³⁶⁴ Tablighi Jamaat is a radical assembly and their main effort in Sri Lanka is to convert non-Muslims to Islam and act as reformist activists.³⁶⁵ The TJ, which arrived in Sri Lanka in the 1950s, have their foundations in changing Sufi beliefs.³⁶⁶ The TJ endorses strict conventional Islam and eliminating the Sufi practices and beliefs in Sri Lankan Muslim societies.³⁶⁷ More precisely, TJ argues that Sufi beliefs, according to Sharia, are *haram*, and should be combated and defeated with jihad.³⁶⁸ At the height of clashes among Muslim groups, as well as complaints of BBS and other Muslim groups, 161 TJ Islamic clerics were deported in 2014.³⁶⁹ Still, the former Defense Secretary of Sri Lanka stated that, “*Tablighi Jamaat* members could re-apply for a religious visa to arrive in Sri Lanka and push radicals into more violence.”³⁷⁰ Furthermore, he said, “TJ could push already hardline Sri Lankan Muslims toward such more radical groups as *Hizb ut-Tahrir* and *Jamaat-e-Islami*.”³⁷¹ Since the end of the separatist war in Sri Lanka, TJ has become a leading Islamist group. Still, events like international Islamic conferences were held in Sri Lanka with Colombo’s support, until ethno-religious tensions arose.³⁷²

³⁶⁴ Barbara D. Metcalf, “Living Hadith in the Tablighi Jama`at,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 52, no. 3 (1993): 584, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2058855.pdf>.

³⁶⁵ Faslan and Vanniasinkam, “Fracturing Community,” 16.

³⁶⁶ Faslan and Vanniasinkam.

³⁶⁷ De Munck, “Islamic Orthodoxy,” 406.

³⁶⁸ De Munck, 407.

³⁶⁹ “Sri Lanka ‘Expels Muslim Preachers,’” BBC News, last modified January 22, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16675086>.

³⁷⁰ FDI Team, “Sri Lanka: Colombo Orders Islamist Clerics to Leave,” Future Directions International, last modified January 28, 2016, <http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/sri-lanka-colombo-orders-islamist-clerics-to-leave/>.

³⁷¹ FDI Team, “Sri Lanka: Colombo Orders Islamist Clerics to Leave.”

³⁷² Ali, “Political Buddhism, Islamic Orthodoxy,” 306–308.

3. Other Islamist Organizations

Saudi Arabia exports the hatred-filled Wahhabi teachings through its funding and expects to propagate a strict Islamist culture around the world.³⁷³ The Wahhabis in Sri Lanka motivated through a movement called *Tawhid* or monotheism.³⁷⁴ Tawhid Jamaat has its robust manifestations in most of the mosques in Sri Lanka and it is leading the construction of mosques.³⁷⁵ As per Amir Ali, there has been a growing trend for instigating ultra-religious orthodoxy toward global *Ummah* because of backing provided by Saudi Wahhabism ideologies since the 1980s.³⁷⁶ The conflict between Muslims and Sinhalese rapidly improved when Saudi Arabian-based movement Thawheed Jamaat fenced in the Muslims disputes.³⁷⁷ With the rise of Thawheed Jamaath ideologies in Kaththankudi came terrorist incidents against innocent civilians by attacking a Sufi gathering with swords and knives on Friday, March 10, 2017, after a mosque gathering.³⁷⁸ The innocent civilians protested against these extremist Islamist groups by displaying boards bearing the phrase “stop Wahhabi terrorism”; later it was revealed that they represented a pro-ISIS group.³⁷⁹ The secretary of Tawheed Jamaath in Sri Lanka, Abdul Razick, has delivered a number of controversial blasphemous statements on Buddhism, degrading its religious value, which created further divisions among Muslims and Buddhists. Later he was taken by police for questioning.³⁸⁰ According to the International Crisis Group, there are allegations against

³⁷³ “Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Invade American Mosques,” Freedom House, March 1, 2012, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/special-reports/saudi-publications-hate-ideology-invade-american-mosques>.

³⁷⁴ “The Wahhabi Invasion of Sri Lanka,” *Colombo Telegraph*, April 4, 2013, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/the-wahhabi-invasion-of-sri-lanka/>

³⁷⁵ Klem, “Islam, Politics and Violence in Eastern Sri Lanka,” 733.

³⁷⁶ Ali, “Political Buddhism, Islamic Orthodoxy,” 299.

³⁷⁷ Stephen Schwartz and Irfan Al-Alawi, “The Wahhabi Invasion of Sri Lanka,” *Colombo Telegraph*, last modified March 27, 2013, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/the-wahhabi-invasion-of-sri-lanka/>

³⁷⁸ “Ugly Head Of Islamic Radicalization,” *Colombo Telegraph*, March 14, 2017, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/ugly-head-of-islamic-radicalization-continues-to-terrorize-kattankudy/>.

³⁷⁹ “Ugly Head Of Islamic Radicalization.”

³⁸⁰ Iseth Hussain, “Sri Lanka Muslims at the Cross-Roads? Part II,” *Colombo Telegraph*, last modified May 17, 2014, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/sri-lanka-muslims-at-the-cross-roads-part-ii/>

Pakistan military intelligence (ISI) for funding jihadi militants in Sri Lanka.³⁸¹ Traditional Islam, such as Sufism, directly conflicts with the views of groups such as Jamaat-e-Islami and Thabligi Jamaat.³⁸² The internal conflicts aroused in 2007 among Islamic reformists' movements in Sri Lanka were energized by global *Ummah* concepts of Sunnis against traditional Sufism.³⁸³

D. CONCLUSION

The mobilization of Muslims in Sri Lanka has been sparked through a pretext of development aid and welfare by powerful Islamic states' economies, promoting extremism in Muslim communities, particularly in Eastern Province. Sri Lanka is a developing country; its poor economy has become dependent on international monetary assistance, especially from Gulf countries. Islamic and Arabic education for Muslims is the extension that unites Islamic state in the world, and that mobilizes Muslims, specifically in Sri Lanka. Islamic religious education and Arabic language education enabled by foreign economic assistance have become more lucrative for poor Muslims of Sri Lanka. These religious teachings have indoctrinated the Muslim population with interpretations of Islam that differ from the one traditionally held in Sri Lanka, changing the paradigms of social behavioral patterns of Muslims distinct to Sri Lankan Muslim culture. The foreign Islamist organizations appearing in Sri Lanka use different names from the ones they use in other countries, which may mislead local and international audiences from recognizing that these organizations are delivering Islamization to Sri Lankan Muslims. In any case, there is evidence that the Islamist groups operating in Sri Lanka have connections to major radical Islamist groups in the Middle East and elsewhere. Foreign Islamists are responsible for introducing their extreme ideologies in the hope of turning what is a minority of extremists in Sri Lanka into a strong majority. These distinct ideologies lead to cultural behaviors that encourage the Muslim community to abstain from social and ethnic interaction and

³⁸¹ ICG, "Sri Lanka's Muslims: Caught in The Crossfire," 25.

³⁸² Olivier Roy, "Islamic Radicalism in Afghanistan and Pakistan" *UNHCR Emergency and Security Service*, 2001, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3c6a3f7d2.pdf>.

³⁸³ McGilvray, "Sufis in Sri Lanka: Tradition, Conflict, and Innovation," 46.

affiliation with other communities, thereby increasing the estrangement of Muslims and compounding extremist feelings.

IV. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The Muslim minority population in Sri Lanka is mobilizing around Islamist politics. Conversely, Buddhist nationalists, inspired by instrumental politicians and the perceived threat of Islamization, are mobilizing against the Muslim population in Sri Lanka. This thesis has attempted to answer the questions of how and why Islamism is growing among the Muslim minority population of Sri Lanka. The research and analysis tested two hypotheses: The Muslim minority population in Sri Lanka is mobilizing around Islamism in reaction to growing Buddhist nationalism, and the Muslim minority population in Sri Lanka is mobilizing around Islamism as a result of external actors promoting religious extremism. The findings of this thesis cannot suggest that there were not existing grievances and religious differences between Muslims and Buddhists in Sri Lanka that external influencers could exploit. The tensions that remain from Sri Lanka's colonial past and religious differences notwithstanding, it is certain that these groups were able to maintain ethnic harmony until the advent of religious sentiments in politics. Global Islamism also has much affected the ethnic relations in Sri Lanka, as it has in other parts of the world. At the same time, growing Buddhist nationalism has underscored and incubated ethnic concerns, ultimately to the detriment of the quality of life of all Sri Lankans.

A. MUSLIM MOBILIZATION IN SRI LANKA

Amir Ali argues that the worldwide goals purported by the Brotherhood or Islamism overwhelm with fanatic Islamist extremist goals have not affected Sri Lanka's Muslims.³⁸⁴ The analysis frames his supposition following a comparison of the external radicalism of Muslims with that of Sri Lankan Muslims. Nevertheless, because Sri Lanka's exposure to ethnic and religious extremism accompanied a long civil war, the population is fearful of this religions extremism and sensitive to its connection with terrorism. Thus, internal judgment of escalating Muslim radicalism is unique to Sri Lankans. As discussed

³⁸⁴ Ali, "The Muslim factor in Sri Lankan Ethnic Crisis," 253–254.

in Chapter II, McGilvray and Klem, as well as Izeth Huzain, claim some Sri Lankan Muslims have crossed the line to radicalism and have adversely affected other Muslims in the state due to its violent nature.³⁸⁵ The influence of Saudi Arabia on Islamic education debated in Chapter III of this thesis established that Sri Lanka's Muslim leadership has promoted extremism, giving birth to a handful of violent extremists operating in the Eastern Province. Consequently, the external financial welfare segregates and isolates Sri Lanka's Muslim communities, empowering some extremist Muslim groups to influence peaceful Muslim groups. These extremist Muslim groups interpret peaceful Muslims' divergence from strict extremist practices as apostasy or infidelity, which lead to radicalization and Islamization attempts to control the non-extremist Muslims.

A number of approaches has characterized radicalization. Certainly, radicalization arises from long-term social discrimination and unfair governance, by which privileged classes deprive certain classes of Muslims of their rightful social status. This radicalization process occurs through multifaceted means and is atypically energized in Sri Lanka through Islamic everyday religious factors. Feelings of vulnerability, or of ambivalence from living in an environment of conflict, or of frustration from enduring institutionalized foul play are identified as three critical mental components causing alienation among minority populations. Such feelings invigorate the spiritual fundamentalism and radicalization amongst Muslims. Further analysis also refers to segregation, abuse, bad reputation and self-image, use of false interpretations in Quran classes, and fanatic consolidation as factors leading to radicalization. Furthermore, radicalization runs closely parallel to violent terrorism, which could come in multiple guises. However, the analysis sees the radicalizing of a group as unquestionably reinforced or instigated by the influences of external groups.

Religious differences and practices, as well as underlying political desires of instrumental politics, have divided the Sri Lankan ethnicities. The frictions highlighted in this thesis were heightened between the Tamils and the Muslims, reinforcing their competition for supremacy in politics. On the other hand, no such competition existed

³⁸⁵ ICG, "Sri Lanka's Muslims: Caught in The Crossfire."

between the Sinhalese and the Muslims until religion became prominent in their respective politics. This religious inclination has driven an ideological and cultural wedge among a few Buddhist-Sinhalese as well. Yet, as long as Tamil terrorism formed the common enemy, Sinhalese and Muslims maintained a positive relationship.

Some powerful Sinhalese politicians use Buddhist fundamentalists as an instrument in their politics and allow them freedom to act violently, which has led to many chaotic incidents that aggravated the schism between the Sinhalese and the Muslim populations. As this thesis has shown, the Buddhist and minority fundamentalists in Sri Lanka use politics to profess their radical beliefs and outline controls for other ethnic and religious groups that do not affiliate with them. Notably, uncompromising Sinhalese Buddhist monks have invoked incidents of violence, such as the destruction of Bamiyan Buddha statues, assaults, slaughtering of cattle, and the burning of Buddhist monks in Afghanistan by Islamists, to justify for legitimize radical Buddhist movements against Muslims in Sri Lanka.

Fear of radicalization and extremism could hinder future ethno-religious harmony and that could harm the solidarity of Sri Lanka. Marginal separatism is growing among most Sinhalese, who fear the increased number of Muslims in trade. Sinhalese Buddhists make efforts to control other religions, especially Islam, with an anticipatory fear that outside forces will reduce the Sinhalese way of life in Sri Lanka. These fears emanate from Buddhist monks who have observed Muslim minorities uniting around Islamism in an effort to change the Sri Lankan legislature and justify those changes as the exercise of religious rights. The endeavours of Buddhist activists for control have fractured the entire ethno-religious harmony; similarly, thesis finds that the consequences of Islamism and Islamist fanatics' physical activities in Sri Lanka have been significant.

Buddhist monks express their fear of transnational Islamism and Islamic institutions that have been energized by foreign influences to convert the Sri Lankan Buddhist Sinhalese into Muslims. These conversions of Sinhalese Buddhists to Islam have occurred through marriages, which and have increased in the recent past. Another fear driving Sri Lankan Buddhists to mobilize is rapid growth of the Muslim population by having marriages with Sinhalese women. Population growth is the highest concern of the

Islamic world (1.7 billion Muslims worldwide, including 2.1 million Sri Lankan Muslims³⁸⁶) and it threatens to erode Sinhalese power (16.2 million Sinhalese), which needs further studies to establish. This analysis finds that the fear has grown with the outpacing Muslim population in Sri Lanka, which at its inception was less than hundred people and now surpasses the Tamil population. Buddhist Sinhalese believe that this Muslim population is a result of their religious conviction of *Ummah*.

Sri Lankan Muslim involvement in ISIS Islamist activities have widened the future threat to the nation. The research analysis refers to the death of a Sri Lankan Muslim ISIS member in Syria, the connections to bombings in India, and recent arrest of Sri Lankan ISIS member in Australia as the nearest cases that prove affiliations to Islamic State by Sri Lankan Muslims. Moreover, the reference maintain by Sri Lankan Muslim extremist groups to creation of caliph in Sri Lanka will remain as an additional threat to the national security, which need an extra care.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis has analyzed the evidence collected through research and drawn two conclusions that might be useful for the government of Sri Lanka to consider in its efforts to prevent further radicalization of ethno-religious groups. These conclusions are described in the following section. Furthermore, other vital areas merit follow-on investigations. The first, it would be valuable to examine the impact of Sharia and Shura applied to the Muslim society by analyzing the grievances of Muslims in Sri Lanka. A separate study into finding the exact role of foreign Islamic organizations could help trace the Islamization process. A study on Sri Lankan Muslim population growth in comparison to the Islamization process in the contemporary world could contribute to minimizing future effects of global fanaticism in Sri Lanka. These are only few suggestions for future research.

³⁸⁶ CIA. "World Factbook - Central Intelligence Agency," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed November 17, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html>.

C. CONCLUSION

This thesis has made every attempt to examine the existing literature relevant to the relations of Sri Lankan Muslims and Buddhists. Based on the research, this thesis described how and why Islamism and radicalization grew and erupted among Sri Lankan Muslims. Further, thesis considered two distinct contrasting hypotheses: The Muslim minority population is mobilizing around Islamism in reaction to growing Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka, and the Muslim minority population in Sri Lanka is mobilizing around Islamism in response to external actors promoting religious extremism. The thesis reflects on several scholarly works that recount the effects of radicalization and notions of Islamism, development of Buddhist mobilization, development of Islamic fanaticism, and Islamism in Sri Lanka and its connection to the South Asian region and beyond. Such an assessment could benefit from further in-depth critical considerations of the perspectives. Especially, this thesis challenges the external issues and understands the essential variables relate to ethno-religious culture that appreciate the social and political issues existing in Sri Lanka. The findings of the thesis identify that Buddhist nationalism instigated against colonial rulers has shifted its focus against Muslims and corresponds to foreign-influenced Islamist reforms affecting Sri Lankan society. Similarly, the disproportionate reactions by Buddhist Sinhalese and Tamils unite the Muslim community while external Islamization influences reinforce Muslims' resolve to mobilize against other ethno-religious communities. These two opposite reactions are the overriding factors as to answer how and why the Muslim minority in Sri Lanka is mobilizing against the other communities.

The constant debasement of values pushed by religious concepts of politically radicalized devotees' criteria has the ability to destabilize Sri Lanka to a fragile country. The transparency of democracy and liberty of people in Sri Lanka perspective on the equality maintained by GOSL. This would further depends on the perceptions and beliefs among ethnicities on how GOSL understands the strategic dealing with external policy implementation. Finally, it is extremely essential to understand how the exploitativeness of outsiders could endanger the states' security and ethnic congruity. Controlling radicalization of Muslims and Buddhists is a prerequisite in multi-ethnic Sri Lanka to advance the nation's progress. To prevent the rise of Islamism and, in turn, Buddhist

nationalism, Sri Lankans must understand the predominant philosophies as well as the specific means and end goals of both groups. Thus, it is more sensible to evaluate the activities of religious associations, especially, when their efforts are coordinated through religious affiliations beyond Sri Lanka. In this way, it is possible to test whether these events are indicators of a radicalization process such as Islamization, or a reflection of social progress, or radical changes engaging in disguise as social engagement. Therefore, it is essential to check rising radicalism in Sri Lanka, which is the growing enemy of social harmony among all ethnic groups in the state, before it heightens to a fierce fanaticism.

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