Crime–war in Sri Lanka

A least likely case with dozens of degrees of freedom

In this chapter, three armed conflicts in Sri Lanka since independence are used to provide a particularly strong focus on Proposition 9: crime as a cause of war and war as a cause of crime. The Marxist revolutionary party Janathā Vimukthi Peramuṇa (JVP, People’s Liberation Front) first led an insurgency in the 1970s and 1980s, which overlapped with the more deadly ethnic Tamil insurgency (which also encompassed class and caste resentments) starting in the 1980s. In the context of an analysis of our other propositions, the recent history of Sri Lanka is used to illustrate three cascade dynamics: crime cascades to war, war cascades to more war and to crime and crime and war both cascade to state violence such as torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial execution. Sri Lanka is also a case that cascaded new technologies of crime–war globally, such as suicide-bomb vests. The criminological lens for looking at cascades of warfare is not the most important one, but it is a profoundly neglected one.

To put it dynamically, Chapter 4 argued that war has a propensity to morph into extreme crime problems that can be a cause of violence greater than the war. But crime can also morph into war. Hence, war prevention is crime prevention. And crime prevention—community policing that works—can interrupt cascades of warfare. For the past half-century,

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1 This chapter is an expanded version of considerable portions of Braithwaite and D’Costa (2015).
countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia have been losing many more lives to their warmongering through domestic crime and suicide than from battle deaths (see e.g. Archer and Gartner 1984; Ghobarah et al. 2003). This is one reason for a move to diagnose the Sri Lankan case with a special focus on Proposition 9. It has implications for understanding variation in how much violence every society suffers as a result of war—from peaceful societies such as Costa Rica, Japan and Switzerland to combative societies such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia. We will see, however, that Sri Lanka is also inductively useful for enriching our insights about deterrence and defiance (Propositions 1 and 10). Indeed, as in the previous three chapters, in this chapter all 10 of our propositions come into the analysis.

The cascades framework conceives cascades of violence as recursively related to cascades of militarisation and cascades of domination (Proposition 8). With Sri Lanka’s three recent armed conflicts, we illustrate how a single society, a single war, is not an $n$ of 1, but includes many degrees of freedom that support qualified inference about explanatory dynamics. For example, there are many ethnic riots and many assassinations at different points in the history of a society, each of which can assist in testing our propositions.

Sri Lanka is a strategic single-society case to assist in the diagnosis of cascade dynamics—first, because it is an outlier as an extremely violent society. Sri Lanka was the most consistently violent Asian society across recent decades on Karstedt’s (2012) Violent Societies Index, though no longer in her more recent data (Karstedt 2014), where Pakistan was scored as the most violent society in Asia and globally (before Syria had reached its deadly heights). When Sri Lanka was confronted with an existential threat, it responded with security sector crimes that included summary executions, disappearances, torture, intentional bombing of Tamil hospitals and rape of Tamil refugees (HRW 2011; ICG 2011b, 2013c; UN 2011).

Sri Lanka is also analytically attractive because it is a ‘least likely case’ (Eckstein 1975) to validate propositions about violence begetting violence. This is because violence works decisively in ending Sri Lanka’s wars. A least likely case is a tough test of a theory because it explores a context in which the theory is least likely to be true. Obviously, a case where violence ends violence is one least likely to be supportive of a theory that violence begets violence.
Sri Lanka is also a least likely case of cross-border violence because it is an island. Yet Sri Lanka’s wars cascaded across to the assassination in India of prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. In the early phases of this conflict, Indira Gandhi’s annoyance at Sri Lanka moving from under India’s wing to be more aligned with China (and to receive military assistance from Pakistan), combined with her party’s need to curry favour with India’s powerful state government of Tamil Nadu, minded her intelligence service to train and arm Sri Lankan Tamil parties in Tamil Nadu. In these and other ways that we will discuss, the cross-border cascade dynamics may not, therefore, be as vigorous as those across the Pakistan–Afghanistan border, the India–Pakistan border or the borders of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Moreover, in the end game, it was possible to cut the Tamil Tigers off from arms supplies by sea. Yet, there are still substantial cross-border cascades of violence to code in the Sri Lankan case. This is also true for the other ‘least likely’ island war cases that we have coded for Peacebuilding Compared so far—Bougainville (Braithwaite et al. 2010b) and Solomon Islands (Braithwaite et al. 2010c)—which were both cases that cascaded to a degree from grievances spawned in World War II and
were fought with weapons buried by American and Japanese troops during that war.² This is also true of a number of other island war cases coded in Peacebuilding Compared such as Ambon in Indonesia (Braithwaite et al. 2010a).

The three subpropositions of Proposition 9 that will organise our analysis of Sri Lanka are:

a. Crime often sparks cascades to war.

b. War cascades transnationally to more war and more crime.

c. Both crime and war cascade to state violence such as torture.

These three cascades occur in almost all 39 armed conflicts for which the preliminary core fieldwork has been completed for Peacebuilding Compared (and 700 variables about the conflict that have been preliminarily coded). This is an utterly non-random sample of armed conflicts in which follow-up is required for another decade (all are post-1990 conflicts). The Peacebuilding Compared team conducting the broader, longer-term research will not take this pattern as credible unless it continues to hold up in the years ahead for these 39 cases and until fieldwork-grounded coding has been completed on a more geographically representative sample of at least 60 armed conflicts. This statistical approach to inference in the Peacebuilding Compared project is relentlessly complemented by a more historical and ideographic attitude to inference contained within single cases and across whole regions that multiplies the degrees of freedom from this small n, as we attempt for South Asia in this book.³

² Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) soldiers also did some fighting in the Western Province of Solomon Islands. Weapons cascaded between both nations and from and to tribal conflicts in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Finally, a global private military organisation, the British–South African corporation Sandline, escalated violence in a way that played the most decisive role in ending the civil war on geopolitically remote Bougainville island.

³ When John Braithwaite spoke at the Institute for Ethnic Studies in Colombo in 2013, a retired general chastised him for referring to the fight with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a civil war. ‘It wasn’t a civil war,’ he said, ‘we were fighting terrorists.’ Rohan Gunaratna (2001: 314), in his book on the JVP conflicts, said: ‘The JVP is not a terrorist group but it has often resorted to terrorism.’ Instead of arguing with such contentious claims, we are attracted to the virtue of understanding the cascading of crime–war in a way that admits crime–terrorism–war distinctions, but basically seeks to embrace them through a unified explanation. One of the strengths of the Peacebuilding Compared coding methodology is that it allows us to code violence as many things at once. It allows coding of crime variables concerning extrajudicial assassinations, torture, rape and drug trafficking to support insurgency, terrorism and more. It allows Sri Lanka’s wars, to varying degrees, to be coded as ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts, class/caste conflicts, ideological conflicts, identity conflicts and separatist wars. And it allows the war against the LTTE to be coded simultaneously as counterterrorism, counterinsurgency and conventional war. ‘In the Jaffna peninsula
The data for this case were collected from interviews in India with Indian military officers and diplomats who served in Sri Lanka, in various fieldwork trips to Sri Lanka this century by Bina D’Costa on other projects and in 68 interviews John Braithwaite conducted mostly in Sri Lanka in 2013, some of them with more than one person.

Following a brief overview of the Tamil radicalisation and class radicalisation that are relevant to our arguments, we provide an analysis of early phases of Sri Lanka’s conflicts to illustrate hypothesis 9(a): crime cascades to war. Then we move to hypothesis 9(b): war cascades transnationally to more war and more crime. Finally, we return to hypothesis 9(c), on cascades of state crime, after considering the paradoxical quality of cascades of crime–war in Sri Lanka. In the context of prioritising these lenses, we manage to bring into the analysis a consideration of all our propositions.

**Context: Tamil and class radicalisation**

Sri Lanka’s nation-building process and the ethnic identity politics of difference (De Silva 2005; Wickramasinghe 2006) are deeply intertwined through a discursive process initiated by predominantly Sinhalese–Buddhist state elites who took control of the postcolonial state (D’Costa 2013). Class politics was also intertwined with a pushback of radical Sinhalese youth against state elites that cascaded to terrible violence in 1971 and 1987. In our narrative, we attempt to unpack intersections between the kind of oppression in focus with the Marxist imaginaries of these Sinhalese youth and the ethnic identity politics of Tamil resistance to their oppression by state elites (Proposition 8).

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Plate 8.2 The Sea Tigers of LTTE were innovative in building their destructive little navy.

Picture (a) shows a submarine on display at Puthukudiyruppu War Museum. Picture (b) shows LTTE cadres embarking on a LTTE Sea Tiger vessel in Mullaitivu, 2003.

Sources: Wikipedia. (a) Photograph by Adam Jones. (b) Photograph by Isak Bernsten.
The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE or Tamil Tigers) was formed on 5 May 1976 under the leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran. The LTTE was a political party with various military wings—notably, the Tigers (armed infantry), Sea Tigers (navy), Air Tigers (air force) and Black Tigers (a wing with expertise in terrorism, including suicide bombing and assassinations). While in 1956, 1958, 1977, 1979 and 1981 there were serious outbreaks of ethnic riots allegedly orchestrated by state actors, a turning point in Sri Lanka’s history was the anti-Tamil pogrom, commonly known as ‘Black July’, which started on 23 July 1983. An estimated 3,000 Tamils were killed and more than 150,000 became homeless in mob violence that continued for three days. The riots were understood by many to be triggered by an LTTE attack in Jaffna, in the Northern Province, which killed 13 soldiers. A large number of Tamils were displaced and many who were able to leave the country moved to other parts of the globe. The LTTE declared its first ‘Eelam war’, marking the beginning of Sri Lanka’s long civil war.

After the Indo–Sri Lankan Accord on 29 July 1987, Indian Peacekeeping Forces (IPKF) moved in to enforce peace. The last IPKF contingents withdrew in March 1990, after which the second ‘Eelam war’ was declared. During this phase, the LTTE displaced nearly 75,000 Muslims from the north of the country. Part of the complexity of this conflict is that Muslims came under attack from both of the largest ethnic groups: Tamil militants and violent Sinhalese. After an unsuccessful peace agreement with president Chandrika Kumaratunga’s government in 1994, the LTTE declared the third ‘Eelam war’, causing mass displacement and a humanitarian crisis, especially in the Jaffna Peninsula and the Vanni region in the north. After a four-year ceasefire, the fourth ‘Eelam war’

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4 The Air Tigers were led by LTTE leader Prabhakaran’s son, Charles Anthony, and the Sea Tigers, an amphibious warfare unit, which consisted mainly of lightweight boats, was headed by Colonel Soosai, a.k.a. Thilaiyampalam Sivanesan. In addition to these there was a suicide commando unit called the Black Tigers (Karunku Puligal), which launched one of its first attacks against the Sri Lankan army in 1987, causing 40 deaths, and the LTTE Intelligence Unit, which operated internationally. Both of these were headed by Shanmugalingam Sivashankar, better known as Pottu Amman.

5 Although Muslims from the Tamil-dominated north of Sri Lanka speak the Tamil language, they are not generally considered ethnic Tamils. Before the 1990s, nearly 5 per cent of Sri Lankan Muslims lived in the Northern Province. However, after the emergence of the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress in 1981, LTTE leaders perceived Muslims as a threat to the mono-ethnic Tamil nation and forced them to leave their homes. Researchers estimate that close to 75,000 Muslims were forcibly displaced during the late 1980s and early 1990s (IRIN News 2013).
CASCADeS of ViOLeNCe

was declared following the collapse of the peace process in July 2006. The narrative of some informants was that this led to a fifth war on Tamil civilians:

‘There was a war against the LTTE. Now there is a war against people … There is a gradual genocide and a structural genocide going on … State colonisation is being used to change the electoral balance and to change the demography … Refugees are not going to strive for economic reasons. They are going in search of their rights. There is no future with their family here. They do not have a dignified life. They have to sell their property to pay the people smugglers. When Australia sends them back, they are treated as betayers of the country. The intelligence tells them: ‘You are in trouble’. It offers them the way out, of working as intelligence agents and villagers. Sometimes they are given the option of showing their loyalty by doing work for government political parties, commonly getting 30 Tamils to vote for the government. CID [the Criminal Investigation Department] and the army are doing this … The people-smuggling business is win-win-win for the regime. They build their structural genocide, gradual genocide agenda when more Tamils leave. They win by collecting money from them right up to family members of the president for the navy to allow them to leave. They win when they come back by extracting betrayal of their community. When they threaten returnees, sometimes they fabricate fresh accusations against them of crimes they allegedly committed before they left. (Interview with religious leader, 2013, No. 091354)

Muslim leaders we interviewed in 2013 believed they likewise were at risk of a ‘war against the Muslim people’ enabled by the untrammelled power of Mahinda Rajapaksa’s then executive presidency and attacks on Muslim communities by Buddhist extremists who supported the executive presidency that dismantled the separation of powers, institution by institution. An interview with one leader of a militant Buddhist organisation seemed to affirm this analysis:

We support the executive presidency. The priority is to strengthen accountability of the executive presidency to all the people of Sri Lanka. Not to divide power or devolve power … The government should have moved against LTTE extremism early and it now must do this with Muslim extremism to nip it in the bud early … We must stop campaigns that support social division. We must ban parties based on race or religion. Schools based on religion should be banned … Clear standards and guidelines should be established for establishing places of worship. This includes basic things like providing parking. The government should take responsibility and demolish new places of worship that are not approved. (Interview with Buddhist organisation leader, Colombo, 2013, No. 091353)
The standard narrative of Sri Lankan scholars and protagonists of the four Eelam wars, followed by a cascade of violence against Tamil and Muslim civilians, is a cascade narrative of four wars within a war followed by seemingly never-ending structural violence (even as one hopes for reform from the new regime elected in 2015). In this chapter, we complement this narrative with a cascade of class war that preceded these five cascades, and which enabled them. We return to the class war cascade that was historically prior to the LTTE wars later in the chapter.

The LTTE’s deliberate recruitment strategies—which in the earlier decades might have been supported by some of the population but were gradually dreaded by them—also increased the vulnerabilities of the Tamil population in the Northern and Eastern provinces. While it started to recruit women from the beginning of the conflict, it also began to recruit children in the late 1980s after the India–Sri Lanka Accord. Fighting an insurgency of this composition soon became an enormous challenge for the IPKF. Thirty per cent of the LTTE’s fighting cadre were women. It is estimated that, between 1987 and 2002, 4,000 women had been killed in combat. This number included more than 100 suicide bombers who belonged to the Black Tigers. The women in the LTTE were responsible for the deaths of prominent people, including India’s prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, who was assassinated on 21 May 1991 during his re-election campaign.

The majority of the LTTE’s child recruitment occurred in the Vanni region. The United Nations estimates 64 per cent of the child recruits were boys and 36 per cent girls. There is no new evidence of children being recruited since the LTTE’s collapse in 2009. Both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have suggested that the breakaway Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP), formerly led by Sri Lankan politician and former militant Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan (also known as Karuna), has been reconstituted and is now under the control of former LTTE cadre Sivanesathurai Chandrakanthan (also known as Pillayan). At least 60 people who were recruited as children and are now over 18 years of age are still associated with the group.

Between September 2007 and 19 May 2009, the Sri Lankan army carried out a resurgent military offensive in the Vanni using widespread shelling that caused a large number of civilian deaths. Despite grave danger, the LTTE refused civilians permission to leave and used them as hostages. Throughout the final stages of the war, the LTTE also continued carrying
out suicide attacks against civilians outside the Vanni. A panel of experts appointed by then UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon to advise him on accountability during the final stages of the conflict found ‘credible allegations’ that, if proven, indicate that war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed by both the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE (UN 2011). The Sri Lankan Government has continually frustrated implementation of UN resolutions for an international investigation into alleged abuses by both sides in the bloody finale to the civil war. In the final six months of the conflict, up to 40,000 civilians were killed and another 6,000 forcibly disappeared (UN 2011).

The state’s imposition of an economic embargo on the conflict zone between 1990 and early 2002 was the single most important cause of the severe economic and social decline of the Northern and Eastern provinces (Sarvananthan 2007). The embargo was in force when the LTTE gained control of the Jaffna Peninsula and almost the entire Northern Province. The declaration of the area as a high-security zone (HSZ) and heavily militarised area destroyed people’s livelihoods. Restrictions on fishing and subsistence farming, the planting of landmines in agricultural areas and the collapse of infrastructure, especially major roads, were all results of the area being declared a HSZ. This intensified ethnic grievances and generated deep divisions between the north-east and other parts of Sri Lanka. During this period, the number of serious crimes also escalated in these areas.

Extreme poverty in the Northern and Eastern provinces contributed to huge economic disparities with other regions of Sri Lanka. These two provinces comprise 28 per cent of Sri Lanka’s area and 14 per cent of the population. The LTTE controlled 44 per cent of these two provinces and 20 per cent of the population. While no household survey data are available to include the refugee camps and internally displaced persons (IDPs), the Vanni was perhaps the worst affected by the protracted conflict. The inequality and the economic vulnerability of the population were exacerbated by the fact that two parallel economic authorities existed in the provinces: the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE. Illegal taxation by the LTTE to finance its activities and the formation by it of some

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6 It was in force between 1990 and 1996 on the Jaffna Peninsula, and until January 2002 in the Vanni. Also, there was no electricity in the Vanni between 1990 and 2002.

7 These data are valid until July 2006 before the final round of full-scale hostilities between the rebels and government security forces. For details, see Sarvananthan (2007).
administrative units, such as the Tamil Eelam Police and the Tamil Eelam Judicial Service, squeezed out resources from the already vulnerable and impoverished communities. The LTTE was also involved in transnational crime, took relief goods from local and international donors and sold them to the black market and forcibly took land from minority communities (D’Costa 2013).

Crime cascades to war in Sri Lanka

We argued in Chapter 4 that historians do not always take seriously the proposition that crime often cascades to war (MacMillan 2013). In a sense, they are right that this should not be the most central element of a theory of cascades of violence. Yet, in the Peacebuilding Compared dataset, some kinds of crimes are repeatedly coded as sparking armed conflicts. Political assassinations, major terrorist acts, murder and rape in the context of ethnic/religious riots appear in our data so far to be particularly important crimes societies must minimise in seeking peace. Sri Lanka reveals this wider pattern in an illuminating way. Few wars in recent history were escalated to a greater degree by a violent leader than the LTTE’s war for an independent Tamil state in Sri Lanka under the leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran. At the start of that war, the LTTE was just one of five major armed groups and another 30 minor ones pushing for Tamil independence. During the 1980s, Prabhakaran assassinated leaders of competing groups who hesitated in complete submission to him, liquidating all competing Tamil insurgency groups. He also terminated LTTE members who questioned his judgment. Understanding the biography of a man who turned his society upside down is no easy matter. Frances Harrison (2012: 234) sees Prabhakaran as an example of trauma being ‘transmitted from one generation to another, storing up trouble for the future’. One story told by Prabhakaran’s father that greatly affected him was of a Hindu Brahmin (most Tamils are Hindu) in the 1958 riots who had been tied to a bed by the Buddhist Sinhalese mob, doused with petrol and burnt alive (Clarance 2007: 41). Prabhakaran also repeatedly used narratives of other violent crimes committed against Tamils to call for an armed struggle against the state. In a 1984 interview with an Indian magazine, Prabhakaran dubbed the anti-Tamil pogrom of 1983 the ‘July Holocaust’ and claimed that this experience united all sections of the Tamil masses. He stated: ‘Armed struggle is the only way out for the emancipation of our
oppressed people’ (Thottam 2009). Prabhakaran, however, is not the only LTTE leader for whom such crimes figured in the biography of their turn to violence.

The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 was both a crime caused by war and a crime that escalated war. It was an event that decisively changed the dynamics of Indian engagement with Sri Lanka’s war. After this, the Indian state and intelligence service were no longer playing a balancing game between sometimes currying favour from Tamil politicians in the state of Tamil Nadu by supporting the Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka and sometimes supporting the Sri Lankan state to enhance regional stability. After the young female suicide attacker snuffed out Rajiv Gandhi, India’s regional military and intelligence might was committed to the ultimate defeat of the Tigers. It played a major role, mostly covert, in delivering that military result. It was a result that did not come, however, until domestic Sri Lankan military leaders became convinced that they could and should win militarily. Assassination attempts were also relevant to that change of heart.

Some of our military informants in Sri Lanka argued that LTTE mistakes even bigger than the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi were their failed assassination attempts on the lives of Sri Lankan secretary of defence and brother of the war-winning president Mahinda Rajapaksa, Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, and war-winning army commander General Sarath Fonseka. These were the two men who persuaded the army that they could defeat the LTTE. Prior to their leadership of the late 2000s, the Sri Lankan military was seduced by the militarily unsophisticated analysis of the international diplomatic community and Sri Lanka’s own strategic elite that the LTTE was the most militarily powerful terrorist organisation in the world. In retrospect, its accomplishments seem less formidable than the mujahidin of Afghanistan in driving out the Soviet army and then the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). One Sri Lankan commander jumped from recognition of the undoubtedly formidable military capability of the LTTE to the inference that defeating the LTTE would prove as impossible as it was for France to defeat Ho Chi Minh’s army in Vietnam (Proposition 4). According to our interviews, this was the answer one of Sri Lankan president Chandrika Kumaratunga’s five most senior military commanders gave on an occasion when she asked each for their assessment of the feasibility of abandoning peace talks in favour of a full military solution. It was an answer that reflected the
thinking of the Norwegian leadership of the post-2002 peace process, of EU diplomats generally and of the US State Department. Fonseka served as the commander of the Sri Lankan army from December 2005 until mid-July 2009 and led the military to victory against the LTTE. However, he fell out with the government and challenged president Rajapaksa unsuccessfully during the next election. Two weeks after his defeat, he was arrested and convicted by a military court on four counts of corruption and nepotism related to defence deals that bypassed military procedures in purchasing equipment.

Most good Sri Lankan analysts we interviewed were unsure of what Prabhakaran’s strategic calculations were. But a number felt that Prabhakaran shared the delusion that it would be incredibly difficult to defeat him. Hence, he could go to the absolute brink of a genocidal conflagration; he thought that would call in the kind of international intervention that would give him the best shot at an independent Tamil homeland. In retrospect, we can see that the international community should have been saying to the Tamil diaspora and the LTTE leadership in Sri Lanka that if Prabhakaran

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8 Lead Norwegian diplomat and current Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme Eric Solheim ‘had a meeting with president Rajapaksa in late March 2006 where he told the president, Eric Solheim, that Prabhakaran was a military genius and that it would be suicidal to take him on’ (Chandraprema 2012: 312).

9 In our interview with the Sri Lankan military commander General Sarath Fonseka (Interview, 2013, No. 091340), he said that, during the 2000s, Pentagon analysts would engage very sympathetically with his analysis that he could militarily defeat the LTTE quite quickly. While US military leaders found that credible, State Department officials saw military defeat of the LTTE as unrealistic. Fonseka described the reaction of the UK high commissioner in Sri Lanka to the 21 July 2006 LTTE provocation of closing the sluice gates that cut Eastern Province farmers off from irrigation for their crops. After the LTTE was routed in the region around the gates by 14 August, Fonseka said the high commissioner warned him that he should not assume that the military victory in this region could be replicated across the north. Fonseka’s critique of Western diplomats was that they were always talking up the impossibility of military defeat of the LTTE. Among the people who believed the Western diplomats’ analysis were the LTTE itself and the Tamil diaspora who funded the LTTE’s military folly and kept pushing for a maximalist military solution. At the moment of that military defeat around the sluice gates, Western diplomats should have been warning Tamil leaders that they must dissuade Prabhakaran from that folly because military defeat was certain if they did not genuinely embrace a political settlement. General Fonseka’s comment in our 2013 interview was: ‘It probably would not have worked. Prabhakaran probably would not have been convinced. But that would have been the right way to go for the international community and the political leadership of Sri Lanka to work together to end terrorism.’

10 For example, a retired Sri Lankan general said: ‘Prabhakaran never believed that he was defeated or that he would be defeated right up to the end. Even when he was totally trapped, he was hoping for a change of government in India’ (Interview, Colombo, 2013, No. 091352).

11 Put another way, Prabhakaran, the Tamil diaspora and Western diplomats may all have believed that Rajapaksa had no effective peak to his enforcement pyramid; he would not and could not go all the way to the military annihilation of the LTTE. He did. They were wrong.
goes to the brink, what will happen is what did happen: he would push his people over it. Pushing to the brink would not bring international intervention; pulling back from the brink would save the Tamil people and give the international community a shot at a political settlement that gives him at least some of what he wants. By not saying this, the international community created a monstrous moral hazard. Hopes for international peacekeeping intervention can be a cause of war. The moral hazard was the false belief that, in pushing to the brink of genocide, the LTTE could count on an international intervention that would catch the Tamil people in its net before they went over the precipice. International intervention should be clearly articulated as a reward to the likes of Prabhakaran for pulling back from brinksmanship, not a reward for going to the brink. As one Sri Lankan human rights leader put it, peace negotiators could have said there would be ‘severe consequences’ if the LTTE did not accept an autonomy deal (Interview, 2013, No. 091316). Consequently, the LTTE was seduced to the view that there could be benefits from playing by the rules of the peace game for a while, but no costs from withdrawing from peace talks after gaming them (see Toft 2010).

The military defeat of the Tigers in 2009 might be read as a refutation of the cascade hypothesis. While thousands were killed in the final year of the long conflict, since 2009, the war victory has resulted in a cessation of war deaths and almost complete cessation of Tamil terror. In other words, instead of cascading to more violence, the extreme violence of 2009 seemed to end further violence rather decisively. The evidence is strong that while LTTE leader Prabhakaran was alive, he would have used peace talks to regroup, recruit and eliminate Tamil leaders who supported peace. So it may always have been the case that a military solution was feasible and the most likely path to ending the killing. We do not argue that violence always cascades to further violence. As with all social science propositions, often it proves downright wrong that violence cascades. Nevertheless, even at this point of maximum invalidity in South Asia, we diagnose the cascade framework as providing fertile insights and

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12 For more examples, see Toft (2010) and the discussion of Proposition 4 in Chapter 3, this volume.
13 See comments like the following from a leading contemporary analyst and former JVP fighter (Interview, Colombo, 2013, No. 091355): ‘LTTE was a maximalist political organisation. They could not settle for anything little. They gave primacy to the military over the political. The job of the political strategy was to support the military strategy.’
correctives to offer the discerning analyst. Let us then turn to how one should salvage explanatory relevance of cascade hypotheses even in this least likely case (Eckstein 1975) of violence ending violence.

The violence cascades thesis causes us to critique the maximalist way the Sri Lankan army conducted the final slaughter of the war. The insistence of the Sri Lankan Government that the United Nations quit the north of Sri Lanka eight months before the final onslaught, and the lack of backbone from the United Nations in asserting its responsibility to protect civilians, permitted a much more vast slaughter than would otherwise have occurred. More slaughter, on the cascades account, builds the potential for larger future cascades of violence. A minimally sufficient military victory induces lesser cascade dynamics.

Cascade to authoritarian capitalism

The ruthlessness and authoritarianism of the unaccountable power afflicted on the Tamil civilians in 2009 became part of a vicious cycle of unaccountable and violent authoritarianism imposed by the victorious regime over all Sri Lankans who were not its cronies. Ending the war was politically popular, especially among the Sinhalese majority. It was sold as a necessary kind of unaccountable power for the military and the leadership of the president. Once a long period of wartime unaccountability of power is entrenched, those who hold it are reluctant to surrender it, especially when they can sell a narrative about the risk of the enemy rising again. Torture and disappearances for the opposition, and impunity of the regime for war crimes, are not the best policies for averting long-term cycles of violence. As Goodhand and Korf put it:

The Rajapaksa government may have thrown off the shackles of the ‘peace trap’, and successfully, in its own terms, pursued a war for peace, but escaping the ‘war trap’ may be more difficult, as the coalitions and alliances constructed to pursue the war may impede its ability to forge a new broad-based political settlement for lasting peace. (Goodhand and Korf 2011: 2)\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{14} Goodhand and Korf’s (2011: 14–15) analysis also shows the limits of liberal peacebuilding for turning back the tide of cascades of violence. Sri Lanka was a peacebuilding case where the international players were enrolled by weighty domestic political players: first, the LTTE, and then the regime of the Rajapaksa brothers. The liberal international peacebuilders may have been able to enrol much of domestic civil society with their bags of money, but, in the end game, the civil society players who were not swept from the game table were those with deep indigenous identities or domestic roots that resonated with local support that permitted state tolerance. In that end game,
The Sri Lankan state became the family firm of president Rajapaksa until his defeat in 2015—a state sheared of many of the checks and balances of its independence constitution. As one party leader put it: ‘The country today is run by criminals. Big business belongs to the criminals’ (Interview, Colombo, 2013, No. 091302). Sri Lanka acquired a form of crony capitalism under president Rajapaksa under which the ruling Rajapaksa brothers got a slice of the action from much of the legitimate economy and the criminal economy. Two of president Rajapaksa’s brothers were the two most influential members of his government’s inner circle. The military was the part of the family firm controlled by defence secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa. Before the Rajapaksa Government, Sri Lanka was significantly under the control of the shadow government of a handful of criminal business entrepreneurs who used their income from control of gambling, drugs, prostitution, smuggling and human trafficking to buy individual journalists, television stations and newspapers to shape the political environment. From that base, these business criminals moved up to control blue-chip companies. After the 2009 military victory, the shadow government of organised business criminals who were once the puppeteers of political leaders became the puppets of the Rajapaksa brothers.

Sri Lanka waits in hope to see whether the defeat of president Rajapaksa in the 2015 election by a senior defector from his own regime, Maithripala Sirisena, will temper crony capitalism. One of Rajapaksa’s ministers who was rather critical of his president in 2013 provided this pessimistic analysis of Sri Lanka’s governance problems not being about personal dictatorship: ‘No, he [Rajapaksa] is not authoritarian. But the structure of the government is authoritarian and so he becomes authoritarian’ (Interview, Colombo, 2013, No. 091328). He then went on to argue that one of the ways in which president Rajapaksa was not authoritarian was that he had not rigged elections: ‘His joy is to be genuinely elected’ (Interview, No. 091328). Rajapaksa’s surprise election defeat in 2015 in some ways vindicated this assessment—as it did the assessments of other ministers we interviewed—that the president believed his people loved him and would keep electing him.

peacebuilding weakened rather than strengthened civil society, with human rights becoming a dirty term in mainstream populist Sinhala politics. By 2011, employment in the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector in Sri Lanka had fallen to around one-quarter of the level reached during the 2000s.

15 This was the leader of the Marxist Party, the JVP, which led the uprisings discussed in the next two sections of this chapter.
Peter Bloom (2016) has argued convincingly, however, that a long-run shift towards authoritarian capitalism is utterly compatible with both the kind of free markets and free elections we see in Sri Lanka and other regimes that have shifted to authoritarian capitalism such as Mexico, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s newly constitutionalised authoritarian capitalist regime in Turkey, Viktor Mihály Orbán’s Hungary or Rodrigo Duterte’s Philippines. A strong majority of Russian citizens freely choose to vote for Vladimir Putin and half the people of the United States freely chose to vote for Donald Trump’s authoritarian capitalism. For Sri Lanka, the war on terror provided the ideological justification for the shift to authoritarianism, as was true with Putin, and with the shift to authoritarian capitalism that started with George W. Bush in the United States after 11 September 2001 (state torture, extraordinary rendition to Libya, Guantanamo Bay’s endless detention without trial, widespread drone assassinations in countries against which the United States had not declared war and the spurning of liberal multilateralism in trade policy after the 2001 Doha Declaration by the World Trade Organization). The ‘war on drugs’ also motivated authoritarian shifts in many countries, such as Mexico—in fact, across the Americas, starting with Richard Nixon’s war on drugs.¹⁶ The war on drugs, war on terror, war on fascism, the Cold War on communism—all have been the stuff of the imaginaries of authoritarian shifts since the 1930s. Whether by Rajapaksa in Sri Lanka, Putin in Russia or Xi Jinping in China, an imperial executive—in particular, an imperial presidency that sheds checks and balances from other institutions such as courts and parliaments—is the execution strategy for swings to authoritarian capitalism. We do not see this as an iron law of oligarchy (Michels 1962);¹⁷ shifts to authoritarianism are regularly reversed. We see such reversals to some degree in Sri Lanka since the defeat of Rajapaksa in 2015, to a large degree in Germany, Italy and Japan after 1945, in the Soviet Union with Gorbachev’s glasnost and perestroika in the 1980s, in many people-power revolutions since then (as discussed in Part III) and we will quite likely see it in the United States after the demise of Trump. On our analysis, there is no iron law of oligarchy, but there is systematic modelling of tactics of concentration of political and financial power in imperial executive presidencies (including by

¹⁶ In Part I, we discussed how Hitler used Stalin’s authoritarianism, and vice versa, to justify their populist imaginaries of why their own domestic authoritarianism was needed. Likewise, many allied countries in World War II used fear of fascism to justify terrible authoritarianism, such as interring innocent German and Japanese citizens.

¹⁷ This is the law that however democratic is the ethos of political parties, over time, they become increasingly oligarchic.
prime ministers who remake their office presidentially) (Proposition 2). In addition, from Sir Lanka to Bangladesh (Chapter 7) to Putin’s Russia there is modelling of the idea of cultivating money politics through crony capitalists who get to monopolise national champion firms. This drives widespread shifts to authoritarian capitalism—as does fear among ordinary people of globalisation, fear of domination by great powers or fear of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) acting at their behest (Bloom 2016). Especially among those who feel the chill of job insecurity, nationalist capitalism (‘America first’, ‘Sinhalese first’) has populist appeal. Sri Lanka has not competed as well as India in global markets. Sri Lanka has managed regional hegemonies through King Solomon’s compromise of giving India first refusal on development projects in the northern half of the country and China first refusal for the southern half. Resentment over this can motivate the kind of warlike nationalism that we will see the JVP popularised in demanding the exit of Indian peacekeepers from Sri Lanka. Paradoxically, as with the Chinese Communist Party, the JVP’s Sinhalese nationalist socialism in the end became a prop of bourgeoning authoritarian capitalism in Sri Lanka.

Cascade prevention options in the hands of insurgents and diasporas

Blame for the maximalist slaughter and war crimes that occurred in the 2009 end game rests most profoundly with Prabhakaran. His engagement with a succession of peace processes was always tactical, less genuine than everyone on the other side of the table. Even at the end, LTTE orders to shoot civilians who tried to surrender contributed to the slaughter (one war crime cascading to another)—as did Prabhakaran’s decision to have his commanders attempt to sneak through enemy lines wearing suicide vests to use should they fail (Harrison 2012: 67). They all did fail. When the commanders were shot in suicide vests, the army could use this to justify murdering surrendering civilians. The army likewise used an incident in February 2009 when the Tigers sent a female suicide bomber to mingle with a group of escaping civilians (Proposition 6)—an operation that killed 20 soldiers plus eight civilians (Harrison 2012: 102). That is not to excuse the mass murder of civilians, the 32 artillery or air attacks on hospitals recorded by Human Rights Watch or the Red Cross and indiscriminate bombing of the final UN food convoy of the war (Harrison 2012: 90–91, 240). But it does help explain mass murder through a cascade of violence that involved suicide vests that were
invented by the LTTE to be cascaded globally. From Iraq to Afghanistan to Yemen to Pakistan, innocent civilians are now killed daily somewhere in the world on suspicion of being a suicide bomber.

Somasundaram (2010: 423) argues that the development of the Tamil militancy and the LTTE suicide bombers can best be understood in terms of the particularity of Sri Lanka’s sociocultural and political circumstances. He observes that while Tamils in Sri Lanka had often been stereotyped as somewhat submissive, the suicide cadres very quickly developed following the 1983 riots. Somasundaram (2010: 422) argues that ‘social sanction for a group to behave violently can bring out aggressive acts they had learnt or seen’ (Proposition 2) and this increased the participation of Tamil youth in suicide attacks. Prabhakaran also advocated a cult of the use of cyanide capsules: Tamil rebels were instructed to commit suicide rather than be captured by the state. Suicidal violence was the worst way that violence cascaded globally from Sri Lanka. It was the cascade that gave the Sri Lankan state the green light from the United States, India and China to ‘do what it takes to fight terrorism’. The prominence of that terror cascade in the calculations of the great powers was heightened by the Sea Tigers’ innovation of a suicide boat that speeds towards a navy ship, which was replicated by jihadists on the USS Cole in 2000.

Plate 8.3 The USS Cole is towed away from the port city of Aden, Yemen, into open sea, 29 October 2000, after a terrorist attack killed 17 crew members and injured 39 others.

A cascades analysis does not say military solutions never work. Our least likely case analysis suggests that military solutions, even when they work, cascade violence. Hence, it warns that maximalist military solutions risk more virulent cascades of violence than minimalist ones. It counsels mobilising the spectre of military defeat to motivate peace negotiations—when military defeat is in reality a credible possibility (as in Iraq–Kuwait in 1990 and Sri Lanka in 2009)—as a better option with the Saddam Husseins and Prabhakarans of this world than purely facilitative diplomacy that fails to be assertive with military reality checks. This is a philosophy of preventive diplomacy as something that must be asserted, which then must fail and fail again, in multiple creative modalities before taking the risk with cascades of violence. One of those last-chance modalities involves laying out the full brutality of the worst possible military consequences of shunning a political settlement. This is best done not by making threats, but by third party diplomats laying out the military reality check to insurgent leaders and the diasporas that fund them. Western diplomats share some blame for the cascades of violence from Sri Lanka. They failed to open their minds to the military reality and then to use it to try to motivate a diplomatic solution.

Crime–war and security dilemmas of the JVP: From class struggle to ethnic separatism

This section continues the analysis of Proposition 9(a) (crime cascades to war). It does so, however, by considering two other wars that immediately preceded the take-off of the Tamil insurgency. It explores how these wars cascaded into one another. We cannot understand the Tamil wars without embedding them within the cascades of class wars that were their immediate historical antecedents. The first civil war driven by class politics was in 1971. It recurred in 1987–89 when the Sinhalese nationalist and Marxist political party, the JVP, took up arms against the state. Many JVP activists had disappeared before the conflict and thousands by the

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18 Following the split within the Ceylon Communist Party in 1963 roused by the Sino–Soviet conflict, Sri Lanka’s largest leftist party, the JVP, was founded, in 1965. The JVP has been described as ‘hydra-headed’ and ‘phoenix-like’ for its ability to regenerate despite being violently annihilated by the state.
end of it. Many were tortured. The security forces raped female activists (as also happened with LTTE women). This state crime was important to the onset of the cascade of violence that occurred.

The various phases of conflicts demonstrate that economic interests have played a major role in Sri Lankan ethnic rivalry. Class theories of ethnic conflict (Horowitz 2000: Ch. 3) reveal and explore the diversity of conflict motives among different classes of society. Economic rivalries—traders versus traders, clients versus traders/merchants, landowners versus labourers, labourers versus labourers—may have further accentuated differences marked by ethnic lines. Caste was another layer of vertical complexity in the cleavages that coalesced to escalate these conflicts (Proposition 3). Interestingly, however, caste was also complex as a horizontal cleavage: ‘a horizontal competition of “my caste is best”’ (Interview with a Marxist student leader who had been on the JVP hit list during the JVP’s conflict with the state, Colombo, 2013, No. 091307). This informant continued:

Rural caste oppression was a factor in the rise of JVP, but only one factor, and [the rise of the] LTTE. JVP was fundamentally a crisis of the system of agrarian production. Smallholders and peasants experienced population increases with disease eradication and better health. There was an excessive labour supply and the land shortage.

In the mid-1980s, the JVP’s financial support base comprised small entrepreneurs based in Colombo who either had rival Tamil businesses or had difficulty in obtaining credit from banks that, according to them, were under disproportionate influence from Tamils (Ponnambalam 1981). The JVP led an unsuccessful youth rebellion, first in 1971, which was crushed with a loss of 4,000 to 10,000 lives, and then another armed uprising, in 1987–89, which again was put down at a cost of perhaps 40,000 or more lives (Gunaratna 2001: 105, 269).

Just as the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi and the attempts on Gotabhaya Rajapaksa and General Fonseka were crimes that escalated plans for a Tamil war, we can see that kind of cascade at the foundations of the JVP uprisings in Sri Lanka. In our interviews, JVP leaders stressed that they turned to armed struggle because their party was being tyrannised by state violence in the form of arbitrary arrest, torture and disappearances. In the literature (Gunaratna 2001: 269) and in our interviews, it was often said that the fatal mistake the JVP made was to announce that if members of the military and the police did not defect to them, the JVP would kill
their families. Some JVP members, without actually being ordered to do so by the JVP leadership, then indeed proceeded to kill family members of the security forces. One reason they did this was that they had already persuaded 2,000 soldiers to desert, many to join the JVP (Gunaratna 2001: 328).\footnote{Others of these deserters and the estimated 20,000 deserters from the long war against the Tamil insurgency (Gunaratna 2001: 368) became members of armed criminal gangs who mounted armed robberies, kidnapped for ransom and undertook contract killing, among other activities (i.e. a war-leads-to-crime dynamic internal to the victorious army).} Erroneously, they calculated that by threatening military families in the conditions of extreme uncertainty they had created by December 1988, when around 100 people were being assassinated every day (Gunaratna 2001: 267), larger sections of the military might defect to them. Instead, the JVP triggered a cascade of slaughter of their own cadres. The security forces recruited hit squads of soldiers and police whose family members had been killed by the JVP (Gunaratna 2001: 333, 338–9). They had no compunction in the systematic killing of the entire leadership of the JVP. Once almost all politburo and central committee members were killed, the insurrection collapsed. On the other side, it was likewise a case of crime enabling civil war: ‘The JVP concentrated on recruiting members from houses set on fire and families in which brothers or fathers were killed or a female harassed or raped’ (Gunaratna 2001: 295).

With the JVP uprisings, a Marxist imaginary cascaded violence:

Where there was a lot of influence on both JVP and LTTE from Marxism was when it comes to armed struggle. People thought, especially oppressed people thought, the best way was armed struggle because of the Marxist influence. They thought that killing was a good way to liberation … JVP and LTTE had the same heroes. It was not Gandhi. It was [advocates of violence such as Subhas Chandra] Bose, Mao, Che [Guevara], [Fidel] Castro. (Interview with JVP leader, Colombo, 2013, No. 091313)

Assassinations on both sides in the failed JVP uprising of 1971 motivated both sides to settle scores in 1987. The security forces argued that the government had erred in not wiping out the JVP in 1971. This perception also encouraged the security forces in 1987 to believe that ‘unless we wipe them out first, they will wipe out not only us, but also our families this time’. This perceived security dilemma (Proposition 5) magnified and cascaded common criminal threats into an imperative for war. Deputy inspector general of police Premadasa Udugampola, the most efficient, ruthless death squad leader, who had lost his wife, children, mother
and brother to the JVP, said: ‘I did not want a Pol Pot regime to come’ (Gunaratna 2001: 340). Even more interesting are the considerable data supporting the conclusion that the JVP prematurely resorted to armed struggle against the government by attempting to capture the armouries of 74 police stations on 5 April 1971 and then abduct the prime minister and senior ministers, because of their analysis that, if they did not strike first, the state would wipe them out in the way that the Indonesian Government had wiped out that country’s communist party in 1965 (Cooke 2011: 122, 135; Authors’ interviews). That security dilemma analysis of the JVP in 1971 was exaggerated because the Sri Lankan security forces did not see the JVP as the threat that the Indonesian security forces had seen in their communist party in 1965. The Indonesian Communist Party was the largest in the world outside China and the USSR; it already wielded great power inside Sukarno’s government. Thus, cascades of imaginaries can be as important as cascades of action. Imaginaries of pre-emptive violence are spread by networks—in this case, Marxist networks that modelled a security dilemma, even if it was not fully grounded in reality. What the security dilemma realities are matters little if key actors imagine that, when they fail to act decisively to kill the enemy, the enemy will kill them.

Preventive diplomacy was needed in 1971 to persuade the JVP that they were not in that security dilemma and that parliamentary politics was a more plausible path to power (which became a reality in 2004 when the JVP became the third force in the Sri Lankan parliament, with 41 seats and various ministerial portfolios). It was true that state crime against JVP cadres was also a cause of the 1971 uprising. So what we have here is serious state crime that needed to cease, combined with an imagined security dilemma imported from state violence in Indonesia that triggered a cascade of JVP violence that, in turn, triggered a cascade of state violence. All this was allowed to cascade for want of preventive diplomacy to provide a reality check to the immature political minds of the JVP cadres of 1971, whose average age was 20 (Gunaratna 2001: 119). The more mature minds of regional foreign ministers or wise and respected communist revolutionary leaders might have persuaded them that they were not in as dire a security dilemma as they believed (or propagandised).

Our hypothesis is that the two JVP uprisings helped create a culture of violence and a legacy of untreated trauma in Sri Lanka. Beyond these profound ways in which JVP violence contributed to crime (Proposition 9(b)), and was caused by it (Proposition 9(a)), in both uprisings common crimes to steal guns were the principal way the JVP armed itself,
combined with hundreds of major robberies planned by the JVP from September 1986 of money, gold and other valuables that allowed them to buy guns (Gunaratna 2001: 267). Gunaratna describes this crime wave as contributing to anomie—a state of disorder in which citizens no longer knew who was in charge or what were the rules of social order (Proposition 7):

The gradual build up of crime and the accompanying brutalization of the society was followed by the emergence of a lawless, a policyless and a leaderless nation. Two governments had emerged [the JVP was called the ‘night government’] and the people did not know whom to support and follow. (Gunaratna 2001: 270)

**Paradoxes of the cascades between LTTE and JVP violence**

This section seeks to inject more complexity and nuance into Proposition 9(b)—that war cascades to more war and more crime. It does so through a paradoxical exploration of the application to the Sri Lankan case of Proposition 3: *Violence cascades through alliance structures when a cleavage motivates mobilisation of alliances or unsettling of power imbalances*. The JVP always tended to be a Sinhalese nationalist party and it still is. It chose in 1987 to reignite its uprising because it believed that Sinhalese dignity was challenged by the presence on Sri Lankan soil of an Indian peacekeeping force. The JVP argued that the Sri Lankan Government was allowing their country to be hostage to Tamil division and Indian imperial designs. There was a paradox, therefore, that the LTTE had provided weapons, landmines, explosives and training to the JVP to weaken the Sri Lankan military that would have to fight on two fronts (Gunaratna 2001: 133) (Proposition 3). The LTTE threat cascaded through the intentional agency of LTTE strategists of violence to the JVP becoming a more credible threat.

In the late 1980s, the Sri Lankan state was suffering military defeats at the hands of the LTTE. It seemed to lead to a society that was disintegrating. For that reason, the state at first welcomed Indian peacekeepers so the Indians could bring the LTTE under control while the state concentrated on subjugating the JVP in the south. The next paradox was that JVP nationalist propaganda pilloried the state for its weakness in surrendering Sinhalese sovereignty to the Indians. Indian intervention redefined JVP
politics in Sri Lanka (Uyangoda 2008). The JVP nationalist propaganda resonated in the south and built support for the JVP while helping to destabilise president J. R. Jayewardene, who lost power in 1989. His successor, Ranasinghe Premadasa, was therefore minded to convince the unpopular Indian peacekeepers to leave. Then came the next paradoxical cascade of the Government of Sri Lanka replenishing the firepower of its principal enemy, the LTTE, so it could inflict more losses on the Indians. This it did, killing 1,200 Indian peacekeepers. The peacekeepers had initially been fairly popular among Tamils, many of whom were protected from the LTTE by the peacekeepers, and protected as a result of the pause from the more general ravages of war. The LTTE manoeuvred to undermine this Tamil civilian goodwill by firing on Indian troops from inside places of worship and other locales where Indian return fire would kill many Tamil civilians. Incidents of rape of Tamil women and other misconduct by demoralised Indian peacekeepers, who, in our interviews, found it hard to understand why they were there being killed, also made the cascade worse (Proposition 9(a)).

Sri Lanka had become a country with wars among four major combatants: the Sri Lankan military, the Indian military, the JVP and the LTTE. Some of these combatants chose to escalate violence not only against enemies, but also against ‘friends’. They did this to goad their friends to resist their enemies. As a result, cascades of violence became convoluted and virulent. Organised crime then saw opportunities to enrol political parties to their projects, even to seek to take them over, as some interview informants alleged organised crime interests did with the JVP. More mundanely, a climate of extreme violence created opportunities for Sri Lankan organised crime to promote protection rackets, in turn nurturing a political culture of corruption. Suicide (self-violence) also trebled between the 1960s and 1990s in Sri Lanka (Gombrich 2006: 25). Sri Lankans became inured to a culture of disappearances.

While we do not document cascades of state crime and combatant crime in detail here, abductions, disappearances, arbitrary detention, torture, rape and sexual violence were rampant in Sri Lanka during its 26 years of protracted warfare. These crimes have been documented by human rights organisations and the United Nations (see Amnesty International 2013; HRW 2011; UN 2011). Various regimes were quite open about making the fact of torture common knowledge:
Disfigured heads and bodies were displayed openly to serve as a warning to the public. Such atrocities became commonplace. The existence of at least eight such torture chambers was discovered by a Commission investigating disappearances in four provinces. (Commission of Inquiry into Involuntary Removal or Disappearance of Persons in the Western, Southern and Sabaragamuwa Provinces 1997: 34)

In our interviews, Tamil activists also reported that there had been an increase in disappearances following the 2005 failed peace process. Human rights activists and Sri Lankan Tamils living in Jaffna and Colombo were usually ‘white vanned’. White vans without number plates picked up people who were usually never seen again. Incidents of enforced disappearances continued after 2009, though at a lower level. A report that includes interviews with 40 witnesses of sexual violence and torture notes that the witnesses had been released only after their family paid a large bribe to the security forces, most often brokered by a member of the Eelam People’s Democratic Party (EPDP) or well-connected individuals in Sri Lanka (Sooka 2014: 43). The domination dynamics evident here that cascade from cascades among the four major combatant forces down to individuals take many forms: cascades of exclusion, militarism, cronyism, corruption and money politics, cascades of state terror and cascades of class politics, among other domination dynamics.

Conclusion: Multiplicity in crime–war dynamics

Archer and Gartner (1984) showed that homicide rates rise after nations participate in wars at home or abroad (supporting Proposition 9(b)). There are other war–crime dynamics beyond those considered here that feed this result. We have illustrated but a few. These include war in Sri Lanka cascading to rape, during the war and in refugee camps afterwards, followed by murder to eliminate witnesses; war cascading to militarisation of a society in which the military steals land and businesses from people; and war cascading to crony capitalism in which a ruling family loots the nation, corrupts accountability institutions and causes political opponents to disappear. The collapse of an autonomous rule of law also induced anomie and revenge criminality (Proposition 7):

20 The EPDP is a political party and a pro-government paramilitary organisation in Sri Lanka.
When accountability is not there in the legal system of society you get a lot of revenge happening. People take things into their own hands. Crime rates increase as you get a revenge culture. (Interview with rights activist, Sri Lanka, 2013, No. 091342)

‘People start to think if we can’t change militarisation, then we had to learn how to live with it and cope with it’, and, as a result, there is ‘normalisation of abnormality’, such as Tamil widows being told that if they want a normal life they should marry a soldier (Interview, northern Sri Lanka, 2013, No. 091318).

Many of the data points that drive Archer and Gartner’s (1984) result are countries that experience elevated homicide rates after participation in wars that end with a peace forged by military victory: World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War. Major cases such as these and Sri Lanka, where peace is achieved through military victory, at one level do refute the simple hypothesis that war cascades to more war. A cascade approach helps us unpack simple causation models that read Sri Lanka as a case of nonviolence secured through violence. We might likewise unpack World War I, World War II and the Indochina Wars as cases that each included a cascade to genocide: to a Turkish genocide against Armenians in World War I; Nazi genocide in World War II; and Khmer Rouge genocide against class enemies of the new Maoist Cambodia, which included supporters of the defeated pro-US government of Lon Nol, non-Maoist intellectuals, professionals, monks and people of Vietnamese and Chinese ancestry in the Indochina Wars. Each of these genocides cascaded refugees who triggered other conflicts in places such as Palestine—for example, refugees from the Khmer Rouge (most of whom fled to Vietnam) encouraged the cascade to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, which then cascaded to an invasion of Vietnam by China in 1979. Within each of these wars where military victory caused a peace, a war between A and B drags in C, which in turn drags in D and E. The fact that the cascade dynamics internal to these wars are so profound is what leads us to call two of them World Wars and to call what started as ‘the Vietnam War’ the ‘Indochina War’. Hence, it is simultaneously true that violence ended these wars and that violence cascaded from them.

21 Consider also the work of Toft (2010), discussed in Chapter 3 of this volume.
Sri Lanka is not a case like these mega wars that have dragged in large numbers of national armies. Yet we can see the victory of the state military in the first JVP uprising as creating conditions not only for peace, but also for the second JVP uprising and the four ‘Eelam wars’—just as we saw in Chapter 2 World War I creating conditions for World War II. So we have illustrated how we must unpack cascades internal to a country case, and internal to a single war, to understand the ways in which the peace-through-war script in Sri Lanka is not quite right. Just as Sri Lanka is not a case that cascades to world war, it is also not a case like Iraq (in 2003), El Salvador (Richani 2007) and various African countries where more people are killed by homicides, state violence and armed gang violence after a peace agreement is signed than were being killed during the war. Even so, Sri Lanka powerfully demonstrates the cascade dynamics of homicide leading to war and war leading to homicide. We have also identified in our narrative many data points in Sri Lanka where riots and rapes contributed to escalation to war and war motivated and enabled rape and riots.

This returns us to the dangers of static analysis discussed in Chapter 2. We saw in Chapter 2 that, in deciding to invade Iraq in 2003, president George W. Bush’s inner circle undertook a static analysis of the cost and desirability of regime change in Iraq (see Luban 2013; Woodward 2002, 2004) rather than any recursive analysis of possible cascades. Our policy inference, of course, is that such decisions will be better if they are open to recursive diagnosis of cascade risks. President Bush did not weigh the costs of a crime wave in Iraq that would take more lives than the invasion (Iraq Body Count 2012). For example, more academics had been killed in Iraq (448) through kidnapping, suicide bombs and other violence than by coalition forces up to the time of president Bush’s ‘mission accomplished’ declaration (Griffis 2014). President Bush did not weigh up waves of traumatised young American soldiers returning home to inflict violence on their families and on themselves in an awful carnage of suicide in their families. Nor was there any factoring in of the threat to American constitutional values that state crime at institutions such as Abu Graib and Guantanamo Bay and extraordinary rendition to totalitarian regimes like that in Libya would have on the fabric of American society or on the lives of young Americans such as Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning who exposed these state crimes. He did not weigh up the risk of cascades to civil war that could empower something like Islamic State, led by a former inmate of the Abu Ghraib and Camp Bucca prisons in Iraq.
Obversely, our analysis causes us to reconsider the importance to war prevention of sharpened security sector and crime prevention competence. Improved democratic policing that might have prevented the anti-Tamil riots of 1956, 1958, 1977, 1979, 1981 and 1983 that so shaped the imagination of young LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and that might have prevented the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi—as with the case of Archduke Ferdinand (Chapter 2)—are counterfactuals we cannot empirically test. Yet we can hesitate to dismiss them as sparks that, if extinguished, would inevitably lead to other sparks that light identical conflagrations. Extinguishing sparks that ignite wars is not as important as tackling the root causes of those wars, such as the domination of Tamils—discrimination and violence against Tamils by the Sinhalese nationalist state. Yet it is important.

We can be attentive to redressing root causes of regional cascades of violence at the same time as we also work at dampening all types of cascade dynamics. States and the United Nations can be moderate in deploying military power to guarantee a responsibility to protect civilians. It is possible to demand a political process and political transition backed by military might that threatens regime change, without moving with maximal force to war as the instrument of regime change. When diplomacy and military deployment become more like that, extremely violent legacy societies such as Sri Lanka and Palestine can become less common. That, at least, is one policy hypothesis that motivates the ongoing inductive work of Peacebuilding Compared.

22 In this context, we mean democratic policing that is not captured by a ruling party or a dominant ethnic group, but that acts decisively to protect the rights of citizens of all ethnicities and parties. Across South Asia—in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal, as well as Sri Lanka—this book has revealed a deep pathology of police being politicised rather than playing an independent role in a separation of powers that sees them douse sparks of communal violence, whichever group is injured first. Chapter 7 conceived this as a cascade of violence from the colonial policing of the Raj being politicised to defend British interests. We see the importance of this policing pathology in Wilkinson's (2004) research that shows a history of cascades of violence of this type across hundreds of communal riots in India (see Chapter 5). Where the police do show resolve to prevent violence from spreading, to smother the sparks, they have overwhelmingly succeeded in doing so throughout Indian history. Wilkinson found that the cases where there is a lot of killing are ones where the police fail to show resolve. Failure of resolve in turn occurs because their state government is politically reluctant to allow the police to control a group that delivers electoral support to the party in power. One of the reasons low-intensity Maoist insurgencies afflict some rural areas of half of India's states is that state political leaders have tolerated them or encouraged them because the insurgents killed mostly party-political opponents of those state leaders in the regions Maoists control (Chadha 2005: 375–6; Routray 2012: 319). Likewise, in Nepal, the king tolerated Maoist killings for a number of years because they were killing his republican enemies in the democratic parties (Chapter 9).
Another is the power of cascades of reconciliation. A retired Sri Lankan general told the story of how he reconciled with one of the few surviving top LTTE commanders, quoting the Buddha: ‘Hatred does not cease with hatred, but with love.’ His message was that the same religious belief systems that provided the resources for cascades of hatred also had the resources for cascades of reconciliation.

Many such small gestures, we argue, are important to cascades of reconciliation: a little cascade from one Buddhist country to another or from a Buddhist to a Hindu invoking a shared religious belief. Much more than this is needed to reverse a legacy of extreme violence, as discussed in Part III. We also conclude there that everyday rituals of reconciliation are important. A macro-structural peace is most fertile when recursively related to an everyday micro politics of nonviolence.

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23 The context was a reconciliation meeting just a few months before the war ended. Former LTTE commander Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, better known by his nom de guerre, Colonel Karuna, who had recently been appointed as a minister, arrived at the reconciliation meeting in Colombo. There was silence and no one knew what to say. ‘Karuna had been made a minister but no one had ever forgiven him,’ as the Sri Lankan general expressed it. So the general walked up to Karuna and shook his hand, which broke the ice. Then the general said, ‘I want you to know that I forgive you because I was one of the first people you attacked with a Claymore mine that killed two men on my patrol in 1986.’ Then the general made that quote from the Buddha. Karuna smiled and shook hands with the general a second time. This quote had been used by the Sri Lankan prime minister at the San Francisco meeting to form the United Nations and greatly moved the Japanese Government and people at the time. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe recalled it in a speech on 7 September 2014: “Hatred ceases not by hatred, but by love”. On September 6 [1951], 63 years ago, at the San Francisco Peace Conference, it was Sri Lanka who encouraged Japan’s return to the international community by saying this phrase, while Japan at that time was trying to take a step forward to its reconstruction from its post-war devastation. Over 60 years since then, Japan as a peace-loving nation has contributed to world peace. This time, I would like to visit Sri Lanka with feelings of gratitude towards them’ (translation of this part of the speech in Sri Lanka acquired during fieldwork).