TIGERS, BOMBS, AND BALLOTS: MEASURING THE EFFECTS OF TERRORISM ON ELECTORAL ALLEGIANCE IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Terrorist and insurgent movements use violence as a means to achieve political ends. In democracies, terrorist attacks might induce voters to favor different parties based on their relative stances on matters of security. However, the mechanism by which violence affects electoral allegiance remains understudied. This paper uses data on terrorism and electoral outcomes from two consecutive Sri Lankan presidential elections to test several hypotheses related to an emerging theory of terrorism’s effects on electoral preference. Research findings generally support the theory that periods of reduced terrorism benefit left bloc candidates while increases in terrorism benefit the right. However, the scale of violence locally does not appear to result in a proportional or pronounced local increase in support for the right above national trends, a fact that may owe in part to the nature of LTTE attacks. Analysis suggests that while terrorism appears to influence electoral preferences in Sri Lanka, factors of ethnicity, sector, and relative variation in party platforms from one year to the next pose a significant challenge to positively attributing causality.
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Introduction

In their nearly thirty-five years of intermittent conflict with the government of Sri Lanka, the national-separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam frequently played a spoiling role in the democratic process, assassinating and attacking political candidates, enforcing election boycotts, and perpetrating deadly and demoralizing acts of terrorism in the run-up to national elections.

While the immediate effects of these attacks, measurable in chaos, bloodshed, and lives lost, are manifest, the subtler impact of violence on voter choice remains little explored. How does violence work to mobilize or demobilize voters? Are terrorized citizens more likely to support advocates of strong defense and forward-leaning counter-terrorism? Or are they inclined to favor politicians who advance policies of negotiation, reconciliation, or appeasement? How accountable do voters hold incumbents for past terrorist attacks?

Understanding how, to what degree, and by what mechanism terrorist violence might affect electoral allegiance has important implications for policy in a world where an increasing number of democratic nations find themselves struggling to overcome terrorist and insurgent threats. This study, which applies the theories and findings of an emergent literature on terrorism and voter behavior to a non-western case, probes Sri Lanka’s extensive experience with democracy and terrorism to test the durability of contemporary models, suggest potential modifications, and enrich discussion.

The first section of this paper frames the research problem and identifies the key hypotheses to be tested. The second section outlines the data sources and methods used.
The third section provides a critical review of literature intended to capture the state of the scholarly debate surrounding the effects of terrorism on electoral outcomes to flesh out the theoretical and methodological foundation of the study and highlight its intended contribution to scholarly knowledge. The fourth section begins with an analysis of changes in national-level political developments, trends in terrorism, and resulting changes in electoral allegiance from 1999 to 2005. It continues with an in-depth analysis of key district and sub-district case studies aimed at revealing some of the complicating factors that pose significant challenges to evaluating the effects of terrorism on electoral outcomes in a dynamic political environment using limited case studies.

Comparison of electoral returns from Kandy and Colombo, districts that differ in terms of their levels of terrorism but share similar demographics, helps to determine whether local violence results in local changes in electoral allegiance. Analysis of electoral returns in Trincomalee, a multi-ethnic eastern district that experienced a growth in terrorism from 1999 to 2005, sheds light on how left-leaning electorates respond to deterioration in the local security environment while analysis of outcomes in Digamadulla, where terrorism decreased, offers an opportunity for cross-comparison.

Section five is comprised of limited policy recommendations and conclusions. It also offers insights for others interested in conducting similar evaluations, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of using case studies, as opposed to large-\(n\) sample studies, to measure the impact of terrorism on election outcomes.
I. Research problem and hypotheses

From the early 1980s to 2005, the Tamil Tigers often staged political assassinations and high-impact suicide attacks in advance of Sri Lankan national elections, ostensibly to subvert, spoil, or achieve favorable outcomes in domestic political contests. However, to date no study has assessed the impact of LTTE attacks on electoral returns. The central question this project seeks to answer is: to what degree, if any, did Tiger-perpetrated acts of terrorism influence national and district-level returns during the 1999 and 2005 Sri Lankan presidential elections?

Fundamentally, this study attempts evaluate the impact of terrorism on elections by observing and analyzing changes in relative levels of support for left and right bloc candidates within and between select electoral districts over consecutive elections. By considering variables including voters’ proximity to sites of violence and variations in levels of violence across space (electoral districts) and time (1999 versus 2005) this study attempts to isolate the effects of Tiger-perpetrated terrorism from other factors likely to influence electoral returns. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the theories set out by Berrebi and Klor (2004; 2006) in their study of Israeli elections. Consistent with this objective, I attempt to test three interrelated hypotheses:

H1: National-level impact: Analysis of terrorism and presidential election results in Sri Lanka from 1999 to 2005 reveals that terrorism executed in advance of national polls disproportionately benefits right bloc candidates while reductions in violence lead to increased support for the left bloc.
**H$_2$: Geographic Proximity/Local Effects:** Relative support for the right bloc candidate generally increases the closer a voting population lives to the site of terrorist attacks.

**H$_3$: Polarization theory:** Left-leaning districts isolated from acts of pre-election terrorism are the primary exception to the rule and respond to terrorist violence by increasing their relative support for left candidates.

### II. Methodology, data, and data caveats

Study-relevant data includes information related to terrorist incidents preceding the 1999 and 2005 Sri Lankan presidential elections and national, district, and sub-district voter returns for both contests. Basic demographic data, detailed at the district and sub-district levels, helps to control for the effects of economy, ethnicity, religion, gender, etc., on observed changes in voting behavior across time and treatment and also facilitates comparison between demographically similar districts.

The 1999 and 2005 presidential contests were selected as cases for testing the key hypotheses for several reasons. First, they differ markedly in their levels of terrorist violence. While 1999 saw 11 terrorist incidents—including mass casualty, election-eve suicide attacks on both candidates—result in 111 fatalities and 258 injuries in the four months before elections, 2005 saw only nine incidents, most minor, resulting in five deaths and 24 injuries, few of which occurred close to polls.$^1$

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$^1$ If one considers all incidents in the year preceding the vote, Sri Lanka experienced approximately twice as many attacks, six times as many fatalities, and eight times as many injuries in 1999 as in 2005. The most significant act of terrorism preceding the 2005 vote was the August assassination of Sri Lankan foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar at his Colombo home. While the LTTE explicitly denied involvement in the killing, I include the attack in my analysis based on the fact that a majority of Sri Lankans attributed it to the Tigers and voters—like researchers—make judgments based on imperfect information.
Second, the 1999 and 2005 contests are a rare example of consecutive elections that register as relatively similar in other significant respects. Both contests pitted mainstream Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) politicians, including an incumbent president (1999) and serving prime minister (2005), against United National Party (UNP) chief and popular parliamentarian Ranil Wickremasinghe. In each contest, candidates staked out positions relatively consistent—though not identical—with their party’s traditional platform on issues of economy, foreign policy, and national defense, including the LTTE threat. Also, in both elections aggregate voter participation topped 73 percent nationwide and differed by less than one-half of one percent. The percentage of the national vote split between the major left and right candidates in each case exceeded 97 percent of the vote and again differed by less than one percent. Combined, this pattern of similarities in the national political climate and differences in the degree of violence make 2005 and 1999 useful cases for inferring the effects of terrorism on voter preference. However, as the following pages demonstrate, relative differences in party platforms between election years may still have a significant effect on returns and thus impact how reliably changes may be attributed to variations in rebel violence. Because the level of terrorism is endogenous to other changes in the political environment, this study is limited in its ability to attribute causality and instead focuses on identifying correlations in the data significant to the theory under review.

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Detailed data on terrorist incidents occurring in the months preceding the 1999 and 2005 elections were obtained from the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism Global Terrorism Database (START GTD). Initial efforts to integrate data from multiple incident databases were hampered by the poor vetting of incident data exhibited in some sources as well as a general trend toward underreporting of pre-2001 terrorism data, especially for less studied conflicts including Sri Lanka’s. GTD was chosen because its data proved to be the most reliably sourced and it exhibited the most complete and error-free record of incidents for each study year. In contrast to other databases, GTD has been compiling comprehensive records of worldwide incidents since before well before 1999.

Data from GTD was synthesized, crosschecked, and subjected to additional research where discrepancies with news or other sources existed. The resulting catalogue of incidents records the date and the location of each attack (by district and, in some cases, by polling station), the attack type and target, and the number of associated casualties. With respect to terrorism data an important caveat must be stated up front: while incidents in urban areas that affect members of the Sinhalese majority community rarely go unobserved in the media, this is may not be true of smaller-scale attacks elsewhere. Incidents affecting minorities or which occur proximate to the conflict zone or LTTE areas of control may be subject to systematic underreporting due to a lack of transparency, substantially decreased media presence, and rebel intimidation, and this

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may affect the validity of results. Where minor incidents in Colombo register front-page news, it may be fairly asked, ‘if a bomb goes off in Mannar, does it really make a sound?’

Detailed election data from the 1999 and 2005 presidential contests was obtained from Sri Lanka’s Department of Elections4 and independent media sources. Relevant reports include national summary results, district-level results, and sub-district (polling station) results for each year. While district-level returns are of primary interest, results enumerated at the polling station (sub-district) level provide a useful additional check on the impact of proximity to violence on voter choice (H2), zeroing in on the populations most directly affected by violence and helping to identify any potentially significant correlation between patterns in voting and demographic shifts.

Demographic data, enumerated at the national, district, and sub-district levels, was obtained primarily through the official publications and working papers of the Sri Lankan Department of Census and Statistics.5 Primary resources include the results of the 1981 and 2001 censuses and the 2007 ‘Special Enumeration’ of the Eastern Province and Jaffna. Census reports, which document both national and district-level demographics, including population size, sex ratio, birth rate, religion, ethnicity, age distribution, unemployment, etc., aid in identifying significant changes in population composition at the district or national level that might account for observed changes in electoral

allegiance. However, data for several key provinces in the north and east is limited in its scope and reliability compared to that available for other districts since the war and ceasefire have made census taking difficult for the government and separatists maintain a vested interest in perpetuating the notion that areas under their de facto control are overwhelmingly minority in composition.

Following initial analysis of national-level trends in voter preference and terrorist violence from 1999 to 2005, I test the additional two core hypotheses through analysis of district-level case studies, including Kandy and Colombo, Trincomalee and Digamadulla. In the first case, Kandy and Colombo were selected because they provide a unique opportunity to test H2 while controlling for the potentially confounding effects of ethnicity on voter choice; both Kandy and Colombo share similar demographic features while differing markedly in the levels of terrorism experienced during the study period. Trincomalee, on the other hand, is the only natural choice for testing H3 since it is the only left-leaning district in Sri Lanka to experience an increase in terrorism over the study period. Finally, analysis of ethnically heterogeneous Digamadulla, which is proximate to the conflict zone and has at several periods experienced high levels of terrorism (particularly against its minority Sinhalese communities) was selected because it helps to demonstrate the inherent difficulty in determining how terrorist violence relates to voter preferences expressed at the district level where demographic distributions and changes in the level of threat perceived by ethnically and geographically distinct sub-populations are likely to confound analysis. While analysis of Digamadulla as a ‘complicating case’ entails obvious selection bias, it does not detract from the fact
that study of developments in the district pose challenges to Berrebi and Klor’s theory, a fact of obvious significance to policy makers.

Finally, this study and the 2004 and 2006 analyses undertaken by Berrebi and Klor attempt to assess the degree to which terrorism affects voter preference. However, it is necessary to note than within the context of a dynamic political process, voter returns may also have a reciprocal effect on the level of terrorism. 6 This potential interaction between variables has implications for determining causality and thus somewhat limits the reliability of conclusions.

III. Literature review

As nations increasingly struggle to meet the challenge of terrorism, a significant literature has developed surrounding group characteristics, motivations, and the various strategies employed by terrorists to achieve their political objectives. However, as Berrebi and Klor observe, we still “have scant knowledge regarding the consequences of terrorism.” 7 While authors including Pape 8 and Hoffman 9 argue substate actors employ terrorism as a strategy because it is effective in achieving political change, others argue such claims lack empirical support. 10 As Hickman observes, “that electoral violence and intimidation

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7 Berrebi and Klor (2004; 2006)
have affected election outcomes is a conclusion commonly drawn but too often insufficiently supported.\footnote{Hickman (2009)}

In an effort to prove empirically the causal effects of terrorism on voter preference, viewed as the underlying mechanism for inducing political change in democratic systems, Berrebi and Klor conducted econometric studies of terrorism and voting in Israel. Their findings reflect an electorate highly sensitive to terrorism, which polarizes voters and confers a measurable advantage to right bloc candidates if executed within three months of polls.\footnote{Berrebi and Klor (2004; 2006)} Similarly, Berrebi and Klor observe that the nearer a voting population lives to terrorism, the more pronounced will be its support for right-leaning governments.\footnote{Berrebi and Klor (2004; 2006)}

However, case studies outside Israel, including recent analyses of Spain’s March 2004 congressional elections, which were preceded by significant incidents of terrorist violence, deliver a more complex picture of terror’s impact on voter choice, suggesting a less straightforward relationship than the one theorized by Berrebi and Klor. By comparing presential and absentee votes and analyzing a variety of pre- and post-election survey data, Montalvo\footnote{Montalvo, Jose. “Voting after the bombing: can terrorist attacks change the outcome of democratic elections?” [http://www.econ.upf.edu/docs/papers/downloads/1000.pdf] Accessed 5 February 2010.} and Bali\footnote{Bali, Valentina. “Terror and Elections: Lessons from Spain.” \textit{Electoral Studies}, Vol. 26 (2007), pp. 669-687} reach similar conclusions about the effects of terrorism on Spanish voters by very different methods. In each case, authors argue that the M-11 attacks—in which Islamist extremists killed 191 people and injured 1,800
others by detonating a series of bombs on the Madrid subway system three days before elections—actually cost the right bloc control of parliament, both because its controversial policies were perceived to have precipitated violence and because it lost credibility through its attempts to stem the anticipated political fallout by blaming violence on Basque separatist ETA. Although the Spanish example seems to contradict Berrebi and Klor’s theory with respect to which bloc gained support as a result of violence, on closer inspection the case nevertheless reveals an electorate shifting its support in favor of the party it believes most capable of reducing the level of domestic terrorism, a development that shows the degree to which the wider political context is important to understanding how voters react and what those reactions mean. Collectively, this corresponds well to Indridason’s observation that terrorism is likely to affect electoral allegiance to the extent that voters perceive parties unequal in their abilities to provide security, one of the most fundamental goods a government supplies to its citizens.

Understanding the degree to which Sri Lankan voters might be similarly affected by violence is important because Sri Lanka, like Israel, is a democracy characterized by high levels of terrorism and close contests between its dominant political parties, which have often fundamentally diverged on the question of how to best address the LTTE

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problem.\textsuperscript{18} Indeed, in both countries successive governments have pursued a range of options from negotiation to aggressive offensive operations in their efforts to repair domestic security.

Israel and Sri Lanka also share several other compelling similarities. In each case, an ethno-linguistically distinct sub-population—one occupied and the other seeking to establish its own nation—has sought to secure its independence and that of a traditional, geographically defined homeland through a campaign of terroristic violence. Both countries are also divided between several religious and ethnic groups that to varying degrees have opposed terrorists, sought to win greater political franchise, and struggled to establish a more egalitarian and integrated society while avoiding conflict. Where large numbers of Sri Lanka Tamils have existed in Sinhalese dominated regions for centuries and have little interest in the LTTE’s separatist agenda, so do many Israeli Arabs have very different aspirations than Palestinians living in the occupied territories. In Sri Lanka, the dominant ethnic Sinhalese comprise 75 percent of the population with ethnic Tamils constituting 14 percent.\textsuperscript{19} In Israel, Jews make 76 percent of the electorate with Muslims registering 16 percent—a number that does not reflect the estimated 3.5 million non-citizen, non-voting Palestinians living in the occupied territories.\textsuperscript{20}


Furthermore, while both countries’ political systems are dominated by well-established left and right parties, each also feature a range of minor parties that play into coalition politics but represent much narrower nationalist, minority, or non-secular interests. However, dominant parties have in each case come to depend on the support of these smaller political entities to achieve their mandates.

In both Israel and Sri Lanka, the locally dominant ethno-religious communities have also invested their territorial claims with religious and historical significance and sought to portray themselves as threatened minorities, at least when viewed from a regional perspective. Where Israel is perceived to be the promised land of Judaism and the sole nation for Jews in an otherwise Muslim-dominated Middle East, Sri Lanka is viewed by many Sinhalese as a last bastion for Buddhist religion and culture only steps from a Hindu-dominated Indian hegemon.

Finally, where occupied Palestinians have sought to stop further Israeli settlement in their territories, Tamil separatists have also bitterly resisted Sinhalese encroachment on their traditional homelands, especially those areas in the heavily contested Eastern Province. In both instances, programs to introduce settlers in regions home to subaltern groups has sparked conflict and served as an impediment to peaceful negotiation.

Similarities aside, there are also significant differences between the cases, many relating to the nature of domestic terrorism, which seem to effect public threat perception. For example, where the LTTE has for the most part directed its attacks at military and
political targets, Palestinian terrorists have often preferred to target Israeli civilians. And where 90 percent of Israelis are urban dwellers, almost the opposite is true of Sri Lankans. Combined, such differences can influence the degree to which citizens view terrorism as a threat to their personal security and thus how they register their concerns at the polls.

Beyond its relevance to understanding terrorism and conflict development in Sri Lanka, study of the wider phenomenon is of value to other developing and established democracies faced with the threat of terrorism and insurgency. Ongoing US and NATO efforts to support emerging democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan mean that better understanding of the connection between terrorism and electoral outcomes can help to facilitate more rapid and robust security and stability for nations plagued by a range of violent, anti-democratic terrorists, insurgents, and spoilers. At the same time, political outcomes like the defeat of Spain’s conservative PPP, judged by some an example of how terrorists can use violence to secure favorable electoral outcomes, suggest findings also have direct relevance to developed Western nations. Indeed, the significance US pundits attach to “time since last successful domestic attack,” and widespread fears that the US would be targeted ahead of its own 2004 elections suggests Americans are equally attuned to the potential impact of domestic insecurity on electoral outcomes.

22 Hoffman (2006)
23 The World Factbook (2009)
24 Aznar, Jose Maria. Eight Years as Head of State. Barcelona: Planeta, 2004
Finally, while a large number of studies of politics and security in Sri Lanka have discussed the LTTE threat in detail, none has comprehensively addressed the effects of terrorism on voter choice. In fact, few authors have examined the issue of pre-election terror’s effects on voter returns outside situations in which candidates have been directly assassinated or rebels have sought to enforce election boycotts, as was the case in the 2005 presidential race in the northeast.

Of the few studies that examine how violence and intimidation affect Sri Lankan voters, nearly all focus on the highly localized effects of partisan violence and exclude LTTE attacks from their analysis. For instance, where Saul,26 Hickman,27 and Hoglund28 each addresses how local UNP or UPFA-perpetrated violence influences if Sri Lankans vote, none discusses the potential impact of Tiger-perpetrated terrorism on how they vote. Yet where these studies collectively suggest that partisan violence has not, in practice, been executed on a scale sufficient to alter outcomes at the district, let alone national, level, history suggests that strategically executed acts of terrorism can substantially affect which party voters support, sometimes with election-changing outcomes.

Politics in Sri Lanka have historically been characterized by close, competition between the dominant United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) with alternative coalitions to the incumbent being elected to power in a large number of national elections, nearly all of which have been remarkable for their levels of

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27 Hickman (2009)
voter participation.\textsuperscript{29} In 1999, the right People’s Alliance (PA), led by SLFP chief Chandrika Kumaratunga, and the extreme right Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) competed against the left United National Front (UNF), led by UNP chief Ranil Wickremasinghe. In 2005, the PA and JVP formally united to form the right United People’s Freedom Alliance (UPFA), once again competing against Wickremasinghe and the UNF.

Where the UNP has traditionally been considered the party of the “better-off, more cosmopolitan and pro-business sections of the country’s multi ethnic population,”\textsuperscript{30} and has recently sought to advance negotiations with the LTTE, the economically center-left SLFP, increasingly associated with Sinhalese chauvinist elements, has pursued a much tougher stance against rebels, advocating stronger domestic security. The extreme right JVP, which has gradually picked up momentum to emerge as a third party in Sri Lankan politics,\textsuperscript{31} is an economically far-left Sinhala chauvinist entity strongly opposed to the Tamil separatist agenda and highly critical of any negotiated political solution to the ethnic problem.\textsuperscript{32} Collectively, the three parties (the UNP on the left, and the JVP and SLFP on the right) secured the overwhelming number of votes in both the 1999 and 2005

\textsuperscript{32} For extended discussion see: International Crisis Group. \textit{Sri Lanka: Sinhala Nationalism and the Elusive Southern Consensus,} Asia Report No. 141 (November 2007). The JVP first emerged as a Maoist youth movement in the late 1960s. After failing to win progressive socialist reforms from the SLFP government in 1971, it staged a violent but short-lived insurrection. After a period underground, the JVP re-emerged in the late 1980s to stage a second failed insurrection, this time aimed at forcing the UNP government to eject the Indian Peace Keeping Force that had been charged with disarming LTTE rebels on the Jaffna peninsula. After being de-proscribed in the mid-1990s, the JVP reconstituted itself as a far-right Sinhala chauvinist entity and has grown in popularity in the Sinhalese-dominated south.
contests and constitute the two blocs for which polling data from the elections has been condensed and analyzed.

IV. Case Studies

At the national level, electoral outcomes in Sri Lanka from 1999 to 2005 appear to broadly mirror the findings of Berrebi and Klor, who theorize that support for right bloc candidates will grow relatively as terrorist violence rises and decrease after periods of relative calm. While the left bloc UNP was handily defeated by the right bloc PA/JVP in 1999 after a period of formal hostilities with the LTTE and a significant growth in terrorist incidents, the UPFA only narrowly defeated the UNP in 2005 following a period of vastly reduced violence facilitated in large part by the left bloc’s negotiation of a ceasefire with separatists. The following pages lay out the dominant political currents in each election cycle, characterize key trends in terrorist activity in each period, and discuss national-level electoral outcomes in advance of analysis of district and sub-district presidential election returns.

1999 National Election: Contexts and Outcomes

The following three sections highlight and discuss key developments in the Sri Lankan political environment and changes in the level of terrorist violence as they relate to presidential election outcomes from December 1999. This analysis helps to establish a baseline for understanding trends in electoral allegiance and terrorist violence observed

33 Berrebi and Klor (2004; 2006)
from 1999 to 2005 and to measure the degree and manner in which observed changes in voting owe to differences in the level of terrorist violence as opposed to other factors in the political and economic sphere also likely to affect voter preference.

**Political Currents, 1999**

Incumbent Chandrika Kumaratunga entered the 1999 presidential election after a period of prolonged war with the LTTE. The temporary cessation of army offensives in spring 1999 gave way to a steady rise in LTTE terrorism in various regions of the island. While Kumaratunga’s “war for peace,” which had been aimed at defeating the LTTE to pave the way for negotiation with Tamil moderates, had seen nineteen months of grating battle in the northeast, results were far from decisive and many analysts predicted she would fail in her bid for re-election as a result of costly military losses and the PA’s demonstrated inability to repair domestic security.\(^{34}\) The Tamil Tigers effectively reversed the army’s modest territorial gains in only a matter of months.\(^{35}\) Morale in the armed services reached an historic low and desertions reached an historic high.\(^{36}\)

Though not officially due for a year, Kumaratunga called early elections in 1999 in an effort to obtain a fresh mandate to break the left bloc UNP opposition’s continued obstruction of a PA amendment proposing partial devolution as a solution to the ethnic


conflict.\textsuperscript{37} For its part, the UNP favored the creation of a two-year interim administration for the northeast with full LTTE participation. The PA and its proponents on the right charged the UNP with obstructionism and criticized its plan as undermining national security and effectively surrendering vast tracts of the nation to the LTTE.\textsuperscript{38} According to Sri Lankan policy expert Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, “the debate brought to the fore the entrenched fear and loathing of the LTTE present among the majority Sinhala community and, in hindsight, has been cited as a factor in [the UNP] electoral defeat.”\textsuperscript{39}

However, this “entrenched fear and loathing” and the attendant loss of the UNP left must be understood in context of the LTTE’s concrete actions immediately preceding the election, which played a significant role in undermining the appeal of the UNP’s call for unconditional talks, the keystone in its proposed plan to resolve the Tamil separatist issue. In an unusually vitriolic November 17 ‘Heroes Day’ speech, LTTE chief Velupillai Prabhakaran labeled the Kumaratunga government “a curse on the Tamil people” and informed audiences they “knew what to do” at polls.\textsuperscript{40} However, any notion that these words might have been intended as a tacit endorsement of the UNP was effectively undone by LTTE attacks on both parties’ leadership barely one month later. Mass LTTE violence days before the election sent a strong message to already suspicious Sinhalese voters that the LTTE was in no way prepared to involve itself in serious negotiation, a development that left the UNP out in the cold on its key issue.

\textsuperscript{38} Saravanamuttu (2000), p. 221
\textsuperscript{39} Saravanamuttu (2000), p. 221
\textsuperscript{40} Saravanamuttu (2000), p. 224; Peiris (2009), p. 30
Trends in Terrorism, 1999

1999 saw a large number of terrorist incidents in the Western Province as well as in the more actively contested regions of northern and eastern Sri Lanka. Four months out from the date of polling, 11 major terrorist incidents had resulted in 111 deaths and over 250 injuries. Most notable among these attacks were the near simultaneous suicide bombings of a PA rally at Town Hall in the Borella polling division of Colombo and a UNP rally in the Ja-Ela polling division of Gampaha, only thirty-minutes north of the capital. Both occurred only three days prior to the election. According to Berrebi and Klor’s theory, the high numbers of casualties and close proximity to polls should have resulted in a large benefit for the right PA nationwide and a more pronounced benefit locally.

At Town Hall, 15 were killed and 110 injured, including Kumaratunga, who lost her right eye in the blast.\(^41\) Several bodyguards, bystanders, and high-profile PA politicos died. Curfews were enacted in response to the violence but Kumaratunga, bruised and bandaged, appeared on state television the next day, excoriating the LTTE. Vowing that elections would take place as planned, the president emphasized the degree to which attacks proved that the Tigers were terrorists who were purely interested in achieving their objectives through violence and thus could not be engaged in political settlement.\(^42\)


UNP chief and presidential candidate Ranil Wickremasinghe was absent from his party’s Ja-Ela rally. There, a comparatively smaller explosion killed eight people, including several party VIPs and an iconic ex-army general, and injured approximately 40 supporters. Likely aware of the degree to which the violence undermined his platform for unconditional talks, Wickremasinghe and party loyalists blamed PA extremists for the violence. However, the attacks, both of which were suicide operations, bore the unmistakable hallmarks of Tamil Tiger operations and UNP accusations of partisan “dirty tricks” were dismissed as politically expedient fictions by observers on both sides.

Where analysts had earlier speculated that 1999’s military misadventures had effectively destroyed Kumaratunga’s chances for re-election, that assessment changed in the wake of the pre-election bombings as commentators predicted the attack would grow support for the incumbent. However, this was not, as Berrebi and Klor’s theory predicts, articulated in terms of shifting public perception with regard to the need for forward-leaning counterterrorism, but instead in the more emotional terms of a “sympathy vote” for the injured candidate.

While the election-eve attacks received the most attention domestically and internationally and came, critically, just moments prior to the vote, they were not the only LTTE attacks to feature prominently in the news in the months leading to the election. In September, the LTTE executed a vicious massacre at Punchi-Sigiriya, an agricultural

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43 The UNP decision to blame the PA is in some way similar to the conservative PPP’s attempt to portray Islamist violence executed in the run-up to Spain’s 2004 congressional election as the work of Basque separatists rather than al-Qaeda operatives. In both cases, though for very different reasons, the identity of the perpetrators of the attack was deemed to have significant ramifications at the polls because it undermined one faction’s security policy disproportionately.

settlement in the multi-ethnic Digamadulla District. There, LTTE cadres armed with knives and machetes butchered 61 Sinhalese villagers in an attack highly reminiscent of the Kent and Dollar Farm massacres of the mid-1980s and the Kallarawa massacre of 1995.45 The incident galvanized the nation’s Sinhalese population and spread fears in majority enclaves on the fringes of the LTTE’s traditional areas of influence in the north and east. At the same time, in locations across the north and east, sporadic small-scale attacks continued against Sri Lankan police, military, and paramilitary forces.

**Presidential Election Outcomes, 1999**

Only three days after violence killed 23 and injured 150 in Colombo and Gampaha, Sri Lankans went to the polls and re-elected Chandrika Kumaratunga. While her right PA secured 51.12 percent of the popular vote, she was afforded a more comfortable margin of victory over the UNP, which collected 42.7 percent, thanks to the unexpectedly high take of the extreme right JVP, which polled an unprecedented 4 percent nationally with especially strong showings in the conservative, Sinhalese-dominated south. This marked the continuation of a steady trend of rising support for the JVP beginning after its de-proscription. Collectively, 55.5 percent of Sri Lanka’s voters fell behind the right bloc in 1999 while the remaining 2 percent of the vote was distributed fairly evenly between 10 minor candidates representing various special interests.

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While it is difficult to say to exactly what degree Kumaratunga’s success owes to the increase of terrorism and the critical events preceding the election, it is noteworthy that the JVP, which campaigned as a nationalist, Sinhala chauvinist party opposed to any political compromise with Tamils that might “divide the motherland,” secured significant backing despite running one of its less iconic leaders—a compromise that seems to have been aimed at asserting the party’s growing political muscle without seriously endangering the electoral success of the dominant PA, which was the JVP’s natural ally and its obvious preference to the UNP.46

Deciding the degree to which rises in terrorism benefitted the right is a challenge because a range of factors other than citizens’ beliefs about one party or the other’s ability to provide greater population security are likely to have played into decision-making. This proves the important point that political context can be highly important in identifying what terrorism is likely to signify to voters from case to case. For example, voters who might have seen support for the UNP as a means to advance security by pursuit of a political settlement certainly thought twice thanks to Tiger attacks, which sent the message that rebels could not be so easily appeased. Meanwhile, to the extent that the right gained support, the benefit may have owed in part to emotional reactions rather than careful determination by voters that the PA signaled the best chance for bringing violence under control.

Comparison of national and district-level outcomes from 1999 with those of 2005, however, provides a better basis for judgment. Combined, numbers suggest that shifts in party platforms and steep reductions in terror see UNP support rise across virtually all districts, but with increasing polarization of the electorate along ethnic lines. Examination of key districts, provided in subsequent pages, reveals that disaggregating voter responses to terrorism, as opposed to other endogenous political and social factors, poses a serious challenge for analysis but highlights the degree to which the case-specific details ironed out of large-n studies are essential to interpreting local political developments and crafting effective policies aimed at insulating voters from insurgent violence. Specifically, understanding the mechanisms by which acts of terror can be expected to produce different results depending on where, how, and against whom they are executed, and how individuals prioritize terrorism reduction relative to other issues, has significant implications for how policy solutions are developed and the integrity of democratic processes preserved.

2005 National Election: Contexts and Outcomes

Mirroring the previous section, the following pages provide discussion and analysis of the key political developments and changes in terrorist violence that form the background for the November 2005 presidential election. By juxtaposing key changes in the political and economic environment against changes in the level of LTTE violence, the following sections aim to elucidate the degree to which changes in voter behavior over the course of the study period—in particular the progressive rise in the popularity of the left UNP—can
be attributed to the dramatic scaling back of terrorist violence as opposed to other factors. By broadly characterizing national-level trends, these sections open the door to deeper analysis at the sub-district level, a process that aids in developing a more nuanced appreciation of the relationship between terrorist violence and voter preference in Sri Lanka.

**Political Currents, 2005**

The 2005 presidential election saw Sri Lanka in a very different place than in 1999. An attempt by the right PA to officially incorporate the extreme right JVP in coalition saw thirteen PA MPs defect to the UNP in 2001, a move that resulted in temporary loss of parliamentary control to the UNP opposition. This caused an unprecedented situation in Sri Lanka’s history, with the executive president effectively sidelined in the national political process by her left UNP rivals. Prime Minister Wickremasinghe wasted no

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47 Since the controversial 1978 amendment of Sri Lanka’s constitution by President J.R. Jayawardene, Sri Lanka has been ruled by an executive president who officially serves as head of state and head of government. This modified Gaullist system is unlike many parliamentary democracies in that the president, rather than serving a titular role, wields substantial political power. But while the president is vested with wide executive authority, the legislative powers associated with the office are, strictly speaking, constitutionally limited. However, the prime minister, who is appointed by the president from the ranks of the majority coalition (which until 2001 corresponded to the president’s own coalition), has traditionally performed a ceremonial role, using the office’s constitutionally mandated legislative powers, which are substantial, to directly serve the president’s interests in parliament. This relationship changed dramatically in 2001, however, when the executive was, for the first time, compelled to engage in co-habitation and select a Prime Minister from outside her own coalition. The unexpected rise of the UNP and resultant appointment of Ranil Wickremasinghe as prime minister revealed for the first time the degree of political instability and ambiguity that could result when conflict rather than collusion characterized the relationship between president and prime minister. Prime ministerial checks on presidential power, which had rarely been exercised in the past, saw the president largely marginalized in the national legislative process. For an extended discussion, see: Shastri, Amita. “Sri Lanka in 2001: Year of Reversals.” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (January-February 2002), pp. 177-182
time implementing his party’s proposed peace plan and by February 22 secured a ceasefire agreement (CFA) with the LTTE with the aid of Norwegian facilitators. The LTTE, which had arguably been at the height of its power in 1999, saw its fortunes reversed in the wake of 9-11 as the global community and many Tamil supporters became less tolerant of its violent tactics. In this environment, the UNP proposal that had not interested Tiger leadership in 1999 was much more attractive. With the inauguration of the ceasefire, roads between the government-controlled south and rebel-held north were re-opened for the first time in over a decade and security was scaled down island wide.

Kumaratunga, the PA and the JVP accused the UNP of endangering national security by reducing policing and restricting forward movement by the army in the name of confidence building with the LTTE, but the right stopped short of challenging the ceasefire agreement, which had seen violence cease almost overnight. Negotiations with the LTTE in Bangkok the same year saw slow forward progress but terrorist attacks failed to materialize in 2002 and 2003. Shortly after Norwegian facilitators announced in 2003 that parties had agreed to “self-determination based on a federal solution within a united Sri Lanka,” a move that was hailed as an unprecedented breakthrough, the LTTE suddenly and inexplicably pulled out of talks. However, the Tigers agreed to continue to abide by the ceasefire agreement. Though uncertain about whether talks could be revived, the UNP had nevertheless succeeded in scaling down security costs, growing the economy in peacetime, and temporarily eliminating terrorism.

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As hardliners on the right complained about LTTE intransigence and continued to argue that the UNP had aided rebels by ceding them *de facto* control of vast regions of the north and east, violence gradually began to resume in contested areas, though well below 1999 and 2000 levels. The Karuna faction, an eastern guerilla army that split from the LTTE in 2004, publicly charged Tiger leadership with entering peace talks and agreeing to the ceasefire in a cynical bid to recoup from steep 1999 losses, consolidate its control in the northeast, and infiltrate new territory to the south. Allied with the JVP, the reconstituted PA, which had recovered from the earlier loss of key MPs, made the most of this development, asserting itself against the UNP and taking back parliament in the 2004 general election by stirring popular fears surrounding the hidden costs of the CFA and the dubious future of talks.

With her own presidential term limit expiring, Kumaratunga handed the reigns of the party to new Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, a low-country populist with roots in the same southern districts that were home to the Sinhala chauvinist stalwarts of the JVP. The UNP again ran Ranil Wickremasinghe, party leader and architect of the controversial CFA and abortive peace process. Consistent with his past position,

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While Sri Lanka’s census does not differentiate between low-country and up-country Sinhalese, the distinction, which has important historical, socio-cultural and political dimensions, is nevertheless commonly observed among the general population. Where the up-country or Kandyan Sinhalese have their roots primarily in the landed *Govigama* caste and were the last of the Sinhalese kingdoms to succumb to colonial domination in 1815, the low-country Sinhalese have longstanding ties with the country’s various European ruling powers, beginning with the Portuguese in the early-1500s. Where *Govigama* also exist in large numbers in the low country, the caste system is substantially different, with several traditionally lower-caste groups enjoying significant power and prestige as a direct result of their commercial ties to European colonials and traders. Though in the comparative minority, the aristocratic up-country Sinhalese have enjoyed a disproportionate degree of political power at the national level since independence and until recently intermarriage between the groups was rare.
Wickremasinghe campaigned on a platform of bolstering the CFA and reviving the peace process with the LTTE. Wickremasinghe also placed emphasis on the economic improvements that came as a result of reductions in terrorist violence and the scaling-back of defense expenditures it afforded.

The PA again sought a formal union with the JVP, which continued to paint the CFA as an unwise policy that threatened the nation’s security and sovereignty. Though JVP constituents were highly unlikely to formally back the UNP thanks to key disagreements over matters of security and economy, the move to unite was a strategic attempt to prevent the kind of split in right bloc votes that occurred in 1999. Even a four percent stake was too much to risk in what was popularly anticipated to be a much closer election given the peace dividend credited to the UNP. With no certain hope of luring minority voters away from the UNP, Rajapaksa and the PA instead sought to grow their base, a move that required them to sign a formal memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the JVP in which they promised to reject any federal solution to the separatist problem and to renegotiate the terms of the controversial CFA. Effectively, this signaled a pronounced slide to the right for the PA from its traditional position under Kumaratunga, despite the fact that the UNP and PA retained their relative positions with respect to matters of security.

**Trends in Terrorism, 2005**

Where the conditions of the ceasefire agreement saw terrorism all but eliminated from 2002 to 2004, 2005 saw a gradual uptick in violence. Internecine skirmishing between the
LTTE and the Karuna faction, largely confined to the Eastern Province, comprised of the electoral districts of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Digamadulla, saw militants killed on both sides and civilians injured in the crossfire.

In the four months preceding the 2005 election, nine incidents resulted in five deaths and twenty-four injuries. Of these, the most notable was the August assassination in Colombo of Sri Lankan foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, an internationally recognized Tamil statesman and harsh critic of the LTTE. On the same day Kadirgamar was killed, LTTE operatives murdered (also in Colombo) a Tamil couple associated with a rival Tamil political party. The remaining fatalities and injuries occurred when LTTE cadres attacked a refugee camp in Digamadulla, killing two police and injuring several civilians. While terrorism paralleled 1999 events in terms of location and targeting—each involved attacks on politicians in Colombo and civilians in the east—there were vast differences in the selectivity and scope of violence and many fewer resulting deaths and injuries. Furthermore, 2005 incidents occurred substantially further out from the date of polling than 1999 events.

Stepping back a full year from polls, statistics from 1999 and 2005 project very different pictures of the nature and deadliness of terrorist activity. First, 1999 was almost seven times deadlier than 2005, with 201 deaths in the first year compared to only 15 in the second. Second, the number of injured dropped by a more than a factor of nine, from 411 in 1999 to only 44 in 2005.

Significantly, presidential elections remained largely peaceful in 2005, as they had in 1999, with respect to incidents of partisan (non-LTTE) political violence.
According to a study by Hickman, a limited number of incidents in each year saw the two major parties lose ground at polling stations where the number of complaints of violence and intimidation by their competitors was especially high, but such events were of a “retail rather than wholesale” nature and too dispersed to manifest in polling division, let alone district or national-level, outcomes.\(^5^0\) This is in stark contrast to the parliamentary elections of the intervening years, each of which was marked by wide scale partisan violence, often of a serious or deadly nature.\(^5^1\)

**Presidential Election Outcomes, 2005**

Formally united with the JVP, Rajapaksa’s right bloc UPFA won 50.29 percent of the popular vote to the UNP’s 48.43 percent, a much closer result than 1999, and only one half of one percent more than the number of total votes required to declare an official winner. This time, the two-party vote was 98.72 percent, with less than 2 percent of votes falling to 11 minor candidates outside the UPFA and UNP. Where in 1999 the UNP had won an outright majority against the PA and JVP in only the left minority strongholds of the Vanni, Batticaloa, and Trincomalee, by 2005 it added had added multi-ethnic Colombo, Kandy, Matale, Nuwara Eliya, Jaffna, Digamadulla, Puttalam, and Badulla. In fact, the UNP only failed to improve on its 1999 performance in three districts, all of which were located in the Sinhalese-dominated south and thus most distant from sites LTTE terrorism—a trend that in the most immediate sense contradicts Berrebi and Klor’s

\(^5^0\) Hickman (2009)  
\(^5^1\) For a full treatment of the subject see: Hoglund (2009)
theory that support for the right will should grow the closer a district is to the site of terrorism, but which is nevertheless understandable if approached in qualitative terms.

The three exceptions, those districts where the right block actually gained support, were the comparatively ethnically homogenous Sinhala enclaves of Hambantota, Monaragala, and Matara. In the first, home to both Mahinda Rajapaksa and the JVP, the right bloc stake grew 3.26 percent to a national high of 63.73 percent. Neighboring Monaragala and Matara saw very modest gains (each less than 1 percent) to 56.94 percent and 61.85 percent, respectively. This phenomenon suggests a local effect that likely owes less to factors of terrorism or the candidate’s political platform than to his status as a native son. In fact, one would be remiss not to question why Rajapaksa’s margin of support was not higher in the south given that his candidacy signaled the potential for an unprecedented transfer of political power away from the English-speaking, Colombo-Kandy, high-caste urban elite to the bilingual, low-country rural class that had spawned movements like the JVP precisely because it felt its interests went unrepresented in Colombo. Hence, where some commentators have attempted to characterize the 2005 national outcome as a broad-based repudiation of UNP policies, analysis of developments in the UPFA’s own home districts suggests a much more complicated scenario. Even if we assume that 100 percent of Hambantota’s minority voters (only 2.9 percent of the district population) supported the UNP in 2005, that means a full 32.33 percent of Sinhalese voters still favored from the left bloc.

Collectively, national-level analysis of violence and voting trends in Sri Lanka from 1999 to 2005 provides an opportunity to assess the degree to which terrorist attacks
influence broad trends in support for left and right candidates over the study period and to identify confounding factors, including the temporary cessation of war and changes in the national economy, that are endogenous to the political environment and thus might also contribute to observed changes in electoral allegiance. Additionally, analysis at the national level provides a baseline for judging the degree to which localized changes in levels of support for left and right candidates might relate, say, to factors of ethnicity as opposed to local levels of violence, an issue which necessitates further investigation at the sub-national or district level. In the following pages, I progress directly to analysis of district-level terrorism and presidential election outcomes as a means to test my second hypothesis and establish whether increasing geographic proximity to terrorist violence effects more pronounced changes in electoral support than those observed nationally.

**Sub-National Analyses: Contexts and Outcomes**

The following case studies facilitate evaluation of hypotheses 2 and 3, which relate to the local effects of terrorist violence on electoral returns and the potentially polarizing effect of violence in left-leaving districts, respectively. In the first case, I test the degree to which local terror manifests in more pronounced support for right candidates through comparison of Kandy and Colombo, districts that are demographically similar but which differ substantially in terms of their experiences with terrorist violence. In the second case, I test the degree to which increases in terrorism in left-leaving districts—as opposed to increases in terrorism nationally—affect electoral allegiance in Trincomalee, the only left-leaning district in Sri Lanka to experience a localized increase in terrorist casualties.
from 1999 to 2005. Finally, I examine the case of Digamadulla, a heterogeneous eastern district with a history of ethnically targeted terrorist violence, in an effort to reveal the degree to which the effects of violence on electoral allegiance are neither as straightforward nor as easily observable in Sri Lanka as Berrebi and Klor suggest in their study of the Israeli electorate.

**Kandy and Colombo: Developments from 1999 to 2005**

Maha Nuwara (Kandy) and Colombo constitute an ideal set of districts for side-by-side comparison because while they differ remarkably in the levels of terrorist violence experienced over the study period, they have strikingly similar demographic features. Colombo’s population is 76.6 percent Sinhalese while Kandy’s is a close 74.1 percent. Where Tamils register 12.1 percent in Colombo, they comprise an almost identical 12.2 percent in Kandy. Muslims constitute 10 percent of Colombo’s population and 13.3 percent of Kandy’s. In each district, one percent or less of the population is comprised of individuals belonging to miscellaneous other ethnic groups. However, where Colombo suffered devastating attacks against the PA candidate three days ahead of elections as well as sporadic incidents of violence throughout the months leading to elections, Kandy remained typically quiescent and insulated from attack.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Sinhalese</th>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colombo</td>
<td>76.6 %</td>
<td>12.1 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>1.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandy</td>
<td>74.1 %</td>
<td>12.2 %</td>
<td>13.3 %</td>
<td>0.4 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, analysis of the 1999 election results reveals no significant shift of the Colombo electorate towards the right bloc when measured against outcomes from Kandy.
In the 1999 polls, Kandyan voters favored the right bloc 52.82 percent to 45.10 percent with the locally alien and extreme right JVP garnering only 2.53 percent of the right bloc’s support. In Colombo, the right won a marginally larger 53.74 percent of the vote, with a more substantial stake (4.56 percent) contributed by the JVP, which has long maintained a political presence in that district. 44.08 percent of Colombo voters supported the UNP, a level comparable with that observed in Kandy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right Support</th>
<th>Right 1999</th>
<th>Right 2005</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colombo</td>
<td>53.74 %</td>
<td>47.96 %</td>
<td>- 5.78 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maha Nuwara</td>
<td>52.82 %</td>
<td>44.30 %</td>
<td>- 8.52 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left Support</th>
<th>Left 1999</th>
<th>Left 2005</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colombo</td>
<td>44.08 %</td>
<td>51.12 %</td>
<td>+ 7.04 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maha Nuwara</td>
<td>45.10 %</td>
<td>54.33 %</td>
<td>+ 9.23 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus despite its acute recent experiences with terrorism, Colombo failed, in direct contradiction to Berrebi and Klor’s theory, to generate a locally observable inflation in support for the right. In fact, it is worth noting that the marginal advantage enjoyed by the right bloc in Colombo, as compared to Kandy, is actually smaller than the capital district’s relative surplus in Sinhalese voters—the ethnic constituency statistically most inclined to offer its support to right governments.

In 2005, after a period of reduced violence in Colombo and the continued absence of terrorist violence in Kandy, support for the UNP grew in both districts, following the predictions of Berrebi and Klor and echoing results nationwide, with the exception of the three previously discussed southern districts. The most notable feature of the 2005 returns is that in Kandy, support for the UNP grew somewhat disproportionately to Colombo.
Where in the capital, the UNP gained just over 7 points (increasing to 51.12 percent) to join the growing number of districts delivering majority support for the left, Kandy saw support for the UNP grow 9.23 points to 54.33 percent. Given that terrorism appears not to have played a significant role in affecting electoral preferences locally and that relative ethnic distributions remained static over the duration of the study period, inflated support for the UNP may be best explained in terms of the differential impact of the JVP/PA partnership on minority Muslims, who are more numerous in Kandy. The shift to right signaled by the union of the PA and JVP saw the political strata shift with important implications for minorities and moderates, a position that well describes the bulk of Sri Lanka’s Muslims voters.  

Additionally, if the resurrection of the divisive JVP/PA union that cost Kumaratunga thirteen ministers and her parliamentary majority in 2001 did not result in a more pronounced shedding of Sinhalese SLFP moderates in the hill country, it would be surprising since the JVP holds a smaller stake regionally and continues to be viewed with suspicion outside its traditional southwestern constituency. The validity of this hybrid explanation, though admittedly imperfect and statistically difficult to prove, seems to be confirmed by the additional fact that in Matale, an up-country district comprised of over 80 percent Sinhalese and 10 percent Muslims, support for the UNP nevertheless grew by 8 points—slightly more than a comparatively multi-ethnic Colombo but slightly less than Kandy.

52 Kumaratunga’s loss of parliamentary control in 2001 was a direct result of the defection of members of the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress (SLMC), who disapproved of the JVP and its Sinhala chauvinist agenda.
If the 1999 polling results from Kandy and Colombo seem to disprove the hypothesis that local increases in violence result in local increases in support for the right, this does not of course mean that Berrebi and Klor’s theory is wrong. Instead, it may be that differences in the nature of terrorism from one theatre to another disrupts somewhat the notion of ‘local terrorism’ and thus the likelihood of discernible ‘local effects.’ In fact, given the nature of terrorist incidents executed in Colombo and elsewhere in 1999 and 2005, and in Sri Lanka generally, a potential caveat might be in order.

Where in Israel a range of Palestinian groups have, for decades, targeted Israeli citizens on buses, in restaurants, and in markets, Sri Lanka’s comparatively unitary LTTE has consistently sought to portray its war as one waged not against the people but against the Sinhalese-dominated government. As a result, most attacks have been trained on political and military VIPs, soldiers and police, economic targets and symbols of state power. Where exceptions occur, as in the case of the massacre of Sinhalese settlers in the east or Muslims in the northeast, and bombing of Sinhala-Buddhist religious sites, attacks still carry significant national-level political and ethnic implications. Thus, even if attacks can be expected to carry local effects, a fact that seems as inevitable as it is illusive, they may be flattened out by broader national trends or, in other cases, may be too local to register in electoral returns at the polling division level.

1999 pre-election violence is an example of terrorism that could only be expected to galvanize voters on a national scale, which was very likely the LTTE’s intent. By targeting leading presidential candidates and seeking once again to disrupt and undermine Sri Lanka’s democratic process—the LTTE killed the favored presidential candidate in
1994—the group sent a clear message, accessory civilian casualties aside, that it had its sights trained on the state, not on the populace of Borella, the neighborhood where the Colombo bomb went off, or Ja-Ela, the mono-ethnic urban enclave where several UNP leaders died. If inhabitants of these districts do not register a discernible increase in support for right candidates, it may be because they did not view these attacks, which were obviously focused on the political arena, to signal a pronounced increase in risk locally above that which they signaled generally. Where Berrebi and Klor argue that terror attacks should directly influence the salience of the conflict in the targeted locality because they are expected to have an inordinate effect on how local residents view their personal security, prospects for economic prosperity, etc., this may not hold true where terrorist violence is largely perceived to follow politicians and does not manifest in the course of normal day to day life. The truth is that throughout much of the Sri Lankan conflict, including the period under study, most civilians could remain fairly confident in their safety from terrorism providing they did not live in or proximate to areas of LTTE control and avoided political demonstrations and government institutions. While this is a far from a perfect hypothesis and one that merits future testing, it constitutes one possible explanation for why high levels of support for the right bloc following periods of increased violence do not seem to manifest in disproportionate levels of support for the right at the local level in Sri Lanka.
Trincomalee: Developments from 1999 to 2005

Analysis of terrorism and electoral outcomes in Trincomalee adds a further wrinkle to how we understand the elusive local effects of terrorism. A multi-ethnic electoral district located on Sri Lanka’s northeast coast, Trincomalee provides an important case study for testing Berrebi and Klor’s theory about the effects of terrorism in left-leaning constituencies because it is the only left-leaning district in Sri Lanka that actually saw an increase in terrorist violence between 1999 and 2005. Analysis of changes in support for the left and right blocs over the study period suggests that while levels of terrorist violence may play a role in influencing electoral allegiance, conditions of ethnicity, geography, and other factors cloud results and lead to far less straightforward outcomes than those predicted in the model. This is borne out by Trincomalee’s progressive shift to the left despite the deterioration of the local security environment, a development that apparently contradicts voting trends in Israel.

In 1999, Trincomalee remained far more peaceful than its geographic location relative to the broadening conflict might otherwise suggest. For the year in full, Trinco saw only two incidents of terrorism, each of which resulted in the death of one member of the Sri Lankan military but not in any other injuries. In 2005, Trinco saw five incidents resulting in six deaths and seventeen injuries. Two incidents involved the military and resulted in five deaths and two injuries. One incident involved the death and injury, one each, of local police. Two other incidents involved fifteen civilians, none of which were killed but all of which were seriously injured, who were attacked in a refugee camp.
Where in 1999 voters in Trincomalee favored the left UNP by a very narrow 50.25 percent, in 2005 their support for the left grew to 61.33 percent.

Examined at the sub-district level, results collectively suggest that changes in levels of UNP support over time correlate better with ethnic distribution than levels of terrorism either district-wide or locally. The Seruwila polling division, home to an important Buddhist temple and disproportionate number of the district’s Sinhalese, saw five members of the Sri Lankan military attacked and killed by LTTE cadres in 2005 despite witnessing no local incidents in 1999. Nevertheless, support for the UNP rose from 38.49 percent to 44.86 percent, an increase of 6.37 percent overall. In Muttur, where minorities form a larger proportion of the local population, 2005 LTTE attacks against refugees at a tsunami camp saw 11 injured. Support for the UNP in Muttur also rose, in this case by 13.59 points to 59.54 percent overall. Finally, in the eponymous, comparatively urban and overwhelmingly minority-dominated Trincomalee polling division, which saw no change in the number of local incidents from 1999 to 2005, support for the UNP grew by 13.77 percent (a similar gain to Muttur’s) to a district high of 77.9 percent. Voter participation in Trincomalee District remained fairly constant from 1999 to 2005, demonstrating neither the marginal growth in turnout observed island wide nor the marked decrease observed in the districts of Batticaloa, Jaffna, and the Vanni. However, it is worth noting that percent participation in Trincomalee District dropped significantly in the two polling divisions where terrorist violence occurred at higher levels in 2005 (Muttur and Seruwila) than in Trincomalee proper, where turnout grew in line with trends observed elsewhere on the island. This effect may owe to fears of
terrorist reprisals or, relatedly, the reduction in government police and military presence in the hinterlands.

While outcomes in Trincomalee on one hand appear to directly contradict the idea that growth in terrorism leads to growth in support for right candidates, the subtler issues of ethnicity, geography, and constituency render results understandable from a qualitative perspective. First, while terrorism did increase in Trincomalee, it increased only marginally compared, say, to the number of deaths and degree of destruction citizens might reasonably envision as resulting from a return to war. Because UPFA success was seen to carry an increased likelihood of a return to hostilities and the almost sure renegotiation of an already fragile, but still holding, ceasefire, border communities could expect to suffer disproportionately from UPFA shake-ups of the political order. In this respect, it is understandable that voters in Trincomalee would elect a more conservative approach that involves accepting a marginal increase in terrorism over a larger (anticipated) increase in the chance that open hostilities might resume. This is in sharp contrast, perhaps, to thinking in southern districts, which suffer directly neither the effects of terrorism nor the effects of war and can therefore vote in line with their principles with less concern for the potential associated fallout.

Also, because citizens on the east coast are more proximate to areas of established LTTE control and more distant from seats of government power, they may justifiably doubt the right’s ability to deliver better security to them regardless of whether they doubt its intent. Collectively, local circumstances demonstrate the degree to which changes in local violence constitutes only one of many elements involved in a highly
complex decision calculus that transcends streamlined models. Nevertheless, the point remains that, in contradiction to Berrebi and Klor’s theory, increases in local violence in left-leaning districts did not manifest in growth in support for the right bloc, which lost support at a rate quite consistent with that observed across other districts when the ethnic composition of the population is taken into account.

**Digamadulla: Developments from 1999 to 2005**

Sri Lanka’s history with terrorism may disrupt somewhat the notion, as advocated by Berrebi and Klor, that local attacks will to carry noticeable local effects. Again, this seems to depend on the composition of the population and differences in attacks that have serious implications for how civilians see terrorist activity as a threat to their personal security or to the security of their communities. Digamadulla’s overwhelmingly rural population is comprised predominantly of Tamils, 18.4 percent, and Muslims, 41.5 percent, with Sinhalese in a narrow minority, 39.9 percent. Though minorities generally reject violent attacks on Sinhalese civilians, many Tamils and Muslims viewed the movement of Sinhalese settlers into the district in the early 1990s as an unwelcome encroachment and a deliberate campaign by the government to progressively dilute the local minority population—a hedge against the LTTE’s separatist ambitions for the Eastern Province. On the other hand, many Sinhalese felt adamant about their right to migrate internally. LTTE attacks on settlers like the one carried out at Punchi-Sigiriya in 1999 send strong and provocative messages that are heard island-wide but make distinctly different impressions on different sub-groups. For
the Sinhalese, they are an assault on their people and a repudiation of group’s right to exist in its own nation. For minorities, violence may be a frightening reminder of what the LTTE is capable of, but its clear focus on a distinct sub-population renders the political message behind the attack readable and thus does not raise the same fears for local minorities as it does for local Sinhalese.

The unsurprising result is that while the effects of such attacks at the super-local level are effectively obscured by the status of the Sinhalese population at the sites of violence, where they constitute a very small minority, the differential impact on the various ethnic communities at the division level, and perhaps the national level, may be more likely to be visible.

Ballot returns from Digamadulla’s four polling divisions in 1999 and 2005, however, reveal how difficult it can be to make sense of returns when matters of terrorism, ethnic politics, and conflict development intersect. A survey of electoral returns shows that support for the right held steady in Ampara division, where Sinhalese constitute an overwhelming majority (93.37 percent) compared to Tamils and Muslims, who predominate to varying degrees in the remaining three divisions.53

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digamadulla Polling Division</th>
<th>Right 1999</th>
<th>Right 2005</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>55.28 %</td>
<td>55.85 %</td>
<td>+ 0.57 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sammanthurai</td>
<td>64.02 %</td>
<td>45.09 %</td>
<td>- 18.93 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalmunai</td>
<td>55.46 %</td>
<td>23.08 %</td>
<td>- 32.38 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potuvil</td>
<td>56.40 %</td>
<td>32.84 %</td>
<td>- 23.56 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the notable decrease in support for the right in minority dominated divisions is consistent with that seen in other regions, the most noticeable feature of results is the comparatively high level of support the right managed to achieve across polling stations in 1999, a fact that owes principally to the historic affinity between local Muslim political groups and the SLFP. 2005 shows this Muslim support dropping drastically, likely as a combined result of the UPFA shift to the right and the modest peace dividend realized by the UNP. In Ampara, which in 1999 had the lowest level of support for the PA despite having the highest level of Sinhalese, anticipated benefits for the left owing to reduction in the level of terror may have been overshadowed by the lingering insecurities of a Sinhalese ‘majority in the minority,’ understandably unconvinced by a ceasefire that saw violence reduced in net but nevertheless facilitated progressive infiltration of the region by separatist insurgents.

**Intervention: The LTTE and Voter Turnout in 2005**

The question of voter turnout is an important one in the case of the 2005 presidential election because the LTTE, while broadly eschewing terrorist violence and adhering to the conditions of the ceasefire in word (if not entirely in deed) nevertheless elected to impose a controversial boycott on voting in areas under its immediate control and/or influence. Following less than subtle LTTE pronouncements that “no good could come from demonstrating interest in the upcoming elections,” levels of voter participation fell by 17.97 percent in Jaffna, 15.84 percent in Batticaloa, and 6.89 percent in Digamadulla.
Generally, the impact of the boycott on voter turnout decreased in relative proportion to the percentage of the district population made up of vulnerable minorities and the distance of the district from centers of LTTE control.\textsuperscript{54}

Collectively, this points to an obvious potential weakness in the way many studies envision terrorism and measure oscillations in its level of intensity over time, especially with respect to the question of voting. Where Berrebi and Klor and others, including this author, and various terrorist incident databases, rely on tallies of fatalities, injuries, and incident details as a proxy for changing levels of terrorism, there is no effective way to quantify how changes in the level of threat perceived by a population influences how voters operate and engage in decision-making. This is especially important in places like Sri Lanka and other societies plagued by insurgents who, in contrast to conventional terrorist groups, often exercise radically different levels of control and influence in various regions and among various groups. In this respect, it is necessary to emphasize Hoffman’s point that terrorism involves not merely violence done, but also the threat of violence, itself a very powerful coercive tool when credibly applied.\textsuperscript{55} While large-scale attacks, spilled blood, and detonated bombs deliver a strong message that may influence voters to stand behind parties tough on terrorism, so can subtler actions and efforts at intimidation powerfully alter how citizens perceive their level of safety.

Importantly, because the districts most significantly impacted by the LTTE boycott were those with the largest minority populations and those that offered some of

\textsuperscript{54} For reference, see table in appendix, p. 53  
\textsuperscript{55} Hoffman (2006)
the strongest support for the UNP in 1999, many analysts have argued that it was the voting ban that cost the UNP the election, which, as stated above, was lost by a very narrow margin in 2005. While this thinly veiled threat by terrorists does not, strictly speaking, lend itself easily to inclusion in models like Berrebi and Klor’s, it is nonetheless important to note that in the Sri Lankan case the credible threat of violence by a substate group seems to still have produced a relative advantage for the right bloc, though by an entirely different mechanism—one whereby direct demobilization of traditional left bloc voters rather than violence stimulating a reactionary shift to the right sees right candidates benefit. This unanticipated development, which has a disproportionately localized effect and a national-level impact, confounds analysis.

**Review of Key Findings**

Consistent with the predictions of Berrebi and Klor, this study finds that decreases in terrorism resulted in accompanying decreases in support for right governments at the national level in Sri Lanka from 1999 to 2005. Reductions in terrorism over the study period saw increased support for left-bloc candidates, as demonstrated in steady gains in voter support for the UNP in 2005 in all but three Sinhalese-dominated districts. However, the overall effect of terrorism on voting is admittedly difficult to isolate from other policy changes endogenous to the political environment that may have exercised a confounding influence on electoral allegiance over time.

Study of voting patterns in the Colombo and Kandy districts does not, however, suggest any correlation between local levels of violence and local levels of support for
right-bloc governments. In fact, comparison of voting in Sri Lanka’s principal cities shows that in 1999, a period characterized by intense terrorism in the capital, support for the right bloc was very comparable to that seen in Kandy, which saw no violence at all. This suggests a more complex relationship between violence and threat perception than theorized by Berrebi and Klor or exhibited in Israel and may relate to differences in the nature of terrorism between countries.

Finally, analysis of changes in terrorism in left-leaning, multi-ethnic electorates suggests that, in contrast to Berrebi and Klor’s theory, support for left governments may grow even in cases where the local security situation deteriorates over time, as was the case in Trincomalee. Further, comparison of Trinco to results in nearby Digamadulla point to a voter decision calculus that is to a great degree obscured by relative differences in how ethnic groups perceive the level of terrorist threat as well as how they are distributed within and across electoral districts.

V. Policy Implications and Conclusions

The preceding study developed out of a much earlier proposal to examine the effects of LTTE-perpetrated targeted killing on conflict development in Sri Lanka from the mid-1970s to the present. Ultimately, however, issues related to time and scope as well as several challenges associated with data collection saw that project shelved in favor of one that pursued the same basic question, though through a somewhat different lens. At its core, this study was motivated by an identical desire to understand the degree to which violence could prove instrumental in producing political change for substate groups.
While findings suggest that violence does impact how voters engage in decision-making at polls, analysis of the Sri Lankan case reveals that the effects of violence on outcomes is far from straightforward, differing markedly between groups, across regions, and over time as political contexts evolve. Such a dynamic terrain proves difficult to capture in a model or condense into a simplified framework for understanding.

Where large-n studies such as Berrebi and Klor’s may be able to ascribe a measurable, if marginal, advantage in electoral support to right candidates as a result of terrorist violence in one environment, the results of Spain’s 2004 congressional elections and study of developments in Sri Lanka from 1999 to 2005 suggest, not surprisingly, that political context and the related character of terrorist violence plays the better part in determining how voters respond at the polls. In the former case, a right incumbent party saw an unexpected defeat due to terrorism because the attacks were popularly perceived to result from its controversial policies. In the latter case, a right government widely slated to lose in 1999 thanks to its long-term failure to repair domestic security (despite forward-leaning military and counter-terrorist policies) achieved a significant victory in the wake of terrorist incidents that severely undermined the left’s platform for resolving the issues of ethnic strife driving violence. Collectively, these developments point to the fact that quantitative studies that speak in terms of average gains, average fatalities, and average terrorist incidents can offer limited guidance to policymakers, who must wrangle with the thorny problems of ethnicity, geography, constituency, and wider political currents that affect how acts of violence are perceived to affect security and thus how voters respond at the polls.
On the other hand, the preceding paragraphs also demonstrate the degree of difficulty inherent in using limited case studies to separate the effects of terrorism on electoral preferences from the wider political trends that affect how citizens choose party loyalty. Nevertheless, case study analysis reveals important conclusions relative to the Sri Lankan political environment as well as generally. First, governments must be aware that where insurgents are involved, issues of ethnicity and proximity to rebel power centers may have a significant impact on how civilians calculate risk and thus how they seek to advance their security. Second, the nature of rebel violence can have a significant impact on how electoral effects manifest, or do not, at the local as opposed to national level.

While Sri Lanka defeated the Tamil Tigers militarily in May 2009, a political solution aimed at addressing minorities’ longstanding grievances remains elusive. Small-scale bombings in Jaffna prior to the January 2010 presidential elections suggests that the threat of terrorism has not been eliminated entirely. Furthermore, polls saw the trend towards polarization of the electorate along ethnic lines observed from 1999 to 20005 returns reach its apex, with the UNP claiming majority support only in those districts where Tamil and Muslim ethnic minorities predominate. Unfortunately, where failure by the government to protect the interests of vulnerable populations could result in the revival of separatist ambitions, it has become increasingly clear in the political environment that dominant parties do not need to court minority voters to achieve a mandate and instead may win simply by growing their base among dominant Sinhalese.

In more general terms, we must also recognize that where violence committed can have an effect on voters, so too can violence threatened. After all, the point of terrorism is
not to achieve victory by attrition, but rather to induce capitulation or compromise by governments through manipulation of the citizenry. This is an important takeaway from the LTTE’s 2005 election boycott, where a simple measure of the voter participation differential in key districts is enough to reveal insurgents’ power to disrupt electoral processes and potentially swing national-level outcomes. Because body counts and measures of property damage cannot very accurately proxy the degree of influence terrorists hold over civilians, a more nuanced qualitative study is required, especially where insurgents are involved or where governments cannot (or are weakly committed to) providing equal protection to all citizens in all regions.

On a fundamental level, it is also necessary to recognize that terrorism and conflict resolution are not a priori the most salient issues to all voters across all nations or, perhaps more significantly, even across all districts within a single nation. Where Berrebi and Klor ground their analysis in the notion that issues related to terrorism and the occupation are the deciding issues for Israeli voters, in contrast, for instance, to matters of economy, polls conducted in Sri Lanka suggest that individuals ascribe various levels of importance to terrorism and the broader issue of resolving ethnic conflict. Not surprisingly, results differ a great deal based on ethnicity and sector; where Tamils almost without exception base their votes on issues related to the conflict, as many as 30 percent of Sinhalese voters claim to base their decisions on candidates’ economic platforms, including their perceived abilities to control the cost of living.

Though Berrebi and Klor, Montalvo, and other advocates of large-\(n\) longitudinal and econometric studies fairly note the weaknesses inherent in relying on survey data to determine the effects of violence on voters, such methods nevertheless seem to offer the most straightforward means of assessing the degree to which citizens’ choices are affected by terrorism. Governments and policy think-tanks interested in protecting citizens and safeguarding democratic institutions from the coercive effects of violence would be wise to invest directly in investigating the relationship between voting and terrorism where it occurs. Results could prove useful in building better security in places like Iraq, which despite limited incidents of terrorist violence during its most recent elections appears to be on the way to building a strong, multi-party democracy.

Finally, though the operative models seem to conceive of security as a fixed good provided by a government to its people, the truth is that all citizens do not view all measures equally. One man’s vote for greater security can be another man’s vote for less, a point that is important in the Sri Lankan scenario and somewhat undermines the logic that drives the Israel theory. Tamils, Sinhalese, and Muslims all recognize an elevated risk of terror in Colombo, yet the decision calculus involved in achieving better security through ballotting is likely different for all. Where Sinhalese constituents have little to fear in backing right parties who have historically pursued forward-leaning counter-terrorism policies, Tamils, who are most likely to bear the brunt of enhanced security measures, have real reason for fear in a domestic climate characterized by highly restrictive emergency regulations, draconian anti-terror legislation, and negligible legal recourse. Thus it is worth noting that even Tamils who believe a right-bloc government is
at an advantage for stopping terrorism might conceivably favor a left-bloc government in the interest of preserving their personal safety. One month after the PA’s 1999 victory, over one thousand Tamils were rounded up in Colombo and questioned in the name of preventing terrorism.\(^{57}\) In 2006, the UPFA successor saw nearly the same number of non-resident Tamils forcibly expelled from Colombo and placed in camps or with family in the northeast. As researcher Tiberiu Dragu emphasizes, electoral pressure to stop terror results in a commitment problem for governments who rely on minorities for their support at the polls but risk losing favor when they overreach in their approach to counter-terrorism.\(^{58}\) Maintaining this balance requires a sophisticated understanding of the differing threats and pressures perceived by various group across various regions. Unfortunately, at least in the case of Sri Lanka, models such as Berrebi and Klor’s are poorly equipped to enumerate or represent these crucial factors. In this respect, scholars interested in examining the dynamic interaction between terrorism and electoral allegiance would be wise to pursue a mixed methods approach capable of blending longitudinal quantitative study with an informed appreciation of the cultural and political factors operative in individual conflict scenarios.

\(^{57}\) Saravanamuttu (2000), p.224

The Jaffna electoral district includes the administrative districts of both Jaffna and Kilinochchi.

The Vanni electoral district is comprised of Mannar, Mullaitivu, and Vavuniya administrative districts.

The Digamadulla electoral district is coterminous with the Ampara administrative district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>% Right Change</th>
<th>% Sinhalese</th>
<th>Terrorism Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>- 22.02</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuwara Eliya</td>
<td>- 20.78</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batticaloa</td>
<td>- 15.96</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digamadulla</td>
<td>- 14.22</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>- 9.75</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maha Nuwara</td>
<td>- 8.52</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matale</td>
<td>- 6.99</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanni*</td>
<td>- 6.25</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puttalam</td>
<td>- 6.15</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gampaha</td>
<td>- 6.10</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombo</td>
<td>- 5.78</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badulla</td>
<td>- 4.49</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kegalle</td>
<td>- 3.94</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polonnaruwa</td>
<td>- 3.60</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anuradhapura</td>
<td>- 3.24</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratnapura</td>
<td>- 2.55</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kurunegala</td>
<td>- 2.19</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalutara</td>
<td>- 1.87</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galle</td>
<td>- 1.82</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matara</td>
<td>+ 0.60</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaragala</td>
<td>+ 0.70</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hambantota</td>
<td>+ 3.26</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison of changes in right bloc support 1999-2005 relative to distribution of Sinhalese voters and relative change in the level of terrorism.
Right Bloc Votes by Electoral District, 1999 and 2005

- Kegalle: 54.96 (PA/JVP 1999), 51.02 (UPFA 2005)
- Ratnapura: 55.56 (PA/JVP 1999), 53.56 (UPFA 2005)
- Monaragala: 56.87 (PA/JVP 1999), 58.94 (UPFA 2005)
- Badulla: 49.67 (PA/JVP 1999), 45.18 (UPFA 2005)
- Polonnaruwa: 56.21 (PA/JVP 1999), 52.61 (UPFA 2005)
- Anuradhapura: 58.32 (PA/JVP 1999), 55.08 (UPFA 2005)
- Puttalam: 48.09 (PA/JVP 1999), 54.33 (UPFA 2005)
- Trincomalee: 58.41 (PA/JVP 1999), 52.26 (UPFA 2005)
- Digamadulla: 52.82 (PA/JVP 1999), 57.1 (UPFA 2005)
- Batticaloa: 42.88 (PA/JVP 1999), 37.04 (UPFA 2005)
- Vanni: 26.61 (PA/JVP 1999), 18.87 (UPFA 2005)
- Jaffna: 47.02 (PA/JVP 1999), 25 (UPFA 2005)
- Hambantota: 60.17 (PA/JVP 1999), 63.43 (UPFA 2005)
- Matara: 61.25 (PA/JVP 1999), 61.85 (UPFA 2005)
- Galle: 58.41 (PA/JVP 1999), 60.23 (UPFA 2005)
- Nuwara Eliya: 48.75 (PA/JVP 1999), 27.97 (UPFA 2005)
- Matale: 55.08 (PA/JVP 1999), 48.09 (UPFA 2005)
- Mahanuwara: 52.82 (PA/JVP 1999), 44.3 (UPFA 2005)
- Kalutara: 57.35 (PA/JVP 1999), 55.48 (UPFA 2005)
- Gampaha: 54.78 (PA/JVP 1999), 60.88 (UPFA 2005)
- Colombo: 53.74 (PA/JVP 1999), 47.96 (UPFA 2005)
Percent Voter Participation by Electoral District, 1999 and 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral District</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kegalle</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>81.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratnapura</td>
<td>82.14</td>
<td>83.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaragala</td>
<td>79.98</td>
<td>81.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badulla</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>81.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polonnaruwa</td>
<td>79.29</td>
<td>80.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anuradhapura</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>78.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puttalam</td>
<td>69.57</td>
<td>71.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurunegala</td>
<td>77.37</td>
<td>80.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>63.78</td>
<td>68.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digamadulla</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>79.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Batticaloa</td>
<td>48.51</td>
<td>64.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanni</td>
<td>31.22</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>19.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hambantota</td>
<td>73.84</td>
<td>81.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matara</td>
<td>75.07</td>
<td>80.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galle</td>
<td>78.98</td>
<td>81.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuwara Eliya</td>
<td>81.21</td>
<td>80.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matale</td>
<td>72.74</td>
<td>79.04</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mahanuwara</td>
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<td>79.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalutara</td>
<td>79.62</td>
<td>81.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gampaha</td>
<td>78.31</td>
<td>81.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombo</td>
<td>74.32</td>
<td>76.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1999 Presidential Election, Distribution of National Vote

- UNP: 43%
- PA: 51%
- Other: 4%
- JVP: 2%

2005 Presidential Election, Distribution of National Vote

- UNP: 50%
- UPFA (PA + JVP): 49%
- Other: 1%
1999 Presidential Election Returns by District

2005 Presidential Election Returns by District
Bibliography


