Surname WIJETUNGA
First names (in full) LIYANAMOHOTTILAGE MINOLI SAKUNIKA
Faculty board EDUCATION
Degree name and pathway MSc EDUCATION (COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION)
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Exchanging ginger for chilli?: The Social Ecology of a World Bank-funded Higher Education Project in Sri Lanka

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Science in Education (Comparative and International Education)

Minoli Wijetunga

Supervisor: Professor Liam Gearon

University of Oxford, Department of Education

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Abstract

Internationally funded education projects in the majority world are a rich field of study, which intersects multiple disciplines from education to economics to postcolonial studies. As a former colony, currently a low-middle income country, Sri Lanka has been at the receiving end of these funds – grants and loans – for years. While there is much criticism against such international funders imposing a new imperialism on the majority world, there is also literature that represents the international funders as helpful actors. In this dichotomy what is less present are the voices of those from the majority world countries and their narratives.

This study explores the social ecology of academics working on a World Bank-funded project in the higher education field in Sri Lanka. Adopting a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach, it uses interviews to uncover theories emerging from the data. The emerging theories are two: one explores the concept of trust and notes that the lack of trust in one's government, State, and State systems catalyse the academics to be open to help from international organisations like the World Bank; the second is based on the concept of obligation and identifies that associative political obligation to the education system drives the individuals, thus prioritising short-term practicalities over long-term ideologies. These two theories help both explain the social ecology of academics, as well as complicate the existing understanding of the internationally funded projects in the majority world.

In situating these two emergent theories in the larger literature, this study suggests that the World Bank should be represented more dynamically; to truly capture the nature of the World Bank, this study suggests it be approached as an epistemic actor and/or a theorist, who permeates multiple facets of social ecology.

Keywords: *higher education, funding, Sri Lanka, World Bank*

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AHEAD	Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development
BWI	Bretton Woods Institution
CGT	Constructivist Grounded Theory
CUREC	The Central University Research Ethics Committee
DOR	Development Oriented Research
ELSE	English Language Skills Enhancement
ELTA	Enriching Learning, Teaching, and Assessment
FUTA	Federation of University Teachers' Associations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GT	Grounded Theory
HE	Higher Education
HEMS	Humanities, Education, Management, and Social Science
HETC	Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century
ICE	Innovation Commercialisation Enhancement
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDA	International Development Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	International Organisation
IRQUE	Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education
NIFS	National Institute of Fundamental Studies
NSF	National Science Foundation
RDIC	Promoting Research, Development, Innovation, and Commercialisation
RIC	Research Innovation and Commercialisation
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
UBL	University Business Linkage
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank
WBES2020	World Bank Education Strategy 2020

1. Introduction

> "There is no story that is not true, [...] The world has no end, and what is good among one people is an abomination with others." (Achebe, 1958, p. 99)

In the field of education and international funding, there are many 'stories'. There are stories of benevolence, there are stories of aid, there are stories of goodwill; there are also stories of silencing, stories of oppression, and stories of imperialism. As Achebe (1958) says, though, none of these stories is untrue. However, some stories are spoken louder than others, and some stories are not written in a form that is accepted by the academic literati. The stories that are less heard are the ones that arise from the majority world[1] by majority world scholars. If you don't like someone's story, Achebe (1958) says, you write your own. This dissertation is writing of that story – the story of the local actors that centres their experiences.

This Constructivist Grounded Theory-based dissertation investigates a World Bank-funded project in the higher education (HE) field of Sri Lanka to understand the social ecology[2] of the local actors, the academics, working on the project. In a field of research that is largely a binary where international funders like the World Bank are presented either as saviours or as villains, this dissertation departs from the binary to centre the academics who are being acted upon by these large institutions. It positions itself as part of the dewesternisation project[3] (Mignolo, 2011) in the field of education, the one that attempts to move beyond the western horizons. Its objective, then, is not to reaffirm a neo coloniality,

---

[1] Majority world is used to refer to the countries that have been known as 'third world countries' and 'developing countries'. It serves as a reminder that those in power, or 'the West', are in fact a minority of the global population. The term was coined by the Bangladeshi photographer Shahidul Alam. The term majority world defines those countries by what they have, instead of what it lacks – as is the case with terms like developing countries and Low Income or Low Middle Income Countries.

[2] Drawing from Bookchin (2007), this dissertation understands social ecology to encapsulate how and why actors interact with their environments and their responses to it. It also encompasses the social implications of these interactions.

[3] Dewesternisation project is one of the five options for the creation of "a polycentric world in which no civilisation is imposed over all the rest" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 28). The dewesternisation project is an on-going process which seeks an epistemic shift away from the hegemonic centre towards the recognition of intellect in the majority world. Dewesternisation is not an anti-Western discourse. It is the provision of an alternative trajectory that originated largely in East Asia. It does not attempt to replace one hegemony with another. Most importantly, it does not reject capitalism like in decolonial studies, but confronts "other levels of the colonial matrix of power: the sphere of authority, of knowledge, and of subjectivity. Briefly, it is not a movement of anti- but of self-affirmation" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 47).

nor is it to establish international funders as necessary saviours. Its objective is to create space for the voices of the majority world, and present an understanding of their reality in HE and international funding.

This somewhat unorthodox introductory chapter serves two purposes: first, it positions the study historically and within societal organisation structures and presents the reasons for conducting this study and researcher interest in the topic; second, it provides the necessary background to the research in terms of country information and a brief history of the relationship between Sri Lanka and the World Bank in the HE field. The latter part of the first section is written in the first person to indicate reflexivity. The Chapter concludes by laying out the flow of the study.

1.1. Positioning of the Study

1.1.1. Historical and Political Positioning

> Take up the White Man's burden –
> In patience to abide
> To veil the threat of terror
> And check the show of pride;
> By open speech and simple,
> A hundred times made plain,
> To seek another's profit,
> And work another's gain.
>
> –The White Man's Burden, Rudyard Kipling

The approach of external bodies to education in the majority world countries cannot be discussed without discussing the colonial roots of education. Most majority world countries were colonies at some point in history, and their trajectories are thus interlinked with the colonial agenda. This section discusses education in the colonies as was determined by the colonisers, and traces the idea of imperialism to its current manifestation. It then positions the study in this context of imperialism and capitalism.

The role of education in the hands of the coloniser was a benevolent project with the aim to "free the mankind from ignorance" (Deonanan, 1976). Postcolonial literature, however, frames it in terms of cultural imperialism, of being a tool in the hands of the ruling bourgeois to perpetuate a state of subservience (Carnoy, 1977). The idea of education as a

great liberator places the responsibility of 'educating' the 'regressive people' in the hands of the proverbial civilised man; a task – as penned by Kipling in 1899 – that was a burden on the White Man. Yet the White Man continued to bear this responsibility conscious of "the blame of those ye better" and the sacrifice it takes. This perpetuation of a specific approach to education is historically documented: Harik and Schilling (1984), for example, writes on the African education policy in Kenya by the British to note that while the education policies did take economic realities of Kenya into account, the ultimate goal was to create a 'white man's country'; Deonanan (1976) notes that the education system in Trinidad was for a white middle-class society, and not Trinidad. The most (in)famous, however, would be the case of India and Thomas Babington Macaulay's Minute of 2 February 1835, which tipped the education policy in the Indian Raj in favour of the Anglicists. Macaulay identifies education as a crucial element of cementing the hegemony, stating that the purpose of education must be to create "a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (Young, 1935, p. 359). It is this class that is then entrusted with the task of being the communicator between the Indian people and the coloniser; through education, this class of people have been indoctrinated to the ways of the White Man. Carnoy (1977) thus, identifies education policy as a fundamental tool of not just legitimising the power of the colonisers, but also as a tool to maintain power in the hands of the 'ruling bourgeois'.

The ruling bourgeois weaponises education to perpetuate hierarchies – be it in the form of aristocratic feudalism or through crony capitalism. The idea of capitalism perpetuating hierarchies derives from a larger historical discussion around the relationship between imperialism and capitalism led by economists such as J.A. Hobson (1902), Schumpeter (1955) (See also Schumpeter and Swedberg (1991)), framed by Lenin's (1917) *Imperialism: the last stage of capitalism*. Carnoy (1977) favours this argument that imperialism is the inevitable end point of capitalism, challenging Schumpeter's notion that imperialism is antithetical to capitalism in that the latter advocates against a monopoly of the market. This line of thinking has generated a significant sub-field in postcolonial studies on education as cultural imperialism. However, Carnoy (1977) has been criticised for a lack of systemic discussion on how he conceptualises capitalism (Bowman, 1976), as the

relationship between capitalism and imperialism as expressed by Carnoy (1977) depends on his understanding of the term. This lack of consensus on the definition of capitalism is key to understanding the debates on capitalism as a force for the good – an engine for prosperity (Friedman & Friedman, 1962) – and a force of evil.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said (1993) discusses modern forms of imperialism and power structures. He notes that the foundation of future empires will lie not in conquering land, but through cultural reform led by hegemonic policies. Although a glimpse of this policy-led conquering was seen through certain acts of the old imperialistic rule, this is the defining feature of new imperialism: there is a shift from a trade and military-led colonialism to an international institution-led neocolonialism; thus, an old imperialism versus a new imperialism. Old imperialism is what Macaulay embodies and Carnoy (1977) went to great lengths to dissect and challenge. New imperialism, as Tikly (2004) notes, is one where "low-income countries and regions that were previously subject to older forms of European imperialism" are incorporated "into a new regime of global governance which serves to secure the interests of the USA, its western allies and of global capitalism more generally" (p. 173). IOs are a key player in this version of new imperialism due to the power they hold over the majority world.

However, at the current point in time, majority world countries like Sri Lanka relies on help from the outside world. It could be argued that Sri Lanka – and countries like it – needs the outside world more than the outside world needs them. In the presence of such a distinct power imbalance, the countries in need of help have to meet the outside world on their own terms. i.e. (often) on the grounds of capitalism and a free-market economy. In that light, it could be argued that seeking help from institutions like the World Bank is furthering another type of colonisation. Yet countries like Sri Lanka have no power to challenge this form of societal organisation. Instead, they choose a side in a lose-lose situation. Therefore, this study positions itself in favour of the dewesternisation project

where the countries are able to negotiate terms and create their own version[4] of the societal structure within the larger framework of capitalism.

1.1.2. Research Interest

In 2018, I was working at one of the oldest universities in Sri Lanka as a Temporary Assistant Lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Department I was working for applied for a research grant from the World Bank, and "won" the competitive bidding. At the initiation of this project, I shifted to working solely for the project as its first Research Assistant.

Although I worked in that position for only a year, it was a year taut with political tension within the university system. There were multiple forces at play, including critiques from left-wing colleagues, championing the grant as a victory by others, and colleagues involved in the project perceiving this as an opportunity. These tensions prompted me to delve into the field of HE funding by the World Bank in majority world countries, leading to a realisation that while the field of research is overflowing with accounts of the World Bank's conduct, there was little that looked at these projects from the point of view of loan receivers; not loan-receivers as perceived by scholars from the global centre, but accounts from the periphery that attempts at a contextual theorising. The gap in the literature was identified before this dissertation was conceptualised. However, the topic was not pursued.

With an 18-month distance from the World Bank-funded project, studying at the University of Oxford placed me in a position that was more appropriate to study what is claimed to be a neo-colonial power, where the claimants have often furthered the silencing of the oppressed. The political climate of the University of Oxford, with the Rhodes Must Fall Movement (Chigudu, 2020), the response by Oriel College (Oriel College, 2021), and the discussions around decolonising the curriculum at the Department of Education (Department of Education, 2021) influenced the decision to take on this project. *Culture and Imperialism* note that "post-imperialism has permitted mainly a cultural discourse of suspicion on the part of formerly colonised peoples, and theoretical avoidance at most on

[4] China has taken the lead in creating two financial institutions – New Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank – with a specific focus on the majority world. This has been posited as a threat to the Western development model (Wang, 2019).

the part of metropolitan intellectuals" (p. 194) with Said (1993) going on to say that he found himself caught between the two. My situation was somewhat similar in feeling a sense of belonging both to the 'Ivory Tower' of the University of Oxford, as well as to the former colony of Sri Lanka, a post-conflict nation-state. This intersection, I thought, would be the ideal moment to investigate the social ecology of the academics working on a World Bank-funded project. I have managed to achieve a sense of critical distance that would benefit the study.

1.2. Background to Sri Lanka

1.2.1. Sri Lanka and Higher Education

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is a small island located in the Indian Ocean. It has a population of ~23 million, and is a multi-religious, multi-ethnic country. The majority ethnic group is Sinhalese, while Buddhism is the majority religion. Sinhala and Tamil are the national and official languages of Sri Lanka, while English is considered a link language. Sri Lanka was first colonised by the Portuguese, then the Dutch, and finally the British. The British colonised the entire island, their rule lasting from 1815 to 1948.

The formal education system of Sri Lanka has been heavily influenced by colonisation. Thus, the content and patterns of formal education in Sri Lanka were based on the objectives of the colonisers and the needs of a colony (Warnapala, 2011). Although the Buddhist-based system of education still existed in the country, the Colebrook Commission of 1833 had the overall education policy of Ceylon focused on utilitarian reforms that would prepare the native middle class for public employment, in turn creating natives with European attainments (Warnapala, 2011). Unlike the Anglo-European world where the purpose of education was debated, tertiary education in Sri Lanka was established with a far simpler goal: the creation of a group of natives who would be loyal to the colonisers and capable of white-collar employment. Thus, at the outset itself, the Sri Lankan tertiary education system aligned itself – though it is questionable if an alternative was allowed – with pragmatics as opposed to ideals. However, this objective was questioned with the emergence of the independence movement in Sri Lanka.

The policy reforms under political independence were motivated by a drive for freedom and autonomy. In 1929, the Buchanan-Riddell Commission stated that

> no University deserves the title of University which is denied the freedom to determine the branches of learning in which it will provide instruction and promote research and the conditions of governing the appointment of its staff and the control of its regulation and of intervention by the legislature (Ceylon Parlimentuva, 1959, p. 22).

The 1942 Hansard (Kalugalagedera & Kaushalya, 2017) confirms this sentiment, and highlights the importance of a university to be independent of a government-affiliated department. In fact, on the understanding that a country emerging from centuries of colonial rule requires an independent education system, the Special Committee on Education 1943 identifies two main purposes for a university: to allow an individual to obtain the highest possible level of physical, mental, and moral development irrespective of wealth or social class; and to be able to use the learned skills for the betterment of the nation (Kannangara, 1943). Having to pay for tertiary education severely limited the vision of open access that was envisioned by the policy makers, thus still catering to an elitist cohort of students. In order to overcome this inaccessibility, a free education scheme was introduced in 1945, leading to free education up to the tertiary level, which exists to date.

1.2.2. Sri Lankan Higher Education and the World Bank

As a majority world country, most initiatives in Sri Lanka have the involvement of a multilateral agency, a bilateral agency or an International Non-Government Organisation. The field of education is no different. Some of these agencies and organisations include the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, British Department for International Development, U.S. Agency for International Development, Swedish International Development Agency, Japan International Cooperation Agency, German Agency for Technical Assistance, UNESCO, UNICEF, UN Development Program, Save the Children, World Vision, Christian Children's Fund, and Plan International (Ashford, 2009). The World Bank, however, is among the few that have shown explicit interest in the field of HE.

Three World Bank-funded projects have been executed in Sri Lanka to date: Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education (IRQUE) project completed in

2010, Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century (HETC) project completed in 2016, and Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development Operation (AHEAD) project to be completed in 2023. The last project, AHEAD, is the focus of this study. It is a project of USD 100 million (World Bank, n.d.). The project focuses on three result areas: increasing enrolment in HE in priority disciplines for economic development; improving the quality of HE through Enriching Learning, Teaching and Assessment (ELTA) and English Language Skills Enhancement (ELSE) development projects; and promoting Research, Development, Innovation and Commercialization (RDIC). RDIC projects are further classified into 1) Innovation Commercialization Enhancement (ICE), 2) Research Innovation Commercialization (RIC), 3) Development Oriented Research (DOR), 4) University Business Linkage Cells (UBL), and 5) HE society linkage cells (World Bank, n.d.).

1.3. Research Objective, Question, and Dissertation Outline

Research objective:

- To create a space for the voices of the majority world, and
- Present an understanding of their reality in this area of HE and international funding.

Research question:

- What cause-effect relationships exist in the social ecology of an academic working on a World Bank-funded HE project in Sri Lanka?

Dissertation outline:

Chapter 1 (Introduction) stated the research objective and research question. It explained the reasons for conducting this research, and provided necessary background to Sri Lanka and the World Bank-funded project.

Chapter 2 (Literature Review) reviews different representations of the World Bank in development and education literature. It identifies the gap in the literature, and situates this study within that lacuna.

Chapter 3 (Methodology) justifies the relativist constructivist philosophical perspective that bounds this study: Constructivist Grounded Theory. It also explains researcher positionality and reviews ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 (Data collection and Analysis) explains the process of data collection for the study and details data analysis as per Constructivist Grounded Theory approach.

Chapter 5 (Findings) presents the findings of the study, and connects the codes that emerged during analysis to create a coherent narrative.

Chapter 6 (Discussion) identifies two interpretivist theories from the findings and contextualises them. The chapter also situates them in larger literature.

Chapter 7 (Conclusion) concludes the dissertation by noting considerations with which the study should be read, and flagging areas for future research. This is followed by appendices.

2. Literature Review

Outline

2.1 Introduction

2.2 World Bank and forces of convergence

2.3 World Bank and mechanisms of influence

2.4 Dynamic networks

2.5 Summary

2.1. Introduction

The World Bank group is a collection of five institutions with varying purposes. Two of these institutions - The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) which lends money to governments of middle-income and low-income countries; and The International Development Association (IDA) which lends money interest-free, and provides grants to governments of poor countries – together is known as the World Bank (World Bank, 2011). They work in almost all parts of the World, namely, Africa, East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia [sic] (World Bank, 2021). The World Bank website claims that the Bank works in "every major area of development" under three broad categories: 1) Priorities – human capital project; people, peace, prosperity; COVID-19 hub; World Bank support for country access to COVID-19 vaccine; 2) Knowledge – research and publications, data, learning, development topics, open knowledge repository; and 3) Products and services – financing products and advisory services; Treasury (World Bank, 2021). Identifying Knowledge as a focus category of its own reinforces the role of the World Bank as a Knowledge Bank, which is discussed in section 2.3. Due to the interest of this study, the role of the World Bank in the field of education is interrogated below.

Comparative Education Professor Steven Klees (2012) notes that "the World Bank is the architect of what has become a truly global education policy" (p. 49). The education design of this influential architect is a human capital approach to education where the value of knowledge is measured in its contribution to the economic growth (Spring, 2015). This is

the foundation of most criticisms against the World Bank; that it "embeds a belief that the spread of global capitalism is both inevitable and egalitarian, that competition creates better lives for everyone, and that economic growth is always desirable" (Shields, 2013, p. 88). The manifestation of this could be through serving interests of large corporations at the expense of skilled workers, brain drain, undermining of local cultures and practices, and/or creating graduates who are unable to be critical (Spring, 2015). The Bank, being a force for good to eradicate poverty or a neo-colonial force that fails to understand local context, is often the two sides of the debate (See, for example Dubey et al., 2019; Regmi, 2017). Regardless of the possible winner in this debate, the extensive body of literature around the World Bank and its work in the field of education indicate that it is, indeed, a forceful presence in the field. This presence of the World Bank is discussed below using a trifactor approach designed to uncover the meanings and images of international organisations (Shahjahan & Madden, 2015): 1) Forces of convergence, 2) Mechanisms of influence, and 3) Dynamic networks. As this study is interested in the HE sector, the discussion will mostly focus on this sector, while drawing some literature from all sectors of education.

2.2. Forces of Convergence

Forces of convergence implies that HE policies are becoming more and more similar across national and regional levels despite their contextual differences. Leuze et al. (2008) suggest two modes of convergence, a sigma-convergence and a delta-convergence. Sigma-convergence occurs when nation-states adopt similar HE policies due to factors such as national requirements and political economy; delta-convergence, however, is more important, in that it indicates the movement of nation-states towards a template that is promoted by IOs. Leuze et al. (2008) call IOs "delta-convergence entrepreneurs" as they argue that IOs use an orthodoxy of "best practices" and other such buzz words to push countries towards adopting ideas perpetuated by IOs. Many scholars note that these ideas perpetuated by IOs that push nation-states towards a delta-convergence are neoliberal in nature (Shahjahan & Madden, 2015). Thus, under this representation, the nation-states are pushed towards a convergence using the hegemonic power of IOs as the driving tool. The World Bank is a fine example of this hegemony.

The World Bank – or "the Bank" – is one of the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI), alongside the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Established in July 1944 with 43 countries, its aim was to help rebuild the economy that was in pieces after the World War (Law, 2014). It also hoped to promote international economic cooperation. In the opening speech of the Bretton Woods conference, Henry Morganthau, the US Treasury Secretary, noted that the Bank hopes to help "the creation of a dynamic world community in which the people of every nation will be able to realise their potentials in peace" (*Inaugural address by Henry Morgenthau Jr*, 1944). This goal was to be achieved by lending money for countries to engage in development projects among other ways. The Bank is portrayed as one with altruistic motives – "We provide a wide array of financial products and technical assistance, and we help countries share and apply innovative knowledge and solutions to the challenges they face" (World Bank, 2021) – a helping hand for those in need.

Decision making at the World Bank is tied to the financial contributions of donor countries, where countries that give the most have higher control over loan programs and the conditions of the loan (Collins & Rhoads, 2010). In fact, in *The Making of Global Capitalism*, Gindin and Panitch (2012) write that the significance of BWIs is that they "institutionalized the American state's predominant role in international monetary management as part and parcel of the general acceptance of the US dollar as the foundation currency of the international economy" (p. 74). Furthermore, the voting system within the Bank being based on "the size of each country's subscription of gold, national currency, and government securities" (Gindin & Panitch, 2012, p. 76) furthered the veto power that the US would have. This is not to say that the US had the monopoly in creating the Bank. Instead, there was a close link between the US and the UK in drafting the workings of the Bank, a collaborative effort by a former imperial power and an emerging one. This is a partnership worth noting given the transition from an old imperialism to a new imperialism, where the hegemony still remains in the hands of a favoured group of people. In spite of the relationship not being one where both share equal power (Gindin & Panitch, 2012), the idea of a declining imperialist power working together with an emerging one in order to write the future of new imperialism, to create the blueprint for a new colonialism is rather poetic, and testimony to the shifting of global power within a select few.

Furthering this idea of neo-colonial power, the role of the Bank was redefined so that direct lending became a secondary objective:

> …its mandate was expanded to include "development" (read: capitalist development), not just "reconstruction." This famously turned the Bank's purpose away from European reconstruction and towards arranging and guaranteeing loans from private capital for economically underdeveloped regions. (Gindin & Panitch, 2012, p. 75)

This idea of funding "development" echoes "civilizing" that formed a large part of old imperialism. Similar to the old imperialists who were keen to demonstrate that "European social evolution has always been self-generated, owing nothing important to the non-European world, that Europe (or rather Western Europe, "the West") has always been, and remains today, ahead of the rest of the world" (Blaut, 1989, p. 261), the World Bank's idea of development follows that "its economic system, capitalism, is the core of its uniquely progressive character, and that progress for the [Anglo]-European world can only come via the diffusion of [Anglo]-European-based multinational capitalism" (Blaut, 1989, p. 261).

The possibility of such forces of convergence that could adversely impact the majority world in deep and lasting ways is a primary cause of concern in the literature, which mostly focus on the Bank's preference for a human capital approach to education. The World Bank publication *Lifelong Learning in the Global Knowledge Economy* (World Bank, 2010) describes the ideal citizen as a person who is able to act autonomously with a strong sense of self, an idea that pits American individualism against the collectivism present in most of the majority world (Spring, 2015). This could also lead to the loss of indigenous tools and ways of knowing, as the idea of development and education becomes homogenized across different countries. However, Teixeira (2017), studying the changing views of the World Bank about education has observed a decline of human capital theory in more recent policy documents from the World Bank. As is clear from the way the Bank has changed its mandate to fit the global demands, the World Bank does not seem to show any reluctance to change its course to suit the global demands, including those from its strongest critics (Goldman, 2001; Obamba, 2013).

On the other hand, while the World Bank promotes a liberal market economy, there are other forms of capitalism – the coordinated market economy modelled on Germany, and

more importantly the case of Chinese capitalism which is positioned "within—or beyond—conventional understandings of capitalist variety" (Peck & Zhang, 2013, p. 357). The presence of these other forms, especially the unprecedented development of East Asian markets (Redding, 1993) thus present the idea of independence through the creation of each country's own version of capitalism. In such a contested field then, it is important to interrogate whether the World Bank and other IOs who are proponents of a liberal market capitalism have as much power as the forces of convergence claim they have. In this regard, the ways in which these IOs influence countries to shape their ideology has to be probed. This is expanded in the mechanisms of influence section below, focusing on the role the World Bank plays in knowledge creation, thus furthering their influence.

2.3. Mechanisms of Influence

Mechanisms of influence concentrate on means: it investigates how IOs disseminate and enforce the desired meanings and interpretations of policy in HE. Literature (See Bassett & Maldonado, 2009; Lebeau & Sall, 2011) indicates that scholars believe IOs to possess a toolkit that enables this enforcement: these include comparative reviews, national reports, conferences, workshops, and technical expertise among others. The World Bank's positioning of itself as a 'Knowledge Bank' becomes crucial in this regard.

The first recorded seed of the World Bank's interest in knowledge creation is found in the address of World Bank President James Wolfensohn in 1997. He notes how the future lies in the Bank becoming a "Knowledge Bank". There is a two-pronged approach to achieve this goal: invest in knowledge production, i.e. research; and disseminate the knowledge thus produced in the form of publications, seminars, databases, and courses (Wolfensohn, 1997). In this endeavour to become a Knowledge Bank, the World Bank has engaged in several activities. Due to its position of power, the Bank has not only managed to invest in knowledge production, but has also become an important tool in shaping public education and learning systems across the world. All these factors, however, combine to give the World Bank a status that is "more and more resembling a conventional (yet global) HE research institution" (Zapp, 2017). In addition to that, the World Bank also uses loan conditions to reform education policy in donor countries and exert a normative influence

that encourages agenda-setting at a national level following World Bank policy design (Jones, 2007; Klees, 2002).

Reviewing the stakeholder responses to World Bank as a Knowledge Bank is difficult due to lack of a measuring tool. Kramarz and Momani (2013) posited researchers engaging World Bank's publications in debate as tacit recognitions of its status as a legitimate knowledge producer. Following this line of argument, the vast amount of literature that discusses and debates the position of the World Bank as a Knowledge Bank – including this dissertation – are affirming its legitimacy and the force of its influence. In a paper that examines the historical struggle for power between the World Bank and UNESCO, Elfert (2021) notes how the World Bank was originally supported by UNESCO in its work in the field of education, but then overcame UNESCO due to its better structural organization and administration capabilities. The paper also notes that the success of the World Bank as a Knowledge Bank was partly due to the rise of economics in the world. The readiness of World Bank to be responsive to global mood shifts, and work in knowledge dissemination in a jargon-free language that is accessible by most people in positions of power seem to be key reasons for its ability exert great influence. This is furthered by the Bank's ability to financially support these knowledge products (Kramarz & Momani, 2013).

2.4. Limitations of the Two Representations

While the two representations above – forced convergence and mechanisms of influence – are the most researched, the two have significant limitations. They both neglect the role of other players who are a part of HE policy mechanisms such as professionals and corporations in each nation-state (Shahjahan & Madden, 2015). Understanding the internal dynamics of the Bank help to contextualise its heuristic framework (Mundy & Verger, 2015). Furthermore, the representations above reduces both the nation-states and IOs to monoliths, and overlooks the nuances of their complex nature. The moment one acknowledges that the World Bank – as any other form of organized institution of governance – is not a monolith, the policy presence and influence it exerts demand a nuanced reading, as elaborated in the following section.

2.5. Dynamic Networks

IOs, by the nature of their work, engage with different institutions and individuals, which makes their ecology a complex one. These different actors include ministries of education, trade representatives, think tanks, teachers, and academics (Bassett & Maldonado, 2009). However, there is little work that interrogates this dynamic complex nature of IOs where the perceptions of external actor networks are explored (Shahjahan & Madden, 2015). This is problematic not only from the point of view of the IOs and their representation, but also from the point of view of nation-states working with IOs. As Naidoo (2011) writes, the representations mentioned above present nation-states that are at the receiving end of IO's help as passive entities upon which IOs enact their agendas. There is little agency given to these actors, although stakeholder involvement is considered important in the functioning of IOs.

While there is ample literature on the effectiveness of World Bank policies and programmes and their implications (See Banya & Elu, 2001; Brock-Utne, 2007; Collins & Wiseman, 2012; Heyneman, 2003; Heyneman, 2012; Obamba, 2013), there is little work on the subject from the point of view of receivers of World Bank loans (Perera, 2021), examples of the few exceptions being Collins and Rhoads (2010) and Perera (2021). As noted by one World Bank official,

> One of the biggest mistakes I think that observers of international institutions make, especially in terms of the Bank and the Fund, is overstating, overestimating the influence of the Bank. Our mandate requires us to work with the government as it should and that defines what we can do. (Collins & Rhoads, 2010, p. 192)

Thus, the narratives of the loan-receivers become an integral component of the World Bank and international aid narrative. Unfortunately, it appears that academia at large is preoccupied with criticising or celebrating the World Bank, silencing the voices of local stakeholders in the process. The individuals who are from receiver countries, whose attachments lie with the country and not the World Bank, who are considered the beneficiaries of these loans and grants have little voice in the larger literature. As noted by Knutsson and Lindberg (2017), when researching education aid, "researchers must also carefully search for less obvious expressions of 'the political', that is, mundane weapons

that actors employ to pursue their own strategies, counterwork against their opponents, and build, as well as destabilize, coalitions of various sorts" (p. 716) by investigating the social ecology of local actors working on a World Bank-funded project in the majority world. This paves way for this particular study.

This study positions itself in the midst of criticism of new imperialism led by a capitalist agenda, where education is considered the next item on the market. However, its objective is different from the vast majority of literature on the topic of international aid and the majority world. This study seeks to understand the perceptions local actors have on international aid in education. It hopes to give a voice to the colonised, the oppressed, and the periphery. Its aim is to understand the social ecology of the academic working on an IO-funded project. In doing so, it hopes to give a degree of agency to these actors whose narratives have been co-opted by both oppressors as well as well-intentional allies.

2.6. Summary

This Chapter engaged with the literature on the World Bank through the lenses of forces of convergence and their mechanisms of influence. The literature review indicated a gap in literature when it comes to the dynamic networks approach to the World Bank. In identifying the lack of voices from loan receiver countries and their take on World Bank-funded projects, this study finds its place in the larger literature and establishes itself as somewhat emancipatory in research objective.

3. Methodology

Outline

3.1 Philosophical perspective

3.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT)

3.3 Ethics of the study

3.4 Methodological rigour

3.5 Summary

3.1. Philosophical Perspective

3.1.1. Relativist Ontology

The research question that drives the study seeks a subjective answer, which indicates the relativist ontological positioning of the researcher. The study looks to understand a reality that is formed of multiple mental constructions rising from lived experiences of the persons who have experienced them, a relativist stance (Guba, 1990; Hugly & Sayward, 1987). Guba et al. (2018) define relativism as "local and specific constructed and co-constructed realities" (p. 220). The ecology of the academic working on an internationally-funded project is dependent upon each individual's reality. The researcher believes this is self-created at the individual level, and enforced by the interactions between in-group members as well as the out-group members. Thus, this indicates a relativist ontological understanding, where multiple realities as experienced by different actors are accepted and embraced by the researcher to "produce a knowledge that is reflective of their reality" (Guba et al., 2018, p. 103).

3.1.2. Constructivist Epistemology

Emerging in the mid-1990s challenging the dominant paradigm of realism (Cristol, 2011), constructivist epistemology allows for the construction of a reality in collaboration with the research participants, where the researcher also play an active role (Guba et al., 2018). Constructivism creates space for experimental and multi-voiced texts (Guba et al., 2018), which is necessary for an emancipatory study such as this, that attempts to shift away from the individualistic methodologies of the West (Charmaz & Flick, 2017) that position the researcher outside the study. Furthermore, constructivism "starts with the

experience and asks how members construct it" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 344), while entering the phenomenon to the best of the researcher's ability. This was deemed as aligning with the researcher's epistemic leaning as constructivism provides the opportunity for the researcher to acknowledge that the phenomenon studied cannot be completely distanced from her previous experience of it. Therefore, a constructivist epistemological lens is used by the researcher to acknowledge and foreground her role as an academic working on the World Bank-funded project that is being studied (See Introduction, Section 1.2).

While many constructivists write their study in the first person, a deliberate choice was made by the researcher to write in the third person as adapting a first-person writing style would render the participants, co-constructors of knowledge, invisible. It also indicates a stylistic contrast between reflexivity boxes used in the dissertation.

3.1.3. Critical Inquiry

Critical inquiry is an approach with a broad perspective that intentionally avoids fixed, prescriptive conceptualizations (Denzin et al., 2008), and as such cannot be contained in a singular definition. Canella and Lincoln (2012) define critical qualitative inquiry as "any research that recognizes power - that seeks in its analyses to plumb the archaeology of taken-for-granted perspectives" (p. 105) while Charmaz and Flick (2017) notes that "critical inquiry addresses power, inequality, and injustice" (p. 35). Considered one of the many approaches that reside within qualitative research that attempts to move away from a positivist epistemology, critical inquiry is an emerging approach to research in education (Charmaz & Flick, 2017), which becomes crucial in the dewesternisation project (Silova et al., 2020) of education research. In a study that investigates education imperialism, a study that critiques the hegemonic power of western institutions like the World Bank over the majority world, an emancipatory approach to research is crucial. Critical inquiry becomes fundamental in this regard.

3.2. Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT)

Grounded theory (GT) is a qualitative research methodology that emerged in response to the strong quantitative bent in social science research in the 1960s USA. It was designed in response to the criticism that qualitative research was "impressionistic,

anecdotal, unsystematic, and biased" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 5). GT makes its first appearance in the history of sociological research with *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* by the sociologists Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss in 1967. The method advocates for developing a theory grounded in the data that emerged in the research as opposed to deducting hypotheses that fit within existing theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The theory combined two distinctly contrasting and competing schools of thought: Columbia school positivism from Glaser and Chicago school pragmatism from Strauss (Covan, 2007). Yet, they both emphasize the usefulness of quantitative and qualitative data for the generation of theory as well as for theory verification in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory.* GT gained popularity in the field of sociology to such an extent that Glaser and Strauss continued writing on the methodology, although their two approaches diverged. While Glaser discarded the idea of verification being a component of GT (Charmaz et al., 2018), Strauss continued in this vein in his highly instructive book *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* (1987). In 1990, Strauss and Juliet Corbin co-authored *Basics of Qualitative Research* which arguably marks the definite points in which the two founders of GT parted ways. Strauss and Corbin (1990) introduced a new procedure that is to be applied to data rather than emerge from the data. Glaser's (1992) strongly-worded response *Emergence vs forcing: Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis* set apart the two paths of GT, Glaser abiding by a more positivist classical approach[5] while Strauss and Corbin adhering to a more rigid structure. While GT as a whole has been diversified - for example, Schatzman's Dimensional Analysis (Bowers & Schatzman, 2021) – there are three main strands of GT that diverge on their epistemological approaches: classical GT attributed to Glaser, evolved GT attributed to Strauss and Corbin, and Constructivist GT attributed to Charmaz. The latter frames this study.

The 1990s saw scholars shifting away from the positivist approach to GT advocated by both classic and evolved GT (Bryant, 2002, 2003; Clarke, 2003). Conrad (1990) for example, notes his discomfort with how the "analytic method 'shatters' and disembodies data from the individuals who produce it" (p. 1258). They moved towards an epistemology

[5] While *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* does not explicitly state its epistemological position, the language used in the writing, comments on researcher bias and seeking an objectivity has resulted it being considered a positivist text within the field (Mills et al., 2006)

that foregrounds subjectivity, thus leading to Kathy Charmaz's Constructivist Grounded Theory in 2000. CGT retains the inductive, comparative, emergent, and open-ended nature of classic GT (Charmaz, 2014), while rejecting the role of "a neutral observer" and a "value-free expert" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 13). This makes the researcher an active part of the research, where they are methodologically required to introspect their privileges, preconceptions, values, and experiences to identify that these shape both the analysis as well as the facts they identify within a data set. Charmaz has extended the use of CGT in later years to show its usefulness in conducting critical inquiry (Charmaz & Flick, 2017) as well as for social justice research (Charmaz, 2012), two areas which form the basis for this study.

3.2.1. Rationale for CGT

At its core, Grounded Theory is about discovering theory emergent from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). The primary reason for opting for a CGT methodology for this study is its objective of departing from the hegemonic influences of western theories. In a study that speaks of education imperialism, furthering a hegemonic ideology of reinforcing western theories upon the majority world conflicts with the study's ethos. CGT, however, provides a useful set of tools for the researcher with a social justice inclination (Charmaz, 2012). Furthermore, a CGT approach is considered more appropriate when investigating an area where there is little existing research (Birks & Mills, 2015). As elaborated in the literature review, there is little research done on the perceptions of international funding from the point of view of loan receivers. Thus, CGT was deemed the most appropriate.

Critical inquiry demands the researcher to not take existing structures for granted, which nudges the study towards adopting emergent methods (Charmaz & Flick, 2017). An emergent method is one which "begins with the empirical world and builds an inductive understanding of it as events unfold and knowledge accrues" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 155). While most qualitative methods are emergent according to the above framing, CGT pushes it further by 1) encouraging the researcher to bring doubt into the analytic process systemically, and 2) being flexible in allowing the researcher to explore discoveries made along the way within a methodologically established set of strategies (Charmaz & Flick, 2017). The former is important due to the intrinsic knowledge and biases the researcher

brings to the study (explored in the Introduction, section 1.2). This fits with the 'pluraversality' idea of looking beyond the western horizons in education research, to provide alternative theories (Silova et al., 2020). As the study attempts to theorize from the contextual position of the majority world, as it attempts to allow theory to emerge from the data, a systemic casting of doubt over knowledge frames brought into the study by the researcher is imperative. CGT has this doubting built into its process. The nature of the question studied is fluid. Not only is the exploration based on a phenomenon that shifts in response to external factors – for instance, covid-19 is an unforeseen factor that moved the responses of the local actors – but the project being studied is ongoing. This necessitates the study to have a great degree of flexibility. Thus, the second factor above – flexibility – is required to stay faithful to the data, and shift the exploration upon discoveries made as the research progresses.

3.2.2. Critique of CGT

There are two main criticisms of CGT that are addressed here: its departure from classic GT and the case of the literature review.

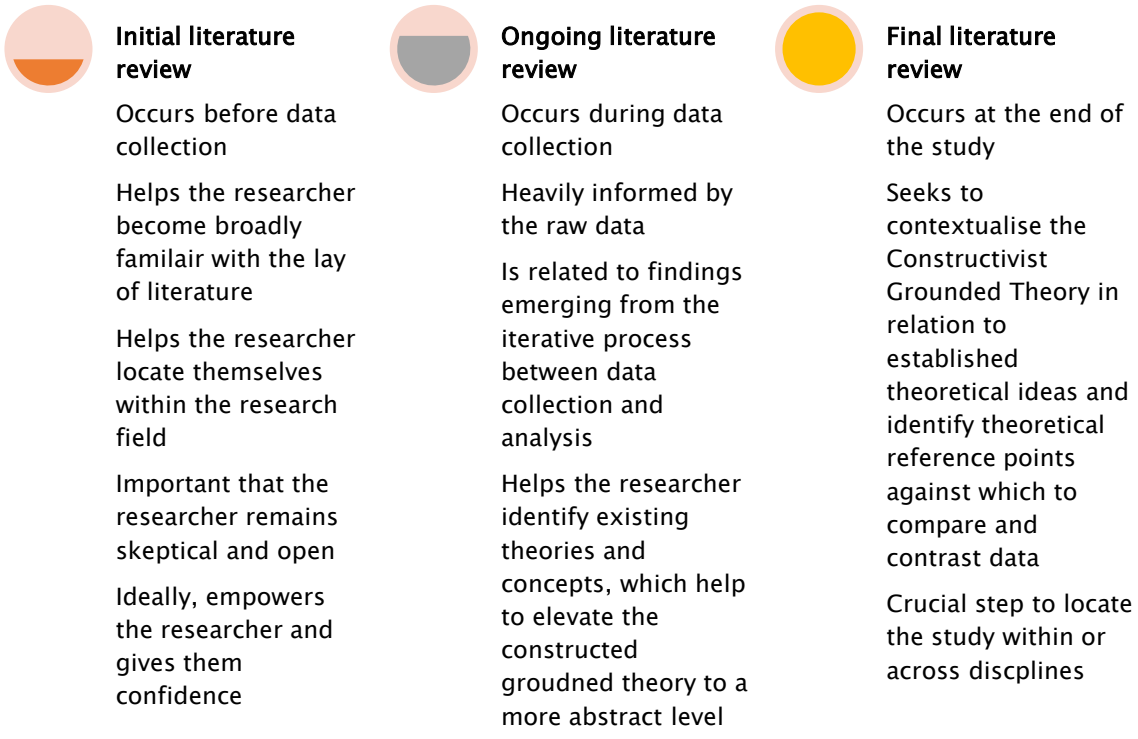
The first criticism is that CGT departs too much from classic GT, which renders it too descriptive (Glaser, 2012; Glaser & Holton, 2007; Hernandez & Andrews, 2012). According to these critics, only classic GT can produce an explanatory theory. While some have responded to these critics with more cynicism, calling out an implied desire by the critics to establish what Bryant (2003) calls "The One True Church of GTM", Gibson and Hartman (2014) note that "It should also be clear that we reject any claim that Constructivist Grounded Theory is not Grounded Theory" (p. 59). They point out methodological boundaries that have been set up to avoid the researcher devolving into incoherence; Gibson and Hartman recommend a practice where the researcher is simultaneously open and closed. Although an oxymoron on the surface, it highlights the researcher being open to finding meaning, but being closed due to their focus on the constructs made by the participants of the study. Throughout this process, there is the constant negotiation of the researcher involvement as the meanings are co-constructed (Gibson & Hartman, 2014). In this study, this researcher takes the stand that substantive theory produced in this study is not descriptive but explanatory. This is because the theory generated explains the attitudes

and approaches of local actors to the World Bank and its loan; not describe it. Furthermore, the researcher engaged in constant reflexivity throughout the study – and not just during data analysis or collection – to negotiate collaborative meaning-making.

The disputed place of the literature review is the second criticism of CGT (Hernandez & Andrews, 2012). In classic GT, Glaser and Strauss (1967) state that the literature review should be delayed until after the analysis to ensure no contamination. However, Strauss and Corbin (1990) clarify that researchers bring a considerable background of disciplinary literature as well as professional literature. Glaser (1992), though, insist that extant theories should be kept away from the GT methods. Many CGT researchers have written extensively on the impracticality of assuming the researcher may not have prior knowledge of the literature in the field (Clarke, 2005; Dunne, 2011; Thornberg, 2012). This assumption of the researcher as a tabula rasa is considered positivist in approach and there is a consensus (excluding purists of classic GT like Glasser) on the literature review being an inevitable component of research. The conversation in GT now is such that "the crux of the matter is not whether a literature review should be conducted – there is consensus that it should – but rather when it should be conducted and how extensive it should be" (Dunne, 2011, p. 114). In addition to the importance of the literature review as a component of academic rigour required in the fulfilment of a degree, this study understands reviewing of literature to: contextualise the research question, critically engage with existing literature, and be an exercise of reflexivity. Due to this multifunctional nature of the literature review, the writing of the literature review was done in three phases per Thornberg and Dunne (2019, p. 212) as illustrated in Figure 1 below. The dissertation contains the initial literature review (Chapter 2) and the final literature review (incorporated into the Disucssion, sections 6.2 and 6.3).

Figure 1

Process of the Literature Review (Adapted from Thornberg and Dunne, 2019, p. 212)

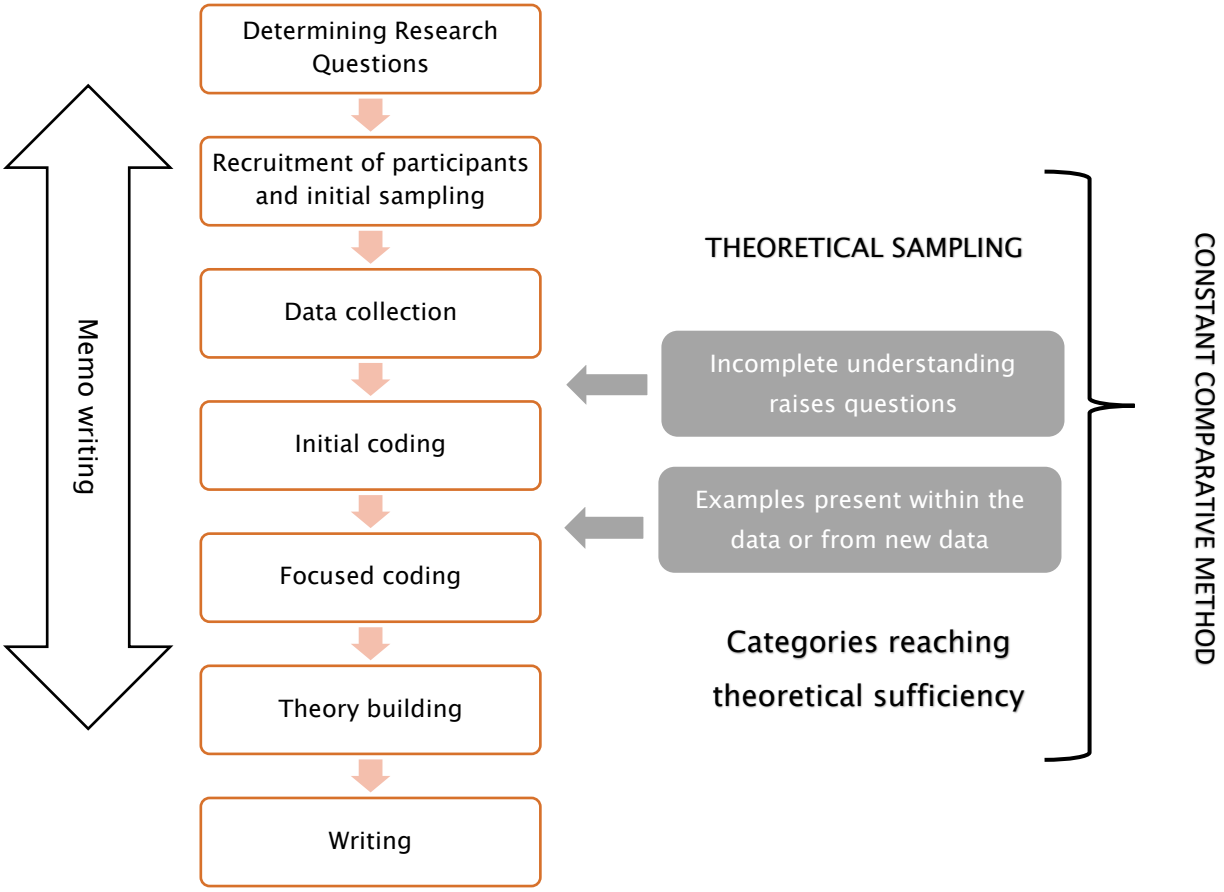


3.2.3. CGT Design

CGT design takes the researcher through an iterative process of data collection and analysis. This process is illustrated in Figure 2 below. While the diagram below provides a comprehensive outlook, CGT process is rarely linear (Charmaz, 2014).

Figure 2

A Visual Representation of CGT (Adapted from Charmaz, 2014, p. 18)



3.3. Ethics of the Study

Edwards and Mauthner (2012), feminist practitioners, define ethics in sociology research as a "moral deliberation, choice, and accountability on the part of the researchers" (p.14). This fits the framework of virtue ethics – an agent-based ethics framework where the focus shifts from the actions to the character of the person – an ethics framework recommended for education researchers (Brooks et al., 2014). Following the argument of Brooks et al. (2014) that it is necessary for education researchers to have "a well-informed personal ethical perspective to support their decision making" (p.20), this researcher adopts a feminist ethics of care in the study as described in section 4.2. The study is also bound by the institutional ethics review framework, as described in 4.1.

3.3.1. The Central University Research Ethics Committee, University of Oxford

The study was approved by the Central University Research Ethics Committee of the University of Oxford (CUREC) (Confirmation email in Appendix A). The application was revised twice in the process of the study, once to expand the number of participants, and the second time to revoke the original idea of pseudonymising the name of the country. Originally, the study used a pseudonym for Sri Lanka, as the researcher felt naming the country would put the participants more at risk. However, participants noted that the country has to be mentioned to sufficiently elucidate the tensions that exist and contextualise their positionality, thus CUREC was revised (Revision approval emails in Appendix B and Appendix C). Furthermore, a data protection impact assessment was also conducted due to the digital nature of the study, using the data privacy procedure of the Department of Education, University of Oxford (Central University Research Ethics Committee, 2020) (Appendix D).

3.3.2. A Feminist Approach to Ethics

Feminist research ethics arise from two feminist projects that were part of an explicit challenge to the Western epistemology efforts: the first, ethics of care, is largely attributed to psychologist Carol Gilligan and philosopher Nel Noddings; the second project is a longer contribution made by various feminist philosophers and social theorists in post-structuralist, postcolonial, and post-modernist thinking (Preissle & Han, 2012). This researcher identifies first as a feminist researcher; this history and positioning of feminist research ethics juxtapose with CGT methods, thus making the marrying of the two appropriate and effective in an emancipatory study such as this.

In practising a feminist approach to research ethics, the researcher followed the Association of Progressive Communications' framework for feminist internet ethical research practices. This called attention to seven categories including consent, situatedness, and memory (explained with reference to the study using memos in Appendix E) (Association for Progressive Communications, 2019). Consent includes sending quotes from the interview to the participants who have consented to be directly quoted and the process of negotiation thus ensured. Situatedness discusses issues of the researcher's majority ethnicity when interviewing members from ethnic groups that have been historically oppressed; it also

reflects on the researcher being a woman conducting an interview where a man-interviewee flirts during the entire course of the interview; and "the Oxford effect". Memory, resisting to be forgotten, is the foundation of this entire study, an attempt at academically codifying the social ecology of the majority world actors, who have too often had their voices co-opted by the powerful – often benevolent – actors from the centre.

3.4. Methodological Rigour

Adherence to the CGT methodology requires the researcher to be reflexive (See section 1.2 of the Introduction), as well as adhere to four criteria that are considered a measure of quality in CGT studies: credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness (Charmaz, 2014). The set of guiding questions provided by Charmaz (2014) for this evaluation is in Appendix F. This section discusses the methodological rigour of the study.

3.4.1. Credibility

The researcher's experience in the project (as explained in section 1.2 of the Introduction) enabled a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The participants represented both HEMS and STEMS equally, thus providing a sufficient variety in research participants to understand the phenomenon from multiple perspectives. By conducting hour-long interviews which were intense and open-ended, the researcher was able to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' perspectives of the phenomenon. Constant comparison method employed throughout the data collection and analysis allowed for comparison between observations and between categories. The analysis emerges from the data: there is a logical link between the data, the argument made, and the analysis. The findings and discussion section of the study provide sufficient evidence for the reader to independently assess the emerging theory.

3.4.2. Originality

There is little research done on the local actors of internationally funded projects that centre the local actor experience and not the role of the donor/loan giver. In that sense, this study is original in its contribution. It fits within the dewesternisation projects in its methodology, while the emergent theories belong in the fields of postcolonialism and

education. The study, thus, has theoretical significance. Its social significance is in its centring of the oppressed.

3.4.3. Resonance

While the categories that emerged from the data captured the fullness of the experience, limitations in writing a dissertation allowed the researcher to present only a fraction of it. While an attempt has been made to represent liminal meanings in the study, it has been more successful in revealing taken-for-granted meanings. The study draws links between the local actors, their larger collective identities (teachers, colleagues, and citizens), and institutions like the university, the government, and the World Bank. The emergent theories were discussed with a few former colleagues of the researcher, who found the theories to resonate with their lived experiences. While participants noted the interviews caused them to pause and reflect on their actions and lives, it is hoped that this study, once published, would further this cause.

3.4.4. Usefulness

The emergent theories of this study are based on trust and obligation. The analysis examines these concepts for tacit implications, which forms the basis for the emergent theories. This interpretation of the concepts that are thus arrived at is useful for the local actors to understand their internal conflict and dilemmas. The analysis indicates several areas for further research such as the shape and form of trust in other majority world countries with similar and different socio-political backgrounds. Ideas for further research is expanded in Chapter 7, section 3. This study is believed to contribute to a better world by nudging at the knowledge hegemony that is imbalanced. It also contributes to intimate knowledge about the local actors in the majority world, illustrating their agency.

3.5. Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology and methods employed in the study. Following a relativist constructivist approach to critical inquiry, the study used a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach to answer the research question. It is grounded by two approaches to ethics: CUREC of the University of Oxford and feminist research ethics. The study engaged in intense methodological rigour by adhering to credibility, originality,

resonance, and usefulness. The next chapter follows from this basis and details the process of data collection and analysis.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

Outline

4.1 Sampling

4.1.1 Initial sampling

4.1.2 Theoretical sampling

4.1.3 Participant summary

4.2 Data collection

4.3 Data analysis

4.3.1 Memo-ing

4.3.2 Initial coding

4.3.3 Focused coding

4.3.4 Theoretical coding

4.4 Summary

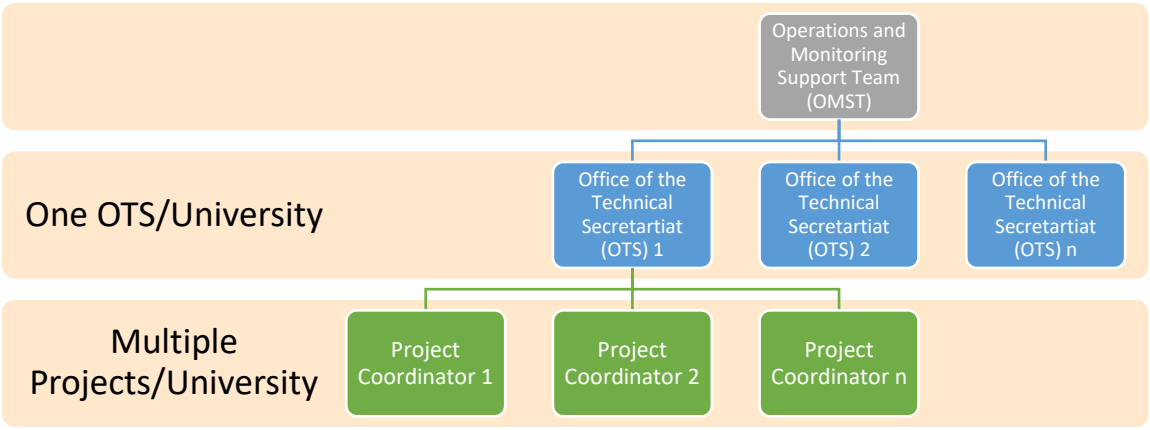
4.1. Sampling

In qualitative studies, such as this study, the purpose of sampling is to represent the phenomenon that is of interest to the researcher (Morse & Clark, 2019), and not an extrapolation to the population (Freedman, 2004). Compared to other qualitative methods, Grounded Theory uses sampling at different stages of the research design, which makes the sampling process complex. Morse (2007) identifies three dimensions that have to be considered when sampling in Grounded Theory: scope of the phenomenon, the trajectory of the phenomenon, and time. It is imperative that the sample selected adequately reflect these three aspects of the phenomenon, as GT relies on rich data to generate theory.

The inclusion criteria for sampling in this study was simple, allowing for considerable flexibility as is required under GT. The participants only had to be academics working on the HE project funded by the World Bank that is currently ongoing in Sri Lanka. The individuals that fit this criterion belong to three tiers, as illustrated in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3

Organizational Layout



4.1.1. Initial Sampling

Participant recruitment began with emailing all individuals at OMST and OTS levels as indicated on the official website of the project. The email (Appendix G) contained a Participant information sheet (Appendix H) as well. Of the 20 individuals who were reached out to this way, only one explicitly refused to take part in the study citing conflict of interest. Another accepted the invitation after obtaining approval from the World Bank. Several others did not respond to the email. Reminder emails were sent out after a waiting period of one week, and if the recipients did not respond to the reminder, it was assumed that they are not interested in taking part in the study. Everyone who accepted the invitation was asked to fill and sign the consent form (Appendix I).

4.1.2. Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling is guided by emerging theory (Draucker et al., 2007). Glaser (1978) notes that theoretical sampling occurs when the researcher "jointly collects, codes, and analyses his [sic] data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, to develop his [sic] theory as it emerges" (p. 36). Thus, once a few interviews were conducted, other criteria for selection emerged from the data as well as from direct recommendations from the participants. There were two distinct criteria: 1) the disciplinary background of the researcher, and 2) the type of university (urban university, semi-urban university, or newly established university). At this juncture, the researcher decided to reach out to individual

project coordinators as well. Contact information of the project coordinators was provided by the existing participants. 20 more invitations were thus sent out to recruit more respondents (the documents were the same as those in Appendices G and H). While no one explicitly rejected the invite, only a few responded to the email. Those who did not respond were assumed to be not interested in taking part in the study. The recruitment of new participants (using the same consent form as in Appendix I) enriched the data and aided in creating robust interpretivist theories.

4.1.3. Participant summary

Twelve participants' narratives contributed to this study. Table 1 below summarises participant information. STEM refers to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; HEMS refers to Humanities, Education, Management, and Social Sciences.

Table 1

Participant Summary

Participant number (P#)	Disciplinary Background	Education	Years attached to the university system
P01	STEM	PhD	~20
P02	HEMS	PhD	~20
P03	HEMS	PhD	~20
P04	STEM	PhD	~20
P05	STEM	PhD	~20
P06	HEMS	PhD	~20
P07	HEMS	PhD	~20
P08	HEMS	PhD	~20
P09	STEM	PhD	~20
P10	STEM	PhD	~20
P11	HEMS	PhD	~20
P12	STEM	PhD	~20

4.2. Data Collection

Described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 124), intense interviews are a mode of in-depth interviewing that are open-ended and emergent, recommended for CGT studies (Charmaz, 2014). As intense interviews expect the participants to answer questions at length, in their own words, it fulfils the qualitative interview purpose of "[listening] to people as they describe how they understand the worlds

in which they live and work" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 3) while allowing the construction of reality as perceived by the participant which is a requirement of CGT. Although longer in duration, these interviews expect the interviewer to have prior knowledge of the phenomenon under study (Check & Schutt, 2012). Due to this researcher's involvement in the project under study, familiarity with the topic was achieved. Reflexivity was practiced in the form of writing down presuppositions prior to conducting interviews to minimise their interference in the data collection and analysis process.

All twelve participants had intense interviews of approximately an hour. While a basic interview schedule was used for the initial interviews (Appendix J), the interview schedule shifted in focus as the interviews progressed, especially during theoretical sampling. An example of these revised interview schedules is in Appendix K. The interviews were conducted online via MS Teams as it was a platform approved by University of Oxford ethics guidelines. While online data collection was encouraged by the University due to restrictions in place with COVID-19, the decision was confirmed by the *Decision-making checklist for type of online qualitative data collection* (adapted from Wilkerson et al. (2014) and O'Connor and Madge (2017)) (Appendix L).

The participants were given the option to turn their camera on or to use only audio. Some participants opted to turn the video on after the opening remarks, which was understood by the researcher as having established rapport. While having the video provides non-verbal information regarding the discussion (O'Connor & Madge, 2017), reflexivity memos of the researcher indicate that the loss of video did not severely impede the interview process. However, this mode of interviewing poses the "headshot problem", where the researcher is unable to read body language and note emotional cues that are not facial expressions (Gray et al., 2020). This is a limitation of the interview method used. While not a perfect solution, detailed notes were taken during the interview process to minimise this limitation.

4.3. Data analysis

4.3.1. Memo-ing

Writing memos is a crucial part of GT process. Lempert (2007) notes that "memo writing is the methodological link, the distillation process, through which the researcher transforms data into theory" (p. 245). Charmaz (2014) identifies it as a spontaneous activity that helps the researcher stay involved in the analysis of data. Memos were therefore extensively used by the researcher to write down ideas as they emerged. Charmaz (2014) advises the maintaining of a methodological journal for reflexivity if the researcher has prior experience in the phenomenon under study. Due to this researcher's involvement with the project, reflexivity was considered crucial and memos were extensively used to confront and codify these experiences and presumptions.

Transcripts were auto-generated via MS Teams, and the researcher then compared the transcript against the audio/video. This allowed the researcher to immerse herself in the data. In addition to the content, the researcher also noted the speed, the emphasis, and the tone of the conversations. The context of the interview such as time and place were also noted. Box 1 is an excerpt from a memo written during this part of transcribing.

Box 1

Reflexivity Memo - Positionality

Reflexivity Memo – Where do I stand? P08 and I seem to have a good rapport although it's the first interview. They seem to feel more comfortable when I would recognise names they would mention (I knew Prof [redacted] and my enthusiastic nodding probably tipped them off on my excitement). It felt like they thought of me almost as an in-group member. Almost. Something was different though. Oxford effect? It did come up.

4.3.2. Initial coding

Initial coding, as the first step of identifying what the data is about, followed mostly a line-by-line coding. The researcher used NVivo for this purpose. The analysis used a constant comparison approach where data from one interview was compared with that from

others. Codes used at this stage were gerunds wherever possible, as recommended by Charmaz (2014) to stay as close to the data as possible.

Initial coding gave rise to detailed and specific codes such as “trying to be realistic with goals” and “working at the university”. There were some in-vivo coding. Some examples for in-vivo coding include “productive citizens”, “trying to do something”, and “feeling grateful”. Memos were used to practice reflexivity and bring awareness to the process of coding (See Box 2 below).

Box 2

Reflexivity Memo – Initial Coding

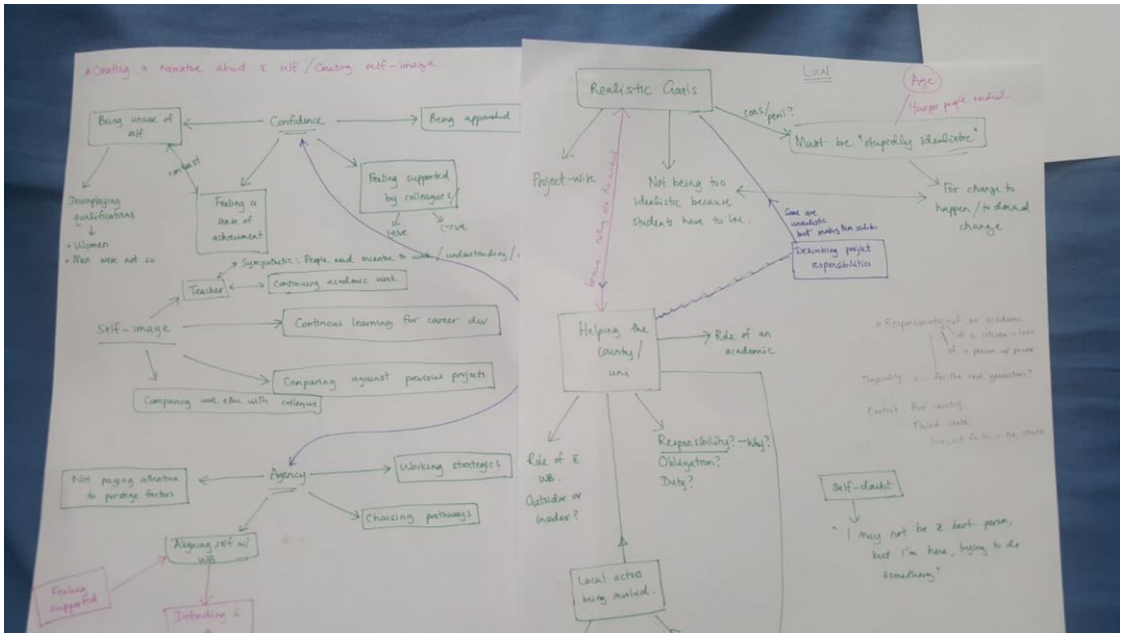
Reflexivity Memo – Initial coding P11 talked a lot about responsibility. Where does this sense of responsibility come from? Why do they feel this burden? Leads to the question of what is the role of an academic in a place like SL. Linking this to the idea of setting realistic goals because having grand narratives and dreams have not helped anybody so far, are the academics taking on a burden they don't have to?

4.3.3. Focused coding

Focused coding was more conceptual than line by line coding, and the concepts were more abstract. As a means of synthesising and analysing larger segments of data (Charmaz 2014), focused coding moved away from line-by-line coding to larger categories. While NVivo was helpful in focused coding, most syntheses were done using mind maps, one example given in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Focused Coding



Realistic goals emerged as a category that tied into helping the country, helping the university system, and helping the students. Local actors taking agency and ownership initiatives was also an emergent category. With theoretical sensitivity developed, and the code "feeling responsible", "feeling obligated" being significant initial codes, the focused category of "Responsibility" emerged. The process, however, was not linear.

4.3.4. Theoretical coding

Theoretical coding was done in parallel with theoretical sampling. Although "responsibility" was a focused code that garnered much attention, this shifted during the theoretical coding process to that of "trust". Saturation of data indicated that the idea of "responsibility" was two-fold: it derived from a sense of helplessness felt by the participants for not having State support for education, and feeling like they owed something to the studentbody (because no one else was looking out for the students). The idea of trust was then explored in relation to the focused codes, and the nuances were teased out through the constant comparison method. The second part of the discovery related more to obligation, and focused codes were again explored with this in mind. The emergent theory thus arrived at are presented in the next Chapters – findings and discussion.

A single narrative was then constructed using the conditional/consequential matrix (Figure 5) of Strauss and Corbin (1990) that cobined participant narratives, which is given at the beginning of Findings Chapter.

Figure 5

The Consequential/Conditional Matrix (Strauss and Corbin, 1990)



4.4. Summary

This chapter explained the process of data collection, providing details of the participants and the process of intense interviewing. Data analysis comprised of highlighting the importance and use of memo-ing for the study, and an overview of how the study generated the two theories. The findings of the study comprise the next chapter, which starts with the aforementioned vignette.

5. Findings

Outline

5.1 A cumulative narrative

5.2 Findings

5.3 Summary

5.1. A Cumulative Narrative

The following is a cumulative narrative constructed using the conditional/consequential matrix of Strauss and Corbin (1990), based on the data that emerged in this study:

> The social ecology of an academic working on a World Bank-funded project is one of multiple narratives. Their decision to take on the role is sometimes voluntary, at other times a result of their previous conduct and relationship with superiors. Sometimes the motivation behind taking up the position is personal – career advancement and professional development. It is scaffolded by a desire to do something for the students, for the university system, and the country. The academic feels supported by their peers and colleagues, but at times finds it challenging to work with some other colleagues who are not officially a part of the project. Compounding this are university regulations and the country's bureaucratic practices, which the academic believes adversely affects the project progress and efficiency. Despite these obstacles, the academic is driven by the idea of education as empowering, development, and freedom. They consider it a personal responsibility to further this aspect of education, as the State structure is considered unable to do so for a number of reasons: bureaucracy, corruption, and lack of capital. In this context where the State is unreliable, the academic welcomes the World Bank as a source of capital and authority that complements the academic's desire to further the field of education in Sri Lanka. This is not to say they are unaware of the larger criticisms against the World Bank. There is academic awareness of the hegemonic nature of the institution, but the academics find this incongruent with their experience working on the project. Furthermore, they have more immediate concerns in the field of

education that has to be resolved, which makes ideological stances a privilege they cannot afford.

5.2. Findings

Sri Lanka's contribution to education as a percentage of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is among the lowest in South Asia at 2.1% in 2018 (World Bank, 2020) (See Appendix M for graphical representation of Percentage of GDP on education across the years). While the low allocation of funds to education was accepted during the civil war period (circa 1983 to 2009), this minimal allocation of funds caused the Federation of University Teachers Association (FUTA) to launch a 100-day strike in 2012. This longest lecture strike centred around a demand for 6% of the GDP to be allocated to education, which ended upon the government agreeing to gradually increase the GDP allocation over the years (De Alwis, 2012). Yet, nearly a decade later, the highest GDP allocation was 3.4% in 2016 (World Bank, 2020), thus failing to meet the promised target. This is but one example of the long history of the education system being subjected to promised national policies that fail to materialise and the lack of capital in the free education system in Sri Lanka.

> So you may want to read about the Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) ... If you look at the countries like Korea, GERD is about 4% of the GDP. If you look at the National Science Foundation statistics you will see - if I remember correctly the last report was done in 2014 or 2015 – it was around 0.1% in Sri Lanka. […] There was a national policy in 2009 where they were trying to increase it up to 1.6% by 2016. But [at present,] it's not 1.5%, it's not even 0.2%. So when you look at this, unless you have these projects, researchers will not get funds to conduct research. (P12)

The lack of financial investment in education has had a significant impact on the research and development sector. As illustrated by P12 above, the lack of capital in research despite promises to the contrary has led the academic researcher to not trust the State to provide the necessary support for their work. Framing this in terms of "rich trustworthiness" (Jones, 2013) brings reliable signalling to focus. Reliable signalling requires communicative competence, and in the case of State and State systems, the ability to follow through and

deliver on their promises. Sri Lanka has failed on this account, and are not able to signal reliably.

> I don't think any of the researchers are interested in where the funds are coming from. It can be World Bank, it can be ADB, it can be government. We don't care … If you have a very small percentage allocated to research…then there's no other option…I personally know that NSF (National Science Foundation) has lost almost all of its funds, so they are not giving any grants; NIFS (National Institute of Fundamental Studies) I think are also in a very [difficult] scenario right now because they are not getting any money from the Treasury. So the institutes that are supposed to give the grants don't have any money and the university itself is struggling. (P05)

As the State has repeatedly failed to provide the required support to the field, the academics are content with finding the support where it is available. This, in this instance, is at the hands of the World Bank. One of the many ways of signalling correctly, Jones (2013) writes, is to indicate that the entity is reliable in ways that are not expected of them. The World Bank engages in this type of signalling effectively:

> Some of the items we purchased under the government procedure which the University is not able to pay [for], we have put that into our procurement plans [of this project]. [We] got the approval from the World Bank and we have made the payment for very long outstanding bills […] this project actually benefited the University. (P06)

Not only does the World Bank provide financial support in a way that the government has failed, but they have also indicated their support in helping the university out of trappings created by an unreliable State mechanism. Moreover, the idea of the State failing to support academics is not limited to capital and finances. It is entrenched in the violent histories of Sri Lanka.

> Maybe this part of the world is a totally different one in terms of the thinking... This is a Tamil speaking area, so they are normally... they don't go well with the

> government, right? So we look at the government in a sceptical manner. [...] They hope that the outside world, the World Bank or the UN – they would give some sort of support. (P04)

The scepticism associated with the governing body of Sri Lanka by the Tamil-speaking communities is a remnant of a thirty-year-old civil war, and ineffective attempts at reconciliation. The State oppression of minorities in Sri Lanka has a long history (expanded in Appendix N). The actions and inactions of governments and State systems during ethnic conflicts signals the degree of respect that authorities hold for their people, especially those from oppressed minority ethnic groups. When circumstances – the ethnic riots of 1977, 1983, and the civil war (See Appendix N for a timeline of ethnic issues in Sri Lanka) – forced a part of the people to be vulnerable, the State mechanisms failed the people spectacularly. In such a context, the minority-dominated universities and academics from such institutions find it impossible to place their trust in their oppressor. Instead, they turn to international organisations who, as a collective, have been vocal in calling for justice and liberation of oppressed minority groups. While the World Bank has not been involved in such negotiations, it is a part of larger body of IOs working in Sri Lanka. IOs, as a group, have been considered more trustworthy for the minority communities than their own government and State structures.

Furthermore, corruption plays a key role in the loss of trust in the government and State structures. The corruption rampant in Sri Lanka takes the shape of money mismanagement, where funds are used for personal pleasure and convenience by government representatives like the Minister for Education and Directors of HE authorities.

> I know [in] the last [World Bank-funded] project how much of money [was] wasted. When the minister comes for a workshop he's having a press conference. We have to pay for that also. They are taking drinks[6] there. The guards [to the Minister] have to be given food and everything […] There were so many vehicles. One vehicle for the Director. One vehicle for the Director's wife. These sort of things happened. (P03)

[6] 'Drinks' in this context and Sri Lankan English, means alcoholic beverages. It is culturally frowned upon to consume alcohol while working.

In contrast, the World Bank representative to Sri Lanka is viewed in a positive light. He is considered supportive:

> Sometimes I have requested meetings [with World Bank representative to Sri Lanka] just to talk through an idea […] Then when I actually put up [publications], I sent them to him. He gave feedback. (P11)

As well as competent and understanding:

> I can learn many things from him. He's a very good person. Whenever we cannot do something, he will say it in a diplomatic way. I learn from him how to do that. (P08)

The contrast in attitudes towards the two representatives extends to the trustworthiness extended to the two institutions. Their conduct is considered a reflection of the ethos of the body they represent, and, as such, the World Bank appears more trustworthy than the Sri Lankan government and State structures.

In addition to the ambassadors being approachable and forthcoming, the World Bank is considered to be responsive to the voices of the academics.

> When I was in the HETC project, like the monitoring officer, I wrote this to the World Bank. I told them the ministers are wasting the money. […] World Bank understood that thing. [In this project] they told “No, you can't have a separate vehicle for each and every person. You have a common vehicle [for] everyone. […] They don't have [external] Directors appointed. It’s the academics who are taking on the work. They have mentioned that the project director needs to be the Vice Chairman of the University Grand Commission. So the involvement of the Minister and the Minister's parties are very much less this time. (P03)

Placing such restrictions and regulations on the project is seen as the concerns of the academics being heard and enacted upon, which fosters trust in the institution. Entrenched histories both social and political has moved the academics away from placing trust in the governing bodies, the State structures, and public policy. World Bank policy, on the other hand, invites trust. It makes space for the academics to not only have a meaningful voice, but shows respect and responsiveness.

> What to do? We cannot change the system that is there. Very difficult. Convincing [the Ministry of Education and other local administration] is also very difficult, sometimes to them. World Bank, you can talk to them. You can explain and you can convince them. (P08)

This has been even more evident under pandemic conditions:

> Last year, many could not achieve their ideal targets [because of the pandemic]. But our fund disbursement is based on them achieving these targets. World Bank has been very helpful in trying to find alternative middle ground without rigidly standing by their targets. That's a huge relief to us as well as the academics [in the universities]. Because the students are not there. You can't show achievements. So, World Bank has been very supportive in that sense. […] They have given us the option of considering those KPIs as not applicable for this year. (P07)

The academics' voices, their issues and concerns, formed the basis of the project. The focus areas of the project were developed by local academics in consultation with other academics, and individual activities were designed and proposed by the academics at each university, often in consultation with the students:

> You know at the beginning when [the World Bank] formulated this project, they incorporated various academics from various subjects and [these academics] decided our main problems... We formulated these three result areas based on our own issues. Less enrolment, quality education, research. (P08)

This bottom-up approach is appreciated by the academics:

> There are some things that I am very glad to see. One is the means by which the initiatives were proposed. We're not talking top-down. We did not propose them. They were ground up. The faculties, or the departments were encouraged to come up with their own initiatives based on their own specific context based on their own local needs. (P11)

The World Bank is seen as merely facilitating and financing the activities that the academics have identified as necessary. Not only does this give agency to the local actors,

acknowledging and respecting local knowledge, but this also gives the academics the freedom to pursue passion projects in a way that has not been possible under government limitations. This furthers the trust they place in the World Bank.

Furthermore, the World Bank is seen as attempting to diversify the representation of STEM and HEMS in positions of power within the project, an endeavour that is appreciated by the academics. Out of the four academics working in the senior-most positions of the project, three are from HEMS, one is from STEM. This distribution addresses the lack of representation of HEMS scholars in positions of power that is present in the Sri Lankan education system:

> As a Humanities and Social Sciences person, I'm very happy about that. Of the four of us, three are from Social Science and Humanities. Even World Bank decided to get [people] from [HEMS] because they want to encourage Humanities and Social Sciences. (P08)

However, this attraction to the World Bank, or the disregard for the source of money that P05 mentions above, do not emerge from ignorance, but need. The academics are aware of the criticism against the World Bank, yet believe in education – and by extension research and development – are imperative for development.

> You have to realize they are a bank. They lend money on an interest and that's how they survive. We have to make sure we add value to what we do. (P10)

The academics are aware of the implications of this particular loan, and are concerned about the repayment of it, especially under the deflation of the Sri Lankan rupee. Their contempt or frustration, however, is with the government and not with the loan giver – the World Bank:

> The decision to accept this loan was taken far above my pay grade. OK? I can ideologically object to working on a project like this. But considering that by the time I was approached [for the project], it was already going ahead. That was a given. The government had accepted the loan. (P11)

As much as the capital for the projects is from the World Bank, the execution, the ideas, and the ownership of the projects lie with the academics and the Sri Lankan education

system. The World Bank is considered an outsider, at times benevolent, at times an institute that is fulfilling its mandate, but an outsider nonetheless. This is evident in the academics' discussion of the loan and loan repayment:

> The repayment of the loans is going to be a problem for the government. That's why it is very important to utilize the money in an appropriate manner for the very important activities where at least at the universities we have those assets available. (P06)

This raises concerns about the loan giver:

> We all have concerns about accepting funding from international loan agents like the World Bank. What agendas [do] they bring into the higher education system? (P11)

Thus, the World Bank is not considered an insider. In fact, while they acknowledge and are grateful for the support they have been given, and stress on the desire to make the best of the money for the betterment of the country, the enforced nature of the loan, and therefore the World Bank's presence, is very much present on their minds:

> බැඳගත්ත බෙරේ ගහගන්න ඕනේ. [7] (P06)

Although there is a distinct degree of trust exhibited towards the World Bank in place of the government and State structures, this does not mean a shifting of authoritative power to the World Bank. Instead, the local actors retain power in themselves, taking up a greater degree of initiative and agency in order to fulfil their obligation to the students and the university system.

> [Enhancing] research and development, and innovation and commercialization is something that I believe in, which we really need in the country…But of course there are challenges. But then I look back at the work that we have done so far with the help of the University. We have done something to the country. (P12)

[7] This Sinhala idiom is similar to 'crossing the Rubicon'. It literally translates to: Now that the drum has been strung on the self, one must play it.

The idea of commercialization of innovation as necessary for Sri Lanka, in the context of the participant responses, is more about accumulating capital and clout necessary to further the research and development goals. Their belief is that this will lead to a positive outcome for the country.

While the larger goal is to better the country and the system of education, academics play a strong supportive role to other academics in order to achieve this particular task.

> After the guidelines were developed, and before we called for proposal, we actually went to universities to introduce what the project is going to be, how the process would be after they win the grants, about the monitoring process period, so that people are prepared. (P07)

Being supportive also entails being more understanding:

> So when people tell me “I am so sorry, Madam, but I don't know how to do that”, I hope I am patient. I hope I am supportive. People need support to achieve things. (P11)

This significant supporting role that is played by the academics goes beyond their duty and crosses over to an obligation that is voluntary. From being available to other people working on the project even over weekends to stretching the money received to secure as many benefits as possible, the academics are taking active steps to ensure the advancement of the country.

> [If an academic offered funding for their PhD chooses] a country like New Zealand, the amount [i.e. tuition and living cost] is low. Then we may save some money and we can utilize this money [for] another person also. (P08)

> I announced [a round of calls for PhD funding] only for social sciences and humanities, because we find less number of PhDs in HSS. I was able to offer 9 English PhDs because of that round. Very senior people, but without PhDs. Now we have 23% Science, 22% HSS, 22% management PhDs. The age limit was 48. There were some applications in the previous round, and according to their age, I made the

> call for this round […] I found that we have less number of PhDs in humanities. That is why I [made the suggestion]. (P08)

The academics feel an obligation to their students, to create not merely a robust graduate, but to consider the practicalities involved in the students' life after graduation:

> Great philosophers may be born, great sociologists may be born, but that is a very, very small percentage of the total graduates that come into the University. But the bulk is just average. The average students need to go back to their village. Live a decent life, be employed, and be productive citizens. (P07)

This grounded reality that is experienced by the academics play a significant role in their dealings with the World Bank as well as the government. The academics witness student struggles first-hand, and consider it their duty and obligation to alleviate these struggles to the best of their ability.

5.3. Summary

There has been decreasing trust in the state by the academics to provide money for projects, to deliver on their promises, and in the way that state officials behave. This is in contrast to their approach to the World Bank, which provides money for projects and whose officials have positive interactions with the academics. This means that despite the acknowledged problems of World Bank loans, it is seen as a necessary or even desirable option for these academics from the majority world. The idea of catering to the market needs, the market obligations, is a concern to the academics. The success that is envisioned for the country and its people cannot be an imaginary utopia; it has to be grounded in global realities, no matter how distasteful they may be. To resist is a privilege; it is not a privilege afforded to the people in the majority world – and not a privilege enjoyed by Sri Lanka.

These ideas are discussed further in the next Chapter – Discussion, where two theories are formed from these findings: one on shifting trust and one on choosing associative political obligation.

6. Discussion

Outline

6.1 Theories that emerged from the study

6.2 A social, political, and theoretical contextualisation

6.3 Implications of the emergent theories

6.3.1 Micro implications

6.3.2 Macro implications

6.4 Summary

6.1. Theories that Emerged from the Study

- **Shifting trust:**

  The lack of trust in one's government, State, and State systems[8] catalyses the academics to embrace international organisations like the World Bank.

- **Choosing obligation:**

  Associative political obligation to the education system drives the individuals, thus prioritising short-term practicalities over long-term ideologies.

6.2. A Social, Political, and Theoretical Contextualization

Philosophically, the concept of trust is widely discussed and debated. This study understands that "to trust someone is to allow him or her the opportunity to care for (in the sense of taking care of) something we value" (Potter, 2002, p. xv). In this study, the thing of value is education – its system, structures, means, and values ascribed to it; the contenders for trust are the government and State structures, and the World Bank. Extending from trust, trustworthiness is defined, at least in part, as a matter of responsibility, where judgments about trustworthiness cannot be made in abstraction; they have to be grounded in power and privilege (Scheman, 2020). Power and privilege are cornerstones of the Sri

[8] It can be argued that in Sri Lanka there is little separation of power between the State and the government (See Gonsalkorale, 2020; Medawatte, 2014), which conflates the three entities of government, State, and State systems.

Lankan government; power and privilege are founding stones of BWIs including the World Bank.

Power and privilege held by the Sri Lankan government is political, social, and historical. It is important to note that this lack of trust is independent of party politics. The nature of governance is such that the issues of corruption and political favouritism are present to varying – but significant – degrees despite the party in power. The Sri Lankan government has always been led by the majority ethnicity and religious group, thus placing power at the hands of an already privileged group. This has created an ethnonationalist identity in the country (See Rambukwella, 2018 for a comprehensive narrative on the cultural genealogy of Sinhala nationalism), which affects all areas of governance including education. The dogmas of nationhood being ethno-centric, the minority groups in the country have been oppressed by the government both overtly and covertly, and little substantial reforms have been made to address this oppression (Åkebo & Bastian, 2020). In that light, as noted on page 46 above, ethnic minorities are not completely comfortable with placing their trust in the government: ethno-religious oppression has been a part of Sri Lanka's short post-independence history.

Political influence is significant even in the field of education, a prime example being political appointments – the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor to the Open University of Sri Lanka being the latest in a series of political appointments that are being challenged by academics (Ameen, 2021). When authorities select experts in a manner that appears biased, it warrants distrust (Alfano & Huijts, 2020). Another current development in the political influence in the field of education is the proposed Kotelawala Defence University Bill, which is accused of being "a form of private education which is subsidized by the government and run by the military" (Amarasuriya, 2021). Sri Lankan academics have withdrawn from online teaching and administrative writing in protest of this Bill (Federation of University Teachers' Associations, 2021; Srinivasan, 2021) at the time of writing this dissertation. With but two of the most pertinent issues in the HE sector at the moment, it can be argued that the field of education is Sri Lanka is at the mercy of politicians and their politics.

To contextualise this ethno-national and political power, and to an extent (lack of) accountability, the country has to be situated in its postcolonial state. The favouring of the elites that aided the British to govern was continued post-independence, and a handful of families have since held control of the government (Verite Research, 2017). The use of 'ethnic lines' by the British to dilute independence movements (Spencer, 2008) has also contributed to the formation of a specific ruling class, which continues to hold power with little accountability. In fact, Ananthavinayagan (2020) argues that "British colonialism reproduced a violent elite that hijacked the state structures… which enabled further pillage and plunder of [country's] resources". The conduct of the government can, therefore, be seen as evolved from colonial practices.

Baier (1986) identifies trustworthiness to include being able to be vulnerable with those in whom trust is to be placed. History has repeatedly shown that minority groups that are vulnerable to the government have been betrayed. Corruption, mismanagement of money in education projects (as illustrated by participant responses above), and high influence of politics in education make the academics consider the government unreliable, and therefore, not trustworthy. This leads to the academics not willing to provide the government with the opportunity to care for education in Sri Lanka, establishing their distrust in State, State structures and the government.

This conduct of the Sri Lankan government and State has created a lacuna for a trustworthy authoritative body that the academics can find reliable and trustworthy. The World Bank fits within this gap. Due to the thirty-year civil war, international organizations and their involvement in internal matters of the country is not a new phenomenon to Sri Lankans. In fact, as noted by P04 on page 46, some prefer these international organizations to the Sri Lankan government. It is in this context that the World Bank enters Sri Lankan academic ecology. The Bank's reputation as a global power – possibly aided by the colonial mentality of the postcolonial Sri Lanka – and its financial stronghold, i.e. the ability to support their recommendations with capital (See literature review), highlight the Bank as a body with both privilege and power. To understand how organizations can effectively signal trustworthiness, to understand how the World Bank compares against the actions of the Sri

Lankan government and State structures, the World Bank conduct is investigated via three factors that foster trustworthiness (Alfano & Huijts, 2020): voice, response, and diversity.

Voice and responsiveness are discussed together in this section as the two concepts are interlinked. Allowing the stakeholders to have a meaningful voice fosters trust in the institution. Contrary to criticisms against the World Bank for undermining local knowledge, contrary to literature on World Bank's external stakeholder participation being merely ritualistic, with many scholars noting that it "does not amount to much more than a participatory fig leaf" (Verger et al., 2014, p. 385), the experiences of the participants of this project identify the World Bank as an institution that makes space for their voice and is responsive to what these voices say. While the criticisms levelled at the World Bank in this regard are not unfounded, it is likely that this is another instance (other instances are discussed in the literature review) where the Bank has positively responded to its critics and changed their approach.

It is also possible that this is a consequence of the Bank's emphasis on the ideal citizen as one that acts autonomously. In encouraging autonomous behaviour in a collectivist society, the individuals are given the agency to act in the interest of the community. Reading it in this manner, then, makes the Bank's emphasis on individual autonomy an asset for the collectivist communities (as opposed to a hindrance). However, this is reliant on the individuals wishing for the best interest of the community and not of the self. As the shaping of these is dependent upon dominant social factors, the power of the World Bank may be significant in other ways. This is discussed in section 3, implications of emergent theories.

The Bank's promotion of diversity is evident in its interest in developing HEMS in HE. In an atmosphere where HEMS faculties and departments are struggling to justify their existence (Haniffa, 2021), the emergence of the World Bank as a champion of HEMS is important. It is a straying away from the STEM focus, which bodes well for HEMS fields. If the Bank measures value of knowledge with reference to its contribution to the economy alone (as discussed in the literature review), then this development could mean either that the Bank is now perceiving HEMS to be important for economic development. Alternatively, it

could simply be the Bank trying to be more inclusive in an attempt to be responsive to critics. There is precedence for this 'betterment' behaviour, as noted in the literature review.

This dichotomy of institutional behaviour – failure on the part of Sri Lankan government and State structures pertaining to providing capital, committing itself to the betterment of the country through education (whatever the definition of betterment may be), and playing a supportive role to the academics vs the perceived reliability and trustworthiness of the World Bank displayed through its responsiveness to the voices of the academics in a meaningful manner and actions taken towards diversity – forms the basis of the first interpretive theory of this study. It is a theory of trust, where trust placed in institutions is in motion: the lack of trust in one's government, State, and State systems catalyses the academics to embrace international organisations like the World Bank.

The second interpretive theory that emerged from this study focuses on obligation of the academics. Obligation as a philosophical concept has many manifestations, but the emergent theory finds associative political obligation to be the most pertinent. Associative political obligation derives "from one's membership of a polity and related to the conduct of its collective affairs and the preservation and enrichment of the quality of its collective life" (Parekh, 1993, p. 243) i.e. association or membership of a particular community is the foundation for this type of obligation. The polity in this instance is the participants' identity as academics belonging to the university system of Sri Lanka. Their collective interest lies in enriching the quality of the university system for the betterment of the country.

Although citizens of a country are also bound by civil and legal obligations, this associative political obligation take priority with the academics. This is evident in their willingness to challenge existing university regulations, and appeal to the World Bank for effective and efficient functioning of the project. As discussed in the previous section, this may be due to the disillusionment of the academics due to the socio-political conditions of Sri Lanka, which are deeply felt in the field of education. The identity of the academics within the academia – as teachers and researchers – take prominence over their identity as citizens. This could be argued a natural result of a situation where the government and the State systems have been deemed not trustworthy by its people.

In prioritising associative political obligation, the academics retain decision-making power in the project-related relationship with the World Bank. The project initiatives that are deemed necessary, important, and successful have emerged from local academics. Supporting other academics to successfully complete the projects is done by local academics. In this sense, this study finds evidence to counter the claim that the World Bank ignores local knowledge and attempts to implement solutions that are not context specific. Instead, the academics appear to be the ones with agency and the skill to implement changes. The role of the World Bank is a supportive and reliable one. Importantly, the World Bank is not considered irreplaceable; they are the supportive funder, one among the many other possible international funders. Their significance, for the academics, lie in them being more reliable than their government, but do not appear have special significance when compared against other international organizations.

Despite this favourable view of the World Bank, the academics consider the Bank an outsider, one which is owed. the Sri Lankan academics are concerned about the consequences (unlike the Ugandan university personnel who said "We take the food and damn the consequences" (Collins, 2011, p. xxiv)). They are worried about the generational debt incurred via these projects. At the same time, they recognize a need for this financial burden. Their approach to development and betterment of the country stem from practicalities that are tangible for the student and visible in the society. These include students finding jobs and providing for their families, the latter highlighting the collectivist nature of the country's culture. They recognize a deep responsibility to the graduates they help enter the society and the market, and wish to ensure that those students are able to live a good life. This life, due to the global power dynamics, is a market-centred, neoliberal leaning one. Whatever the political ideology the academics may hold, the political reality is that it is the society the students enter. Thus, the academics place their associative political obligation to the students before an ideological obligation.

This tension between ideologies and practicalities forms the basis for the second interpretive theory that emerges from this study. The academics do have the ability to hold on to their principles and ideologies (if they so choose), but at a cost. If they are to hold on

to these ideologies, it could adversely impact their students. Instead, they choose to prioritise their obligation as teachers instead of furthering an ideological cause; they choose the short-term fulfilment over the possibility of effecting change in the long-run: associative political obligation to the education system drives the individuals, thus prioritising short-term practicalities over long-term ideologies.

Both the theories that emerged from this study are interpretivist theories. i.e. the study acknowledges that the theorizing done to present the two interpretive theories in this chapter result from an interpretation of the data. It embodies an imaginative understanding of the social ecology of an academic in a World Bank-funded HE project in Sri Lanka, and assumes "facts and values linked; truth as provisional; and social life as processual" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 231). The two theorising of these two theories, however, indicate the presence of a larger social ideal towards which the academics aspire. The roots of this larger aspiration and the implications of it are discussed in the next section.

6.3. Implications of the Emergent Theories

There are two aspects to the implications of the emergent theories. One is micro: the implications they have within Sri Lanka, in a context where a foreign agency is considered more reliable than the government (however justifiably so). The second implication is more macro; both the theories emerge from a social context where the academics feel an obligation to achieve an ideal that has been elusive to the country. It is necessary to understand who or what creates this ideal that countries attempt to achieve, as that would reveal more about the social ecology within which academics operate. This section focuses on these two levels of implications.

6.3.1. Micro Implications

This placing of trust in foreign entities is not an alien concept in Sri Lanka when looking at its colonial history. A popular idiom in Sinhala is "ඉඟුරු දී මිරිස් ගත්තා වගේ" which literally translates to *exchanging ginger for chilli*. The story behind the idiom is thus: the Portuguese colonised the coastal areas of Sri Lanka, and King Rajasinghe II was unable to reclaim the territory. Therefore, he sought help from the Dutch to dispose of the Portuguese. The Dutch successfully did so. However, the Dutch then refused to hand over

the land to the King as agreed, instead of taking over control of the areas themselves. This is said to have prompted the King to declare that seeking help from the Dutch to get rid of the Portuguese is like exchanging ginger for chilli. The idiom is now used to indicate situations where strategies employed to solve an issue results in bigger issues. It is worth reflecting if placing trust in the World Bank due to distrust towards the government and State structures would be parallel to the Portuguese and Dutch incidence of the proverb.

In the absence of larger powers to shield the university system from external influences, when the university systems are at the mercy of external bodies due to failures of governments, the academics prioritise their associative political obligation to the students and the university system. This means that they would do what is best for the students and the university system bearing the immediate outcomes in mind. Such a focus on the short-term aid the enforcement of power of IOs like the World Bank. With academics having little power to resist, as their primary concern is the immediate welfare of the student body, it paints the majority world actors such as the Sri Lankan academics as accomplices of the hegemonic world order. This, however, needs to be qualified. It has to be located in the sociopolitical context of the country, thus highlighting the making the best of a given situation. Thus, this plays to the dynamic networks representation (Shahjahan & Madden, 2015) of IOs.

6.3.2. Macro Implications

In the literature review, the idea of the World Bank as a Knowledge bank emerged and was established. Zapp (2017) noted that the World Bank is more powerful than the top HE institutions in the world, and that it could be thought of more as a think-tank than a funding body. The different manifestations of the World Bank as a think-tank, as a research institute, as a Knowledge bank, as a technical expert, as well as a funder with the ability to not only recommend their ideology, but reinforce it through a multi-pronged approach making the World Bank an important figure in the social ecology. The world that the academics aspire to is one that was created by institutions like the World Bank who have the power to project an ideal for the rest of the world. This ideal that is thus projected is one that is largely American, hegemonic, and monopolising. The World Bank becomes dangerous

and in need of criticism due to this: they are the creator of majority world academics' aspirations.

The World Bank may at some point in their history have engaged in activities that warranted criticisms of neglecting local resources, knowledge, and using loan conditions to coerce countries into adhering to their mandate. However, their influence is so far and wide that such measures are no longer necessary. As evident by the participants' responses, the neoliberal market is the ideal that academics aspire to achieve. Even though they may have ideological resistance to this, the strong roots of the societal organisation demands that these ideologies take a back seat for the sake of the student body. The World Bank is not merely a funder for education; they define the purpose of education and have created a system where individuals have to embrace this interpretation. Although over two decades prior, Barnett and Finnemore (1999) iterate the need to approach IOs differently:

> Global organisations do more than just facilitate cooperation by helping states to overcome market failures, collective action dilemmas, and problems associated with interdependent social choice [...] IOs exercise power as they constitute and construct the social world (p. 700).

The World Bank has created the social world for most of the global actors. In order to fully understand this role of the World Bank, interrogating the institution using an epistemic governance approach to international organisations (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2019) is useful: epistemic governance approach to international organisations state that IOs attempt to "bring about change by acting upon others' view of reality and the situation" (p.87). There are several strategies employed to bring about this ontological change: knowledge production, conceptions of what is acceptable/desirable, and people's identifications.

The World Bank establishing itself as a Knowledge Bank fulfils the first criteria. It is heavily engaged in knowledge production. In fact, it has moved away from being a coercive loan giver to a source of much-cited research and reports (Zapp, 2017). This establishes the Bank as an institution that acts upon the world's reality. Through this knowledge production, and the power and capital they have, the Bank has also created an idea of a desirable society. It is this society that the Sri Lankan academics aspire to achieve for their

students, and it is this society that is promoted through the creation of labels such as "developing countries" and "developed world". Third criteria of people's identification is a weaker point in World Bank repertoire. Although in the *World Development Report: Knowledge for Development* (1999) the Bank writes that "Poor countries—and poor people—differ from rich ones not only because they have less capital *but because they have less knowledge*" (p.1, emphasis added), the Bank has moved away from that narrative. It now uses Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the foundation of their education endeavours. It relies heavily on local knowledge and expertise in carrying out its projects, as evident by this study. In doing so, the Bank presents the idea of the ideal individual that is attainable by any and all. These factors contribute to the Bank being an epistemic actor – a role much more involved than that of a mere funder. It needs, in fact, to be reconceptualised as an "epistemic actor or 'theorist' embodying wider transformations of the rationalisation and scientisation of human development" (Zapp, 2017, p. 10).

6.4. Summary

This chapter explained the social ecology of an academic working in a World Bank-funded project through two emergent theories: one on shifting trust, and the other on choosing associative political obligation by the academics. The chapter contextualised the theories in terms of Sri Lanka's sociopolitical status, as well as in the larger literature on IOs. The Chapter concluded noting that the World Bank should be viewed more as a theorist or an epistemic actor than a mere fund provider. The next chapter, Conclusions, summarises the study and recommends areas for further research.

7. Conclusion

Outline

7.1 Exchanging ginger for chilli?

7.2 Considerations for understanding the study

7.3 Further study

7.4 Summary

7.1. Exchanging Ginger for Chilli?

The title of this dissertation, "exchanging ginger for chilli" refers to a Sri Lankan proverb that has its origin in colonisation. The proverb is applicable to the findings of this study in two levels: micro and macro.

At the micro level, the proverb applies to Sri Lanka. The World Bank is considered an authoritative power that can fulfil certain aspects of education that the academics perceive the government to have neglected. This is an ingrained lack of faith in the State structures, exacerbated by decades of being disappointed. International organisations, on the other hand, have historically risen to the occasion, and the World Bank is perceived as one of these reliable bodies. However, in placing their trust in the World Bank, it is possible that they are trading in one inefficient form of governance for a more problematic one: the role of neoliberal ideologies in a free education context has to be explored. i.e. whether it could be a case of exchanging ginger for chilli. However, it is not certain that this influence of the World Bank would be to the detriment of the country. Only time will show how this shifting of trust would affect Sri Lanka. Hence, it is a question whether this placement of trust in the World Bank is indeed like exchanging ginger for chilli. At the macro level, this idea can be extrapolated to the majority world in general. The World Bank has positioned itself as a Knowledge Bank, as an authority even in the field of education. In relying on the support of the World Bank, the majority world countries are placing their future in the hands of an actor that they know little about. Whether the existing less-than-ideal conditions will be bettered through this interaction, or if the situation would be worsened, remains to be seen.

The main reason for choosing this title, however, is found in the narrative that birthed this proverb (explained in Chapter 6, section 3.1). King Rajasinghe II sought help from the Dutch because he did not have sufficient power or resources to expel the Portuguese. It was a relationship that arose more out of necessity and less out of choice. When majority world countries reach out to the World Bank or accept aid from the World Bank, it is often out of necessity than out of choice. It is not just that these countries are signing up for an uncertain future because their current conditions fail to meet a global standard (which, incidentally, has been set by institutions like the World Bank among other global super powers), but they do not have any other option available if they are to meet these standards. Whether this gamble pays off, or if they end up with much spicier chilli in place of the mildly spicy ginger, remains to be seen.

7.2. Considerations for Understanding the Study

The study does not wish to use the term limitations, which indicates there is an ideal to achieve. As a relativist, the notion of one true ideal that must be attained is a notion that this researcher rejects. Instead, this section notes some points to consider when understanding this study.

Constructivist Grounded Theory requires the researcher to sit with the data for a long time. While this researcher did sit with the data for several months, it is possible that more nuances and threads would emerge the longer one sits with the data. Time constraints of the study are one consideration. Constructivist Grounded Theory based on intense interviews assumes that the participants are truthful in their responses (Charmaz, 2014); however, the participant perceptions are influenced by their experience. Due to this study being conducted in the middle of a global pandemic, the participants would have had a more turbulent experience than otherwise, which would have invariably affected their responses. Conditions during which the study took place is a second consideration. The study is presented according to stylistic requirements of a Master's dissertation, which does not allow much room for creativity. In a study that positions itself as emancipatory and for social justice, having to adhere to hegemonic norms of Western academia, the ways in which the presenting of the study was limited by these norms must be acknowledged. From the order of chapters to not incorporating more reflexivity memos in the writing of the

dissertation, structural limitations of the academic stylistic requirements is the third consideration.

This study was an exercise in giving space to the voices from the majority world. However, in writing of the dissertation, the researcher may have used language that takes the agency away from local actors. While a deliberate attempt has been made to be conscious of language, there may be oversight on part of the researcher. There may be unconscious bias apparent in the language as a result of the researcher's position of privilege, as well as the colonial mentality of the researcher. These factors are hereby acknowledged.

7.3. Further Study

This dissertation achieves the objective it set out to do to a great extent; i.e. understand the social ecology of academics working on a World Bank-funded project in the HE field in Sri Lanka. However, there were multitudes of other concepts that emerged during the focused coding phase which should be explored. For example, some participants noted the gender of officials, noting that having women spearhead the project is cause for its success. There is room to explore care as a feminised form of labour in this regard. Multiple threads emerged from the initial coding phase that could be followed further. As such, the two theories that emerged in the course of this study are not exhaustive; they are but two elements of the social ecology. Following other threads would provide more insight into the social ecology that the researcher sought to explore.

As mentioned throughout the study, there is little research that centres the voices of the majority world through a majority world voice. Further research should be done in this area, preferably through grounded approaches, in order to further the dewesternisation project. Codifying other forms of knowledge, theorising non-Western ways of approaching a social ecology, and normalising the idea of multiple narratives and multiple theories is imperative in this larger field of understanding the influence of IOs on the majority world, and understanding how and why the majority world responds the way it does.

7.4. Summary

In exploring the social ecology of local actors working on a World Bank-funded project in the HE field of Sri Lanka, two key concepts emerged: trust and obligation. Based on these two concepts, two substantive theories were created which explains the relationships and tensions that exist between key players in a social ecology of an internationally funded project in the HE field. The use of a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach was instrumental in uncovering these tensions and relationships to arrive at the two theories.

The first theory which revolves around trust and trustworthiness complicates the relationship between actors and the State, and indicates its impact on the effectiveness of an IO like the World Bank. As a substantive theory, this applies to Sri Lanka and could be extended to countries that have a similar political conditions within the country. The second theory focuses on a specific type of obligation, associative political obligation and explains the actions of the local actors in terms of their obligation priorities. The sociocultural causes behind this prioritisation require this substantive theory to be applied only to countries with similar sociocultural environments. Together, the two theories paint a complex picture of the social ecology of the academic in a World Bank-funded project. None of the relationships between parties is linear or simple, but is entrenched in histories and historical consequences. This indicates that literature which presents IOs as saviours, as well as those that represent IOs as villains, neglect to appreciate the complex nature of fund receiver countries. Thus, this dissertation sits in the realm of the small but important body of literature that centres the experiences of the majority world countries as narrated by local actors, codified by a researcher who shares their cultural identity.

In situating the two emergent theories in the larger literature, it is evident that the current, most used, conceptualisation of the World Bank as a funder is insufficient to capture the degree of its power and influence. The World Bank also produces knowledge, legitimises knowledge, and disseminates knowledge. The funding is in addition to all the knowledge-related activities. Thus, to truly capture the nature of the World Bank, this study suggests it be approached as an epistemic actor.

Revisiting Achebe's (1958) words that opened this dissertation, the story that unfolded through this dissertation is not necessarily a good story or an abomination; it is one that complicates the narratives often heard in the field of international funding and HE. All stories are true: the stories of benevolence and the stories of oppression. True, too, is this story – the story of academics from a majority world country who navigate many tensions and ideologies that is the core of their reality. True, too, are the stories that centre voices from other majority world countries, although they are yet to be heard.

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Appendix A: CUREC Approval Email

From: Katharina Ereky-Stevens <katharina.ereky@education.ox.ac.uk>

Sent: 02 March 2021 10:34

To: [redacted].ox.ac.uk>

Cc: Student CUREC <student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk>; [redacted]

[redacted]@education.ox.ac.uk>

Subject: Re: MSc Education CUREC application for [redacted]

Importance: Low

Dear [redacted],

Project Title: Exploring 'everyday wars' of position: Studying the 'political' in aid to education via World Bank funded programme in the "developing world"

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards. Accordingly, approval has been granted. There is only one issue to attend to, but there is no requirement to resubmit. Please see below:

- I understand that the **start date** for the part of the research project involving human participants and/or personal data is not the 1st of March 2021 as noted in your ethics application form, but **earliest today 2nd of March 2021** – the date your ethics application was approved. Please do get in touch with me if this is not the case.

Please continue to follow all current guidance issued by CUREC during the pandemic, notably COVID-19: CUREC guidance on research involving human participants,https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/coronavirus

If relevant please also check the CUREC website for their best practice research guides, https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/resources/bpg

Good luck with your research study,

Keep well and safe,

All good wishes,

Katharina

Member, DREC'

Appendix B: CUREC Revision Approval Email - 1

From: Katharina Ereky-Stevens <katharina.ereky@education.ox.ac.uk>

Sent: 05 May 2021 12:21

To: [redacted].ox.ac.uk>

Cc: [redacted]@education.ox.ac.uk>; Student CUREC <student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk>

Subject: Re: CUREC extension - ED-CIA-21-137

Dear [redacted],

Title: Exploring 'everyday wars' of position: Studying the 'political' in aid to education via World Bank funded programme in the "developing world"

Your amendment to the application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed amendment to your research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted.

Good luck with your research study,

Keep well and safe,

All good wishes,

Katharina

Member, DREC

Appendix C: CUREC Revision Approval Email - 2

From: Katharina Ereky-Stevens <katharina.ereky@education.ox.ac.uk>

Sent: 01 July 2021 10:23

To: [redacted].ox.ac.uk>; Student CUREC <student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk>

Cc: Katharina Ereky-Stevens <katharina.ereky@education.ox.ac.uk>; [redacted]@education.ox.ac.uk>

Subject: Re: CUREC application amendment - ED-CIA-21-137

Dear [redacted],

Thank you for informing you about the planned changes to your research, and for sharing the relevant documents for me to review.

I have considered the amendment to your application on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the amendment to your research plans has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted.

Good luck with your research,

best wishes,

Katharina

Appendix D: Data Protection Assessment Form



Privacy by Design

Reference number:

Project Name/ Processing Activity/Business Practice: MSc dissertation: Exploring 'everyday wars' of position:

Studying the 'political' in aid to education via World Bank funded programme in the "developing world"

Privacy by Design Assessment

Screening assessment outcomes and reasons:
Set out the outcomes and reasons identified in your screening assessment here to explain why you have concluded a DPA is necessary
The screening assessment concluded that data collection and processing do not pose high risk to the participants.

Stage 1: Necessity and Proportionality Assessment of Proposed Processing of Personal Data

*What is your **lawful basis** for processing?* *What additional **condition** are you relying on for processing special category data?* ***Transparency:*** *When you collect the data, will you be giving individuals the following information:* *a. The purposes for which their personal data will be processed?* *b. The people or organisations their personal data will be shared with?* *c. The lawful basis for processing their personal data?* *d. Any international transfers of their personal data* *e. When their personal data will be erased?* *f. Their rights under GDPR?* ***Accuracy:*** *Are individuals able to update their personal details in the event of any changes?* ***Data minimisation:*** *a. Is the personal data to be collected the minimum necessary to achieve your purpose(s)?* *b. Will access to the personal data be restricted to those with a strict need to know?* *c. How will access be controlled?* *d. Is there any scope to anonymise or pseudonymise the data* ***Retention:*** *a. Is there a documented retention schedule?* *b. Is there a clear reason for the length of time personal data will be kept?*	**Transparency:** a) Yes. Indicated in the information sheet provided during recruitment, and included in the written consent form b) Yes. With myself and my supervisor c) Public interest task d) No e) As soon as the dissertation is submitted f) Yes. During the recruitment process **Accuracy:** NA – no personal details will be published. Data will be pseudonymised before publication. **Data minimisation:** a) Yes. Only email addresses (publicly available) for the purpose of contacting the individuals for interviewing b) Yes. Myself and my supervisor c) Data will be stored in a password-protected folder on my OneDrive, which can be accessed through two-step verification only d) Data will pseudonymised **Retention:** a) Yes. Personal data until the dissertation is submitted. Other data, for a period of 3 years after the end of the study (according to University protocol) b) Yes. To contact the individuals for research purposes (for example, to verify transcripts of their interviews) c) Yes d) Yes – University protocol as per (a) above e) Yes, through supervision meetings

c. *Is the reason documented?* d. *Is there a procedure for implementation of the retention schedule?* e. *Is there a procedure in place for monitoring the implementation of the retention schedule?*	
Security: a. *Will personal data be collected, transmitted and stored securely?* b. *Is the level of security to be provided appropriate to the risks presented by the processing?* c. *Will arrangements be put in place for the secure disposal and/or destruction of data when it is no longer required?*	**Security:** a) Yes. Data will be stored in a password-protected folder on my OneDrive, which can be accessed through two-step verification only b) Yes. Minimal risk c) Yes
Data processors: a. *Will a third party be used to process the personal data on behalf of the University?* b. *What processing will the processor carry out?* c. *Is there an agreement in place with the third party?* d. *Does the agreement include all the provisions required under the GDPR?*	**Data processors:** a) No b) NA c) NA d) NA
Data sharing: a. *Are decisions about how the personal data will be used being taken jointly with another organisation?* b. *Is the personal data to be shared with that other organisation?* c. *Is there an agreement with the other organisation covering respective roles & responsibilities including request and complaints handling?*	**Data sharing:** a) No b) NA c) NA **International transfers:** a) No b) NA c) NA

International transfers: a. *Will personal data be transferred outside the EEA?* b. *If so, will the transfer be to a country approved by the EU?* c. *If not, will appropriate safeguards be in place e.g. model clauses/Privacy Shield*	

Sage 2: Risks Identification and Assessment Matrices

Remote likelihood of harm + minimal impact = LOW risk

Possible likelihood of harm + minimal impact = LOW risk

Probable likelihood of harm + minimal impact = LOW risk

Remote likelihood of harm + significant impact = LOW risk

Possible likelihood of harm + significant impact = MEDIUM risk

Probable likelihood of harm + significant impact = HIGH risk

Remote likelihood of harm + severe impact = LOW risk

Possible likelihood of harm + severe impact = HIGH risk

Probable likelihood of harm + severe impact = HIGH risk

		SEVERITY OF IMPACT		
		Minimal	Significant	Severe
LIKELIHOOD OF HARM	Remote	LOW	LOW	LOW
	Possible	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
	Probable	LOW	HIGH	HIGH

Risks of Processing Matrix

Impact on Individuals **Will the processing lead to individuals suffering…**	**Likelihood of Harm** **Remote** **Possible** **Probable**	**Severity of Impact** **Minimal** **Significant,** **Severe**	**Overall risk** **Low,** **Medium** **High**	**Reasons**
Inability to exercise their privacy rights ie: • *To be given information about processing* • *To access their personal data* • *To request correction* • *To request erasure* • *To object to personal data being processed for marketing purposes* • *To object to processing where the lawful basis is legitimate interests* • *To restrict processing* • *To request transfer to another party* • *Inability to request decisions are made by a person and not by automated processing* *Inability to access services* *Inability to access opportunities* *Loss of control over personal data* *Discrimination*	Remote	Minimal	Low	The recordings are only of interviews with the participants. These interviews do not focus on sensitive content. All responses will be pseudonymised. No other participant will know the identity of other participants. The project name and the country name both will not be mentioned in the study. Participants can opt in to being direct quotes (in the consent form), and if they consent, an interview summary will be sent to them for approval.

Identity theft *Fraud* *Financial loss* *Reputational damage* *Physical harm* *Emotional harm* *Loss of confidentiality* *Reidentification of pseudonymised data* *Any other significant economic disadvantage* *Any other significant social disadvantage* *Inability to access personal data because IT systems used for processing are unavailable* *Inability to access personal data in a timely manner due to inability of the University or a third party to restore access to systems in a timely manner*				

Security Risk Matrix

Source of Risk to Individuals A breach of security leading to individuals suffering…..	**Likelihood of Harm** **Remote** **Possible** **Probable**	**Severity of Impact** **Minimal** **Significant,** **Severe**	**Overall risk** **Low,** **Medium** **High**	**Reasons and Measures to be Taken**
loss of personal data examples: • Insecure electronic devices • Unencrypted memory sticks • Paper copies removed from secure work environment • IT system	Remote	Minimal	Low	Only device used is my laptop which is password protected. Recordings and transcripts will be stored on a password protected folder in my OneDrive, which requires two-step authentication to access. No paper records will be kept. No memory sticks will be used.
destruction of personal data	Remote	Minimal	Low	NA
alteration of personal data	Remote	Minimal	Low	NA
Unauthorised disclosure of personal data	Remote	Minimal	Low	Email communication

examples: • Insecure paper waste disposal • Insecure hardware disposal • Use of insecure email accounts Phishing by email, telephone or face to face				will be limited to organising of interviews and sharing of interview summaries. The latter will be password protected, the password shared during the interview.

Unauthorised access to personal data examples: • Inadequate doors and locks • Inadequate supervision of visitors • Inadequate IT system security	Remote	Minimal	Low	Personal data will be stored only on one device, which is secured as explained above
Inability to access personal data because IT systems used for processing are unavailable				NA

Data Protection Principles Risks Matrix

Source of Risk to Individuals Will individuals suffer harm because….	**Likelihood of Harm** **Remote** **Possible** **Probable**	**Severity of Impact** **Minimal** **Significant,** **Severe**	**Overall risk** **Low,** **Medium** **High**	**Reasons and Measures to be Taken**
Personal data will not be obtained direct from individuals & informing them of				NA

processing is impossible to achieve or will involve disproportionate effort				
The purpose of processing is unclear				NA
The purpose changes over time				NA
A new purpose arises				NA
Inadequate personal data is collected for the purpose				NA
Irrelevant personal data is collected				NA
More personal data is collected than necessary				NA
The personal data held is not accurate				NA
The personal data is collected from unclear sources				NA
The integrity of the personal data is unclear				NA
The personal data is kept for longer than needed				NA

Carried out by:	[redacted]
Role:	Master's student
Date:	25/03/2021

Approved by:	Lisa Holmes
Role:	Deputy Director of Research
Date:	26/03/2021
First review Date:	
Measures to be incorporated into project plan	By: Role: By date:

Appendix E: Feminist Ethical Research Practice

Questions for ethical research practices towards a feminist internet (Association for Progressive Communications, 2019)

Consent

- Is the consent (of participants in the research) informed?
- Have we clearly explained the goals and objectives of our research?
- Have we communicated the risks and implications of the research on the lives of participants? And have we communicated this effectively? (taking into account language, ability, and other factors)
- If the ideals of informed consent are not achievable, or only partially achievable, can you explain and document why?

Accountability

- Do you know who you are accountable to – which persons or community?
- Does this include a practice of reciprocity with participants and others touched by the research?
- Do we take ownership of the risks that participants might face?
- What better ways of engagement are there for us to be more transparent in our processes, outcomes and other stages of the project?

Situatedness

- Are we aware and do we communicate our location and positionality i.e. our identity, culture, the body we inhabit, race, etc?
- Do we reflect on privilege (of various kinds) when producing knowledge – is it an active reflection that impacts the production?

- Are we cognizant of power relations, the dynamics and how they might shift, between researcher and research participant within the field of internet research institutional power relations?
- Is the research process and outputs open to critique?

Intersectionality

- Do we assume that our condition is universal? And how do we address that?
- Do we describe and understand the context in relation to intersecting powers that are acting upon people?
- Are we describing people and groups as homogenous – as if they live "single-issue lives", and not taking into account that they embody multiple and various identities and realities?
- Are we doing a tokenistic inclusion of various people and groups, or moving towards complicating our understanding of the context in terms of intersecting powers and identities?

Connection

- In the process of building networks have we stated clearly the types of connection we (seek to) establish with the participants/actors and others
- Commitments
- Risks
- Benefits
- Have we left space (literally and otherwise) for the possible evolution of relationships? This could be relations within the research team, individual transformations etc.

Memory

- The feminist politics of knowledge building is also about resisting being forgotten. So here we must ask if people have always been forgotten, how can this be addressed?
- How can your project contribute to preserving memory and building archives for the community and participants in the research process?

Care and safety

to be understood in terms of care of, care for and care against

- Does our research process show enough care for the person | information | data | collective?
- Do we look after those who are vulnerable?
- Do we ensure not to put anyone at risk, to not (re)produce harm?
- Do we follow rituals and practices of self-care and collective care?
- Do we as individuals and as a team, in relation to various other networks and relations, establish boundaries?
- Care is feminised labour historically expected of women in particular, or specific groups based on caste, class, race, ethnicity etc. Are we aware that care too can be exploitative and do we work against that?
- Do we have a mechanism for ensuring the safety of the person | information | data | collective?

Researcher comments

In addition to the consent forms and participant information sheet compiled in accordance to CUREC guidelines, the email sent to the participants indicated that I am available to discuss anything related to the research and answer any questions at any point. However, none of the respondents requested extra clarification. Some responses from the participants indicated that they have not thoroughly perused the participant information sheet, as they asked questions that were already answered in the information sheet such as

the mode of data collection. In such instances, I talked the participant through the study before starting the interview. Some participants seemed quite aware of the risks and implications of taking part in the research, as they had sought permission from the World Bank before agreeing to take part in the study. The following excerpts from reflexivity memos (Boxes 3 and 4) speak to this:

Box 3

Reflexivity Memo – Informed Consent

Reflexivity Memo – Informed Consent

P08's email surprised me. The fact that all the documents I sent and my name have now been flagged with the World Bank officials in charge of Sri Lanka makes me a little nervous. I'm glad P08 did this though. Now they can speak freely without worrying about what they are at all. Good for them! I could read this as an indication of the power that is given to the WB by P08; I could also read this as the WB promoting freedom of expression, although I have no idea if the WB prohibited P08 from talking about certain topics. Regardless, it's good to know that P08 is aware of the possible repercussions of taking part in the study. I didn't really think it would be a problem, or that the WB would penalise those taking part in the study. But I'm glad P08 made sure to cover her bases. Wouldn't want something bad happening to my participants because of a passion project/dissertation!

Box 4

Reflexivity Memo – Accountability

Reflexivity Memo - Accountability

I feel a strong sense of accountability to the academics working on the WB project, regardless of them being my participants. This probably stems from having been one of those people working on the project, but also 'one who got away'. I was able to leave, but for most of my participants leaving is not a feasible option. I don't want to unjustly portray them in my work, or put words in their mouth. I'm aware I will have little impact as an individual with a Masters study on the topic because these participants are senior academics in the field. But I *am* at Oxford. That changes things. I need to be really really careful of what I say because my work is going to carry the weight of Oxford and its clout.

As evident by the above excerpt, accountability weighed significantly on my mind during the research process. There were better ways of engaging with the participants to be more transparent about the process, outcomes and stages of the project. For example, if I were able to have discussions with each of them at the end of each stage of data analysis. However, this did not seem practical. Individually meeting 12 people to discuss the research process and outcomes is a time-consuming activity that is difficult to do in the timeframe of a master's dissertation writing. The participants being academics with compact schedules, finding time with each person would have been another obstacle. I was in conversation with P02 for three months before they were able to give me an appointment for the interview. While I did make an effort to be clear of the research process when conversing with the participants, I feel this is an area I need to focus on and improve for future research.

The Oxford factor, i.e. being affiliated to the University of Oxford, well-known for its clout and prestige was a key factor in my awareness of privilege when conversing with the participants. Some reflections on this are evident in the memo excerpt below which was written after my interview with P06:

Box 5

Reflexivity Memo – Situatedness: The Oxford Factor

Reflexivity Memo – Situatedness: The Oxford factor

It was slightly awkward for me, how often Oxford came up. Made me wonder if I would have got fewer participants had I not been from Oxford. Commenting on the sort of work I get to here, or saying "you can easily access those over there" when referring to journals, while true, I felt positioned as an outsider. The following up on if I plan on returning, that it's good if I could come back and then share the knowledge I gained here back home was something that touched me. Yes, I do want to do it, but there is almost a reverence attached to my knowledge simply due to where the certificate originated. This makes me uncomfortable. I am also an outsider, as much as an insider.

It is an awareness of the privilege of institutional affiliation that made me take a CGT approach in my study, and engages in constant reflection. I will invariable have internalised a Global North lens simply by studying here which I need to acknowledge, and try to unlearn for an earnest attempt at conducting a CGT study. While I am in a position of power due to my university affiliation, I am also in a position of power due to my race and ethnicity. This was evident when interviewing someone who was from a minority ethnic group, as illustrated in the memo excerpt below:

Box 6

Reflexivity Memo – Situatedness: Race and Ethnicity

Reflexivity memo – Situatedness: Race and ethnicity

When the person brought up the government issues and the distrust of the government, I lost control of the interview. I had not thought about the impact of the war on these things. And here I was, a Sinhala Buddhist as clear from my name, conducting these interviews and asking them about their opinion of the government. Took me a while to regain control of the interview. I was worried I would force him to say things he didn't want to divulge, especially to someone from the oppressor's group. I was also worried I would make him feel uncomfortable. My privilege has to be checked and addressed in future interviews.

The idea of intersectionality is acknowledged methodologically, as the study takes a relativist ontological positioning. In studying the phenomenon and not the individuals, the focus shifts from making universal statements about a group as if they are homogenous, instead of shifting to discussing the processes associated with the phenomenon which are a product of individual lives that are led by the participants. The emergence of gender and race, two intersections at the forefront of the intersectionality discourse establishes this study as one that is conscious of and is making room for an intersectional discussion.

The study did not intend to build networks consciously, but was aware that this may happen as a part of establishing rapport. Therefore, I left space for the possible evolution of relationships in two ways: first, the methodology selected, CGT, allowed space for researcher transformation in the process of the study. This happened in ways I did not anticipate, compelling me to confront my preconceived ideas about institutions like the World Bank and adjust them in the face of grounded data. Second, participants expressed interest in collaborating for future research and in desiring connections between academics at the University of Oxford and themselves. While not factored in as a benefit to the participant at the designing stage of the study, I did my best to foster these connections as a means of maintaining researcher integrity and staying true to my emancipatory ideals that drove the study.

The study was taken up because the voices of the people that are the subject of this research are often unheard, erased, or forgotten. While the study hopes to have provided a forum for their narratives and experiences to be preserved, the study needs to be presented at conferences and published in academic journals for the building of archives. I intend to do both these activities once the dissertation has been marked.

Care for the participants was mostly covered through CUREC regulations and best practices. As the participants did not involve any vulnerable communities, the care for participants was relatively easy to achieve. However, care became crucial in data presentation. Multiple reflexivity memos indicate my personal struggle with trying to portray the participants' narratives as justly as possible. Exercising reflexivity in this regard involved having intense conversations with my peers on the best approach to the writing of the draft. This also links with care for self, which, unexpectedly became central to the care safety element. The following memo was written immediately after an interview with a participant who is a man:

Box 7

Reflexivity Memo – Care and Safety: Self-care and Safety

Reflexivity memo – Care and safety: Self-care and safety

I'm just really glad these interviews took place online and not in person. He was flirting with me, and I wasn't sure how to handle it. He didn't stray from the topic per se, but the tone, the laughter all were rather uncomfortable. I was trying to figure out if I should take it in my stride, laugh along, and use it to build rapport. I will meet these people one way or the other once I go home. At the same time, though, it isn't right! I shouldn't have to navigate unwanted flirtations with my interviewees. I couldn't shut down the interview because I wanted to know what he had to say about the questions I asked. Having said that, I probably would have cut it short and walked out if this was in-person. Because it's on Teams, I felt okay. He couldn't actually endanger me. I was safely in my room.

Feminist ethical research practices were thus followed in the manner illustrated above.

Appendix F: Grounded Theory Studies Criteria

Criteria for Grounded Theory Studies (Charmaz, 2014, pp 337-338)

Credibility

- Has your research achieved intimate familiarity with the setting or topic?
- Are the data sufficient to merit your claims? Consider the range, number, and depth of observations contained in the data.
- Have you made systematic comparisons between observations and between categories?
- Do the categories cover a wide range of empirical observations?
- Are there strong logical links between the gathered data and your argument and analysis?
- Has your research provided enough evidence for your claims to allow the reader to form an independent assessment – and agree with your claims?

Originality

- Are your categories fresh? Do they offer new insights?
- Does your analysis provide a new conceptual rendering of the data?
- What is the social and theoretical significance of this work?
- How does your Grounded Theory challenge, extend, or refine current ideas, concepts, and practices?

Resonance

- Do the categories portray the fullness of the studied experience?
- Have you revealed both liminal and unstable taken-for-granted meanings?
- Have you drawn links between larger collectivities or institutions and individual lives, when the data so indicate?

- Does your Grounded Theory make sense to your participants or people who share their circumstances? Does your analysis offer them deeper insights into their lives and worlds?

Usefulness

- Does your analysis offer interpretations that people can use in their everyday worlds?
- Do your analytical categories suggest any generic processes?
- If so, have you examined these generic processes for tacit implications?
- Can the analysis spark further research in other substantive areas?
- How does your work contribute to knowledge? How does it contribute to making a better world?

Appendix G: Email to Potential Participants

Subject: Invitation to participate in the research study **Exploring 'everyday wars' of position: Studying the 'political' in aid to education via World Bank-funded programme in the "developing world"**

Dear XXX,

I hope this email finds you healthy and well.

I am writing to you asking if you would be willing to take part in the aforementioned research. I am a Masters student at the Department of Education, University of Oxford. I used to work as an RA on the AHEAD Project at the Department of English, University of [redacted]. My experiences there piqued my interest in the ways in which academics involved in projects funded by international funding agencies navigate the field. Therefore, I have settled on the above for my dissertation for this MSc in Education. I believe this question deserves proper exploration.

I have attached the participant information sheet to this email. Please let me know if you want to clarify any points. I am happy to clarify them via email or get on a call with you to talk you through the project.

While I understand you would be quite busy considering the times, I would extremely appreciate it if you would like to take part in the study. Your identity would be kept confidential, of course, in line with the extensive and rigorous ethical framework adhered to at the University of Oxford.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

With Regards,

[redacted]

Appendix H: Participant Information Sheet

Department of Education
University of Oxford
15 Norham Gardens
Oxford
Ox2 6DQ
+44 1865 274024



[redacted]
[redacted].ox.ac.uk
MSc Student

Exploring 'everyday wars' of position

Studying the 'political' in aid to education via World Bank funded programme in the "developing world"

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) Approval Reference: **ED-CIA-21-137**

Why is this research being conducted?

International funding is a contested topic in the HEIs in Sri Lanka, due to the neoliberal market-oriented approach. As a country that takes a rights approach to education, with free tertiary education, the demands and conditions of international funding bodies can cause tension. This has led to criticism of the international funders as well as those working with and/or for them. This study wishes to understand the experiences of the individuals working on a higher education project funded by the World Bank.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited because you are a Sri Lankan currently attached to an education-related programme funded by the World Bank, but are from the academia.

Do I have to take part?

No. You can ask questions about the research before deciding whether or not to take part. If you do agree to take part, you may withdraw yourself from the study, without giving a

reason, by advising me of this decision. The deadline by which you can withdraw any information you have contributed to the research is 01 July 2021. If you wish to withdraw from the research, all data pertaining to you will be deleted immediately.

What will happen to me if I take part in the research?

If you are happy to take part in the research, you will be interviewed via Microsoft Teams at a time convenient to you.

The interview should take approximately 90 minutes. You can also ask to pause or stop the interview at any time.

With your consent, I would like to video record you in order to have an accurate recording of your views. This will allow me to completely engage with you without being distracted by taking notes.

Are there any potential risks in taking part?

The following risks are involved in taking part: the views you express may impact your professional career if they can be attributed to you.

To reduce any potential risks, your responses will be pseudonymised. No other participant will know the identity of other participants.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

There will be no direct or personal benefit to you from taking part in this research.

What happens to the data provided?

The information you provide during the study is the **research data**. Any research data from which you can be identified (video recording)is known as **personal data**.

Personal/sensitive data will be stored in a password-protected folder on two-step verified storage. The data will be stored until the final dissertation is submitted, and deleted promptly after.

Other research data (including consent forms) will be stored for at least 3 years after publication or public release of the work of the research.

The supervisor will have access to the research data. Responsible members of the University of Oxford may be given access to data for monitoring and/or audit of the research.

I would like your permission to use direct quotes against a pseudonym in any research outputs. You can take part in the study, but opt out of being directly quoted.

Will the research be published?

The research may be published in academic publications. A summary of it may be published on websites.

The University of Oxford is committed to the dissemination of its research for the benefit of society and the economy and, in support of this commitment, has established an online archive of research materials.

On successful submission of the thesis, it may be deposited both in print and online in the University archives to facilitate its use in future research. If so, the thesis will be openly accessible.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee (Reference number: ED-CIA-21-137).

Who do I contact if I have a concern about the study or I wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact [redacted].ox.ac.uk) or [redacted]@education.ox.ac.uk), and we will do our best to answer your query. I will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible:

Social Sciences & Humanities Inter-Divisional Research Ethics Committee; Email: ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk; Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD

Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the study.

The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest.

Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/individualrights/.

Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

[redacted]

Department of Education

University of Oxford

15 Norham Gardens

Oxford

Ox2 6DQ

[redacted].ox.ac.uk

Appendix I: Consent Form

Department of Education
University of Oxford
15 Norham Gardens
Oxford
Ox2 6DQ
+44 1865 274024

[redacted].ox.ac.uk
MSc Student

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) Approval Reference: ED-CIA-21-137

Exploring 'everyday wars' of position

Studying the 'political' in aid to education via World Bank funded programme in the "developing world"

Purpose of Study: International funding is a contested topic in the HEIs in Sri Lanka, due to the neoliberal market-oriented approach. As a country that takes a rights approach to education, with free tertiary education, the demands and conditions of international funding bodies can cause tension. This has led to criticism of the international funders as well as those working with and/or for them. This study wishes to understand the experiences of the individuals working on a higher education project funded by the World Bank.

		Please initial each box
1	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	☐
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse consequences or penalty.	☐

3	I understand that the research data collected during the study may be looked at by authorised people outside the research team. I give permission for these individuals to access my data.	☐
4	I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.	☐
5	I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.	☐
6	I understand how this research will be written up and published.	☐
7	I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.	☐
8	I consent to be video recorded	☐
9a	I agree to the use of pseudonymised quotes in research outputs **OR**	☐
9b	I do not wish to be directly quoted	☐
10	I agree to information from my interview being used as probes in other interviews	☐
	I agree to take part in the study	☐

	dd / mm / yyyy	
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
	dd / mm / yyyy	
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature

Appendix J: Interview Prompts

1. Introduction: Researcher introduces self and her background.
2. Tell me a bit about your academic life; where did you work? In what area?
3. How did you join this project by the World Bank?
4. What did you consider when joining this role?
5. Can you briefly describe your role? Describe your typical day at work.
6. What sort of challenges have you faced in this role?
7. What are some of your 'victories' in this role?
8. Do you still maintain relationships with your colleagues from the university? What is the nature of that relationship?

Appendix K: Revised Interview Prompts

1. Introduction: Researcher introduces self and her background.
2. Tell me a bit about your academic life; where did you work? In what area?
3. How did you join this project by the World Bank?
4. What did you consider when joining this role?
5. What do *you* see as your role in this project?
6. Would you take on a similar position again? Why? Why not?
7. Have you faced any criticism in this role?
8. What would you say are your biggest achievements in this role?
9. Compare experience in previous WB projects with this project
10. Are you happy in this position?

Appendix L: Online Data Collection Checklist

Decision-making checklist for type of online qualitative data collection

Directions: answer the following questions to decide between online or offline study design. If you respond 'Yes' to most items, consider online data collection.	Yes – online	No – offline
Administrative considerations		
Can staff transfer offline qualitative data collection skills to an online environment with minimal training?	Yes	
Is there money in the budget to cover the costs of online qualitative data collection software?	NA	
Is there money in the budget to cover the costs of online recruitment?	NA	
Does the budget limit the ability to pay a transcriptionist to produce written transcripts of audio or video recordings?	NA	
Are members of the research team trained to code disjointed text transcripts,	Yes	
audio, video or other visual files collected online from study participants?	Yes	
Population considerations		
Are members of your population able to use the technology required to participate in your online study with minimal training?	Yes	
Do members of your population have access to the technology required to participate in an online study, including high-speed Internet access?	Yes	
If members of your population will be dependent on community spaces, e.g. libraries or Internet cafés, to participate in an online study, are you confident the location will not limit the time they can participate or bias their responses?	Not dependent	
Do members of your population have the literacy to participate in online text-based data collection, e.g. message boards or chat rooms?	Yes	
Is it important to have participants from geographically diverse locations?		No
Data collection considerations		
Compared with offline data collection, will online data collection increase the confidentiality of participants?	No difference	
Is it desirable for your study participants to have greater perceived anonymity?	Yes	

Is it desirable for your study participants to have greater perceived homogeneity?	Yes	
If collecting data online, do you have access to strong data security systems, e.g. a dedicated study server and data encryption?	Yes	
If collecting data online, is there technical support for members of the research team?	Yes	
If collecting data online, is there technical support for participants?	Yes	
Are there significant barriers to securing participant transportation or a physical space if data were collected offline?	Yes	
If collecting data online, are you confident that members of the research team will be able to build rapport with study participants?	Yes	
If collecting data online, does your qualitative data collection software allow participants to record emotional reactions, e.g. emoticons?	Yes	
If the viewing of media is critical to your study, will the qualitative data collection software you are using support the media, e.g. hyperlinks, photographs, videos?	NA	
Does the study timeline prohibit delayed access to data while it is being transcribed?		No
Is it important to have every comment date and time-stamped and linked to a participant identification number?		No
Directions: answer the following questions to help you determine whether you should use synchronous (yes) or asynchronous (no) data collection, or both. If your responses are in both columns, consider whether it would be beneficial to use both data collection methods.	*Yes - synchronous*	*No - asynchronous*
Are you expecting to have participants who lack experience communicating with other people in an online chat room environment?	Yes	
Is participants' reflexivity important to you? Are participants more likely to be engaged if they are allowed to participate on their own time?	Yes	
Are you willing to sacrifice the spontaneity of an interactive conversation to allow for reflexivity or to accommodate participants' schedules?	Yes	
Does your retention plan allow you to contact participants who do not log into an asynchronous data collection tool within an agreed-on period of time?	NA	

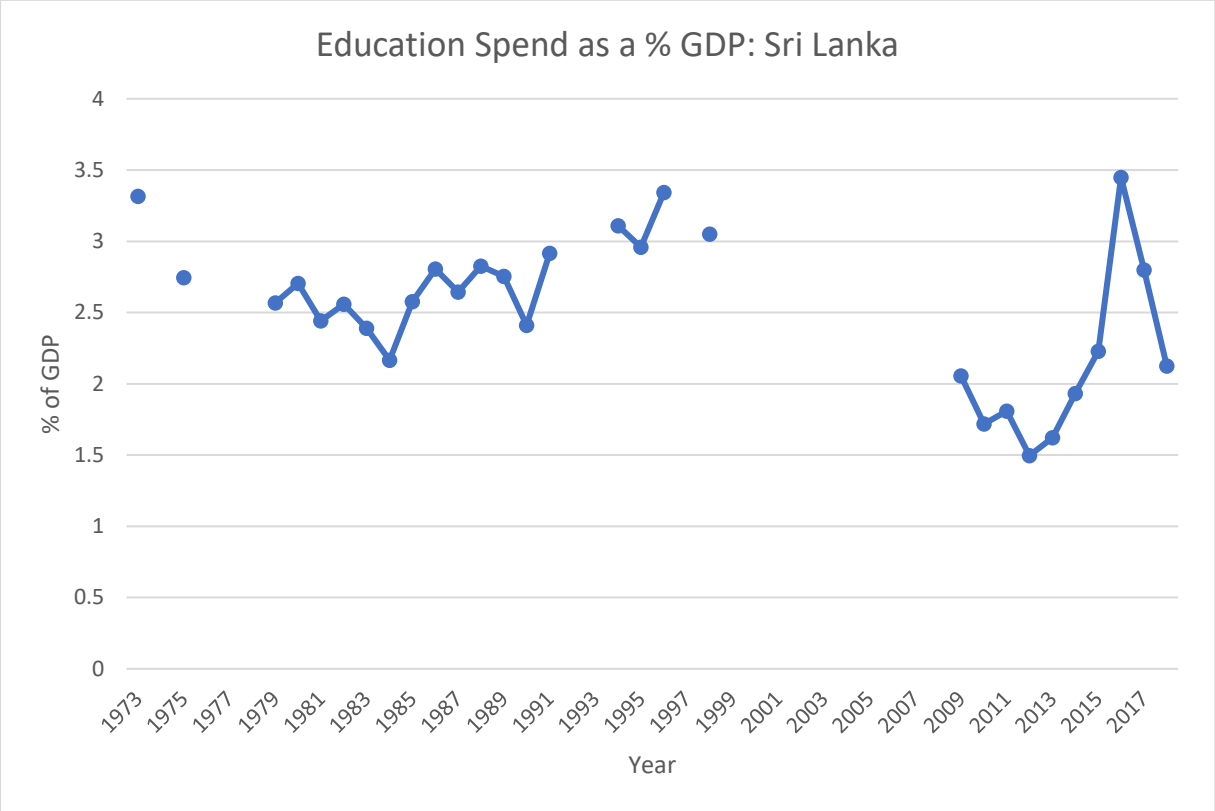
Are you confident that if your retention plan is implemented appropriately, participant dropout will be minimal?	NA	
Is the use of the constant-comparative method critical to your study design?	Yes	

Appendix M: Education Spend in Sri Lanka

The following figure (Figure 6) plots the spending on education as a percentage of GDP in Sri Lanka. The data were obtained from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (World Bank, 2020).

Figure 6

Education spending as a percentage of GDP: Sri Lanka

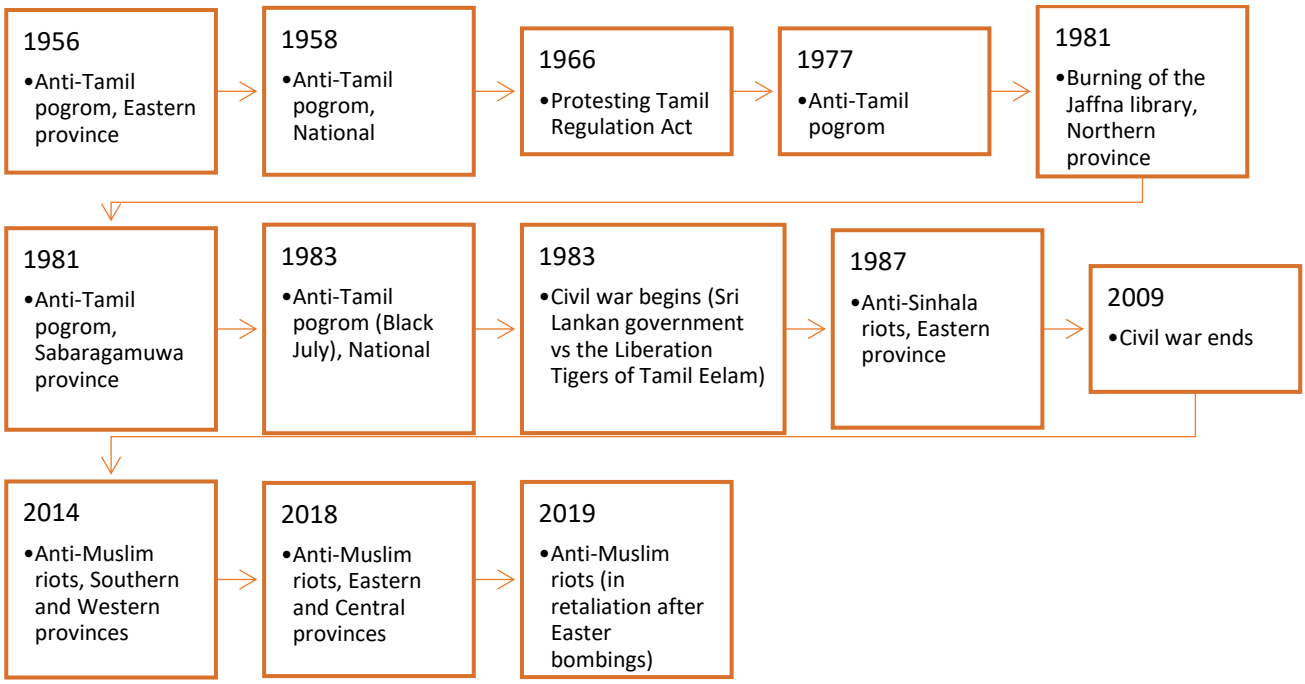


Appendix N: Ethnic Issues in Sri Lanka

A brief timeline of some of the major ethnic conficts in Sri Lanka since independence is given in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7

Conflict in Sri Lanka: A timeline



Sri Lanka: State oppression of minorities – selected readings

- Report: Sri Lanka's North I: The Denial of Minority Rights by International Crisis Group https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/sri-lanka-s-north-i-denial-minority-rights
- Article: Two Years After Easter Attacks, Sri Lanka's Muslims Face Backlash by United States Institute of Peace https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/04/two-years-after-easter-attacks-sri-lankas-muslims-face-backlash
- Article: Rights of Sri Lankan Muslims Need International Protection by Human Rights Watch https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/02/rights-sri-lankan-muslims-need-international-protection

- Report outline: The Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka – A Historical and Sociopolitical Outline https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/727811468302711738/pdf/677060WP00PUBL0io0political0Outline.pdf
- Article: Sri Lankan Black July By R. Hoole for The Colombo Telegraph https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/sri-lankas-black-july-borella-24th-evening/