Nimruji Jammulamadaka
Shoaib Ul-Haq   *Editors*

Managing the Post-Colony South Asia Focus

Ways of Organising, Managing
and Living

Springer

Managing the Post-Colony

Series Editors

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This book series is a landmark in critical and postcolonial studies in management and organisation studies, offering a geographically and theoretically comprehensive exploration of managing the post-colony. Geographical comprehensiveness is achieved through the location-specific focus of each volume, and theoretical comprehensiveness by going beyond the textual/representationalist biases of the current field towards a more diverse theoretical base, and a strong empirical focus on managerial and organising practices.

The series uses geohistorical location as an organising device (a diverse and contested epistemic space) from which to produce knowledges about the diversity of experience and practice of management and organisations. It builds and supports contemporary theoretical and empirical understandings of managing and organising beyond the Anglo-Saxon and Global Northern location of the current field.

Key themes covered in the series include:

- Postcolonial experiences
- Decolonial aspirations
- Management systems, processes and practices
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- International business concerns
- Governance practices
- Organisations and organising practices
- Leadership styles, practices
- Indigenous knowledges
- Business conceptions, ideals
- Business-society-environment relationships
- Non-profit and community organising
- Managing workplaces
- Resistance practices
- Emerging economies.

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*Narayana Samarambham, Vyasa Sankara
Madhyamam, Asmad Aacharya Paryantam,
Vande Guruparamparam I bow to thee, the
teachers and the teaching traditions since
times immemorial*
—Nimruji Jammulamadaka

*To my beloved late Sheikh, Qulzm e faiyoozat
Maulana Akram Awan, who made me who I
am today*
—Shoaib Ul-Haq

Series Preface

Managing the Post-Colony. Three words. The first, a verb, a part of familiar everyday (English) vocabulary. The last, a noun, of fairly peculiar disciplinary usage, held together by an innocuous definite article—*the.* The phrase comes into and eludes grasp, all at once.

Seen from the perspective of *management*, a modern discipline which has become the most sought-after professional practice and academic discipline globally (Steyaert et al. 2016; Pfeffer and Fong 2002), the phrase *Managing the Post-Colony* implies a *management practice* that operates on the post-colony. The discipline's self-fashioning and evolution as a body of knowledge and practices have occurred largely in contrast with and opposition to the colloquial sense of 'managing' as getting by, or coping with everyday vicissitudes involving the production and distribution of goods and services. In her book *What Management Is,* which *Business Week* called the year's best book on management in 2002, Joan Magretta (former editor at *Harvard Business Review*) explains that: "Management is a discipline. Once mastered it will help you to navigate the external shifts in the business environment and those internal to your own organisation" (Magretta and Stone 2013: x). From this perspective, the post-colony appears as the ground, the substrate on which this disciplinary practice performs its operations, and enacts a kind of mastery. In this sense, "underneath all the theory and the tools, underneath all the specialized knowledge, lies a commitment to performance that has powerfully altered our economy and our lives" (ibid: 7). Seen from the perspective of the *post-colony*, management may appear as a distinctly Western, Eurocentric modern discipline that has invaded "every sphere of human activity, from the deeply personal to the public, from market to government, social sector to civil society" (Jammulamadaka 2019: 1) often displacing and silencing diverse ways of managing and organising around the world. This realisation begs the question: How do we reclaim and liberate ourselves from this disciplinary invasion? And in turn, how do diverse (alternative) ways of managing and organising (co-)exist, resist and flourish, especially in relation to ongoing struggles to reclaim stolen or settled lands or revitalise customary practices amongst Indigenous peoples in 'post-colonial' societies?

It is these epistemic, political and material questions that emerge, in contextually distinct ways, in the tense and paradoxical coming together of *post-colony* and *management*, of everyday praxis and theoretical discipline. They form the subject matter of this book and the broader canvass of this book series. The post-colony is not a mere substrate, an empty geography that provides economic inputs such as land, labour and other natural resources as factors of production into organisations that are being managed. Post-colony is a spatio-temporal moment and location that came into existence with Columbus's '*discovery*' of America in 1492. This moment arguably brought into being colonisation of diverse worlds, a set of violent and interconnecting structural, social and psychical processes that continue into the present day, pervading the whole world, despite the political independence of several colonies post World-War II. This spatio-temporal moment and place is home to the vast majority of the world's peoples for thousands of years. To recognise the majority world in this way potentially shifts attention from the word *managing* in the phrase *Managing the Post-Colony* to *post-colony*, that spatio-temporal moment of life and living of peoples after colonisation.

Some clarification of our use of the terms postcolonial and decolonial is needed since both represent key and contemporary rubrics and debates with which management and organisational scholars have engaged to think through the questions we raised above. To be clear, they are not the only rubrics and debates in the humanities and social sciences that address questions of colonial pasts and presents, but they are common coordinates for such work in our discipline. They are neither singular perspectives (more an umbrella of ideas), nor uncontested (Jack et al. 2011), but they do furnish a point of departure for our work here. Within the disciplinary genealogies of postcolonial and decolonial scholarship and practice, there exist several debates and nuances. First, there are geo-epistemic differences between postcolonial and decolonial traditions—questions of the provenance of ideas, their authors, and the kinds of knowledges, experiences and voices they privilege. Postcolonial studies, broadly speaking, initially emerged from the work of (literary) theorists inspired by Marxist, postmodernist and poststructuralist critiques such as Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Ranajit Guha and others, many of whom are of South Asian origin. Writings on decolonisation necessarily span a wide range of locations and experiences, including, for example, diverse and prominent African anti- and decolonial writings and actions such as those of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Nelson Mandela or Achille Mbembe. Decolonial critique has also been prominently and particularly shaped by a range of works by South American scholars inspired by liberation theology and dependency theory such as Anibal Quijano, Enrique Dussel, Walter Mignolo, Gloria Anzaldúa and others. Considered as epistemic movements for the purposes of this contrast, whereas decolonial perspectives broadly aim at 'other detaching' from the modern-colonial world system and modern Western enlightenment epistemologies through delinking, epistemic disobedience and border thinking/doing and enabling the co-existence of plural worlds, postcolonial perspectives broadly aim to uncover and articulate Eurocentrism and the parochial limits of modern global knowledge systems. Furthermore, whereas decolonial traditions combine both praxis and theoretical activity, postcolonial work

has been largely focussed on theoretical critiques. There exist other differences as well (see Sauerbronn, et al. 2021 for a good overview and comparison), but we would like to pause here to focus attention not on their differences but their shared concerns and similarities.

Postcolonial and decolonial traditions share a concern with the Eurocentrisms of the modern world and its knowledge systems, and both posit ethico-political questions. Both pay attention to the subaltern who has been excluded, both seek to provincialise Europe, and both have engaged with the work of practitioners of anticolonial objects albeit within different geographic vicinities such as MK Gandhi, Frantz Fanon, Wamán Poma de Ayala, José Carlos Mariátegui, Aimé Césaire, Albert Memmi, L. S. Senghor, Awa Thiam, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti (see el-Malik 2013) amongst many others. We therefore take the stance of solidarity and deep interconnections as those among family relations in approaching post- and decolonial traditions. We practice the argument we have made elsewhere that preoccupying ourselves with differences amongst them is itself a consequence of Eurocentric epistemic concern. Practical political and strategic decolonising concerns are better served, we aver, by bringing together post- and decolonial traditions and moving between them as a space of shared concern and productive tensions (Jammulamadaka et al. 2021).

The term *post-colony* itself and the tricky hyphen needs clarification. Without the hyphen, the the term postcolonial has been conventionally used to refer to a theoretical corpus of historical and literary works, while the hyphenated post-colony has been used to indicate a historical moment (or moments), after the end of formal colonisation, i.e. political independence. Many postcolonial scholars, and their critics, have struggled with the use of the hyphen, since it may be taken to suggest that forms and practices of colonisation have affected only certain places of this world and further, that independence spelled the end of colonisation. That there is now a world 'beyond' colonialism (and other forms of economic and cultural imperialism). This historical usage has led to much debate and discontent especially given the continued realities of settler colonialism in many parts of the world, on the one hand, and associated forms of structural and systemic violence and ongoing dispossession of native lands. On the other, it has been challenged by scholars and activities who underscore and illuminate the continuing colonial encounter in various spheres—epistemic, cultural, economic, social, linguistic. We recognise these debates and agree with these criticisms, in our conscious and provocative use of the hyphenated term 'post-colony'. It is meant to provoke.

In conceiving this book series, we have been influenced by a range of thinkers, and in particular the ideas of Anibal Quijano, Walter Mignolo and others who recognise *coloniality* as constitutive of modernity and modernity's dark side and *decoloniality*, *not* as the after of colonisation but as synchronous with coloniality. That is to say, we come with an invitation through this book series to view the world as coloniality/modernity/decoloniality. From this view, our use of the term post-colony signifies a spatio-temporal moment that marks the space-time *after the beginning* of colonisation, from where and when the co-existence of coloniality/modernity/decoloniality happens. The spatio-temporal moment of the post-colony spans the whole world. We therefore use the hyphen to draw attention to

the fact that colonialism has affected *the whole world* and in fact is constitutive of modernity (Mignolo 2000). Thus, what we collectively and strategically refer to as a 'global society' is a site of continuing and reinvented forms of coloniality (including in/of the contemporary 'West'), in which managerialism, and neoliberal modes of management and organising play a key role.

In using the singular post-colony, we are not endorsing the post-colony as a disembodied, decontextualised, universal, abstract spatio-temporal moment. Instead we understand the post-colony as a historically and geographically situated and embodied experience produced through the deep recursivity of material-institutional structures. We wish to recognise this deep situatedness and historicity and diversity of colonial experiences around the world—from settler colonialism to institutional colonialism, to Orientalism to racial and gender apartheid to neo-colonialism. We therefore refrain from using the simplistic plural post-colonies. Instead we approach the initial volumes in this book series through a geographical (better, perhaps, geo-historical, or geo-political) lens, organising edited volumes by locations. Common to all forms of colonisation around the world has been the subjugation of local ways of knowing, thinking, living, managing and organising. Through this geographic focus we intend to engage with locations in deeper ways through this book series, unpacking and illuminating its interactions and intersections with diverse ways of managing and organising.

The context for this book series sees increasing calls for, and much greater visibility globally, the decolonisation of academia. Imperatives to decolonise the university—its structure, curricula, administration—have been gathering momentum in recent years such that it is well and truly 'back on the agenda', as Mbembe (2016) notes. Some of 'the market acceptance' of decolonisation has become a source of wariness and unease amongst decolonising practitioners and scholars (Bhambra et al. 2020; Mbembe 2016) because of its putative co-optation by colonising neoliberal structures and process. In a recent assessment of decolonising management and organisational knowledge along with other colleagues, we noted that "the project of decolonising MOK has proceeded unevenly, heterogeneously and within limits,… scholarship on decolonising seems to remain largely concerned with highlighting the coloniality and Eurocentricity of MOK" (Jammulamadaka et al. 2021: 722), "even as Business Schools [where the discipline of management resides] in diverse locations function as contested sites of neocolonialism and expansion of Western neoliberal perspectives" (Ibid: 717). In part, these concerns may also echo cautions that post- and decolonial perspectives may themselves be considered inappropriate and/or inadequate (Greedharry and Ahonen 2015), notably for work and analysis in/of erstwhile colonies (Jammulamadaka et al., 2021), and that they have yet to manifest in concrete praxis. It is here, in this intersection of praxis-theory, that this book series inserts itself, as a way of practicing management theory and a theorising of the praxis of producing management knowledge to decolonise management and organisation studies.

Notwithstanding the flowering of post- and decolonial management studies within the broader management discipline, some 'post-colony' locations have often been subsumed under the rubric 'emerging economies', emerging from a colonial history

and now challenging traditional nodes of power in the global system notably through their MNC firm strategies (Hoskisson et al. 2013). Alongside growing recognition of the pragmatic ecological limits of a precarious planet, new mental models are required to better understand and learn from the economic and social experiences of these 'emerging markets', post-colonial locations.

It is our praxistical assertion that critique of Eurocentrism and neoliberal extractive management is a necessary but not sufficient condition for change. With the firm belief that nature abhors a vacuum, in the absence of other ways of thinking and doing managing and organising, our extant management discipline will continue to prevail and flourish despite all its toxicities. The creation of such mental models and practices has to be necessarily accompanied by decolonising extant models and practices as well as creating new models by interpretively reclaiming and recuperating ways of managing and organising implicit in diverse modes of living, livelihoods and working around the world. In advancing this agenda of "managing the post-colony" as creating and/or recovering models and ways of managing and organising that lie outside the epistemic West, we are cautious of falling into an Orientalist time warp of regressive atavisms, fundamentalist identitarian nativisms or postmodernist relativisms and hybridities. Instead, we abide by and encourage solidarities of border consciousness which recognise the dynamics of native and Western structures and seek to forge better places that transcend these reductive and definitional native-west binaries.

With these ethico-political aspirations, and material sensibilities, in mind, this book series intends to bring to you cutting-edge, critical, interdisciplinary, and geographically and culturally diverse perspectives on the contemporary nature, experience and theorisation of managing and organising under conditions of coloniality/modernity/decoloniality. We therefore necessarily take a broad view of what management, organisation, managing and organising is, as a noun, a verb, as a concept and as praxis. We use these terms to denote a wide spectrum of ideas and practices, ranging from post-colonial experiences, decolonial aspirations, management systems, processes and practices, globalisation impacts, international business concerns, governance practices, organisations and organising practices, entrepreneurial ventures, managing water and other natural resources, leadership styles, practices, Indigenous knowledges, business conceptions, ideals, business-society-environment relationships, non-profit and community organising, managing workplaces, resistance practices, emerging economies and the list may go on. Through this book series, we explore questions such as

- What diverse ways of managing and organising exist in post-colonial locations?
- How might these diverse knowledges and practices for managing and organising be linked to conditions of post-coloniality or decoloniality?
- What forms of contemporary colonisation, imperialism and anti-colonial resistance might be at play?
- What is shared, and what is context-specific, about managing and organising in the post-colony across different locations?

With openness to form, structure and presentation, we envision this book series as a dialogue, a co-construction with kindred spirits—workers and dreamers. With the desire to engage and invigorate this field of inquiry, we are structuring the volumes to provide space for contributions from young/early career/scholars new to this field, as well as from those working beyond the university. We hope that from the labours—authorial, editorial, and of those whose managing and organising is studied and represented in the pages of this volume and others—new lines of inquiry, praxis, resistance and transformation of colonising structures in the post-colony will emerge.

Series Editors

Kolkata, India   Nimruji Jammulamadaka
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Foreword

Rethinking the Post-Colony: A Challenge for Organisational Theory

One of the welcome developments in organisational scholarship over the last few decades is that it is no longer outrageous to contend that the mainstreams of our fields have often extrapolated from western experiences to develop theoretical constructs that are deemed universally applicable. The book in front of you not only critiques such an intellectual regime for delegitimizing the perspectives and knowledges of non-Western societies, but also dares to offer an alternative. To that extent, it is most welcome.

Such a perspective has a long prehistory. Anti-colonial activists across Africa, Asia and Latin America had been conscious of the role played by European knowledge—even 'scientific' knowledge—in reproducing and legitimating colonial power relations; that is, of the 'epistemic violence' of colonialism. Clearly, the violence of colonialism wasn't merely epistemic. Many of the anticolonial activists articulated their political and philosophical thoughts while incarcerated for their 'seditious' activities (e.g. Jawaharlal Nehru and Nelson Mandela), in the midst of military campaigns (e.g. Simon Bolivar and Frantz Fanon) or on the run (e.g. Che Guevara). The radical philosophies of praxis of these activists/scholars became the foundation of much of the scholarship undertaken under the banner of "postcolonial studies."

This new scholarly field provided a space for critical scholarship on the politics of culture and discourse from across the world. To be sure, it has been less successful in linking directly to the material conditions under which many of the dispossessed subjects of the global South actually labour, but that is generally true of almost all of academia. What postcolonial scholarship has been good at is bridge-building; in essence, it has fostered an international community of scholars of culture and power in the same way in which a community of anti-imperialist social scientists had emerged in the 1950s and 1960s.

Starting with the pioneering work of Edward Said, a global critical scholarship on culture and (post)colonialism emerged which—through syllabi, edited volumes and

conferences—brought together, under one theoretical umbrella, the work of anticolonial scholar-activists such as Albert Memmi and Léopold Senghor from Africa, Franz Fanon and Aimé Césaire from the Caribbean, M. K. Gandhi and Subhas Chandra Bose from colonial India, and several others. A new generation of critical scholars of colonialism emerged in the 1980s as leading lights within this new field, among them Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Partha Chatterjee and Gloria Anzaldua, to name a few. Concerned with articulating an anti-colonial epistemological framework, they creatively engaged with the work of theorists such as Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan, developing a variety of anti-colonial perspectives that sought to restore agency to those who continued to labour under newer forms of colonial and imperialist oppression.

The privileging of the epistemological over the ontological realm is an artefact of postcolonial theory, perhaps of theory in general, but it does provide a distinct platform for activists to articulate their struggles against global capital. At its best, it legitimises and honours the efforts of those activists whose principled opposition to the forces of capital remain unrecognised by the traditional theories of their time.

That is not to say that responses to this emergence need to be always celebratory. Critiques of the postcolonial position from a right-wing space are not interesting to me, but their interlocutors from a critical perspective must be mentioned, for they make very important points. For instance, in recent years the sociologist Vivek Chibber has observed how a preoccupation with "difference" by postcolonialists may enable old atavisms, hamstring people's movements and legitimise the oppression of minorities in the name of enacting a non-western epistemology (Chibber 2014). If postcolonial theorists seek to remain relevant in the world of critique, they must negotiate with and respond to such critique as well.

To locate these traditions in our field, the year 1997 may be marked as the one when the term *postcolonial* began to gain traction within organisation studies, with the publication of Anshuman Prasad's article titled "Provincializing Europe: Towards a Post-Colonial Reconstruction" (Prasad 1997). Of course, this moment had its prehistory as well, which included critiques of Eurocentrism in international management research, analyses of the silencing of minority women in academic texts, critiques of seemingly emancipatory discourses such as postmodernism from the perspective of poorer nations and attempts to theorise the culpability of global capital and MNCs in the furtherance of 'pre-modern atavisms' such as female feticide (see Mir & Mir 2014 for a review). But Prasad's paper may have been the first journal publication in OS that explicitly invoked postcolonial theory within the realm of organisational studies, and sought to interrogate "Europe's claim to universality as its problematic, and to contend that any serious attempt to reorganize the past and/or the future must subvert the European appropriation of the universal" (Prasad 1997: 91).

In the nearly three decades years since then, the postcolonial analytic has seen a significant expansion in organisational studies. Despite the circumspect assertion by the editors of a decade-old special journal issue on postcolonialism that it is "still a somewhat quiet and tentative voice around the margins of orthodox MOS" (Jack et al. 2011: 275), an examination of the literature points to a flowering of sorts. A new special issue on similar issues is in the works (Jammulamadaka et al. 2021). I have

myself been part of a documenting of this phenomenon, as have been the editors of this book. But it is now time to sit back and watch with pleasure as a new generation takes over!

<div align="right">

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Acknowledgment

Praise for *Managing the Post-Colony South Asia Focus*

The power of domination is its ability to silence other ways of knowing, being and doing. *Focus on South Asia: Ways of Managing, Organising and Living* delivers a profound critique of Western management theory and its universalistic claims. But, it goes much further to advance other managements and ways of organising from the peoples and communities of South Asia.

—Stella M. Nkomo, *University of Pretoria, South Africa*

I like very much the orientation and the composition of the volume…

—Walter Mignolo, William H. Wannamaker *Professor of Literature and Romance Studies at Duke University, USA*

Very Impressive and Much Needed.

—Pushkala Prasad, *Zankel Chair Professor, Skidmore College*

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Ways of Managing, Organising and Living: Focus on South Asia

Nimruji Jammulamadaka

Abstract This chapter introduces the volume and lays the groundwork for the chapters of this book. It situates management within the context of colonization and global geopolitics and the post-colony as the spatio-temporal moment after the beginning of colonisation. It then points to the need for decolonising management by recuperating diverse and other ways of managing, organising and living in South Asia that derive from the world views of the peoples of this place. It provides an overview of South Asian colonial encounter and the trajectory of management in this part of the world. It advances the metaphor of enmeshment as a way of thinking about the development of this volume and the ways of organising it represents. It also articulates some of the geopolitics of knowledge considerations that have influenced the development of this volume.

Keywords Managing · Organising · Post-colony · South Asia · Decolonising management · Organisation · Geopolitics of knowledge

1.1 Introduction

This volume aims to articulate certain shared configurations of meanings of organising and managing in the South Asian post-colony. It is not however a proposal for South Asian Management. It is neither about the production of monolithic and homogenous knowledge about South Asia as an essentialist essence and pure difference that distinguishes South Asian management from modern Western management, nor is it about a necessarily unavoidable hybrid or third space of the postcolonial condition. It is neither about purist nativisms nor essential hybridities. Rather it is about recovering, recuperating and bringing into vogue an understanding of, and appreciation for, alternate ways of managing and organising beyond Western capitalism, that emerge from other silenced cosmologies and histories of and from South Asian post-colonies. I use post-colonies to indicate the time after the beginning of

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colonisation, not its alleged ending. The aim here is to surface invisible, silenced and buried, shared and diverse ethical imaginations, and offer points of departure for and ways of organising and managing that recognise and honour these cosmologies by bringing together, ideas, arguments and perspectives on managing and organising practices that draw from the diverse peoples of South Asia.

This volume has encouraged and necessarily pursued a broad interpretation of organising and managing practices derived from local cosmologies so as to discern the existence of these ways amidst the effects of the continuing colonial encounter and neoliberal globalisation. This plurality towards organising and managing is inspired by a feature of indigenous cosmologies and histories in South Asia where every community, often identified as *jati*, describes its own origin story called *jatipuran.* The terms *jati* and *jatipuram* appear in many languages of South Asia, and *jati* can be loosely translated into an identity community. Loosely translated as ancient story of the *jati, jatipuran, or* origin stories are different for each *jati* placing that *jati* at the center of relations within that universe. *Jatis*[1] with divergent and even contradictory *jatipurans,* have coexisted side by side, physically and metaphorically, for centuries, fostered within a plurality of cosmologies, in co-existence rather than coercion and domination. It is this self-animated plurality that arises from a tolerance to contradictions that animates this book. In these everyday tolerances to contradictions, these ways of life relate more to praxis of border consciousness proposed by Mexican origin American Chicana feminist Anzaldua (2012), than they do to Western capitalist cosmology.[2] In this sense, this book on *Ways of Organizing, Managing and Living* is a manner of decolonising management.

1.2   Management and Organization, Its Critiques and Alternatives: Taking Stock

The self-fashioning of management as a scientific discipline takes shape within narratives about Western industrial revolution. Anchored in social sciences, the broad ontological and epistemic contours of its theories and practices are aimed at maximising cost efficiencies and shareholder value. Virtually every other kind of managing taking shape in every other spatio-temporal location, is identified by a prefix, whether Japanese management or Indian management (Jammulamadaka 2016a). This disciplinary narrative reinforces Western (broadly North American) management and market managerialism as the norm aiding the spread of these Western "managerialist discourses and practices into ever more remote and hitherto marginal corners of

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[1] Jatis and Jatipurans have been invented here as English plural forms of the vernacular words jati and jatipuran.

[2] , Ayn Rand's, (the philosopher-novelist) observation that "there are not contradictions" in her novel Atlas Shrugged can be understood as an illustration of this cosmology, without getting into the details of Western cosmology and philosophy. Refering to popular philosophy rather than scholarly accounts of Western philosophy is deliberate and part of the unsettling move of this volume.

the world" (Murphy 2008, p. 18). With the post World-War II shift in geo-political power, export of US-led management via Ford Foundation appeared as part of US soft power strategy of continuing global imperial dominance. The end of Cold-War which left US as the sole super power paved way for unbridled spread of extractive global management through transnational corporations and their global value chains which are now responsible for generating more and more of the world's income (Saito 2013).

US-led imperial globalization, it has been suggested, has been challenged by a shift in the locus of economic activity and power to so-called *emerging economies* and BRICS (Saito et al. 2013; WTO 2013; Nayyar 2016). The rise of the Rest has been one of the most phenomenal changes since 1950s (Amsden 2001; Zakaria 2011). The share of the Rest in global manufacturing output increased from one twentieth to one fifth between 1965 to 1995 (Amsden 2001). Between 1980 and 2011, developing economies led by China and India raised their share in world exports from 34 to 47% and their share in world imports from 29 to 42% (WTO 2013). At this time, share of developed economies dropped sharply from 66 to 53%. Studies of World Bank, IMF and OECD suggest that GDPs in the Rest are growing faster, benefitting from neoliberal global capitalism and contributing to a larger share of world economy and that this has been happening for the first time since 1700s. OECD (Johansson et al. 2012) and other studies estimate that at the current rate of growth, the Rest will overtake developed world in next 25–30 years. The world appears to be witnessing the *re-emergence* of multiple centres outside the West almost 500 years after Columbus's 1492 so called *discovery* of America.

Notwithstanding the above, one is forced is wonder "isn't the so-called shift in locus of power an illusion?", especially because even a cursory glance at the discipline of management, or perhaps management and organisation studies (MOS), suggests that it is well and thriving as the *North American Theory of Organisation* (NATO). The difference from 1996 when Burrell (1996) pejoratively identified management as NATO and now is that qualitative and interpretative methods too have been co-opted into NATO. In this context, managerial talk of shifting locus of power and emerging markets and transforming markets appear as discourses of *managing* the post-colonies through instilling a false sense of being in control. In a sense of *déjà vu*, similar to the alleged *discovery of new worlds* by the *old worlds,* the re-emerging multiple centers globally are getting recast as *emerging markets/economies* and *transforming markets/economies* by the imperial power. Analogous to anthropology's integral role in furthering the colonial agenda, Western management furthers the reign of Western managerial imperialism globally via transnational corporations and globalising management academia.

From the perspective of the colonised, what one experiences is that strategies for *managing* the post-colony have merely mutated, reinscribing difference as a lack and professionalising management becoming the extractive, appropriative strategy. Dark and dehumanising narratives of orientalism, white man's burden and civilising mission have been replaced/repackaged as ostensibly neutral narratives of institutional voids in international management (Bothello et al. 2019), diversity and inclusion and cross-cultural management for managing people (Jack and Westwood 2009).

In this spatio-temporal moment of the post-colony, the colonial allure and grip of the white man's way has re-appeared in the guise of Western management being the most sought after and widely offered professional training globally (Durand and Dameron 2017; Pfeffer and Fong 2002; Hawawini 2016; Honig et al. 2017). This self-proclamation and re-inscription of the West as the one and only reference point for management; and NATO, as the one and only universal knowledge, has ensured that native institutions and knowledges about ways of organizing and managing in the Rest of the world remain invisible. It also means that modern Western-ised management institutions in the post-colony remain firmly tethered to US-led disciplinary concerns and practices even as this management practice is entrenching the planet in multiple crises of capitalism, making Earth more and more unlivable (Fotaki and Prasad 2015; Ghoshal 2005).

Western management's disciplinary orthodoxy has rarely if ever acknowledged its constitutive complicity with the (ongoing) colonial encounter. Critical management studies has been trying to correct this situation (these critiques will not be rehearsed here). However, the point remains that these critiques' search for alternatives and transformations to management too remain Western or eurocentric. The 2014 *Routledge Companion to Alternate Organization* introducing and describing the book, explains alternatives to management in the following terms:

> explores economic and organizational possibilities which extend far beyond the narrow imagination of economists and management theorists. Chapters on co-operatives, community currencies, the transition movement, scrounging, co-housing and much more … aim … is to move beyond complaining … into … diversity of organisational possibilities. … organizing as a form of politics by other means, and one that can be driven by the values of solidarity, freedom and responsibility (Parker et al. 2014).

From the perspective of the *post-colony(s)* though, these alternates presume universality of the said values, constituting yet another *revision*, where Western worldview remains pre-eminent, revolving around a Western cosmology. The cosmologies, lives and living of the peoples of the post-colony(s), the other(s) remain absent. The trend is repeated in another critical volume on *Reinventing Management Education* (Steyaert et al. 2016), which articulates the post-colony, specifically the subaltern, as concerns for the future of management. Notwithstanding this exclusion of the post-colony from the *present* of management, it would be inaccurate and unethical not to acknowledge the fact that it is critical management that has provided an entry for and recognised the *other, the colonised* in management with its broadly inclusive nature. Critical management has also ensured space for resistances to eurocentric management to gather strength in the form of post and decolonial management in solidarity (Jammulamadaka et al. 2021).

In the years since this entry into critique, post- and decolonial perspectives have grown in importance and scholarly outputs in management (Jammulamadaka 2019; Jammulamadaka et al. 2021). These perspectives have critiqued diverse aspects of management for their eurocentrism, for instance, "institutional voids" has discursively positioned, the *emerging* Rest as inferior, and *a site of lack* needing rescue by knowledge and material interests from the outside (Bothello et al. 2019) and diversity and inclusion has become a modality of homogenization (Jack 2015; Faria 2015).

In a remarkable move, post and decolonial management scholars began critiquing critical management studies theorizing itself as eurocentric in the volume *Routledge Companion to Critical Management Studies* (Prasad et al. 2015).

These conditions of entry have however constrained the possibilities of decolonising. Epistemic and methodological fixation with particular varieties of theorizing, writing and knowledge packaging in management academia (including critique), tend to equate differentness in knowledge generation, presentation and writing with under-development of idea, argument or a polemic. These assessments compel post and decolonial to remain limited to a theoretical lens that can at best critique management (Jammulamadaka et al. 2021) and at worst subsume it within diversity and inclusion to manage market demands (Bhambhra et al. 2020). Praxistical transformations of Western management by decolonizing and decentering towards diverse managements and heterogenous ways of managing and organizing remain annoyingly beyond their scope.

In this prefix approach to post/decolonial management, the *other* of and *from* the post-colony, enters management as an exception to the eurocentric norm (Bhambra 2014), as a site of absences/lacks etc., in an implicit comparison with a Western ideal. What Escobar says in the context of understanding resistance, can be extended to include more generally management scholarship frequently even post/decolonial management:

> Studies of resistance, however, only hint at the cultures from which resistance springs. The forms of resistance and the concept itself are usually theorised in relation to the cultures of the West. It is more difficult for the researcher to learn to habitate the inner interpretative architecture of the resisting culture, which would be prerequisite for a representation that does not depend so much on Western knowledge practices (Escobar 1995, p. 168).

For instance a decolonising paper describing an indigenous community says, "….communities have limited facilities and resources" for management and organising. This paper implicitly presumes that facilities and resources are objective universals and not local, contextual social constructions intimately related to forms of organising and managing that are rooted in diverse worldviews and systems of rights and obligations (Jammulamadaka and Sharma 2019). Tendency towards implicit universalisation can be noticed in many writings of scholars from North/West as well as privileged Southerners/nonWesterners. This tendency appears to be agnostic of the geographic location or affiliation, instead it appears as a characteristic of the authors' epistemic locus of enunciation. This troublesome manner of incorporation of the *other* as a prefix into management, without interrogating the underlying presumptions, while definitely within the ambit of what is understood as post/decolonial theorising, nonetheless turns decolonising aspirations of those embodying Souths/nonWest in all geographies, into a mirage. Aspirations of provincializing Europe turn, into a mirage, because the West is deemed to be the universal context.

The *other* also tends to enter as the exotic (Schroeder and Borgerson 2008; Priyadarshini 2003). For instance, the same paper pointed above inspite of its allegiance to decolonial lens, describes the community's geographical locale invoking

its luscious green landscape, its dreamy cloud cover and high altitude.[3] Sadly, this paper, similar to many others, does not dialogue with this locale's intricate connectedness with life, living and managing praxis of the community. Instead, the locale is relegated to a tepid background, a tourist brochure status. This further reinforces the troublesome prefix mode of incorporating other, in the absence of any equivalent descriptions about locales in the West in management writing. The absence of equivalent descriptions, is presumably because contextual knowledge of West itself is (or has to be) universal. But the presumption is fallacious. Those located outside the West (both geographic and epistemic), privileged others like me, or the subaltern others, do not know what it means to see the West and would have appreciated a similar description, even if touristy, of those locales, but the descriptive endeavour is not reciprocal! The other does not merit the status of a reader, or a thinker, only one of a passive consumer! Not only the producer, creator and author of knowledge, even the informed reader of management knowledge is Western. Decolonising management occurs within this global coloniality/modernity.

1.3 Post-colony: Recuperating Alternate Managements as Decolonising

Given that the post-colony, as the spatio-temporal moment and location after colonization is all-pervasive, it might appear fool hardy to attempt decolonizing management. But one needs to draw inspiration and energy from the fact that decolonization is not the after of colonization. It is contemporaneous. Decolonisation has in fact been occurring since 1492 as a necessary corelate of colonization in various guises and forms around the world. As Maldonaldo-Torres (2011) explains in his essay, the more appropriate way to recognize the condition of post-colony would be coloniality/modernity/decoloniality.

Historically, decolonial and anti-colonial struggles against colonial extractive empires have been driven by embodied epistemic critiques of colonial rule as well as through alternate indigenous political mobilisations. The Santhal rebellion, Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army, swadeshi movement, non-cooperation movement are some examples of such mobilisations in South Asia. Cueing this insight into the empire of management suggests that decolonising requires not only theoretical critiques of Western management as is currently practiced (Jammulamadaka et al. 2021), but also the generation of alternate indigenous and other managements and organisations. Despite epistemic resistances and critiques, in the absence of alternate other articulations of management with corresponding ways and meanings of

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[3] I have kept this paper anonymous as the intent is not to injure or undermine the authors. I am uncomfortable singling out the writing of a paper this way here, because I recognise that this paper seeks to give voice to the *other* and weave their context back into MOS theorising and overcome the objective, third person universal world view of Western epistemology and therefore needs to be heard.

organising and managing; the empire of Western management will have an uninterrupted universal reign, a fact evident in management theorising on and from the nonWest that incorporates the nonWest as a mere geographic location, not as a way of living, thinking and being. This book therefore goes beyond providing theoretical critiques of Western management, to advance other managements in the form of shared configurations of meanings and ways of organizing, managing and living in the South Asian post-colonies.

In articulating shared configurations of meanings and ways of organising and managing in South Asia, this essay, this volume and its putting together is concurrently a decolonising praxis and theorising of management. In this sense it is what the decolonial scholars Mignolo and Walsh (2018) call praxistical theory, or theoretical praxis. It is decolonising management through recovering and recuperating the knowledges of ways of organising and managing, that have been silenced in and denied by Western management. These knowledges and ways are neither petrified nor immutable, nor are they monolithic. While they pre-date the colonial encounter, they have also been reconstituted by it, yet, not fully determined by it. As such these knowledges and ways have survived and reside in community histories, ethics, social and political lives, infrequently written, largely unwritten, continuing as cultures, customs and oral and personal memories.

This book thus effects a departure in management, by studying such managing and organising practices as cultures, where culture is a way of being, with its meanings attending to, shifting and contingent on lived practice. Through this book I endeavour to unpack the laminae and textures of meanings of allegedly simplistic and jejune ways of organising and managing. This perspective does not subordinate business practices to rational economic calculation or to spiritual texts, in a social and epistemic hierarchy but looks at the textures of meanings and fluid hierarchies of community practices and structures in ongoing social life of which commerce, economics, religion and politics all are integral and transposable dimensions. This is not to suggest that the chapters of this book do away with the role of religion, faith, scripture and custom in organising and managing. Instead, the chapters differ in not seeing religion and faith as separate and sanctifying operations on management and economy, but as a constitutive intrinsic feature of native organising; where religion remains indistinguishable from commerce or politics (or vice versa), where all come together at once, in living, managing and management. In reading and interpreting the structuring, ordering and functionalist meanings of cultures of organising and managing, I hope to be able to de-exoticise, and de-romanticise cultures.

This said, it is also important to note that while conceptualizing the post-colony as an all-pervasive spatio-temporal moment is inspiring and empowering, it also tends to make the other into an abstract, homogenising the colonial condition and colonial encounter around the world. In this sense, it makes it difficult for us to recover and recuperate silenced knowledges, cultures and ways of managing and organizing because these are contextually shaped. "All known organizations of people- civilisations, kingdoms or cultures- create and transfer knowledge and understanding of their own praxis of living" (Mignolo and Walsh 2018, p. 137). It is well recognized by historians, anthropologists and scholars of post and decolonial persuasion that while

the colonial encounter in the abstract has great similarities, in its empirical mani-festations through different European imperial powers- Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, in different parts of the world around Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe and Australia it has taken different forms (Kaltmeier et al. 2011; Madison 2007). The brutality of the encounter has varied in different geographic locations.

While in some places it was marked by widespread extermination and dispos-session of native peoples and populations such as in Americas and Australia with settler colonialism, it presented itself through slave trade enslaving Africa, racial apartheid, along with bureaucratisation for managing the colony's resources-physical and human. In Asia, this bureaucracy was vastly elaborated with colonial adminis-trations and interventions into every aspect of life and living, not just in the present, but also the past. The past (and through it the future) was managed through the inven-tion of Orientalism in Asia. The discourse of Orientalism (not Said's book) served as a way of simultaneously using the colonized and also displacing them from the narrative of the native society.

These empirical presentations of colonization on the one hand, varied according to the colonial power's interest and agenda in the colony, and on the other in their interactions with diverse cosmologies of the colonized during the colonial encounter. As Nandy (1983) has explained, everywhere these encounters interacted with native cultures and sub-cultures, releasing and invigorating those native sub-cultures that resonated with colonial violences while also silencing other sub-cultures. These rein-vigorated sub-cultures in post-colony, assisted and aided by colonial institutional regimes displaced and/or even reconstituted colonized societies significantly engen-dering multiple perversions in their wake. Some very easily recognizable displace-ments and reconstitutions pertain to gender relations and socio-economic relations of society.

For instance as regards gender relations, Oweyumi (1997), Nandy (1983), Walsh (2016) and others have shown that colonial encounter has aligned with native viru-lent masculinity, replacing more fluid customary ancient androgynies (Nandy 1976; Verma 2018; Sangari and Vaid 1990) (not to be confused with the current LGBTQ discourses). On the one hand, in nonWestern societies the feminine is considered powerful and thinking (Nandy 1976; Simpson 2011) unlike West's stripping women of their reason (Plumwood 1993). On the other, ancient pre-colonial low impact patriarchies and masculinities were reconstituted through combining with "Western perverse patriarchy of coloniality/modernity" to constitute contemporary systems of gendered exploitation and brutality in colonized societies (Walsh 2016; Mignolo and Walsh 2018; Sangari and Vaid 1990; Verma 2018). It is worth recalling here that Nandy (1983) points to how recovering the self requires thinking of timelessness as the proper difference from a Western sense of time. Similarly, Catherine Walsh (2016, p. 42) suggests a different way of understanding gender, gender's otherwise, "not just against gender, but … importantly beyond its heterosexual and hierarchical ideological matrix … [to] destabilise, undermine, transgress and interrupt [them]; with practices that create, and …. call forth the spiritual and creative energies of the androgynous".

Similarly, colonial, imperial capitalist revenue systems, property rights and legal systems have disrupted interdependent, balancing mechanisms of customary practices of wealth generation, trade and production relations replacing them with rapacious Western capitalist practices (Birla 2009). Land and other resource ownership has been redefined through European law misrecognizing and miscategorising customary rights and obligations (Appell 1995; Prakash 2003; Sengupta 1980). Business and mercantile laws have illegalized and disrupted customary mechanisms of countervailing power and resource management opening up ways for unbridled exploitation on the one hand and resource scarcities on the other (Birla 2009; Jammulamadaka 2016b, 2018; Roy 2008).

It is only reasonable to expect therefore that these diverse displacements and manifestations of the colonial encounter in the post-colony, would have deep and differentiated impacts on native organizing and managing practices. Doing justice to recuperating native organizing and managing practices requires us to pay attention to these different formative experiences of management in diverse locales of post-colony. It is therefore that this book focuses on managing and organizing practices in one sub continental region that shares a host of similar colonial experiences—South Asia. In popular lore, it is common to think of sub-continental South Asia or even India as a colonial construction. However it would serve us well to recall that for centuries prior to colonial encounter, a sense of shared lives, cultures and histories has prevailed in the region despite astounding diversity.

1.4 South Asia Post-colony

The Indian Ocean region of South Asia is a landmass of great diversities and shared histories. Comprising seven modern, low to middle-income nation-states of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, this region is home to about a fifth of the world's population. The memories of this region among its people date back thousands of years. The intersections of geographies and histories of South Asia reveal accounts of vibrant, rich, diverse communities that have cradled multiple faiths, spiritualisms and unique social structures and contingent hierarchies, notably caste and *jati*. I refrain from reproducing encyclopaedic facts and figures of demographic, socio-economic and geographic profiles of the seven nations of South Asia. In my view, such an effort aligns with the interests of international and cross-cultural business that focuses on differences and relative (dis)advantages of these for capitalism, rather than the sensibility of the post-colony and its human preoccupations. Instead, I provide here a glimpse of the colonial encounter to set the backdrop against which the chapters of this book unfurl.

This glimpse is necessarily brief and partial, touching upon definitive moments and institutional interventions of the colonial encounter that have impacted managing and organizing in South Asia. In engaging with South Asia rather than specific countries of South Asia, I seek to recover that sense of wholeness, and shared histories and

memories of and in diversity that had once defined this region, before its dismemberment into seven mutually exclusive, antagonistic nation-states—it is no co-incidence that India-Pakistan-Afghanistan is seen as one of the most volatile hotspots of a nuclear world! I am underscoring the wounds from the arbitrary division of peoples and societies into modern nation-states.

I am not positing any essential cultural superiority of South Asia nor suggesting that the pre-colonial moment was an Eden of virtue and non-violence. Societies of South Asia, carry practices and potentials of both good, bad and greys, just as societies elsewhere. They also bear the residues of conflicts, big and small, between multiple native kingdoms and rulers, as also the conflicts between different imperial powers amongst themselves and with natives.

Popular impressions see Asia's colonization as separate from colonization of Americas. Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese allegedly *discovered*[4] the sea route to India in 1497, just 5 years after Columbus allegedly *discovered* America, yet in common perception, South Asia's colonial encounter is seen as a story of 200 years of British Empire starting from the eighteenth century. These perceptions themselves are manifestations of a eurocentric history devoid of colonies. South Asia with a much larger population than either Western Europe or Americas, and several months of sailing distance from Europe, was in a sense better equipped to resist colonization than the indigenous of Americas. The native social structures and modes of political governance in South Asia, made direct seizing of land relatively difficult. Thus, commerce established the basis of colonial rule by European imperial powers- Dutch, British, Portuguese, French—native goods in exchange for the gold and silver that were looted from the Americas (not European commodities) (Madison 2007). Portuguese were the earliest colonisers in sixteenth century, turning parts of present day Sri Lanka, and Western and Southern India into colonies. The Dutch became the prominent colonial power in the early part of seventeenth century accounting for almost half of Asian trade at that time. Britain was a minor player in the sixteenth century colonial empire. But after the Battle of Plassey in 1747, British East India company gained power from the Nawab of Bengal and Mughal rulers, displacing Dutch and other imperial powers from South Asia. Portuguese, Dutch, French, Austrians and other dominions were reduced to small enclaves in pockets of the Indian subcontinent (Madison 2007).

The Indian subcontinent had seen several invasions prior to colonisation. Many of these invasions, did not enter deep into the socio-cultural-economic-political fabric of the society, especially the villages which have constituted the heartland of this region. Owing to the decentralised administrative, governance mechanisms and relations of tribute within South Asia, despite invasions, native society and social structures at the local and village level were largely able to continue to function uninterrupted for several centuries (Mookerji 1919). Politically and economically, these invasions implied a change in the recipients of tributes and taxation, rather than a complete overhaul of administrative control. Mughal rule did bring in some administrative

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[4] Discovered, in the sense that the knowledge of these lands to the people who live there does not count as knowledge. We in South Asia also pay homage to these discoveries of us.

changes in regions under its control, but, these were not comparable to the scale and extent of colonial interventions. Though the role of administrative control from political conquest cannot be ruled out, in this region, wider social changes were usually driven by differences in practices of faiths and religions- multiple sects of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and other animistic faiths. Colonisation added Christianity to this heady mix of religious plurality, where Christ got incorporated into the pantheon of Gods and Goddesses of the region. But more importantly, colonisation changed the underlying administrative and politico-economic dynamic of the society.

Large parts of South Asia's wealth were agrarian or farm dependent, the strategy of just looting gold and silver adopted in Americas was therefore insufficient for colonial plunder (Madison 2007). Colonial power needed to put in place a centralised administrative regime that could capture and remit a larger value/surplus from this agrarian society (Goody 1986; Sengupta 1980). This strategy was fully exploited and taken to its zenith by the British. Through the operation of Permanent Settlement in the last decade of the eighteenth century British successfully alienated massive populations of natives from their rights to land and produce. Consequently, on the one hand, land, as the most important productive resource became concentrated in the hands of a few, on the other, taxation was shifted from the village to the land owner. This move disrupted local socio-economies, severing the long standing customary interlocked status relations within a social structure differentiated on the basis of hereditary occupations and caste (Kaviraj 2009; Mukhia 1981, 1985; Prakash 2003). Permanent Settlement was accompanied by the establishment of an administrative bureaucracy at a scale and level unprecedented even in Britain (Gupta 2012). The sub-continent served as the testing ground for some of the bureaucratic measures that were to become eventual hallmarks of Western bureaucracy. This apparatus of administration was necessitated by the fact that Britain had to manage South Asia from a distance—"*In 1820 there were more than 13 million people of European origin in the Americas. In Asia there were less than 100,000.*" (Madison 2007, P. 111). " *The British raj was operated by remarkably few people. There were only 31,000 British in India in 1805 (of which 22,000 in the army, and 2,000 in civil government). In 1931, there were 168,000 (60,000 in the army and police; 4,000 in civil government; 26,000 in the private sector, and 78,000 family dependents).*" (ibid. p. 119). Following Macaulay's (1835) astute pronouncement that the empire needed to "*form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect….*" trained bureaucrats who were Indian only in colour but British in thinking, replaced all customary administrative mechanisms aligned to caste, *jati* relations. The annihilation of native ways of managing and organising, especially those coded in customary legal systems in the subcontinent was comprehensive with the introduction of British common law from 1850s.

In an imperial sleight of hand, under the guise of efficient and meritocratic governance and administration, holistic cosmologies of South Asians that were at once public and private, at once social-political-economic-spiritual-religious; were dismembered into separate private religious-cultural and public autonomous social,

economic and political spheres. As Shoaib says in the next chapter, imagination itself was torn out into an exclusively cognitive function divorced from the spirit that made existence meaningful. This took away the life-breath out of the interlocking and interdependent grids of customary relationships. The public sphere was subject to the legal, political and economic code of self-interest maximising rational man of British common law: individual property rights, a penal code and civil code, albeit adjusted to the level of *less-than-citizen, less-than-subject, less-than-human Hindoos* as the British were known to refer to natives; and the private sphere into a fossilised invariant, noncontingent construction of personal law accompanied by the prose-lytising, civilising fervour of missionaries (Mani 1998; Pels 1997; Birla 2009). These codes accompanied by modern English education and Orientalist history, discred-ited, and rendered native institutions as inferior, illegal practices, cavalier, archaic, inefficient, inhuman, moribund and exploitative; implanting in their lieu a set of ostensibly modern, equal, meritocratic institutions which nevertheless concealed the extractive motives and dehumanising, de-spiriting basis of these implants (Jammu-lamadaka 2018; Mani 1998; Sengupta 1980). Notable here, is the particular role played by Orientalists such as William Jones and Warren Hastings in developing an Orientalism, that allowed a seamless grafting of European modernity onto Indian custom. Orientalism invented a particular kind of, *Hindu*-ised, *Brahmin*-ised casteist, hierarchical monolith version of India and its past, through use and mis-use of native scholars and scholarship, then denigrating both the knowledge and its authors, as a decaying morass of *Indian* custom, antiquated, time-less, yet anachronistic, that could only be reformed and transformed by embrace of scientific reason and modern colonial culture of merit, equality and capitalism (Mani 1998; Dodson 2007). Elite reformist nationalists subscribed into this narrative, elite traditionalist nationalists challenged it. Either way, they ensured the centrality of this colonial narrative in the subcontinent's self-definition. Alongside this homogenising and monolith-ising of South Asian societies, diverse identities of the natives notably -caste, tribe, region, language, religion, occupation, were mobilised, and even exaggerated at times, as also silenced and denied; first by British followed by the natives, in the construction of an ostensibly singular Indian colony that stretched from Afghanistan in the West to Burma (now Myanmar) and beyond in the East and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in the South, comprising some essentialist sense of *Indianness*, in lieu of the plural diverse self-definition of the subcontinent. In the next section I turn my attention specifically to managing and organising practices in South Asia against the backdrop of this continuing colonial encounter.

1.5   Managing and Organising in, From and Through South Asia

Native institutions of managing and organising in South Asia customarily existed intertwined with life. With occupations being mostly hereditary in the form of caste

and *jati* and productive activity being organised within the family, native organising and managing was difficult to segregate into a separate economic sphere. Caste and *jati* have been important organising structures governing both social conduct and occupation—a formal ritualistic structure of caste as four varnas of Brahmin, Kshyatriya, Vysya and Sudra for the savarnas (those within the caste system), as well as avarnas (those outside the caste system) and in practice as numerous *jatis* (based on language, lineage, region, occupation etc.). *Jatis* and caste are not necessarily coterminous (Gupta 2007). "The social order of castes separated the search for social prestige and cognitive powers, political and military supremacy and commercial wealth" (Kaviraj 2009, n.p.) and material comfort, along the four varnas of Brahmin, Kshyatriya, Vysya and Sudra respectively. The groups existed in relations of segmentation, interdependence and hierarchies, "generally recognised social constitution, an authoritative allocation of social roles, rewards and therefore life-trajectories which governed conduct in minute details" (Kaviraj 2009, n.p.). In principle caste hierarchies are fluid, not determined by birth alone, but over centuries, like ancient patriarchies, caste too became increasingly insular. While mobilities of individuals across caste groups were not as common, mobility of castes themselves in power and social status hierarchies were common (Dirks 2011), as also were different local hierarchies in different parts of the subcontinent (Wickramasinghe 2006; Yalman 1967). Casteism emerged as a more fossilised mechanism during the colonial encounter (Ganguly 2006) following classification and categorisation of castes into lower and upper castes during colonial rule.

Such wholistic way of living (including all its shades of greys) was more common to rural areas and coexisted alongside a collective corporate form which was more of an urban phenomenon. This corporate form variously known as *sreni, samgha, gana,* (Khanna 2005; Majumdar 1920) were guild like structures occured in an uninterrupted fashion from 800 BC to 1000 AD. *Srenis* were corporate associational structures, which worked to safe guard interests of members. Generally, occupationally differentiated, with over 30 different kinds of occupations including those of garland makers, smiths, carpenters, traders and robbers, individual *srenis* did not have exclusive control of the occupation even within a single town. They however exercised considerable oversight on the conduct of members, in the sense that members were to abide by the *sreni's* code of conduct- *sreni dharma*. Evidence suggests that members from different castes and *jatis* became members of a *sreni* (Majumdar 1920) and *sreni* also fulfilled municipal governance functions. However, this openness slowly reduced in the centuries after 1000 AD (Khanna 2005). The characteristics morphed to varying extent through interactions with external influences, cultures. The Mughal rule which began in the sixteenth century saw the emergence of small workshops and factories known as *karkhanas* which existed alongside *srenis* (Moosvi 2011). British rule, drastically altered *srenis* reducing their primary function to caste governance (Roy 2008).

Colonial delegitimization of native institutions, knowledges, organising and managing practices through both Orientalism and institutional interventions, led to notions of managing and organising taking on new meanings. Before long, British articulated the need for building capacity for modern administration and management

in the colony. In 1916, the Indian Industrial Commission set up by the crown, stated that "*to build up an industrial community capable of working such an organisation, certain positive measures were required, including the provision of industrial and technical education...*" (IIC 1916–18: p. 92). Colleges in different parts of the subcontinent took up the responsibility for vocational training and commerce education so that natives could contribute to industry. The real impetus towards management in its contemporary form came after World War II, when much of the subcontinent- India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka gained independence during 1947–48. Bangladesh separated from Pakistan in 1971. Nepal and Bhutan, the Himalayan countries have been part of the colonial encounter, however, Nepal was not formally colonised by British and Bhutan had ceded only its foreign relations to British after losing the battle in North Bengal in what is now Indian territory.

In the exercise of US's soft power in South Asia (Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990), in the early decades after independence, management education was introduced through Ford Foundation driven capacity building and institutional development projects (Hill et al. 1973; Jammulamadaka 2019). Through these projects, American business schools set up similar entities in India and Pakistan—Institute of Business Administration, Karachi in Pakistan in 1955, Institute of Business Administration under University of Dhaka, Bangladesh in 1966, and Indian Institutes of Management in India in 1961. These early institutes helped diffuse the idea that even social and rural development needs to be managed. In the subsequent decades, largely coinciding with the spread of US-led globalisation, other countries of the region got pulled into the management studies bandwagon aided by Western multilateral institutions. Sri Lanka began business management studies in the 1980s, Nepal and Maldives in 1990s, and Bhutan in the first decade of the new millennium. South Asia now hosts several thousand programs offering degrees in business and management. India contributes to a majority of these programs.

This soft power of management knowledge and education has not been uncontested. In India, by the 1970s, several scholars openly questioned the suitability of Western management approaches to the Indian psyche and ethos (Pareek 1974; Rao 2010; Chakraborty 1991, 1995; Chowdhry 1989; Phillip and Narayan 1989). While some turned to tools of psychology to unpack the Indian psyche and formulate more appropriate human resource management principles (Rao 2010; Sinha 1982), others turned to ancient scriptures to formulate a scriptural, spiritual basis of Indian management (Chakraborty 1991, 1995). Similar moves were seen in the proposals for Buddhist management and Islamic management coming from various parts of South Asia and beyond (Abuznaid 2006; Mellahi and Budhwar 2010). Common to these ethnocentric moves was the strategy of sanctifying an *other* approach to management by laying claim to a particular philosophical tenet such as *karma*, *dharma, dhamma* postulated in a scriptural authority -a religious text such as Bhagavad Gita and Quran. Here Gita came to operate as shorthand for Indian (in turn triggering criticisms of Hindu-ising and saffronising India). The approach continues to be popular into the present day, even though it has done little to dispute colonial assertions about religion, faith, lack of industry, management and organisation in South Asia.

The point here is not that religion or faith is an unsuitable basis for organising and managing. Rather, it is the very characterisation and constitution of religion as a distinct body of textual knowledge, ritualistic practices determined by an immutable central authority, that is divorced from the practices of economy, polity and culture, or life itself that is problematic in its eurocentrism. Interestingly, Prof. Ashis Nandy points out that many languages including those in South Asia, do not have a word which has the same meaning as religion has in English language.[5] The above contestations and attempts of indigenising management, play into the colonial divide separating the economic, political, cultural and spiritual. Here religious basis as scriptural authority serves to purge modern Western management of its capitalist immorality while simultaneously sanctifying the very management and organising knowledge it is contending with. The decolonial thinker Mignolo puts it succinctly, "the West has knowledge, the Rest has culture" (not knowledge) and there, the West remains the owner and author of management knowledge. The reduced religious and cultural spheres detached from economic and political dimensions are the only spaces of action available to the natives (Birla 2009). In this global hierarchy, the political and economic knowledge of management remains the possession of Western modernity. Natives can access this only by shedding their spiritual and cultural cloaks that inhibit the flourishing of capital. In this narrative, resistance to the West, implies accessing the knowledge through religion, purifying economics through natives' cultural and spiritual superiority.

Unfortunately, neither the nationalists nor management scholars of and from South Asia, have considered turning their attention outside the textual scriptural religion, to the actual organising and managing practices in vogue in society, then or now, as ideas of forms of alternate management. Through this omission, they lend sanction to the colonial narrative that has temporally teleported whatever organising and managing practices that have existed, and some of which continue to exist, into a pre-modern moment. A moment in a linearised space–time where pre-modern appears as the necessary inferior precursor to modernity, whose practices are pre-capitalist, primitive customs rife in superstitions, lacking in efficiencies and productivities, and, therefore in need of being developed and transformed to the standards of modern secular professional management.

This omission and temporal dislocation, effectively invisibilises the structural and functional meanings of the subcontinent's systems of flexible and fluid, interdependent, community-based work organisation and production that have evolved around the locus of the household, traditional occupational communities and castes. These invisible systems of work organisation which drew on dependent labour (not slave or indentured labour more familiar to Europe) and a differentiated system of property rights and obligations had managed to ensure that trade and production of goods and services (excluding agriculture), contributed to over a third of the national income during 1600s (Madison 2007: p. 123). It obfuscates from appreciation, the diverse logics, including economic logics and textures of meanings that inform the early and long-standing practices of traditional community organisations of *srenis* whose

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[5] Mentioned in personal discussion.

corporate character and functions in administration and organising production and markets for goods and services might even hold lessons for today's challenging times.

Unlike management scholars, economic historians, anthropologists and some sociologists, have researched the empirical realities of managing and organising in South Asia (Markowitz 2008; Bayly 1983; Haynes 1987; Rudner 2020). Yet as Birla (2009) explains, this research serves to validate the economic rationality of the native actor. An actor whose rationality is rescued from the spiritual and ethnic garb of communitarian organising. In this modality of analysis, culture and economy remain as distinct and autonomous systems and the analysis serves to dispel Orientalist myths and prejudices of the native as other-worldly and spiritual on the one hand, on the other, "validating culture on the grounds of its consistency with capitalist economic rationality" (2009, p. 10). Such privileging of economy and capital operates within the eurocentric cosmology of a priori autonomous spheres of economy, polity, culture, society. It is here that this book, as stated previously, differs in not using culture and religion to sanctify and purify management but as a constitutive intrinsic feature of native organising; where religion remains indistinguishable from commerce or politics (or vice versa), where all come together at once, in living, managing and organising.

As a strategy of decolonising management, this volume has encouraged and necessarily pursued a broad interpretation of organising and managing practices derived from local cosmologies so as to discern the existence of these ways amidst the effects of the continuing colonial encounter and neoliberal globalisation. The chapters in the book tend to coalesce around the idea of *enmeshments.* The mesh in enmeshment serves as multidimensional metaphor. It serves as a symbol of a net in which one is trapped, i.e., trapped in custom, family, society, community, colonial encounter, coloniality, Western onto-epistemics, Western management, and so on. The mesh also serves as a safety net through which one is protected from a free fall while one is trying to leap off to different locations, such as to realise one's potential, to transform custom, imagine new knowledges and communities, experiment, escape coloniality. Metaphorically, this essay and the book leap off to decolonize management while being entrapped in coloniality, by having the *other* at the center of its discourse, not as an exception to a universal norm.

In a sense, this volume itself can be considered an enmeshment which not only provides a safe space for us authors to recuperate and reclaim our silenced selves and our managements, but also implicates and connects all of us with the wider community of decolonising management scholars. The idea of enmeshment also refers to the active integration of the individual and the communal, rather than the subordination of the individual to the communal. Enmeshments thus refer to those decolonial ways of managing and organising that form a complex, complicated, imaginative and ethical interweaving of relationships, languages, knowledges, voices, structures, institutions, cultures, customs and memories. More details of the chapters and organisation of this volume are provided later in this essay.

1.6 Geopolitics of Knowledge: Some Intents and Implications

The challenges of decolonizing management have usually been expressed in epistemic terms pointing to differences in worldviews, philosophies as well as language of academic writing that disadvantages the other. The attention these epistemic challenges have received has been to the exclusion of aspects like absence of or limited funding for research, library resource scarcities, limited training in nonmainstream approaches of research (training is often focused on Western epistemologies), accreditation and competition driven institutional expectations on publishing in Western ranked journals (for job security), heavy teaching load leaving little time and space for research that exist in many nonWestern institutions. Focus on epistemic challenges has been at the cost of such material geo- and body political nexus and effects of knowledge. Therefore, I take a brief moment to headline some of the geo and body political intentions and implications of this volume.

a. In the absence of work generating alternate and plural managements that serve pluriversal world, one fears, the consistent theoretical critiques underscoring eurocentrism, the colonising, imperialising impulse of management, the representative politics of discourse, have become a self-fulfilling prophecy displacing the emergence of alternatives. With alternatives being subject to the same colonising apparatus of theoretical validation, post and decolonial theoretical perspectives in management and organization studies have displaced praxis (Jammulamadaka et al. 2021). It is here that this book intends to intervene and play a recuperative role. It is not about turning the tables and creating sites of pure difference or mindless hybridity, but about understanding ourselves differently as human beings, as management scholars, through different vocabularies and grammar of organising so that we may manage our ways into better worlds for all, everywhere.

b. Geopolitics of knowledge explains the implication of research practices including writing and publishing in ranked journals in producing hegemony of contemporary management knowledge. The institutional apparatus of higher education privileges publishing in Western journals while simultaneously elevating them to the only prestigious source of valid knowledge. This institutional apparatus skews towards the West, not just in authorship (Murphy and Zhu 2012) but also in having access to these published papers (as journal download statistics consistently show). Accordingly, this book and book series, has been about resisting such hegemony and intervening discursively by creating an alternate space for thinking and doing decolonizing management. Books generally have a far greater likelihood of being accessible, because they are provided by libraries and can be bought singly. Journal special issues on the other hand are often highly expensive with limited access as they are part of an entire subscription bundle.

c. Decolonising management occurs within tense coloniality/modernity. In this tense paradox we are talking about alternates and still doing it in the hegemonic English language in global publication outlets such as prestigious journals and

publishers. This book too is guilty of this charge. However, we take inspiration from the argument of Javed Majed in this book. Writing on English language, multilingualism and management he proposes the strategy of owning English, making it our own, rejecting the native-nonnative speaker binary, decolonizing English language itself. Building on this decolonizing praxistical intent, we have strived to balance the everyday with the theoretical in the postcolonial, making sure that the language and writing remains accessible to all, including novices to post and decolonial theories and the reader does not get alienated by dense theorisations. Further, we are continuing to explore ways of translating and bringing in multiple languages- at least abstracts on a website- but this is constrained at the moment due to limited resources for the project.

d. The reader and consumer of the knowledge this book encapsulates is English speaking and more often than not located in a privileged place—a resource capable school, as things stand at this time. We had tried to enter into an open access arrangement, but have been hindered by the all too familiar situation of the post-colony, lack of funding. In this context, I, along with my colleagues in the *Managing the Post-colony* project, take the opportunity to thank Alliance Business School of Alliance University, Bangalore, and Indian Institute of Management Calcutta for coming forward and hosting the author workshop for this volume. This workshop was coordinated by Prof. Arindam Das of Alliance University and myself.

e. In this project of *Managing the Post-colony*, we have also struggled with the question of who is the author. Who is speaking? Is South Asia being spoken about? Or is South Asia speaking? Conscious of this discursive politics, we have strived to ensure that the geographic location is as important as the epistemic location of our authors. We have strived to have as many of our authors located and living in South Asia as possible. In the process we stumbled into two undercurrents of globalising academia's geopolitics. First, the very material nature of this publication, as a book rather than as a special issue of a journal has alienated quite a few potential contributors who have preferred to operate within the boundaries of the hegemonic material and discursive practices of knowledge geopolitics such as institutional expectations on what constitutes a research contribution, and, critique eurocentrism from within this hegemony in permissible ways such as by publishing in ranked journals. Second, the doing of the book has also alerted us to the inadequacy of a fixation with geographic location for authorship, given the flows and circuits of globalization in which we academics circulate. I flag these undercurrents which the unfinished project of decolonizing management faces below.

f. It has been the intention of this volume to move beyond the confinement to a theoretical lens, that has been thrust upon post and decolonial perspectives. As such, some of the authors in this volume living the post-colonial moment in life, yet being unfamiliar with the theoretical oeuvre of post and decolonial perspectives symbolize a kind of academic subaltern. They *are*, but cannot *be* within the cannon of post and decolonial theory. It is therefore our great privilege and honour to be able to work with these fellow subalterns who are willing to

risk themselves in departing from theoretical and academic orthodoxy, living and performing difference and alternatives, not just writing about them.

g. In bringing together authors and chapters in this volume, we have strived to account for the diversity of South Asia. We have also been careful to ensure that we avoid reproducing the modern nation-state configuration as the basis of representation. We also recognize that we have not been able to involve authors from many parts of South Asia such as Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, which deal with different kinds of contexts and locations due to multiple reasons, none from want of trying. We have nevertheless started a dialogue with interested and sympathetic scholars in South Asia.

h. An important concern many of the authors of this volume have struggled with, including us editors, is in walking the tightrope between respecting tolerant and/or secular feelings and emotions in our societies and recovering spiritual-religious meanings informing organizing and managing practices. All authors have been extremely conscious of the fact that they are not writing in a socio-political vacuum but in the midst of diverse fundamentalist sub-cultures currently sweeping the region and have been extremely careful about resisting and avoiding the risk of appropriation and co-optation into such fundamentalist arguments while seeking to put readers in touch with *timeless* (Nandy 1983) wisdoms of cultures of organizing and managing in South Asia.

1.7 About the Book

This edited volume goes beyond revisionist, nationalist, essentialist projects of indigenising management that have been at work around the world since the 1960s, to recover other attitudes and practices towards managing and organising that go beyond Western management. It is organised around four parts. After the Introductory chapters comes Part I: Post-colonial South Asia: Condition, Memory and Voice. Part II: Resistance and Re-existence through Communities as Organising. Part III: Indigenous Ethics of Managing and Organising and Part IV: Resistance and Re-existence in Institutionalised Education and Knowledge. I provide a brief overview of the chapters below.

Introduction

Introduction is organised in two parts. Part A is this introductory essay. Part B comprises Shoaib Ul-Haq's detailing of the ethical imagination in organising and how it works towards decolonising management. In keeping with recovering cultures of organising, Shoaib turns his attention to Sufi worldview as one among many possible sources of ethical imagination that can provide an alternate logic of organising. Shoaib and I have had the privilege of co-editing this volume.

Part I: Post-colonial South Asia: Condition, Memory and Voice

The four chapters in this part speak to the condition of the South-Asian post-colonies. In the highly contested terrain of language in the post-colony, Javed Majeed throws in his hat into the ring, and makes a bold suggestion to differentiate the language politics of multilingualism and official English language during colonial and immediate post-independence rule from contemporary hegemonic status of Business English as the lingua franca of the globalisation era. Drawing on language economics and world systems approach, Javed advances the idea of undoing the artificial binary between native and non-native speakers of English and owning English given its inseparability from competitive advantage in the global economy. He also contends that the dominance of English in management studies in South Asia cannot be simplistically reduced to an issue of language but undoing this domination requires recognising the deeper structural asymmetries that pervade management practice and academia.

The pandemic and shift to online mode of learning and working has refocused attention on the digital divide. By juxtaposing low computer literacy in Sri Lanka with high and admirable attainments of literacy and educational levels in the country Nalin Abeysekera and Yashoda Bandara revisit the issue of digital divide from a different perspective. They question received wisdom on how human capital development poises a country to take advantage of economic opportunities under globalisation. By showing similarities between province wise differences in economic development, and the prevalence of computer literacy levels in the country, they lament about the squandering of social development gains the country has achieved under Kannangara's free education policy for Sri Lanka to a Colombo centric economic development which began in colonial era and is continuing into contemporary globalisation era. They go beyond the preoccupation with absence of English language training as the cause of digital divide instead emphasising external oriented character of Sri Lanka's ICT policies while ignoring any recognition of and role in promoting regional equities and equalities within the country. With great disconcert they point to how this sensibility contrasts with Kannangara's views that spearheaded the country's transformation through education for all, after independence.

By drawing out the memories of a railway locomotive manufacturing company set up under colonial rule and that is now shut down, Arindam Das takes us into the complexity of postcolonial organizational nostalgia. Connecting organizational nostalgia and postcolonial analysis, Arindam underscores the contradictory impulses of the outer modern West and the inner spiritual native. These nostalgic recollections of Burn Standard and Co, even as they reminiscence about the good old golden days, simultaneously unveil the hegemonic and racist structures of an organization. Even in the recall of the mimicked old days, there is a mocking, appropriation and subversion of colonial structures of practice and thought, this Arindam argues infuses nostalgia with critique.

Contrary to the convention in postcolonial discourse analysis that searches for subaltern agency and voice in a discourse, Lakshman Wimalasena shifts the locus of his probe to the subaltern individual by approaching the subject from a critical realist perspective. Drawing on the types of reflexivity that have been identified in the

critical theorist Archer's work he unpacks the manner in which subaltern individuals negotiate their everyday life stories with reflexivity, by actively maintaining or re-constituting their contexts, themselves or both in varying ways. He argues that this active reflexivity is necessary given the complex character of life and living in the post-colony that merges characteristics of identity and society of a pre-colonial pre-class social context with a class based post-colony. Through detailed life stories of subaltern Srilankans, demonstrating reflexivity he challenges conceptions of the subaltern as a passive habitual actor. Lakshman invites us to recognise subaltern individuals as active agents who are engaging with their destinies. Taking his ideas seriously implies that we re-form our methods of managing people, organizational and social interventions in post-colonial contexts to honour this agency.

Part II: Resistance and Re-existence through Communities as Organising

In a deep dive into the local politics of a political society, Kumar Shreshtha and Prashant Mishra study an informal market place of fruits and vegetables daily bazaar of subsistence sellers comprising of a demographically homogenous community to unpack how their politics contributes to longevity of the bazaar. This daily bazaar in eastern India presents what we call a political society following postcolonial theorist Partha Chatterjee. Kumar and Prashant pay close attention to politics of business in the Bazaar *Samiti*, the quasi-formal association of bazaar sellers and their spatial interests, to underline for us the importance of recognising not just co-operation and competition for business in the marketplace, but even the co-existence of contestation. They find that this contestation emerges due to distinct spatial advantages/disadvantages proffered to sellers' business. *Samiti* by both instigating, participating and managing this contestation contributes to the longevity of the bazaar. Through their study, they reveal how what from the outside appears as a homogenous political society of the dispossessed, who may at best regroup along identity lines, is in fact heterogenous fractured along spatial interests and politics. Through this work, they not only broaden our understanding of governance in informal markets, but also caution us against simplistically and reductively assuming similarities of interests and politics among subaltern communities along different demographic parameters such as class, caste, religion etc.

   Turning attention to the ways in which resistance is offered to capitalism's universalisation project, Ashar Saleem aligns himself with subaltern studies scholars who have drawn attention to local social mores and structures as sources of resistance to capitalism's universalising tendencies. By tracing the processes of Akhuwat, an Islamic microfinance institution operating in Pakistan, not a microfinance organi-sation appropriating Islam, (or women or poor) Ashar makes his case that when an organisation refuses to operate according to the logics of capital, it is in fact resisting capitalism's universalisation project. Contrasting Akhuwat's practices of interest free, family based lending and interpretation of poverty as lack of social rela-tionships and support systems with Grameen Bank's group lending model targeting women, Ashar expresses his conviction in resistance that refuses to see poverty as lack of capital. Not just Akhuwat, Ashar too resists falling into the Western capitalist organising logic in not identifying Akhuwat as a charitable or community financing

organisation, but as an alternate model of organising capital different from Western capitalism.

When ways of living are ways of managing and organising, neo-liberal modernity threatens not only managing and organising but living itself. Jitesh Mohnot and Sankalp Pratap trace the manner in which the institution of the joint family has resisted, reinventing itself in a Marwari community. Marwari community of India has been studied extensively, but the focus has been on large business houses who are now the emerging market multinationals of India. In studying a community of small-scale businesses in a traditional town, Jitesh and Sankalp draw out the intricate flows of capital as the relationships of joint family. They show how sustenance of the joint family is also the sustenance of the business(s) within the present day legal institutional regime. This joint family has survived not in its pure historical form, but in a reinvented form to accommodate an institutional regime that is hostile to its existence.

Communitarian organising is often presented as the decolonial alternative to modern Western organisation. Nimruji Jammulamadaka through her study of NGOs points to how communitarian organising is not about rejecting logics of function but about reinterpreting the idea of organisation and function in decolonial ways. Highlighting the need to decolonise the underlying idea of organisation, Nimruji says that an other view of organisation does not recognise the individual and organisation as a priori distinct ontological categories. This is in contrast to the modern Western organisation which has a role based partial coupling of an individual to an organisation, where both individual and organisation are ontologically prior and distinct. She advances an other conception of organisation as *community enmeshment* involving whole persons and function here means facilitating autonomy and existence.

Part III: Indigenous Ethics of Managing and Organising

Through a careful investigation of the values pervading pre-colonial indigenous systems of public administration system of *Rajakariya*, infused with Buddhist philosophies, Yashoda Bandara, Arosha Adhikaram and Kumudinei Dissanayake, make a case for respiritualising work and workplace as an antidote to the criticisms of unethicality and irresponsibilities about Sri Lankan public administrative system. While Yashoda and her colleagues draw upon Sinhala Buddhist philosophies to trace the values of indigenous public administration, what is interesting is the sensitivity and care they show in differentiating and dissociating their suggestion from a call for Buddhist-ising Sri Lankan administrative service. In this they underscore the tense and uneasy position of religion in public (and personal) life in the post-colony. They base their arguments in the need to reconnect and bridge the ruptures between living and working, brought about through a disenchanted rationalisation and secularisation of organisation and work under colonial rule. They seek to reconnect the person and the work in a wholistic sense through values, by at least partially undoing the Western bureaucratic separation of job from person.

Islamic management has been positioned as a distinctive approach to management. Razi Lone builds on this positioning, explicating the epistemic differences, cosmologies and worldviews of contemporary neoliberalism and Islam. He dwells

at length on the difference between organising and functioning according to a world-view, where religion does not exist outside the organisation, job and role but becomes all of these through its very conception of the self, individual and world; and appropriating select elements of a worldview into neoliberal expansion and organization. Such appropriation leaves intact separation of the individual and organisation in a secularised disenchanted here and now world. Similar to Yashoda and her colleagues in Sri Lanka, Razi critiques modern neoliberal organising for its valourisation of disenchantment. He also goes a step further in critiquing the Islamic organization and management in the manner of its co-optation into existing hegemonies, calling for a deeper engagement with the worldview, with substance rather than form.

Part IV: Resistance and Re-existence in Institutionalised Education and Knowledge

The crucial role of language in resisting epistemic violence in illustrated by Himanshi Rajora's study of the institution of Tibetan Traditional Medicinal System *Men Tsee Khang*. Set in the context of Tibetan exile following Chinese occupation, she shows the role of *Sowa Rigpa*, Tibetan traditional medicine practice in building and sustaining national cultural identity in exile. By unpacking the use of Tibetan language in the instruction, preparation of medicines and practice of Sowa Rigpa at *Men Tsee Khang*, Himanshi demonstrates how Tibetans have resisted epistemic violence by continuing to maintain a wholistic healing approach that incorporates the spiritual and the material, the sacred and the mundane, the human and the cosmos. They have resisted appropriation of their knoweldges and ethos under coloniality, much better than the close cousin Ayurveda found more commonly in the Indian subcontinent, even though they have recast their pedagogic institutions from an oral *guru-shishya* tradition of *Amchis* to modern Western institutions of colleges. This resistance though has had its costs, the traditional doctors are not eligible for the honorofic of doctor. While ink has been expended upon the hegemony of English language, Himanshi offers us a refreshing take on the use of language as a strategic tool to resist epistemic coloniality.

Bodies bear scars, they also bear histories. Yashoda Thakore reminds us of this in her autoethnographic account that traces the socio-economy and aesthetic of *Kala-vanthulu* artist families. Through recovering the stories of *kalavanthulu* as women and as dancers, as she has encountered, experienced and discovered them, she challenges received wisdom of caste as is presently seen in India. Her archives implicate both colonisers and the nationalists in both stigmatising and writing out the women of these families who own and live these dances in their bodies, souls and lives. Hers is both a recovering of the self, and the community, as also a telling comment on the aesthetic transformations of performing knowledge, that occurs as the locus of knowledge ownership shifts across gender lines from a female body to the male body and across caste lines from *kalavanthulu* dances to neo-classical Kuchipudi dances. Through her destigmatising account of reclaiming *kalavanthulu* identity, she invites us to pay closer attention to the socio-economic and intellectual havoc wrecked during the colonial encounter by illegalising customary practices and the stubborn persistence of these enslaved mental attitudes and models.

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Chapter 2
Introduction: Indigenous Alternatives and Ethical Imagination

Shoaib Ul-Haq

Abstract The role of imagination as a creative force in generating indigenous alternative organizing models is not given enough attention. Although phenomenology allows us to examine the way we experience our relationship with the world without reducing it to sense perception alone, most of the literature is still fixated on understanding human experiences from a Western rational perspective treating imagination as a mental faculty. Nevertheless, many non-Western traditions, such as Islam, consider imagination as a spiritual activity and as a human capacity of generating true and meaningful knowledge thereby going beyond pure phenomenological interpretations. By resorting to this spiritual imagination, we can replace the contemporary neoliberal imaginary with an ethical imaginary focused on local epistemological frameworks. This ethical imaginary is essential for generating alternative models.

Keywords Indigenous alternatives · Ethical imagination · Ibn Arabi · Neoliberal capitalism · Islam · Sufism · Delinking · Epistemic disobedience

2.1 Introduction

There is a dire need to generate indigenous alternative management theories and praxes based on the unique history, culture, and society of South Asian regions (Bruton et al. 2021). However, as Nimruji pointed out in her introduction, most of the existing theoretical frameworks and management models claiming to provide such an 'alternative' are beset with the same logic of coloniality and the neoliberal imaginary (Abbinnett 2021) which characterizes the mainstream. Interestingly, some of these alternatives are generated in the global South, such as microfinance, Bottom of Pyramid (BOP) projects, community currencies and Islamic banking etc. One might expect that these alternatives would reflect the epistemic perspectives of the local community and attempt to provide a more just and sustainable foundation for organizations. Nevertheless, their efforts to scale up plugs them into global capital

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markets whose internal character reproduces a set of colonial/neoliberal relations and results in co-optation of these alternatives (Arora and Romijn 2012; Karim 2011; Ul-Haq et al. 2020), thus thwarting their emancipatory and positive decolonial potential. Therefore, we need to realize that it is complex to neatly demarcate the boundary around an alternative as critics can always point out some neoliberal/capitalist element (Parker and Lightfoot 2014; Fisher 2009).

The same realization, however, highlights the importance of what Walter Mignolo calls *delinking* (Mignolo 2007) or disassociation from the "hegemonic ideas of what knowledge and understanding are and, consequently, what economy and politics, ethics, and philosophy, technology and the organization of society are and should be" (Mignolo 2007: 459). Such a project, of course, requires a break with Western epistemology in the form of an *epistemic disobedience* (Mignolo 2009, 2011) which can result in a non-capitalist political economy more valuable for people and communities whose voices have been silenced, distorted, or marginalized (Ul-Haq and Westwood 2012). The motto of this decolonial thinking is *desprendimento total* (total detachment) which implies a radical rupture from the existing modern or post-modern knowledge and the associated mental categories. The aim is to bring to the foreground a "silenced and different genealogy of thought" (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012, p. 33).

Despite the co-opted status of most Southern alternatives, they contain elements of this different genealogy of thought. Ultimately, we need to begin the process of delinking from somewhere and one option is to start by presenting and analyzing those alternatives which claim to have an alternate value system with different organizing principles and practices. A central point of this volume, then, is to create an awareness and appreciation of these alternatives that are present in South Asia and to create an understanding that other ways of managing and organizing, however circumscribed, are indeed possible. The metanarrative built by these alternatives is, at least theoretically, irreconcilable with capitalist logics and is aimed at decentering the existing economic system. Hence, despite their vulnerability to the processes of capitalist co-optation, I would still like to treat them as alternatives "due to their original radical intent, the alternative values they promote, and their significance in the realm of the potential" (Ul-Haq et al. 2020, p. 4). The objective of this strategic move, in decolonial terms, is "to learn to unlearn in order to relearn" (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012, p. 32).

One important aspect of this epistemic disobedience is to be careful about the language we use. Positing the Western vs. indigenous binary opposition is fraught with its own problems as it is not only characterized by a hierarchical relation of power (Hall 1996) and a "poisonous paternalism" (Macedo 1999) but also a dangerous reductionism. This binary opposition assumes that each term is fixed, immutable, homogeneous, mutually exclusive, and hierarchically ordered. These assumptions, taken together, consign indigenous knowledge to an inferior position where it is synonymous with 'primitive', 'simple', 'non-reflective' and 'unscientific' as well as part of a 'folk culture' (Howes 1979; Pottier 2003). This pejorative understanding, however, was contested by scholars who argued for a conscious awareness of the political economy of knowledge production as it is refracted from the

Western academy (Alatas 1977, 1993). This awareness should result in a move away from hegemonic ontological categories to a realization that indigenous knowledge encompasses not only people's understanding of their social and moral worlds but also their historical and cultural specificities. It is embodied in negotiated organizing practices of local communities which are imbued with unequal power relations as well as translations of external (mainly Western) discourses and practices. In other words, indigenous management models are, at least theoretically, more about the moral, socioeconomic, and historical relations in which they emerge in response to a contemporary organizing problem than about secular, rational and technical solutions to that problem.

Nevertheless, these models arise in an environment where capitalist categories of thought have entered our unconscious (Tomsic 2015) and have influenced the way we think thereby producing a kind of 'capitalist subjectivity' (Tomsic 2015). This subjectivity is also part of colonial relations and has been noticed by scholars such as Ashish Nandy who writes,

> It is possible today to be anti-colonial in a way which is specified and promoted by the modern world view as 'proper', 'sane', and 'rational'. Even when in opposition, that dissent remains predictable and controlled (Nandy 1983: 12).

In other words, there are some sophisticated means of assimilation of potentially subversive forms. The subtle and ingenious nature of these appropriation processes makes it hard for many to realize the transformation of being absorbed into or taken over by the capitalist mainstream. There are various ways we can describe non-capitalist relations of production and consumption, but they remain relations of production and consumption. What characterizes all these relations is that they are almost always placed in the larger capitalist narrative and are determined and evaluated by its logic of accumulation, domination of material forms and the autonomy of exchange value. For example, scholars have empirically documented certain regions where people had different cultural norms and social values and a divergent understanding of value creation and organizing (Gibson-Graham and Dombroski 2020). However, these empirical facts could not morph into a fundamental practical attack on the dominant economic system and emerged instead as a local variation of the universal narrative of neoliberal capitalism.

Additionally, these decolonial efforts face an enormous practical challenge when they try to compete with the many-headed hydra of neoliberal capitalism which has the power to capture and co-opt these alternatives to serve its own interests of maximum exploitation from people and the planet (Klein 2014; Marcuse 1965). The zeitgeist of competition, standardization and compliance in the market-based environment forces the alternative to gradually adopt means-ends instrumental rationality which results in mission drift and moral compromises (Ul-Haq et al. 2020).

Nevertheless, it is relatively easy to highlight problems with the existing scheme of things than to *imagine* new indigenous alternatives in order to turn critique into action. If management and organization knowledge is not to be based on Western frameworks and ideas but on indigenous cultural forms, we need to not only study history of these forms and associated organizing practices but also to imagine an

alternative for contemporary use by drawing insights from that history. Although we remain too weak to completely break free from capitalist forces, we are also too strong to completely submit to these forces.

2.2 Accessing Ethical Imagination

Despite the Herculean task ahead of us, we still have access to traditions which are relatively puritanical, egalitarian and were able to resist complete ideological domination of colonial/neoliberal forces such as Islam (Gellner 1992). It has been argued that Islam provides an alternative value system based on its theologically inspired epistemology with a belief in God (*Allah*) and His last prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Zaman 2019; Ul-Haq 2021a). For example, instead of focusing on man (subjective authority) as the generator, definer and arbitrator of knowledge claims, Islam focuses on God (external authority) as the foundation for all knowledge (Ul-Haq 2021b) who endowed man with a body and a soul (*ruh*) and made man His vicegerent (*khalifa*). This status of vicegerency elevates man from other created beings but also makes him responsible for their welfare and for creating a just social order according to the guidelines provided by Quran (the Holy book) and Sunnah (sayings of the prophet). This implies that humans have the capacity to focus on love, cooperation, empathy, and possess an altruistic mentality (Zaman 2019) and need not be modeled as self-interested rational maximizers with a competitive, greedy, hedonistic, and winner-take-all mentality (O'Flynn 2009). The latter is dangerous because this model and the negative language used in conjunction with it has the power to become a self-fulfilling prophecy (Ferraro et al. 2005). Further, the assumed moral justification for the capitalist order emerges from advancing human freedom (Friedman 1962; Hayek 1978) which translates into the destruction of collective structures (Bourdieu 1998) and heedless consumption (Bauman 1988). Nevertheless, this focus ignores other perspectives on human freedom where submission to the will of God defines freedom (Ul-Haq 2021a) and spiritual concerns are valued over material pursuits. Many critics have pointed out the tendency of people to focus on materialistic and self-oriented types of meaning in their life in the capitalist economic system and its disastrous consequences for humanity. The continuous intervention of markets in the lifeworld (Habermas 1987) might exactly be the reason why life in Western societies has become "little more than an ongoing series of commercial transactions held together by contracts and financial instruments" (Rifkin 2000: 112).

Nevertheless, we do not necessarily have to follow this path. There are human capacities of expression and powers of invention which were important in earlier traditions but are not given enough attention in today's *rational* environment. From the beginning of Greek (and Western) philosophical thought, the aim of generating knowledge has been to search for the truth (Oosterhoff 2001) which is immediately associated with the power of human reason (Castoriadis 1997). As explained by Timothy Mitchell,

> Whichever aspect of modern, secular rationality one emphasized, everything could be under-
> stood as the development of this universal principle of reason, or a reaction against it, or its
> failure, delay, or absence (Mitchell 2002, p. 1).

Within these capacities there is a special place of 'imagination' which plays a
central role in many everyday activities, but it is also called into play as we attempt
to come up with innovative and indigenous solutions to organizing and managing
problems. This implies that we can not only use our imagination to participate and
learn about the world as it is but also use it to look beyond or "to posit that which is
not, to see in something that which is not there" (Castoriadis 1997: 151). The latter
have been named as *radical imagination* (Castoriadis 1997) and this activity as a
transcendent use of imagination (Kind and Kung 2016: 1). This radical imagination
opens up the realm of possibility just like sense-perception opens up the realm of
actuality (Yablo 1993). In this possible realm one can create novel social forms i.e.,
images, institutions, and significations essential for generating new organizing and
managing models.

Most of the existing literature on imagination, however, treats it as a mental activity
involving imagery or some sensory presentation (Kind and Kung 2016) which is
under someone's voluntary control. This exclusive focus on the individual mind while
totally ignoring the spirit (Meyer 2008) is one of the hallmarks of Western cultural
history since the Enlightenment. It is assumed by Descartes, for instance, that it is
only thoughts in someone's mind that provide foundation to all knowledge thereby
reducing humans to a little more than self-reflecting cognitive agents (Burke 1997).
These agents can only use their cognitive capacity of reason to generate new knowl-
edge by using, for instance, the scientific method. Hence, the role of imagination as
a mental activity is constrained to a mere guide on action and inference.

Nevertheless, for many religions and indigenous traditions, this cognitive view of
imagination is reductive (Mignolo 2011). First, this capacity is not related only to
the mind but also involves one's spirit. The cognitive view has relegated imagination
to the psychological realm "making it merely reproductive in character and recom-
binatory in its activity, and thereby granting its' works a deficient, illusory, deceptive
or suspect status" (Castoriadis 1997: 215). This assumption that *only mind can know*
does not exist in many historically rich traditions (Penn and Malik 2010) including
Sufism (Islamic spirituality) (Ul-Haq 2021c). For example, in the thought of the
famous thirteenth century Sufi Sheikh, ibn Arabi, the world of imagination (*alam
al-khayal*) is "seen as the creative source of manifestation, the very cause of our exis-
tence, and the powerful intermediary that enables us to remain in constant contact
with the Infinite and the Absolute [God]" (Akkach 1997: 97). For Sufi masters, the
seat of radical imagination is the human spirit whose power of creating new social
forms derives from its epistemological and ontological privilege over other knowl-
edge sources. It has the subtle power of insight or unveiling (*kashf*) which can inte-
grate the materiality of the seen world (*alam al-shahada*) with the spirituality of the
unseen world (*alam al-ghayab*) in a tiny fraction of time (Chittick 1994). Secondly,
imagination might or might not be a voluntary exercise as God can also illuminate a
Sufi's spirit by temporarily resolving the duality of the seen and the unseen, meaning

and form, the spiritual and the material (ibn Arabi 1230/1998). These moments of illumination have moral and ethical connotations as they bring man closer to understanding his place as God's vicegerent. In other words, this supra-rational mode of knowing helps us in making moral choices in a teleological governed universe which can then inform alternative organizing models.

Based on the above, I argue that a starting point of alternative organizing efforts should be this spiritually informed 'ethical imagination'. I define ethical imagination as the *creative capacity to not only generate but also distinguish between various courses of action keeping in view one's religious consciousness and theological commitments.* It follows from this definition that an ethical organization is one that places ethical imagination at the core of its strategically important organizing principles, models, and processes. Since this organization is cognizant of its postcolonial history and the ethical injustices and ambiguities, there are higher chances that this imagination will result in the extraction of indigenous and emancipatory resources. Spiritual, social, customary practices, memories, knowledges feed into the exercise of this ethical imagination. To nurture such ethical imagination, we can critically draw upon the historical resources of the native and indigenous knowledges, insights, experiences elsewhere in the world, appreciating their pros and cons including the *Sufi* thought. This is how we can claim, reclaim, rebuild, resurge or insurge indigenous knowledge.

A central tenet of this book involves our faith in the transformative potential of this ethical imaginary and the beneficial practical knowledge that it can generate. The chapters in this volume focus on creative praxis and several ethical imaginaries in postcolonial nations.

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Part I
Post-Colonial South Asia: Condition, Memory and Voice

Chapter 3
Multilingualism and Management Studies in South Asia

Javed Majeed

Abstract When accounting for the dominance of English in management studies in South Asia, the legacy of British colonial rule must be distinguished from the global rise of English since 1945 and the role of the US in advancing management studies in India. The spread of neoliberal free-market doctrines, tertiarization, and the knowledge economy, which links the creation of surplus value to the intellectual and cognitive skills of workers, have naturalised the use of English as the language of global competitiveness in India, and its dominance is further reinforced by processes of elite closure. While a combination of a world systems approach to language with language economics helps us to understand how English is sustained as a global lingua franca, in India perceptions of its neutrality also play a role in its continued dominance. The loose language-culture equation in Business English reinforces this perception. Moreover, alternatives to English in Management Studies can be equally problematic, and substituting another language for English will not in and of itself undermine structures of domination and authority. The more fundamental issue is the structural relationship between global capitalism and management studies in the Global South, rather than the language in which it is taught.

Keywords Multilingualism · English · Language · South Asia · Management studies

3.1   Introduction

Recent scholarship in postcolonial management studies has addressed the dominance of English as the language of instruction and publication in management schools in the global South, marginalising locally grounded epistemologies in other languages (Myhill 2003; Tietze 2008; Horn 2017; Kothiyal et al. 2018; Boussebaa and Tienari 2019; Jammulamadaka 2019). However, this chapter argues that when accounting for the dominance of English in management studies in India the legacy of British

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colonial rule must not be conflated with the global rise of English since 1945 and the key role of the US in advancing management studies in India. In particular, the global spread of neoliberal free-market doctrines, tertiarization, and the knowledge economy have naturalised the use of English as the language of global competitiveness in India, and processes of elite closure and vested interests have also perpetuated its dominance there. Another key factor in the global dominance of English is the rise of the knowledge economy, which links the creation of surplus value to the intellectual and cognitive skills of workers. In 'cognitive capitalism', language is a factor in the production process, and language learning is reconceptualised as an economic decision (Spowage 2018). This has had an impact on the language economies of India, in which the ascendancy of English as an index of global competitiveness co-exists with other languages in regional and state labour markets.

This chapter also outlines how a combination of a world systems approach to language with language economics helps us to understand how the dominance of English is globally sustained through cost savings, privileged markets, economies of scale, and legitimizing effects, and how that dominance is reproduced in some countries of the global South. Also important are perceptions of the neutrality of English, which play a role in its dominance in India. In management studies, the use of Business English as a circumscribed and shared communication code in the global business community, which is not tied to a cultural identity rooted in a narrowly defined ethnos, is an example of this relative neutrality, albeit in one highly restricted form of English.

The dominance of English in Institutes of Management globally is also underpinned by native speakers acting as literacy brokers in the field's publications (Boussebaa and Tienari 2019). Questioning the binary distinction between 'native' and 'non-native' speakers of English undermines this hierarchy. This, together with the loose language-culture equation in Business English, makes the latter a viable option in management studies in India, particularly given the objections which can be made against its possible rivals. However, it is important to stress that replacing English in Management Studies with another language will not in and of itself undermine structures of domination and authority. The more fundamental issue is the structural relationship between global capitalism and management studies in the Global South, rather than the language in which it is taught.

3.2   British Language Policy in Colonial India: A Brief Overview

The colonial state was constrained to work with and intervene in the multilingual situation in India because of the practical difficulties, even impossibility, of imposing a monolingual regime in a region with multiple families of languages and the density of their speakers (for which see Masica 1993; Cardona and Jain 2003). The establishment of Fort William College in Calcutta in 1800 to teach Indian languages

to East India Company servants (Kopf 1969), the production of dictionaries and grammars on Indian languages by colonial officials and writers (Cohn 1985) as well as by Indian authors (Majeed 2019b), resulted in the standardization of Indian languages and dialects during the colonial period. In the early twentieth century, G.A. Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India* (LSI) played a key role in identifying the languages and dialects of India and in defining their boundaries, often in collaboration with Indians (Ibid.). The engagement with Indian languages was evident in the training of British candidates for the Indian civil service, who had to pass examinations in the language of the region they were assigned to and in a classical Indian language (either Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian) (Majeed 1999). Moreover, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the British increasingly saw India as an agglomeration of small societies. This 'epistemological balkanisation' was partly the result of the data intensive nature of its rule, which involved gathering information on all aspects of Indian society at the district level including its languages (Bayly 1996; Ballantyne 2008). The reinforcement of India's multilingualism also accorded with the Raj's 'sociology of multiple ethnicity' (Washbrook 1982), that is, its view of India as irredeemably heterogeneous along the axes of caste and religion, but also for the LSI, along the axis of language.

On one level, then, the colonial engagement with Indian languages reinforced and consolidated India's multilingualism. This varied from region to region in accordance with locally-conditioned imperatives, as has been stressed by Rahman (1996) for Sindhi and King (1994) for Hindi and Urdu. The latter's description of British language policy as 'a choked and tangled maze' in relation to the Hindi-Urdu conflict (p. 54) is an apt description of colonial language policy as a whole. Alongside this reinforcement and consolidation of India's multilingualism, English became powerful in terms of status, prestige and usefulness, particularly after it replaced Persian in 1837 as the language of the courts (Rahman 1996). The 'Anglicist' camp in colonial policy was increasingly important from the 1830s onwards, but its first clear formulation was the evangelical Charles Grant's 'Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain particularly with respect to Morals, and on the Means of Improving it' (1793). He argued for the diffusion of the English language in India as part of a civilising mission to give Indians direct access to European literature and science. This view was critical of the 'Orientalist' policy of the time, dominant until the 1820s, which aimed to continue the role of previous Indian rulers as patrons of learning in Sanskrit and Arabic, hence the establishment by the East India Company of the Calcutta Madrassa in 1780 and the Sanskrit College in Benares in 1791. Both the Anglicist and Orientalist views were reflected in the ambiguously worded educational clause of the 1813 Act renewing the East India Company's Charter, which referred to the revival of traditional learning and the introduction of western science (Zastoupil and Moir 1999). The 1830s saw the increasing visibility of the Anglicist camp in educational policy in India, best exemplified by Macaulay's (1835) minute on education arguing for the spread of English to an elite group of Indians as a necessary step in the creation of intermediaries between the British and Indian society. However, in spite of government resolutions favourable

to the Anglicist policy, the victory of the Anglicists was never complete. Lord Auckland's lengthy minute of November 1839 on education was a skilful compromise between both positions, as was the official despatch of January 1841 on education in India (Zastoupil and Moir 1999).

In this period of the Orientalist-Anglicist debate, there was strong demand from upper caste groups in Indian society for English schools in Bengal, who saw English as vital to their future prosperity, and had their own agendas to pursue in bolstering or acquiring status in the new colonial order (Zastoupil and Moir 1999). The support for English language education amongst Indians was not confined to those with 'progressive' views alone: it included cultural conservatives with orthodox religious beliefs, who saw no incompatibility between their beliefs and English education (Zastoupil and Moir 1999). Others, such as Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833), typified the process by which the Indian intellectual community absorbed and turned to its own ends new opportunities and fresh perspectives brought by the British to South Asia. As a globally renowned figure who used English alongside Indian languages to articulate his ideas on reform and religion (Zastoupil 2010), Roy was an early example of an Indian thinker who participated in and helped shape the 'cosmopolitan thought zones' (Bose and Manjapra 2010) made possible by the global circulation of ideas in empire and their translation into and out of English.

In colonial India, then, the relationship between English and Indian languages was complex, with different strands of colonial policy promoting English in some spheres and Indian languages in others. Paralleling these policies were the social mechanisms which enabled English to migrate from its community of British speakers to groups of Indian users in zones of interracial contact and acculturation (Dahrwadker 2003). Elite groups like the Bengali *bhadralok* who embraced English, continued to maintain a strong attachment to Bengali language and literature while cultivating their proficiency in English. In some cases, this proficiency even deepened their appreciation of Bengali language and literature. In his seminal *The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* (1926), S.K. Chatterji described how his study of the history of the English language inspired his systematic investigation of 'the history of my mother tongue' (p. xi), and how his training in the analysis of English laid the ground for his examination of Bengali. It was as lecturer in English and Comparative Philology at the University of Calcutta that he launched a three-year programme in the comparative grammar of Bengali (Chatterji 1926).

3.3 Postcolonial Legacies

Thus, while British language policies in India were multifaceted and contradictory, one outcome of these policies was to reinforce India's multilingualism. As mentioned above, Grierson's LSI played a key role in identifying and mapping Indian languages and dialects in the subcontinent (for details, see Majeed 2019b). It encapsulated and anticipated some of the key issues which the successor states to the British Raj had to address, namely, how to recognise regional languages, how to define the

relationships between them and between these regional languages as a whole and 'national' languages, and how to assign cultural and political value to each regional language. The Indian state dealt with the legacy of multilingualism in a number of ways. First, it reorganised India into linguistic states. However, the State Reorganisation Commission (hereafter SRC), formed in 1953 to make recommendations for the reorganising of state boundaries, was guarded about language as the sole criterion for reorganisation. In this it followed Nehru's lead, who advocated taking a cautious approach in recognising the importance of linguistic homogeneity as a principle in reorganising states; administrative, financial, or other political considerations were to take precedence (Tillin, 2013). Hence the SRC's 1955 Report stressed that while linguistic regionalism had a place in India, the supremacy of the Indian Union politically and economically was paramount in the event of any such reorganisation (SRC Report 1955, p. 236), and linguistic homogeneity should not outweigh administrative, financial or other political considerations (ibid., p. 39, 40, 43, Ch. 5, Ch. 6). As a result, there were clear deviations from the linguistic principle in the reorganisation of boundaries (Schwartzberg, 1985). This approach was in keeping with the post-1947 focus on nation building on the foundation of economic development and industrialisation, and the need to contain subnational tendencies, especially in the wake of partition. It constituted a break with the Indian National Congress' own past, particularly its reorganisation of its party structure in 1921 to correspond with linguistic boundaries as the nationalist movement developed a mass base (King 1998; Tillin 2013). In contrast, the LSI's approach to mapping Indian languages and dialects reflected the reality of the dialectal continuum in India. The Survey evoked the many linguistic zones of high-intensity communication and contact in the subcontinent, in which the distance between languages is not always definitive. Moreover, Grierson repeatedly stressed the difficulty of defining boundaries between adjoining languages (Majeed 2019b, Ch. 2). Interestingly, the SRC, which referred to Grierson a number of times, sometimes stressed the provisional classification of languages, the complexity of border areas between them, and the facts of bilingualism, to forestall demands for separate states (for example, in relation to Panjab, see SRC Report, pp. 141–45). However, the creation of linguistic states with discrete boundaries was at odds with the Survey's geography. This was because the postcolonial state intervened in the multilingualism of India by carving it up into discrete language-based entities, while trying to subordinate the principle of linguistic homogeneity to administrative, financial, and other political factors. In doing so, its aims were to forestall linguistic sub-nationalism and ensure both the flexibility and resilience of the Indian Union.

The need to balance these competing factors resulted in what Tillin has called 'the compromise politics of statehood' (2013). Commentators have also stressed the importance of compromise in the provisions of the Indian constitution (Tiwary, 1967; Austin, 2004). This is evident in the provisions for language rights and entitlements. In some ways, the LSI's loose vocabulary of language rights and entitlements (for which see Majeed 2019a, Ch. 1) was a preliminary to the more extensive definition, formalisation and expression of these rights in the Indian Constitution. These include Articles 343–351 in Part 17, which inter alia allow for the different states of

the Union to have their own official language, and the stipulation that states have to provide adequate instruction at the primary stage of education to children of minority linguistic groups. Article 29 confers on cultural and linguistic minorities the right to conserve their languages and cultures. The inclusion of the Eight Schedule in the Constitution in 1950, which lists the official languages of the Indian Republic, is a powerful source of formal and constitutional recognition of various languages and communities in administration, education and the economy (Sarangi 2009). In addition, the three-language formula formulated by the Education Ministry in consultation with the States further reinforces these rights and entitlements (for details see Sarangi 2009). These provisions sit alongside what Austin (2009) has called the 'tactful euphemism' of Hindi in the Devanagari script as the official language of the Union (Article 343) and the stipulations that English continue to be used for official purposes (Article 345) and for a period of 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution as one of the languages of transaction in Parliament alongside Hindi (Article 120). These Articles emerged as a compromise between Hindi activists' demands in the Constituent Assembly for Hindi to be the 'national' (as opposed to official) language of the Union, and for it to replace English as the language of government as soon as possible, and other members of the Assembly who saw these demands as an attack on the status of regional languages (Austin 2009).

The postcolonial Indian state's interventions in this context reflected the fact that when it came to the complexities of multilingualism in India, 'elegant monistic solutions' (Gupta 1970, pp. 259–60) were not viable to deal with the issues this raises. The aim was to try to allocate relative status to different languages for official use at the federal and regional level to reinforce conciliative patterns, and to manage demands for autonomy in such a way as to reinforce the institutional resilience of the political system (Dasgupta 2013).

In contrast, while language has been at the heart of Pakistan's most significant political problem, namely ethnicity (Rahman 1996), it has been less successful in managing multilingualism. From the beginning it paid little attention to language as a policy issue (Ayres 2003). The symbolic importance of Urdu in Muslim separatism meant that Urdu was declared to be the official language even though in terms of numbers it was a minority language, and it has come to be viewed by regional language groups as a form of linguistic imperialism (Ayres 2003). Of particular importance here was the Bengali language movement in what was then East Pakistan from the 1950s onwards. This movement was the prototypical case of ethno-nationalist assertion in Pakistan, and it was the first time the domination of the Centre was successfully challenged through ethnolinguistic appeals. It also renewed elite hostility to ethnolinguistic nationalism (Rahman 1996, Ch. 6). Other significant forms of ethnolinguistic nationalism include Sindhi (ibid., Ch. 7) and Baluchi (ibid., Ch. 9). The federating units of Pakistan continue to contend with the domination of the Punjabi-dominated ruling elite at the Centre, which uses Islam and Urdu as symbols of national integration, and state-sponsored language policies and language planning have reinforced Urdu's dominant status (Rahman 1996). In this scenario, ethnolinguistic nationalism tends to be left-wing, in so far as it is assertive of subordinate classes and collectivities (ibid.). The decision not to take the route

of linguistic provinces with concomitant Constitutional underpinnings has meant that language conflicts have been less effectively institutionalised in Pakistan than in India, although it is also clear that there are significant shortcomings in the Constitutional provisions for languages in India. Agnihotri has argued that because issues were decided in the Constituent Assembly with a view to consensus building rather than on merit, decisions regarding language were taken without due concern for the nature and structure of language and the multiplicity of minority voices and views on this issue were marginalised (Agnihotri 2015). In his view, the Constituent Assembly did not engage seriously enough with India's multilingualism. For Babu, the Indian constitution only pays lip service to linguistic plurality and the multilingual ethos of India, and it has created a four tier order of languages which parallels the caste hierarchies of Indian society (Babu 2017).

3.4 English as a Global Language and Management Studies in India

Thus, India and Pakistan have dealt with multilingualism and the legacies of colonial language policy in different ways. As we have seen, alongside the reinforcement of India's multilingualism in colonial India, English became powerful in terms of status, prestige and usefulness. In both India and Pakistan, English continues to be a link language. It has significant presence in the domains of power and this dominance is perpetuated by processes of elite closure (for which see below). In India, the Constituent Assembly framed and adopted the Constitution in English, and there is no version in an Indian language which has legal standing. The Official Language (Amendment) Act of 1967 legalized assurances on the continuation of English in addition to Hindi for all official purposes of the Union and for the transaction of business in Parliament. English is also the additional official language in some states, and the only official language in others. In 1967, for example, the Nagaland Assembly proclaimed English as its official language and as the medium of education (Punekar 2011). A number of the Indian censuses have shown English to be the preferred second language choice for the speakers of some Indian languages, primarily in the non-Hindi speaking areas of the southern and eastern regions of India (Brass 2009).

However, when it comes to the dominance of English in management studies in India, the colonial legacy needs to be distinguished from the impact of globalisation since the end of British rule. Phillipson (1992) and de Swaan (2002) have argued that it was only after 1945 that English became globally dominant. They link this to the decisive rise of the US as the major global power of the advanced capitalist economies. In the post-war period American foundations and institutions laid the groundwork for MBA programmes and management studies in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the 1950s and 60 s the Ford Foundation played a key role in replacing British style training in commerce with the US system of management education. Between 1959 and 1962 the Foundation sponsored visits to India by Professor George Robbins of

UCLA, whose subsequent report was pivotal in the establishment of Indian Institutes of Management in Ahmedabad and Calcutta outside the Indian university system (Jammulamadaka 2019). The first was mentored by Harvard, and the second by MIT, and these institutional links were further cemented by US Faculty visiting and teaching in India (Ibid.). This collaboration in management studies led to the transfer of management knowledge and pedagogy from the US to India, and it included the transfer of curriculum, teaching methods, hiring policies, and the tenurial system (Kothiyal et al. 2018).

It is also likely that the context of the Cold War played a role in the sponsoring of management studies as part of a diplomatic and cultural policy of expanding US influence and the ideology of capitalism against the Soviet bloc, especially given India's non-aligned foreign policy, and more importantly, its closer relations with the USSR during the Cold War. Moreover, while the US and the UK have sometimes collaborated in the promotion of English globally, they have also competed with each other (Phillipson 1992). The competitive co-operation (Reynolds 1981) between the US and the UK became especially marked after the First World War, when the rise of the US as a world power posed a serious threat to what Cain and Hopkins have called gentlemanly capitalism in Britain (Cain and Hopkins 1993a, b). Britain's dependence on the US during the First World War, and its extensive war-time borrowing on Wall Street, inverted the British-US relationship. Britain emerged as a permanent debtor and London found it harder to operate as the unrivalled financial centre of the world (Cain and Hopkins 1993b). As Cain and Hopkins put it, Britain's battle with the US was not between navies and armies, but between economies, treasuries, central banks, and stock markets (p. 58), and we could add, between different versions of the English language. Noah Webster's *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) was motivated by a patriotic stress on a distinctively American English, while earlier versions of the OED were deliberately deficient in their coverage of North American words (Landau 2001). The relationship of competitive collaboration was also evident in lexicography. The delegates of Oxford University Press saw editions of Webster's *Dictionary* as a benchmark which the OED had to surpass, but they simultaneously opposed the incorporation of Americanisms into the OED, while also holding up Webster as an example of 'lexicographical economy' which the OED editors were advised to emulate (Mugglestone 2005).

3.5   English as a Competitive Language in the Global Economy

It is important, therefore, not to conflate the rise of English as the foremost global language, reflected in its dominance in Indian Institutes of Management, with the legacy of colonial rule. This dominance has also been reinforced by the spread of neo-liberal free market doctrines, which has naturalized the use of English as the

language of global competitiveness around the world. For example, after the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis and the IMF-led economic restructuring in South Korea, English was promoted as the medium of instruction in higher education because it was seen as a key index of competitiveness and as the inevitable side-effect of globalization (Piller and Cho 2015). In Singapore the decision to make English the official language was also motivated by its perception as a mark of global competitiveness and by Singapore's aim to position itself as a global city (Wee 2012). In South Africa, the perception of English's value as an international corporate language reinforced its dominance in the operational communications of the central economy falling under the South African Revenue Service (Wright 2015), particularly after South Africa's integration into the world economy following the abolition of apartheid (de Swaan 2002). Similarly, the switch from French to English as a medium of instruction in Rwanda in 2008 was partly justified with reference to English as the language of globalisation and the need to attract FDI in the service sector (Spowage 2018). Ricento notes the assumption made by governments in low-income non-English dominant countries that using English as a medium of instruction will have symbolic, material, and strategic benefits, particularly in terms of attracting FDI for socio-economic development (Ricento 2015a). He also notes English is the lingua franca of multinationals whose workforce at the time accounted for 40% of global GDP and approximately 2/3rds of world trade (Ricento 2015a). An increasing number of transnational firms mandate English as the common corporate language (Neeley 2012). So, too, the US patronage in India of US-style management studies in English has been reinforced by the spread of neoliberal free-market doctrines after the liberalization of the Indian economy, which started slowly in Indira Gandhi's last term in office, stepped up during Rajiv Gandhi's term, and accelerated after the economic crisis during the Congress government of 1991-1996 (Frankel 2005). Of particular importance here is the expansion of the digitalized knowledge economy in India, which has further strengthened the perceived value of English as a competitive language in the global economy.

3.6 Tertiarization and the Knowledge Economy

Language economists have discussed how the preference for English as a global lingua franca has also been conditioned by and correlates with the expansion of the digitalized knowledge economy (Ricento 2015b). Thus, leading entrepreneurs in the Indian IT industry view English as an index of globalization, and see its dominance in Indian business and management as a sign of the Indian economy coming of age (Sonntag 2015). One of the features of late capitalism has been tertiarization or the emergence of the knowledge economy, which, because communication is central to the market's functioning, increases the importance of language, culture, and identity in the creation of added value (Bale 2015). Post-industrial capitalism in the form of the knowledge economy increasingly links the creation of surplus value to the intellectual and cognitive skills of workers. In 'cognitive capitalism' language is

seen as a factor in the production process and language learning is reconceptualised as an economic decision (Spowag 2018).

This tertiarization of the economy has had an impact on the language economies of India. Frankel (2005) has described India as 'an enclave economy with islands of excellence distributed between regions, states, and urban and rural areas' (p. xiii). She outlines the two economies emerging in India following liberalization which accelerated after the economic crisis between 1991 and 1996 during the Congress government. One economy is predominantly agricultural, which saw a decline in public investment from the 1980s onwards, and which by the 1990s stopped absorbing labour, leading to the casualization of jobs in the rural labour force. The other is the productive knowledge-based sector, involving some 15% of the population who are also India's privileged consumer classes. This absorbs well-trained industrialists, managers, laboratory scientists, and software engineers. It competes in the global market place and has iconic status. It has a high international profile, and is concentrated in major cities in a few states, one of which is Bangalore in Karnataka, well-known as a centre of India's IT and business processing outsourcing industries. As a result, there are competing linguistic hegemonies in Bangalore, between the local Kannadiga identity of 'Bangaluru' as a regional city, and the cosmopolitan identity of 'Bangalore' as an international metropolis celebrated by the city's bourgeoisie and English press. The structuring of opportunities in the employment sector, with increasing labour demand in English speaking call centres, reflects the expansion of English in the global knowledge economy and its hegemony in the commercial, financial, scientific, and IT fields, while Kannada has been confined to the literary and domestic spheres. Although Kannada has been the official language of the state since 1963, market factors have proved to be more powerful than the state-based policies of language provision under India's three-language formula (Nair 2009; Sonntag 2015). Bangalore is therefore indicative of how the predominance of English as a global language (EGL) within a global labour market co-exists with the existence of regional and state labour markets, with the upper lucrative levels focusing on the knowledge economy and demanding a knowledge of EGL, and the lower levels of the agricultural and the industrial economy operating in state and regional languages (Williams 2015; Romaine 2015).

3.7   Vested Interests in English and Elite Closure

There are additional reasons why the divisions of labour corresponding to English as a globally dominant language are reproduced within particular nation-states. With the promotion of English in South Korea, for example, the production and commodification of English created business opportunities, and vested interests in its perpetuation therefore reinforced its dominant position (Pillar and Cho 2015). In India there is a growing privatized HEI sector in which English is the medium of instruction, and a lucrative business in English medium private schools and tuition. This includes low-fee private schools, as is the case in other developing countries such as Pakistan,

Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya (Romaine 2015). Some states in India have reversed pro-regional language policies by introducing English as a subject in early primary grades in an attempt to produce an English-speaking work force that is globally competitive (Romaine 2015). In other cases, state-led attempts to reassert regional languages as a medium of instruction at primary school level in English medium private schools have not been successful, as in the case of Karnataka in 2006 when the state government sought to reassert Kannada as a medium of instruction. The Karnataka High Court ruled in favour of English-medium schools as private entities exempt from state policy and the Supreme Court upheld this decision in 2014 (Sonntag 2015). The privatization and marketization of education in India therefore constrains the regional state's ability to intervene in the field of education when it comes to the language of instruction.

Elite closure also plays a role in the perpetuation of English in the global South. Spowage (2018) shows how Rwanda's language policy actively reproduces the country's elite. In spite of the drive for language equity in South Africa, one of the reasons why English is likely to remain the operational language of the central economy is that its elite constituencies are partly reliant on a knowledge of English for their status (Wright 2015). In India, English is an important factor in elite closure, for example, in the domain of law (Sarangi 2009). However, a distinctive feature of elite language choice in India arises from the existence of two alternative official languages (Hindi and English) in a country where the vast majority speak a regional language or a combination of a local mother tongue and a regional language (Brass 2009). The strong presence of regional languages also means that language issues become particularly salient as a strategic tool when emerging regional elites challenge established elites (Sonntag 2009). Moreover, non-Hindi speaking states support English in advanced education in order to equalize the opportunities of their regional elites in relation to the elites from Hindi-speaking regions (Brass 2009). Tamil Nadu has gone the furthest in eschewing Hindi, and it has one of the highest levels of bi- and trilingualism in English in the country (Ibid.). Thus, elite closure in India is tied to English because of India's multilingualism, not in spite of it. While English is a key asset in the competition between established elites and proto-elites, it is also a key factor in the competition between the Hindi speaking elite and regional language elites, some of whom support English in order to limit the power and influence of Hindi at a national level.

3.8 Cost-Saving, Legitimization Effects, and English as 'Neutral'

As we have seen, the global influence of English plays an important role in determining its dominance in key domains in some nation-states of the South. Our understanding of this global dominance and how it is reproduced can be further enhanced by a world-systems approach to language. de Swaan (2002) has argued that the

world language system, held together by English as the 'hypercentral language', has oligopolistic features. These include privileged markets ('native' speakers of the dominant language enjoy advantages in the provision of certain goods and services, such as teaching materials, teacher training services, interpreting into the dominant language), communication savings effects ('native' speakers of the hegemonic language have less need to translate messages produced by speakers of other languages, and also have less need to translate into other languages), and language learning saving effects (the dominant language tends to be learnt by other speakers, so the need for 'native' speakers of this language to learn other languages is reduced). He also argues that the users of a language with a high communication value, pre-eminently English, profit from the position of their language in the constellation of languages, that is, from a kind of location rent. Whenever someone learns their mother tongue as a foreign language, the communication value of their language increases without any effort on their part (pp. 51–52). Furthermore, he likens language loyalty to brand loyalty: consumers prefer large brand names, because of the prestige these confer—in some ways, the dominant languages of the world-system operate like prestigious brands. The reconceptualization of language as branded goods is reflected in how the post-war global expansion of English is described in reports by the British Council as an 'asset' comparable to North Sea Oil, a 'world commodity', and a 'brand…highly sought after' (Phillipson 1992). de Swaan also points out that the global spread of English generates economies of scale: the courses and books which teach it are cheaper than those compared to non-dominant languages in the world-system, because of the larger number of users.

de Swaan further argues that users of dominant languages benefit from legit-imization effects (pp. 134–135), that is, from the automatic advantages enjoyed by the mother tongue speakers of these dominant languages in situations involving nego-tiation, competition, and conflict. In such situations, using the dominant language is intrinsically legitimizing, while the use of other languages requires explanation (see also Bourdieu 1977 on linguistic production in the language market and the role of 'symbolic capital' in authorising dominant languages). The cost savings accruing to English are evident in South Africa, where the National Language Policy aims to counter linguistic exclusion but English dominates the operational communica-tion in the central economy (Wright 2015). The interventionist planning required to reverse or counter language shift, and to develop languages appropriate for use in new domains, requires considerable funding and public resources before such inter-ventions can become self-sustaining. These variables make language development economically risky. Moreover, if African languages were to be equitably established in the public sphere, this would require deciding the appropriate linguistic protocols at each national level meeting, and would entail direct economic costs as well as psychic costs (for example, negotiating the linguistic equation anew for each occa-sion, and striking the balance between convenience and competitive advantage). The communicative benefits of African language use would have to outweigh the commu-nicative costs in any given situation, and for the central economy the uncertainty of the outcome here is a barrier to the use of African languages. Hence English remains

the operational language of the central economy, despite the drive for language equity (Ibid.).

The legitimizing effects accruing to English also extend to its being posited as 'neutral' in terms of conducting business in a language which transcends ethnic and cultural diversity (Wright 2015). English is viewed as a neutral medium enabling corporations to solve the problems of cross-cultural integration arising from transnational capitalist activity, for example when merging companies from different nation-states (Neeley 2012). The perception of English as a pragmatic, inter-ethnic, and neutral lingua-franca also underlay its choice as the official language of Singapore (Wee 2012), while the switch from French to English in Rwanda was partly motivated by perceptions of French as tainted by its association with the Hutus and the genocidal Francophone government (Romaine 2015). In instances like these, political imperatives to use English as ethnically and culturally 'neutral' dovetail with the dominance of English as a lingua franca in the global economy and as the language of management studies.

In India, too, aspects of the legitimizing effects of English as politically, ethnically, and religiously neutral operate in key domains. As mentioned above, the Constituent Assembly framed and adopted the Indian Constitution in English, and there is no version in an Indian language which has legal standing. Part of the reason for this was the perception that English was not tied to a particular region, unlike Hindi, which faces the challenge of being a regional language that simultaneously aspires to be a 'national' language (Gupta 1970; Kudaisya 2006; Austin 2009). The Official Language (Amendment) Act of 1967, which legalized assurances on the continuation of English in addition to Hindi for all official purposes of the Union and for the transaction of business in Parliament, was partly designed to placate those who were resistant to what they saw as the imposition of Hindi, especially in South India, where some activists saw and continue to see efforts to expand Hindi's influence as language 'imperialism'. These tensions were evident in the Constituent Assembly debates about Hindi as an official language (Dasgupta 2003; Austin 2009). Moreover, oppressed groups like Dalits view English as an instrument of socio-economic mobility, and as a form of resistance to dominant regional languages and their Sanskritization (Sarangi 2009; Sonntag 2015). The 'castelessness' of English promises agency, articulation, recognition and justice to Dalit writers, and its potential to translate 'the Dalit life from fatalism to an identity of rights outweighs considerations of its distance from Indian reality' (Kothari 2013, p. 67). Similarly, Babu argues that because English is outside the four tier order of languages defined by the Constitution, it has emancipatory potential, and hence 'to attain a casteless society, it is essential that we enable the citizens to wield a language that has no memory of caste' (Babu 2017, p. 118).

In addition, Hindi, like Urdu, has been communalized along religious lines from the late nineteenth century onwards (King 1994; Dalmia 1997; Orsini 2002; for the parallel communalization of Urdu, see Rahman 2011), and this has limited its ability to function as a point of identification for different religious communities (Sarangi 2009). The official drive to 'purify' Hindi by Sankritizing it, or what Agnihotri (2015) has called the 'puritanical fanaticism involved in Sanskritising Hindi' (p. 53), has

created a wide gap between the Hindi used in schools and in homes, making it difficult for the language to serve as a vehicle for mass literacy (Sheth 2009). Snell (2011) has argued that the over-formal register of Hindi promoted in official circles has even encouraged the importation of English words into the language. The main impetus behind this official Hindi is to shape it as a symbol of a particular version of Indian nationhood, rather than to extend its communicative competence (Gupta 1970). Thus, the historical legacy of Hindi and the sensitivity of other regional language elites, especially in south India, to Hindi 'imperialism', are obstacles to it replacing English completely in all the domains in which the latter is used.

In management studies, the use of Business English as a circumscribed and shared communication code in the global business community, which is not tied to a cultural identity rooted in a narrowly defined ethnos (Tietze 2008), can be seen as another example of the relative 'neutrality' of a specific form of English. Waquet (2001) has argued that English should be viewed as the Latin of the twenty-first century. In many parts of the world, it has been reduced to a vehicle of instrumental thought and an auxiliary working language. Furthermore, English, unlike Latin which was closely associated with the Catholic Church as a liturgical language until the Vatican II Council of 1962 to 1965 (Waquet 2001), does not carry specific sacerdotal associations. It is therefore more readily seen as a 'secular' language than its rivals in India and Pakistan, such as Hindi and Urdu. While these languages have acquired various political loadings, as discussed above, they also have communalised histories which continue to resonate today. Unlike Latin, though, the practical function of English in domains like management studies means it need not carry a corpus of cultural references for those using it.

3.9 'Native' and 'Non-native' Speakers

With regard to the language-culture equation in English, Phillipson (1992) has suggested that the weaker language-culture equation in English, as opposed to the stronger equation in France's *mission civilisatrice*, may have been a factor in the wider spread of the former and underpinned its more flexible attitude to different varieties as opposed to French. Undoing the binary distinction between the native and non-native speaker of English would further loosen this language-culture equation and undermine the language hierarchy in management studies. A number of commentators have argued that the dominance of English in Institutes of Management is underpinned by 'native' speakers acting as literacy brokers in the field's publications (Boussebaa and Tienari 2019; Tietze 2008). This means 'non-native' speakers have to form instrumental co-writing relations with scholars in English core countries, with the latter being named as joint authors, irrespective of whether they have made a substantive contribution or not to the article's content (Kothiyal et al. 2018). The valorization of the 'native' speaker is also evident in the teaching of English as a second language, which is underpinned by the 'native speaker fallacy' (Phillipson 1992), that is, the view that the ideal teacher of English is a 'native'

speaker. As Gill (2012) has pointed out, the construct of the 'native' speaker forms 'part of the hidden ideological apparatus by which the English language has secured its frontiers and identities against incursion by non-native others' (p. 279). It would be wrong to label non-native speakers as passive victims in management studies (Horn 2017; Boussebaa and Tienari 2019); however, since language-based authority in management studies' publications in India is predicated on the distinction between the 'native' and 'non-native' speaker of English, questioning this binary distinction would go some way in undermining this hierarchy. This binary distinction ignores how English has been indigenized in countries like India, which has institution- alized varieties with a history of acculturation and a range of functions in local education, administration, and legal systems (Kachru 1986; Phillipson 1992). This is evident, for example, in the linguistic texture of the Indian Constitution itself (Majeed 2016). Such variations are not deficient imitations, rather they are systemic variants anchored in local cultures and long-standing historical processes (Phillipson 1992). One example is 'Hinglish', whose rising status is evident in its increasing pres- ence as the code-switched language of mainstream Hindi cinema since the 1990s, in contrast to the 1950s to 1980s, when English was a marker of cultural alienation and class elitism (Thussu 2011). Hinglish 'loosen(s) the idea of English', by blurring the distinction between Hindi and English (Panel Discussion in Snell and Kothari 2011). Undoing the distinction between native and non-native speakers would also counter the normative and ideological narratives of authenticity grounding the notion of languages (Brutt-Griffler and Samimyi 2003; Myhill 2013), especially national languages, as bounded unitary entities and their speakers as a well-defined, homoge- nous, and monolingual community, in contrast to the 'inauthenticity of the bilingual, the hybrid, the non-standard and the non-native' (Gill 2012, p. 272). It would there- fore also undermine the authority of 'native' speakers acting as literacy brokers in management studies publications.

3.10   A Note on Pakistan

This essay has focussed on India but Pakistan is part of the same linguistic region as India. The South Asian languages of the Indo-European family of languages do not fit the post-1947 political boundaries of the subcontinent (Majeed 2019b). Languages such as Punjabi and Bengali which are geographically contiguous with each other span the political boundaries of both states. Other languages that are not geographi- cally contiguous are related in families that also span these political boundaries (for example, Brahui, for which see Emeneau, 1980). As discussed above, Pakistan forms an interesting comparison with and contrast to India in terms of its language poli- tics. On the one hand, it has been less successful in managing language conflict and multilingualism than India, partly because it opted not to have linguistic provinces (Rahman 1996; Ayres 2003); these policy failings were particularly clear in the role the Bengali language movement played in the creation of Bangladesh (Rahman 1996). On the other hand, as in India, English continues to be a link language, and it

has significant presence in the domains of power (Rahman 1996). Pakistani English is an institutionalized non-native variety of English like Indian, Singaporean, or Nigerian English (see Rahman 2014 for a detailed study). As in India and elsewhere, its dominance is perpetuated by processes of elite closure and the global reproduction of English as a hegemonic language. Moreover, Urdu has links with a religiously inflected version of citizenship, which has led to regional ethno-nationalists stressing the importance of other languages in a secular political idiom (Rahman 1996). More research is needed into the history of management studies and its institutionalization in Pakistan, its epistemological politics, and its connection to the geopolitics of the Cold War, especially given Pakistan's role as a US backed front-line state in the struggle against Communism, which intensified after the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR in December 1979. This would enable us to examine the overlaps and differences between the trajectories of management studies in India and Pakistan after the partition of 1947, particularly in relation to language politics.

3.11   Conclusion

The prevalence of English as the language of instruction in Indian and Pakistani Institutes of Management cannot be solely attributed to the legacy of British colonial rule in India. The effects of British colonial policy were multifaceted and complex. Different strands of colonial policy promoted English in some spheres and Indian languages in others, and one effect of British policy was to consolidate India's multi-lingualism. Instead, we need to focus on the reasons for the rise of English as a global lingua franca since 1945, and more recently, the perception of it as an index of competitiveness in the global economy, particularly in relation to the digitalized knowledge economy and the service sector. As we have seen, a combination of a world-systems approach to languages and language economics can explain how the global reproduction of English impacts on countries of the South like India, Rwanda, and South Africa, as well as in other Asian countries such as Singapore and South Korea. In each of these countries there are also local factors contributing to its dominance in key domains. In addition, English is perceived by oppressed groups in India such as Dalits as both relatively 'neutral' (by virtue of being 'casteless') and empowering. In management studies, the use of Business English as a circumscribed and shared communication code in the global business community, which is not tied to a cultural identity rooted in a narrowly defined ethnos (Tietze 2008), is another example of this relative 'neutrality'.

Thus, for the time being at least, the instrumentalization of English in the restricted communication code of Business English in management studies in India is unlikely to be dislodged. English in this restricted domain, as opposed to literary English, is like a kind of secularised Latin of learning but with weak cultural associations. As we have seen, some language activists in India view Hindi through the lens of linguistic imperialism, and using regional languages as mediums of instruction in management studies would be restrictive because they do not operate as inter-regional

lingua francas or link languages. In some cases, even the State language has been resisted by speakers of other languages as an imposition, as in the case of Assam (Baruah 1999). Moreover, most, if not all, fluent users of English in South Asia are bi- or multilingual, and English is only one language in their linguistic repertoire. It is possible to question the assumption that legitimization effects automatically accrue to English in all situations of negotiation and conflict, and users of other languages might have a competitive advantage in these situations when they communicate amongst themselves in their own languages in the presence of monolingual English speakers. They can also control and direct the processes of translation into English for these speakers.

It is important to stress that replacing English with another language in Management Studies around the world will not in and of itself undermine structures of domination and authority, particularly if that language also has an imperial history (such as Spanish or French). Replacing one language with another does not automatically change material or cultural structures of domination. The focus on language and culture when addressing issues of domination in colonial and postcolonial discourse theory, although important, can also be limiting, because it occludes material structures of domination and pre-empts materialist critiques–concepts of class and capital go missing, and issues of material deprivation and poverty get ignored (Washbrook 2004; Acheraïou 2011). Irrespective of the question of the language in which management studies is taught in South Asia, the more fundamental issue is the structural relationship between global capitalism and management studies in the South.

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Chapter 4
Untold Story of Sri Lanka: Paradox in Education, ICT and Development in Post—Colony

Nalin Abeysekara and Yashoda Bandara

Abstract This chapter investigates Sri Lankan education, human development and economic development, against the backdrop of colonization and globalization and explores how colonialization affects some of the factors with different realities. The free education policy of Sri Lanka after independence has improved the quality of education as well as the literacy rate of the country. Sri Lanka has a comparatively high Human Capital Index and which has been identified as responsible for better position of human development compared to many other countries. But, computer literacy rate in Sri Lanka is quite low and disparities align with regional development disparities. Regional disparities can be linked to emergence of Colombo as the center of administration. This itself is an effect of colonization and subsequent globalization, resulting in deep regional disparity. Kannangara's philosophy focused on reversing colonial impact by empowering country's future generations for breaking the chains of poverty and colonialism through education. But incongruence of development strategies impacts regional disparities of computer literacy despite high literacy.

Keywords Free education · Post-colony · Reginal disparity · ICT · Sri Lanka

4.1 Introduction

Sri Lanka situated in the South Asia region is an Indian ocean island nation with rich civilization dating back to thousands of years. Sri Lanka is separated from the Indian subcontinent by the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait. Colonial rule in Sri Lanka began in 1505 with the arrival of Portuguese and in the following centuries has witnessed shifts in colonial powers. In 443 years of colonisation, Sri Lanka has been under the rule of Portuguese (1505–1658), Dutch (1658–1796), British (1796–1948), and Trincomalee Harbour were under the French for few months in 1796. Like the

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other parts of South Asia, Sri Lanka became independent from colonial rule by the British in 1948. Thus colonial experiences are quite deep seated in Sri Lanka. While colonial rule has impacted all dimensions of life and living in the colony, here we focus specifically on education.

Within the South Asian region, Sri Lanka has a comparatively high Human Capital Index of 74, compared to Bangladesh's 106, Nepal's 102, India's 115, Afghanistan's 133 and Pakistan's 134 (Schafer 2018), and it has been able to consistently maintain higher human capital outcomes compared to its income level (Aturupane 2018). According to Spain (1984), Sri Lanka has one of Asia's highest literacy rates at 91.8%. Sri Lanka is well known for its stellar achievements on various dimensions of human development from the early years of post-World War II period (Osmani 2018). In the 1960s and 70 s when many countries, newly attaining independence from colonial rule "were almost obsessively preoccupied with growth, Sri Lanka set up an elaborate welfare state structure", quite unlike these other developing countries (Osmani 2018, p.547). As a consequence, educational and health outcomes of the people of Sri Lanka surged ahead of levels in South Asia and even some developed Western countries of the world (Isenman 1980). The country's focus on building human capital of its people over the past six decades has been identified as one of the main factors that drove the country towards a leading position among its South Asian neighbors in education (Pswarayi-Riddihough 2019), making Sri Lanka a role model for human development paradigm (Osmani 2018). Interestingly Gylfason and Zoega (2002) argued that more and better education appears to encourage economic growth directly as well as indirectly through increased social equality and cohesion. They highlighted that education seems likely to encourage economic growth not only by increasing and improving human capital but also, physical capital and social capital—that is, by reducing inequality. Sri Lanka therefore can be thought of being excellently poised in terms of human capital in the whole of South Asia in leveraging the information and communication technologies (ICT) revolution that started off in the 1990s and the most recent industry 4.0 with digital technologies (Jorgenson and Vu 2016).

However, Sri Lanka shows comparatively high levels of digital divide and great inequalities in digital literacy. Sri Lanka, earlier known as Ceylon, comprises of nine provinces and despite high levels of literacy across all of them, digital literacy across these provinces is highly unequal posing an interesting paradox with regards to the relationship between socio-economic development and digital development. Gunkel (2003) observes that digital divide is the disparity in the digital world, which like technology itself, is actually 'a moving target'. It means that people first differ considerably in access, then in how they use ICT for what purposes, and that the differentiation in use often correlates significantly with user socio-demographic profiles. Literature has generally examined digital divide issues in terms of technologies, ownership and their impact on access (Srinuan and Bohlin 2011). While digital divide has been understood in literature in terms of technologies, the abilities, competences and skills necessary to use information and communication tools is a crucial aspect of digital divide. Interestingly, digital inequality in Sri Lanka is not only geographic but also gendered. As per literature internet penetration in Sri Lanka continues to rise, even

though women have less access to the internet and an urban–rural digital divide persists. Only half of Sri Lanka's population, between the ages of five to sixty nine, are digitally literate. In this chapter, we examine this contrast between literacy and digital literacy in Sri Lanka, in the context of Sri Lanka's colonization and immediate post-independence social policy and the more recent neoliberal globalization and economic growth focus.

Usually, digital divide has been understood as a problem of technology access, control and ownership and more basic theorising of digital divide as a social phenomenon has been limited (Ragnedda and Muschert 2016). Through this study, by examining literacy and digital literacy and the inequalities therein as social phenomenon brough about through social policy, we underline the importance of locus of policy formulation and its relationship with the (continuing) colonial encounter and neoliberal economic growth. We thus add to extant postcolonial critiques of digital divide. In a sense we suggest that the contemporary neoliberal economic growth inclusive of digital technology driven development under globalization, serves to erode the development and educational gains realized after independence. Such gains and equities had been painstakingly achieved through indigenously driven social policy. However, neoliberal development creates new inequities through regional concentration by directing resources to areas that serve global (western) needs. We realise that we are not using post and decolonial theoretical perspectives, even though we recognize and experience the colonial encounter in direct ways in our daily lives. Our sense of the digital literacy inequality stems from this lived experience. In keeping with this position, our chapter does not get into an overt theorising of the post-colonial, instead we lay out the issues as we see them and invite readers to engage as active thinking beings.

4.2 Sri Lanka: Colonial Experience and Education

In the sixteenth century, when Sri Lanka fell into Portuguese control, Portuguese missionary groups set up schools to promote Roman Catholicism (Perera 1998) and missionary education was compatible with the changing social situation. These schools attracted many children and were used by missionaries to propagate Christianity and as well as Western culture (Manoj 2020). From 1658, when the Dutch colonized the coastal areas of Sri Lanka for 156 years, they established a system of primary schools to assist the missionary efforts of the Dutch Church. "The Scholarchal Commission" inspected the schools, examined pupils, and also settled matrimonial disputes (De Silva 1981). During this period, there were separate schools such as Orphan, Parish, and Private schools. Dutch children received education in separate schools. Education was given in the seminary, a training school for future missionaries (Gooneratne 1968).

The role played by the British in education after they colonized Sri Lanka is extensive. Many of the Dutch schools in low country were closed down after the British takeover resulting in a short term contraction of European-style education

(Nubin 2002). Amid escalating debates about colonial rule, treatment of colonized peoples and the financial burden on the Empire, British government appointed sixteen Commissions of Inquiry between 1818 and 1826 (Casinader et al. 2018). In 1832, Colebrooke-Cameron Commission made some recommendations in relation to the administrative, economic, educational and social organization of Sri Lanka (Mendis 1956). The Colebrooke-Cameron Commission highlighted the standardization of educational curriculum and advocated the substitution of English for local languages. In that context, local English schools started and missionary schools that had previously taught in the vernacular also adopted English. The graduates of European-style schools, a large portion of them Christians from the low country in the south-west, went on to fill lower and middle-level positions in the colonial administration (Nubin 2002; Gnanapragasam 1988). By the mid-nineteenth century, government-funded schools and Christian schools were again expanding; in 1870, however, their combined student bodies had about 20,000 students.

Given, limited access to formal education for the natives, other social, religious leaders of the time such as Anagarika Dharmapala with foreigners like Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky of the Buddhist Theosophical Society installed Buddhist schools to provide Sinhala students with an English education rich in Buddhist values, and to bring Buddhism to life, at a time when it was slowly fading away (Bulder 2007). Most of these schools were established in the capitals of the major provinces of Sri Lanka. The first of these were Ananda College, Colombo (formerly English Buddhist School); Dharmaraja College, Kandy (formerly Kandy Buddhist High School); Mahinda College, Galle (formerly Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society School); Musaeus College, Colombo and Maliyadeva College, Kurunegala (formerly Kurunegala Buddhist Institution) which were followed decades later by Visakha Balika Maha Vidyalaya (formerly Buddhist Girls College), Colombo, Nalanda College, Colombo and Mahamaya Vidyalaya, Kandy (Bulder 2007). Alongside these institutions, some traditional education continued in pockets in Tamil and Sinhala languages (Nubin 2002). However, this colonial period was marked by great social, economic and educational inequality and disparities.

Almost two decades before independence, when limited forms of native participation in rule was promoted by the British, Dr. C.W.W Kannangara, a native, was appointed as the first chairman of the Executive Committee of Education in the State Council and became the first Minister of Education in colonial Sri Lanka in 1931. This State Council had been formed following the recommendations of the Donoughmore Commission that had been set up in 1931. As education minister, he tabled a proposal to provide free education in Sinhala and Tamil at all levels of education in all schools in all of Sri Lanka (Sumathipala 1968), in which education would be free 'from Kindergarten to University', for every citizen of Ceylon. It meant that every pupil was free of paying any fees for education. It took him 16 years of lobbying and advocating in the State Council before his plan of free education became reality in Ceylon in 1945. The implementation of this free education scheme marked an end to the social inequality that was inherently promoted by the colonial education system (Wuister 2018).

On May 30, 1944, Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara tabled the Education Bill in the State Council, taking the first steps of establishing a free education system in the country. Delivering one of the longest speeches in the legislature (Sedere 2018; 2016). Kannangara had stated in a special lecture in Calcutta in 1947,

> The main objective should be to create free and open-minded people. Free education should be the hallmark of national thought. The functioning of the school system in our country is to make our language our religion, our culture and traditions, and to produce a generation of children and adults with deep thinking, (cited in Kalyana et al. 2020).

Kannangara took steps to abolish the two-tier school system where English was taught to privileged students and the vernacular language was taught to the rural masses. While he emphasized teaching *swabasha* (native languages) in schools, he also advised that students should learn English to compete in the modern world (Gunatilleke 2020). The Kannangara Report (1943) projected a vision of social change moving away from the inequalities created by colonial education policy to recognition of the universal right to education, the need for free education as a pre-requisite of a democratic society, and the role of education as an agent of upward socio-economic mobility for all individuals. This endogenous and indigenous conceptualization was way ahead of the "basic needs" approach of international agencies in the 1970s and well before the discourse of rights based approach to development and UN declarations, covenants, and conventions (NEC 2003 pp. 3–4).

Kannangara has been called 'the father of free education in Sri Lanka' because of his struggles for free education—free in language, free of inequality of education, free in pedagogy, free from unemployment through vocational training, etc. Kannagara, through his proposal was seeking to revive some of the precolonial education systems that had been completely destroyed during colonial rule and we turn to outline these systems next.

4.3 Precolonial Education in Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan traditional education system was similar to the educational practices in much of the Indian sub-continent. It was closely related to the caste structure of occupations. In Sri Lanka, while the broader socio-cultural similarities were shared with India in the early centuries, in later centuries it was mainly founded upon Buddhist religious background and evolved having strong interactions with the local socio-cultural context.

In the Kandyan era (1597–1815); the last pre-colonial native kingdom, education system can be seen as a combination of methods that addressed both tacit and explicit knowledge bases at primary and advanced levels. As mentioned in many folklores, there were small village level primary education centers where basic reading and writing were taught by teachers at their residences. Sometimes these education centers were established in small village temples where an educated priest conducted classes for children. There were no formal syllabi, grading system or

trained teachers and special infrastructure in these centers, but the village children could get some formal knowledge from these centers through books like *Sahaskada* and *Nampotha*. These vernacular primary schools served communities and satisfied their basic literacy needs (Warnasuriya 1969).

Caste system was the basic mechanism that structured the pre-colonial social organization since before the Kandyan era. With a diversity of castes which were locally constituted, people learnt, trained and pursued occupations that corresponded to their caste. According to Dayaratne (2018) ancient indigenous peasant communities have created and sustained a rice civilization with a surplus through a sophisticated form of irrigation that results in the island's reputation as the "Granary of the East". The settlement system had evolved around peasants who are living in small hamlets surrounded by paddy fields, chena cultivations, reserved jungles, and water tanks. Even though there were great kings, kingdoms and golden era's in Sri Lankan history, often administrative powers together with the authority of law enforcement by the king and higher officials (Dewaraja 1985), had been delegated to functional and territorial chieftains as well as to local communal bodies (Ryan 1953; Karunananda 2006) leading to a decentralized form of governance.

Caste system gave a higher importance to tacit knowledge of occupations. The practical aspects of day-to-day work were largely related with the tacitly embedded accumulations of knowledge in occupations. Here people engaged in specific hereditary occupations. Every person belonged to a particular occupational group which designated his/her future job. Family played an important role as one of the key pillars that held the caste system in place (Ryan 1953), where the knowledge, skills and attitudes relating to a particular occupation were transmitted from generation to generation through kinship bonds. Technical, conceptual, and social expertise of these occupations was tightly attached to the knowledge and understanding accumulated over generations and embedded in the social context. It was not codified or declared and thus amounts to tacit knowledge. From young ages, children were taught to participate in occupational tasks while learning the requisite skills through experience, being guided and mentored by parents and elders of the family. As such, the knowledge that was required for securing an employment or a means of living was transmitted over generations within family or clan boundaries through informal education.

After Buddhism was introduced, three main monasteries; Mahavihara (in 3 BC), Abhayagiri (in 1 BC) and Jethavana (3 AD) were established during the era of Anuradhapura kingdom (Mendis et al. 2017) and developed into academic institutions called *Pirivena*. They were centres for knowledge creation and dissemination, similar to the wide and comprehensive education systems of its neighboring counterparts like Nalanda and Takshasila in ancient India. Initially, these were centres of oral learning, but during King Valagamba's reign the first attempt was made to transform such knowledge into text. From that point onwards, many scholarly works had been produced, mainly on Buddhism and history. Over the next few centuries new centres like Alahana Pirivena in Polonnaruwa, Vijayaba Pirivena and Parakumba and Sunethradevi in Kotte were added, and the network of education centres were

widened comprehensively across the island (Blackburn 2001). Native formal education of the country was institutionalized all over the island with this system. Both chronological and archaeological evidence reveal that these monasteries provided education to thousands of learners including Buddhist monks (Vimalabuddhi 1960).

Buddhism created a convincing ground by ensuring free access to education to all. The subjects taught in *Pirivena*s included Buddhism, languages (Pali and Sanskrit etc.), poetry, astrology, and medicine. Many textbooks on these different subjects were available by this time. Those who obtained education from these institutions spread all over the country and as a result, the number of educated individuals increased gradually taking the general literacy and educational attainments of pre-colonial Sri Lankan society to high levels.

Pirivenas or temple-based education centres continued to provide more comprehensive and systematic education than primary education centres, extending the scope of disciplines to include different fields such as Buddhism, languages, astrology, medicine and history. These institutions offered free education without discrimination, as they were supported by royal grants and public contributions. The influence of caste based informal learning, meant that the number of individuals who were interested in receiving formal education was limited to a handful, usually Buddhist monks.

The colonial rulers centralized this native decentralised administration and also gained complete control of all local tax revenues and resources. During the Portuguese period all most all the income sources belonging to the temples were taken over, and it made a devastating effect on *Pirivena* education system as *Pirivena*s were maintained by the temples (Hewawasam 2019). Similarly, hereditary, occupation based learning too had been comprised through destruction of the rural economies (Coomaraswamy 1947). The rice based local socio-economy, had been transformed into a peripheral structure integrated to the colonial capitalist world economy. Consequently, drained of local access to resources, decentralized provision of social needs at the local level including education, health etc. suffered and significantly deteriorated by the time of independence of Sri Lanka in 1948, leaving the country in a condition of deep poverty and inequality.

4.4 Post-Independence Sri Lanka: Education and Development

At the time Sri Lanka received independence from Britain, literacy rate in the country stood at a mere 57.8 percent (Daily Mirror 2017). Kannangara looked to free education as the social revolution that would take Sri Lanka out of its various poverties and inequalities. After gaining independence Sri Lanka enshrined the right to free education in the constitution in 1948 (D'Souza and Moore 2017). It is prudent to note here that such acknowledgement is a move far ahead in time when compared to other neighbouring South Asian countries that gained independence during the

Table 4.1 Literacy rates in Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh

Country	Literacy rate %
Sri Lanka	91.8
India	77.7
Pakistan	60.0
Bangladesh	74.7

Source World Bank, 2020

same period. For instance, a similar right to free and compulsory education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years was included in constitution in India as a fundamental right in 2010. In 2010, Article 25-A of the Pakistani constitution was created, stating that "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law".

Under the free education policy spear headed by Kannangara, government of Sri Lanka resolved to provide free education from kindergarten to university to every citizen. The state had thus set up an extensive decentralised administration and infrastructure, similar to pre-colonial times, that ensured that access to education was widely available across the length and breadth of the country, while providing free education services including text books and other relevant support. A significant outcome of the implementation of free education is that the literacy rates in Sri Lanka have reached higher levels compared to other South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan (World Bank 2020). Table 4.1 shows the literacy rates of these South Asian countries as of year 2020.

Consequent to the policy, literacy rates, educational attainment levels and other social indices, rose steadily. At the moment Sri Lanka maintains a literacy rate of 91.7% (refer Table 4.2) with very few regional disparities. The results of this decentralised policy can be seen in the regional distribution of literacy rates in Sri Lanka shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Literacy rate in Sri Lanka across regions

Region	Literacy rate (%)
Western Province	95.6
Central Province	88.6
Southern Province	91.9
Northern Province	94.8
Eastern Province	86.0
North Western Province	92.7
North Central Province	91.6
Uva Province	85.5
Sabaragamuwa Province	91.5

Source Labour Force Survey 2012, Dept. of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka

Table 4.3 Selected Socioeconomic Indicators

Year	Literacy rate (%)	Population (million)	Life expectancy	Infant mortality per '000 live births	% Employed in agriculture sector	% Unemployed in labour force	Per Capita Income US$
1940	40	6.2	42	141	55		
1960	72	9.8	61	68	53	16.6	187 (1970)
1980	88	14.7	69	34	51	24	540
2003/4	93	19.2	74	17	33	9	997
2014	96	20.5	75	15	31	4.4	3280 (2013)

Source Sedere (2016)

As per Table 4.2 it can be seen that the literacy rate of different regions in Sri Lanka ranging from 86 to 96% across regions. Moreover, D'Souza and Moore (2017) find that other educational indicators such as elementary school enrolment, and mean years of schooling also are better in Sri Lanka.

Based on the study of Liyanage (2014), free education is one of the reasons for Sri Lanka to achieve universal primary education by 1964. More importantly, as per the World Bank's observation, social indicators such as literacy rate, life expectancy, birth rate in Sri Lanka are ranked among the highest in South Asia as well as compare favourably with those in middle-income countries. Table 4.3 depicts the substantial development that Sri Lanka has achieved in the last seven decades through some selected socio-economic indicators. As per Sedere (2018; 2016) all governments irrespective of the leading political party have contributed to the success that Sri Lanka has achieved in this regard.

Sri Lanka pursued an elaborate welfare state structure, quite atypical of countries at comparable levels of income. It can be argued that given its particularly high socio-economic indicators and limited regional disparities in social development, as a nation, Sri Lanka was best poised to take advantage of the economic growth opportunities resulting from globalization and the revolution in ICT technologies. Against this backdrop, the inequalities that are visible in computer literacy in Sri Lanka are particularly puzzling. We use digital literacy and computer literacy interchangeably in the chapter.

4.5 Economic Development and ICT Revolution in Sri Lanka

Literature suggests that human development has a positive relationship with economic growth. Educational attainments, by impacting the quality of human capital

and opportunities available have been found to positively aid income growth and economic growth (Mukherjee and Chkraborty 2010; Appiah et al. 2019; Aghion and Howitt 1992). Interestingly, Miladinov (2020) argues that higher human capital contributes to the rise of GDP per capita. The per capita GDP levels in Sri Lanka vis-à-vis other South Asian neighbours support this thrust of literature, as is evident from Fig. 4.1.

Figure 4.1 depicts the GDP per capita growth across south Asia and shows that despite challenges Sri Lanka has consistently maintained a higher level of per capita GDP over time in comparison with its neighbours.

Further from examining the structural share of Sri Lankan GDP from 1940 to 2013, it is clear that the percentages of 1940s show the features of a primary economy where agricultural sector has a dominant share of 50% in GDP. When it comes to 2000, a clear transformation of structure is visible where the service and production sectors jointly contribute to 92% of the GDP with a drop of agricultural sector to 8%. This change has created a total shift of country's economic structure and it has been viewed as an upshot of the social upliftment resulted by the gradual expansion of education through 1944 Kannangara education reforms (Sedere 2018; 2016).

However, Sri Lanka has been unable to take advantage of the plethora of opportunities opened up by the ICT revolution. The country had initiated working on ICT from 1983 by establishing Computer and Information Technology Council of Sri Lanka through the National Computer Policy of 1983 (COMPOL). The view at that time was to enable Sri Lanka by developing its digital capabilities to gain from the commitment to an open liberalised economy that was looking outward at globalisation. However, it was only after 2001, when Sri Lanka entered into an agreement with Swedish International Development Agency that ICT policy and implementation work was started again (United States Agency for International Development 2002; National Computer Policy for Sri Lanka (COMPOL Report), 1983). Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka was established in July 2003
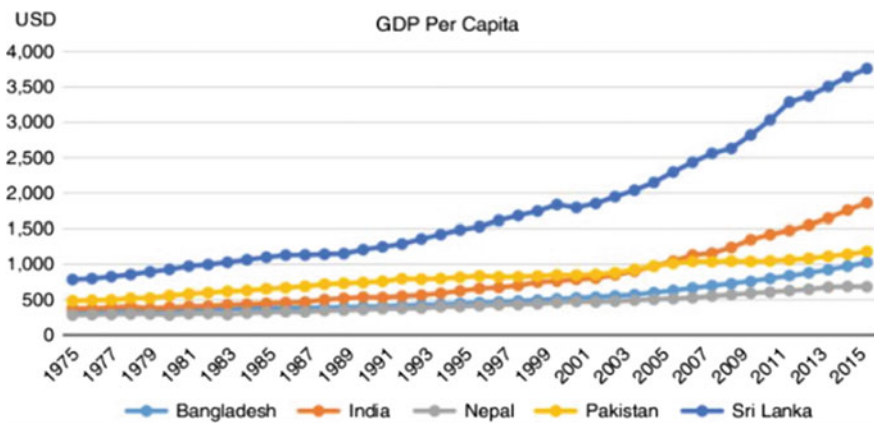
Fig. 4.1 Per capita GDP across South Asian countries. *Source* World Bank, 2017

and empowered to compose and administer programs and strategies in Sri Lankan government as well as the private sector (Karunathilake and Vidanagama 2021). This ICT policy formulated in early 2000s embraces neoliberal and new public management thinking seeking to reduce inefficiencies in governance and envisions strategic implementation of ICT to strengthening quality of service and skills and support country's development by operating as a value adding hub to industries and communities (Dissanayake 2011; United States Agency for International Development 2002). Notwithstanding these long-standing policy initiatives, computer literacy rate in Sri Lanka remains at a meagre 32% in 2020, severely limiting the opportunities of the people for benefiting from the growth opportunities afforded by ICT. Internet penetration rate in Sri Lanka remains only 34%, in contrast, neighbouring countries like India show a 45% internet penetration.

In addition, there has been a marked regional disparity in computer literacy across various provinces of the country. Over the almost two decades since the introduction of the ICT policy the regional disparities in computer literacy remain (Abeysekera 2008). As of 2019, the highest computer literacy rate of 44.1% was reported from the Western Province. Less than 22% literacy rate is reported from Eastern (15.7%), Uva (21.6%), Northern (19.3%), and North-Central (21.7%) provinces (see Table 4.4 for details). In 2019 at least one computer was available in 22.2% of households in Sri Lanka. Interestingly the highest availability can be seen in the Western province (34.7%) while the lowest availability is reported from the Uva (12.9%). This makes us wonder about the impact of online education during covid pandemic on the free education policy.

Extant studies have attributed much of the regional disparity in computer literacy to lack of English education as well as access to computers and telecenters (Dissnanayake 2011; Wignaraja and De Zylva 2018). Accordingly, improving opportunities and incentives for English has been considered as one of the key strategies of the ICT Human Resources Capacity Building Program in Sri Lanka. Karunathilake and Vidanagama (2021) point to the need to better integrate Sri Lankan educational

Table 4.4 Computer literacy rate in Sri Lanka 2019

Region	Rate (Percentage)
Western Province	44.1
Central Province	28.8
Southern Province	31.2
Northern Province	19.3
Eastern Province	15.7
North Western Province	29.1
North Central Province	21.7
Uva Province	21.6
Sabaragamuwa Province	27.2

Source Computer Literacy Statistics (2019), Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka

system with ICT, and Liyanage (2014) emphasized the need for a master plan vital to deliver direction and promote the use of ICT in Sri Lanka as an enabler in improving access to quality education.

While English language remains a barrier in taking advantage of the internet and digital economy as many scholars from Sri Lanka and around the world have pointed out (Maseko et al. 2010; Janks 2004), this chapter, seeks to look beyond English education for an explanation for the unevenness and low status of computer literacy. It turns its attention to unevenness of economic growth as a factor driving disparities in computer literacy.

4.6   Regional Development in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka consists of nine provinces including Western Province, Central Province, Southern Province, Uva Province, Sabaragamuwa Province, North Western Province, North Central Province and Northern Province. Western Province contributes 39.1% of the provincial-wise contribution to GDP, which is phenomenal (Central Bank of Sri Lanka 2018). Southern and Central Provinces being the second and third largest contributors to country's GDP stay far behind at 10.7% and 10% of GDP. On the other hand, Northern Province contributes only 4.7% and Uva and North Central provinces' contribution to GDP is also very low at 5.4% and Eastern Province at 5.7%.

As per World Bank (2012) the highest rate of urbanization in the country is reported in Colombo metropolitan region where urban concentration has been accompanied by higher economic density and higher productivity. Colombo, the main commercial hub in Sri Lanka is a part of the western province. Colombo has the highest computer literacy rate in the country. Even though the region convers only about 6% of the country's land area with 28% of its total population, it accounts for 45% of GDP and 73% of industrial value-added.

Western Province records the highest per capita income of 3,808 USD which is 1.6 times of the national per capita income. Gampaha and Kaluthara, the other districts close to Colombo and part of Western province also have a greater GDP than national average. Interestingly, Sakalasooriya (2021) argues that the Western Province in Sri Lanka has taken the advantage of concentration of most important infrastructure investment, with the Colombo port, Bandaranaike International Airport, better road and more reliable power and water supply, leading to continuous widening of regional development disparities in Sri Lanka.

With regards to industry and service sectors too, the same pattern is evident. Western province dominates industry activities with a contribution of 45.8% while Central and North Western provinces became second and third highest contributors. In terms of services activities, the Western province recorded the highest contribution of 39.6% while Central and Southern provinces had the second and third highest contributions (Central Bank of Sri Lanka 2018).

This unevenness in regional economic development is also evident from poverty levels in the country. As a result of concentrating economic activities in Western Province, as per Asian Development Bank (ADB) poverty in Sri Lanka has become a rural phenomenon since the growth of such areas has lagged behind. In 1996, the provincial poverty level ranged from 55% of the households in Uva province to 23% of the households in the Western province where Colombo is located (Central Bank of Sri Lanka 1997). This is one indication of disparity between the Western Province and two other provinces in Sri Lanka. Interestingly, even though studies have referred to digital divide in Sri Lanka, and the need for a centralised ICT approach for Sri Lanka to be able to take advantage of opportunities, they have largely ignored the rural urban divide (Pringle and David 2002; Jayaweera 2002). It should probably come as no surprise that unlike Kannangara's emphasis on using education policy to rectify social and economic inequalities; ICT and digital policy emphasis from 1983 onwards has been focused outwards on taking advantage of opportunities of globalisation for economic development in a liberalised economy. These policies have been completely silent about social and regional economic inequalities in Sri Lanka (Informtion Communication Technology Act 2003; National Computer Policy for Sri Lanka 1983; United States Agency for International Development 2002).

It is worthwhile to discuss computer ownership in Sri Lanka in this context. As depicted in Table 4.5, again the Western Province records the highest 34.3% (in the year 2019) and this can be seen as the same in the previous four years. Uva, Eastern and North-central provinces recorded lower levels of ownership which would again

Table 4.5 Computer ownership in Sri Lanka

Sector/Province	Desktop (%)				Desktop or Laptop (%)			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
Sri Lanka	12.1	12.1	9.5	8.0	21.6	22.8	22.3	22.0
Urban	17.6	18.5	13.4	12.6	35.4	38.2	37.5	38.0
Rural	11.4	11.2	9.1	7.4	19.6	20.6	20.0	19.7
Estate	4.1	2.9	1.5	1.2	6.1	4.5	4.2	4.6
Province								
Western	18.3	18.2	13.7	11.0	33.6	35.2	33.4	34.3
Central	12.4	12.4	9.5	8.6	21.2	22.5	20.2	20.8
Southern	10.8	9.6	8.6	7.6	17.9	18.3	19.8	17.9
Northern	6.5	7.2	6.0	5.6	16.7	18.7	18.5	16.2
Eastern	5.8	5.6	5.5	5.4	11.2	11.7	13.2	13.4
North-western	9.7	11.4	8.8	7.1	19.2	21.2	21.4	20.5
North-central	8.7	7.0	5.9	4.8	13.8	15.2	14.8	14.0
Uva	8.2	6.9	6.4	3.7	11.9	11.0	14.0	11.8
Sabaragamuwa	11.7	12.8	9.6	9.2	17.9	20.3	18.1	19.3

Source Computer Literacy Statistics (2019), Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka

highlight the regional disparity. And also the urban sector in Western Province of Sri Lanka is well above the national average with 38% (the national average is 22%) in the year 2019; and the estate sector (4.6%) and rural sector (19.7%) can be seen to be below the national average. As per Pringle and David (2002) Sri Lankan IT policy has not taken this important factor into consideration. This can be seen to be corresponding with "computer literacy by province".

In spite of pursuing a highly supportive social policy of free education, the economic development trajectory post-independence favoured a particular kind of centralized governance and economic development that reinforced regional inequalities which particularly favoured the colonial capital city Colombo and the Western province. This Colombo centric development was directed towards the global economy similar to what had occurred during the colonial rule. This contrasts from the social policy of equitable development in independent Sri Lanka, and the pre-colonial experience of decentralized governance and economy. This Colombo centric centralised development further strengthened during the period of globalization especially around the ICT technologies. Even the ICT policy which was developed based on inputs from international funding agencies, advocated a centralised development approach that centered around Colombo and the Western province. The inequities of economic development have on the one hand been reflected in poverty levels in other provinces. They have also been reflected in the differential access to and ownership of computers or laptops one of the fundamental means of connecting to ICTs. Census figures for 2019 show that smartphone remains the most important source of connecting to internet as people do not have access to other devices.

The Colombo centric economic development can be traced to the emergence and designation of Colombo as a capital by colonial rulers. The emergence of Colombo as the center of administration is itself an effect of colonization. According to Brohier (1984; 2000, P.2) "Colombo is a city forced on the peoples of Ceylon in spite of themselves. It was never a creation of their own choice or making". First established as a Portuguese outpost Colombo was governed by the Portuguese (1518–1656), the Dutch (1656–1796) and the British (1796–1948). As has been argued elsewhere (Perera 2002, P.1703), "modern Colombo is a foreign implant with neither a hinterland that produced it nor a history of 'organic development' related to Lanka. The existence and meaning of colonial Colombo, therefore, has intimately depended on European metropolises". It came about due to the colonisers' focus on maintaining a port and external relations with their empire. Colombo's emergence and growth was not a consequence of the internal administrative needs of the native population.

The decision to treat Colombo as the main city in colonial period has triggered provincial disparity. According to Kuruppu (1983), the most significant net effect of the colonial domination of Sri Lanka can be said to be the restructuring of the pre-colonial economy to create a peripheral type of economic structure integrated into the capitalist world economy. Many examples also can be seen in this era as Cinnamon became the most significant export product in the fifteenth century which attracted colonial powers such as the Portuguese and the Dutch. It can be seen that both Portuguese and the Dutch had little interest in Sri Lanka beyond the cinnamon trade (Kuruppu 1983). In the export economy established by the colonial rulers Sri

Lankan economy and production activities mainly concentrated on supplying a few primary commodities to the global market and consumption was heavily dependent on imported items (Snodgrass 1966). In the process of economic transformation, Sri Lanka was converted into an economy specializing in the production of a few primary agricultural commodities for the world market in return for the manufactures of the metropolitan economies. The establishment of export crop plantations of coffee, followed by tea, rubber, and coconut was pivotal in the process of restructuring the economy (Kuruppu 1983). Having formed during the colonial period from 1505 to 1947, the Western Province of Sri Lanka continues to be the main industrial hub of the country since independence in 1948 with unchanged economic strategies, making itself the economic core and leaving other provinces in the periphery of economic development (Sakalasooriya 2021). Hence according to Wanasinghe (2002) the core area of the Western Province represents 72.4 percent of the manufacturing sector 80% of the manufacturing industries and 88% of workers in the industries. Sri Lanka has continued with Colombo centric economic strategies for last seven decades even after independence.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has juxtaposed Sri Lanka's exemplary achievements in the field of education and human development against highly unequal and poor computer literacy. In contrast to extant studies which have placed the blame for the digital divide at the feet of an education system in the vernacular and campaigned for promoting English to overcome digital divide, this chapter has turned the focus onto uneven economic development. Specifically, this chapter has identified the preoccupation with a Colombo and Western province centric economic development as a key reason for the differential distribution of digital divide. This differential resource access prevents people from engaging with the ICT opportunities irrespective of English knowledge. This uneven economic development negates the possibility of leveraging all the gains in human capital development made over the years. English was the primary language of the formal education system that developed during the colonial era but it was converted into Sinhala in post-independent education reforms. However, with the economic, political and social changes that took place in the late seventies attempts were made to introduce English to the country's formal education. While attitudinal issues towards English remain important, the regional disparities in resource distribution and access to computers and other infrastructure owning to economic development differences cannot be overlooked while evaluating ICT and digital and computer divide.

We have also suggested the continuities of Colombo centric development with colonial rule. Colonial era transformed the country's citizens into mere service receivers instead of being active stakeholders of the administrative system (Bandara and Dissanayake 2018). It is clear that Kannangara's philosophy focussed on reversing this backward mentality by empowering the country's future generations for

breaking the chains of poverty and surpassing the invisible ceilings of colonialism. Yet, there was hardly any integrated framework of national-level strategies, especially economic and technological, which support this aim in a holistic perspective. As a result, the country has failed to achieve such a holistic level of empowerment in spite of excellent literacy rate and human development levels. Thus, it is worthwhile to study how this incongruence of development strategies impacts regional disparities of education and computer literacy throughout the process of decolonization/indigenization.

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Chapter 5
"Permission to Narrate": Colonialism, Anti-colonialism, Postcolonialism and Organisational Nostalgia

Arindam Das

> *Because I know that time is always time*
> *And place is always and only place*
> *And what is actual is actual only for one time*
> *And only for one place*
> *I rejoice that things are as they are and*
> *I renounced the blessèd face*
> *And renounce the voice*
> *Because I cannot hope to turn again*
> —T. S. Eliot, "Ash Wednesday" (1930/1963, p. 85)

Abstract This article uses 'organisational nostalgia' to highlight the longing for colonial glory, various facets of postcoloniality, and anti-coloniality (or decolonisation). Closely scrutinising three interviews and a set of photographs of a now shut down railway wagon manufacturing industry, Burn Standard Company Ltd., Burnpur in West Bengal, India and the sole literary text that has reference to Burn Standard, Burnpur—*One Hell of a Life* (2014) by Captain Stan Blackford, the analysis, on one hand, illustrates the desire for an acritical nostalgia for colonial organisational practices and its associated socio-cultural habitus and artefacts; and, on the other, the postcolonial (even anti-colonial and decolonising) appropriations and subversions in the daily narratives of the organisation and its members. The chronotope-memoirs bring to fore the working class's evocative reminiscences of the intercultural relations that existed in the post/colony. The chapter thereby reiterates the co-existence of colonial and decolonial thinking and praxis among the colonised.

Keywords Organizational nostalgia · Critical organizational studies · Organizational storytelling · Postcolonialism · Postcolonial organizational leader · Alternate modernity

> … organizational nostalgia is not a marginal phenomenon, defining the dominant emotional
> complexion of some organizations…nostalgia for an organizational golden age exercises a

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considerable influence on the way present-day events are interpreted, acting as a rich source of symbolism and meaning. —Gabriel (1993, p. 119)

5.1   Introduction

"Permission to Narrate," a phrase that forms the title of the article, is a critical piece by Said (1984) that voiced the subalternist concerns of the Palestinians in the international media otherwise enthralled by the Zionist narratives of the colonising Jews. My reference to Said's article is not meant to consolidate some similar narratives of marginal subjects in critical organisational research, but to articulate in a Saidian demystifying way the "history-transcending universal rationalism" (Said 1984, p. 47) promulgated by the *colonial Weltanschauung.* I invoke Said to critically estimate an organisation and its socio-cultural habitus in the lights of a postcolonial setting. Yet, any blind hero-worship of a theory/theoretician may be myopic. As a conscious researcher, I acknowledge the fact that the praxis of postcolonial theory had been a matter of privileging of the western episteme (Chakrabarty 2002; Chatterjee 2012; Prakash 1994; Sen 1987; Spivak 1988), and the very application of the same to critical organisational studies is no less "overwhelmingly Eurocentric" (Prasad 2012, p. 20). However, any attempt to provincialise the Eurocentric discourse of postcolonial organisational studies does not imply any binary opposition to the same. It instead calls for a selective and constructive application of western and indigenous postocolonial hermeneutics critiquing the imperialist organisational discourses. In this article, I intend to do the same by cautiously applying postcolonial discourses (both from scholars of East and West) to a particular kind of organisational emotion that Yiannis Gabriel dubs as "organizational nostalgia"—a sentiment reminiscent of the golden days of the organisation (Gabriel 1993). By analysing the nostalgic workplace emotions of ex-employees of Burn Standard Company Ltd. Burnpur (West Bengal, India), a railway wagon manufacturing industry, I attempt to delve into the colonial hangovers, anti-colonial resistance, decolonising attempts, and postcolonial representations of an organisation. Through analysis of three interviews (primary source [Informant-1, age 83; Informant-2, age 95; Informant-3, age 75]), and a set of photographs (primary source, 30 in number) I intend to delve deep into the subjective aspects of organisational meaning-making as evident in the post/anti-colonial socio-cultural habitus of an organisation. To do so I unravel the hitherto concealed and undocumented spaces of articulation that help us re-imagine an organisation from the fresh, albeit ambivalent (Bhabha 1984), perspectives of "glorification of social mission of the colonizer" (Spivak 1985, p. 251), anti-colonial resistance (Gopal 2019), and postcolonial negotiation/identity formation (Hall 2000). I had also visited the organisation and its employee quarters (aka Wagon Colony or ISW Colony, Burnpur), where I had taken pictures and collected information from the existing inmates. I had also referred to the memoir by Captain Stan Blackford, *One Hell of Life: An Anglo-Indian Wallah's Memoir from the Last Decades of the Raj* (2014), the only literary text that has reference to Burn Standard, Burnpur. This was

done to triangulate the primary data that I analyse (Guba 1990, p. 23) and thereby adding better insight and rigor to my study (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, p. 4). My research into the hi/story critically delves into the nostalgically re-created emotional workplace data/myth (Cross 2015; Gabriel 1993; Kessler and Wong-MingJi 2010; Putnam and Mumby 1993; Ulus 2015; Veresiu 2018) and contributes to the intersectional studies straddling the world of critical organisational studies and postcolonial criticism (Barker 2013; Bhattacharya 2017; Nkomo 2011; Prasad 2003, 2012; Prasad and Prasad 2003; Raman 1991, 2009, 2014, 2020).

5.2 A Theory of Organisational Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a portmanteau word that combines two Greek words *nóstos* (meaning 'homecoming' or 'return to native land') and *álgos* (meaning 'pain', 'grief' or 'ache'). The word was coined in 1688 by Johannes Hofer as a translation of the German word *heimweh* (literally meaning 'homesickness') to indicate a depressing medical condition and despondency of the Swiss mercenaries longing to go home after their services abroad. A medical condition, nostalgia, was closely associated with melancholia and hypochondria and was about the depletion of the "'vital spirits', causing nausea, loss of appetite, pathological changes in the lungs, brain inflammation, cardiac arrests, high fever, as well as marasmus and a propensity for suicide" (Boym 2001, p. 4). The sole treatment to the condition was in the return of the nostalgia sufferer to her/his home. Nostalgia slowly came to designate a plethora of cultural, psychological, and aesthetic meanings. Such jostling of signifiers has created an aporiatic impassé in the understanding of nostalgia. Derrida's use of *aporia* that indicates an impassé or puzzle due to the presence of overabundant and even oppositional meaning is surely to be discerned in the critical use of 'nostalgia'. For example, for a group of critics, nostalgia is triggered out of the negative emotions of 'separation anxiety' and longing to go back home (viz. Wildschut et al. 2006). Yet, for another school, it is positive and has futuristic traits bordering on the qualities of redemption (Sedikides et al. 2008). Indeed, unlike modern historiography, nostalgic recollections are neither chronologically evolving nor topically fixated. Nostalgia is conjured in the liminal zone bestriding memory and history. No wonder, nostalgia theorist Svetlana Boym says, "nostalgia speaks in riddles and puzzles, so one must face them in order not to become its next victim—or its next victimizer" (Boym 2001, p. xvii). Boym's reading of postcommunist Europe through such nostalgic recapitulation thus recreates the received knowledge of history through fantasies and memories—the objective truth interpreted through the subjective projection of the self. Any nostalgic recapitulation for Boym is either 'reflective' or 'restorative' (Boym 2001). Restorative nostalgia "puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps" (Boym 2001, p. 41). Restorative nostalgia is conservative and does not admit to any radical vilification of the static past. Whereas, reflective nostalgia "dwells *on algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance" (Boym 2001, p. 41). Reflective nostalgia provides an opportunity to

critique the past from the vantage point of the present. Hence, dreams and regrets are at once evoked. The constant, dynamic movement from the present to the past and back to the present provides a non-linearity of the chronotopic scheme. For Boym, "re-flection suggests a new flexibility…The focus … on the meditation on history and passage of time… [Reflective nostalgia] is more oriented toward an individual narrative that savors details and memorial signs, perpetually deferring homecoming itself (Boym 2001, p. 49). Such reflective nostalgia defers the homecoming through its love-hate relationship with memory.

Any postcolonial understanding of the theory of nostalgia perceives history not from the perspective of collective memory but that of an individuated one. This is not to underrate the nostalgia that springs up from the collective *anima mundi* (world soul-wisdom). But, true to the idea of postcolonial cultural memory, postcolonial nostalgia codifies individuated responses to the longings of 'home' that go beyond any historical understanding. The subjective recollections give narrative agency to the postcolonial subject to reinvent the past, to negotiate with the collectively distinct history and help in the creation of a multidimensional cross-referencing where the public and the private meet. This nostalgic postcolonial individuated recollection pluralises and interrogates the standard version of history. Thus, postcolonial understanding of nostalgic recollections tends to be subjective and fragmentary and re-narrates the accepted premises of historical metanarrative. An alternate micro-history, a postcolonial take of nostalgia, points at uncertainties and aporias that subverts the otherwise homologous history of the colonial past. Dennis Walder's *Postcolonial Nostalgias* (2011) is such a counter-positivist understanding of colonial/neo-colonial history through nostalgic recollection. An alternative response to established colonial/neo-colonial history, postcolonial nostalgia reconstructs the homecoming (or rather the impossibilities of homecoming) beyond facile imperial fantasy as one imbricated with politics of struggle and resistance. The dialectics of postcolonial nostalgia takes us beyond the colonial perspective of 'neutral' history. Through the modes of subjective re-viewing, it dehistoricizes, creatively challenges and problematises the monumental, accepted historical facts. It subverts the general, documented understanding of history from the perspective of the reflective individual experiences. The postcolonial nostalgic narrator re-reads the colonial signs of the past and brings back the memories from the margin that was otherwise lost to colonial amnesia. It brings in the question of ethics and recreates the past from the position of the subaltern and exposes the "older patterns of imperialist exploitation" (Banerjee et al. 2009, p. 12). The regressive or repressive nostalgia of a subject of a post-colony creates a hysteria whose symptomology involves painful memories and trauma (Walder 2013). Just as Eliot's narrator in *The Wasteland* who despairingly documents, "These fragments I have shored against my ruins", the postcolonial nostalgic narrator tends to journey "towards an inner, even spiritual dimension, glimpsed through the various masks or personae he creates" (Walder 2011, p. 113).

From the perspective of critical organisational studies, nostalgia has been theorised by Yiannis Gabriel in his seminal article "Organizational Nostalgia: Reflections on the 'Golden-Age'" (1993). For Gabriel organisational nostalgia is no mere sentimental recollection of the past or a desire for the historical inquisition. For

Gabriel "organizational nostalgia" is "highly plastic" and "infused with symbolism and meaning". Gabriel elucidates about nostalgic past that it is:

> … highly selective, generally idealized, and infused with symbolism and meaning. … is at once part of us but not part of the present world, evoking a glowing emotional response and inviting further idealization … but resisting historical elucidation. (Gabriel 1993, p. 121)

Hence, for Gabriel, postcolonial nostalgias are recollections that recreate a golden past which are juxtaposed against the inner present, which is "almost invariably found emaciated, impoverished, and lacking" (Gabriel 1993, p. 121). The modes of performing the social phenomenon of organisational nostalgia are through "stories, jokes, myths, gossip, nicknames, graffiti and cartoons" (Gabriel 1993, p. 138); it is "benign" and "honourable" intending to "reintroduce idealism in organization" away from "profit, rationality, efficiency and domination". Further, the elements of organisational nostalgia for Gabriel, comprise of old buildings of the company and the old charm inherent in them, and old leaders who were more of family heads than technocratic leaders of the present. For Gabriel organisational nostalgia acts as a mode of identity-making: vicariously fulfilling an individual's need to see him/herself as someone of value of being "somebody again" (Gabriel 1993, p. 132).

My research findings partially agree with Gabriel's elements of organisational nostalgia that essentially centers on the old buildings and organisational artifacts, old leaders, and the desire to reclaim old identity through storytelling, etc. But, Gabriel's understanding of organisational nostalgia is restorative rather than reflective (Boym 2001). His is positivist and conservative in nature and does not admit criticisms. Further, an "erection of an organizational *malignant*" is meant for the construction of a subject's narcissistic ego, a grotesque caricature who in denial and defiance idealises the nightmarish and demonising perspectives of the organisation (Gabriel 1993, p. 135). Hence, for Gabriel (1993), there is little or no scope of subjective counter-discourses or subversive voices ("malignant") while reclaiming an organisation through nostalgia.

Such a myopic understanding of counter-discourses and subversive narratives to the "golden past" of an organisation is ineffectual towards the complete understanding of an organisational culture that ought to accommodate all the voices, including the non-benign one. This is especially so when the interviewee is of subaltern status within the colonial or neo-colonial organisational structure and when her/his memory helps generate a counter version of established history. The set of pictures analysed by me and the interviewee's counter-discourses (that talk about colonial hegemony and attempt a decolonising identity creation) to the golden past thwarts the romantic "homecoming" of the organisational nostalgia. Hence, my analysis of the organisation nostalgia from a postcolonial perspective will be an addition to the otherwise incomplete understanding of Gabrielian restorative organisational nostalgia. I open spaces for performance of resistive counter-versions of nostalgia through my understanding of postcolonial organisational nostalgia. Here, I accept Boym's version of the individuated 'reflective' nostalgia (2001) that differs and defers the standard designs of 'golden' homecoming. For me, the postcolonial turn to organisational nostalgia is "restorative" (Byom 2001) when it comes to the acritical admiration of

the colonial past of an organisation (nonpareil static version of colonial "golden days" [Gabriel 1993]), and "reflective" (Boym 2001) when it accommodates criticism of the colonial organisational hegemony and either intends to decolonise the same or slyly resist its static version through recollected images of Bhabhaesque "hybridity" and native modernity (Chatterjee 1997).

5.3 Mookerjees' ISW: A 100-Year Saga

Burn Standard Co. Ltd., Burnpur (West Bengal, India), earlier known as Indian Standard Wagon Ltd. (aka ISW Santa work [Santa Mouja being the village that was annexed for the factory being laid]) was founded by the pioneering industrialist of Bengal, Sir Rajendra Nath Mookerjee (aka Sir Rajen) in 1918 and managed by Burn & Co. founded by the Englishman Alexander Burn. The company specialised in manufacturing railway wagons, carriages, springs, and railway equipment. In 1927, Burn & Co. was acquired by Sir Rajen. In the 1930s, the company could produce 3000 wagons per year (Darvill 2015). Most of these wagons were wood wagons and a few made of iron and all four-wheeler wagons. Administration of the organisation was in the hands of the British and Anglo-Indians till independence. With difficulties in getting trained engineers, Anglo-Indians trained in railway operations were hired. It was only after independence in 1947, that steel was used in wagon manufacturing. It was post-independence that the company reached its performance zenith under the stewardship of Sir Birendra Nath Mookerjee, son of Sir Rajendra Nath Mookerjee. The company was nationalised in 1976 and Burn & Co. was amalgamated with Indian Standard Wagon and renamed Burn Standard Co. Ltd. in 1987. The company along with two other organisations, Braithwaite Burn and Jessop Construction Company Limited became subsidiaries of BBUNL (Bharat Bhari Udyog Nigam Limited), a Public Sector Undertaking of the Government of India. The company was referred to BIFR ("The Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction", whose objective was to determine the sickness of a company and determine revival methods/or permanent shutdown of the company) in November 1994 and officially declared *sick* in January 1995. A rehabilitation package was approved by BIFR in April 1999 and BBUNL was declared *failed* in 2001. Efforts to bring in change in management did not fructify. A revival plan was approved by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (*CCEA*) in August 2010 and BBUNL was brough under direct control of Ministry of Railways (MOR). However, from 2019, the company has been shut down till further notice (Historical Perspective 2019).

Burn Standard Company, from its very initiation, was a complex postcolonial site. The company was initially owned by native Bengalis, Sir Rajen and Sir Biren who were known for their Anglophilia and yet were characters that never negotiated their self-respect with the colonial rulers. Sir Rajen, a pioneering industrialist, was also president of the Asiatic Society and president of Indian Science Congress.

Although Sir Rajen was against "vain prejudices of a narrow-minded *Swadeshi*",[1] yet it would be a gross injustice to think about him as a man who sided with colonisers (Mahindra 1933, p. 235). During the *Swadeshi* movement, Sir Rajen accepted appointment as Director of Bengal National Bank, a *Swadeshi* enterprise. He was also an active Director of Indian Stores, a *Swadeshi* venture established for the sales of *Swadeshi* machinery (*The Cyclopedia* 1909, p. 349). During the ceremony of a life-size statue erection of Sir Rajen, in Calcutta's business center Dalhousie Square, Lord Brabourne, the then Governor of Bengal, on 1 February 1938, had admitted:

> Sir Rajendra left behind him a reputation for fair dealing and integrity, for firmness without the harshness of spirit, and for personal charm and ease of manner, which enabled him to hold, with dignity, a position to which few of his countrymen had attained and for which he is held in affectionate remembrance by persons of all races and creeds (as cited in Rana 2004).

Similarly, Sir Biren—a Trinity College graduate in Engineering—who was knighted in 1942 owing to his supportive role towards British in World War II wherein he had served on the Viceroy's National Defence Council and Munitions Production Advisory Committee, was also the first Indian to acquire a World Bank loan for his steel industry (the current IISCO Steel Plant) in post-independent India in 1953. This was the first instance of a loan being granted by World Bank to any private company. Thrice he borrowed from World Bank with matching grants from the Nehru Government (Rana 2004). Indeed, any organisation led by such father-son duo, and the culture that emanates therefrom, would inevitably exude an ambivalent straddling of coloniality, a penchant for Western modernity, and indigeneity.

Hence, the nationalist spirit that churned out an organisation like Burn Standard was no mere blueprint of a Western discourse founded on the consumption of scripted European modernity, rather it was an appropriation of that modernity from an Indian perspective. It was a perfect Bhabhaesque liminal zone (1994) beyond the binaries of either-or/east–west/insider–outsider. Such an organisation is a perfect example of what political theorist Partha Chatterjee would say, "Our Modernity" (1997). As my research reveals, the colonial spectre looms large in an organisation like this. But that is in the outwardly material perspective—use of machinery, colonial buildings, implementation of science and technology, western organisational layout, pro-European administration style, matters dealing with economy and finance. This is a domain where the "west has proved its superiority and the East had succumbed" (Chatterjee 1993, p. 6). Whereas, the spiritual domain of the organisation, its inner domain, bore the mark of ethnic cultural identity (Chatterjee 1993, p. 6). Such areas included the organisation's ethnic nurturance of Bengali art and culture, its promotion of education in local languages, clubs formed by the employees (and their wives) and its activities, promotion of Hinduism (contrary to the colonial mission of civilising Christianity). As the nostalgic data proves and my fieldwork reiterates, the binaries between the "material" projections and the "spiritual" projections of Burn Standard

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[1] *Swadeshi* or *Swadeshi* Movement refers to the politicized nativist movement that contributed to the Indian nationalism and its freedom from colonialism.

are not always very marked but at times indistinguishably dissolved to create a unique bricolage. Even the leader of Burn Standard showed traits of postcoloniality. One of my interviewees remarked about Sir Biren,

> After 1947, Sir Biren made it a point that the administration was in the hands of the Indians. But most of these Indians perhaps lacked the requisite administrative skills otherwise so brilliantly displayed by the British administrators in the pre-independence Burn Standard. Having said that, we still had to be in our full English formals to meet Sir Biren and speak in English during any boardroom meeting where he was present. Sir Biren was a perfect European who lost it to the cunning central government of India for being too honest (all his income-tax papers were always perfect). It was said that once when the Prime Minister rang him up, Sir Biren told his secretary to ask the PM to call him later as it was Sir Biren's lunchtime. It is this arrogant, dismissive, and non-adjusting nature that ultimately resulted in his downfall. Also, after 1967, with the communist party coming to power in West Bengal, he decided not to negotiate with the militant labor movements and their absurdly misplaced demands. This resulted in the first lock-out for the company that lasted for about a year (2nd October 1967–9th May 1968). Sir Biren lost control over the organisation. It was nationalised by the Government of India in 1976. Sir Biren was too English for the Indians and too Indian for the English.

The primary and secondary sources that I analyse in the next sections corroborate this split between the organisation's colonial penchant in the outer material world and a sovereign ethnic tilt in the inner nationalist spiritual realm. Interestingly, at times in the organisational culture of Burn Standard, colonial modernity overlaps with traditional ethnicity to create a coinciding zone. It is in this overlapping zone that colonial culture is provincialised, and a new kind of modernity is born. Here I fall back again on what Partha Chatterjee says, "Our Modernity"— "a modernity that is national" (Chatterjee 1997, p. 14). For Chatterjee, such newly founded modernity appropriates the progressive, material scientific discourses of colonial Europe by infusing in it the hues of ethnic tradition and spirituality. Rightly Chatterjee argues that alternative organisations thus born, straddled the universal truth of scientific, progressive modernity (essentially bestowed by colonial modernity) and the ethnic traditions. Citing the example of Prafulla Chandra Ray, a Fellow of the Royal Society, who "thought it worth his while to write *A History of Hindu Chemistry*, Chatterjee affirms that the culture of national modernity is a matter of ethnic coping with Western modernity (Chatterjee 1997, p. 20). The process of liminal, alternate modernity may not be very different from Bhabha's hybridity (Bhabha 1984, 1994) but it results in "our modernity", a condition that we will witness in the nostalgic recollections of Burn Standard.

5.4   "A Man of Principle, a General Manager Better Than the Colonial Sahibs!" A Post/Colonial Organisational Leader and the Golden Era of ISW

One of my interviewees (Informant-1) while talking about the most successful General Manager of the organisation, Colonel Birupaksha Basu, (see Picture 5.1)

Picture 5.1 Colonel
Birupaksha Basu (from
Singh 2020)

opined: "Till independence this company was just like any other run of the mill
company. After independence when the British left and most of the Anglo-Indians
left and when Sir Biren appointed Colonel Birupaksha Basu as the General Manager,
that the company came to the limelight". Colonel B. Basu (18.08.1909–14.06.1980),
aka Ban Basu, was the fourth graduate of the first batch (and the first Indian) from The
Institute of Mechanical Engineers in 1927 (*Proceedings* 1932, p. 202; Singh 2020,
p. 18). In 1940 he volunteered for Railway Military Service. He was sent abroad and
rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel. He returned to India from World War II—Iraq theatre
and after independence became the first DCME (Deputy Chief Mechanical Engi-
neer) of Jamalpur Workshop, East India Railway (now Eastern Railway). In 1952
he joined Burn Standard Company, Burnpur (then Indian Standard Wagon managed
by Martin and Burn). He was the first Indian General Manager of the organisa-
tion. Colonial-army association of the General Manager of Burn Standard was not
something new. Even pre-independence, British or Anglo-Indian officers of the firm
were by default a part of Auxiliary Force (India) [AFI], a part-time paid volunteer
organisation within the Indian army in British India. Here, one is reminded of Black-
ford who in his memoir talks about by default becoming a member of AFI once he
joined Burn Standard in 1939 as an officer. Blackford further reminds that the then
General Manager, Captain Pearce, was in overall command of the AFI (Blackford
2014, Chapter 27, n.pg.). However, in case of Colonel Basu, this was the first time
that an Indian General Manager with colonial-army background was appointed by
the management of Burn Standard, Burnpur.

Talking about Colonel Basu's previous career at Jamalpur Workshop during
the British Raj, Sing reminds what Sahai (a 1931 graduate from The Institute of
Mechanical Engineers and one who worked directly under Colonel Basu) said,

Basu was a pioneer who never lost an opportunity from winning a point from his British
colleagues and making them realize that he was equal, if not better, than them in every way.
(Singh 2020, pp. 18–19)

If the above historical background and recollection about Colonel Basu indicate a
duality in his tilt towards the British and the 'natives', then this unstable identity that
articulates the dialectics of opposed temperament— "modern, colonial, postcolonial,
'native'" (Bhabha 1994, p. 218) remained a dominant trait during his tenure as the
General Manager of Burn Standard Company. One of my interviewees recollected,

During the tenure of Colonel Basu as General Manager (1952–1965), the company was a
gold mine. Fortunately, India was growing at that time. From four-wheeler wagons, it had
now become an eight-wheeler wagon. Riveted wagons transformed into welded wagons
during his tenure. Workers were very nicely looked after, far better than colonial times.
Though trained in the European way of life, he never missed the human touch. During the
colonial times, there was nothing called labour welfare, Colonel Basu introduced the same
(Informant-1).

Here it would be worthwhile to mention that Informant-1 had himself served as
General Manager of the company. However, a discerning reading of the narrative
suggests the nostalgic recollection to be much more than being mere paean of 'good
old days' and fond reminiscence about the standing-out-from-the-crowd 'perfect
leader' and his legacy (Gabriel 1993). In Colonel Basu, we observe the postcolo-
nial organisational leader. The charismatic leadership (Noguera 1995; Bryman et al.
2011) attained by Colonel Basu is through his Bhabhaesque stereotype-subverting,
disturbing hybridity, and resistance to colonial organisational culture. Not only in his
nostalgic recollection does Informant-1 speak about the golden days of the organi-
sation and its best leader but compares his achievement to that of his colonial prede-
cessors. Thus, the nostalgic recollection shows a subversion and dismissal of the
vexed discourse of colonial progress, growth, and development. While comparing
Colonel Basu with one Mr. Philip (a British manager of ISW), Informant-1 said that
if the former had the technical know-how and far better insight into western engi-
neering skills then the latter (who also happened to be the informant's immediate
boss) worked merely on experiential and practical understanding with no under-
standing of the truce design formula important in wagon manufacturing. The Infor-
mant also recollected how one Mr. Gail (a senior British officer of ISW) was fired
from his job by Colonel Basu for breach of organisational conduct without any
prior notice. Recollecting the organisation-specific jargon of "Rule 9" (a rule in the
employee service book that stated that anyone can be fired by the management,
without prior notice or stating any reason), Informant-1 reminds how the office pool
car that usually stopped in front of Mr. Gail's bungalow every day, on one particular
day did not stop to pick him up and later it was found out that Mr. Gail was sacked by
Colonel Basu. "He was more British than the British themselves", opined Informant-
1 about Colonel Basu. Informant-1 further recollected that during the tenure of the
British General Managers, laborers were not only less paid and mistreated but also
their housing system was most pathetic with quarters having single doors and no
windows. Although Colonel Basu could not do much about these permanent housing

structures, the sanitary system in these labour colonies was improved, manual scavenging at labour quarters to a great extent reduced (also a three-storied public *khata paikhana* for native male workers [*khata paikhana* translated as service latrine] razed to ground), free primary school (R.V.S. Junior Vidyalaya) for children of the laborers was opened, ladies' park and open-air community theatres were built, laborers and their family members now had access to sports facilities (with western games like football and cricket along with the more indigenous games like wrestling promoted by the organisation, and ISW stadium was built in 1958–1959) and he even launched a photography society (in a separate small house in the precincts of Dâk-bungalow) and started a library for the employees (Informant-1). The laborers were paid a hefty bonus that would go to even four figures (rare in any organisation across the country in those days). Burn Standard became one of the best-paying private firms in India. Informant-1 reminded that during this period Burn Standard had issued sixteen rounds of bonus shares in a span of seven to eight years. The decolonising attempt of Colonel Basu positively impacted not only the laborers but also the officers. According to Informant-1 before independence, there were two service rule books in the organisation: the rules of the 'pink book' governed the British and other European officers (with rules more laxer and salary package much high), and the rules of the 'yellow book' governed the Indian officers (with rules more stringent and salary package comparatively low). Colonel Basu abolished any colonial favouritism to create a standard service rule for all the officers, irrespective of their race. Thus, Colonel Basu had resisted colonial organisational culture that was equivalent to "(genocidal) violence and a degraded view of its victims as things that are less than human" (Prasad. 2012, p. 14). It further transpired from the narrative of Informant-1 that Colonel Basu was a Bhabhaesque postcolonial mimic man: "In the workshop Colonel B. Basu was a perfect British but in social gatherings and functions like the Independence Day and Republic Day none was a better Bengali than him with *dhoti*, *punjabi*, and a shawl. His speeches during these occasions proved him to be a man very well versed in Bengali language. The thirteen years that he was the General Manager was the golden time for the company. All were afraid of him, but all loved and respected him." Colonel Basu's sense of colonial-military punctuality is highlighted by Informant-1 in the story where Colonel Basu issued a confrontational letter to Informant-1 for starting a cultural event 13 min late (whereby the chief guest was a *Swamiji* from *Ramkrishna Mission*, Asansol) and later even went ahead to incorporate a rule that thenceforth all organisational events needed approval from the General Manager. One here is reminded that time/clock is an indicator of discipline and control, embodying authority, and demonstrating industrialisation/capitalism—an outcome of European colonial modernity. The same is highlighted by Thompson's seminal research (1967). The Victorian virtues of punctuality were perhaps incorporated by Colonel Basu during his colonial military service and strictly incorporated during his tenure at ISW.

True to what Gabriel suggests, the conjuring of the leader, (here of Colonel Basu by Informant-1) recreates an organisational space that is "found richer, more authentic,

more meaningful" (Gabriel 1993, p. 130). Although this recreation of the long-forgotten leader through nostalgic recollection is a restorative nostalgia than reflective [Informant-1: "We still discuss among ourselves (erstwhile colleagues) what a wonderful time it was under Colonel Basu!"], that fills in the memory gap with all the yearning for homecoming (Boym 2001), yet it is also indicative of a postcolonial organisational leader who elides specific cultural signification and exposes the fragility of a modernised European organisation. Colonel Basu's organisational vision and leadership style are hybrid in characteristic. If on one hand, he maintained an authoritative British leadership style (Jago 1982) then, on the other hand, his style was participatory (Huang et al. 2011) during the social functions at the organisation. His labour welfare schemes went to decolonise and creatively disrupt the old colonial organisational system of ISW to extend greater benefits to 'native' workers. The nostalgic recollections of Informant-1, through its performativity, acts as a rhetorical strategy that helps to re-create the image of a postcolonial organisational leader whom history has otherwise concealed and forgotten. During my fieldwork when I asked the current residents of the labour colony (37 inhabitants) and the students at the primary school (16 students) if they had ever heard about Colonel Basu and his pro-labour and post-independence projects, they agreed that they have not. Hence, my project of goading organisational nostalgia can be perceived as a resistive attempt to resolve amnesia of colonial aftermath. True to what Gandhi says, I perceive this postcolonial project to be a "disciplinary project dedicated to the academic task of revisiting, remembering, and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past" (Gandhi 1998, p. 4).

5.5 Buildings and Photographs of ISW: Colonialism, Hybridity and Organisational Nostalgia

When I went to interview Informant-2, who was an employee of ISW, I found an old man who, despite his geriatric infirmities, was all eager to recount stories of his organisation and activities about it. His nostalgic recounting unfailingly signalled to the projection of a personal memory that was further inflicted by colonial memories; and all adding up to proclivities of peculiarities otherwise erased from the documented, straightforward canonised history of the nation and the organisation. His recounting moved around colonial architectures and artifacts of the organisation. These organisational architectures and artifacts, recollected through nostalgia, unfailingly carried "potent symbolism" (Gabriel 1993, p. 127). However, in the case of ISW through the nostalgic recollections of Informant-2 and Informant-3, I traced elements of coloniality and subaltern responses to the same. My second informant (Informant-2) joined the organisation as a labourer and rose to the status of senior staff. It is through his reflective narratives around organisational buildings that I intend to highlight how the Gabrielian recreation of the golden past is thwarted (1993) and the aporiatic impasse generated in the nostalgic homecoming.

> I got married at KD type quarter. My wife was not habituated with *khata paikhana* (service toilet or dry pit toilet), at her father's house there was good sanitary *paikhana*. Though she never complained, I felt very embarrassed. There was a three-storied public lavatory for us laborers. Good that they have razed it to the ground. What a shame to have such a building! The KD type quarters were most pathetic. They were less of quarters and more of pigeonholes. It was one room with no windows and a very small ventilator. I had to stick around this place for a couple of years before I moved to KW type quarters. It had a *pukka paikhana* (permanent lavatory). I got it through a promotion. Finally, when I was promoted to staff then I got the FNW quarter. There was a garden, attached toilets, and even a small drawing-room. To have achieved that was something in those days! The Dâk-bungalows were three in numbers. Initially, only Britishers and Anglo-Indians were given the same. Initially, it had swimming pools and even fireplaces. The 'outhouse' had servants to run all errands for them. But, post-independence many Indian officers resided in them. My son who also worked in this organisation as an officer (in 1970s) was assigned one of these Dâk-bungalows. It was a moment of pride for the entire family to be at a British-style Dâk-bungalow. During our stay there, the swimming pools had become swamps and we never cared to clear it and rather turned it into vegetable garden. But, we still had the facilities of the fireplace and servants in the 'outhouse'. (Informant-2)

My fieldwork proved that ISW quarters' segmentation and nomenclature did bear a racially charged colonial imprint. The KD type stood for "Koolie Dhamari", KM stood for "Koolie Mazdoor", KW stood for "Koolie Worker" and FNW for First Native Worker. The 'native' laborers at the lowest rung were provided with either KD type or KM type quarters. The outhouses of the Dâk-bungalows were similar to it. KW quarters were for more experienced and senior laborers. While FNW were quarters meant for staff/clerks or the *babus* of the company. During colonial times *koolie* or "coolie" was a bureaucratic term used by the colonial masters for the indentured laborers who did bear loads. The reference to such *coolies* and *babus* (and especially to one Parameshwar, an outwitting *babu* in charge of the *coolies* under Blackford) at ISW is to be found in Blackford's book (2014). Similarly, *dhamari* indicated people who loaded or unloaded goods with help of a *dhama* or basket. The baggage of colonialism, once used as a slur for the low-wage unskilled indentured workers, the word collie, is still to be found as a palimpsest in the dilapidating quarters of Burn Standard (See Picture 5.2).

The reflective nostalgia of Informat-2 creates a barrier in the happy homecoming memories to the initial days of himself in the organisation or in the KD or KW type quarters. His brooding over the sanitary facilities is no simplistic recalling of organisational architectures but brings to light the deep race-based and class-based impact that the colonial architecture had on his ontological being. The deep infrastructural neglect of the poor indigenous workers by the colonial administration characterised by the "native's" inequitable access to sanitation (and forcing many of them to open defecation), as recalled in the Informant-2's reflections, undercuts the old-gold days of organisational nostalgia. On the other hand, his being able to gain access to the colonial Dâk-bungalow as its resident during the later days of his life is symptomatic of postcolonial mimicry. My informant, as evident through his nostalgia, does not make a blind, simplistic reproduction of colonial habits and institution. He turned the English swimming pool, a sophisticated architecture, to a vegetable garden where he grew "*kochu saag*" (taro), an authentic, inexpensive

Picture 5.2 KD type quarter (the window is a later addition)

Bengali leafy vegetable. Most jocularly he commented, "*jekhane memsahib age naito, amar bow kachu tulto*" (trans. "where once the *memsahib* (colonial lady) took a swim, now my wife plucked taro") No wonder, the Bhabhaesque mimicry disrupts the colonial authority through a flawed mimesis. It also created a subject(s) who is white (by the dint of his access and possession of a bungalow with a swimming pool), but not quite (the mis-imitation of English manners in turning a swimming pool to a kitchen garden for taro cultivation) (Bhbbha 1994, 86). The turning of the colonial swimming pool to that of a taro cultivation plot (*kochu*, in Bengali, also humorously insinuates to "mere trifle") is not merely a mimetic failure that mocks colonial authority, but a discursive process through which a colonial civilising project is disrupted.

My third interviewee (Informant-3) joined the organisation as a trainee apprentice and had spent more than forty years of his life at wagon colony. Initially a resident of FNW quarters, he later retired while he was at one of the Dâk-bungalows. A good athlete and an extremely gregarious human being, he rambled at length about the *Kalyan Samiti* (a club formed by the workers and staff of ISW and one that received ample funding from the company for various social activities), *Ganashree Sadan* (the open theatre founded by Colonel B. Basu), and the ISW stadium. What is perhaps most intriguing is that all these three organisational architectures, as inferred through the recollections of Informant-3 and ratified through my fieldwork, had emerged as postcolonial organisational sites. *Kalyan Samiti* if on one hand received

ample funding from Burn Standard for hosting annual *Durga Puja* and *Basanti Puja* celebrations (both Hindu religious festivals), is also a place that regularly hosted housies for men on Sunday afternoons. Housies were number gathering games (much like bingo) played with higher stakes and was a colonial favourite (Caplan 1995). It might intrigue the readers to know that housie is still played at *Kalyan Samiti* and is one of the few public housie playing sites of the country. The club if on one hand is a Brahminical structure that propagated Hinduism through the help of the organisation, then very embracing of a masculine colonial game problematises the non-secular indigenous site. Similarly, *Ganashree Sadan* (an open theatre that had hosted the contemporary who's who of the Bengali world of art and culture) represented the inner world of the organisation that was in sharp contrast to the organisation's outer world of western material progress (Chatterjee 1993). As my fieldwork proves, the intrinsic Indianness was represented through the terracotta designs of the theatre (see Picture 5.3).

The largest terracotta mural on the main gate of the theatre had women playing *pasha* (*pachisi* or symmetrical cross-board game played with cowrie shells), reading books, or dancing to the beats of *madal* (drums). It may be conjectured from the information provided by the interviewees that these terracotta murals were designed by Bikash Sengupta (a celebrated local artist, commissioned by Colonel Basu, who also built the murals at the ISW stadium gate in 1964 [according to Informant-1]). The murals of the front gate of the ISW stadium (see Picture 5.4) represent both "Athena with the torch" (a highly westernised image of games and leisure) as well as men playing hockey and football.

One ought not to forget that it is the same year (1964) that India won the Olympic gold in Hockey by beating its arch rival, Pakistan. One final structure that Informat-3

Picture 5.3 Mural at the main gate of *Ganashree Sadan*

Picture 5.4 ISW stadium main entrance

would brood upon in the interview was the double-storied cycle stand. An architectural novelty that many new to ISW Colony would wonder at: "We took our relatives to see this. No other company in India perhaps had this double-storied cycle stand" (Informant-3). The double-storied cycle stand was perhaps an appropriation of western architecture by redesigning the same. This structure (now in a dilapidated state and barely recognisable of its earlier purpose or significance, see Picture 5.5), constructed post-independence, is not an imperial derivative but a site that moved beyond "big technologies" to recreate a western discourse through local agencies (Arnold and DeWald 2011). The cycle stand also had permanent employees as its caretakers and a Swiss punching machine to record the time of parking.

5.6   Some Photographs and Few More Anecdotes

Some photographs about the organisation, shown to me by Informant-3, creates a postcolonial bricolage. His pictures (permission was not granted to print them in the article) and the stories if indicative of postcolonially informed identity was no less a brooding over the ex-colonial culture. Pictures (and associated stories) ranging from the organisation's Sports day celebrations at its stadium (with colonial observances like "Go as You Like" to "Equestrian sports") to the festivities of "Vishwakarma Puja" (Hindu God of machines and the venerated divine architect) and organising of "Mazdoor (Labour) Union Meetings" at *Bari Maidan* (an open public ground named after

Picture 5.5 ISW double-storied cycle stand

Abdul Bari, a protégé of Dr. Rajendra Prasad and an anti-colonial socialist Congress labour organiser), his pictorial narratives had unravelled post/colonial "political and psychological treasury from which we (were to) draw the reserves to cope with the future" (Lasch 1980, p. xviii). Further, for "Informant-3" his choosing to recall nostalgia was not only a matter of recounting a Golden Age but even a matter of "healing and pain" (Frost et al. 2000, p. 25), a cathartic reflection:

> We had seen a terrible lockout in 1967 for eight months. A fall out of Naxal driven labour movement, you see. We heard rumours about many women from the workers' families trading their flesh to makes ends meet. Their children begging in the streets. The sight was horrendous. Then we remember how happy we were when our company was nationalised. It was a government undertaking firm now. Getting orders directly from the Railways without having to budge. But the nationalisation of our organisation had led to the gradual decline of its work culture. All the employees across the hierarchy felt that their job was ever secured, and monthly salary would be a piece of cake even if they did not work. The labour, we joked, started believing, '*asi jai maine pai, kajer janno* bonus *chai*' ('we come daily to the organisation and hence salary is a must, if you want us to work then pay bonus'). The labour leaders would call a strike in each department, alternately, to prove a point. I remember coming to the quarters for the lunch break and taking a long siesta and extending my break by half an hour to forty-five minutes. Perhaps unconsciously, but we started the slow-poisoning process of the company. We Indians are the ones who have choked it to death! An organisation of *Ingrej-amol* (British colonial times) is now finished! (Informant-3)

The nostalgic vignette captured above does not openly recycle the Raj fantasy or British imperial past, yet the juxtaposition of more contemporary post-independence organisational events with that of an imagined colonial organisational perfection put the former in a negative perspective. Here, the nostalgia is not merely reflective

of an attraction–repulsion or pleasure-pain flux that generates a desire-abhorrence stalemate for the organisation but even generates a complex experience that exudes an ambivalent response to the post/colonial condition.

5.7   Conclusion

Authors of organisational emotion had covered sites that characterise intense and lived emotional activities, individual or social in magnitude, centred around an organisation (Pinder 1998; Fineman 1999, 2000, 2006; Ashkenasy et al. 2000; Hareli and Rafaeli 2008; Barsade and O'Neill 2014; Fotaki et al. 2017; Jakob-Sadeh and Zilber 2019). More focused work on organisational emotion, organisational nostalgia (Gabriel 1993; Strangleman 1999; Leunissen 2016; Leunissen et al. 2016; Sedikides et al. 2015), intends towards a meaning-making or identity-generation related to the extant or ex-actors of the organisation. But, nowhere had organisational emotion or nostalgia been captured to understand the character of post/coloniality in the organisational structure. In this article, I intended to do the same through interviews (whose microhistorical elements subvert the grand discourse of colonial modernity) and triangulation fieldwork. My thesis around postcolonial organisational nostalgia is an extension and reworking of the nostalgia studies by Gabriel (1993) and Boym (2001). I move beyond the theoretical premise of Gabriel (1993) that accommodates no critical reflexivity in the nostalgia about the static "golden times" of an organisation, as may be evident in nonconformist, resistive voices. My research instead shows that such marginal *malignant* (even mimic-mocking) voices go a long way in understanding the hegemonic structures of an organisation, particularly if colonial in conceptualisation. I further adopt the concept of reflexive nostalgia of Boym (2001) and highlight how the same may be used to subvert and appropriate the colonial understandings of an organisation. Further, through the nostalgic recollections, I reveal how a postcolonial organisation, of alternate modernity (as suggested by Chatterjee 1997), may be formed that straddles the rationality and logic of the colonial west in its outer domain and a spiritual quest in its ethnic inside. I also raise the concept of a postcolonial organisational leader who may exude Bhabhaesque hybridity and bring ambivalence to any stereotypical identity (Bhabha 1984, 1994) and even has the potency to decolonise the organisation and raise concerns for its subaltern employees. This chapter may further whet the researchers of organisational emotion to undertake research, whether by using similar or different methods, about post/decolonial element in the organisations of Global South.

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Chapter 6
Critical Realism, Reflexivity and the Missing Voice of the Subaltern: The Case of Postcolonial Sri Lanka

Lakshman Wimalasena

Abstract This chapter concerns post-colonial Sri Lanka and aims to demonstrate the emancipatory potential vested within the ontological concept of *agential reflexivity,* in understanding the marginalised voices of the *subaltern.* Existing understandings have been criticised for underplaying the *voices (agency)* of postcolonial (Sri Lankan) agents through the generalised view that they inhabit traditional social contexts characterised by routine action that dismisses conscious reflexive human nature. The value of the philosophical concept of reflexivity therefore lies in its ability to acknowledge the diversity associated with conscious human action that can recognise the voice of the subaltern. Reflexivity allows deeper insights into the concealed realities beyond the assumption that subaltern is a passive actor, a product of society. Reflexivity as a viable, novel methodological approach to the postcolonial meta-theoretical landscape, can demonstrate how individuals inhabiting postcolonial contexts are increasingly required to produce creative, innovative, conscious action beyond routine, habitual behaviour in negotiating with the world. Based on 101 work and life histories gathered from Sri Lanka, this chapter demonstrates the centrality of reflexivity in understanding how individuals living in this postcolonial context negotiate its complex social fabric.

Keywords Critical realism · Postcolonial societies · Reflexivity · Social mobility intentions · Sri Lanka

6.1 Introduction

Postcolonial theory, besides Marxism, is perhaps the most common approach used to study postcolonial societies (D'Souza 2010). Yet, as Mannathukkaren (2010, p. 299) argues, even though 'the postcolonial theory aspires to open up paths for different [approaches] that have the promise of emancipation and liberation for all cultures and societies […] this promise is hardly fulfilled'. For example, D'Souza

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(2010, p. 263) notes, there is a noticeable 'absence of engagement with postcolonial theory in critical realism', thus, its emancipatory potential in the study of postcolonial societies remains untapped. This absence of viable emancipatory methodological approaches relates to another criticism of postcolonial contexts concerning the *missing voice* of the subaltern. Critical realism remains predominantly Eurocentric in its conceptualisation (ontology) and application (epistemology). Yet, critical realism's ontological position of acknowledging not only structure (society and culture) but also agency (individual) as having reality status informs its epistemic potential to recognise the missing voice of the subaltern through 'reflexivity'. Therefore, this chapter aims to demonstrate the emancipatory potential of *agential (personal) reflexivity,* which is a core meta-theoretical position within critical realism, in uncovering the neglected realities of postcolonial social contexts. The *agency (voice)* of postcolonial actors is marginalised through the generalised view that the social contexts they inhabit are predominantly characterised by routine, habitual action (Wimalasena and Marks 2019). These existing discussions tend to underpin postmodern/social constructionist perspectives that offer primacy to *structure (society)* and *epiphenomenal status* to agency (e.g. Ahmad 2000). Scholars (e.g. Mannathukkaren 2010; Mignolo 2007; Chakrabarty 1997; Bhabha 1994) observe, postcolonial societies are assumed to be known, taken-for-granted history within Western mainstream narratives that grossly overlooks minority histories and their differential socio-cultural and occupational circumstances occupied by postcolonial agents. The homogenous, universal, gender-neutral view of the subaltern has been linguistically constructed within such literature dismissing the context-specific individual responses to socio-cultural influence. The subaltern has been assigned with 'passive' status, dismissing their creative, innovative and contingent action in terms of resistance and attempts of emancipation (Wimalasena and Marks 2019). Postcolonial agents are situated as static, immobile individuals without aspiration, lacking agency. The subaltern appears to be linguistically constructed, with a socially ascribed identity, grossly neglecting their conscious reflexive nature and their active, reflexive identity work in accomplishing desired social positions. Particularly, in relation to social contexts like Sri Lanka and India, where caste system was a powerful, rigid social stratification system in which large groups of people were obliged to behave in a specific manner and perform specific duties, with no opportunity for social mobility across different castes. Some low-caste individuals, subsequently, benefitting from the social transformation effected through the colonisation process, have become successful entrepreneurs transforming their traditional caste-trades into business ventures, making own choices and transforming low-caste identity status, showcasing aspirations for a better life (Jayewardena 2007). Strategies such as inter-caste and inter-class marriages, gaining higher educational qualifications and getting into middle-class occupations also have been instrumental in effecting such upward socio-economic mobility. Also customary gendered relations have been transformed to some extent, which is reflective of women's educational and occupational attainments, particularly in Sri Lanka (Wimalasena 2017). Therefore, existing conflationary views in theorising the postcolonial contexts and work and life journeys of

the subaltern tend to overlook the variability associated with social action effected through conscious reflexive agency of the individual (Archer 2007).

The available accounts of oppression and resistance within the postcolonial Third World, therefore, tend to focus on the societal influence while agential responses to or the variations associated with such responses being largely neglected (Wimalasena 2017). Thus, critical realism, that considers not only the social influence (structure) but also the individual (agency) in a dialectical, reciprocal process understood through reflexivity, is distant in researching postcolonial Third World (D'Souza 2010; Wimalasena and Marks 2019). Personal reflexivity is the conscious human action that all normal individuals possess, in considering themselves in relation to the world around them and in consciously manoeuvring their life journeys through the world (Archer 2012). Personal reflexivity is the way critical realism recognises the voice of the marginalised (Wimalasena and Marks 2019; Wimalasena 2017). Thus, the value of the philosophical concept of reflexivity lies in its ability to recognise the voices of postcolonial agents, rather than assuming them as passive actors operating habitually.

Post-colonial realities understood through the sociological accounts that are constructed based on Western theory and philosophy tend to view such societies as consisting of stable conditions that predominantly require routine, habitual behaviour to operate: such understandings seem to grossly overlook the dynamics and variations of postcolonial social action (Bhambra 2014). Therefore, this work proposes personal reflexivity as a viable methodological approach that can demonstrate how individuals inhabiting such contexts are increasingly required to produce creative, innovative, conscious action rather than operating habitually in pre-assigned routines, in negotiating with the world around them. This chapter builds on two key observations from previous studies (e.g. Wimalasena and Marks 2019; Wimalasena 2017): (1) the prolonged colonisation has generated a complex socio-cultural system consisting of enduring postcolonial elements of patriarchy, caste, religion and agriculture as well as a colonisation driven capitalistic social system typified by social class, that demands unique reflexive responses from contemporary Sri Lankan agents, and (2) personal reflexivity is a viable approach that offers emancipatory potential in the study of postcolonial contexts. Thus, the chapter hypothesises that many of the agential endeavours of resistance, oppression and emancipation within this context remain under-researched and neglected. Therefore, using 101 work and life histories and echoing the work of Mignolo (e.g. 2007) on modernity/coloniality, this chapter demonstrates, how contemporary Sri Lankan agents negotiate its complex social configuration constitutive of both a pre-colonial, traditional, caste hierarchy and a modern social system erected through colonisation, typified by social class. Using examples from perhaps the largest study on reflexivity and the first within postcolonial Sri Lanka, this chapter shows how postcolonial agents oriented to different reflexive modes, negotiate and move through the world consciously creating divergent life and occupational journeys. This chapter emphasises that personal reflexivity offers a superior explanatory potential to recognise the mechanisms through which oppression is engendered, resistance is demonstrated and emancipation is attempted by postcolonial agents.

The remainder of this chapter is structured in the following manner. Firstly, a brief account of the research context—postcolonial Sri Lanka, is presented outlining the coexistence of both precolonial and postcolonial social elements that subjects its members to complex social circumstances. Secondly, the chapter engages in a discussion on personal reflexivity and its different modes. This section also considers the possibility of reflexivity and habitus operating in tandem. Next, the research design is outlined before presenting a detailed discussion on the findings that focuses on how contemporary members in this society mediate the influence emerging from its complex social configuration appreciating the usefulness of an understanding of reflexive modes in the analysis. Finally, a brief conclusion is offered.

6.2   Sri Lanka, a Postcolonial Third World Social Context

The first human habitation in Sri Lanka is believed to be established upon the arrival of King Vijaya in 543 BC from India (Wriggins 1960). Caste-based family structures that categorised individuals into obligatory services offered to the king—*rajakariya*—was the basis for traditional social relations, which continued until the *Kandyan kingdom* ceased to exist, being absorbed into the British Empire in 1815 (Yalman 1967; Jayawardena 2007). Colonisation that began in 1505 continued for over 450 years until 1948, gradually unsettling the traditional social fabric of Sri Lanka (Wimalasena 2017). However, 'colonisation touched Ceylon and its people in an uneven fashion' adding further complexity to its social fabric (Wickramasinghe 2006, p. 6). South-Eastern region (the *low-country*) was the first to be colonised by the Portuguese (1505–1658), followed by the Dutch (1658–1676). The *Kandyan Kingdom* (the *up-country*) continued independently, ruled by the local kings until the British colonial occupation of the whole country in 1815 (Yalman, 1967).

Traditional Sri Lankan society was organised around a caste system, that was strongly supported by patriarchal norms, with unique complexities of its own, which is different to that of Indian caste system. Particularly, both Sinhalese and Tamil communities had their own separate caste hierarchies. The *Kandyan kingdom* was central in establishing its own caste structure generating social divisions of privileged and underprivileged segments of population (Jayawardena 2007). '*Kandyans* differentiated themselves as superior from the other segments of the population mainly based on their kings' historical resistance to the Portuguese and the Dutch colonists, generating an innate sense of caste superiority within its people, despite having their own internal caste hierarchy' (Wimalasena and Marks 2019, p. 521). The *low-country* also consists of their own caste hierarchy based on occupations inherent in the region, such as fishing, toddy-tapping and cinnamon peeling (Jayawardena 2007).

Colonisation has strongly shaped the life circumstances of Sri Lankans (Alawattage and Wickremasinghe 2009). Particularly, the colonial civil service system transformed the conventional kinship-based gendered patriarchal relations (Risseeuw 1992). The growth of towns, arrival of migrant Indian plantation workers,

rising wage labour force, use of money and the emergence of markets and international trade destabilised the customary, routine lifestyle (Wickramasinghe 2006). Mercantile capitalist process also offered potential for social mobility and land-ownership particularly for people from lower castes who did not have such privileges within the strict caste system that prevailed, creating new resources and opportunities (Risseeuw 1992). The new wage labour system, which was instrumental in establishing a class system based on economic and occupational rank allowing people of low and high origin of all ethnicities, castes and genders, unsettled the self-sufficient traditional social system (Jayawardena 2007): 'employment of a fellow villager for a cash wage [was] incompatible with the norms of kinship' (Brow 1996, p. 10).

The new class system, unlike the rigid caste system that constrained people to their natal contexts with no opportunity for social mobility, has allowed many previously underprivileged individuals with access to education, occupation and upward social mobility (Jayawardena 2007). Today, the strict caste divisions have deteriorated, yet, has left a sense of caste consciousness contributing to the perpetuation of social inequalities (Jayawardena 2007). Sri Lanka is now a multicultural society with approximately 21 million people belonging to a range of religions and ethnicities with the majority being Buddhist-Sinhalese (Wimalasena 2017). Perera (1996) notes that, since 1977, Sri Lanka has attempted a free-market model which has generated wider socioeconomic discrepancies despite its perceived benefits leading to social disintegration. While retaining its traditional social elements Sri Lanka has absorbed modernity, for example, the wide acceptance of women's education and employment (Gamburd 2000; De Alwis 2002). Yet, critical observations (e.g. Jayewardena 2018; Wimalasena 2017) suggest that traditional oppressive patriarchal normativity continues to condition the life-circumstances of Sri Lankan women. Jayawardena (2018) notes that Sri Lankan rural women's life conditions are strongly shaped by patriarchal normativity of *good girl*, *good woman*, *loyal wife* and *family honour:* a woman can claim such identities only by adhering to the patronising process that she needs constant looking after and guarding (by a man), marginalising their own voices. Therefore, Sri Lanka's present social divisions are complex with intersecting hierarchies of patriarchy, class, caste, education, occupation, economic standing, gender, race, ethnicity, geographical origin and religion (Wimalasena and Marks 2019). Sri Lankan political system mirrors the insidious realities of continuing caste consciousness and complexities of its social fabric, manifest and maintained through the power-structures of class (Perera 1996). Perera notes that the youth rebellions of 1971 and 1989, destroying thousands of lives, are examples of this uneven nature of capitalist developments that create ever-growing social divisions of class. Further, the ethnic war that lasted over three-decades until 2008, has significantly shaped and added more complexity to contemporary social fabric of Sri Lanka (Perera-Rajasingham, 2022). De Alwis (1996, p. 90) argues, contemporary Sri Lanka, therefore, is a context of 'ambiguity, and tension, a battle ground upon which notions of sexuality, morality, purity and race, sparred and parried'. 'Sri Lanka today looks back on a 2500-year past, but the important point is not that its past is so ancient, but that it is so present' (Kemper 1991, p. 2). How individuals choose to consciously mediate the influence of this complex social system crafting their own life and occupational journeys and how

they develop and sustain social relations, have not received adequate scholarly attention, owing to the absence of a viable methodological approach that is sensitive to the hidden realities of such social contexts. The next section, therefore, presents a critical realist account of personal reflexivity demonstrating its emancipatory potential to understand subtleties of social action within contemporary Sri Lanka.

6.3   Personal Reflexivity

Owing mainly to the seminal work by contemporary philosopher Margaret Archer (2000, 2003, 2007, 2012) personal reflexivity as a viable approach to study social action assumes a central position within critical realism. Critical realism grants reality status to social structures, cultural forms and human actors, recognising structure, culture and agency as operating independently, in different timescales and each element possessing unique emergent powers: yet, these different elements are considered as necessarily interconnected (Archer 2010, 2012). More importantly, structure and agency (individuals) are identified as analytically distinct (analytical dualism) and their interplay can be observed through personal reflexivity (Archer 2007). Therefore, reflexivity is the way society and individual are connected, how agency is effected and how individuals negotiate with the social world (Maccarini and Prandini 2010).

Through the concept of *double morphogenesis* Archer's approach allows understanding agency as shaped by structural and cultural emergent powers and that subsequent individual action as reproducing and transforming social structures and cultural forms in turn (Brock et al. 2017). Personal reflexivity allows understanding this complex relationship between the individual and society (Farrugia 2013). Individuals reflexively adapt and respond to novel situations they constantly encounter, rather than reacting habitually (Archer 2010; Wimalasena and Marks 2019). Reflexivity theory is therefore at odds with Bourdieu's concept of habitus: Archer (2012) argues that no longer habitual, pre-reflexive, routine action can provide adequate explanations of social reality. Wimalasena and Marks (2019, p. 533) confirm this position arguing that postcolonial Sri Lankan agents 'are active reflexive beings who do not operate in a pre-reflexive rule-like manner, nor do they live anymore in societies that are isolated from modernity'.

Reflexivity as a social process is relatively new in sociological research, as social science has paid little attention to individuals' internal conversations (Sayer 2010). Thus, reflexivity theory contributes to a new perspective on how people's everyday reflexivity enables empirical understandings of social phenomena—the way individuals respond to social forces (Sayer 2009). Reflexivity is the conscious and purposive emergent power that individuals possess to monitor themselves in relation to their circumstances that is exercised through internal conversations (self-talk) (Archer 2010). Through a process of conscious reflexive deliberations, we engage in self-talk 'with ourselves about ourselves—our situations, our behaviour, our values [and] our aspirations (Elder-Vass 2010, p. 102). 'It is the 'internal conversation' that

denotes the manner in which humans reflexively make their way in the world' (Brock et al. 2017, p. xiii). Reflexivity connects people's concerns, projects and practices together (Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma 2010). Individuals reflexively articulate life strategies, confront life trajectories and satisfy their ultimate concerns and such internal conversations constitute the way that the individual and society are interconnected (Archer 2007).

Reflexive theory considers, individuals engage in specific agential enterprises—the life projects, in responding to their involuntary life circumstances they experience as social bonuses (enablements) or social evils (constraints). These enablements and constraints stem from individuals' life or occupational circumstances such as socio-cultural capitals produced by caste and class positioning, access to privileged education and social relations (Wimalasena and Marks 2019). Elder-Vass (2007) asserts, unless mediated by agents such emergent powers lay dormant. To take advantage of social bonuses or to mitigate the negative effects of social evils, individuals must engage in a life project for example, education, work, marriage or divorce (Wimalasena 2017). 'In short, the *activation* of objective constraints and enablements depends upon their subjective reception by individuals or groups' (Archer 2010, p. 278). Rather than assuming individuals reproduce the social context they inhabit, reflexivity informs us, what individuals will choose to do is indeterminate (Archer 2007). Their doings depend upon the formula; context + concerns (Archer 2010): yet further variations emerge based on the mode and extensiveness of reflexivity individuals exercise. Reflexivity is also considered to be the precursor to the development of personal and social identity (Archer 2003). Utilising reflexivity in sociological inquiry, therefore, can yield '… many more insights into social processes and the relation between individual and society' (Sayer 2009, p. 114). The recognition that every society depends upon the practice of reflexivity by its members makes the concept indispensable to social theory (Maccarini and Prandini 2010) and particularly in studying the postcolony.

Archer recognises four different reflexive modalities commonly practiced by individuals, each generating a unique patterning of life journeys, namely; communicative, autonomous, meta- and fractured reflexivity. Fractured reflexives are identified as having under-developed reflexivity, they therefore do not tend to demonstrate a clear patterning of life journeys. Communicative, autonomous and meta- reflexivity entail consciously patterned biographies effecting social immobility, upward social mobility and lateral social mobility respectively (Archer 2012). Individuals engage in practicing provisional reflexive modes temporarily too, if doing so, strategically allows individuals to reach their ultimate life concerns (Wimalasena and Marks, 2019). Table 6.1, demonstrates how individuals oriented to and exercising different reflexive modes choose to consciously craft their life journeys differently. The sections that follow, focus on reflexivity to demonstrate the emancipatory potential of critical realism in unveiling concealed realities that exist within postcolonial Sri Lanka.

Table 6.1 Summary of the main features of reflexive modalities

	Reflexive mode			
Main features	Communicative	Autonomous	Meta-	Fractured
Ultimate life concern	Family and friends	Work related	Self-inflicted value ideologies	Not clear
Social mobility intentions	Immobility & contextual continuity	Upward mobility & contextual discontinuity	Lateral/volatile, often finds contextual incongruence	Unclear, more concerned about present moment
Internal conversation	Need completion by an interlocutor	Self-contained	Self-contained & critical about own reflexivity	Under-developed
Stance towards structural powers	Evasive, tends to be under community pressure, guided by tradition	Strategic & not hesitant to contradict tradition	Subversive & own ideologies that supersede collective ideologies, engages in constant social critique	unclear
Career orientation	Voluntary step-downs, degree of under-employment, keen on work near home, modest occupations or voluntary unemployment	Clear career vision, many false starts, keen on career progress, committed to acquire qualifications & experience	Focused on jobs located in the social sphere, aims to realise value ideologies through work, work is an avenue of expression	unclear
Reflexive life projects	Aimed at enabling contextual continuity	Anticipatory & opportunistic, aimed at upward social mobility	Solutions to overcome contextual incongruity	Unclear
Modus Vivendi	To be with family and friends	Occupational success and material gains, autonomy	Social and occupational contexts that support value ideals	Unclear
Outcome	Reproduction and continuation of existing structural and cultural forms	Transformation of structural and cultural forms	Reorientation of structural and cultural forms	Lacks purposeful action

Source Wimalasena (2017, p. 377)

6.4 Methodological Considerations

This study uses people's everyday reflexivity as the key analytical framework (Wimalasena 2017). The analysis is based on 101 work and life histories gathered during 2011 and 2018 for two different studies: (1) meaning of work and (2) digital distraction, social media and rural women in Sri Lanka, respectively. The participants mainly represent mainstream occupations but also include traditional caste-based occupation holders reflecting local hierarchical status, ensuring fair representation of occupational diversity within the research context. The caste-specific occupations are normatively understood based on local interpretations of superior or inferior caste identities, for example, traditional drummers, dancers, or washers are considered menial trades of lower castes (Wimalasena and Marks 2019). Occupations such as housemaid in the Middle-East or machine operator in garment manufacturing factories are understood as modern jobs with low-status (Lynch 2007). The participants also include those who are voluntarily unemployed, full-time house-wives as well as individuals from all races, ethnicities and religions representing Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and Burgher (Euroasian) communities. Names, locations and organisations were pseudonomised ensuring anonymity and right to privacy.

Work and life history interviews, that encouraged expressing perceptions, thoughts and experiences freely, generated rich qualitative data to explore the subtleties associated with participants' reflexive deliberations. The interview themes closely followed the established criteria of reflexivity summarised in Table 6.1. The interviews lasted between approximately 25 and 100 min, translated and transcribed verbatim and coded using qualitative software—Nvivo. Thematic approach was used to analyse the biographies that also incorporated emerging themes which enabled understanding the reflexive orientation of each participant and their responses to social forces. The analysis identified the 101 participants in terms of their dominant reflexive mode: 32 communicative reflexives (CRs), 43 autonomous reflexives (ARs), 23 meta-reflexives (MRs) and three fractured reflexives (FRs). Conforming Archer's (2007) findings, the three FRs provided only mono-syllabic answers to questions, with no recognisable pattern of life-journeys providing no adequate substance for further analysis.

6.5 Results

Conforming to previous observations (e.g. Alawattage and Wickremasinghe 2009; Jayawardena 2007; Wickremasinghe 2006), the findings reveal that contemporary Sri Lankan society consists of a complex social system owing to the (uneven) colonial influence. Contemporary Sri Lankans are subjected to constraints and enablements (structural and cultural emergent powers) emanating from both the caste-based precolonial social configuration and the colonisation driven class-based modern social system, generating winners and losers (Jayewardena 2007). Yet, how individuals

negotiate such complex involuntary life circumstances can only be adequately understood through the analysis of their reflexive responses, which the following sections discuss.

6.5.1 Communicative Reflexivity and Intentional Social Immobility

Thirty-two participants identified as practicing communicative reflexivity, conforming the basic characteristics (summarised in Table 6.1) identified by Archer (2007, 2012). Below is a representative example of communicative reflexivity within the research context.

6.5.1.1 Bandara's story

37-year-old Bandara, an ideal example of communicative reflexivity, strongly oriented to the indigenous social system persisting in contemporary (rural) Sri Lanka. He hails from a higher caste family in a traditional village belonging to the last palace of the Kandyan kingdom (now known as the 'Temple of the Tooth'). His life is devoted to the 'rajakariya' (king's duty) to hold the traditional position titled 'Kariya Korala' (administrator) at the palace bequeathed by his lineage. Bandara has never attempted to move away from his natal context. Instead, he has followed in the footsteps of his father, who also sacrificed his whole life to carrying out the 'king's duty'. The unique nature of the work Bandara and his family are obliged to perform has bound them to devote their whole lives to performing duties to the Palace. They lead a life different from that of ordinary people: they are not even supposed to attend funerals or any other 'kili gewal' (impure places). The work (king's duty) comes first and their personal lives must be of secondary importance. This traditional lifestyle binds Bandara's whole life to the same occupation with social immobility, consciously ensuring that he perpetuates the tradition. Yet, unlike his ancestors, Bandara finds sustaining the traditional way of life ever more challenging. He makes a conscious effort to ensure his father's wish that he continues with the tradition without regret. When it was time for Bandara to get married, his father again made that decision and he has committed his life to a bride of his father's choosing. Bandara maintains that he derives greatest satisfaction by serving the Lord Buddha and has consciously constructed his modus vivendi around the main life concern of family from which he derives a high level of satisfaction. He is aware of the objective social price he must pay in ensuring social immobility.

Similar to *Bandara, a* key characteristic of all CRs in this study, that conforms Archer's (2003, 2007) findings, is their active commitment to ensure contextual continuity and social immobility by making conscious choices of undertaking

modest occupations, familial trades or being voluntarily under-employed or un-employed creating *micro-worlds*. Such a life strategy requires significant reflexive powers and entails high social costs. For example, below interview excerpt from *Udesh's* biography demonstrates CRs' commitment to stay-put:

> I finished my degree but was staying at home without a job. There were jobs but only in Colombo which I didn't like. From my childhood, what I wanted was to stay at home peacefully... So only after a year or so since my graduation I found this job that I can commute from home… I can join the audit department, it is good money but I won't do it, it involves travel… (Udesh, 37, Development Assistant – Postal Department).

CRs' biographies, particularly those who continue with caste-specific trades suggest, unlike their ancestors, for whom 'things [went] on happening in the same way, [that] habit… suffice[d] for conduct' (Archer 2010, p. 279), are having to use more reflexive powers in sustaining traditions. The biographies of both *Bandara* and *Millawana* provide evidence on the difficulty to ensure the 'intergenerational transmission of cultural capital' (Archer 2010) is no longer a routinely easier task:

> We are obliged to continue *rajakariya* as customary to our lineages*, but* we find it very difficult now, we don't get the same privileges we used to… These days... *lamai* (children) cannot be easily persuaded to doing this art. Though we have *lamai* in our lineages, we can't specifically say who will take on these duties... (Millawana, 58, drummer)
>
> The problem in this system of *rajakariya* is, there isn't enough money coming in to live a normal day-to-day life. See, even though we've been given lands and fields [by the palace] they don't generate sufficient income, so many original lineages have given up on these duties... So I'm not sure how long we can hold onto these traditions. (Bandara–37, Kariya Korala).

This sub-group also demonstrates a tendency to adopt *provisional reflexive modes* (Wimalasena 2017) if that enables in ensuring contextual continuity in the long-run. For example *Duncan's* efforts to study, prior to joining his family business (that was destroyed due to civil riots) and leading it to success again, demonstrate him provisionally practicing autonomous reflexivity to regain his family's lost fame, which conforms Archer's (2007) assertion of CRs 'getting back to the base':

> After 1983, my brother looked after all the businesses. My father gave up… upon loosing many of our businesses during the *Black-July riots*. I totally committed myself to education, which was the sole request of my brother. He wanted me educated and experienced to run the business, he convinced me education would be my contribution to the family. My father's side was upper class people… There [was] this mental agony that we must keep up… So, we [had] to come up in life… That's the main reason why I went to University (Duncan, 37, Business Partner).

Therefore, the maintenance of even communicative reflexivity, findings suggest, requires greater levels of reflexive engagement and 'contextual continuity' is no longer a routine task (Archer 2010).

6.5.2 Autonomous Reflexivity and Upward Social Mobility

Forty-three participants were identified as practicing autonomous reflexivity: below summary presents a typical autonomous reflexive (AR) participant's work and life history.

6.5.2.1 Sakunthala's story

Sakunthala is a 30-year-old newly-married school-teacher with respectable caste-identity. Her parents were rural farmers and as a family they have experienced a lot of economic difficulties, in common with most rural villagers. She had to live away from her family at an uncle's as her parents could not afford to educate her. Her biography indicates greater awareness of her life circumstances and how, through education, she could change her destiny. She now lives in an urbanised area, near the school where she is currently employed. She has encountered number of obstacles in life: yet every major life-decision she made has been strongly connected to her quest for a better life through a job. The rural school she attended lacked continuing teachers and sufficient resources. She could not afford choosing science subjects or attend tuition to prepare for competitive examinations. The cultural norm within rural Sri Lanka is that women must get married early, have children and be a full-time housewife. However, her strategic sensitivity has led her to choose arts subjects: this allowed her at least to borrow notes from others and study without having to attend classes. Subsequently, Sakunthala finds herself slightly short of the required marks to enter university and manages to obtain an external-degree. She becomes a teacher through a competitive examination. After many years of effort, Sakunthala is now able to live the kind of life she desired. She finds working very satisfying and is determined on improving her skills, knowledge and qualifications to support her career. Sakunthala has been extremely selective and patient about her marriage but entered a late marriage which had worried her parents greatly and subjected her to ridicule in her village. She married a man of same occupational standing with similar commitment to work, enabling her upward mobility strategy. She believes, it is through hard work that one can escape from constraining natal circumstances.

As in the case of *Sakunthala*, a key feature of all ARs is their life-long commitment to upward social mobility accomplished through own choices around *work. Work is the* ultimate life concern of ARs and they tend to measure their upward-mobility success through financial gains and material success (Archer 2012):

> I was an intern for six months in the HR field when I was an undergraduate… they paid me only Rs. 2500 a month… [T]oday my basic salary is Rs. 180,000. Besides, I manage… three other companies in the group, so I get Rs. 25,000 monthly allowance each… [T]he company gave money to buy a car under my name, so I paid that 15 lakhs as a down-payment and bought a vehicle. The company pays Rs. 60,000 for the lease, so the total package of my perks is Rs. 325,000, plus Rs. 18,000 of fuel monthly (Yasantha, 36, Finance Manager).

Unlike CRs, who tend to *evade* social powers, ARs *strategically* confront the social influence (Archer 2007). They tend to even challenge their habitual behaviour in adjusting to new social situations:

[W]hen you start living in this society, you must live according to their way. For example... when you don't drink [liquor], they call you '*godaya'*, (villager)… I hadn't used '*hendi, geroppu'* (spoon and fork), I didn't know how to use them, so I went to a restaurant with [a friend] and started eating using '*hendi geroppu'*. That's how I learnt that after coming to Colombo… To be very frank, I hadn't had a meal at Hilton [Hotel] or any other big hotel ever. So when I confront such situations, I imitate the person that I am with… (Yasantha, 36, Finance Manager).

Attempting to acquire professional identities and challenging birth-ascribed identities is also a key feature of autonomous reflexivity, which also compliments their ultimate life concern of *work*:

The 'job'… is the main concern. If you consider my present life situation, I have two kids. I am facing the problem of finding good schools for them. Schools ask these questions, 'where do you work?, what is your position?, are you qualified?'… When I say I'm a qualified accountant, a member of the [Chartered] Institute [of Accountants] there will be a good recognition... My school or where I come from won't go down well. (Jayasiri, 37, Manager—Finance and Administration).

ARs, therefore, demonstrate a unique reflexively strategic approach towards the emergent social powers that influence their lives.

6.5.3 Meta-reflexivity and Volatile Social Mobility

Twenty-three participants were identified as meta-reflexives (MRs): below is a summary of a representative life history.

6.5.3.1 Padma's Story

Padma (40) lives in a rural village and is a small-scale money lender. The second youngest in a traditional farming family of five children, she now lives with her elderly mother. Padma has saved a small amount of money through employment as a housemaid in the Middle-East. She emphasises, there is no recognition in her society for a woman who goes to the Middle-East to work as a housemaid but her poverty left her with no other option. Padma has no intention of getting married, which makes her unusual in her society, where the cultural norm is that every woman must marry, have children and be a housewife. Even though she experiences constant harassment from villagers in being a spinster in a traditional male dominant culture, she declares that she is not afraid of living her life single, committed to her ideals. Contradicting established social norms, Padma perseveres a life committed to moral worth. She regards money lending as a service to her poor community, rather than an occupation,

and stresses that she does not want to make money. Padma thinks her livelihood gives her independence which is her main life concern. She has abandoned several occupations in the past incurring significant social costs as they did not support her values. Padma is unsettled about her future and does not have a steady future-plan. Her aim is to live her life without depending on anyone. Padma's thinking is religious and philosophical: she does not believe in a life driven by material comforts and expresses indifference about life by emphasising that one day everyone must depart, leaving all they have earned behind. She is critical of society, views life indifferently and states that life is a suffering, far from being a joy.

Similar to *Padma,* all MR participants conform the characteristics established by Archer (Table 6.1), with highly developed reflexive powers. Unique to MRs is their *subversive* stance towards social powers. *Sumanadasa's* biography demonstrates this *subversive* stance in his conscious battle against birth ascribed inferior caste positioning:

> I was reluctant to go to school as I felt the caste divide strongly. At school, we were left out, no one cared for us... We were treated lowly.… Due to [caste] difference officers block any aids given by the government to us. They blocked water supply: realising the potential loss, we formed a farming society and created two lakes. I was its president for 20 years... that lifted our people's living standards… Also, we formed a thrift society... I am the treasurer. I joined the cultural centre to teach dancing and drumming. I was involved in school development society... I've been doing social service... A powerful member in the temple too. I demonstrated good leadership… I've done so much work for the temple, so I can speak with the monk or so-called big people (higher caste) in the village face-to-face without a fear. I did all that as I feared my children would face the same problems I experienced... I was so concerned about my children's education: I sent them to schools far away from this village. The ill-treatment from the village… continues. (Sumanadasa, Traditional Drummer, 56)

MRs' life concerns are outwardly oriented aimed at social transformation and reorientation for a better society. For example:

> I… realise that we have an extremely flawed educational system… which will take a whole generation to fix it… The kind of businesses I thought we needed to create… internationally competitive and innovative... is significantly hamstrung in development because we didn't have the human resource base… [The] history of innovation and development in Sri Lanka is very poor. I have tried that for years… It's an upward climb… These are all very insular protected areas, nobody wants to change, that's endemic in the competitiveness of the country… the amount of innovations coming up in Sri Lanka is almost zero… Nevertheless, I remain hopeful… (Shafeeq, 41, CEO)

MRs' ultimate life concerns placed upon value ideologies are reflections of their extraordinary reflexive responses to constraining nature of social powers and their own dispositions. MRs pay a high social price in their quest of achieving a 'morale purpose' in life (Archer 2003).

6.6 Discussion

The findings presented above demonstrate how postcolonial Sri Lankan agents engage in internal conversations about themselves in making work and life choices in relation to a complex social system that is constitutive of both pre-colonial and post-colonial social elements: this reflexive action makes them 'active agents' rather than being the linguistically constructed passives. Further, this study showcases how reflexivity, as an analytical framework, can unveil concealed realities associated with postcolonial societies. Rather than being complete 'gifts of society', this study shows, the members of postcolonial Sri Lanka reflexively engage in '… defining, refining and prioritizing concerns and elaborating projects out of them' (Brock et al. 2017, p. xiii). The social practices they generate in realising these projects are aimed at a modus vivendi—a desired life situation (Sayer 2010). Such choices they make are strongly informed by individuals' ultimate life concerns and reflexive orientation that shape the kind of work and life journeys they consciously craft, mirroring their responses to involuntary life circumstances, resistance to oppression and attempts of emancipation (Wimalasena and Marks 2019). Therefore, this work advances a novel sociological position that challenges the established understandings surrounding the 'subaltern' who has been viewed as a complete gift of society, who operates habitually.

Work is a key reflexive life choice through which the participants attempted to reach *a modus vivendi* but what purpose *work* serves can only be explained through an understanding of individual's reflexivity. Thus, reflexive theory can explain what each agent consciously strives for in their work and life journeys, for example, to conform to oppression as a normalised condition or to resist it. It is through *work* that CRs make the conscious choice to *stay put* ensuring social immobility (Archer 2007). They reflexively anticipate and *evade* any possible threats to their commitment to family and friends that emerge within social or occupational domains. For example, a CR may choose not to apply for a lucrative promotion, as increased responsibility may take up too much time restricting their family-time. They reflexively create 'micro worlds' (Archer 2003) in evading societal/cultural influence and sustaining traditions, for example, as in the case of *Bandara.* By absorbing birth ascribed (caste or class) identities they effect contextual reproduction (Wimalasena and Marks 2019). Thus, communicative reflexivity offers the potential to understand how a segment of population in postcolonial Sri Lanka contributes to the aggregate outcomes of social reproduction and continuation of traditions. Yet, it is vital to note that normative conventionalism demonstrated by CRs is now increasingly a reflexive endeavour (Archer 2010).

In contrast, ARs tend to strategically confront social influence upon their lives through *work* related choices in resisting oppression and disadvantage and attempting upward social mobility (Archer 2012). For example, *Tharanga's* orientation to autonomous-reflexivity demonstrates her strategic awareness and stance towards disadvantaged involuntary life circumstances of rural poverty and becoming a teacher as a solution to her troubles. The migrant ARs from rural to urban contexts, however, face the most challenging life circumstances due to the mismatch of old habits

(habitus) and new habitat requiring extraordinary levels of reflexive powers in making choices of adjusting to and surviving in the new socio-occupational contexts. ARs focus on acquiring occupational identities in attempting to challenge, resist and erase inferior birth-ascribed identities (Wimalasena and Marks 2019). The practice of autonomous reflexivity, unlike social reproduction of communicative reflexivity, leads to social transformation (Archer 2007).

This study finds that the most advanced reflexive powers are demonstrated by the MR sub-group. *Work* plays a central role also in MRs' lives, in that they strive to create conducive work outlets to realise their value ideologies (Wimalasena 2017). MRs commit to long-term careers to support creating such favourable work outlets, yet, they may not necessarily be loyal to a particular organisation or a job, and are not hesitant to quit a job if their value ideals are threatened, effecting lateral social mobility (Archer 2003). Their career choices are focused on resisting and reorienting established societal norms to make a difference (Wimalasena and Marks 2019). MRs are keen to acquire desired social identities reflective of their value commitments and erasing any incompatible birth-ascribed identities: for example, *Sumanadasa's* life-long endeavours to erase inferior-caste identity and acquire counter social identities such as teacher and community leader. The practice of meta-reflexivity thus results in socio-cultural transformation and reorientation (Archer 2003, 2007).

The practice of *provisional reflexive modes* if doing so enables accomplishing their ultimate life concerns (Wimalasena and Marks 2019) is another useful finding about postcolonial Sri Lankan individuals. Most participants appear to have practiced alternative reflexive modes tentatively to enable accomplishing their choices. For example, *Yahampath* (CR) has practiced autonomous-reflexivity in gaining required educational and occupational standing suitable for his middle-class family, demonstrating what Archer (2007) calls, CRs getting back to their base. Similarly, meta-reflexive *Raveendra* (CEO) has practiced autonomous reflexivity in establishing his business to gain financial independence required to engage in social service and politics. This observation also emphasises that 'no modality can now work as a *habitus*' and that ensuring routine action also is a reflexive task (Archer 2010, p. 300).

The findings conform Archer's (2010) and Wimalasena and Marks' (2019) position that pre-reflexive habitual behaviour—habitus (Bourdieu 1977) as no longer adequate to understand social action of the postcolonial Third World, even within a society labelled as *traditional*. Reproduction of routine, traditional action has become increasingly a reflexive task. Archer (2010, p. 296) asserts, 'Increasingly, natal background and socialization practices no longer provide guidelines to action for the young members of any class [or caste], let alone ones tantamount to assuring reproduction of social position' (Archer 2010, p. 296). Even CRs, who aim to reproduce traditional practices require extraordinary levels of reflexive engagement, unlike for their ancestors whose contexts remained relatively stable for long periods of time (Wimalasena and Marks, 2019). Present CRs 'encounter external obstacles defeating their habitual routines and exceeding their habitual repertoires' (Archer 2010, p. 273).

As discussed through different reflexive modes above, this study finds, reflexivity as capable of unveiling the divergent choices individuals make during their life courses in effecting their social mobility intentions (Archer 2007). While, such life choices including education and work are shaped by differential socio-cultural circumstances such as caste or class position, this study emphasises that individuals, for the most part, make such choices consciously for different reasons. For example, the educational and occupational choices of CRs are aimed at effecting socio-cultural immobility, allowing them to build their world around family and friends and continue and sustain traditions ensuring contextual continuity. ARs strive for accumulating material wealth and occupational progress working at upward social mobility. In contrast, MRs' choices in life are based on challenging the existing conditions, beliefs and traditions, particularly when living out their value ideologies are constrained: their actions therefore are focused on transforming and reorienting existing socio-cultural contexts in the hope that they would find ideal outlets to realise their value-ideologies. Thus, reflexivity enables understanding active choices of the subaltern, for example, educational and occupational choices that reflect divergent individual intentions, a phenomenon traditional postcolonial theory has grossly overlooked in advancing a passive subaltern.

More importantly, this work shows the utility of reflexivity in understanding postcolonial agents' responses to oppression and their actions of resistance and emancipation. The biographies of both autonomous-reflexive *Sakunthala and* meta-reflexive *Padma* provide strong evidence to suggest they are resistant to patriarchal expectations. They have chosen to challenge the gendered normative expectations of *good woman* and *loyal wife*, the patronising processes of patriarchy (Jayewardena 2018), which could only be understood or explained through an awareness of reflexivity. Reflexivity allows understanding how the influence of historically established social structures and cultural practices, which condition life and occupational prospects are mediated by present incumbents. This study therefore demonstrates that reflexivity holds greater potential of uncovering subtle and concealed mechanisms of social realities within postcolonial Sri Lanka and hearing the marginalised voices of its members. Reflexivity allows explaining how individuals consciously mediate the socio-cultural influence upon their lives that operate as enablements (social bonuses) or constraints (social evils). Through a spectrum of reflexive responses and choices demonstrated by postcolonial agents during their entire life-course in mediating socio-cultural influence upon their lives, this work dismisses the established view that the subaltern is a gift of society—a socio-linguistic construction.

6.7   Conclusion

This chapter, extending beyond the existing approaches to understand the postcolony that advance a passive subaltern, demonstrated personal reflexivity as an analytical approach with emancipatory potential. This chapter challenges the existing generalised view that postcolonial contexts, to a greater extent, consist of stable social

conditions with stable expectations and lasting relationships in which habitual action predominates. Instead, this work demonstrated, the daily life of postcolonial Sri Lankan agents as characterised by complex, dynamic social situations that demand creative, innovative, non-routine action. Reflexivity allows capturing such diverse, subjective, individual action by postcolonial agents in consciously crafting their life journeys in either reproducing or transforming/reorienting existing social conditions they inhabit. This chapter extends reflexivity as a viable methodological approach to study post-colonial social action, outside the Western context. Further, this work shows reflexivity as offering a superior explanatory potential in understanding how oppression is engendered, resistance is demonstrated and emancipation is attempted by the subaltern. Reflexivity theory offers postcolonial scholars a novel, creative and sophisticated methodological possibility that can explain the contemporary shift of communicative reflexivity associated with normative conventionalism, towards autonomous reflexivity sensitive to global opportunities, and meta-reflexivity of new civil society consisting humanistic values with potential for human emancipation, flourishing and the good life (Brock et al. 2017). This study, through the biographies of Sri Lankan postcolonial agents, demonstrates that the subalterns developed reflexivity and that they are reaping the global opportunities offered within late-modernity shifting away from communicative reflexivity. This chapter while inviting scholars to be vigilant towards the changes taking place within the postcolonial Third World, demonstrates how structure and culture come together to shape, but *not* determine, human choices: the subaltern remains a reflexive being conscious about the world around them. Thus, reflexivity offers potential for emancipation, flourishing and the good life for the subaltern.

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Part II
Resistance and Re-existence Through Communities as Organising

Chapter 7
Capitalism's Universalizing Project and Forms of Organizing in the Microfinance Industry: Evidence from South Asia

Ashar Saleem

Abstract   In this chapter, I discuss capitalism's universalizing project in the Global South by exploring its influence on the microfinance industry of South Asia (SA). Microfinance has simultaneously been the site of great admiration and suspicion as an indigenous solution to the problems of poverty in these areas. I compare two cases for their approach to addressing human deprivation through microfinance in this region: Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and Akhuwat in Pakistan. The two countries share a colonial legacy. The aim of this study is to tease out the key features of capitalism's universalizing mission in the microfinance sector in this geography. These features include, defining; poverty, women's status, social relations, and organizational sustainability. When local organizations concede to these definitions on Center's terms, i.e., poverty as lack of capital, women as needing emancipation, social as a form of capital, and sustainability as achievable only through profit maximization and scalability, capitalism's universalization project is complete. By challenging any one or more of these features, an organization offers scope for alternative ways of managing and organizing. These insights also provide resources for postcolonial studies to theorize on resistance against capitalism and for silencing its critics.

Keywords Postcolonial theory · Capitalism · Universalisation · Resistance · Microfinance · Global south · Akhuwat

7.1   Introduction

Postcolonial theory is meant to critically analyze the complex dynamics of modern Western capitalism (Banerjee and Prasad 2008) and to highlight its continuing significance in various societies across the globe (Prasad 2003). It has also been used to study the process of domination of Western Capitalism in the Global South (Khan and Koshul 2011). Under this tradition, scholars have studied various empirical sites for instance Pakistani villages stitching soccer balls for Western brands such as

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Nike (Boje and Khan 2009), and in many cases have exposed the non-western, local voices, being marginalized by Western (capitalism inspired) interventions in the garb of social work. This literature has also challenged naturalization of Western, mainly US style of management, and exposed sites where local knowledge and organizations have confronted US style and resulted in alternative or hybrid forms of organizations (Alcadipani and Rosa 2011; Frenkel 2005; Yousfi 2014).

More recently postcolonial theory has come under increasing criticism for undermining capitalism's universalizing tendencies (e.g., see Chibber 2013). The focus of this criticism is postcolonial scholars such as Guha (1997), Chakrabarty (2008) and Chatterjee (2010), who argue that capitalism universalization project has failed in the colonies because of the unique history and culture of these sites. Critics argue that as far as key features of capitalism are concerned; on creating a market order in place of state or religious orders and on commodification of various area of social life, the universalization has prevailed—not failed, in the colonies. Beyond these core features, capitalism accommodates, rather promotes, cultural and political diversity (Chibber 2013). This criticism has sparked an intense debate resulting in exchange of heated arguments from both sides (e.g., see Spivak 2014; Chatterjee 2013; Chibber and Warren 2016).

My aim here is to inform this debate by discussing some possible sources and scope of resistance against capitalism's universalizing tendencies. For this purpose, the chapter analyzes two cases from the microfinance industry in South Asia—Grameen Bank[1] in Bangladesh and Akhuwat in Pakistan. Both of these organizations claim to provide alternative to Western capitalism. However, both draw on different sources of inspiration. One that accepts some of capitalism's core principles and the other that confronts these. The two have, thus, different consequences for the communities in which they operate.

The chapter contributes to postcolonial studies by highlighting some unique features of modern capitalism's universalization project and conditions under which resistance to this scheme becomes possible. Unique features of capitalism's universalizing mission include, concepts of poverty, women emancipation, social relationships, and organizational sustainability. The paper argues that before the center can begin to manage (and organize) post-colonial people and locations, it first needs to define them. The act of defining builds the context in which problems are identified and solutions suggested. For instance, when the people at the periphery are defined as *poor*- meaning not owning any capital, the context is already set. The problem is now posed as *access to capital*, and solution is *microfinance*. Interventions such as Grameen Bank in Bangladesh are valorized and celebrated as models for success, despite evidence to the contrary (see Bateman and Maclean 2017).

Akhuwat (meaning *brotherhood*—as translated by the organization itself)—a microfinance organization in Pakistan, tries to redefine the poor at the margins. It

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[1] Grameen bank has been selected for comparison with Akhuwat, as it is widely considered as the seminal idea and organization in microfinance. It introduced popular model of microfinance in the rest of the world including Pakistan where majority of MFIs proudly associate themselves with Grameen.

views poverty as lack of (social) connectedness and strives to create relationships between donors and borrowers. Akhuwat, is an aberration to neoliberal, capitalistic models of management in a number of ways. Unlike traditional models of microfinance, Akhuwat, as a policy does not charge interest on its loans. Further, the organization relies on religious places—mosques, churches, and temples, for signing contract with borrowers and for disbursement of loans. Conventional microfinance organizations exploit (and destroy) the existing social relationships in postcolonial communities. Akhuwat, consciously makes attempt to build social relationship through its operations. The paper contrasts Akhuwat—with the most popular model of microfinance—Grameen, in order to highlight differences.

The remaining chapter is organized as follows. I will first briefly describe the popular model of Grameen Bank. Then I will contrast it with Akhuwat a local organization which challenges not only the conventional models of microfinance but also the premises on which these popular models are built. A description of social capital and the impact of Grameen Bank on social capital follows. In the final section I discuss the key features of capitalism's universalizing project in the microfinance industry in South Asia. I also discuss how the two selected organizations engage differently with these features and thus provide alternative modes of managing and organizing in these post-colonies.

7.2 Poverty, Money and Microfinance Organizations: Universalization of Capitalism in the Global South

7.2.1 The Grameen Bank Story

Grameen Bank is widely considered as the most successful model of microfinance organization in recent times whereby access to small-scale loans has successfully been given to the poor. Established in 1976, Grameen Bank ('village bank' in Bengali) was conceived and founded by Muhammad Yunus, an Economics Professor from Chittagong University, Bangladesh (Grameen 2020). According to his own account, Yunus conceived the idea of Grameen Bank during an acute famine in Bangladesh in 1974 (Yunus and Jolis 2003). During that human disaster, many starving people migrated from their villages to the capital—Dhaka, in search of food. Scores of them died in the city—along highways, on streets, and in other public places. Yunus recalls:

> … They did not demand anything from us. … but death by starvation is the most unacceptable of all. … And all this happens because a person does not have a handful of food to eat at each meal (Yunus and Jolis 2003, p. 17).

The misery of these starving and dying people—and the apparent callousness of the state and indifference of the wealthy at their plight, caused a paradigm shift in Yunus's thought. As he describes in his award winning book, Banker to the Poor

(2003), Yunus was already dissatisfied with the relevance of economic theories he used to teach in the university. Events around the famine only reaffirmed this conviction. The existing economic theories and models, despite their sophistication, were of no use to understand and resolve human suffering. He must study the poor directly—in their own environment, in order to understand their problems and to devise some solution to these. Thus, Yunus selected the village of Jobra, near Chittagong University, to understand the plight of poor in the real world.

> I decided I would become a student all over again, and Jobra would be my university. The people of Jobra would be my teachers (Yunus and Jolis 2003, p. 18).

After making a few interventions, such as trying to improve agricultural productivity through irrigation in this village, Yunus learned that the poorest of the poor were not benefiting from these activities. The increased agricultural productivity would have virtually no impact on these people. They worked very hard for their living but somehow could not escape the clutches of poverty.

> I eventually came face to face with poor people's helplessness in finding the tiniest amounts of money to support their efforts to eke out a living (Yunus 2007, p. 45).

This insight, that people actually needed money in order to survive and survive well, eventually led Muhammad Yunus to establish Grameen Bank—a bank that would offer small loans to mainly women borrowers in Bangladeshi rural area. Around 97% of Grameen's borrowers were women (Yunus 2007). These loans would be offered to individual women who became part of a social group where each member was a guarantor for the other member's repayments. The classic product, "the basic income generating loan" were repayable in weekly installments with an interest rate of around 20%. (Yunus 2007, p. 63).

A typical Grameen bank branch would cover around 15 to 22 villages. Bank manager and staff would visit these villages, familiarize themselves with the prospective clients, promote their program, and educate these villagers about the loan processes. They would then form groups of five prospective borrowers (all women), out of which only two are offered loans in the first stage. Only when these two members repay their loan amount along with interest for six weeks, do the remaining member become eligible for loans. Grameen claims that group pressure, collective responsibility, and self-interest, serve as the collateral on the loan and ensure a loan repayment rate of 98.2% (Grameen 2020).

Grameen met with phenomenal success in the years to come. This model of microcredit was widely followed in various parts of the Global South. Because of its popularity and success, the bank and its founder ultimately won a Nobel prize in 2006 (Counts 2008). As of December, 2019 Grameen Bank had been distributing around 3 billion USD worth of microfinance based loans per annum, with a cumulative amount disbursed since inception equivalent to 30.23 billion USD. As of June 2020, the bank had around 9.33 million members, 97% of these were women (Grameen 2020).

7.2.2 Microfinance Meets Social Capital

There are numerous definitions of social capital due to its multifaceted nature (Woolcock 2001). This paper takes issue with the term in the discussion section, However, I explain it here because of its centrality in the popular microfinance models. Economists, sociologists, and political scientists tend to have their own understanding of what constitutes social capital, leading to considerable confusion (Islam 2016). For instance, Woolcock (2001) includes, family, friends, and associates, in the social network that is the source of social capital. He defines social capital as, "the norms and networks that facilitate collective action" (p. 70). Fukuyama (2001) highlights the importance of culture and defines social capital as "an instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between two or more individuals" (p. 7) and "shared norms or values that promote social cooperation, instantiated in actual social relationships" (Fukuyama 2002, p. 27). Coleman (1988) defines social capital based upon its functions. For him social capital resides in the structure of social relations which facilitate (coordinated) action towards a given end. Finally, Putnam (2000, 2001), a widely cited figure in microfinance literature, considers social capital as networks of relations and norms of reciprocity that have value for both members of the network and for people outside it:

> social capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. (Putnam 2000, p. 16)

7.2.3 Grameen Bank and Social Capital

Some researchers contend that Grameen Bank (GB) has a positive impact on social capital. Thus, Dowla (2006) suggests that GB increases the social capital of its borrowers by building trust, developing new norms, and by increasing the network of borrowers' relations. For instance, earning the trust of its (potential) borrowers was the biggest challenge GB faced. The poor people generally did not trust microfinance organizations because of their previous experiences with government led microcredit schemes and because of their incapacity to effectively utilize the borrowed money. Further, GB's insistence on offering to women only, added to this mistrust. In order to build trust GB worked on recruitment of appropriate staff and then offered them relevant training. This trust was gradually built over a period of time, and required local managers to intervene and counsel poor people in their family affairs, negotiate conflicts, (Woolcock 1998), and to provide relief during emergency situations and during natural disasters (Bornstein 1996). The trust that GB placed on these poor borrowers' ability to repay and in their creditworthiness resulted in borrowers placing trust in GB itself. Further, this mutual trust between GB and its borrowers, had a spillover effect in the industry and other microfinance institutions also worked towards creating a trust based relationship.

Similarly, GB also created new norms for microcredit loan schemes. These included norms for transparency in transactions, timely repayment, and credit discipline (Dowla 2006). Grameen believed that nothing should be offered for free. Thus, even during disasters such as wide scale floods in Bangladesh the relief that GB provided was offered as a loan. In 1991 when the government asked Banks to write off loans less the 5,000 Taka (USD 125), the GB convinced its borrowers to still repay loans. There were even reports that borrowers' would get loan from informal lending sectors at a higher interest rate to repay GB's loan, just to comply with the repayment norm (Sinha and Matin 1998). Group lending was also a norm initiated by GB, which was followed by other microfinance institutions in Bangladesh and outside. Further, participation in group meetings, involvement in selection of Board of Governors for GB, and asset owner ship by women, were also not common before GB intervention in the Bangladeshi rural life (Dowla 2006). GB encouraged horizontal relationship between borrowers of the same social status, and vertical relationship between people from different social strata and between borrowers and the government (Larance 1998; Todd 1996).

In contrast to these positive impacts on building social capital there are stories about the adverse effects and exploitation of social capital (e.g., see Karim 2011; Adams and Raymond 2008). Thus, Lamia Karim replaced the term "credit", with "debt", and this move allowed her to raise difficult questions on the practices of microcredit (Karim 2011). For instance, how social relations changed when debt was introduced, mediated by a modern bank? and what was the plight for social position of women in a state of indebtedness in a patriarchal society? In her one-and-a-half-year long ethnography, Karim finds startling answers to these poignant questions. There was evidence of new norms and practices created as a result of microfinance intervention, such as: formation of an economy of shame, surveillance of women borrowers in a group based lending scheme, and creation of a new—neoliberal subject—in the form of female petty money lenders.

The shaming of men through women is a cultural practice in these parts of the world. Women are traditionally considered the "custodian of family honor" (Karim 2008, p. 10), in these societies. Thus, to disgrace a woman is considered "the ultimate form of dishonor", for their men (p. 10). NGOs have generally appropriated this norm. As the majority of their borrowers are female (97% in case of GB), shaming has turned out to be a very effective weapon to intimidate their borrowers in to repaying. As Karim notes this gives an altogether different meaning to the inclusion of female borrowers into microcredit schemes. Female borrowers are sought by microfinance organizations because of their vulnerability to shaming—not because lenders aim to emancipate them.

> If the woman gets publicly shamed, the family is dishonored. In a face-to-face society, men and their families try to maintain the sanctity of their family honor by observing the honor of their women. (Karim 2008, pp. 10–11).

There was also evidence that in case of GB majority of its loans were ultimately used by men. Women only acted as an intermediary. Apparently GB officials and Yunus remain complicit to this arrangement. Yunus admits that, "now Grameen lends

money to husbands, but only through the wives. The principal borrower remains the wife" (Yunus and Jolis 2003, p. 91). Multiple lending is another issue facing the industry. Due to proliferation of NGOs offering microcredit in the global South, many borrowers started borrowing from multiple organizations—often using one loan to repay the more immediate demands of some other loan (Sriram 2010).

Arguably the most disturbing aspect emerging from this criticism of GB activities was the increase in traditional money lending practice. Contrary to GB's claim that microfinance has substantially reduced loan-sharks, some researchers found that money lending had increased at multiple levels of these communities. The new lender that emerged was GB borrower, who would receive money at a relatively lower interest rate and then would lend it to other desperate women at higher rates. Because these women had very little skills to run other businesses, money lending appeared the easiest and most logical source of earning to these borrowers. Further, traditional money lenders also seemed to be thriving:

> [t]he traditional moneylenders often boasted that their business was better due to NGO loans. The neoliberal subject that has emerged … is the figure of the female petty moneylender. Grameen has not actually liberated the poor but taken them to the banking system (Karim 2008, p. 21).

The account presented above suggests that microfinance supported not challenged capitalism's excesses. This happened despite Yunus's continued harping on the ills perpetrated by capitalist system on the larger society. For instance, in his most recent book Yunus again warned of the negative consequence of neoclassical economics and the system it generated. However, he again brought up GB as the appropriate solution to it.

> …. existing capitalist engine … needs to be redesigned, … Grameen Bank has helped me to imagine what such a redesigned engine might look like. … …. I've been very happy to see how effectively it addresses the problems … (Yunus 2017, p. 18).

7.3　Akhuwat: Resisting Capitalism's Universalization?

Akhuwat, a microfinance organization providing interest free loans since 2001, was the brainchild of Amjad Saqib and some of his close friends. Saqib, a practicing medical doctor, turned government officer, was serving in a state supported rural support program back in 2000–2001, in Punjab, the most populous province of Pakistan. According to his own account, Amjad once took his friends to a village nearby Lahore, the capital of Punjab, in order to show them some of the success stories of microfinance intervention (Saqib 2014a, b). His friends were impressed with the impact microcredit could have on the lives of poor people. However, they also criticized the practice of charging high interest rate from poor borrowers. Saqib tried to justify this on the basis of higher cost of operations for a microfinance organization and on sustainability issues. However, when the argument prolonged, he offered them an alternative. He asked his friends:

[I asked them] if you can provide me with capital without charging interest, I take the responsibility to provide it to people on non interest basis. Idea of Akhuwat originated there –outlines of an organization started to emerge (Saqib 2014a, b, pp. 105–6).

Akhuwat initiation was humble but its progress was not. The first loan of PKR 10, 000 was offered to a widow in the slums of Lahore in March 2001. She bought two sewing machines, got an order for stitching school uniforms from a nearby school and managed to return the loan within six months. She and a handful of other initial borrowers who all successfully utilized and returned their loans, convinced Saqib of the viability of this model. He made more ambitious plans for reaching out to millions of marginalized people spread across the country. By the end of 2019 Akhuwat had developed into one of the largest microfinance organizations in Pakistan. With 825 branches spread in 300 cities across Pakistan, Akhuwat had served more than 4 million families with loan disbursed amounting to PKR 100 billion (roughly USD 600 million) (Akhuwat 2019). It claims itself to be "the largest interest-free microfinance program in the world" (p. 9). This claim has not been challenged to date.

Besides microfinance, Akhuwat also started a number of other social ventures aimed mainly at social inclusion for the marginalized people and communities in Pakistan. These included Akhuwat programs in the education sector, health sector, clothes banks for the poor, and programs for social inclusion of transgender community. In all these programs Akhuwat's guiding principles of compassion and equality remained central. As mentioned in its recent publication:

Akhuwat has a virtue-based approach to poverty alleviation and has designed its various social and economic development activities as an expression of solidarity with the poor. Akhuwat's vision of development is known as MawaKhat (meaning solidarity)— a paradigm of justice and compassion. (Akhuwat 2019, p. 1)

Akhuwat's values translated into a changed organization model and process of loan distribution than that of Grameen. Majority of its loans (85–90%) were offered as family loans. These were offered to an individual male or female member of a household where at least one other family member would sign the document. In addition, this loan required two guarantors from outside the family. Before loan approval, Akhuwat's loan officer would make the social and business appraisal of the family in order to assess character, and credibility of the family as well as viability of their business proposal. The case would then be sent to a loan approval committee. The whole process of loan disbursement took anywhere from 3 to 4 weeks. The main steps of loan process are given in Fig. 7.1 (Akhuwat 2020).

7.3.1   Charging no Interest on Its Loans

Akhuwat drew inspiration for its no-interest policy from religion. Saqib insisted that all ethical systems in general and the three Abrahamic religions; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, in particular, prohibited interest (also see Graeber 2012). Islamic
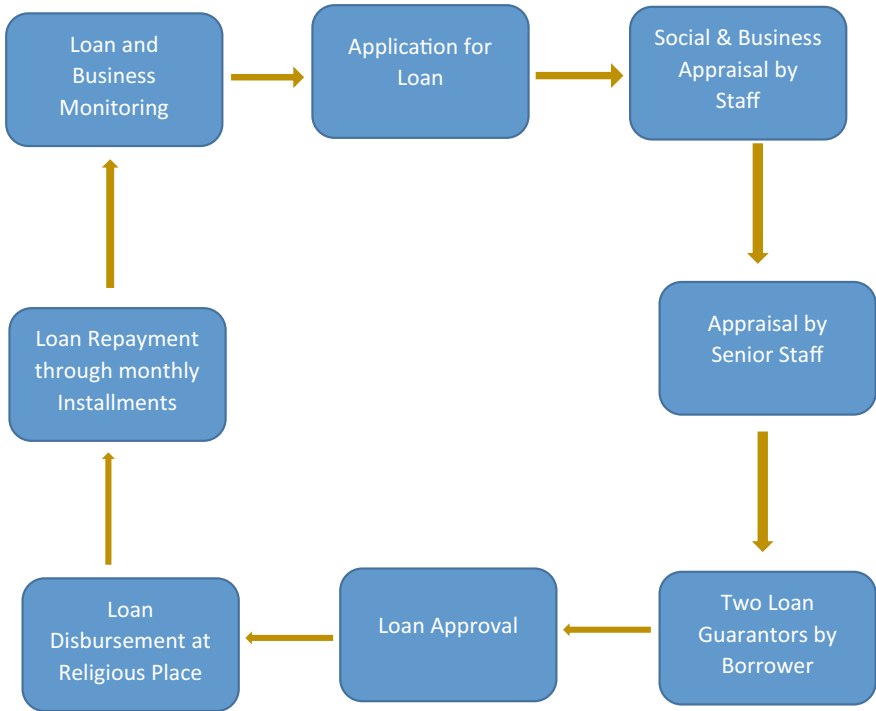
Fig. 7.1 Akhuwat's Loan process

teachings, traditions, and laws put strict sanctions against usury. Thus, Quran, the holy scripture, terms interest based transaction as war against God and the holy Prophet. A clear distinction is made between *interest* and *profit*, and the former is considered devastating for individual and for society's creative powers and economic wealth. The teachings of the holy Prophet, the practices of his followers, and the understanding of distinguished Muslim scholars across all ages, stand testament to forbiddance of interest in the economic system (Saqib 2014a, b).

Given that he could see no ethical system in the world approving of interest on loans, Saqib was puzzled by the prevalence of interest-based economic systems. He was particularly troubled by the unusually high interest rate charged by loan sharks. This interest rate in some cases would go as high as 120 to 240% per annum. The rate in many cases is determined based upon the borrower's urgency of need and lack of alternative sources available to her.

> The most dreadful condition of this loan is that [in order to get out] the principal amount has to be paid in one installment. Poor man usually can't collect that much money. As a result, he becomes a slave of the lender for ever. Isn't it a denial of all ethical injunctions If a person – born independent - becomes a slave… One of the main reasons for economic exploitation, social inequality, and poverty lies in this interest based system. The wealth which is owed by all, gets stuck in one strongbox. This is the real anarchy - *fasad* (Saqib 2014a, b, pp. 17–18)

Akhuwat charged zero interest on its loan schemes because of Islam's strong directives on the matter. Its stated purpose was to increase the circulation of wealth and free the society of evils of usury. Initially Akhuwat's loans were mainly provided for exploring various business opportunities. However, when the organizers learned that many of their prospective borrowers were heavily indebted under high interest loans, and were using Akhuwat's loans to repay these, the organization formalized this practice. About 10% of Akhuwat's total loan portfolio was then dedicated to providing assistance to people in getting rid of high interest loans. Akhuwat called these, "liberation loans". There was an upper limit of PKR 50,000 on these loan, and these were offered to the heavily indebted (Packman 2014).

7.3.2   Using Religious Places

Religious prayer places had a very important role in Akhuwat's strategy. It used these for signing of contracts and for disbursement of loans. Akhuwat made use of mosques, churches, and temples in order to distribute loans to Muslims, Christians and Hindus. Pakistan has a majority (over 96%) Muslim population, therefore mosques remain at the heart of loan disbursement schemes. In the early days of Islam, Mosque was used for prayers as well as for discussing and dealing with political, social, and administrative matters. For some, Mosque used to be the "Seat of Governance" in an Islamic State (Saqib 2014a, b, p. 114). However, with the passage of time the centrality and significance of this strong institution diluted and mosques were used only for offering prayers and for religious congregations. Saqib, wanted a revived role of this institution. He thought that these provided an alternative—and in his opinion, a better venue for cooperation, coordinated action, monitoring and accountability for welfare related activities.

It was only by chance that Akhuwat realized the importance of religious places. Saqib described these early days of hardship when Akhuwat was working in slums of Lahore, with very limited resources, and make shift (wooden cabin based) office arrangements. They worked there for a year and a half:

> [one day] we entered into a (nearby) mosque to get some relief from the scorching heat. The mosque greeted us in a manner that there was no going back. Imam Sahib (the head of the mosque) said with affection: Yes! Service (of humanity) should be done in a mosque. Thus, the mosque became an important part of Akhuwat's system and character (Saqib 2014b, pp. 27–28).

7.3.3   Turning Borrowers into Donors

Few years into microfinance operations, Akhuwat realized that there was a great desire in its borrowers to pay back. Successful borrowers would come to Akhuwat with stories about how their children could now eat two *chapattis* instead of one,

could go to school, and how they no longer had to beg for their small needs. They felt obligated to serve Akhuwat with whatever they had accumulated. It all started when a borrower, who had started a small fruit business with the help of Akhuwat's loan, came back a few months later and desired to donate. He was earning roughly PKR 300 to 400 (roughly USD 2) daily by that time. Saqib asked him to donate PKR 1, daily. He decided to donate PKR 5, daily, instead. Moreover, he also placed Akhuwat's donation box on his hand cart. Every evening he would put 5 rupees in this box. Some were donated by his customers. Every month he was able to donate around 200 to 300 rupees to Akhuwat. This donation would become part of Akhuwat's *Qarz e Hasana* (interest free loan) scheme.

> We decided to adopt this principle. We started to give this message to our borrowers that they could donate 1 rupee (per day) if they wished. But this was not a (necessary) condition. This was the person's own decision. Our task was to motivate them. Tell them that the status of donor is much superior than that of the borrower. In any good society there should be more donors than the borrowers. Even otherwise Akhuwat's goal is to create a society where people are inspired to donate. They should not simply think about their own wellbeing but also for the wellbeing of others (Saqib 2014b, pp. 37–38).

7.3.4 Downplaying Group Lending

During its earlier days, Akhuwat's lending process had some similarities with the conventional microfinance organizations. It relied on group lending, where group solidarity and pressure was the main collateral for loan repayment of the individual. Group lending is generally considered a superior form of lending as compared to individual lending (Morduch 1999; Armendariz and Morduch 2010). More lately this has become a standard lending strategy in the microfinance industry. It can take many forms, for instance, group can borrow itself and then decide on lending within group. This form is practiced in parts of Indian self-help groups. Groups can act as intermediaries, where the loans are given to the individuals within a group but the group as a whole act as appraiser and approver of the loans as well as a guarantor and an instrument of recovery for the microfinance organization. This is the Grameen model and is largely replicated in other parts of the world (Harper 2012).

Akhuwat, however, started to face problems with group based lending. For instance, one of the main problems was the member selection bias: most of the members in groups were selected on the basis of their popularity—not on the basis of any genuine need for credit (Akhuwat 2010). There were also cases of some members dominating the group, and of using other members' as proxies to get access to multiple loans from Akhuwat. The group based repayment mechanism put enormous peer pressure on the individual member. In many cases the harassment, shaming, and in some cases physical torture led to wide scale discontent with group based lending (Ansari 2013). Further, the process of group based lending was costlier for Akhuwat as well. Group formation and regular meetings were more time consuming and often less productive. Because of these issues, many potential

members of Akhuwat's schemes demanded that they be given loan on individual basis (ISFR 2014).

Akhuwat built on this demand for individual lending. However, instead of lending to an individual, it made family—a focal point of its lending schemes (Ansari 2013; Harper 2012). This allowed Akhuwat to not only address the negative fallout of group formation and operations, but also strengthen the family as a social unit. Most of the conventional microfinance institutions, and especially GB, mainly gave loans to women and celebrated women empowerment. However, evidence suggested that this intervention had actually eroded the borrower women's independence, and social capital (Rahman 2001; Karim 2008). Akhuwat provided majority of its loans to families, where husband and wife were jointly responsible for loan repayments. This not only strengthened family bonds but also addressed the issue of multiple loans offered to the same family (ISFR 2014).

> Discrimination in favor of women can have its downsides; men may force their wives to take loans and to repay them, but then use the money for liquor or other amusements, and the family disharmony can end in disaster… Akhuwat started with groups, and still uses them in some particular cases, but the main customer unit is the household, the wife and the husband. Both co-sign their loans, and are responsible for repayment, and the household also takes a guarantor, who is usually also an Akhuwat client. The guarantors are themselves not allowed to borrow until the loans which they have guaranteed have been fully repaid. (Akhuwat 2020)

7.4 Discussion

Postcolonial theorists generally challenge Marxist inspired claims regarding capitalism's universalizing tendencies and scope of resistance against it (Chakrabarty 2005; 2008; Chatterjee 2010; Guha 1997). They argue that capital may have universalizing tendencies in the West but once it enters colonial spheres it forsakes its universalizing disposition (e.g., see Guha 1997). This, they argue is because of difference in local culture, local bourgeois, and the nature of colonial state. This is also because of presence of forms of organization and power relations which are not consistent with the logic of capital (Guha 1997; Chakrabarty 2008).

Critics of postcolonial scholarship on capitalism argue that capital's universalizing drive is still very much active in the Global South. However, this drive is not so much about creating an all-encompassing institutional order similar to West. Rather, capital's universalization is more about creating a market order. Here products and services in various spheres are commodified and produced and offered merely for their "exchange value", rather than for their use (Chibber 2013, p. 125). The difference we see in the dynamics of capital and in opposition to it in the Eastern context is merely because of capitalists' different response to different settings (p. 125).

Microfinance interventions and programs originating in South Asia provide an appropriate site to test the validity of these two claims on capitalism's universalizing mission. As suggested in this chapter, Muhammad Yunus's socio-economic innovation in the form of GB was driven by a deep seated dissatisfaction with the plight

of the deprived under capitalism. This system would continue providing loans to the rich despite their miserable record on loan repayment and refuse to lend to poor because they had no collateral (Yunus and Jolis 2003). Thus when Yunus provided an alternative system he claimed he had turned the conventional banking system on its head. Grameen would offer small loans to poor people and not to rich, to rural populace as opposed to urban, to women instead of men, and on the basis of social collateral instead of physical collateral. Grameen seemed a genuine, indigenous alternative to Western model of banking, designed for the culture and traditions of rural Bangladesh.

Under a deeper scrutiny, however, microfinance loses much of its (perceived) innocence (Harper 2012). What may have started as a genuine desire to help the poor through building an alternative—has turned out to be just another territory (geographic, and socio-economic class based territory) lost to capitalism's universalization (Bateman and Chang 2012; Bateman 2014). Thus, Western organization, governments, and associations, such as the World Bank, and the European Union, now champion the use of social and cultural repertoire of resources for economic growth of the poor. This to them is the best way to help the poor and to correct for the dual failure of state and market in these societies (Meyer and Rankin 2002).

These center led initiatives have an unmistakable universalizing feature. These challenge dominant cultural ideologies through their slogans of empowerment, inclusion and solidarity. They prioritize lenders concerns for financial sustainability over collective action and social welfare. But more importantly, by advocating for using social relationships and cultural norms in place of physical and financial resources, and labeling these as "social capital", a core premise of capitalism is imbued in these relationships. The capital is not "innocent" in this phrase (Walters 2002). It assigns an economic rationality to the social and thus makes it subservient to neoliberal agenda (Meyer and Rankin 2002).

It is hard to ignore microfinance submission to neo-liberal ideologies. What Yunus highlights as the distinguishing features of GB are in line with center's preferences. Thus, none of the claims made, such as: giving the poor easy access to credit, interest based loans, emancipation of women, and a sustainable organizational model, contradict capitalist world view. Even the term—*social capital*—the very notion that *social* is a form of *capital*—to be accumulated and appropriated for personal gains, in order to "maximize utility", appears a neoliberal fiction (e.g., see Rankin 2002; Bateman 2010). In the following passage I will briefly discuss some of the key features of Capitalism's universalization project that have emerged from this study. A summary of this is also given in Table 7.1.

7.4.1 Poverty is Lack of Money

The primary construct which capitalism universalizes is the status of money. Money, as a concept and as a material entity, lies at the heart of capitalist system. A value is assigned to money which makes it appropriate as a medium of exchange, for

Table 7.1 Universalization of capitalistic/neoliberal values: difference between Akhuwat and Grameen Approach

Dominant microfinance features	Neo-liberal values	Grameen approach	Akhuwat approach
Ideology/inspiration	Secular/Individualist	Secular/Individualist	Religion inspired/social
Concept of poverty	Lack of money	Lack of money	Lack of relationships (socio-spiritual deprivation)
Sustainability model	Profit Maximization and Scalability is necessary	Profit Maximization and Scalability is necessary for sustainability (20% + interest is charged)	Donations inspired by religion and by human compassion are as sustainable as business profit (No interest is charged)
Concept of women	Women need emancipation	Women need emancipation (97% of Borrowers are Females)	Women need to be supported within family Borrowers: (58% Males, 42% Females)
Social relationships	Social Relationships are actually a form of Capital	Group based lending. Exploits social capital	Mostly Family based lending (85–90%). Tries to build "social relationships" for instance through turning borrowers into donors

accumulation of wealth, and as a gauge of affluence. This value has to be standard across people, cultures, and geographies in order for it to be relevant to any economic activity. By extension this would mean that value of money—if anything— is universalized. This universalization, in recent times, has undoubtedly Western origins considering the centrality of US dollar (and to a much lesser extent Euro) in the current economic system.

But there is a deeper—and more relevant concept (for this chapter's purpose) that gets universalized alongside universalization of money. That is the idea of poverty. Someone who lacks money is poor. Only money is used for evaluating the status of a person. Traditionally these societies had a far more complex system of valuation which determines the status of a person (e.g., pl. see Jammulamadaka and Sharma (2019), for a rich system of valuation in the Indian rural areas). GB appears to have submitted to capitalism inspired idea of poverty. Akhuwat has not. Amjad Saqib,- despite offering financial loans to the impoverished—makes a conscious attempt to redefine poverty. In lectures, interviews, and books, he often equates poverty with the state of being left alone, and not with lack of access to capital (Saqib 2014a, b). The very name of his organization Akhuwat (meaning fraternity or brotherhood), symbolizes his desire to create a relationship between haves and have nots. For Saqib,

these associations, and not offering money as charity (or as loan) per se, are pivotal to end poverty (Berkley center 2010; Saqib 2014a, b).

7.4.2 Women Need Liberation

Women emancipation, championed by GB, and followed by most of the other microfinance institutions in Pakistan and elsewhere in the world, is another idea documented to have neoliberal underpinnings (Karim 2008, 2011; Rahman 2001). This is an important feature in capitalism's universalizing drive. In the microfinance world this requires woman to forgo her relationship in her family and instead build new connections in the marketplace (Karim 2008) as a female entrepreneur—someone who is in charge of her own destiny. This image is promoted by mainstream microfinance. This model is also cherished by liberal feminists, poststructuralists, and neoliberal ideologues. South Asian (especially Muslim) women emancipation—of late- has become an appropriate site where people from otherwise diverse ideologies, and philosophical backgrounds, seem to converge.

However, repeated ethnographic evidence (e.g., Rahman 2001; Karim 2011) suggests extreme exploitation of women in the name of emancipation. GB boast that 97% of its borrowers comprise women. However, research indicates that women are selected because of their vulnerability (to shaming) in these societies, the loans borrowed by women are used by their men, family relations are compromised, and in some cases traditional petty money lending system is reinforced (Karim 2011). Further, since a woman's honor in these societies extend to her immediate family, and to her distant relations, thus appropriation of women borrowers has been used to influence and exploit a whole extended network of relationship by these microfinance institutions. For them it would be a case of maximum utilization of the social capital available in these societies.

Akhuwat realized the paradox very early on in its operations. It did not restrict its loans schemes to one gender alone. Around 42% of its borrowers were women and remaining men. The arrangement seems more balanced than the one adopted by a conventional microfinance organisation. Further, Akhuwat replaced group based lending with family based lending. This means that Akhuwat's borrowers, either men or women, have to engage another member of the family in order to get the loan. Around 85 to 90% of Akhuwat's loans are offered as family loans—offered to individuals but by engaging other family members—husband and wife mainly, but father and daughter, mother and son also. Through this scheme, Akhuwat aims to preserve the sanctity of family as a basic social organization in these societies. Any new relationship would not be built at the cost of this organization.

7.4.3 Social is a Form of Capital

This feature is arguably the most important one in the capitalist inspired microfinance institution model. The discovery that social relationships are a form of capital—to be accumulated and appropriated as a medium of exchange, in place of money, is claimed to offer the most sought after solution of all time to the issue of poverty. As described earlier, this is rooted in a neoliberal market based rationality (Rankin 2002). By assigning this rationality to the social an over-simplified image of social relationship is built—up for appropriation. This idea and image was adopted wholeheartedly by mainstream microfinance institutions when they exploited these relationships in place of physical collateral in their lending schemes to poor. Collateral has no purpose in a conventional banking system, other than as an assurance against loan defaults. The social collateral that GB and other microfinance institutions rely upon has proven to be a far more effective tool to ensure loan repayment.

However, this approach has disastrous consequences for the social relationships in the societies in which these organizations operate (Rahman 2001; Karim 2008, 2011; Bateman 2010). This intervention destroys the existing social relationships and in its place creates new ones more suited to microfinance. These new relationships are built through practices of borrower's appraisal and constant monitoring, of credit disbursement and repayment, and especially through new norms and rituals of public shaming and of desecrating the property of non-paying borrowers.

Akhuwat on the other hand consciously tries to preserve existing social relationships and build new ones. The new ones are built on the organization's cherished values of compassion and empathy for the marginalized. It encourages its borrowers to become donors of the organization in due course. The organization claims that around 60% of its funding requirements are now met by donations received from its borrowers (Harper 2012). Some contest the exact percentage, but still acknowledge that it is a significant proportion of Akhuwat's overall funds.

7.4.4 Sustainability and Scalability Impose a Business Model

A final core feature of capitalism's universalizing project is its concept of sustainability. It requires that for an organization to be sustainable and scalable it has to have a business model. This entails that organization should be run like a business corporation, always looking to maximize profitability and increase market share. Implicit in this advice is the injunction that donation is not a sustainable source of capital for a microfinance organisation. In order to reach a wider population of poor people there must be alternative (and more reliable) sources of funds such as loan from commercial banks, and equity investment opportunities in microfinance organizations. The funds that are generated through these alternate sources come with a cost of capital, and herein lies the rationale for high interest rates.

This common understanding of how to make microfinance sustainable and scalable appears to run through the psyche of most institutions. This is despite the presence of glaring evidence that profit motive and scalability, especially in microfinance, has devastating consequences for the societies in which these big organizations operate. Small organizations have been doing a much better job of providing social service in these areas (e.g., see Jammulamadaka 2013, 2015). When Yunus criticized Vikram Akula (founder of SKS Microfinance—the largest microfinance institution in India) for making his institution publicly listed and leaving microcredit to the wishes and whims of investors, Akula brushed aside the objection and argued; "Our urgency is how do we reach all the people we need to reach. Commercial capital markets are the only place to get those funds" (Bahree 2010). Ironically, when Amjad Saqib asked Muhammad Yunus on why microfinance institutions charge such a high interest rate from the poor he dismissed the objection by announcing that Saqib did not understand how microfinance worked (Saqib 2014a, b). Neoliberal ideas of sustainability and scalability are not allowed to be challenged in the above examples.

Akhuwat's religion inspired values allow it to challenge these concepts. It refuses to include profit motivation in its model and has found alternative ways of sustainability and scalability (Harper 2012). It relies on the spirit of compassion and empathy of people especially of its former borrowers who now make up 60% of its donation base. Further, the organization reduces the administrative and operational cost through minimal use of acquired assets, by using religious places for many of its operations and by relying on voluntarism and on religious inspiration rather than on bureaucratic controls. Over the years this organization has encouraged and helped a number of likeminded people to build similar organizations such as Akhuwat. Finally, it offers products and services which are sensitive to the needs of the local rather than the demands of the capital, such as; liberation loans, marriage loans, and its support program for transgender (Akhuwat 2020).

7.5   Conclusion

In this Chap. 1 extracted the key features of capitalism's universalizing mission as it operates in the post colony, by studying two cases in the microfinance industry in South Asia. I argued that in order to provide any scope for resistance to contemporary forms of imperialism and to offer any alternative form of managing and organizing, one needs to be sensitive to these features. Akhuwat managed to defy these because of its inspiration from religious sources and embeddedness in its cultural milieu. The main pillars of its ideology include faith (*iman*) in a transcendent reality, sincerity of intention (*ikhlas*), and excellence of action (*Ihsan*) (Akhuwat 2019, p. 3). This embeddedness allows Akhuwat to define key MF issues on its own terms. Thus it defines poverty, as lack of connectedness and not as lack of capital. It situates status of women within family and not outside it, it acknowledges and is respectable to

existing social relationships and tries to build new ones, and it tries to achieve sustainability and scalability through relying on a persistent human impulse of empathy and compassion for other humans rather than on greed for profit.

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Chapter 8
Bazaar as a Microcosm of Political Activity

Kumar Shreshtha and Prashant Mishra

Abstract This essay studies a market form known as bazaar in the local parlance. Bazaars as a market form have survived for more than a millennium in Asia and are still alive. The market ecosystem of the bazaar is constituted by customers, sellers, suppliers and the Bazaar *Samiti*. *Samiti* is a quasi-formal governance entity like an association, managing and supervising the functioning of the bazaar. The context of the present chapter is a daily bazaar in Kolkata, an Eastern metropolitan city in India. By examining this traditional vegetable and fruit bazaar, in its liminal state of existence amidst contemporary realities and traditional mores we explore political contradictions and competencies of this system. The chapter explains the role of spatial politics and varying trust among sellers, in keeping the bazaar together. The coexistence of the *bazaaris* (sellers) in the same time and space is a function of how spatial politics affects trust and norms. Studying the political activity in the bazaar, we discover that the bazaar is sustained by cooperation, competition and contestation through political participation in the bazaar and the *Samiti.* Through this chapter we deepen Partha Chatterjee's political society.

Keywords Bazaar · Spatial politics · Bazar samiti · Subsistence sellers · State · Informal market

8.1 Introduction

The words bazaar and markets are considered synonymous, though there are differences. The term bazaar originates from the Persian word *bāzār,* which was further derived from Pahlavi term *baha-char*, which means "place of prices though the places of transactions were originally not meant for trading purpose" (New World Encyclopedia contributors 2016). Bazaar as a term has been acknowledged in the vernacular around the world. In Indonesia, it is called *Pasar*. In Middle- East Asia, it is called *souq*. Market, on the other hand, is a term that originated from Western countries from

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Latin words *Mercatus* and M*ercari*, meaning "merchant" and "to buy", respectively. Bazaar is not limited to one nation or one subcontinent. Historical records suggest that bazaars were established as permanent markets in the fifth century BC when travelling merchants in Greece became full-time sedentary specialists by transforming periodic markets into permanent markets (Dixon 2002). Greeks considered bazaar as their innovation, citing the case of Agoras, which was a state-managed market with fixed boundaries and a taxation system (Mittelstaedt et al. 2006). Most Asian nations like Kazakhstan, Iran, Tajikistan have bazaars that have thrived over decades and withstood tribulations (Fadaee and Schindler 2017; Rotblar 1972; Spector 2008; Stephan-Emmrich and Mirzoev 2016).

Bakshi (2009) clarifies the difference between bazaar and market, stating that the market is not just a physical space, unlike bazaar. Instead, it denotes a more abstract idea. Markets can be formal and informal based on presence or absence of State regulations. Informal markets encompass the entire gamut of unregulated trading, including itinerant vendors, street vending, flea markets, vegetable bazaar, fish/meat bazaar. In this chapter, informal market is used interchangeably with bazaar. Bazaar is the context of this empirical piece. Across the continents, bazaars represent physical interaction and all of them essentially have an informal market system where there is no formal contract governing the conduct of business and economic exchanges. Modern management and marketing literature often implicitly question the ability of bazaar participants to govern a complex informal marketing system, often underscoring how informal markets are lacking in governance and regulation vis a vis formal markets (Kahiya and Kadirov 2020). Nevertheless, these bazaars have thrived, implying that there is something that modern marketing and management literature misses. It is, therefore, necessary to understand what enables a bazaar to survive and operate in a competitive environment. Through this chapter which presents a study of a bazaar in the Eastern part of India, we focus on unpacking the relationship between *Samiti* (explained subsequently) and the sellers from the perspective of how governance is achieved on a day-to-day basis and how the forces of integration and disintegration and politics within the communities of sellers work in a bazaar.

Bazaar is a social formation and a node of convergence in space and time where cyclically repeated events like buying and selling occur and in the process, a network of far-reaching relationships are formed among its participants (Jain 2007). The informal and non-contractual nature of the bazaar is something that western scholarship has been introduced to post the thesis of Geertz (1978). These economic exchanges of bazaar are embedded in social interactions. When social interactions are important in a market, trust plays a central role in the conducting of business. Transactions are embedded in the social actions in a marketing system that is continuously lubricated because of social trust among its participants (Arrow 1974). Trust in a bazaar is established through an intricate interplay of actions of its participants and the ecosystem during the course of social and economic transactions over the long-term.

The informal nature of the bazaar fosters a situation in which the sellers must act and organise themselves to face and perform different kinds of politics. We use and

extend the idea of political society forwarded by Chatterjee (2004), to explain the manner in which this bazaar sustains over time. We identify two kinds of politics, namely, that which utilises the politics of the State, which we call external politics and the politics of individual sellers, which we distinguish as internal politics. Both of these are deployed and performed for collectively sustaining the bazaar and individually securing one's livelihood. By external politics, we mean politics outside the boundaries of the bazaar where the central player is the State. State politics becomes significant in the backdrop of the fact that no seller in the bazaar has ownership of the land on which the bazaar or his/her stall (selling place is located) either individually or collectively. Our findings suggest that internal politics is a positive mechanism that promotes the survival of the bazaar and is largely managed by the sellers. Sellers use the quasi-formal institution of *Samiti* not just for external politics but also to manage internal politics.

8.2   What is a Bazaar?

A bazaar is a spatially bound, culturally mediated, communally constructed, and complex ordered system of life provisioning. Scholars from disciplines like history (Yang 1998), architecture (Pourjafar et al. 2014), anthropology (Ciotti 2007; Geertz 1978), public policy (Gooptu 2001) and marketing (Sreekumar and Varman 2016; Varman and Costa 2008, 2009; Vikas et al. 2015) have used the bazaar as the site of their research to establish that bazaars are places for buying and selling of consumer goods, social exchanges, cultural transactions and a reflection of structural changes in society (Ostor 1984).

Bazaars were formed when a group of itinerant vendors, who sold goods while travelling to different places, decide to settle down at a fixed location based on the potential for sale (Dixon 1995). These sellers do not have titular ownership of the spaces in these locations, and hence the formation of a trade association or a bazaar *Samiti* becomes necessary (Soto 1989). *Samiti* or association of sellers are not just a feature of the Indian subcontinent. There has been evidence from Asian and Latin American bazaars that market associations remain at the forefront of negotiating security and hygiene for sellers (Pourjafar et al. 2014; Soto 1989; Warren 2001). *Samitis* ensure prevention of loot at night by employing security guards, dealing with the local police, and paying the municipal cleaners to fulfil security and hygiene needs (Soto 1989). Bazaars can be permanent or temporary based on temporal classification. Temporary bazaars work on a particular day in a week or on a special occasion. (Geertz 1978). Fairs and *haats* are examples of temporary bazaars, while municipal bazaars and other bazaars on vacant land are permanent bazaars. Ray (1985) describes the goods available in weekly markets and fairs, here items vary from grain, salt, spices, cooking vessels and coarse cloth to toys for children, fancy ornaments for ladies, whereas permanent bazaars generally have goods for everyday consumption.

8.3 Brief History of Bazaar in India

In India, secondary data of inscriptions, manuscripts of emperor's courtiers, travel accounts of Chinese, diary accounts of British officers have been used to understand the history of the bazaar of last 2500 years (Sreekumar and Varman 2016). Even though historiography and periodisation of the bazaar have been difficult as the process of transaction in a space evolved before the development of writing skills, nevertheless, marketing and economic historians in India have attempted to periodise trading while highlighting the importance of bazaar (Ray 1985; Sreekumar and Varman 2016).

Various eras in Indian history have contributed to bazaars and the bazaar in an era has always reflected the culture of its period. The most significant changes in the bazaar have been in the period of British rule. The colonial period was a milestone in India's history of a bazaar as the period observed an irreversible structural change in the bazaar, and the "local" nature of the bazaar was weakened. Locally produced goods and services started facing stiff competition and losing platform to sell in the colonial times since British were interested in selling the finished products of their factories in the bazaar, and in this process, destroyed the bazaars for goods produced by skilled native workers. Colonial masters had effects on the structure and functions of the bazaars as the British damaged the self-dependence of the villages and consequently reduced the significance of rural bazaars.

Nevertheless, the bazaar continued for centuries because of the trust retained in informal transactions and the social network and social relations which develop both among sellers themselves and between sellers and buyers. Sellers maintain their network through a formal and democratically elected body inside the informal market of the bazaar. This quasi-formal socio-political body is called Bazaar *Samiti*.

8.4 Quasi-Formal Association in Informal Markets

One of the critical characteristics of developing countries is the prevalence of a strong informal sector. The informal sector is constituted by numerous informal marketplaces or bazaars (Anbarci et al. 2012). The conditions in informal marketplaces are different from what typically exists in formal markets (Desai 2013; Viswanathan et al. 2014).

Samiti plays the role of a governance body while governing an informal market, and it organises itself as per the need of bazaar. *Samiti* means *sabha* or *samaj*, meaning a formal coming together of people related to a common cause. The strength of network and informal relations in *Samiti* due to shared culture is not reflected in the English translation of *Samiti* to "association", so we have used *Samiti* in the chapter. In the absence of interference in functioning by state bodies, sellers in informal markets organise themselves through their Bazaar *Samiti* (Soto 1989).

Informal markets, locales where millions of trades transpire daily, are not governed by the same regulatory framework that governs the formal sector (Anbarci et al. 2012). Furthermore, such informal markets are characterised by sellers' absence of land ownership, a joint sense of vulnerability, and the omnipresence of frugality (Soto 1989). While this lack of formality provides informal markets with much autonomy, it negates provision of essential public services by the State apparatus. For instance, sellers in the informal markets would have to self-regulate the hygiene and sanitation standards within the marketplace (Soto 1989). Members from the State's sanitation departments hardly visit them and provide them with essential services. *Samiti* ensures that there are no grievances to the inhabitants due to any garbage produced by the bazaar. This basic act affects the potential survival of the bazaar by impacting the relationship between the sellers in the bazaar and people living in adjoining areas (Fadaee and Schindler 2017; Soto 1989). The balancing role *Samiti* plays in informal markets is not limited to India, but it cuts across other third world nations, as in the case of Peru (Soto 1989). *Samiti* influences the lives of sellers by allowing sellers into the bazaar based on their fit in the marketplace.

Similarly, the marketplaces' security concerns too are handled by Bazaar *Samiti* and do not rely excessively on the State's policing mechanism. It is only during extreme situations that police are employed within the bazaar. The bazaar members almost always create informal policing mechanisms.

In contrast to informal markets, formal markets have a state-controlled market governance mechanism (Scott et al. 2013). Self-regulation is a remote possibility here in the absence of a strong and able association of sellers. Local governance bodies of State, like municipal corporations, police and electricity department provide services to formal markets and redress the grievances of sellers. Formal markets may also have their sellers' association, but the functions are limited to continuing cultural activities of the market and politically, representing the entire market when faced with a common problem, i.e., external politics are significant. In case of customer grievances in a formal market, the Bazaar *Samiti* has no or lesser role to play. The law of the land governs and regulates the norms of ethicality among sellers in a formal market. There are formal markets, such as shopping malls, where there may not be any *Samiti*. The members of *Samiti* in a formal market can be elected by its sellers, this is one of the few points of similarity between a bazaar and a formal market.

8.5 Methodology

Our research was driven by the research question: "how does politics inside and outside of a bazaar drive the bazaar and contribute to its sustenance? The Ashoka Avenue bazaar, situated in the urban areas of South Kolkata, was selected as the site for research. This bazaar was selected because it was a demographically and culturally homogenous bazaar. It was formed by Hindu- Bengali marginalised refugees from Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) coming into post-partition India. The homogeneity in the bazaar is in terms of religion, financial condition and language.

The site selected had to be homogenous in terms of the background of the participants for two reasons. First, we could be more confident that the findings were extendable to various sellers in the bazaar for the ease of theoretical generalisation. Second, we could take the bazaar as the unit of analysis. Once the context was selected, we decided on the method of gathering data. The first author stayed in the vicinity of the bazaar for two years to informally understand the context and the nature of inter-actions inside the bazaar. Later, he formally interviewed ten select participants who were middle-aged, tenth grade passed sellers, who had insights on the politics inside the bazaar as observers and as practitioners of the politics.

Participants were not interviewed in a formal way. Instead using the immersive technique of participatory ethnography, the first author set out to explore how the bazaar survived the systemic constraints and external competition from other forms of market by embedding the questions in between general discussions in the course of being a buyer in the bazaar. The author informed the sellers that he was a researcher studying bazaars and would like to interact with them. The first author asked a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions on the relations of sellers with other sellers and *Samiti*. Some of the relevant questions asked were; (a) how much the sellers earn in the bazaar, (b) what is the influence of *Samiti* on them, (b) are they contented in their current situation, (c) is there any politics in the bazaar, (d) if the politics exist, how has it affected them, (e) how much they adhere to the norms (f) how much is the resistance to the norms at their end, with examples of display of resistance in the past.

Using our observational data, we divide the entire bazaar into three parts: areas B, A, and C based on the decreasing visibility and the current quantum of business of the sellers. Sellers of areas A and B were close to arterial roads while C was away from the main traffic. These areas are designated in the screen grab of google map of Ashok Avenue bazaar (Fig. 8.1). The locals also call it Basdroni Bazaar. From the data gathered on the *Samiti*, it could be seen that sellers in area B were usually the office bearers in the *Samiti* and influential in the conduct of *Samiti's* business.

8.6   Findings

Sellers working in such informal bazaars are subsistence sellers because the earnings of these sellers while varying are usually as low as US $2 per day (Mukherjee et al. 2020). Area C had the majority of subsistence sellers with comparatively lower income than the average earning of the bazaar. The average earning of a seller in the bazaar is close to Rs. 6000 per month (1 USD = Rs.75.00 approximately) while that of a seller in area C is Rs 4000 per month. The A and B areas that are more visible and accessible and hence get higher footfall, contributing to greater volume of business. The majority of customers do not enter too deep into the bazaar, and hence the sellers in area C do not get enough business.

Educational attainment of sellers is generally quite low. 90% of the sellers have not completed their 10th grade. Despite the small sales turnover, less education

Fig. 8.1 Ashok avenue bazaar divided into zones (*Source* Google Maps screen grab 30th Aug 2021)

and predicaments like inadequate or no provision of facilities by the local government; Ashok Avenue bazaar has grown and been in existence for over four decades. The number of sellers has grown. Usually in such bazaars, number of sellers increase because of membership in densely networked social and kinship communities (Viswanathan et al. 2008). The father, mother, uncle, aunt, brother, sister or close friend's relative had been in this bazaar since its inception and this provides entry to new sellers. These relatives have been instrumental in forming the *Samiti*, a norm enforcing agency. Bazaar members who have their home close to the bazaar form a higher trust group based on their long-time acquaintance. The proximity of sellers to the bazaar has became a significant criterion as the bazaar evolved from a collection of insecure sellers encroaching land to *Samiti* members operating in a politically legitimised piece of land. We call this politically legitimised in the sense in which Chatterjee (2004) uses the term political society. Neither the sellers nor the Samiti has any legally enforceable claim on the land. However, they have emerged as important players in the local party politics governing the State.

The sellers in zone C, who cannot procure vegetables from the wholesale market, because of their limited working capital or other logistical reasons, buy from the other sellers in zone A or zone B or sometimes even zone C of the bazaar and sell to customers at a lower margin. Together these seller communities help select and elect apt representatives for the Bazaar *Samiti*, who can contribute to deal making with state agencies and politicians to benefit the entire marketplace (News 2016).

Furthermore, inside the marketplace, a seller has to take permission from *Samiti* to sell a particular kind of goods: vegetables, fruit, and/or fish. They are then expected to sell the same thing until they desire to sell something else. *Samiti* allows sellers to switch from selling one goods to another, provided they inform the *Samiti* members before doing this. Usually sellers display their fresh vegetables, fruits and/or fish on the road side over sheets of plastic or on small temporary structures such as tables. The quantity of stock is in the range of a few tens of kilos.

8.6.1 Samiti as an Axis of Politics

Bazaar *Samiti* is a democratically elected body of sellers that organises, coordinates, and pursues the common interests of sellers in a bazaar. *Samiti* acts as the axis of the bazaar and is known to formalise its norms of ethicality and maintain hierarchies to ensure that individual sellers do not endanger the collective good of the seller community. *Samiti* establishes its political authority by managing multiple seller-friendly activities. It organises community-based initiatives to negotiate with the agencies from the external environment, i.e., external politics for building infrastructure, maintaining hygiene, sanitation in the marketplace, and ensuring protection. *Samiti* manages to attract the attention of State politics by doing welfare work for sellers, which otherwise, is the job of State. *Samiti* also mitigates the negative effect of interaction between the ecosystem of sellers and the inhabitants of the residences in the surrounding areas. *Samiti* and its work in external politics thus have a significant influence on the sellers of the bazaar.

*Samiti*s represent the bazaar in political dialogue with key authorities, such as the local government body members and police, to resolve issues of bazaars. *Samiti* strives to ensure that regardless of the political party in power, the interests of sellers in the bazaar are protected. They keep maintaining strong network with elected public representatives, within and outside the marketplace to achieve the bazaar's long-term objectives.

8.6.2 Influence of **Samiti** on Sellers: Internal Politics

Bazaar is a noisy and crowded space. *Samiti* decides the layout and pathway for customers to move inside the bazaar. *Samiti* provides an entry barrier to new sellers so that overcrowding in the bazaar and blocking of public thoroughfare does not happen. Bazaar *Samiti* justifies its position by resolving day-to-day disputes amongst sellers or between sellers and customers (Warren 2001). *Samiti* helps organise collective actions of sellers for their betterment. Furthermore, *Samiti* plays a critical role in planning major developmental initiatives of a bazaar, such as renovation and sometimes expansion. This is similar to the findings in extant literature (Kosová and Lafontaine 2010; Soto 1989). The renovation requires funds, and expansion means

invading public space available for commuters. The collective action of renovation of bazaar is accomplished by the funds mobilised and maintained by the sellers of the bazaar.

Since it was evident that the bazaar is a highly political space, we probed politics' negative and positive aspects from the perspective of their impact on the bazaar. We observed that the responses of the participants point towards two kinds of forces which intertwined with the relational embeddedness in the bazaar.

8.6.3   Relational Embeddedness in Bazaar

Bazaar has been historically perceived as a physical marketplace where customers, sellers, suppliers meet, interact and perform economic actions (buying, selling or supplying goods) based on their short term and long-term acquaintances. In this sense sellers are embedded in social networks. The acquaintances in the bazaar allow the formation of networks of the actors and their strong or weak relational ties (Granovetter 1973).

We categorise social embeddedness into structural and relational embeddedness. Relational embeddedness is an integrating force in a bazaar and reflects the strength of ties inside the bazaar. Close and strong relational ties inside the bazaar are paramount for sellers, hence we term this as relational embeddedness. In relational embeddedness, the significance of economic gains from the ties and transactions for the sellers is smaller than the possible social gains. While we identify it as relational embeddedness, in the sense that social relations are giving economic outcomes, sellers identify it as both strong social relationships and simultaneously as economic transactions. One does not drive the other. Both happen. Relational embeddedness discusses the quality of the social ties, which leads to a stronger network. Three of the female sellers confirmed that relational embeddedness plays a significant role in their lives. One of them claimed that:

> We as sellers feel indebted to those customers who buy from us regularly. If any of them who frequent to us regularly, come at the time of bohni (1st sale in the entire day), then we do not tend to earn from him and sell the vegetables at cost price.

The relational embeddedness, which is reinforced by strong ties, also involves political and emotional elements. It increases the life of harmony, emotional attachment and good order in the bazaar. Disruptions in the bazaar at the management level are a remote possibility when social embeddedness due to relationships is in force. A male seller in his 50s seemed to be emotional while describing how he was helped in need. His neighbours helped him when he had a medical emergency. He considered the bazaar a warm place where sellers inform customers about the availability of a vegetable elsewhere, when not present in the neighbour's selling point. Note here both the emotionality of the comment and the emphasis on strengthening of relations, rather than an economic transaction(al) sense of reciprocity.

This bazaar has been another home. Once, under the attack of epilepsy, neighbours helped and got me admitted. We believe that if one helps another, one will get the same when one needs it. We ask customers to buy from a neighbour or whomever we know has the product in the bazaar when the product desired (by the customer) is not available in our outlet. This behaviour is reciprocated, and hence our relations get stronger.

8.7   Contestation

But the bazaar is not just a place of harmony and good order. There is another aspect of social and political action in the bazaar that can provide impetus to the existing politics. This is contestation, and its degree decides the fate of the bazaar. Contestation in the bazaar is the resistance to bazaar or *Samiti* enforced norms and is enacted by sellers in the interactions between community, social groups or individuals. From the data it appears that there are also some taken for granted patterns for contestation. Such contestation in the context of the bazaar results from sellers' dissatisfaction when they are let down by the people occupying a specific power position in the bazaar and the bazaar *Samiti*.

There were two degrees of contestation observed in the bazaar: lower and higher. Long interviews with four participants revealed that a lower degree of contestation triggers positive transformations in the bazaar. Moreover, such contestation allows controlled release of pent up anger. Such contestation is characterised by a non-aggressive display of resistance, through repeated objection raising and requests by the seller, even though the seller is not willing to violate the norm. The lower degree of contestation, lacking a visible physical change in selling behaviour (shouting, change place of selling etc.) does not threaten the apparent sense of harmony in the bazaar. One of the old widows among the participants who had her selling point in the C zone explained:

I have been selling at a place which is not on the busy road. Many times, customers do not pay a visit to a space very deep inside the bazaar. Neighbours and I are not earning much compared to some other areas of the bazaar as our visibility is less. I cannot sell much, which is very hurtful as I have a family of 5 who depend on me. I have been requesting Samiti to help, but my request has not been accepted until now. The delay is deteriorating my financial situation. I hope someday Samiti allows me to sell in a more visible location.

The higher degree of contestation is an undesirable state for the bazaar. A more substantial display of resistance characterises this and here the seller is ready to potentially compromise or violate the norm or norms set by *Samiti*. It can potentially threaten the veil of harmony of the bazaar and its relations with the external constituencies- neighbours, state agencies etc. In the long run, this is likely to lead to undesirable consequences for the future of the bazaar. One of the male participants who was selling in the C zone claimed that he might resist the norms than die in hunger:

I have been requesting the bazaar to allow me to sell at a better place and waiting patiently, but there is a limit to patience. I will wait for some time and then will not listen to anyone

and start selling on the road. I am not earning much to get proper meals for my child. Wife works as help in houses and barely managing things.

One of the explanations for a higher degree of contestation among subsistence sellers could be perceived injustice. The sellers in area C do not accept the view of *Samiti* because of their predicament with regards to low earnings. *Samiti* could be right at their place and may not like the sellers to suffer, but there are constraints to maintain norms. High degree of contestation thus acts as a disintegrating force.

8.7.1 Spatial Politics in Bazaar

Sellers in the bazaar are not a fixed set of individuals. New sellers join the bazaar even as some old sellers leave the bazaar to pursue other opportunities. Space is scarce in a bazaar, leading to a continuous struggle for a space with more visibility among the incumbent sellers in the bazaar. The limitation of space constrains the entry of new sellers in the bazaar though new sellers get in with the permission of *Samiti*. The politics for acquiring the conspicuous space within the boundaries of the bazaar gives rise to an acrimonious spatial politics. *Samiti* plays its role as a referee in mitigating the effect of spatial politics on the harmony of the bazaar and possible resistance of those who do not get the beneficial space. The resistance of the sellers is not violent but nevertheless conspicuous in the form of visible flouting of the extant norms and spatial allocations. Three of the participants echo a similar view about their modes of resistance against norms. We quote one of them who informed:

> Samiti keeps taking sellers into the bazaar, but the space is limited. No one wants that his/her visibility to get affected because of a new seller introduced by Samiti. Samiti members involve themselves in the matter of conflict of space, but the problem is deep-rooted.

The problem which the seller hinted at as deep-rooted was indicating a social hierarchy in the seemingly homogenous bazaar. *Samiti* office bearers, known as members were seen as higher in the hierarchy because of their power position. Their position in the hierarchy is strengthened by their role in bazaar administration and financial issues. The politics of space, directly linked to sales, perpetuate resentment against the powerful. Protesting against such power and spatial injustice, some of the sellers do not sell at the prescribed space for a day or two in the week. Some show resistance by delaying the payment of maintenance fees. Such contestations have also prompted ameliorative action by those in power in the bazaar and the Samiti. For example, some renovation was work was undertaken in area C to make it more conducive for sellers in the area.

8.7.2   Cooperation and Competition: The Other Political
Dimensions

Cooperation and competition are an integral part of functioning in a bazaar. Sellers compete and cooperate and display cooperative and competitive behaviours. This aspect has been well established in literature (Belk et al. 1988; Lawrence and Kaufmann 2011). Our study also supports this. Cooperation and competition are survival tactics, as summarised by two participants who enriched the study with their insights on cooperation and competition behaviour.

> Cooperation among the neighbours is required for sharing goods from wholesale market as we use rickshaw van to bring the goods here. Most of the time, we have to share the van because the goods bought by one seller is not enough to fill the whole van, and the cost of a van for one trip is fixed. Cooperation occurs when the seller next door knows that his neighbour has not earned his bohni (first sale). He can direct his customer for one or two products to his neighbour's selling place. Another aspect of cooperation is helping fellow seller in providing smaller denomination currency in exchange for a larger one.

Cooperation builds trust and evokes community feeling among the sellers. It develops a sense of togetherness among sellers. The community feeling and togetherness is essential to foster the political strength of the bazaar as a community. Competition drives the sellers to be on their toes though this does not create any situation of conflict because of the norms prescribed by the *Samiti*. Sellers also indulge in a healthy competition where they follow norms while attracting customers. Healthy competition would mean calling out to customers till they are not engaged to any other seller. Calling out to customers continues until a customer begins to bargain with a seller. Sellers are expected to please and retain the customer without undercutting of price. They do so by claiming that their vegetables and goods are of fresher and better quality than those of others. Sometimes, sellers are able to offer a discount on the vegetables if it is bought in bulk to attract loyalty.

Competition occurs at the level of products by claiming their products as more fresh as the sellers do not have much differential advantage in products apparently though such a perception is created. Individual sellers create differentiation by their behaviour. In scenarios like a bazaar, competition needs to enable both internal and external politics. Sellers are alert to the customer demands, and they are alert to the happenings outside the world of their bazaar.

Cooperation and competition are frequent behaviours in formal markets. In informal markets, in addition to cooperation and competition, contestation is also visible in the form of spatial politics. Contestation provides the third dimension to the internal politics of everyday functioning of bazaar. The internal politics of bazaar becomes a finely balanced field of cooperation, competition and contestation. All three work together and simultaneously to ensure that the bazaar survives. Contestation facilitates survival by providing a necessary outlet for dissent that could otherwise threaten the very existence of the bazaar. Sellers are rejuvenated or face disillusionment based on the manner in which the balance between competition, cooperation

and contestation is experienced. Competition, cooperation, lower degree of contestation and spatial politics promote harmony, while a higher degree of contestation threatens this veil of harmony.

Samiti acts as the agents of informal markets to deal with internal and external politics periodically while managing the functioning by balancing diverse forces in the bazaar. Whereas *Samiti* acts as representative in engaging in external politics, with regards to internal politics, Samiti acts as a mediator between conflicts, an instigator of conflict as also a means of conflict resolution. These various roles work towards maintaining the functioning of the bazaar for collective well-being. It has been observed that the *Samiti* never dismisses or contests the complaints of spatial injustice lest it lead to a very high degree of contestation. However, the *Samiti* also rarely if ever acts on the complaints of such injustice. Infrequently, it takes palliative measures such as cleaning and levelling area C so that it becomes more presentable to buyers. In this manner, by permitting and facilitating contestation in the market place, albeit in lower degrees, in addition to both cooperation and competition within the market place, Samiti exerts a crucial stabilising influence on the bazaar ensuring its survival over the longer term. Varying trust in the bazaar has a long-term impact and affects the politics inside and outside the bazaar, with *Samiti* as the interface. This function of the Samiti is highly critical since a high degree of contestation and spatial politics shakes the very foundation of trust that is enabling the bazaar to function. In pointing to this role of Samiti in the sustenance of the bazaar, we do not intend to underplay its contribution to the maintenance of the status quo of the social hierarchies of sellers. Rather we see this as a broadening of our understanding of political society (Chatterjee 2004) and its place in marketing literature.

8.8 Conclusion

Bazaar is a case of a political society where the politics of a democratically elected Bazaar *Samiti*, and cooperation, competition and contestation in the context of the *Samiti* ensure that the external and internal environment of the bazaar ecosystem remain conducive for the survival of the sellers of bazaar and the functioning of this informal market place. Through this study, we contribute to marketing literature by elaborating the process of governance and oversight within an informal marketplace. We underscore the role of the *Samiti* as an elected representative body that fulfils various governance and administrative functions necessary for the survival of the bazaar. We expand extant understanding of the role of *Samitis* in informal marketplace literature. In addition to providing further support to service provision functions such as hygiene and security and interface with State, we make a novel contribution by describing the political role of *Samiti* in the internal politics of the bazaar. We also elaborate on the manner in which internal politics impacts the sustenance of the bazaar.

Through this chapter we also deepen Chatterjee's notion of political society. As he explains, civil society is a society which is within enclaves of civic freedom and rational law. Civil society has property rights, and the society of people in their gated communities around the bazaar can be identified as this. Chatterjee (2004) describes civil society as the space of the rights of bourgeois. He contrasts political society with civil society and explains political society as being organised in associations, and transgressing the rigid lines of legality while struggling to live and work. Political societies are the realities of colonised locations. The members of Ashok Avenue bazaar too form a political society by coalescing together to transform from insignificant subsistence individual sellers operating on an encroached land to a politically significant society with voting power of a good six hundred people including their families. This political society of the bazaar regularly interacts with civil society. Bazar *Samiti*, which represents the seller community, plays the role of political society here in interactions with both civil society and the state. The political society in the debate forwarded by Partha Chatterjee appears to be relatively homogenous, or a society that is usually fractured along caste, gender and other identity based fault-lines that is appropriable by party politics. Identity politics seem to be the usual basis for regrouping within such a political society. Critics of political society have underscored the importance of class as the solidary mechanism in contrast to other identities. In this chapter, we are able go outside of this debate and look at political society from the perspective of space and spatial politics within an allegedly homogenous demographic.

From our study, it appears that Bazaar *Samiti* holds the driving seat of this politically charged environment. *Samiti* is the leading player in politics because of its position of representation. It is the epicentre of political actions of the bazaar and the axis around which the balancing role occurs. Sellers in the bazaar as a whole form a singular political society from an external point of view and behave as such in their dealings with the external world. In a sense, our Ashok Avenue bazaar is homogenous demographically, thereby constraining the possibility of identity politics. Yet as our study shows, this homogeneity is ruptured due to spatial politics inside the bazaar. In their mutual interactions, they reveal a high degree of heterogeneity in their interests and concerns, with regards to internal politics. Many of these differences seem to be stemming from the impact of the *Samiti* on their business and commercial prospects and levels of earning. In the Ashoka Avenue bazar these commercial and earning prospects are inseparably tied in to location and hence spatial politics becomes the basis of heterogeneity within the political society. Spatial contestations serve to disrupt the veil of harmony and homogeneity. This spatial politics is managed and governed within the political society, by *Samiti* members who take the feedback of the bazaar sellers on issues weekly and mediate between the governing (*Samiti*) and those who are governed.

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Chapter 9
Straddling Business, Jointness and Nuclearisation: A Decolonial Reading of Managing Through Indigenous Institution(s)

Jitesh Mohnot and Sankalp Pratap

Abstract Joint-family system has been a key institution within vernacular form of capitalism in India since pre-colonial times, allowing them continued leverage in commerce. However, the institution of joint family in post-colonial India has gradually changed over time towards nuclearization. This chapter shows how a dwindling institution of extended joint family, which was the very foundation of a prosperous indigenous capitalist class of Marwaris in India, since pre-colonial times, is being retained in spirit (if not in form) despite nuclearization. Exploring the co-constitutive nature of joint-family system and Marwari commerce, we decode decoloniality by explicating practices and praxis spread across multiple phases of familial separation marked by mechanims of tensions, preparations, and slowness towards retaining the spirit of jointness. Furthermore, we highlight the constitutive role of the institution of family in the circulation of capital in bazaars that play out in the trajectory of decolonial re-existence of Marwaris. Familial jointness makes the processes of collateralization, securitization and underwriting reduntant which are beholden of western version of capitalism. We open the black-box of what constitutes 'managing' in the context of a business community thinking on the border, with modern/colonial practices of managing a business on one side and long-held culturally rooted practices on the other.

Keywords Marwari · Joint family · Nuclearization · Decoloniality · Indigenous business community · Mignolo

9.1 Introduction

Joint-family system was a key institution within vernacular forms of capitalism in India during colonial times (Birla 2009). However, family institution in India

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has gradually changed over time in form as well as spirit towards nuclearization which is also an instance of dismantling of localized social institutions in post-colonial societies through modern colonial apparatus that exercises its domination, not through military power, but through secular hierarchies that are inconsistent with traditional order (Nandy 1983). Given this, we ask, how indigenous *manage* their family dynamics given the perpetual colonial onslaught across domains, including commerce? Mignolo maintains that "decoloniality [is] born in the unveiling of coloniality" (Mignolo and Walsh 2018, p. 6), this chapter draws from this insight to show how the dwindling institution of an extended joint family that has been at the very foundation of a prosperous indigenous capitalist class and its commerce, is being retained in spirit (if not in form). Amid colonial (and neo-colonial) inheritance of nuclearizing forces, *Marwaris*, an ethnic business community in India, maintain elements of familial jointness. This institution has been shaping an alternate way of practicing commerce since pre-colonial times.

Exploring the co-constitutive nature of joint-family system and Marwari commerce, we decode decoloniality in practices and praxis in retaining traditional institutions that transcended multiple spheres of daily life. We show that between the binaries of pure jointness and state of nuclearization, there are various phases marked by tensions, preparations, and slowness. In doing so, we recover an account of decolonial living and struggling through our ethnographic work in managing *with* (and not against) the post-colonial disruptions in family and commerce, particularly for indigenous business communities. Our fieldwork aimed at studying culture of indigenous capitalists in terms of reading and interpreting the structural and functional meanings of living and organizing. A year-long ethnographic study of Marwaris revealed that their notion of family and commerce in terms of its system of meanings is not identical to that of general understanding of some other communities within India. Scholarly and popular views suggest that as soon as the house and kitchen get separated between married brothers, nuclearization occurs in India, both in configurational form and in spirit (Kakar and Kakar 2009). However, we found that while the kitchen and other areas get separated within the same house between married brothers, elements of jointness are retained and even performed within the Marwari community. It was observed that in social circles, Marwaris continue to call themselves a 'joint family' even after apparent nuclearization in configurational terms.

In the next section, we provide a brief overview of the Marwari business community. Then, we briefly discuss the methodology deployed towards exploring Marwaris' system of meanings. Following this, we provide an overview of changing configuration of Indian families from being joint earlier to nuclearization in general and within Marwaris in particular. The findings section reveals the gradual changes in familial configurations within a business family that retain a spirit of jointness despite nuclearization. Then we discuss the implications of the study and what it means for decolonial struggles and praxis.

9.2 Marwari Business Community: An Overview

The link between individual and community has always been a focal area of study across disciplines exploring interactions among people with shared history, geography, and identity (e.g., Leung et al. 2014). Two characteristics make any social grouping a community. First is a network of affect-loaded mutually reinforcing relationships among the group with a shared history and identity. The other is the high level of commitment to the shared values and norms (Etzioni 1995). In India, society has also been stratified on multiple bases historically, dominant among them being the caste system based on inherited status and endogamy, divided into a hierarchy of four classes with distinct roles and occupations. At the upper level were Brahmins (teachers) and Kshatriyas (warriors), followed by Vaishyas (traders) and then Shudras (mainly laborers), who faced enormous discrimination. Business-class of Vaishyas comprised multiple communities hailing from distant geographies and various religions. Marwaris were one such trading community in addition to diverse business communities such as Gujaratis, Chettiars, Parsis, Khojas, and Sindhis in India (Ray 1995). While trading or business classes were not considered politically prominent in the pre-colonial period, their political salience grew during the modern period as industrialization grew in India during British rule in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Roy 1999).

Academic literature on business communities has been a subject of study for anthropologists and business historians who have focused on exploring the idea of non-western capitalism and its long-run survival with its indigenous institutions and practices despite periods of foreign rule. Rudner (1994) undertook ethnography in Tamil Nadu, a province in India, to understand the interdependence between commercial, religious, and social organization of Nattukottai Chettiars, a merchant banking community. He argued against the monolithic characterizations of caste systems in the scholarly narratives of colonial encounters. He found that caste and commerce were intricately linked through informal alliances, institutions, and practices. Here too, the formation and distribution of capital for rational business conduct were equally efficient like the West, where such issues were considered independent of one's social affiliation. Timberg, a business historian, studied the Marwari business community for his dissertation at Harvard University (1978). He focused on the transition of community members' from being traders to their emergence as owners of large firms dominating critical industries in India.

Timberg (1978, 2014) studied the community's disposition to migrate and settle in various parts of India and the role family values played in their business success outside their home regions. Furthermore, multiple scholars such as Ray (1995), Roy (1999) and Birla (2009) studied extensively the period of colonization of India and how Marwaris continued to stay relevant despite colonial encounters that destroyed much of the domestic trade and commerce. Often explanations of Marwaris' success oversimplify their adherence to tradition and resistance to western practices of commercial governance. However, as we will show Marwaris have been living

the colonial difference negotiating between the binaries of tradition and modernity, similar to the idea of border thinking that Mignolo (2000) conceptualized to explain the struggles of the locals. They have been *thinking and doing* praxistically in the borderlands, caught between the doubleness of decolonizing-recolonizing (Jammulamadaka et al. 2021).

Marwaris have some unique features not beholden to western society and their idea of capitalism with universalizing tendencies (Parson 2012). While commerce is constantly prescribed to be kept at arm's length, at a distance from social and other spheres in the West, multiple spheres, in the case of Marwaris, were seamlessly integrated (Mohnot et al. 2021). Sociologists such as Harvey Cox, based on intensifying modernity (with its global designs), argued that with increasing urbanization and secularization of work, three patterns would emerge—bureaucratization of work, the emancipation of work from religious character and separation of the place of work from residence (Cox 1965, p. 167). While the modern phenomenon of urbanization has intensified in India, implications suggested by Cox did not appear to be realized in the context of Marwari community. Martin (2012), for instance, studying the emergence of '*Hundi*'—an indigenous instrument of credit developed by Marwaris, and its later integration with legal statutes under colonial rule, found that its survival over time and space could not have been possible if it existed in an isolated vacuum of merely commercial concerns divorced from social dynamics. Hundi embodied not only economic but also cultural and moral sanctions of the community, as reputation (called *sakh* or *peth* locally)—a kind of non-tangible form of capital—it mattered while carrying out trade through Hundi.

Family configuration in the case of Marwaris is joint in structure. The prominent marker of a joint family is a *common* and *shared kitchen.* Domestic spheres, organized in joint configuration, not only include parents, son(s), their spouses, spinster(s) and grandchildren but also extended to widows, unmarried aunts and uncles, children of daughter(s). Kakar and Kakar (2009) conceptualize this as an extended joint family. Nuclearization begins when the kitchen separates, yet family members would still co-locate in the same dwelling, dividing it among themselves. However, in the West, (both epistemic and geographic), nuclearization is considered to occur immediately after the next generation gets married and starts living separately in another dwelling at a distance independently. In India, separation is not co-initiated with the marriage of the next generation. While daughters traditionally leave their parent's house and start living with their husband's family, married son(s) continue to live with the parents, grandparents, uncles, widowed aunts. Until the nineteenth century, 20–40 members co-living in a dwelling with a single kitchen was common. Food would get cooked for all members in a shared kitchen collectively by all women, generally homemakers of the household. However, through the twentieth century, family size gradually kept shrinking as modernity/coloniality started intensifying in India. This chapter explores this change in family configuration and its connectedness with commerce for Marwari business community. The methodology deployed in exploring changes that stand at the interface of family and commerce are discussed in the next section.

9.3 Methodology

Our primary purpose as part of the first author's dissertation of studying the Marwari business community was motivated from our disciplinary home of strategic management. We intended to explore the puzzle of the community's long-standing business success despite remaining alien to business schools' mainstream/colonial frameworks, tools, and curriculum. However, our methodology afforded us a diverse set of insights along multiple themes, one of which is discussed in this chapter. Extant studies on Marwaris point to the fact that the community is secretive about its trade practices to cultural outsiders. Business historians such as Timberg (2014) attribute this to the state's institutional apparatus and non-entrepreneurial classes stereotyping this community by attributing their long-standing business success to ability to exploit market imperfections, and viewing in-group cohesion, as cartelization. This type of attribution has led to a kind of resentment towards this community by society at large. Therefore, merely interviewing community members could not have led to insights into the community.

Furthermore, our gaze into interfaces of family-commerce, religion-commerce and so on demands nuanced insights into their system of meanings which are different from the popular understanding of cultural outsiders colored by coloniality. Therefore, we chose ethnography that afforded the first author to go native in a textile town—*Liba* (pseudonym)—situated in the Marwar region of India for more than a year, allowing participant observations leading to insights from insiders' point of view. By parleying with gatekeepers, the first author actively accessed the community by working as *Munim* (accountant cum supervisor) in a five-decade-old business house owned by a prominent business family. The code of ethics laid out by the Indian Anthropological Association was followed, and all participants were informed of our research agenda. Data was recorded in the form of field notes in addition to ethnographic interviews, capturing photographs, videos, and collecting documents and artifacts. We accessed various sites, transcending commercial spheres to include social, familial and religious ones.

9.4 Nuclearization as Coloniality in Domestic Spheres

Decolonization in the form of independence from the British rule didn't result in reversal to pre-colonial living. As Mignolo (2000) points out, coloniality presents itself in the form of a 'matrix of power' that does not leave out any domain and works to negate the 'other' and its claims of knowledge/practices/praxis. The familial environment was no exception. With the rise in urbanization at the turn of the twentieth century, as the Indian state alluded to neo-liberal ideas, a new class swelled across caste groups in Indian cities that aspired to 'status' that had the elements of Anglo-Saxon lifestyle (Wessel 2004). Sociologists called them 'Urban Middle-class' whose members, according to Andre Beteille, accorded each other 'status,' a function of

class distinction rather than caste (1996). However, the adoption of an epistemic west's lifestyle came at a cost for a developing nation, too high to support large-sized extended joint families. Therefore, familial break-ups marked by tensions between family members, disputes over property and lawsuits became commonplace in India.

Critiques of the Indian middle class point out the degradation of values that generations have lived with, among the members of this new class (Bidwai 1984; Kothari 1991; Varma 1998). Consumption patterns changed such that they started to mediate the relationship of the middle class to Indian values and identity (Wessel 2004). However, such consumption patterns did not change in isolation. Post-independence changes in family laws, taxation, and corporate codes influenced middle-class living (Mahajan 1998; Majumdar 2009). For instance, the state's institutional apparatus has continuously undertaken many changes pertaining to the organizational form of 'Hindu undivided family'—the HUF (Das Gupta and Gupta 2017), making it unattractive, resulting in most family businesses shifting to sole proprietorship, fueling nuclearization. Within this changing milieu, the Marwari business community spread across major cities in India faced a double whammy. One set of challenges came externally from increased competition from others as liberalization intensified, resulting in reduced barriers to trade and access to capital, eroding a competitive advantage of Marwaris with intra-community sources of capital based on kinship-based ties. Another set of challenges, relatively more demanding, were faced internally at the community level. Since Marwaris were comparatively more familiar with the notions of capital and were skilled at redeploying it towards growth over generations, not indulging in excesses materially (Tripathi and Jumani 2013), neo-liberal ideas coupled with changing notions of '*status*' made them more vulnerable than others.

Birla (2008), in her study of imposition of legal statutes and the entire legal infrastructure during British rule in the 1880s to 1930s, showed how Marwaris resisted and mediated between British notions and vernacular forms of capitalist structures to preserve their long-evolved ways and conditions of doing business. For instance, the idea of family (joint and extended) and its centrality to firms' incorporation and sustenance was alien to British minds. Through sustained efforts, the British had to recognize the private spaces of family, deity and charity as an integral part of commercial spaces of capital, which have otherwise been considered public and separate from private ones in the epistemic West. In this context, Mohnot and Pratap (forthcoming) show how Marwari homemakers' gendered work and bodily toil within domestic spaces play a crucial role in preserving and inter-generationally transfering long-standing vernacular capitalist systems and processes. Furthermore, we observe that household practices of homemakers are in congruence with capitalist practices in commercial spaces, which are a bastion of males/husbands. So, in current times, when familial institutions are undergoing disruptions, preserving indigenously evolved vernacular systems and processes of fused and integrated private/personal and public/commercial spaces becomes crucial for Marwari business community. In the subsequent section, we show how Marwaris have preserved jointness in family, albeit in spirit, if not in configurational terms (Table 9.1). In doing so, we show how 'family' has come to evolve as a space of decolonial re-existence.

Table 9.1 Different forms of familial configuration within Marwari business community

Phase	Form of familial configuration
1	Family members in co-residence with common kitchen
2	Family members in co-residence with *separate* kitchen, but living in the same house
3	Family members living in separate houses/land, next to each other
4	Family members living in separate houses, situated at a distance in different localities
5	Relatives (members of extended family), living separately

9.5 Findings: Gradual Nuclearization and Retaining Jointness: Family as the Space of Decolonial Resistance

In a Marwari joint family, adult male members had clear demarcated roles at the business-place. However, the basis of division of work varied. Some divided work on functional lines such as father taking care of finance and accounting, one son handling sales and cash collection from downstream markets, and the other tackling day-to-day operations at the workshop. Sometimes work was divided by allocating downstream markets among brothers on a geographical basis. Once the business expanded, the division of labor was generally based on product lines. However, we found that other factors beyond managerial ones influenced the division of work within the business house. These factors were driven by changing configuration in familial space wherein jointness within the household came under challenge in terms of co-location.
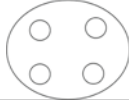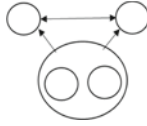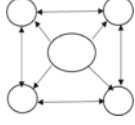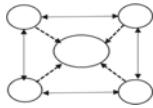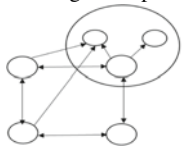
Given this, in the subsequent sub-sections, we examine how Marwaris negotiate the challenges posed by changes influenced through the epistemic West. The challenge for Marwaris is to retain their time-tested institutions, both in their familial and commercial spaces. Furthermore, in parallel to managing the modern/colonial onslaught, we also show how changing degree and nature of complex jointness relates to commerce in terms of organizational forms and processes, which in the Anglo-Saxon world are not interrelated. We first show various phases of familial separation over time and changing organizational form in parallel (Table 9.2). A complex interplay between familial and commercial spaces across phases takes on multiple trajectories (Rows 3a or 3b in Table 9.2). Next, we delve into what retention of the spirit of jointness translates into in commerce and how it substitutes for or enables various organizing mechanisms in commerce.

9.5.1 Trajectory of the Changing Familial and Commercial Configurations and Complex Interplay Between Them

9.5.1.1 Phase 1: Undivided in Family, Unitary in Business

In Liba, there were few families where married sons continued to live as a joint family, like a classical Indian family's configuration, which was in prominence until

Table 9.2 Various phases of nuclearization in family and simultaneous changes in organizational forms

Phase	Configuration	Nature of business	Changing dynamics of jointness	Degree of jointness (in spirit)
1	Family members in co-residence with common kitchen	Undivided	Classical form of jointness	Unitary (strong)
2.1	Family members in co-residence with *separate* kitchens, but living in the same house, in allocated areas	Continues to be joint	Allocative	Quasi-federal with authoritative patriarch
2.2	Status quo	Gradually divide businesses among sons, but all reporting to the family head	Participative	Quasi-federal
3a	Family members living in separate houses/land, next to each other	Each brother responsible for a unit	Neighbourly—seprate title/individual property rightsss	Quasi-federal, with consultative role of patriarch
3b	Family members living in separate houses, situated at a distance from each other	Spin-off	Nuclearization	Federal—Close-knit alliances with co-funded rituals and exchange of capital

the mid-nineteenth century. Everything in the house was shared. One prominent marker of whether a family was indeed a joint family could be ascertained through the presence of a shared kitchen. In the old city area of Liba, traditional houses were of specific design not similar to the western structures that were labeled in the form of BHKs (that is, number of bedrooms). In Liba, at the house entrance was a *basali*, an enclosed area where hosts and guests would take out their footwear (Fig. 9.1). The bathroom and toilet were generally attached to *basali* on one side. On another side

Fig. 9.1 Layout of the house (ground floor)
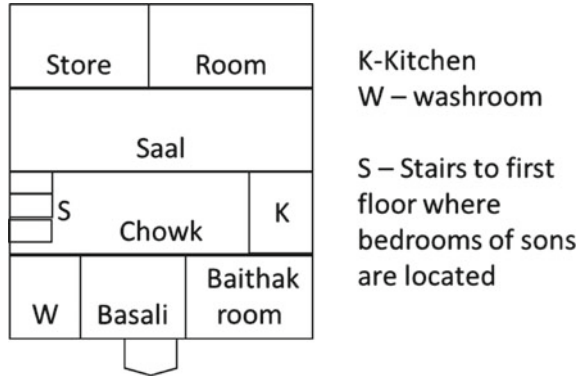
was a room that hosted guests, akin to the purpose drawing rooms serve. However, a typical characteristic of Marwaris of hosting guests was that common guests would be hosted in the room near *basali*. If there were guests particular to one of the sons', say from his in-laws' side or friends of his spouse, they were taken to their respective bedroom, thus providing personal space and privacy.

Next to *basali*, a *chowk* was open to the sky, located almost in the middle of the house. It had a designated area for drinking water pots and the stairs to access the first floor. Going deeper, *chowk* would pave the way for another area called *Saal*, the busiest in the house where members would sit for everyday activities such as having food together. The kitchen and store were located next to the *saal*. In addition, the ground floor would have one bedroom, generally occupied by the senior generation. The first floor had multiple bedrooms for sons, but not all had an attached bathroom. Married sons were allotted bedrooms with an attached bathroom. Therefore, we find that most of the areas within the house were shared, and the organization of the house and its layout reflected the jointness of the family (row 1 in Table 9.2).

In a joint family, the second generation of a newly married son(s) would not be expected to contribute to the running of the household financially. Senior generation (aged fifties and above) would buy all the groceries, pay utility bills etc. Even if the newly married son(s) were managing a business unit independently and making profits, they weren't expected to contribute, as it would be financially demanding on them.

> Khana-kharcho toh ki hai koni… haal toh bausa heng kharcho uthave … (trans: he does not have regular household expenses including food, they are taken care of by his father)
>
> —A broker narrating about a new downstream wholesaler

Only personal expenses such as apparel for themselves, spouse, and kids were charged upon such son(s). So, the pressure to earning enough out of a new venture for facilitating an independent existence is primarily reduced, providing them many years to build their new venture and redeploy profits back into the business.

9.5.1.2 Phase 2.1: Separated Kitchen, but Unitary in Business

Families grew as more sons got married and children were born. Over time, *tensions* emerged within the household, especially between women, around issues of division of tasks, access to material things such as ornaments, etc. Such tensions were common to textile business houses in Liba that had two or more sons with natural rights of inheritance.

> *Jatte do bartan hove vate aawaaz toh hove laa izz…* (trans: it is natural to hear noises when utensils are kept near each other—meaning—tensions are bound to emerge among homemakers within the household).

There was a sense of realization that tensions within the household boundaries must be managed and controlled. Therefore, in Marwari families, we found that separation was partially undertaken by separating married sons in chronological order. After a few years of marriage of the youngest son, the separation would start by constructing or converting a small area within the house (generally 50–70 square feet on the first floor) into a second kitchen for the eldest son's family to use. However, the separated son's family continued to use the same bedroom and bathroom allotted while all other sections within the house continued to be shared. In some cases, the bathroom also continued to be shared even after separation. So, in a way, jointness was still retained but not as unitary as earlier, but of quasi-federal nature with senior generation continuing to be authoritative (row 2.1 in Table 9.2).

> *Inne vaaste toh bausa ne poochno padi…* (trans: I must ask my father for this…) a businessman conveying to his agent on the issue of selling their products in a new bazaar

Moreover, there were counterfactuals to this common trend wherein the younger ones separated their kitchen and not the eldest son, but this was rare depending upon the equation between first-generation homemakers and second-generation ones. In sum, we observe that the separation was only partial, primarily restricted to the kitchen (to begin with) and not the way other families separated. However, for many years after the separation of kitchen at home, business-place continues to be joint. There was no separation of business entities among sons, and they continued to be a unitary entity, with the family head continuing to call shots.

9.5.1.3 Phase 2.2: Carving Out New Businesses, yet Status Quo Within the Household

Gradually, as various product lines matured and sons gained enough grasp over them, separate businesses were carved out either based on product or geographic scope. They were serially allocated to family members who would be expected to manage the respective venture daily in operational terms. However, the autonomy of the member assigned a separate venture was limited to operational commercial decisions. The family continued to be co-located in the same house with allotted spaces, thus maintaining the status quo (row 2.2 in Table 9.2). All financial decisions,

both personal and commercial, continued to be taken by the family-head, allocating resources wherever needed. Diversifying into new product categories or entering new geographies led by the younger generation was ordinary but was undertaken under the stewardship of the family head, who provided the necessary resources. Entire surplus earned from different businesses was appropriated into the family's corpus administered by the family-head(s).

9.5.1.4 Phase 3: Quasi-Jointness with Independent House and Business

The business units allotted earlier, for sons to manage it independently on an operational basis, would scale up to achieve financial independence. Financial independence in Marwari's system of meanings had nothing to do with running a business solely through one's capital. In Marwaris' imagination, capital was a collective endeavour as it was arranged through many complex arrangements leveraging one's family reputation and more extensive kinship networks. Moreover, this was crucial for textile trading, where current liabilities were the primary source of funding. This was impossible to access without community backup. Financial independence, therefore, meant the ability to generate profits over and above required for bootstrapping the business. The son could then use this excess to meet his family's expenses without depending upon the senior generation. Reaching this stage took years, but this was a necessary condition to become financially independent in Marwaris' system of meanings. Once this stage was reached, only then son(s) would start thinking of living in a separate house altogether without co-locating and sharing common spaces with the other brother(s)' family.

> Abe dhando theek chale hai, karcho kahto khud kaad sake… Bausa makaan bana ne de diyo hai (trans: now the business is doing well enough to meet personal expenses… his father has got him a new house)
>
> —An agent informing his client about the state of the business of a textile trader in Liba

Building a new house entailed huge investments. Generally, the senior generation would use the family's wealth to meet this critical milestone, thus saving a lot of money for the subsequent generation to deploy for business expansion. Since new houses required vast sums of money, it was not attempted simultaneously for all sons but pursued serially as their respective ventures matured. Therefore, depending upon number of sons, it took many years to separate them by allocating special property rights to each. This afforded lot of time, and therefore separation was not an abrupt event. There were two variations (row 3a and 3b in Table 9.2) in how new houses were built. One was based on building homes next to each other (3a). The other was based on acquiring multiple plots in different localities (3b) and allocating them among sons with individual property rights. However, the spirit of jointness was retained within the family as well as business in both versions. In business, when a son's venture is scaled up to the extent that it can be managed independently, the patriarch's role turned from being participative to consultative, providing guidance only on critical issues of strategic nature.

Even after apparent separation in terms of living in separate houses, the spirit of jointness was on display. All rituals were performed at one place where the patriarch lived, and no celebration, such as birthdays, was possible without everyone being there.

> *I am not celebrating my birthday this year. Father-in-law of my chacha* [younger brother of father] *died a couple of days back.* (a teen whose uncle lived separately and were in a different business informing his friends)

Moreover, jointness was not just an internal matter but a more extensive social aspect, and therefore family unity was also demonstrated within the wider kinship networks and community.

> Marren atte ek hi shaadi ro card deijo, teen-teen daioni jarrorat koni hai, Mein ek izz haan… [translation: Please give only one common invitation card to marriage in your family, no need to give three separate cards, we are a still joint…[1]]
>
>   (One of the three married brothers who have separated their businesses and lives in their own houses, conveying to a relative that they are still joint)

9.5.2 Effect of Retaining Jointness

9.5.2.1   Jointness also Means Higher Risk-Taking and Bootstrapping, While Preventing Myopia

Maintaining jointness had its benefits beyond social spheres. When the younger generation launched a new business, they were not expected to earn profits to meet living expenses. This arrangement afforded them to have a long-term focus and not to be short-sighted.

> *Sethji ro kayo ro hai ki tu sirf dhanda maate dhyan de… 'mein baitho hoon jitte profit paacho dhandha mein iz daalno, unne aage badha, bado kar' (trans: my father had told me to focus on business… he keeps saying – 'as long as I am there, keep plowing back profits into the firm to take it forward and make it bigger)*
>
>   —A businessman in his late twenties, who had started a new business a couple of years ago reflecting on his father's beliefs

The focus was on establishing reputation overtime in the bazaar, honoring all stakeholders even if it came at the cost of the profit margins. It also allowed experimenting and trying out multiple alternatives in connection to their business model. Son(s), starting a new business, were expected to put back profits into the firms and not take it out to meet expenses in building houses or meeting maintenance costs as the family's patriarch took them to care.

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[1] In popular culture, there has been a Bollywood movie directed by Suraj Barjatya, *Hum Saath Saath Hai* (trans: we are together) that looks at the dynamics of a Marwari business family splitting and then coming back together. It also draws parallel to mythical epic Ramayana wherein the royal family had split, albeit for different reasons.

9.5.2.2 Jointness also Means Deploys Kinship and Collective Capital for Business Expansion

While sons had separated, there was still a seamless flow of capital between them. Loans and advances to each other were widespread with no formal terms and conditions. This form of capital was a luxury as there were no stringent payback periods or regularity of interest payments. Moreover, beyond brothers, raising capital or raw material on credit from the community was more accessible if one maintained good relations with the community.

> *Maangilal ji ro izz toh poto hai… ki dikkat koni hai, parivar chokho hai, peth hai, aaj kiita hi saal hu bazzar mein baitha hai…* [trans: he is the grandson of Mangilal ji…(a prominent businessman of his time in Liba)… therefore there is no problem (in advancing loan) as the family is operating for a very long time in the bazaar and have good credibility]
>
> —An agent informing his client about a businessman and his family to whom the working capital loan is to be advanced on a rolling basis

Credibility in the bazaar depended on the family's reputation, of grandfather, father, uncles, brothers and so on, which continued to play a crucial role long after a businessman had separated from the family. Even if the person after separation operated in a different industry, family reputation mattered as the inter-industry flow of money was a common phenomenon in Liba.

9.5.2.3 Jointness also Means Collateral and Insurance

Capital flow in the bazaar did involve material collateral against loans such as goods in case of working capital or valuables such as gold in medium to long term loans. Still, they were not commensurate with the risks involved, given that most of them were informal contracts.

> *Dhandho upar neeche bhi hoyi toh payo doobe laa koni…vina bausa ro back up hai, bhai re kan ganai paya hai, set hai ne haal bhaya mein sump hai. (trans: even if the business is volatile, the default will not happen because of his father's back up as well as his brother being rich, settled and in good terms mutually)*
>
> —Loan provider justifying the safety by evoking family links of the borrower

So, the spirit of jointness within the family (locally called *sump*) acted as a collateral, albeit intangible, which could be relied upon in case of a family member's inability to pay in the future. Many times, brothers and uncles would come forward and bail out one of the family members if someone was facing problems.

> *Agent: Aadmi sahi hai, chal-chalan sahi hai, par abe agar dhandho nahi chale, mandi aayigi toh voh layi kai kare…tohi paya toh haingara chukaya izz hai (trans: he is a credible person and does not have any wrong habits* [alcohol, smoking] *but he is helpless given the slowdown in his industry…even then he has cleared all his dues*
>
> *Businessman: bhai chukaya hai paya toh…kale family backup nahi hove ni toh paya dubna pakka ha (trans: his brother has paid the dues…imagine if there was no family backup, then default was assured)*

Additionally, jointness acted as an insurance against business risk, which could emerge naturally in any venture due to volatility and uncertainty in any industry. Loan providers could rely on the extended family of the borrower for settlement in times of downturn.

9.6   Discussion

The institution of jointness is indigenous. It signifies a way of life, a certain family ethic, a kind of patriarchy and social structure. In the Western sense, it encompasses the private, personal sphere and the sphere of culture and society, in contrast commerce is a distinct autonomous public sphere. Our study of *Liba* shows that despite the colonial onslaught and an adverse legal institutional set up, the *Marwari* community has held on its cultural sense of a joint family in reconstituted ways adapting to the changing legal institutional framework. This sense of living continues to honour the family ethic and patriarchical social structure. It is their way of resisting the colonial encounter. For the Marwari family, as is seen from the data, their family sphere is not distinct from the commercial sphere. The flows and controls are at once family and also commerce. It is one whole where family and commerce combine to become one. We recognize this wholeness, but also offer an interpretation of this wholeness for commerce and business strategy here.

One of the significant challenges in new venture creation is overcoming the liabilities of smallness, given the resource-constrained environment. We observe that separation starts gradually in the physical familial living space first, and then eventually separation of commercial activities follow (Fig. 9.2). However, the gradual separation is controlled by ensuring that tensions do not escalate to the point that leads to abrupt fracture of family relationships. Since the separation process is gradual, it is beneficial for the entrepreneur, liberating him from the pressures of earning quick money through shortcuts that one could be tempted to deploy to tackle the heat of the competitive market and then eventually losing out in the medium and long run. The institution of jointness ensures that time, money and reputation are all mutually fungible and retention of the spirit of jointness despite nuclearization allows them to overcome multiple constraints.

Personal space in the geographic and epistemic West differs from personal freedom for Marwari married males. In the epistemic West's imagination, nuclearization is about dissociation or decoupling. However, independent existence means different things in the vernacular form of capitalism, both in familial and commercial terms. While our findings suggest that private space for an entrepreneur is narrower given the limited autonomy, it should also be viewed in a temporal sense as familial boundedness allows for a longer time to iterate and experiment in commerce so that the venture evolves into an independent unit, sustainable enough for the family to separate in the long run.

Given the book's theme—managing the post-colony—we open-up the black-box of what constitutes 'managing' in the context of a business community thinking on
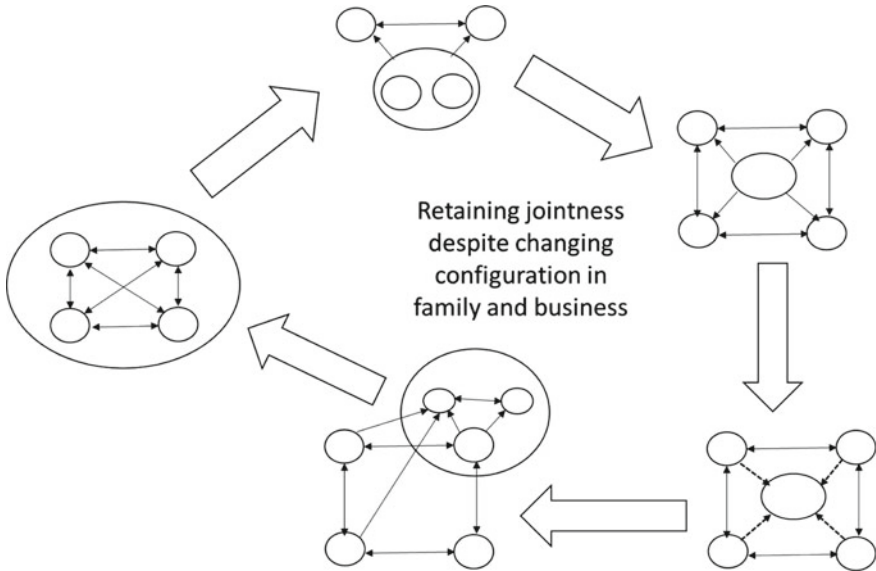
Fig. 9.2 Changing familial and business configurations

the border, with modern/colonial ways of managing a business on one side and long-held and culturally-rooted ways on the other. For centuries, the former unveils itself as coloniality to Marwaris through foreign rule earlier and then neo-colonialism post-independence. Taking a decolonial turn, we show praxis -based naturalized resistance to colonial onslaught towards preserving long-held institutions and their pedagogies. In doing so, we highlight another instance of domestication of the West, of nuclearization in our case. In other words, it confirms the perspective that does not look at the colonized as a victim but as gladiators facing the Caesars of the epistemic West (Nandy 1983). Since decoloniality is born in the unveiling of coloniality (Mignolo and Walsh 2018), this paper unravels the gradual tinkering Marwaris have been undertaking to manage/domesticate nuclearizing forces. It prevents dissociation and decoupling, which would lead to disruption of their commerce, which is intermeshed with joint family institutions (Birla 2009). In other words, we highlight the constitutive role of family institutions in the circulation of capital in bazaars and how the trajectory of decolonial existence does not require collateral, securitization, and underwriting processes beholden of the western version of capitalism.

9.7   Implications and Conclusion

Our study reveals that the separation of brothers in the Marwari community and its praxis is not the same as the epistemic West's nuclearization. While forces that influence nuclearization have also hit postcolonial societies such as India, it has *not*
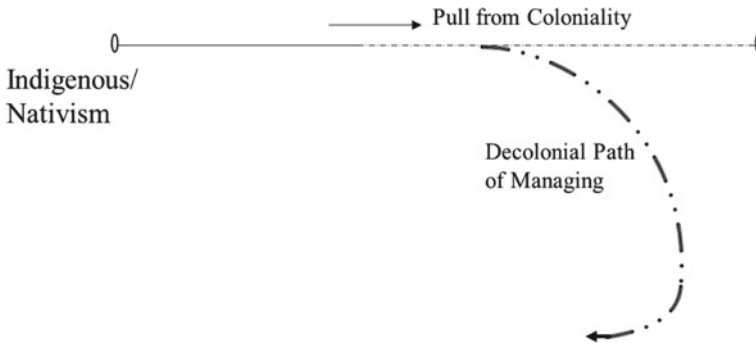
Fig. 9.3 Decolonial path of managing

resulted in an outcome that follows the trajectory of the nuclearization of the West (Fig. 9.3). Located at the intersection of colonial forces of nuclearization and the community's responses, decoloniality of managed separation occurs with contextualized nuances and paths of local histories. This chapter also has implications for cultural entrepreneurship (Peredo 2003). Entrepreneurship today stands at a crossroads between global designs and local histories. While vernacular forms of capitalism are under threat, our chapter shows how disruptions are *managed*, if not reversed, through leveraging historicized values and building one's own houses of thought, what Salazar and Walsh (2017) calls '*casa Adentro.*'

Therefore, in the face of coloniality which presents itself in the form of an all-pervasive matrix, decolonial cultural responses and praxis of retaining the spirit of the local institutions amid the disruption of the coherent structure has implications far and wide. In the current times increasingly characterized by jingoism and hypernationalism under the garb of democracy, the most considerable concomitant damage has been inflicted on our social institutions. This chapter highlights how in spirit, if not in form, the local socio-commercial institutions come to re-exist by anchoring resistance in the community's daily practices and praxis of living.

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Chapter 10
Organization: A Decolonial Interpretation

Nimruji Jammulamadaka

Abstract Decolonizing management and organization studies scholarship still operates from within modern Western capitalist frame of what an organization means. As such meanings of organizational power relations, functional efficiencies and coordination are fully assigned to, and contained within logics of capital and eurocentric frame of organization. Decolonial discourses eschew these logics of capitalist organization through contraposing communitarian organizing with modern Western capitalist organization. This impedes the possibility of decolonizing organization through plural understandings of cognate ideas such as organizational power relations, functionalist co-ordination. This chapter through an analysis of a strategic planning workshop for NGOs (non government organization) and a communitarian NGO suggests another meaning for organization as community enmeshment. In community enmeshment, organization and individual are relationally co-constituted, individual and organization are not ontologically prior and distinct from each other. In this conceptualization, organization is not only communitarian, but also leads to other meanings for cognate ideas, in that its function not only preserves human dignity and freedom but simultaneously enables autonomy, agency and survival from uncertainties and shocks.

Keywords Decolonising organization · Community enmeshment · Organization ontology · Individual-organization relationship · Communitarian organization

10.1 Introduction

Management and organization studies (MOS) continues to remain a predominantly eurocentric pursuit (Prasad 2015; ul-Haq and Westwood 2012; Ibarra-Colado 2006; Dussel and Ibarra-Colado 2006; Jammulamadaka et al. 2021). Whereas decolonising feminisms scholars such as Maria Lugones, Catherine Walsh have appropriated and

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decolonised universal white feminism to provide decolonial feminisms (Lugones 2010, 2016) and androgynes (Walsh 2016); in universal, eurocentric MOS, it remains unclear what decolonial organization means, despite calls to decolonise MOS (Jammulamadaka et al. 2021; Jammulamadaka 2016a; Jammulamadaka and Sharma 2019; Faria et al. 2010; Jack 2016; Westwood et al. 2014; Ul-Haq and Westwood 2012; Ruggunan 2016; Ibarra-Colado 2006). This chapter explores the question of decolonising organization and proposes "community enmeshment" as a form of decolonial organization. The proposed from is distinct from a eurocentric conceptualisation of organization as a bureaucratic (and postbureaucratic) entity that informs and constitutes MOS.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. First section provides a brief review of decolonising in MOS, second section looks at organization in Western coloniality/modernity and how it might differ for other ontologies. The third and fourth sections present the methodology and brief descriptions of the exemplars in the study respectively. The fifth section presents the analysis which is followed by a discussion of the findings. The chapter ends with a conclusion.

10.2   Decolonising in MOS

Western organization and MOS have been products and modalities of western coloniality/modernity (Ibarra-Colado 2006; Dussel and Ibarra-Colado 2006). Western organization as a raced, gendered bureaucracy depersonalising human interaction and enabling large scale control at a distance came to its fullest potential in the colonial context (Goody 1986; Frenkel and Shenhav 2006). This raises the question of the extent to which one can decolonise MOS without interrogating and decolonising the underlying concept of organization. The question arises because literature frequently invokes the term decolonising organization without clarifying what the term might mean, as if referring to an extant consensus about its meaning(s). But decolonising has been invoked in uneven and diverse ways in MOS literature (see Jammulamadaka et al. 2021 for an overview). This interpretative diversity can be welcomed as illustrative of a pluriversal world where many worlds could possibly co-exist (Dussel 2012; Maldonado-Torres 2008) or even as emblematic of MOS' paradigmatic heterogeneity (van Maanen 1995). Therefore, drawing attention to the ambiguity around the term decolonising organization, is not about stepping onto the slippery and risky path of *defining* decolonising for ontological economy, producing crude reductionist universalism (Wimsatt 2006) or preventing pursuit of pluriversalism. Instead, I am motivated by a conceptual problematic implicit in the appropriations and invocations of decolonising that inadvertently reinforce coloniality.

Could examining indigenous communities and adopting particular methodological and ego-logical reflexivities in data collection, as is common practice in decolonial and indigenous MOS (Love 2019) and studies which invoke methodological precepts and cautions (Love 2018, 2019; Girei 2017; Manning 2018), without engaging with what the term organization might mean in a decolonial sense, be

sufficient for decolonising? What about unpacking and developing other meanings of organisation? The questions are pressing because, unlike decolonial feminisms, there is no corresponding, conceptualisation of decolonising organization that provides a locus of enunciation (Mignolo 2000) and articulation for the colonized, even after Ibarra-Colado (2006) provocatively calls for it. Ibarra-Colado (2006, p. 474) has strongly argued that "'organization' [concept] has not been useful to explain other non-modern social experiences …, [it is] unable to acknowledge … the way the existence of human communities are organized" in the non-west. A locus of enunciation as Mignolo explains is the place from which one speaks. It is the civilizational sense, the culture's common sense which informs the thinking and speaking of the colonized.

Inspite of assertions by decolonial scholars about decolonial praxis (Mignolo and Walsh 2018) of indigenous who organize in ways that "….do not follow the logic of capital" (Lugones 2010:754), there is limited investigation of what such an organizing form might be or what its functionalist meanings might be. Notwithstanding the importance of methodological, ego-logical reflexivity in decolonising MOS, such an approach is limited in that it does not address the needs of scholars who are writing and/or engaging in decolonial praxis. It does not provide us the vocabulary needed to recognise and represent other ways of organising rooted in other ontologies. Literature pointing to indigenous philosophies/knowledges in MOS (Eg. New Zealand's Maori (Love 2019; Panoho and Stablein 2012; Mika and O'Sullivan 2014) South African *Ubantu* (Seremani and Clegg 2016; Fink et al. 2005; Jackson 2013) or South Asia's *karma* (Shenoy-Packer and Buzzanell 2013)) often tends to overlay these philosophies onto extant eurocentric meaning of organization; or position the philosophies in opposition to eurocentric logic of capital reinforcing a reductionist binarism, while avoiding an engagement with ideas of other organization. Consequently in MOS, the idea of organization and its cognates such as organizational power relations, function and co-ordination are treated in a universal sense from within the meaning given to them by modern western capitalism (Kallinikos 2003). This singular modern western sense of the organization ensures that the essential distinction between an "organization of indigenous and/or inhabited by indigenous" and "indigenous (social) organization", disappears; silencing other possible meanings of organization.

This conceptual problematic is significant because western anxieties about native third world organizing (Nuijten and Anders 2007; Nuijten 2012), permeate into and have been instrumental in organizing organizations in colonised societies. Consequently, decolonial scholarship and praxis ends up confirming and reinstating the binary of western efficient organization versus inefficient native disorganization (Jammulamadaka 2016b; Nuijten 2012). When colonised others begin to organize themselves praxistically (Mignolo and Walsh 2018) according to their worldviews and sensibilities, they are expected to align with and be absorbed into modern western bureaucratic organization, (even in its alternate sense) for operational, legal and institutional reasons ignoring local worldviews, or risk being treated as illegal, capricious, inefficient, imperfect failures which are unable to scale up or sustain, thereby reinforcing coloniality (Nuijten 2012; Jammulamadaka 2016a, b). Lacking

a locus of enunciation (Mignolo 2000) to express and voice different logics of organizing, and reduced to a position of reactive defensiveness, scholarship ascertains native organizing logics with and from an implicitly hegemonic perspective of MOS. To paraphrase Escobar (1995, p. 168), studies of decolonising organisation, hint at cultures from which organization springs, but the conception of organization itself is understood in relation to the cultures of the West. As such, scholars reject capitalist organizing practices and counterpose native organizing logics of community-based, communitarian indigenous organizations as alternatives to dehumanizing, extractive, western capitalist managerial mode of organizing; culture and community against economy and politics. For example, Lugones (2010, p. 754, emphasis added) says, "… met by different concrete people whose bodies, selves in relations [of Latin American women]….do not follow the logic of capital. ….. *They include affirmation of life over profit, communalism over individualism*". In this discursive oppositionality, narratives of organizational power relations, functionalism and co-ordination acquire a universal meaning and currency in form and content as western, imperial, colonial (and neo-colonial) practices (Cooke 2004; Dar and Cooke 2008; Dussel and Ibarra-Colado 2006; Dussel and Ibarra-colado 2006; Parker et al. 2014a, b). Communal and communitarian forms that focus on the life and living, defined in contrast to this rejected Western universal, get emptied of functional meanings of coordination, (Nuijten 2012; Panoho and Stablein 2012; Ranta 2016; Tedmanson 2012; Walsh 2010). Inadvertently the discursive move reinforces a singular universal eurocentric meaning of organization, and tends to exoticise and utopianise communitarian form.

Devoid of an understanding of organizational power relations or, function, the inter-level interactions and mechanisms of complex systems (Wimsatt 2006) where world-views, ways of living, and ideas of individual and organization all interact in complex functional-structural ways to produce immediate local organization with positive and negative effects, all get black boxed into a quasi-mythic community that anyhow produces positive outcomes. This happens despite one intuitively and philosophically sensing that "all organizing is political" (Parker et al. 2014a, b); that, meanings of power and function are inextricably related to ontology of organization and therefore likely to be different for different worldviews. Conceptually, a decolonial perspective would insist that there are diverse logics of power relations and structure-process function stemming from diverse worldviews, some of which may also encompass solidarities and communities in them. Decolonising MOS therefore needs to recognize and recover diverse meanings of power relations and structure-process function rather than just eschewing them because, such rejection would otherwise imply implicitly accepting a single universal meaning, an acceptance that is inconsistent with the ethico-political premise of decolonizing and striving for pluriversal worlds. The next section examines the idea of organization in modern western capitalism and its logics of power and structure-process functionality.

10.3 Organization in Western Coloniality/Modernity and Other Worlds

10.3.1 Organization in Western Coloniality/Modernity

Availability of organizations "reflects societal conditions at a particular historical conjuncture" (Aldrich 1999, p. 75). The idea of organization that pervades various bureaucratic forms in MOS is derived from western modernity's values and worldview, it is founded upon drawing "boundaries of the private and public world, work from leisure, family and community" (Kallinikos 2004, p. 15). "… [S]egmentation of life into separate and relatively independent spheres is an essential requirement for the forms of human involvement upon which the bureaucracy is predicated" (Kallinikos 2004, p. 21, citing Kallinikos 2003; Love 2019). Here individual in his/her wholeness as well as the organization, are both apriori and ontologically distinct. "Organizations need founders. But organizations cannot recruit them, because organizations don't exist until founders *construct* them" (Aldrich 1999, p. 77). In this sense, the organization is available to be founded, and founding is establishment of relations between two ontologically prior entities, individual and organization. Individual is tied to the organization, through "non-inclusive coupling … to the organization, consequent upon the separation of the role from the person…". (Kallinikos 2004, p. 21). Even though an organization is defined as a group of people pursuing a common goal (Weber 1947), conceptually, organization is a collection of roles and tasks, not persons and; formal rule-bound behavior pertains to roles and tasks, not persons. This is the fundamental distinction that Max Weber makes in his analysis of basis of authority and formal rationality in the modern world. In his thesis, all other bases of authority and rationality are features of a pre-modern world. Thus, formal organization is a decontextualized, depersonalized collection of rule, task and role based behaviours and practices directed towards goal pursuit with corresponding notions of efficiency as the best (in terms of costs) means of achieving ends and effective goal pursuit strategies for maximising organizational interests, survival and growth. Anthropologist, Marilyn Strathern explains, the underlying worldview in Euro-American thinking as "…individuality of persons is the first fact…" (Strathern 2005, p. 43), in English or Euro-american thinking. Relations are thought of as something over and above the *individual*. "Euro-americans have no difficulties in thinking either individuality or relationality, but only of *thinking them together*…." (Huen 2009, p. 157).

In this sense non-inclusive role-based coupling is the first feature of modern western organization, from which other features such as rule bound behaviour, standardization, centralization and dispensability/replaceability of individual emerge (Kallinikos 2004). This bureaucratic organization has developed its fullest expression in the management of colonies, slaves and indentured labour. In non-inclusive coupling of individual-organization relation, there is a fundamental and tragic opposition between organization and individual. In spite of being created by individuals, the individual in his/her completeness, (or his/her human baggage) is understood as

detrimental to organizational interest. Hence organization needs to socialize, control and subjugate (by dehumanizing, curtailing autonomy) the individual who enters it.

Debates on alternate organization are also tied to this ontology of modern western organization, in the sense that the organization and the individual are distinct and organization needs to provide space to individual (by limiting control of body and tasks), provide a greater share of value created to the individual (through profit sharing), as in co-operatives. For instance, explaining alternate organization, Parker et al. (2014a, b, p. 32) say "all forms of organization that respect personal autonomy, but within a framework of cooperation, and are attentive to the sorts of futures they will produce" (Also see Parker et al. 2014b). Here the idea of individual autonomy reinforces organization as a role collection, which can, and, needs to have a limited reach into the individual's preserve. Here, only goals and modalities of alternate organization are different, not what it means to be an organization.

10.3.2 *What About* Other *Organization?*

Scholars studying non-Western worlds have suggested that native worldviews do not recognise the world in autonomous apriori distinct spheres of economy, society, polity, culture etc., or distinct public and private spheres, or dichotomies of free citizen versus bonded slave, individual versus common property rights like the modern West does (Birla 2009; Escobar 1995; Jammulamadaka and Sharma 2019; Jammulamadaka 2018; Prasad 2015; Simpson 2011; Prakash 2003; Love 2019). In this worldview, what is cultural and communal is also at once political and economic or even strategic (Simpson 2011; Birla 2009; Jammulamadaka 2016b, 2018). "All known organizations of people- civilisations, kingdoms or cultures- create and transfer knowledge and understanding of their own praxis of living" (Mignolo and Walsh 2018, p. 137). They form institutions, discourses and practices of such knowledge and organizing (Jammulamadaka and Sharma 2019; Mignolo and Walsh 2018; Quijano 2000). It therefore follows that different societies will have their own organizing and institutional logics emerging from different kinds of social structures, property rights, duties and work (not just individual property rights), conceptions of individual (not just that of modern free citizens vs bonded slaves), (Jammulamadaka 2016a, 2017; Jammulamadaka and Sharma 2019; Prakash 2003; Khanna 2005; Bandara and Dissanayake in press), with related ideas about organization, its power relations, function and so forth. Betasamosake Simpson (2011, p. viii, emphasis added) in the context of indigenous Canadians has argued that "indigenous peoples have always *organized* our families into societies and nations according to our *culturally inherent politics*."

In the Indian subcontinent, literature suggests that the corporate form as a distinct legal entity in the form of *srenis*, *ganas* etc. has existed since about 800 BC till atleast 1000 AD and thereafter has morphed from its interactions with cultures/practices of others who invaded this land (Khanna 2005; Majumdar 1920; Ghoshal 1930). The control of productive resources in this region has also been governed by complex

notions of jointly held property rights, in contrast to the binary individual versus common property rights seen in Western modernity (Appell 1995; Prakash 2003; Sengupta 1980). A further aspect that has constituted the basis of organization in this region is the practice of caste system and *jatis* (loosely translated as communities). Though Western modernity invokes caste system as an unchanging monolithic absolute hierarchy determined by birth; historians, anthropologists and postcolonial scholars have demonstrated the fluidity of caste relations and hierarchies as also their variations across the length and breadth of the sub-continent (Ganguly 2006; Gupta 2007). Caste and *jatis*, two categories which are not contiguous or coinciding social categories have organized occupational life and practice. The manner of organizing determines not only the technological basis of the productive activity, but the whole of the person, family and attendant division of labour. For instance in a native *jati* of silk weavers, the entire family and its division of labour is organized around keeping the palms of the women of the household soft, since only women with soft hands are able to spin the finest of silk yarns. These women spinners do not partake in any household chores lest their palms become rough. The interactions of the elements of caste, *jati*, jointly held property rights and *sreni* arrangements have produced different kinds of occupational and organizational practices involving the conduct of the whole person contiguous with family, not just a partial role (See Jammulamadaka and Sharma 2019). For instance, words uttered in a *sreni* assembly which could vary from a marriage alliance to a business transaction, had a sense of bindingness to them and were inextricably tied to the person's and family's honour (Khanna 2005). The western distinction between private-personal and public-professional did not exist here and this is one of the most critical ruptures brought on by colonial legal institutional apparatus introduced in the sub-continent (Birla 2009; Roy 2008). Such notions continue to permeate in sub-continental societies despite their transformation and illegalization. Here the individual does not exist outside and prior to the organizing frame. They constitute each other.

Ontologically this implies an other logic of organization, where individual and organization extend into, are transposable and make each other together. Strathern (2005), provides a basis to explain this other worldview as one where, individuals are already relational. In the absence of apriori demarcations of public–private, culture-economy, ontological distinctiveness of individual and organization and individual-organization relation itself are different. The individual in this wholistic worldview is not the embedded (Granovetter 1985) or the partial role limited organizational actor. The embedded actor as Birla (2009) explains, is not a whole, but an already bounded and differentiated economic actor constrained (or facilitated) by culture and sociality. This chapter opens up the black box of communitarian form, "broadening meanings" of organizing and managing (Jack et al. 2011). In line with Nuijten (2012) appeal for focusing on practice in understanding native logics, I propose that native organizing with community as the bedrock is ontologically different from modern western organization. I identify this type as a community enmeshment. Using community enmeshment as the type of organizing, I reinterpret meanings for organizational power relations, functionality and co-ordination making this chapter an

attempt to resist "totalizing tendencies within certain thought categories [such as organization]… to interpret everything in their own image" (Ganguly 2006).

10.4 Method and Data

This study adopts a phronetic approach making values, ethicality and power relevant in data collection and analysis (Flyvbjerg 2001, 2004, 2006). Given that decolonizing is an ethico-political pursuit, phronetic approach is suitable (Chakrabarty et al. 2017). Phronetic research examines exemplars of the phenomenon under study using focused "detailed narratives" for analysing the discourse. Such analysis allows us to make explicit and visible what is masked and reveal the underlying belief/idea/value (Broadfoot et al. 2004). Through an abductive analysis of discourse the actions, practices and talk that comprise discourse, "are examined for the way they contribute to ongoing (and sometimes rather precarious) organization and constitution of social reality" (Mumby and Clair 1997, p. 181).

The study's data comes from two exemplars chosen on theoretical grounds to reveal native thinking about, perspectives and practices of native[1] organizational founders on various issues of concern to them in organization. The first exemplar is a reflexive account of providing strategic planning training to grassroot NGOs in India. The second exemplar is of an Indian grassroot NGO identified here as WISCOM (pseudonym). Such mixing of methods and data sources has been undertaken as it allows surfacing of deeper insights (Prasad 2013; Srinivas 2012). The data for exemplar 1 comes from an experiential reflexive account, data for exemplar 2 is from multiple sources: observation notes, interviews, archival and organizational documents. Such use of multiple sources of data in generating the narrative for critical discourse analysis is an accepted convention (Vaara and Tienari 2008; Hardy et al. 2000; Prichard et al. 2004). There are many methods of analyzing discourse, here, narratives were examined for what was being said, (and done), by whom and how it was being said (done) with a reflexive awareness of the conditions and oneself, for reading implicit and explicit articulations of organization and interpreting its function. This was achieved by first identifying the articulation and then comparing it to conventional articulations of a bureaucratic organization elaborated above.

10.4.1 Data Collection

Data on first exemplar is derived from a first-person narrative of a strategic planning workshop held in May 1998 by a prominent national level agency for 12 grassroots NGOs pursuing microfinance in India. This workshop was special for me, being my

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[1] The word native here is used to refer to what in India is commonly identified as *desi*, crudely translated as country as in countryside and not nation.

first job a week after completing MBA. I had retained personal notes as well as vivid recollections of assisting participating NGOs one-on-one, and used these to write a reflexive narrative in 2010. I am interpreting this account after so many years because it has taken me this long to make sense of the ontological basis and contradictions of the experience and unlearning the view of eurocentric organization acquired through MBA. Data for the second exemplar was collected in 2018. Interviews (total 18 h) and focus group discussions (2 with staff) were carried out with the current head of WISCOM (the founder's son) current board members, founder who ran WISCOM for almost three decades, staff and communities with whom the organization was working. In addition, participant observation was carried out in 6 organizational meetings. Annual reports and other organizational documents (souvenirs, memoirs of the founder, doctoral dissertations on the organization) were examined. Data were in a mix of vernacular and English.

10.5   Brief Descriptions of the Exemplars

10.5.1   Exemplar 1: Training NGOs in Strategic Planning

10.5.1.1   Workshop Background

The strategic planning workshop was funded by an international donor. Of the 12 NGOs, some operated in multiple domains such as health, education, women's empowerment, environment, along with microfinance, others solely in microfinance. Some had been operational for over two decades, others 4–5 years. Workshop's goal was to make participating NGOs develop specific strategic plans according to donor provided template that included vision and mission statements, program strategy, SMART objectives and a 3-year scaling up plan for achieving operational and financial sustainability. As trainers, we were conscious that this required program details and financials, therefore founder CEOs were asked to bring along their finance manager/accountant. At the end of the exercise, we did have 12 strategic business plans and some of them did make attempts at implementing them.

10.5.1.2   During the Workshop

Participants arrived in two member founder-assistant teams. During lengthy one-on-one discussions with these teams, I realised that, several NGOs did not have finance managers or accountants. Only one NGO team had a chartered accountant, a couple of NGOs had graduates in commerce. Of the others, one was a literature graduate, another a graduate in economics, a few others were having science backgrounds or other bachelors degrees. 2–3 NGOs had experience with well-developed managerial control systems and independently developed their plans. Most of the remaining

founder CEOs and their second line manager/assistant who accompanied them, were generalists who had learnt on the job. They were adept in working with communities and understanding community needs. Their staff too were generalists learning on the job and lacked specific managerial, financial or data management skills. They belonged to communities and areas the NGO worked in and were members of shared networks (such as kin ship and village). Many NGOs had not brought with them the kind of details that were necessary for calculating projections. It appeared that they did not have the information and control systems necessary for capturing these details. Nevertheless, I could see that they had intimate, detailed knowledge of specific people, communities or villages in the manner of a thick description (Geertz 1973). Several of these NGOs were small, working in less than 50 villages, had smaller staff size (less than 25), NGO founders and staff had spent years with communities and had internalized the concerns, issues and details of funds they had been granted. They were trying to recollect and derive, aggregate (nonhumanised) programmatic information during the workshop by interpreting and processing their immersive and intimate knowledge in response to my facilitative questions.

Early on during the workshop, when I raised the issue of deceit and mismanagement owing to lack of systems, my managers who were spear-heading the workshop assured me that all of them were known for their integrity and their credentials had been ascertained through due diligence and prior field visits. Some organizations and leaders had won national level recognitions and awards. They accomplished transparency and accountability through ongoing community dialogues and reputational processes. From, these assurances, it appeared that informal processes were dominant in coordinating information and workflows rather than control systems monitoring efficiency.

10.5.1.3   Reflections

As a training assistant, I had noticed that for a few of the NGOs, the entire process came very easily. In fact, an NGO which was replicating Grameen Bank model and had a chartered accountant, had come prepared with a strategic plan. But for many other leaders/managers, the logic of the projections seemed alien, somehow they could not relate to it. Several of them repeatedly expressed hesitation and discomfort through objections such as 'how can I force our community to form a group and take loans?', 'What if they don't need the loan?' 'How can I make these estimates unilaterally (not discussing with our community) assuming that I will form so many groups and lend so much money?', 'The lending amounts are decided by our group, community, how can I estimate the amount I will lend or I will need now?' 'I do not know how much funding I will get, how can I make plans for expanding groups without knowing about funds?' 'What if I do not get funds, what happens to these promises (plans) I make to the communities?' Our discussions often continued into the wee hours of the morning, outside official program schedule, yet the doubts and objections remained.

The discomfort they felt was not limited to financial projections, it extended to vision and mission statements and SWOT analysis. They struggled with the notion of *organizational* vision. What made sense to them was community vision. They could instinctively relate to it. But the idea of organizational vision and mission did not resonate with them. It was extremely difficult for them to distinguish the organization as a separate entity from the community. In a similar manner, they were at ease understanding the threats and strengths facing the community. The experience with one CEO, a retired economics professor, working for a Gandhian organization is illustrative. It had been close to 3.30 am in the night and the idea of organizational vision as distinct from vision for the community was still not making sense to him after several hours of discussion. In the end, this gentleman, said, "…but I guess this is difficult for me to accept…based on what I am saying, you develop something..[some vision statement] you have worked hard enough.."

As the 5 day workshop was drawing to its end, the sense some of these NGOs developed with regards to the planning process was one of 'a format that needed to be filled and provided to the donor i.e., us'. These were people, who had struggled against very hostile opposition (I could infer this through the incidents and instances they were sharing). Their knowledge of the communities they were working with was deep, their commitment firm. It seemed to define them and make them as persons. Despite this, (or probably because of this) they could not relate to their NGO as an organization, its organizational interest, priorities or the strategic planning process. It appeared as if for them, the planning process in pursuit of organizational interest, implied some sort of violation of a deep community commitment. They felt a marked unease in committing something on paper as an organizational interest and plan, so much so that some of them asked me to develop the estimates on their behalf and provide them as the workshop output (their subsequent funding from my organization was dependent upon these plans).

10.5.2 WISCOM

10.5.2.1 *Setting up of WISCOM*: (Pseudonym)

Subhash (pseudonym) went back to his native village as a young man in late 1960s and strived to work for the development of rural areas surrounding his native village with a single-minded focus. These villages were in abject poverty, ravaged by floods and cyclones with people unable to afford proper food. He was driven by a passion to rediscover what he called the wisdom of India which had survived in the villages despite the colonial encounter. He thought of himself as a volunteer, as another member of the village, who was integrating into the village and serving it. He had worked for more than 5 years, during which period he had first tried by setting up a proprietorship salt company with himself as the Director, and then a co-operative with villagers as members. Neither of these had contributed to well-being of the villagers as he had desired. As such he disbanded/disengaged from those initiatives

and had become disenchanted about the value of formal organization. Meanwhile, his continual striving had attracted attention of international donors, who persuaded and insisted that he set up a registered NGO so that they could fund his work.

10.5.2.2 Organisation, Function and Process at WISCOM

Finally, WISCOM was registered (setup) in 1976 as a charitable trust with a governing body composed of villagers and urban intelligentsia. During the three decades he led WISCOM, Subhash actively rejected all organization structure and management systems, whether for coordinating, planning, monitoring, reporting systems or performance management. Instead, he held on to his faith in wisdom of village communities in India and insistence on living by such wisdom. His mode of working involved continuous discussions and meetings with villagers—early in the morning, during the day, late into the night etc. to understand issues at hand, causes as well as possibilities. WISCOM had come up with several innovative, transformative practices of rural development in fields of primary and nonformal education, women's empowerment, wasteland development among other things. For instance, the innovations they made in learning material and pedagogy got incorporated into the National Literacy Mission's work in India. Even during the transition period that involved his phased exit from the organization, he actively intervened against his successor's (the first successor was not the son) efforts to introduce managerial systems such as reporting structures, organizational hierarchy, performance management, vision and mission statements that were aimed at institutionalising processes at WISCOM.

The one mechanism that Subhash had followed diligently was having a weekly meeting which was held on the day of the weekly market, when most people visited that area for the market. In that meeting, they shared information about tasks and problems, discussed issues and arrived at agreements over the course of the action. Subhash was so against developing and/or strengthening WISCOM as an organization, that when some donors wanted to give him a grant of over USD one million in the 1980s, he politely refused saying it would distract them from the community. He had even proposed winding up WISCOM at one point in time, because several people in the community had by then become able community organizers/animators and Subhash believed WISCOM was not needed. Despite this, they had managed a budget of a few hundred thousand USD per annum as early as 1990s, when staff salaries were in the range of USD 10–15 per month. When donors approached him with ideas about new projects or operating in new areas, he politely refused, because they were not the needs of the villagers with whom he was working. Sometimes, when some of his staff were interested, he encouraged them and supported them through mentoring to pursue development work on their own outside WISCOM. He was very proud of the fact that WISCOM had contributed to the development of several well-rounded voluntary workers for rural development. WISCOM was one of the organizations who had come up with the idea of self-help savings and credit on its own, way back in the 1970s. As current CEO of WISCOM explained, "It gives you freedom to do some of things that lot of people don't like to do. 90% of the programs,

projects that WISCOM does, people [donors] don't even understand, what we are talking about…." He continues, explaining what his father, the founder did "a great part of innovation at WISCOM is because he did not have money. Because of money crunch we were forced to look at innovations….he [father] had a pathological dislike for money."

10.5.2.3 Staff and Structure at WISCOM

The single-minded focus on village communities ran very deep and was evident in the way Subhash and staff spoke about communities and WISCOM. It was always *our* villages, WISCOM villages. Similarly for the villagers it was *our* WISCOM, *our* Subhash. During my interviews when I asked them to describe the organization and its vision, they described village communities. WISCOM did not appear as a separate entity revealing deep-seated integration.

As an old employee recollected,

> We never had working hours or holidays. We worked for as long as we could. If we wanted to go back to families/native place, we told Subhash and left for a few days. We did not have any such ideas like Sunday is a holiday or leave. If we were required at 6 am in the field, we were there, or even if it was night 11.00 or 12.00 pm we were there. For women's meetings in the village, they would come in the night after 8 pm, after finishing all their chores and our meetings would run till 11.00 pm. There were many villages we could only walk to, even cycling was not possible there.

> we were not told how to do or what to do. It was just that we had to go to the villages and talk to the community and work with the community. It was not as if we were working for salaries. Once Subhash had called all of us for a meeting and said that he did not have money to pay salaries, that he had tried all avenues but there was no money. He was quite sad and had told us that we were free to leave if we so desired, or, we could continue to work with him. All of us had told him that there was no question of leaving. We had not worked that hard to walk away from the villages, their hopes and expectations we helped instill. We said that we would not ask him for money or for salary, we were not doing this for the money, that he should feel free to pay us when he got money. After a few months, one of Subhash's funding proposals was approved, he then paid the staff. That was how we were.

> Once, there was a surprise inspection by an international donor agency. They were pleasantly surprised to see people at work on a Sunday and went back without meeting Subhash and gave us a grant afterwards.

10.5.2.4 Community Integration and Vested Interests

Towards late 1990s, the value of land (over 50 acres) WISCOM had leased from government for wasteland development had appreciated. There were some politically motivated attacks in popular newspapers accusing and alleging WISCOM of illegal and unsanctioned activities and misappropriation of funds. It was anticipated that WISCOM's land lease would be cancelled. Subhash refused to actively defend organizational interests, maintaining that community would address the attacks if they found WISCOM valuable, that there was nothing to defend. If community wanted

WISCOM to stop, he would be more than happy to comply. At the insistence of well-wishers Subhash had issued a proforma denial statement. The community however was displeased about the accusations against Subhash. They protested through rallies with hundreds participating, and approached government to act against the newspapers. They asserted that they knew WISCOM better than anyone and formal reports were not necessary to attest to the work.

During the transition period of Subhash's exit WISCOM went through major upheavals attempting introduction of formal organizational processes. During this period, funding for WISCOM declined dramatically. Despite this, the organization had been able to sustain its work for 15 years. As the current CEO of WISCOM explained, "And if you look at why, one of the major reasons why we have been able to survive [the last] 7–8 years without any external funding programs, is because we had safe zone of people."

10.6   Analysis

It can be seen from the exemplars, NGOs participating in the workshop and WISCOM, are formally registered organizations. As such they are modern bureaucratic organizations with their own physical offices, resources, funding, staff etc. It is possible to read this as evidence of the universality of modern western bureaucratic organization and its underlying ontology. Similarly, the questions, concerns and comments of NGO founders in the strategic planning workshop as well as WISCOM, can be interpreted as indicative of organizational commitment to the community reinforcing western ontologic basis of organization as being ontologically prior, privileged, agential and deliberately choosing to serve the community. However, in order to account for the other's wholistic ontological basis of organisation, I begin reading the exemplar narratives from the discussions around vision statements in the workshop and WISCOM's origin story and I explain this below.

10.6.1   Absent Boundaries

The doubts and objections raised by NGO founders in articulating vision and mission during the workshop reflected desires and dreams for/of the community/villages. These were not articulated as an organizational interest to serve the community, as in Moore (2000) sense of managing for value. Further, community is not connoting the same meaning that is conveyed when a modern bureaucratic organization says it seeks to serve customers. The sense conveyed by 'to serve customers' implicitly involves the idea of organizational interest and how serving customers is good for generating value and profit for the organization. Community visions in my exemplars, are not seen as a *means* to organizational wellbeing and perpetuity, instead they have a sense of being an *end* in themselves, as a vision coming from a moral imperative of

thinking of and from the community (and not the organization) being the right thing to do. This sense is particularly clear from the questions about organizational goals posed by participants. The disinterest with organizational vision and reluctance to shift away from a community vision is particularly evident in the founders asking me to make something up in the workshop. It is also evident in the way, staff and Subhash at WISCOM describe visions for/of the villagers when questioned about vision for WISCOM. Here the organization and community are not being perceived as distinct from each other. Community interest is organizational interest. This sense of oneness seems to have made it difficult for the NGOs to formulate strategic plans at the workshop.

The origin story of WISCOM too diverges from ontological priority and distinctiveness of the organization from the individual. It shows that organizational interest was by far the most unimportant reason for setting up WISCOM, instead it indicates the pressure (he registered only after much persuasion and finally insistence from donors) and overwhelming influence of modern[2] legal and institutional frameworks in India which mandate formal registration for receiving funding. Subhash had been working with the community for years before starting WISCOM, he had in fact lost faith in formal organization by the time he registered WISCOM. *Being with*, *in* and working with community was prior to and privileged over the organization in the case of Subhash. Even after registering WISCOM, he did not pursue grants systematically for organizational growth. On multiple occasions, he resisted and rejected grants, directed the funding towards others including staff (whom he had encouraged to start off on their own) indicating that he was not acting out of a conventional (universal) sense of organizational interest which seeks to reduce and avoid competition. His rejection of a large grant for organizational corpus fund, is also contrary to a conventional view of strengthening the organization by developing a strong capital base. These reveal his reluctance and resistance to a conventional view of organizational interest. Instead, he chose to place himself *with* and *in* the community and draw upon the community's sense of sustenance. Origin stories for the other NGOs are not available in my data and may or may not be similar to WISCOM. However, what is common to NGOs participating in the workshop and WISCOM is the absence of the organization and organizational interest as separate from the community it is serving. The reality of the organization, as evident in their practices, which refrained from using formal management systems, processes and structures and their invocation of villages, community, groups at every mention of what are generally organizational goals and strategies suggests that the boundary between the organization and the community is indistinct here. Organization here is not a distinctly bounded bureaucratic entity with a collection of duly specified roles which individuals inhabit as is expected in a formal modern organization. The organization itself is amorphous.

It is necessary to note here that the previous section discussed the absence of individual-organisation ontological distinctiveness in other worldview, and the analysis here points to absence of community-organisation distinctiveness as evidence

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[2] The specific laws are British era laws, Society's Act of 1860 and Trust Act of 1925.

of other worldview. This approximation is within the purview of the individual-organisation sense because the individual is existing, and operating as one internal to the community and not as someone who is outside of and external to the community.

10.6.2   Absent Roles

It can be seen that role capabilities were not carved out. The kind of staff in the NGOs from both exemplars indicate this. Prima facie this could be read as a case of informal organization or even a simple organization in Mintzberg's (1993) sense within conventional understandings of informality and organization. However, closely examining the amorphousness suggests that what we see in the exemplars is not a case of informal organization inside the formal organization, where, both formal and informal organization exist simultaneously. It is also not a case of only an informal organization, since in that situation too, the boundary of the organization would be decipherable in the form of group boundaries (Hernes and Paulson 2003). Instead from the narratives it appears that in this amorphousness, the boundary of the organization itself is indistinct and the community and organization both make each other and move in and out of each other. The instance of the employees continuing to work irrespective of salary, control or supervision systems at WISCOM illustrate this relationality. They appear to be working in the course of living as whole persons- their private and publicness together, in their cultural-socio-economic-political-religious fullness *in* and *with* the community, not as an organizational role inhabited by partial individuals. The timing of the weekly meeting routine at WISCOM to coincide with the weekly market is indicative of enmeshing of work and organization into daily existence, rather than establishing the organization as superior to and above daily life. Here the individual is not detrimental to the organization, the organization in its community enmeshment appears as an expression of the community. When I visited villages, I noticed that the way villagers talked about WISCOM and Subhash was as if they were speaking about family members and friends. Subhash had not been visiting the villages due to his old age and failing health. The women inquired about him and had decided to visit him. The entire dynamic was one of visiting families and relations, not one of an NGO interacting with a beneficiary or client receiving services. It is also evident in the comment by Subhash's son about surviving in the absence of funding because of a "safe zone of people".

10.7   Discussion

The kind of organization taking shape in the two exemplars is not the non-inclusive role-based incorporation of the partial individual into modern western bureaucratic organization (Kallinikos 2003). The individual and organization are fully being incorporated into each other in relational terms as organizational and community members.

The growing and becoming of the individuals, organization and community has occurred along the course of working and living. I refer to this kind of ontological relationality and organization as community enmeshment.

10.7.1 Another Organization: Organization as Community Enmeshment

Ontologically, with organisation as community enmeshment, the distinctions between what is private and public in the staff- organization sense or what is organizational and non-organizational vis-a-vis community are not evident. Here the organization exists, but instead of having separate interests, boundaries, goals, processes and systems it permeates and is itself permeated and made by the community where it exists. From the data, it is evident that the communitarian organizing practices are centered on the community, recognise and vest agency in the community making organizational authority, longevity, resources indistinct from the community. Community enmeshment is evident in the kinds of interpersonal, moral, cultural and political interactions and feelings of care, affection, trust, respect, dignity and participation invested by founders, staff and communities. Subhash's moral authority and relationship with community merges with WISCOM and vice-versa. These are not merely transactional, or reciprocal exchanges of certain economic benefits, instead these are interactions and conversations which have taken place as part of ongoing social life inside and outside the meetings where village life and living and organizational life are indistinguishable from each other, with shared interests and concerns about families and community well-being (as also animosities). It is in this sense that celebration of festivals, worship, income generation activity, education, folk lore, ecological restoration, combating social evils, all merge seamlessly into each other in WISCOM's working.

Strathern (2005) distinguishes a relational worldview from Euro-American one, in that here relations are not thought of as something over and above the individual, instead there is prior relational co-constitution of individual and community. Thinking together of the individual and organization, is one where they are already relational and co-constituting each other. Within Western sense of organization, full inclusion, is understood as a totalitarian kind of organization with absolute control of human behaviour and the human is fully the organizational man (Kallinikos 2004; Clegg et al. 2015). In contrast to this totalitarian organization the formal bureaucratic organizations with its partial inclusion appears as a better alternative. The exemplars of this study differ from both bureaucratic (or postbureaucratic) and totalitarian organisation. Here staff, organization and communities become more able in their relational making of each other, in their enmeshing, their co-constitution. In the next section I discuss the functional meanings of identifying organization as community enmeshment.

10.7.2 **An** Other *Meaning of Function*

In eurocentric MOS, organization as community enmeshment, is often perceived as messy, disorganized, pre-modern, archaic, ineffective, unprofessional, inefficient, imperfect etc. When decolonial discourse on communitarian form eschews function, it inadvertently strengthens the view that an other organization is indeed inefficient or imperfect with the attendant suggestion that such inefficiency and imperfection should be celebrated not, denounced. This reasoning whether in eurocentric or decolonial MOS, operates from within a framework of culture and economy as distinct, where culture is held as superior to economic rationality. It perpetuates the idea of what Birla (2009: p. 10) calls "a rational economic actor garbed in ethnic wardrobe", where culture and community is seen as a restraint or an enabler on economy.

Reading from an other, non-Western worldview, where cultural, communitarian practice is not subordinated, or even held superior to rational economic calculation, but where culture also, at once becomes the social, political and economic, one is able to interpret community enmeshment as "textures of meanings" of practices in ongoing life (Birla 2009). This other perspective permits us to read functional meanings of organization as community enmeshment. Such a reading does not reinstate economistic managerialist argument, but shows alternate function where communitarian culture also implies economic and strategic action (Birla 2009).

It is important to note here that at WISCOM culture building is not being pursued to reduce administrative costs of control as is understood in management literature. Instead, reduction of administrative costs is an unintended side-effect of enmeshment. Neither Subhash nor the present CEO justified their community enmeshment in terms of organizational interest and the financial benefits such as cost savings provided to the organization. Even when asked to think this way, they resisted this. This is understood as an end it itself, a way of being and living, not a means of cost reduction for organization. It had been presented as a moral, cultural, political and ethical imperative. Organization as community enmeshment does not operate like economic or financial resources such as capital and labour which can be quantified and incorporated into cost–benefit analysis, strategic plans and financial projections. Being interwoven and enmeshed into the communities, leads to sharing into community abilities, politics, strengths, prejudices and anxieties. It is simultaneously imbued with social, cultural, moral and political value. The primary modes of WISCOM's interventions in communities were meeting and dialogue and this required common human abilities—conversation, talking and listening. Functionally, these cultures of caring, respect and belongingness, simultaneously transpose into and become economic mechanisms of voluntary support of locally based workers and communities having a stake in their own well-being and development, and volunteers who perform without supervision. Work as an economic activity simultaneously transposes into a mechanism of affection and caring towards others and reclaiming self-respect and spiritual pursuit for the self. Talking to and engaging each other,

working and being together becomes both inter-personal and a political act of resistance. This dynamic has made WISCOM a recipient of care and also target of local political conflicts and contestations. This structure displaces organizational power relations of a employer-employee hierarchy, placing them within the community and subjecting it to the numerous dominance/subordination, interdependence political relations of power/anti-power (Pettit 1996; Jammulamadaka 2016a) within the village community. This structuring fulfilled another function by voiding the need for setting up expensive and separate systems of accountability to distant centers of power such as donors. Accountability happened as a matter of course. This wholistic sense of work, explains why staff, did not leave WISCOM even when Subhash could not pay them.

Community enmeshment is also functional in that by erasing the distinctions between organisation and community and culture and economy, it enables solidarity, commitment, and accountability, as also reduces dependence on external funding and increases autonomy. WISCOM being enmeshed into the social, cultural, political, economic, religious life of the community enabled it to discover and experiment with several initiatives jointly that could be worked upon at their level irrespective of the availability of external funding. Without dependence on external sources of funding, these initiatives were part of community's ways of life, local opportunities and resources, and addressed their needs. Such initiatives set up a positive spiral of promoting goal attainment and strengthening community. WISCOM's local successes and community strength in turn attracted distant donor funding which WISCOM was able to accept on its own terms, rather than having to accept donor priorities. They were also able to refuse donor projects that did not find resonance with community's sense of its needs. These initiatives manifested in programs such as wasteland development, women's self- help groups in late 1970s and early 1980s before these had become donor priorities. Community enmeshment contributed to WISCOM's and community's autonomy through reduced resource dependence for them and restored agency and power with the community towards goal identification, selection and effective goal attainment. WISCOM did not have to prepare a separate sustainability plan. It just existed with and in the community. This has occurred in an era where NGOs had become primarily donor dependent (Jammulamadaka 2012; Koch 2009). WISCOM as community enmeshment, also allowed Subhash to actively contemplate winding up WISCOM, actively support staff to start out on their own, because all these benefitted the community. Deregistering WISCOM does not automatically mean the death of WISCOM, it still exists in and through the community. That such ongoing everyday cultural, social, political practice is also an effective organizational practice, is evident in the manner in which local communities mobilised to protect and defend WISCOM against allegations and political attacks from vested interests and outsiders. To this extent, organization as community enmeshment is also highly functional.

The experience of WISCOM suggests that being a communitarian organization need not necessarily mean being opposed to serving certain functions. Instead, this is evidence of an other kind of functionality that springs from and is realised in the wholeness of social world, and therefore its transposability and fungibility across

social-political-economic-spiritual life, redefining resources and capabilities in the form of community centricity and relationality. Organization as community enmeshment is functional and strategic because of its ability to sustain autonomy, life in the face of uncertainty and shocks, self-reliance for the organization-communities, and reducing its resource-dependence. It is organisation, function and strategy *as sustaining one's freedom to exist*, not a strategy in the language of capital and markets. Here the organization exists as a part of the community, not apart from the community.

10.8   Conclusion

Just as universal western feminism erases the colonized woman (Lugones 2010), western bureaucratic organization erases this other native "social organization", (Lugones' term 2010). It is the hegemony of eurocentric MOS that these native ways of organization and its cognates have been silenced and particular meanings from Western modernity have been universalized. Decolonial scholars have contraposed communitarian organizing to the logic of capital and seemingly embraced the assigned "inefficiency". To this extent, decolonising organization discourse forfeits the opportunity to evolve plural meanings of ideas such as organization and its cognate functionalisms. This study argues that in summarily associating ideas like organizations, functionality, strategy, efficiency, coordination and leadership with Western management knowledge and rejecting them, native organizing is not only denying an important part of its self but also contributing to a misrecognition and pruning of indigenous wholistic worldviews. It is therefore important to decolonize various management concepts such as organization, to facilitate an appreciation for plural meanings of managerial concepts by changing and redefining meanings. This study, by examining two exemplars, one of a strategic planning workshop and the other of a communitarian NGO, suggests that a modern western bureaucratic, capitalistic, economistic, logic of accumulation and growth based organization need not be the only way of understanding organization and its cognates. Instead, coming from wholistic *other* worldviews, organization can also be understood as a community enmeshment of whole persons. Such community enmeshment, inspite of appearing disorganized in the modern western managerial sense of the word is also highly *other* functional. The argument being made here is not what Mosse (1999: pp. 325–326) calls "the economistic notion of social relations as 'capital' which can be carefully tapped, invested or transferred to meet development ends", the way peer pressure is used as collateral in microcredit lending.

Instead, it is to show that community enmeshment is not just an ethical and a political stance against capitalist modes of organizing. It is at once an economic, functional and strategic stance, where functionality manifests, in all its political-social–historical-economic sense. Such politically and ideologically charged organizing, also happens to be simultaneously efficient, effective for preserving autonomy

and recovering agency. The chapter thus suggests a decolonial meaning for organization and provides a basis for engaging with logics of function and strategy from a decolonial perspective as those which preserve dignity and autonomy.

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Part III
Indigenous Ethics of Managing and Organising

Chapter 11
Indigenous Knowledge, Buddhist Philosophy and Post-colony: Revisiting the Values of Sri Lankan Public Administrative System

Yashoda Bandara, Arosha S. Adikaram, and Kumudinei Dissanayake

Abstract This chapter explores the transferability of indigenous knowledge to contemporary context in the form of values to address common criticisms surrounding public administrative system (PAS) in Sri Lanka, such as bribery, ineffectiveness, harassment, and nepotism. It is difficult to detach indigenous knowledge and history from Buddhist philosophy in Sri Lanka. We turn to these Buddhist philosophies and historical social practices that were silenced in colonial and post-independence PAS. These core values are never claimed sole ownership in Buddhist philosophy and are recognized commonly in any civilized society. We find that Buddhist teachings and practices of righteousness, discipline, public interest, democracy, and non-discrimination at the individual, and social level, showcase the grounds for eliminating unethical behaviors in governance such as wrong-doings, bribery, harassment, and nepotism, in PAS. Thus, we recognize the possibility of using the underlying core values of Buddhist philosophies in recalling and re-covering Sri Lankan indigenous values to overcome the limitations of contemporary post-colonial public administrative organization.

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Indigenous Knowledge, Buddhist Philosophy in Managing the Post-colony: Revisiting Sri Lankan Values in Contemporary Public Administration.

> Young and impressionable
>> Sinhala children:
>> Study the garland of kingly customs
>> To develop love for the nation
>> Our great ancestors
>> Who maintained the precious heritage of Sri Lanka
>> Ordered us directly
>> Not to drink alcohol (vv. 12).

This translation of Sinhala stanza by anti-colonial poet Ananda Rajakaruna, written during colonization era (as cited in Field 2016), highlights the importance of indigenous knowledge and practices in protecting the country. The poet urges Sinhala children to follow the advice of their ancestors by not consuming alcohol–a sin, which, according to *the dhamma* (Buddhist philosophy), leads to the destruction of mind. Alcohol is popularly identified to be promoted within the country under colonization.

11.1   Introduction

Sri Lanka, historically known as 'Ceylon', is a South Asian island nation in the Indian Ocean, situated southeast of the Indian subcontinent, with a total land area of about 65,268 km². Being a multicultural and multi-ethnic country, Sri Lanka is home to a population of 21.7 million people, including Sinhalese (75%), Tamils (15%), Muslims (9%), Burgher, and other (1%) communities. The country is governed by a republic constitution and a governance mechanism consisting of a legislature of a parliamentary system, an executive presidency, and an autonomous judiciary. As an upper-middle-income country, Sri Lanka recorded a GDP of 88.9 billion US dollars in 2018 and an estimated GDP per capita of USD 4,030. With a high human development index of 0.78, Sri Lanka has been positioned at 71st out of 189 countries and territories in 2018 in the index, while recording the highest literacy rate (91%) in the South Asian region.

The history of Sri Lanka can be dated back to about 300,000 BP or earlier with evidence of Paleolithic people, even though written records of civilization exist only from the third century BC. The advent of immigrants from North India to Sri Lanka in the 5th Century BC resulted in radical changes to social and cultural sphere of the country. The colonization of Sri Lanka began with the advent of the Portuguese in 1505 and ended in 1948 after gaining independence from the British rule. During this period of 443 years, Sri Lanka has been under the rule of the Portuguese (1505–1658), Dutch (1658–1796), and British (1796–1948). Undoubtedly the advent of these different rulers brought about numerous changes in the diverse spheres of

society. However, it is British colonization that had the most impact on social life, economy, education, politics, and public administration of the country.

Being one of the most prominent systems established by British rule, public administrative system (PAS) of Sri Lanka (known as the Ceylon Civil Service–CCS) is considered as a fine reflection of the invasion and radical changes that took place in the country during British colonization. CCS, being the forerunner of the contemporary PAS–known as the Sri Lanka Administrative Service (SLAS)–was established by British, based on the British public administration system. In establishing CCS, akin to establishing other social, economic, and political systems by British, the pre-existing systems of indigenous (pre-British-colonial) PAS, albeit more informal but strong, were gradually, but forcefully abandoned, and a western capitalist model was imposed with only certain adjustments to match the indigenous context (Godden and Casinader 2013; Kannangara 1966). Haque (2007) identifies the colonial PAS as an elitist bureaucratic administrative system based on social isolationism. Clearly, colonialism disrupted indigenous ideologies and practices (Sivasundaram 2007), and western ideologies and practices introduced through CCS were incompatible with indigenous ones. As such, the transition from indigenous PAS to colonial PAS was not quick, easy, nor smooth.

Buddhism being the main religion dominating the way of life at the time of the British advent and colonization, it was not surprising that Buddhist philosophy played a key role in indigenous PAS (Sivasundaram 2007). However, with the supremacy of new public administrative systems introduced during colonization, many elements of Buddhist philosophy that underlay indigenous PAS faded away from practice. Yet, psychological attachment to indigenous ideologies and Buddhist philosophy where relevant practices and their residues has continued to flow through generations in the form of religion as well as values and ideals among Sri Lankans. Within this backdrop, the ensuing value mismatch, has substantially impeded the development of contemporary PAS. Kannangara (1966) explains the conditions during the initial phase of the establishment of colonial public administrative structure under British rule as follows;

> The people were different from the rulers in very many aspects, and they were living under a different social and economic order. While the forces coming from outside, and from a more developed society, carried them towards more liberal institutions, those coming from within took them towards authoritarianism.[1] This pull in opposite directions was one of the main threads which ran through the development of the administrative structure in Ceylon (Kannangara 1966, p. xxx).

Thus, similar to many other developing countries with colonial histories, in Sri Lanka too the ability of contemporary PAS to align with the country's ideological essence was largely questioned and seen as a factor causing ethical dilemmas in later years (Haque 1996) in society in general, and in PAS more specifically.

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[1] Authoritarianism here refers to the traditional governance system of conventions and shared values prevailing in the context of indigenous social organization, whereas liberalism explains the forceful loosening of tightly interwoven native relationships of economic and social order by the colonial rulers (Bandara and Dissanayake 2018).

Contemporary PAS is the largest employment provider in the country, maintaining a huge workforce, which amounts nearly to 15% of the country's total workforce. By 2016, the proportion of employees in the public sector increased to 14.6%, and for every 18 citizens, there was a public employee (Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka 2016). The government spends millions of rupees as wages and welfare. The overall nominal wage rate index of public sector employees increased by 4.7% in 2019 compared to 2018, indicating a substantial increment in expenditure for public service workforce (Central Bank 2019).

Even with such a large workforce and substantial funds spent, Sri Lankan PAS is often criticized on the grounds of inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and failures to achieve the expected performance goals as well as neglect and corruption, similar to other South Asian countries with similar administrative systems and colonization experiences (Sabharwal and Berman 2013). Sri Lanka ranks 86 in the Corruption Perception Index among 183 countries across the world (Sabharwal and Berman 2013). Despite many attempts to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of employees and performance, PAS of Sri Lanka continues to demonstrate poor performance and services (Nafeel 2014), interrupting the development and overall productivity of the country's economy (Central Bank 2019). Poor employee management and low performance in PAS is clearly evident through many indicators such as strikes and work stoppages (Amaradasa 2012; Amarasinghe 2009), tardiness, absenteeism, lack of accountability (Amaradasa 2012), corruption (Transparency International 2015), unethical practices (Fernando 2010; De Alwis 2009), and power politics (Nanayakkara 2015; Samaratunge and Benington 2002). Within the numerous dimensions against which this poor performance of PAS employees is discussed, their unethical behavior (Fernando 2010) has been discussed extensively. Lack of ethical norms and values (De Alwis 2009), as well as the disappearance of certain values (Somasundaram 1997; Warnapala 2012; Weeramantry 2003) and poor aggregation and distortion of values (Bozeman 2007), have been identified as dominant contributing factors for these unethical behaviors. It is also interesting to note that along the way, the basic assumptions upon which CCS was constructed such as rationality, efficiency, predictability, merit principle, and political neutrality have been lost (Haque 2007).

Indeed, this deterioration in contemporary PAS and issues such as bribery, ineffectiveness, and nepotism have been strongly attributed to unethical behavior of its employees (Fernando 2010) and lack of ethical norms and values in the system (De Alwis 2009). In fact, contemporary PAS does not entail an explicit set of values that govern the behavior of its employees, despite the continuous promotion of the need for a set of values for contemporary PAS by various scholars and practitioners. What exists as values in contemporary PAS are broad and general statements, implicit or vague and mostly secularized. For instance, the Ministry of Public Services, Provincial Councils and Local Government; the apex body which manages PAS of the country, expresses one of its objectives as "to establish and share a code of ethics which includes result oriented attitudes, accountability, proper use of resources, impartiality and transparency" (Ministry of Public Services, Provincial Councils and Local Government 2021), where Public Service Commission declares

its mission as "to establish and promote an efficient, disciplined, and contented public service, to serve the public with fairness, transparency and consistency" (Public Service Commission 2021). Though some state-owned organizations explicitly express certain values in their organizational documents, such as annual reports, dissemination of such values among employees and actual practice is questionable. Hence, despite vague or implied expressions of values contained in legislative documents and values that have been published in very broad and general terms, we could not find any specific set of values explicitly declared, documented, and communicated in PAS.

Further, reforms that have been made to PAS so far are said to be isolated, ad-hoc (Warnapala 1974; De Alwis 2009) and halfhearted endeavors (Warnapala 2013) without due attention to the moral dimension (Fernando 2010). In other words, it is seen that the CCS and the reforms brought in during later years to PAS have paid scant attention to indigenous knowledge, ideologies, and values, thus leading to the disappearance of certain values from the system over the years (Somasundaram 1997; Warnapala 2013), creating a mismatch between ideologies and values of the pre-colonial, colonial, and the post-independent PAS. Hence, over the years, this disappearance and disparity of values persists between different eras of PAS as well as between PAS and the social milieu within which it operates and to which its people belong to, affecting the performance of PAS.

Values are often regarded as a representation of culture (Hofstede 1980; Maznevski et al. 2002) and as a fundamental cognitive mechanism underlying human cognition, decisions, and actions and thus a predisposition of human behavior (Meglino and Ravlin 1998; Rokeach 1973). Having embedded in individual and organizational entities as a part of knowledge, values bring conscious awareness and understanding of what is 'right' or 'best' and offer a frame of reference to act upon (Avedisian and Bennet 2010; Bennet and Bennet 2008). Thus, an exploration into values offers meaningful and valid grounds for searching insights from indigenous knowledge, which is said to be much more familiar, appropriate, and sustainable in a given society (Senanayake 2006). Therefore, exploration of both indigenous and contemporary organizational values would be a meaningful approach to explain the prevailing performance gaps in PAS and in seeking solutions to the problem. Being a proxy to culture, values are often taken as a reflection of cultural knowledge and understanding, either in organizational or social contexts (Morris 2014; Whitely and England 1977). Knowledge embedded in socio-cultural grounds throughout history carries the essence of knowledge native to that society. This suggestion of revisiting indigenous knowledge and values as part of a possible solution to the current dilemma in PAS is also based on the experiences of countries that had utilized indigenous knowledge that is tacitly embedded in their societies for better results in the management of people and organizations in the modern-day.

Against this backdrop, we will investigate whether there is any aspect of indigenous knowledge that can be brought forward to contemporary PAS in the form of values to guide behaviours of its employees that can then be included as part of a

value declaration by PAS. As it is mainly Buddhist philosophy that underlies indigenous knowledge, we cannot detach indigenous knowledge from Buddhist philosophy. Hence, we turn to Buddhist philosophy and practices that had gotten lost in PAS with colonization and decolonization, yet remain in various forms in broader society, to find answers for the common criticisms surrounding the contemporary PAS. Our effort to find answers through revisiting the Buddhist philosophy is further supported and rationalized by the fact that 80.5% of the employees in the PAS are Buddhists (Public Employment 2016). Further, we turn to Buddhism, also in a context where concepts and practices derived from Buddhism are being increasingly discussed and applied in management, even in the West, as a possible solution to some of the management problems contemporary organizations face (e.g., Chung 2017; Rarick 2007; Suen et al. 2007). Besides, scholars such as Lynch et al. (1997) advocate the need for exploring accumulated spiritual wisdom–through different religious beliefs–as an alternative basis upon which to examine the values of PAS.

However, we emphasize that our treatise here is not to promote Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism or ethnocentrism, but to identify some indigenous values which happen to be founded on Buddhist philosophy over ages, that can be incorporated into contemporary PAS to see whether that can address some of common criticisms towards PAS such as bribery, ineffectiveness, and nepotism. We are mindful of the disparagement towards certain state policy initiatives, such as making Sinhalese the national language, an action that is often criticized as an act that promoted ethnic division leading to a 30-year-old war (DeVotta 2007). Hence, our effort is not to make Buddhist philosophy a part of the PAS, or to perpetuate Buddhist supremacy in PAS, but to consider how some of the values that had proven successful during the indigenous PAS which also are coming from Buddhist philosophy can be reintroduced to the contemporary PAS without another divide between the different religions or ethnicities. Here Buddhist philosophy is co-incidental to our agenda, not the driver. Hence, we are specifically careful to revisit and propose values that are widely shared and not in contradiction with any other religions in the country. Moreover, we are not suggesting that revising indigenous knowledge and values are the only or the main way to address performance issues of contemporary PAS, but rather, that it will provide one avenue (among many) and an alternative to address the issues.

It is also noteworthy that indigenous values founded on Buddhist teachings and practices as well as rituals have transcended different eras and still largely exist in broader society in different forms and levels. Yet, the segregations of life of people in practicing these values as well as greater emphasis on the form, practices and rituals rather than underlying value philosophy is clearly evident, leading to these indigenous values being detached from different spheres such as workplaces, including PAS. For example, people would practice Buddhist values in the temple and would discuss and debate about them commonly in many instances such as death or negative life events (for example, stating that the reason for death or negative life event is *Karma*) but would most often ignore the deep meaning of these values at various celebrations and in spheres such as workplaces. In many instances, the indigenous practices and rituals are given more emphasis ignoring underlying indigenous knowledge or Buddhist philosophy. For example, while Buddhist practices and rituals such as *pirith* chanting

at special events in government organizations are common, underlying Buddhist values such as kindness and understanding, appear to have gotten lost along the way. This is especially so with secularization as a value (Lynch et al. 1997) that has become part and parcel of colonial and post-colonial PAS. It is within this background that we explore deeper into indigenous knowledge and Buddhist philosophy to find answers to some of the issues in contemporary PAS.

11.2 The History and Evolution of the PAS in Sri Lanka

11.2.1 Pre-british Colonization

The history of Sri Lankan PAS goes back to the early civilizations of the country, where chronicles (e.g., *Mahavansa*, *Chulavansa*, *Deepavansa*) and inscriptions bear evidence about a well-organized social organization and systematic governance mechanisms. According to *Mahavansa*; one of the comprehensive chronicles in Sri Lanka, the first organized city had been established by King Parakramabahu in Anuradhapura as early as the third century B.C. Mastery of hydraulic engineering, irrigated agriculture, and construction technology are noticeable features.

Enormous water reservoirs and irrigation schemes that ensured uninterrupted water supply to fields of rice; the staple food, clearly exemplify the ingenuity of ancient hydraulic engineering knowledge. Irrigation works have been praised as the finest systems of ancient Sri Lankan culture (Still 1930). Some of the magnificent monumental structures like *Stupa*, built to honour Lord Buddha, remain the largest such structures in the region, demonstrating the vast indigenous knowledge of construction. For instance, *Jethawana stupa*, with its full height of 121.9 m was once considered as the world's third tallest structure (Silva 1982) and its massive volume of 233,000 cubic meters, still makes it the largest brick structure in the world. Indeed, there should have been an effective administrative mechanism that enabled all these endeavors. Essentially all this evidence are reflections of an effective PAS that was in operation through the rule by the King and *Rajakariya* system (explained in detail below).

During this pre-British colonization era, the country was headed by the King–who literally owned all land in the country–and subordinated by his Ministers who governed rural geographical administrative units (Dewaraja 1995). The country was under the Kandyan Kingdom in the sixteenth century, just before British colonization, had its own political, economic, and social organization with a decentralized but well-integrated administrative mechanism of functional departments and geographical divisions. The social organization was departmentalized functionally by the occupational groups or service guilds such as farmers, blacksmiths, stonemasons, and carpenters based on caste system. The kingdom was divided into nine provinces, wherein each territory, there were caste-based service guilds dedicated to providing

specific services (D'Oyly 1929). Dewaraja (1985) views this administrative organization as a territorial one with a functional division at the bottom of the administrative ladder.

There were no written laws (Hayley 1923), and the entire controlling mechanism was based on conventions and customs (Amerasinghe 1999; Coomaraswamy 1908; Jennings 1952; Percival 1805). These conventions and customs were mainly founded on Buddhist philosophy, and Buddhism was inseparable from rule of the kingdom (Kemper 1984). Sri Lankan Kings have all been Buddhists. Hence, Buddhist philosophy (Damma) played a major role in governing the kingdom. Though king and higher administrative functionaries possessed judicial powers together with the authority of law enforcement (Dewaraja 1985), such powers and authorities have been delegated to chieftains as well as to communal bodies (Hayley 1923; Karunanada 2006; Ryan 1953). Buddhist monks too played a main part in administration and politics, with Buddhist monastic entities becoming self-sufficient economic entities through the income they received from the lands granted to them by the king and *Rajakariya* system, thereby playing a dual role in religious and secular administration (Abeywardana et al. 2018; Gunawardana 1971). Humanistic and flexible features too were very much evident in the manner the country was governed. For instance, the caste system that prevailed in pre-colonial Sri Lanka has been distinguished from similar systems in other countries, for its mild nature (Hayley 1923; Ryan 1953).

The citizens of the country were engaged in compulsory service to the king, through an administrative system called *Rajakariya*, which was founded on the caste system, ordered on a social hierarchy of importance. *Rajakariya system* made public service compulsory for every citizen through performing his/ her traditional occupation. Karunananda (2006) documents how every individual, from his birth, belonged to a particular caste, based on their family's occupation, to serve the formal government and the king (Pieris 1956). In return, they received the rights over land and water, which secured their livelihoods and assured their economic capacity. In the absence of any written rules and regulations, the *Rajakariya* system depended on strong conventions and traditions and this service-reward relationship. As such, the integrated mechanism of caste and *Rajakariya*, with the strong emotional attachment and respect to tradition, made every citizen part and parcel of the administrative organization. With the prerogative ownership of occupations and the respect towards tradition, members had developed a strong sense of mutual obligation, leading them towards voluntarily committed and accountable performances based on mutually trusted relationships rather than a formal contract.

In 1505, the first Europeans, the Portuguese, arrived in Ceylon. After almost a century, Dutch took over the land in 1658, they were able to dominate the Maritime Provinces only and hence, contributed very little in the sphere of government and administration. Their administrative mechanisms were superimposed partly upon indigenous governance structures. Yet, they initiated changes in trade and economics, religion and culture, politics, law, and administration fields.

11.2.2 British Colonization

Unlike the advent of Portuguese and Dutch, the advent of the British in 1796 changed the systems of the country drastically, with PAS being no different. While at the beginning of their rule, British accepted the *Rajakariya* system, changes were introduced to establish a more formalized PAS with their need to build a commercial economic system. Accordingly, through reforms made by the Colebrook Commission in 1832, the *Rajakariya* System was abolished, and the CCS was established, marking the birth of contemporary PAS in Sri Lanka. CCS was first established with a centralized bureaucratic system and followed by a series of reforms that took place in 1912, 1920, 1924, 1931, and 1947, and gradually transformed into a more democratized bureaucratic organization. During this period, functional departmentalization was extended with several newly established departments.

At the time of establishment of CCS, all the citizens were direct stakeholders of the administrative mechanism through *Rajakariya.* They had a definite role to play which made them part and parcel of the system, and its functioning while assuring their livelihood through the service-reward link. With the establishment of CCS, people were detached from their traditional duties and thus from the direct and active role they played as a part of the native administrative mechanism. In Brohier's (1972) words, "what was everybody's business earlier, became nobody's business" after abolishing traditional systems. People lost the autonomy and psychological ownership of traditional duties together with the bond they had to perform properly. The new system offered a job rather than a role, creating a gap between the job and the person.

The human resource (HR) base of the CCS was expanded gradually, allowing a limited number of selected locals to enter into the service. According to Warnapala (1974), only 12% of the HR of PAS was composed of Sri Lankans in 1920, where the proportion increased up to 32% during the next five years. However, during the latter stage of British administration, the local population was allowed to formally enter the administrative organization. This has been enabled partly with the introduction of English language by British for day-to-day communication as well as for official duties during their reign. This introduction of English language to Sri Lankan local community affected not only the medium of communication but also the system of education. Prasangani (2014) reports, "They (British) also changed the temple centered education system into the English based education system through the expansion of schools around the country in an attempt to produce English speaking locals who could assist them in their daily duties and law enforcement" (p. 194). In addition, Christianity was strengthened in the country while encouraging citizens to convert to Christianity, especially focusing on an elite group of people. A well-known example of this kind in history is the conversion of King Don Juan Dharmapala (the last King of Kotte Kingdom, Sri Lanka) (Schmalz 2019). Christians and those conversant in English language were seen as more suitable and loyal candidates for administrative positions. Thus, language and religion can be seen as

factors that supported the creation of a westernized elite group of natives who could easily secure jobs in PAS because of their allegiance to the Western rulers.

It also enforced class stratification in a new way, leaving behind the majority of the country's people in a chaotic condition. This situation promoted individualistic interests among people where the idea that loyalty towards those in power would bring advantages was acknowledged. Though entry restrictions were removed by post-independence reforms, the same attitudes continued, but differently. Post-independence reforms have been largely criticized for politicizing the PAS of the country (Gunasekara and Anedo 2018; Navaratna-Bandara 2010). This replaced British authorities with local politicians leaving public officers to seek patronage of politicians in performing their duties instead of an exemplary leadership.

11.2.3 Post/de-colonization

Sri Lanka regained its independence in 1948, and since then, the PAS of the country has undergone a series of reforms, even after which the fundamentals of the system were said to continue mirroring the British system (Oberst 1986). However, post-colonial constitutional reforms are criticized for politicizing public service (Priyantha et al. 2019).

Contemporary PAS of Sri Lanka operates at central, provincial, district, and divisional levels performing as the main agency of handling governments' affairs concerning framing and implementation of policy, public affairs, law and order, and general administration of development agenda. It derives power from the constitution through the executive arm of the State. But even today, PAS of the country is viewed as a bi-product or offshoot of British rule (Nanayakkara 2015), standing on the tripod of colonial legacies, local inventions, and components borrowed from global reform waves (Priyantha et al. 2019).

The waves of new public management (NPM) started to make changes across PAS of Sri Lanka during the late 1980s when governments were encouraged to initiate NPM reforms with the sponsorships of international donor agencies like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (Samaratunge and Beninington 2002; Priyantha et al. 2019). NPM emphasized economic rationalism (Hughes 1998) and market-oriented governance (Haque 2001) and needed fundamental changes in power structures of the system as well as attitudinal changes on the part of its bureaucrats (Samaratunge and Beninington 2002). However, welfare-oriented system of public administration prevailing in the country was not easily transformed into the condition expected by NPM reforms. After decades, NPM efforts are seen as failures or near-failures today (Samaratunge and Beninington 2002; Samaratunge and Wijewardene 2009; Priyantha et al. 2019), indicated by the prevailing high corruption rates (Priyantha et al. 2019), and inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Thus, the concern on integrated governance emerged, emphasizing the need for civil partnerships and collaborations as an alternative to mismatches and weaknesses of NPM (Samaratunge and Wijewardene 2009). Despite the importance given to the underlying public values

that represent citizens' expectations from public sector (Samaratunge and Wijewardene 2009), country-specific studies on such values embedded in Sri Lankan society are hardly found.

All in all, it is clear from the above explanation that PAS had undergone drastic changes throughout the three eras. At the time when British PAS was introduced (i.e., in the indigenous PAS), all members of the social organization were direct stakeholders in the administrative mechanism founded on Buddhist philosophy. They had a definite role to play through the *Rajakariya* system, and where Buddhist values were followed as guidelines for their day-to-day life as well as work life. With the establishment of the British PAS, people were detached from their traditional duties and thus from direct and active role they played as a part of indigenous PAS. People lost the autonomy and psychological ownership of traditional duties together with the bond they had to execute tasks and render services. A job rather than a role in society was offered by the new system creating a gap between the job and the person. The service relationships appeared to be master-attendant rather than being leader-member as earlier. And with the secularized values that were introduced to the colonial PAS, and other social, political, and economic changes that took place led to a slow erosion of Buddhist values that underlay the work and work practices of indigenous PAS. During the post-colonial era, people became accustomed to being submissive and dependent on superiors, including political authorities, where political responsiveness became a concern for the PAS (Navaratna-Bandara et al. 2010). Reforms such as the abolition of the Ceylon Civil Service, the Establishment of Sri Lanka Administrative Service, and the establishment of a separate Ministry for public administration are all said to be the milestones of strengthening politicians' grip on administrative system (Navaratna-Bandara et al. 2010). With politicians' attempts to secure high positions for their followers, a ground was created for valuing political patronage, making the PAS an employment hub for political patronage (Gunasekara and Anedo 2018). Also, the relationship PAS is having with those who are serving for it has been converted into a clear 'employee-employer' relationship with the contractual affiliations. The indigenous values that were lost during the colonization never reemerged formally, and the secularized values continued to dominate the contemporary PAS.

11.3   Looking for Indigenous Values for the PAS Through Buddhist Philosophy

Buddhist philosophy explains the nature of knowledge, reality, and existence in terms of Buddha *Dhamma* which leads to the realization of three fundamental truths: three signata (*tilakkhana*), i.e. *anicca* (impermanence, transience, or transitoriness), *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness, ill, suffering or painfulness), and *anatta* (non-self, absence of a permanent ego, or insubstantiality) (Wijesekera 1960). Thus, Buddhist concepts guide its followers towards spiritual training, which requires studying,

analyzing and observing the inner nature of his/her mind. Accordingly, Buddhist philosophy, as a way of life, directs human beings to lead a moral life, to be mindful and aware of their thoughts and actions, and to develop wisdom and understanding to achieve true happiness in life. Vreeland (2011) pinpoints four seals that distinguish Buddhism from other philosophical schools. They are, (a) all conditioned things are impermanent and transient, (b) the root cause of our existence is the fundamental ignorance (grasping at a sense of self–*Samsara*) (c) all phenomena are devoid of selfhood, and (d) *nirvan*a (emancipation/enlightenment) is the true peace.

A radical difference between Buddhism and other concerns is believed to be the dependent origination (Vreeland 2011), i.e. the belief that everything depends on causes and conditions (law of causality) and indeterminism (Chan and Morre 1956).[2] These are the fundamental principles of Buddhist philosophy and are intertwined to explain the birth and existence of living beings. According to the theory of causal sequence in Buddhism, living beings pass a "wheel of life" which may begin with "ignorance" or "unconscious deeds" performed by them (*Karma*), which creates energy to take them to the next stage in this life or afterlife. This wheel (cycle) is well noted by Chan and Morre (1956), "every stage is a cause when seen from the effect, and every stage is an effect when seen from the cause" (p. 28). The principle of indeterminism posits that living beings determine their nature and existence through their actions throughout the series of wheels of life (*Sansara*). These fundamental principles of Buddhist philosophy have led to inculcate several values in human beings and encouraged adherence to ethical guidelines in their life course. In line with these, the *Abhidhamma* (Buddha's teaching) have reported nine mental properties to be cultivated (i.e. confidence, prudence, discretion, disinterestedness, amity, the balance of mind, calming of the bodily impulses, mindfulness, and buoyancy of these). Further, fourteen immoral mental states (to be avoided) have been noted as dullness, impudence, recklessness of consequences, distraction, greed, the error of judgment, conceit, hate, envy, selfishness, worry, sloth, torpor, and perplexity (Wijesekera 1960, pp. 30–31). Buddhists believe that they are responsible for the quality of their lives, their happiness, and their resources (Vreeland 2011, p. 7). True peace and happiness in life, as per Buddhist philosophy, come through compassion, and thus it becomes the meaning of life.

While Buddhism is about life in general, it also provides a code of practice for its followers, which was adopted by Kings during the pre-colonial era in managing the country (Amarasinghe 2009), and now as modern management practices in many countries (e.g. Chung 2017; Rarick 2007; Suen et al. 2007).

Within this Buddhist philosophical backdrop, we have attempted to identify and explain some of these Buddhist values that can be revisited to overcome the negative attributes of the contemporary PAS. We thus focus on righteousness as a core value,

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[2] While we have cited foreign and local authors here (and in other places where we discuss Buddhist philosophy) for the convenience of the readers, we have also referred in detail to the original writings of the Buddhist philosophy such as *Sutra Pitakaya*, *Dhammapadaya* and *Saddamma Rathanwaliya*, as well as used our own knowledge of the subject and common customary practices, in developing our arguments with regard to Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist values throughout this chapter.

where public interest, discipline, democracy, and non-discrimination can be understood as other important values in exploring the adoption/adaption of these Buddhist values to the contemporary PAS. In selecting these five specific values as an example of how indigenous values can be reclaimed, we have particularly looked at the main issues that contemporary PAS face and the possibility of acceptance of these values by other religious groups within PAS. Hence, while we have identified five specific values through Buddhist philosophy practiced during the indigenous times (and in the contemporary society), these values are commonly accepted by religions practised in the country such as Hinduism and Islam. The main issues in contemporary PAS that we are attempting to address by these values are the human inefficiencies and unethical behaviours (e.g. wrong-doings, bribery, harassments, and nepotism), which are extensively highlighted in research (Fernando 2010) as well as in various forums, as crippling contemporary PAS.

11.3.1 Righteousness

Eightfold path (*Arya Ashtangika Marga*) is a representation of the Buddhist way of life. It frames out eight directives, including right view, right intention, right action, right speech, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration that leads a person towards a righteous life through moral conduct, concentration/consciousness, and wisdom. Buddhism identifies the virtues that are to be upheld and evils to be avoided in a person's life in two tenfold collections called ten meritorious deeds (*Dasa Kusal)* and ten non-meritorious deeds (*Dasa Akusal)* respectively. The ten meritorious deeds include giving, transfer of merits to others, rejoicing (accepting or participating) in other's merits, morality, reverence to elders and holy persons, pay homage to religious places, and take care of such places, meditation, listening to *dhamma* discourses, teaching *dhamma*, correcting one's wrong views, especially on *kamma.* On the other hand, the unwholesome and immoral acts have been identified as covetousness or greed for other's belongings, ill-will or hatred, wrong views, lying, slandering, harsh speech, frivolous talk, killing, taking what is not given, not just sexual misconduct, but also excessive pursuit of sense pleasures. Buddhism advises individuals to restrain from these ill-wills while upholding righteousness through wholesome acts.

It is evident that pre-colonial PAS recognized righteousness as a fundamental quality to be considered. For instance, Geiger (1960) states that ten royal virtues (*Dasa Raja Damma*) were well known as essential for a good leader and thus, became a fundamental guideline for governance. Referring to *Saddharma Ratnavali,* an ancient text of Buddhist doctrines belongs to the thirteenth century that document how good kings reigned righteously and impartially*,* Amerasinghe (1999) elaborates the common belief in the system that, if the kingdom was to prosper, the king had to rule righteously and virtuously in accordance with the law. Many inscriptional pieces of evidence prove that the need to be righteous was extended to the other officers who exercise authority in the ancient system by imposing rules to eliminate malpractices.

According to D'Oyly (1929), in the pre-colonial PAS, verbal orders were given by kings forbidding chiefs to receive bribes and do injustice. Accordingly, promoting righteousness in PAS would support the eradication of many of the unacceptable and harmful activities such as bribery or taking part in corruption.

11.3.2 Discipline

Five good conducts (*Panchasila*) are basic codes of ethics observed by Buddhists as the foundation for the path to enlightenment. It includes five precepts, abstinence from destruction of life, abstinence from stealing, abstinence from any form of sexual misconduct, abstinence from false speech, and abstinence from intoxication. Moreover, *Singalowada Sutta*, known as the layman's code of discipline (Narada Thera 1940), provides righteousness-based codes of conduct to different individuals, including employees and employers. According to Weeramanthri (2005), Buddhism shares the concept that the ultimate sovereign of the world will be law (distinct from written rules, related to *dhamma*), which is based on righteousness, rather than a ruler who would presumably use force to enforce his law. By acknowledging these principles, Lord Buddha indicates the importance of the rule of law for the survival and development of a community or country.

Adherence to these codes of conduct was evident during the pre-colonial era. Amerasinghe (1999) points out that when the chronicles state a king ruled justly or with justice, it was a recognition of the fact that he observed the laws and conventions of the land. *Pujavaliya*; a classic Sinhala writing of the thirteenth century, says a king who was unable to comply with the guidelines has no moral authority to administer justice, where *Lak Raja Lo Siritha*; a written directive of customary laws in Sri Lanka, says the Council of Ministers is empowered to take action against a king who indulges in acts of cruelty and unrighteousness by violating the customary law (Amerasinghe 1999). Respecting and adherence to the law was a fundamental shared value in society. People's obligation to maintain self-discipline was more powerful, thus making discipline a strongly embedded value in society, even beyond the formal measures during the pre-colonial era. Referring to the words of Lord Buddha; "Man's earthly life is a necessary consequence of his *kamma*, his former deeds. Earthly position and birth status are products of an immutable law standing at the very core of Buddhist metaphysics." (Cited in Ryan 1953, p.36). He further explains how conscious recognition among individuals of the fact of their birth into such a social segment has become a unique feature of the Sri Lankan indigenous caste system on the understanding of *Kamma*.

Even though numerous acts of indiscipline such as bribery, nepotism, harassment, and inefficiency have been explicitly mentioned as offenses together with respective punishments, these acts of misconduct persist extensively and play a major role behind many of the problems prevailing in contemporary PAS. Hence, it appears that the formal written rules existing in the contemporary PAS on indiscipline are not effective. Thus, we suggest that Buddhist religious guidelines emphasizing discipline

would be a useful ground to awaken employees on the importance of discipline and practicing it in their work-life by making them internal values of the employees. Further, the same guidelines can be utilized to promote self-discipline on the ground of conscious understanding of their behaviour.

11.3.3 Public Interest

Buddhist teachings relating to governance focus on the welfare of subjects. Ten royal virtues discussed above promote *dhamma* into authority, thus ensuring the wellbeing of the people. The concept of four heart-winning qualities (*Sathara Sangraha Vastu*) specifies how a ruler should treat his community. Accordingly, a ruler should be generously giving, speak gentle and soft words, work for the benefit of the public, and treat everyone equally. On the contrary, the concept of four evils (*Sathara Agathi*) stresses the need of avoiding ill-will, hatred, fear, and delusion. Most importantly, Buddhism ensures the betterment of all living beings without limitation to humans. *Mahavansa* reports the words of Arhat Mahinda (the monk who introduced Buddhism to Sri Lanka) in his conversation with King Devanampiyatissa (247-207 BC) at the moment they first met when a delegation headed by Arhat Mahinda arrived in Sri Lanka to establish Buddhism (third century BC), as 'Or great king, the birds of the air and the beasts have as equal rights to live and move about in any part of the land as thou. The lands belong to the people and all living beings; thou art only the guardian of it …' (Geiger and Bode 1912). These words of wisdom were in fact, cited in the judgment of R. Amarasinghe, J., Wadugodapitiya, J., Gunasekara J. in Bulankulama and Others v. Secretary, Ministry of Industrial Development and Others (Sri Lanka Law Reports [2000] 3 Sri UR. pp 253–256.), in a dispute with regard to an agreement the government of Sri Lanka had entered into with a foreign company permitting the company to explore and mine a deposit of phosphate. The doctrine of public trust and principles of sustainable development were deeply discussed in the case where the judgment further emphasized that "the task of the law is to convert such wisdom into practical terms…".

The indigenous PAS acknowledged these teachings, where the rulers who practiced them were considered ideal leaders. For instance, Davy (1821) notes that good monarchs avoided evil conduct and practiced heart-winning qualities. The ruler or the leader was expected to uphold ancient laws and protect the weak (Amarasinghe 1999). However, as discussed in many instances, the behaviour of contemporary PAS members is largely criticized for neglecting their role of upholding public trust and public interest. Thus, Buddhist concern on public interest discussed above would create a strong ground for reminding them of the responsibility of working for the betterment of people with genuine intentions. For instance, the above-iterated words of Arhat Mahinda indicate the possibility of such appropriate endeavors of bringing back the indigenous knowledge into contemporary context can be undertaken for ensuring high-quality service in PAS.

11.3.4   Democracy

In Buddhist philosophy, democracy can be understood as a far-reaching concept founded on the ground of mindfulness. In addition to the 'majority rule,' it extends to a condition where freedom of action and thinking is ensured. Basically, Buddhism ensures freedom by assuring free access to all those who engage in righteous conduct upon the correct understanding of the *dhamma*, to the ultimate freedom or *Nirvana*. In *Kalama Sutta*, Lord Buddha introduced certain principles to follow for ensuring the freedom of thought. There he advised not to be led by report, tradition, hearsay, the authority of text, logic, inference, theoretical strength, seeming possibilities, or respect, in accepting new knowledge. Upholding the majority rule, Buddhist teachings acknowledge collective decisions by encouraging meeting and working together in harmony.

Buddhism did not restrict spiritual attainment and encouraged whoever was interested to freely follow the path to *Nirvana*. Thus, the caste or any other social status became largely irrelevant from the point of view of spiritual attainment (Ryan 1953). On this basis, in the indigenous system, democracy was given a broader meaning which is not limited to material and external measures but reached non-material and inner peace of an individual. Yet, structural measures were also not lacking in the system to ensure democracy in its worldly aspect. For instance, the delegation of power was apparent in indigenous governance mechanisms, where powers to make decisions and to settle disputes were granted, to a certain extent, to village level and caste level community institutions. These were known as *Gamsaba* (village-based committees) and *Ratasaba* (community-based committees), respectively, where participatory decision making was practiced.

In addition to the system of parliamentary democracy, the present constitution of the country has declared fundamental rights such as freedom of thought and assembly. Buddhist teachings of democracy discussed above can thus be used to uphold the true meaning of democracy–not limiting it to the constitution–by making it more internal to the employees of contemporary PAS.

11.3.5   Non-discrimination

Lord Buddha opened Buddhism to all, including low caste or high caste nobles, where they all were treated equally in the Buddhist religious institution. As Lord Buddha viewed, just as all the great rivers lose their former names and identities on reaching the great ocean, and reckoned as the great ocean, all the castes lose their former identities upon entering this Buddhist clergy and become the members of one Order (Vithanage 2011). The following stanza, preached by the Lord Buddha in defining how nobleness emerges, offers a fine example for further elaborating non-discrimination as a prominent value in Buddhism.

No man is noble by birth,

No man is ignoble by birth.

Man is noble by his own deeds,

Man is ignoble by his own deeds.

This teaching was extensively embedded in social thought during the pre-colonial era, demonstrated in the behaviour of people's day-to-day lives. While on the onset, it appears as if strict discrimination and differential treatment existed with the caste system, in reality, the teachings of the Buddha ensured that people were also treated equally in many instances. Ryan (1953) notices that people belonging to different castes may eat together in the fields when they are working, even though they maintain the status differences in ceremonial domains. Non-discrimination was ensured in administering justice as well (Amerasinghe 1999). Hence it can be said that coupled with the righteousness emphasized as a key value to be upheld, non-discrimination was practiced in the indigenous PAS with a deeper sense. Yet, the contemporary PAS is largely criticized for treating people differently based on their political, economic, and social capacities. Upholding the moral of the Buddhist doctrine of non-discrimination would support the elimination of such unfair practices while creating a sense of self-dignity in every individual based on his or her righteousness.

Hence, in summing up, it can be seen how, in the absence of a written code of law (Hayley 1923) the entire indigenous PAS in Sri Lanka operated under the guidelines of conventional laws. Yet, the shared values were so powerful to sustain the system for hundreds of years with the voluntary acceptance of people. It was not only the conventional laws but also the values people shared that enforced order in the indigenous system. The force behind adherence to the numerous values espoused in Buddhism is a person's own consciousness and mindfulness, and not the fear of sanctions. However, a mere look at the criticisms on contemporary PAS is sufficient to understand how questionable the actual practices that have been enacted here are, even within a comprehensive framework of laws, rules, and regulations. It indicates that the roots of the issues encountered in contemporary PAS go beyond the structural framework of laws and procedures to a more fundamental issue of internalization of a conscious, and mindful set of values. Thus, giving attention to promoting and strengthening the values discussed above will create a more facilitating ground to enhance the psychological desire of employees to perform their duties effectively, efficiently, and ethically.

11.4 Final Reflections

As evidenced through historical accounts, the abolishment of the rule of the King and Kingdom together with its affiliated systems and gradual and forceful indoctrination into colonial systems, rules, laws, and practices in the local PAS in Sri Lanka have silently crippled the indigenous values inculcated and embedded in the indigenous PAS. Thus, even though majority of public servants remained Buddhists,

values and ethical principles underlying Buddhist philosophy have not been visible in the actions of public servants in contemporary PAS. Instead, socio-cultural, politico-economic transformations which took place through the colonial era into present times have gradually created a PAS that stands neither on a purely indigenous ideology nor a completely western system of values.

As evident in our discussions above, indigenous values ingrained in the Buddhist philosophy depict a broad-based institution of indoctrination. The teachings and practices of righteousness, discipline, public interest, democracy, and non-discrimination at the individual, as well as social level, showcase the grounds for eliminating unethical behaviours such as wrong-doings, bribery, harassment, and nepotism in PAS. Thus, we recognize the possibility of using underlying core values of Buddhist philosophy in recalling and re-infusing Sri Lankan indigenous values to rectify and improve contemporary PAS in post-colonial Sri Lanka. We thus appeal for re-enchanting and re-spritiualising the Weberian disenchanted, rational bureaucratic organization. We remind once again, that these core values are never solely claimed in Buddhist philosophy and are recognized commonly in any civilized society.

There seem to be considerable attempts made at improving Sri Lankan post-colonial PAS, especially through amendments of the constitution, laws, and introduction of new systems through reforms. However, none of these attempts has introduced or incorporated any sort of inculcation of new or indigenous values into the system. Thus, we posit that the gradual re-introduction of indigenous values into existing practices and systems would be an important means for eradicating the deficiencies engraved in contemporary PAS.

We acknowledge that it would not be possible to reintroduce or re-inculcate an entirely new system of values into a generationally and cognitively different society as seen in the post-colony. Therefore, we are pointing to only those already available, broadly-based, unconsciously held systems of values with a philosophical stand. Thus, we posit that a revisit and a gradual re-incorporation of the indigenous value-driven practices into the contemporary management practices would make a breakthrough towards a possible and manageable change of existing PASs. Indeed, how these values be introduced and inculcated in the system needs careful consideration and deliberation.

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Chapter 12
Islamic Ethics and Business in the Postcolonial World

Razi Allah Lone

Abstract This chapter focuses on the interplay of Islamic ethics and business in a world dominated by secular, liberal, and neoliberal worldviews. Using as background the rupture brought about by modernity and accentuated by the colonial experience, in the traditional world that was largely entrenched in a religious cosmology, I underscore the foundational assumptions and ideals of the Islamic worldview in contrast to those of secularism, liberalism, and neoliberalism, and the ethical principles and ethos that emanate from this worldview. The consequences of the secular, liberal, and neoliberal frames for knowledge production and the religious self are highlighted and the primary issues that the dominance of these frames has created in the modern world are also discussed. As an alternative stream of knowledge whose contemporary expressions remain largely entangled in the experiences of post-coloniality, the Islamic Weltanschauung, when understood in its own right, has a distinct position on ethics and how they relate to business. In the context of application, I argue that Islamic banking, which as a theoretically distinct alternative to conventional banking is anchored in Islamic ethics, and wherein the original intent was to bring about social justice and redistribution, became subservient to the imperatives of neoliberalism, which rendered the Islamic ethical ideals largely ineffectual. Finally, through a brief analysis of the application of some principles of Islamic ethics in two Pakistani organisations, I set out how these are manifested in the contemporary world of business.

Keywords Islamic ethics · Business · Postcolonial · Islamic banking · Neoliberalism

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12.1 Introduction

In a world where moral failures are rife, particularly in the realm of business, ethics as a discipline gains salience. While there is a sizeable literature on the subject of business and ethics within non-religious frameworks (Brenkert 2019), the importance of religion as a source of moral principles, in business and management, has not been properly realized (Buren et al. 2019). Taking the example of Islam, studies dealing with the Islamic perspective on business ethics are scant (Ali 2014), and much of this literature's framing of Islamic business ethics can be too narrow. Questions of ontological and epistemological significance and how answers to such questions in the Islamic framework sit with the dominant economic ideology are not frequently dealt with. To be sure, there are studies (Ali 2015; Choudhury 2019) that engage with deeper issues in a philosophically nuanced manner, but there is still much that needs to be done to present a comprehensive and rigorously argued Islamic perspective. This chapter takes a small step in that direction by focusing on the interplay of Islamic ethics and business in a world dominated by the secular, liberal, and neoliberal worldviews in the post-colonial context.

Notwithstanding their emphasis on prescriptions and proscriptions contained in the Islamic textual sources, many academic works dealing with the Islamic perspective on business remain mired in the neoliberal social imaginary. One possible reason could be the colonial encounter, which installed an epistemology that 'has sired a new regime of knowledge production and consumption of global proportions that was defining and proclaiming its truths (e.g., its notion of progress as largely building machines and advancing science) to be universal' (Khan and Naguib 2019, p. 90). Alternatives that challenged these pretensions to universality were denigrated and stifled. This epistemic violence continues till today and has, in no small measure, impacted the field of management and organisation studies of which business ethics is a part.

Using as background the rupture, brought about by modernity, and accentuated by the colonial experience, in the traditional world whose ethos were largely entrenched in a religious cosmology, I argue that the Islamic conception of human and his place in the world is radically different from a liberal and neoliberal conception. By foregrounding the foundational assumptions of the Islamic worldview, in contrast to those of secularism, liberalism, and neoliberalism, and the ethical principles that emanate from it, I proffer a broad view of Islamic ethics vis-à-vis business.

In addition, employing the example of Islamic banking and finance, I argue that efforts to develop and actualise religiously guided alternatives in the context of the neoliberal imaginary are prone to co-optation and, therefore, a holistic approach is needed to conceive of and implement such alternatives. Finally, a brief analysis of the application of certain principles of Islamic ethics in two organisations in the Pakistani context is presented. While it may be difficult to identify examples that epitomise the Islamic ideals in the neoliberal and postcolonial milieu, it may still be possible to cite instances of attempts by organisations to implement some of the guiding principles enshrined in the Islamic worldview.

12.2   The Secular, Liberal, and Neoliberal Worldviews

Teasing out the principles and values of the secular, liberal, and neoliberal worldviews and juxtaposing them with those inherent in the Islamic Weltanschauung provide the necessary backdrop for fully understanding the ethical consciousness that pervades the Islamic approach to business, and life more generally. One of the main concerns of human life is to find meaning. While work is a central activity through which meaning is found, it cannot be viewed in isolation and is rather one aspect of a meaningful existence (Chalofsky and Cavallaro 2013). Below, it is argued that the secular, liberal, and neoliberal worldviews are not capable of producing meaning and are, therefore, inimical to the traditions and modes of thought wherein meaning and purpose take center stage.

12.2.1   The Secular Cosmic Imaginary

The ontological imagination in the secular age is of a universe that is material and bereft of meaning. The word secular, as an 'epistemic category' (Asad 2003), is used to denote a conception of the good life that is severed from traditional or religious ethics and is anchored in concerns that are wholly this-worldly. Separation of the immanent from the transcendent, as it took root in the West, became the primary lens through which social and political life came to be viewed, and it culminated in the understanding '… that the "lower," immanent or secular, order is all that there is and that the higher, or transcendent, is a human invention' (Taylor 2011, p. 33). Understood this way, 'secular' becomes one of the defining principles, which also include, inter alia, moral autonomy, consumerism, and market freedom, of the modern condition that admits only the scientific/rational as the universally applicable way of managing the public sphere, which is to be disassociated from the private realm of religion (Nandy 2002).

We can appreciate it better by employing the concepts of cosmic and social imaginaries as explicated by Charles Taylor. Whereas the functioning of a society is based on the 'generally shared background understandings' (Taylor 2007, p. 323), which constitute the social imaginary, the cosmic imaginary is tied to the way the world is viewed or imagined. It is not fixed and can undergo change through reconfiguration, an instance of which is the transformation of an enchanted world involving spirits and supernatural forces into a disenchanted and demystified one. This civilizational change took place over a considerable period, a significant aspect of which is that 'we have moved from a world which is encompassed within certain bounds and static to one which is vast, feels infinite, and is in the midst of an evolution spread over aeons' (Fennell 2017, p. 123).

In the previous cosmic imaginary, one could employ the understanding of cosmos '(such as portrayed by Platonic forms, Aristotelian ends, or the Biblical account of creation) in which things and events are representative of an overarching order'

(Fennell 2017, p. 124), but now we have a universe that is vast and devoid of any plan. A purportedly mature understanding of this universe is based on scientific premises and is dismissive of illusions such as religion and the reality of moral ideals. It is evident that, epistemologically, this cosmic imaginary has no place for the transcendent. In Lowney's words:

> This story has an epistemological basis that generates a false notion of an objective world divorced from our consciousness and its meanings. It starts from a false dichotomy that reinforces a worldview that is split from and closed to transcendent moral sources. (Lowney 2017, pp. 150–151)

This secular cosmic imaginary has pervaded the various spheres of life in Muslim contexts, one of which is the legal system. While colonialism brought with it the legal systems of Western states, which replaced the Islamic legal system (Fadl 2014), many postcolonial Muslim states have attempted to adopt the modern secular ideal, pushed, in most cases, by society's Westernized intellectual elite. This, however, sits uneasy with the way the self is configured by a traditional and religious constellation of ideas and praxes, and gives rise to contestations and resistance by supporters of the Islamic ideal.

12.2.2   *The Liberal Imagination*

I would now present a very brief description of the liberal worldview. Inscribed in the liberal imagination is a particular idea of the individual, predicated upon certain perspectives on nature, freedom and 'the good' (Mir 2019). There are two implications of the liberal worldview, pointed out by Mir, that are relevant to this chapter:

> Firstly, the 'atomistic', abstract and disembedded picture of the individual means that social, moral or religious considerations (values and norms) are at best irrelevant to the truth of the individual; at worst they are a severe limitation on his full and free development and must, therefore, be opposed or overcome. (Mir 2019, p. 2)

> A non-teleological approach to human behaviour results in a subjective, private notion of 'the good' and, ultimately, to the belief that human nature/identity is, like everything else, a choice, a mere construct. (Mir 2019, p. 2)

A comprehensive view of the good life is not the concern of this liberal framework, and it focuses instead on arrangements that ensure fairness in procedures as they relate to distribution of goods.

12.2.3 The Neoliberal Frame and Modern Business and Management

After this brief overview of the secular and the liberal, it is pertinent to discuss the philosophical underpinnings and ideological moorings of modern business organisation. The structuration of modern organisations and conception of individuals working in them are anchored in management theories that, in turn, have a specific view of the individual and society, based on modern economic theory. This theory is situated within the liberal frame of reference (Mir 2019) and has had the deepest influence on management (Melé and Cantón 2014). In this view, a person's fundamental characteristics are taken to be self-interest, 'aversion to labour' and 'the desire of the present enjoyment of costly indulgences' (Mele and Canton 2014, p. 13).

This idea of the human, the homo economicus, is of a being driven by a calculative rationality that has no place for asking why an action is to be undertaken but only how to use available means for maximizing efficiency; and this rationality reduces human relationships to the level of the instrumental. A strong sense of individualism ties into this conception of the human, and society is viewed as an aggregation of individuals who interact and cooperate for the sake of their personal interests (Mises 2007). A consequence of this view is that moral responsibility becomes an alien idea and economic decisions are deemed value-free. Unless self-motivated behavior and rules for social control employed to preserve order and sustain interactions in the market are interpreted as moral, it is not possible to speak of values, ethics, and responsibility towards society in this worldview. A particularly damaging aspect of this discourse is that it is performative in that we act in accordance with its descriptions. Wilson and Dixon relate this point to organisations by arguing that 'modern economic theory has provided a blueprint via which organisations today are constructed, and via us going through our motions within these settings, has given our economic agency the shape that it has' (Dixon and Wilson 2012, p. 110).

The relationship between this liberal and neoliberal metaphysic and construction of the moral self is cogently articulated by Wael Hallaq, an expert in Islamic law and Islamic intellectual history, whose research engages with, inter alia, the epistemic ruptures produced by the social, political, and historical forces attendant on the rise and spread of modernity:

> The modern constitution of moral value rests on a posited metaphysic of individual freedom and rationality that in turn inheres in an enveloping political and capitalist system of value that shapes the qualities, and therefore *specific types*, of freedom and rationality—all this being a process formative of the self but one that was kept distinct from *that* (unacknowledged) metaphysic. (Hallaq 2018, p. 244)

As an example, if we relate this modern constitution of moral self to the practice of philanthropy in business organisations, we can observe the decoupling of this fundamental human value from 'moral technologies of the self' (Hallaq 2018, p. 44) and their subordination to the pursuit of profit and creation of a public image. The neoliberal social imaginary transmogrifies the inner dimensions of spirituality and pristine ethical considerations into means of securing material interests.

12.3   Secular, Liberal, and Neoliberal Worldviews: Consequences and Issues

Based on the ideas presented above, two significant consequences of the modern condition can be pointed out. One is what Taylor calls 'loss of meaning, the fading of moral horizons' (Taylor 2018, p. 10), which makes it difficult to construct 'viable new meanings deep enough to provide fullness' (Lowney 2017, p. 146). The second is the dominance of instrumental reason, with which 'the fear is that things that ought to be determined by other criteria will be decided in terms of efficiency or 'cost–benefit' analysis' (Taylor 2018, p. 5).

These secular, liberal, and neoliberal frames of reference do not allow much room for alternative modes of thought, and being part of the constitutive elements of modernity, they have colonized the postcolonial social and intellectual milieux for, as Hallaq has pointed out, 'colonialism is not merely a derivative of modernity but one that constitutes modernity's very structures' (Hallaq 2018, p. 31). It is only through the epistemological lens of the Global North that theorising becomes largely thinkable, while other lenses, particularly a religious one, are consigned to the realm of the enchanted. In other words, the colonial experience was not merely political and economic but also had and continues to have a deep imprint on the intellectual consciousness and educational endeavors of the colonized. Thus, the task at hand is to decolonize the erstwhile colonies by de-colonizing the production of knowledge and intellectual engagements.

For the religious individual whose connection with his tradition has been severed and who is unable to think about values in a coherent manner but wants to find a way in this predicament of modernity, the task is challenging. Perhaps MacIntyre's suggestion is apt. In Lowney's words, it is 'to sample different traditions until one strikes a chord and he begins to feel some resonance with its ideas. He might then immerse himself in its discussions and authentically find a home in that ongoing tradition of inquiry' (Lowney 2017, p. 84). Through immersion in this internal dialogue about the fundamental questions of existence, such as the meaning of being human and our ultimate ends, the recovery of an authentic alternative ethical worldview is possible.

12.3.1   Primary Ethical Issues in the Modern World

I now turn to some of the major ethical issues brought on by neoliberalism. One major issue we face today is the seemingly inexorable juggernaut called the market that has invaded every aspect of our lives. Questions of equitability and sanctity are raised as a consequence of this hegemonic control of our lives by a 'market society' (Polanyi 2001) and the nature of such questions is inherently ethical. For those who are unrepresented in a system that privileges market mechanisms and whose preferences are barely taken into consideration, such as the dispossessed, and

when only the short-term becomes the main reference point, equitable outcomes can hardly be envisaged. With the corruption of the intrinsic value of human endeavors by the pervasive influence of the market (Sandel 2012), money is positioned as the dominant extrinsic motivator leaving no room for intrinsic motivation; it becomes a cornerstone of the 'materialistic' model of management. In this 'materialistic' model, profit is used as the sole indicator of success but it 'reflects the values of the strongest stakeholders, favors preferences concerning the here and now, and presupposes the reducibility of all kind of values to a monetary form' (Zsolnai 2015, p. 16).

Another serious issue is that of a widening chasm between a miniscule minority that controls vast amounts of wealth and resources and the mass of humanity that struggles with a life of penury, dispossession, and servitude. According to Thomas Piketty, 'there is little evidence that labor's share in national income has increased significantly in a very long time' (Piketty 2014, p. 22), and inherited wealth continues to play a major role in determining prospects. Questions of equality and distributive justice become relevant in this context and answering them requires a deep engagement with competing ethical perspectives.

One major concern is the ascent of consumerism as the ultimate purpose of life, and conflation of fulfilment in life with consumption, particularly conspicuous consumption, even if a large number of people cannot consume freely. Questions of practical significance as well as more foundational ones attend to this challenge and assume great ethical import. Much of the blame for the current degradation of environment can be apportioned to consumerism. This in turn is inextricably linked to the goals we set for ourselves, conditioned by the prevalent conceptions of the good life.

12.4   The Islamic Weltanschauung

The central aim of presenting the defining assumptions of the secular, liberal, and neoliberal worldviews was to both lay bare the values and concepts assimilated by many, if not most, in a globalized world and provide a contrast with the Islamic conceptualization of life and its purpose. It is at times propounded that there are overlaps between the theologically derived moral values of Islam and those operative in the modern secular-liberal society. What is ignored in this translation of one set of values into another is the rupture that made the traditional world, which drew meaning within a transcendent frame, utterly incommensurate with the modern. This rupture created a modern-secular world with its own genealogy, and ontological and epistemological foundations as delineated above. When contrasted with the individualist orientation of the self that embodies an individualist morality, the Islamic conception of the self is found to be rooted in a distinct idea of the good life.

We have to begin by inquiring about Islam's idea of the good life, and it is through this inquiry that we can explore an alternative way of imagining humans, human nature, and the place of the social in human life and endeavors. Most religions share a view of the human marked by a spiritual capacity that is neither reducible to nor explained by the material. In the Islamic worldview, not only do the immanent and

transcendent interpenetrate, but the former is also inexplicable and bereft of meaning without reference to the latter.

The *Qur'an* as the foundational text of Islam creates an inextricable link between belief in one God and a moral sensibility that encompasses all facets of a person's life. If outward manifestations of piety do not enhance or are not grounded in the moral imperative, it points to a fundamental disconnect that requires serious consideration. As Khaled Abou El Fadl notes, the Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have repeatedly emphasized that 'Islam is inseparable from ethics, or that the very essence of Islam is an ethical character and that the most faithful and pious Muslim is one who enjoys the most ethical character or whose conduct is the most ethical' (Fadl 2014, p. 29).

The mainstay of the Islamic worldview is the idea of sovereignty of God, who has devolved upon humans the role of vicegerent or custodian, which places a heavy moral burden on them. Thus, at the very core of the idea of a human being in this conception is the primacy of duty and not right, which sets it apart from the liberal, anthropocentric frame of reference. While the modern preoccupation with rights spawned a charter that lays claim to universality, what has been pushed down in the hierarchy of morals is the fundamental notion of responsibility that assumes crucial significance in the Islamic worldview. If the structuration of the self is posited as pivotal in how the ethical content of decisions is concretized, then the development of an Islamic self becomes a sine qua non for truly ethical conduct.

Another fundamental idea is God's ownership of all that exists, which puts into perspective the rights that the poor have in the wealth of those whom God has granted it. This means that 'God's compassion is first and foremost bestowed on the poor, the orphans, and the wretched of the earth. The poor's right was nothing short of God's right; violate the rights of the poor and you have violated the rights of God' (Hallaq 2018, p. 89).

In the Islamic worldview, there is a centrality of the social, and this relationality is undermined by the structuring assumptions of economic theory that is embedded in a liberal, individualist worldview. In the Islamic world's early interaction with liberalism, which occurred after liberalism took ideological shape in the nineteenth century, the latter manifested itself in various aspects of reality in contexts that were largely colonial (Devji and Kazmi 2017). And it was particularly in the cultural and religious domains that the values of liberalism made inroads. While Muslim intellectuals grappled with liberal ideas in multifarious ways in the postcolonial context, by the end of the last century, it was neoliberalism whose economic vocabulary and social mores were imbricated into the texture of Muslim societies and permeated much of the spectrum of modern Islamic discourse. It should not be surprising, then, that identities in many segments of Muslim societies are now being largely formed through market-oriented, commoditized, impersonal, and individualized processes and mechanisms. Also, the consumption orientation is exerting an influence on how issues of social and political import are viewed from an Islamic lens (Devji and Kazmi 2017).

12.4.1 **Shari'a** *as a Paradigm and Discourse*

The moral force of the Islamic worldview can be ascertained from the fact that *Shari'a* as a paradigm is represented by a law that is wholly moral, and it serves as a means to moral ends. To understand *Shari'a* in its full scope is to appreciate it as a project aimed at developing a society with a foundational moral core that undergirds the legal superstructure. This moral core is infused by the *Qur'an's* preponderant prescription of being and doing good in all aspects of life. Thus, the *Shari'a* is geared towards the construction of a moral self, and it was well-understood that 'the legal was the instrument of the moral, not the other way around' (Hallaq 2018, p. 85). This explains the permeation of not just rules but the attendant ethic that governed those rules in the economic sphere in premodern Muslim societies.

It is worth pointing out that the number of rules in the Muslim scripture is infinitesimal and while those forming part of the corpus of *hadith* (Prophetic traditions), specifically in the realm of the economic and of business, are not inconsiderable, there remains the act of interpretation that relies on the idea of goodness and presupposes the moral self, both of which are to animate the process of interpretation thereby making it an ethical act. To differentiate the moral in the modern and the Islamic imaginary, Hallaq states that 'the modern question as to why be moral did not arise in the same way for Muslim jurists and theologians. Ethics was not a challenge, but a question of how best to put it into practice' (Hallaq 2018, p. 272).

Based on the above exposition of these two contrasting paradigms, it can be argued that both neoliberalism and *Shari'a* are performative discourses with radically different standards and ends. When the latter was the dominant discourse in Muslim lands, it continued to exert a thrust on the Muslim consciousness even if lived reality did not always fully measure up to every standard. Through the example of the idea of limited liability, we can comprehend why, despite fostering the development of varied and complex forms of business organisation and instruments, the *Shari'a* did not allow it to take hold; it was the liability of the individual, which has a strong moral reference, that could not be set aside. Even though profit and wealth were assigned importance in Islam, their status was secondary to the fundamental value of moral responsibility and accountability.

12.5 Islamic Business Ethics: Philosophy and Principles

The fissure between neoliberal and Islamic ideals brings into relief an important aspect of the diversity that exists in postcolonial locations. As an alternative stream of knowledge whose contemporary expressions are entangled in the experiences of post-coloniality, the Islamic intellectual tradition, when understood in its own right, has a distinct position on ethics and how they relate to business, which, I attempt to present below concisely.

As an alternative to the paradigm of business ethics grounded in such theories as utilitarianism and Kantianism, which rely on a certain ideation of the individual and the society, as proffered above, spirituality and religion can offer worldviews, philosophies, and imaginaries that reveal a more balanced picture of the self and help restore the rightful place of ethics in communities in general and the sphere of business in particular (Bouckaert 2015). One way of presenting the Islamic perspective on ethics in business is to delineate the rules and prohibitions enshrined in the *Qur'an* and the corpus of *hadith* (Prophetic traditions). While this is a straightforward approach and brings to light normative ethical conduct in Islam, which is a desideratum, without an internally coherent linkage of these rules and principles situated in the overarching ontological and epistemological concerns of the Islamic worldview, they become deracinated and disembodied, and are apt to be shorn of the spirit that brings them to life.

In contradistinction to the self-interested individual posited in modern economic framework, the idea of the self in the Islamic worldview is that of a self-transcendent human who draws strength from directing the heart towards others and being conscious of their needs. Taking focus away from one's own self that is constrained and controlled by passions, ego, and self-indulgence, the idea of self-transcendence steers one in a direction that privileges others and creates value for them. This is not to say that one should completely ignore one's pursuits for personal gains but only that such pursuits are to be situated within the larger network of people and society, and their interests and concerns should find prominence in one's conception of life. Situated in this world with a purpose and a mission, humans cannot be unmindful of the impact of their actions on others. In Chapra's word:

> They would rather tend to have the conviction that they have a mission to perform – the mission of being, in the words of the Qur'an, a 'blessing for mankind' (21:107) by ensuring the well-being of all rather than that of just a few (the top 1 per cent). They would also have the conviction that by striving for the happiness of others they will also be able to ensure their own happiness. (Chapra 2014, p. 69)

12.5.1   Taqwa *as the Moral Anchor*

One of the key moral terms in the *Qur'an* is *Taqwa*, which literally means 'to protect oneself from possible danger or attack' (Adeel 2019, p. 45). Living a life that is morally upright and safeguarding against the dangers of iniquity is the primary function of *Taqwa*. The *Qur'an* points to the innate human ability to discern wickedness from righteousness and uses the word *Taqwa* to denote the latter. A verse makes it evident: 'And (by) the soul and He who proportioned it. And inspired it (with discernment of) its wickedness and its righteousness' (91:7–8). Another *Qur'anic* verse is clear in stating that those who walk the straight path and stay the course are increased in guidance and granted *Taqwa*: 'And those who are guided—He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness' (47:17).

It is through testing people for their *Taqwa*, which is what the worldly life is about, that God sees how righteous they are, and chooses them for a life of eternal bliss in

the hereafter. This test measures *Taqwa* in terms of the disposition to differentiate and choose appropriately. The valued disposition differentiates between right and wrong and makes the right choice by choosing what is right. The choice to remain on the right path increases *Taqwa* but it is attenuated if a wrong choice is made. In other words, if one chooses to do wrong, 'one's ability to distinguish right from wrong and to do the right thing is corrupted or dulled' (Adeel 2019, p. 46).

One key implication of the above for business is the motivating force that anchors all its concerns and values. From an Islamic perspective, as pointed out by Ghazali, 'motivations for ethical transformation are profoundly other-worldly' (Khan and Naguib 2014, p. 69). These motivations are centered on God, heaven, and hell, and are spurred by a strong focus on death. In Islamic scriptural sources, there is an overwhelming emphasis on being mindful of one's death and confronting one's mortality through constant reminders that can make one become truly alive to the inevitability and nearness of death on the one hand, and the impermanence and transitory nature of worldly life on the other. This is not to suggest that it is easy to sacrifice worldly gains and gratifications for God's pleasure and submit one's will to the commands of God. In the *Qur'an*, God has used the metaphor of a transaction to convey what it takes to qualify for paradise: 'God has purchased the persons and possessions of the believers in return for the Garden' (9:111).

12.5.2   Islamic Ethical Principles for Business

The above discussion can be encapsulated in two principles that serve as major foundations of Islamic business ethics. In the words of Abbas J. Ali, 'These are: (1) *ehsan*; and (2) the acquisition of benefits and repulsion of harm. The first, *ehsan*, conveys kindness in dealing with others and a tendency to provide assistance to those in need' (Ali 2015, p. 4).

Balancing one's relationship with God and other human beings is an integral part of *ehsan*. It has great significance in that it sets the frame of reference that creates the willingness to be less concerned with one's own rights and more with others' rights. Citing the famous Sufi master Ibn Arabi, Ali further elaborates on the idea of *ehsan*: 'If you are given something, it is fine if it is less than what you had expected and it is perfectly fine if you take less than what you are entitled to' (Ali 2015, p. 4).

I now turn to the specifics of Islamic ethical principles vis-à-vis business, which can be listed under various rubrics. Some principles include those related to the fundamental tenets of economic organisation such as the proscription of *riba* (interest), obligation of *zakat* (religious tax), and avoidance of *haram* (prohibited) products and activities. Underlying these principles is the goal of upholding those values that are central to the Islamic worldview. For instance, *riba* is prohibited since charging it is deemed *zulm* (injustice); *zakat,* which is the minimum due from every Muslim who fulfils the criteria to pay it, is made mandatory to encourage redistribution of wealth; *haram* (prohibited) products and activities, for instance gambling and alcohol, are

prohibited because of the harms inherent in them. But the ultimate end that these principles serve is what is termed *tazkiyya* (self-purification) in the *Qur'an.*

If a typology of ethical concerns as they relate to business activities in today's world is made it can be framed in terms of the relation between business and society (external stakeholders), and business and employees (internal stakeholders). In order to present a picture, admittedly partial, of the principles that emanate from the textual sources of Islam, a sample of *Qur'anic* verses and Prophetic traditions is adduced below. These verses of the *Qur'an* are applicable to all interactions of a business with its external and internal stakeholders while the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) have been placed under the aforementioned rubrics.

Table 12.1 Sample of *Qur'anic* Verses

Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing. (4:58)
O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts. (5:1)
O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess. (7:31)
And O my people, give full measure and weight in justice and do not deprive the people of their due and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption. (11:85)

Table 12.2 Sample of Prophetic Traditions

Business and Society
The Prophet (pbuh) said: "There are three types of people whom Allah will neither talk to, nor look at, on the Day of Resurrection. They are: 1. A man who takes an oath falsely that he has been offered for his goods so much more than what he is given 2. A man who takes a false oath after the Asr prayer in order to grab a Muslim's property 3. A man who with-holds his superfluous water. Allah will say to him, "Today I will with-hold My Grace from you as you with-held the superfluity of what you had not created."" (Bukhari, n.d.)
The Prophet (pbuh) said: "The trustworthy, honest merchant will be with the martyrs on the Day of Resurrection." (Majah, n.d.)
Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Any man who takes out a loan, having resolved not to pay it back, will meet Allah as a thief." (Majah, n.d.)
Allah's Apostle (pbuh) said: "May Allah's mercy be on him who is lenient in his buying, selling, and in demanding back his money." (Bukhari, n.d.)
Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "The Muslim is the brother of another Muslim, and it is not permissible for a Muslim to sell his brother goods in which there is a defect, without pointing that out to him." (Majah, n.d.)
The Prophet (pbuh) said, "If the Final Hour comes while you have a shoot of a plant in your hands and it is possible to plant it before the Hour comes, you should plant it." (Al-Mufrad, n.d.)

Table 12.2 (continued)

Business and Society
The Messenger of Allah passed by Sa'd when he was performing ablution, and he said: "What is this extravagance?" He said: "Can there be any extravagance in ablution?" He said: "Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river." (Majah, n.d.)

Business and Employees
The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Allah said: I will be an opponent to three types of people on the Day of Resurrection: 1. One who makes a covenant in my name, but proves treacherous 2. One who sells a free person and eats his price 3. One who employs a laborer and takes full work from him but does not pay him for his labour." (Bukhari, n.d.)
The Messenger of Allah said: "Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries". (Majah, n.d.)

The above sample (Tables 12.1 and 12.2) is intended to show the general thrust of Islamic ethical teachings vis-à-vis the various domains in which businesses interact with and impact other stakeholders. The purpose here is to provide the contours of a framework for Islamic ethics in business. It bears repeating that although implementing these principles in business contexts is, in and of itself, an act of piety, without the requisite grounding in the Islamic cosmic and social imaginary, it is difficult to bring to fruition the ultimate ends that these principles are aimed at. Additionally, there is a danger of being subsumed by the dominant imaginary, which can then leave a vacuous adherence to form without much substance.

12.6 Contemporary Applications of Islamic Ethics in Business

The discussion above points to the Islamic ethical imperative and its application in business. Without bringing the holistic framing that makes Islamic ethics a distinctive worldview to bear upon the application of its principles in any arena of life, specifically business in our case, it is quite likely that the redemptive power of the principles, the discourse, and their manifestations will erode, and mere forms devoid of substantive moral content will be left. It is in this context that the case of Islamic banking and finance, as an alternative to mainstream conventional banking, within a neoliberal social imaginary would be instructive.

12.6.1 Islamic Banking and Finance and Its Discontents

As argued above, the Islamic ethical frame, when applied holistically, can create subjects that are constituted primarily as ethical selves who have the potential to

live and work as embodiments of a God-centered and God-conscious philosophy. In business, they would actualize the principles of ethical conduct as a means of fulfilling their ultimate purpose. Nonetheless, when these principles are actualized, they can be co-opted by the dominant economic, political, or social imaginary; Islamic banking and finance may be cited as an instance of this co-optation.

Discursively, Islamic banking is posited as distinct and non-conventional, an alternative to the dominant neoliberal-inspired system of financial markets. The non-conventional nature of the discourse of Islamic banking is derived from the corpus of legal and moral precepts of Islamic *Shari'a*. These precepts are supposed to act as guideposts while Muslims follow a path of virtuous life as reflected, for instance, in their concept of *maslaha* (public interest) as an objective of *Shari'a*, which includes their individual and collective economic behavior. Perhaps the best difference between neoliberal-inspired Western banking and finance and Islamic banking and finance is reflected in the conception of risk allocation and reward. In the former, the creditworthiness of a borrower determines the amount of interest while the latter emphasizes the return of the actual investment project (Iqbal and Llewellyn 2002). In other words, Islamic finance seeks to enact a system of risk and reward sharing that reflects the variable performance of a real asset.

Although at the time of its inception Islamic banking and finance was theorised as a radical alternative, as part of a larger framework of Islamic economics, with the passage of time, the original intent was supplanted by a performative intent or the 'intent to develop and celebrate knowledge which contributes to the production of maximum output for minimum input' (Fournier and Grey 2000, p. 17). It began to seek the same ideals of economic efficiency and shareholder value that are inscribed in the neoliberal framework, straying far from the goals of social justice and redistribution (Ul-Haq et al. 2020). In pursuit of co-existence with the hegemonic conventional banking industry, compromises were made at various levels, and stratagems were transformed into standard financial instruments for the purpose of carrying out transactions, making these stratagems the hallmark of Islamic banks, thereby compelling some Islamic scholars to use the pejorative term 'stratagems banks' for them (Ghias 2013, p. 113).

Due to the widespread acceptability of the argument of necessity, the problem set changed from the development of *Shari'a* based financial contracts to the application of *Shari'a* principles to complex financial transactions in the conventional system. Although a different language of the economy exists in the framework of Islamic banking, it is nullified by the hegemony of the neoliberal discourse. Rather than a focus on the primary criterion of social welfare, return on investment and other similar metrices came to be employed to evaluate the performance of Islamic banks and the industry as a whole. Social benefits, such as redistribution of wealth, that were an integral part of the theoretical formulations of Islamic economics, which informs Islamic banking and finance, seem to have become irrelevant because of the compulsion or eagerness to use the defining features of the neoliberal framework. Consequently, the larger picture of how the secular, liberal, and neoliberal worldviews came to dominate and dictate the terms of reference is ignored, and foundational

assumptions of the Islamic perspective on business are rendered ineffectual by an exclusive focus on borrowed criteria.

In their reappraisal of Islamic finance and social justice, Mir and Khan rightly point out the flaw in restricting the analysis of Islamic banking and finance to a criterion that is derived from the dominant framework. They write: 'In the end, an exclusive focus on financial performance should be considered flawed research. True analyses of Islamic finance are by definition and by compulsion based on multiple disciplines and traditions' (Mir and Khan 2015, p. 237).

12.6.2 Application of Islamic Ethical Principles in Two Contemporary Organisations

The failure of Islamic banking and finance to live up to its own ideals should not be construed as an irredeemable situation for Islamic ethics in business in the contemporary world. While it is difficult to identify a contemporary organisation that can be presented as wholly grounded in the Islamic worldview, I can, however, cite the example of two organisations that have attempted to incorporate some of the fundamental Islamic principles of finance in the orientation of their business practices.

12.6.2.1 Sitara Group

In accordance with the prohibition of interest in Islam, which is among the primary prohibitions in the financial domain and is linked to injustice, a Pakistani conglomerate, Sitara Group, decided in 1999 to rid its business of interest-based financing and replace it with non-interest financial arrangements. It developed and 'issued two successful Musharaka based term finance certificates (MTFC) worth a total size of PKR 510 million (US$ 9 million)' (Ali 2005, p. 72).

Musharaka is a mode of financing, approved by the Prophet (pbuh), whereby capital or labour are combined to create a partnership and in which profits and losses are shared (Iqbal and Mirakhor 2011). Because of its close adherence to the precept of profit and loss sharing, *Musharaka* is considered the preferred Islamic financial instrument (Mirakhor and Zaidi 2007). Given that it's not obligatory to be involved in the management of the project financed through *Musharaka*, the partners can pre-agree on a ratio for profit-sharing that could be different from their investment shares. The losses, however, are 'shared in exact proportion to the capital invested by each party' (Mirakhor and Zaidi 2007, p. 51). Thus, the expectations of the investor or the holder of MTFC is linked to the company's operating profit but if its performance remains poor, and losses are verified, the entire investment can be eroded.

As mentioned above, charging interest is deemed unjust by the *Qur'an* and insofar as financial instruments and transactions are concerned, eschewing interest is an

important ethical requirement for businesses from an Islamic perspective. However, the extent to which the overarching purposes of Islam and the integral elements of its worldview are enshrined in the philosophy of this business organisation can determine the extent to which Islamic ethics of doing business are truly reflected in its vision and mission.

12.6.2.2 Akhuwat

Established in 2001, *Akhuwat* is a Pakistani Islamic microfinance institution (IMFI), which is 'now one of the largest IMFIs in the world, with more than 940,000 active clients' (Afonso and Khan 2019, p. 62). Based on the idea of *qard-al-hasan* (benevolent or gratuitous loan), which is untainted by interest, *Akhuwat* aims to further its social mission of poverty alleviation and foster financial inclusion. According to a recent study of a 15 IMFIs across various countries, *qard hasan* as an exclusive methodology was found to be employed only by *Akhuwat* (Harper 2017), which sets it apart as a contemporary IMFI.

As a redistributive instrument, *qard hasan* is highly recommended in Islam 'for community members who are under financial distress and therefore, has special purpose in the Islamic economic system' (Iqbal and Shafiq 2015, p. 26). The Arabic word *hasan* used in the *Qur'an* for this loan means 'beautiful' and it is stated that it is not made to the recipient but directly to God. The objective of this non-rewarding loan is to help those who do not have any material collateral but whose dignity can be maintained by virtue of the benevolence of those who seek rewards in the hereafter.

Akhuwat, which means solidarity, is run on donations, and engages in redistribution of resources by providing financial means to the poor for establishing their businesses. Among the principles that guide its operations is the principle of encouraging volunteerism for it 'considers that there should be a social contract between the privileged and the underprivileged, a sense of duty between those who have resources towards those who do not' (Afonso and Khan 2019, p. 67). Based on the Islamic ideal of economic and social justice, the organisation seeks to promote the spirit of mutual cooperation. *Akhuwat* uses mosques to disburse loans and relies on the force of religious language to both sanctify the transactions and reinforce the moral obligation to fulfil the loan contract.

12.7 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to bring the Islamic epistemological and ontological perspectives to bear upon the nature of the good life and the purpose of humans, and to relate these perspectives to business organisations. This was attempted by proffering an Islamic perspective on ethics in business that is grounded in the Islamic cosmic and social imaginary. I started with a description of the secular, liberal, and neoliberal worldviews, installed in many societies as a consequence of the colonial

encounter, in order to highlight the radical disjuncture between these worldviews and the Islamic Weltanschauung. With an exclusive focus on this world and a denial of any higher meaning or purpose, the secular order repudiates transcendental moral values. Additionally, in the liberal and neoliberal frames of reference the view of human nature is of a construct and humans are posited as self-interested individuals, captives of an instrumental rationality that steers them towards efficiency maximization and renders relationships instrumental. This creates a moral self that is concerned primarily with material interests.

It was argued in this context that we face serious ethical issues including a hegemonic market taking over all aspects of our lives, a yawning gap between rich and powerful elites and the poor and dispossessed, and an entrenched consumerist orientation that controls our search for meaning and purpose, and dangerously denudes the environment.

In the Islamic worldview, humans are vicegerents of God, who owns everything in the universe, and the idea of moral duty takes center stage in that each individual is accountable to God. Relationship with the social is given precedence over other considerations and the *Shari'a*, which regulates Muslim conduct, mediates this relationship. *Shari'a* as a paradigm of law is fundamentally moral and serves the purpose of constructing a moral self that privileges others and their needs and becomes a blessing for them. In doing so, the moral self becomes increased in *taqwa,* and this life of righteousness is what God wants humans to live with an overwhelming focus on the hereafter.

The two foundational principles of Islamic ethics in business are *ehsan* and the acquisition of benefits and repulsion of harm. *Ehsan* conveys the idea of kindness and points to the readiness of an individual to give others more than their due. The prohibitions and prescriptions of Islam are inextricably linked to the values inherent in the Islamic worldview and help in acquisition of benefits and repulsion of harm. However, because the dominant neoliberal imaginary can subvert the potential of these principles when they are applied in business and economic contexts, there is a need for a holistic approach to the application of these principles and preservation of the values and philosophy enshrined in the Islamic worldview.

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Part IV
Resistance and Re-existence
in Institutionalised Education
and Knowledge

Chapter 13
Language: A Formidable Tool in Preservation of Ancient Tibetan Medicinal System

Himanshi Rajora

Abstract Tibetan medicinal system, known as '*Sowa-Rigpa*' or 'the science of healing' is one of the world's oldest known medicinal systems. Tibet has remained under the rule of various foreign dynasties since twelfth century and is still under illegal occupation by People's Republic of China. In spite of the foreign influence, Tibetan medicinal knowledge which is primarily centered around oral traditions and practices; has today emerged as a symbol of Tibet's national identity. This chapter looks at the role of Tibetan language in preservation of individuality of this traditional and unique Tibetan medicinal system. *Sowa-Rigpa* has today made its roads into the West and has been recognized by the ministry of Ayush of Government of India as a traditional medicinal system. It has today emerged as an envoy of the Tibetan people and their culture in the western countries against the Chinese occupation. This chapter also looks at the various practices of Tibetan medicinal practitioners and role of Men-Tsee-Khang institute in Dharmashala in preservation of *Sowa-Rigpa*; and to analyse the linkages between their practices and the Tibetan language in safeguarding one of the vital pillars of Tibetan culture, i.e., *Sowa-Rigpa*.

Keywords *Sowa-Rigpa* · Medicinal system · Tibetan language ·
Men-Tsee-Khang · Culture/Knowledge preservation strategy · Post-colonial impact

13.1 Introduction

Language essentially serves a dual purpose of communication and 'bearer of culture', in that language, communication and culture are products of each other (Wa Thiong'o 1992). Colonialism has successfully subjugated native cultures of the colonies by manifesting the colonised *as* inferiors. To build a narrative of superiority one of the mechanisms pursued by the colonisers has been the encroachment of the native languages of the colonies (Eames 2019; Dastgoshadeh and Jalilzadeh 2011; Niranjana 1990) and, through this, their culture and indigenous knowledge.

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The colonisers kept imposing the supremacy of their own language and through this their epistemology, by deliberately undervaluing native languages spoken in the colonies and, downplaying native epistemologies, knowledges and also appropriating and stealing indigenous knowledge (Alfarhan 2016; Niranjana 1990).

Broadly, this process of dominating the languages of the colonised has followed two steps. As the first step, the introduction of European literature in the name of Shakespeare, Goethe, Balzac, Tolstoy, and Dickens and Western (Greek) epistemologies has led to the pronouncement of the abled western intellect over the indigenous languages (Wa Thiong'o 1992). Right from the setting up of museums and exhibitions in the nineteenth century to establishing English grammar teaching schools and institutes of higher education, all were to legitimatize Western *progress* and superiority over the colonies (Niranjana, 1990; Prakash 1999/2020).

The second step of this process has involved translating indigenous knowledges of the colonised into European languages and, thereby to say the least, stealing[1] their unique knowledges. The colonised were impelled to translate their classical texts in the language of western discourse to pursue Western acceptance of their knowledges (Prakash 1999/2020). This impacted the colonies by forcing the colonised to understand and express the versions of their own indigenous knowledges and worldviews in a foreign language thus breaking the harmony between their worldviews, understandings and articulations (Alfarhan 2016; Mignolo 2012). Invading the colonies' language heritage limited the learning of the colonised child to mere cerebral exercise of translations imposed on him/her rather than understanding the worldviews, concepts and gaining knowledge of his/her self as lived and living experience (Dastgoshadeh and Jalilzadeh 2011; Mignolo 2012; Prakash 1999/2020). Secondly, it opened the doors for western and corporate entities to access traditional knowledges and then manipulate and exploit it for commercial and extractive purposes, while simultaneously withholding recognition from the owners of these indigenous knowledges. In fact, in this process, the more profound and wholistic socio-cultural and spiritual significance of that knowledge has gotten lost and been erased (Dastgoshadeh and Jalilzadeh 2011; Wa Thiong'o 1992). In this regard, *yoga* as an indigenous knowledge of India illustrates the exploitation of indigenous knowledge. *Yoga*, has become popular as a result of westernization as also India's quest for soft power; however, its popularity and commercialization has led to its weird variants such as *'beer yoga, and cheers Asana'* (Gander 2017) which depicts the misappropriation and oppression of knowledges. Such a vicious circle of controlling the language and exploiting the knowledge has led to the extinction and obliteration of several languages and native cultural practices of people in colonies around the world, which can be attributed to the actions of the colonists (Ka'ai-Mahuta 2011; Snively and Williams 2008). Today English language has taken the position of the third most spoken language in the world and is the most preferred second language in the majority of the countries (Alfarhan 2016; Corradi 2017). The educational journey of a colonised child today is forced to commence in English with a hope to make higher education possible

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[1] Here the word stealing is conceptualised as a stronger and morally reprehensible word rather than the milder theoretical appropriation of the word.

for him/her, to be able to avail the study material which exists mainly in English language (Alfarhan 2016; Guo and Beckett 2007; Pennycook 2002; Snively and Williams 2008). In the case of India, the education system is based on the policy of three-languages as medium of instruction, however English has emerged as the most popular language for teaching in most of the non-government schools. Similarly, Tibetans had to initially grapple with Chinese language and control, and later when they exiled to India, they got under the control of the English language (Guo and Beckett 2007; Phuntsog 2018; Roche 2019).

Gradually disassociating people from their own language has been the apparent route followed by the colonisers to arrive at the destination of controlling native cultural institutions, native literature, traditions and customs, and indigenous ideologies (Dastgoshadeh and Jalilzadeh 2011; Mignolo 2012). In this context, western intelligentsia has advocated *science as the "touchstone of rationality",* and any form of knowledge has been required to be qualified on the scale of rationality and Western epistemic privilege rather than religion (Prakash, 1999, p-7). Citing the logic of creating modernity and rational community by positioning science over religious philosophies, colonisers encroached on ones belief and religious/spiritual ideologies to constitute empirical science as a universal knowledge (Dastgoshadeh and Jalilzadeh 2011; Prakash 1999/2020). To satisfy these demands indigenous knowledges of the colonised had to be translated into the foreign language for their universal acceptance (Niranjana 1990). Consequently, several traditions, social practices and indigenous knowledge of the erstwhile colonies died (Ka'ai-Mahuta 2011). One such ancient and traditional system that got crippled in positing indigenous knowledge in the frame of western science is the 'medicinal system' of the colonies. In the name of civilizing missions, the colonisers proposed to free the colonies from their confinement to superstitious religious and social practices that were intertwined with medicinal practices (Prakash, 1999/2020). Colonisers established their superiority by proposing to assist the colonised to civilize, shape and validate their knowledge in an elite and scientific way, which according to the colonisers was lacking within the uncivilized indigenous.

Interestingly, a rise in public interest and demand has been noticed for traditional medicines. They have re-emerged as an alternative medicinal system to their western contemporaries. As per World Health Organisation (WHO), traditional medicine is "the sum total of the knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health, as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illnesses" (official website of the World Health Organisation). The traditional medicinal system is now being practised together with modern western medicinal system in many of countries, and research is being undertaken by western medicinal scientific community to evaluate the efficacy of these traditional medicines and therapies. In addition, policymakers around the world are now devising ways to appropriate traditional medicinal system into modern medicinal system for its better acceptance. This chapter focuses on one such ancient medicinal tradition, called the Tibetan medicinal system the *Sowa Rigpa* and the possible contribution of the Tibetan language in the preservation of this medicinal system.

Men-Tsee-Khang, which is one of the oldest, largest and most reputed Tibetan Medicinal and Astro Institute in India, has also been a front-runner in the preservation of this ancient natural medicinal system. Interestingly, Men-Tsee-Khang has been successful in the preservation of this ancient medicinal system which was once on the verge of extinction due to the Chinese and English influence. One of the major highlights of this institute has been the importance it has given to preservation of its Tibetan language and indigenous epistemology and utilizing it as a formidable tool to revitalize and popularize their indigenous medicinal system which is purely based on natural substances. It is noteworthy to mention that most of the research carried out on this medicinal system after 1980s has focused on its central medicinal institutions and its other textual material (Pordié and Kloos 2014). Attention of international scholars and foreign researchers has also been largely focused on the Tibetan community in exile in Dharamshala, India due to their easy accessibility as compared to Tibet and the influence of Dalai Lama (Stephan 2015). Moreover, most of the early work on *Sowa Rigpa* has largely focused on its initial medicinal literature rather than the practices of Tibetan medicinal practitioners (Donden 1986; Dummer and Dummer 1988; Meyer 1982, 1987; Pordié and Kloos 2014; Winder 1985). The chapter thus aims at identifying and analyzing the possible role of language practices in the survival of this ancient Tibetan medicinal system along with its wholistic onto-epistemological basis.

13.2   Overview of Tibet and Tibetan Language

Tibet is an autonomous region of China also called the 'roof of the world' for being the highest plateau on Earth. It spreads over an area of 1.2 million km^2 and covers most of the Tibetan plateau (Yang and Zheng 2004). It is surrounded by China to the North and East; India, Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar to the South.

Archaeologists believe that Tibet was inhabited by humans almost 21,000 years ago. King Songtsen Gampo (604–650 CE), is considered the founder of the unified Tibetan empire and is also credited with the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet in seventh century on persuasion by his two Buddhist wives (Norboo 1976). Even today, Buddhism is the most dominant religion of Tibet. Dalai Lama (meaning 'big master' in English) is the main spiritual leader as per Tibetan Buddhism and considered to be the incarnation of *Avalokitesvara* or *Padmapani* (Schmid 1965).

Tibet remained a unified nation[2] till ninth century and thereafter got fragmented between regional warlords as a result of a civil war (Wylie 1977). It came under the rule of the Mongol Yuan dynasty in the twelfth century, wherein the administrative rule was with the Mongols, but the political and spiritual autonomy remained with the Dalai Lama, popularly referred to as the priest-patron relationship (Kloos 2020). Tibet became a vassal state of the Qing dynasty of China from 1720 to 1912 however; it still regarded itself as an independent state as Tibet continued to retain its political

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[2] Here the word nation does not mean nation-state in the modern western sense.

autonomy. The rule by the Qing dynasty over Tibet came to an end in 1912 after the Xinhai revolution. Consequently, Tibet declared itself an independent state and the 13th Dalai Lama ruled over it till 1951. In 1959, the People's Republic of China invaded Tibet in response to the Tibetan uprising. His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibetan Buddhism escaped to India along with 80,000 Tibetans and established a Tibetan government in exile in Dharamshala, India (Yeh 2007).

The Tibetan language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group of languages (Van Driem 2007)**.** The language can be further classified into six dialect groups based on sound systems and other minor differences. *Lhasa* Tibetan belongs to the Central or U-Tsang group and is the official language of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Southern dialect group is spoken in parts of Bhutan and Sikkim, Western Archaic in parts of Ladakh and Baltistan and Western Innovative in regions of *Lahul* and *Spiti.* The other two dialect groups of Tibetan language are *Khams* Tibetan and *Amdo* Tibetan (DeLancey 2003). Basically, written Tibetan language is consistent across the region, whereas oral Tibetan varies according to the region. Tibetan script and vocabulary is believed to have originated from India as initial Tibetan texts were translations of Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures. Thon-mi Sam-bho-ta studied at Nalanda University in 632 A.D. under two *Brahmin* teachers to study Sanskrit and Buddhist texts so as to develop Tibetan script for converting these texts into his native language (Norboo 1976).

13.3 Methodology

The very survivability of Tibetan Medicinal system or *Sowa-Rigpa* in today's modern world which is hugely influenced and dominated by western bio-medicinal standards and practices had been my driving force for conducting this research. Beginning from the history of Tibet, origin of its medicinal system and its related practices and traditions, a number of existing research papers, books and articles were examined to enable me in interpreting the subject matter (Denyer and Tranfield 2006). During my literature review, role of language emerged as a prominent factor in conservation of Tibetan culture and in maintaining its uniqueness despite the colonial influences. I thus arrived at the question of examining the role Tibetan language has played a role in preservation of Tibetan medicinal system.

To answer the same, I adopted the qualitative research approach and using multiple secondary data sources (Hammersley 2001). Existing research on Tibetan medicinal system and Tibetan language in published academic papers and journals, government websites, historical records was closely examined to analyse the role of Tibetan language in preservation of Tibetan medicinal system. The case study approach enabled me to examine my research question by collecting data from multiple sources (Jackson et al. 2007). Credibility of the data source was strictly ensured by only referring to the published scholarly papers and government portals.

13.4   Overview of Tibetan Medicinal System

Tibetan medicinal system is also known as '*Sowa-Rigpa'* is one of the world's oldest known medicinal systems, with a history of more than four thousand years. '*Sowa-Rigpa*' literally means the 'the science of healing' and is especially practiced in the Himalayan regions of India, Tibet, China, Nepal and Bhutan (Kloos et al. 2020). There are various theories about the origin and development of this medicinal system, however, it is thought to be related to Ayurveda as a majority of the practices, principles and medicinal ingredients being used in *Sowa-Rigpa* find their mention in ancient Ayurvedic texts (Ministry of Ayush; Cragg et al. 1999). As per the Buddhist traditions, Buddha *Kasyapa* imparted the knowledge on Tibetan medicine and *dharma* to *Brahma*, through which this knowledge was passed down to the mankind. Buddhists thus consider Buddha as the source of medicinal knowledge whereas Ayurvedic texts refer to *Brahma* as the source of this knowledge. Another set of researchers believe that Tibetan medicinal system is based upon Indian Buddhist literature which travelled into Tibet in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. **They believe that Ayurvedic 'Astāngahrdayasamhitā', 'Abhidharmakosasabhasyam'** and other tantras were translated into Tibetan and subsequently absorbed during this period (Tokar and Khangkar 1998). At the same time, a number of Buddhist books also mention about the Ayurveda and thus establishing the fact that Ayurveda did make a lot of impact on Buddhism and vice versa (Singh 2018).

The 'Four Tantras' or *Gyu Zhi* is the most fundamental and famous Tibetan medicine scripture which forms the basis of Tibetan medicinal system (Cragg et al. 1999). Some scholars believe that this scripture was created by Lord Buddha (*Shakyamuni* Buddha) himself whereas others believe that it was synthesized by <u>*Yuthok Yontan Gonpo*</u> in the twelfth century (Tokar and Khangkar 1998). This book consists of a total of 156 chapters and discusses the three bodily humors which are required to be kept in balance for a healthy body. Tibetan medicinal teachings are majorly covered in the four tantras (Choedon and Kumar 2012; Donden 2003).

(a) Root Tantra. Root tantra gives a brief outline of the principles of Tibetan medicine. It compares the Tibetan medicinal system with a tree.
(b) Explanatory Tantra. It is covered in 31 chapters and discusses in detail the functioning of three humors, i.e., wind, bile and phlegm. It also covers the anatomy of the body, process of birth, signs of death and explains in detail the rules for maintaining good health.
(c) Instructional Tantra or Oral Traditions. It is the longest of the Tantras and comprises of 92 chapters. It mainly deals with the causes, nature and practical application for the treatment of 101 disorders.
(d) Last Tantra. Last tantra is covered in 27 chapters and deals with the methods of diagnosis like pulse reading and urine analysis. It also covers the procedure for identification of medicinal ingredients, preparation of medicines and body cleansing techniques like moxibustion, massage and golden needle therapy.

The Tibetan medicinal system believes that all living and non-living beings including their emotions are basically made up of five elements namely Earth, Water,

Fire, Air and Space (Wangyal 2002). Whenever, there is an imbalance in the proportion of these primary elements in our body, it results into various disorders/ disturbances. Similarly, when these elements are balanced, they result into a healthy and sound body, mind and emotions (Donden 2003).

As per the Tibetan school of medicine, the above mentioned five primary elements of a body combine together to form three types of primary energies, i.e., *rlung, badkan and mkhrispa* (Choedon and Kumar 2012). These three energies are referred to as '*nyepa*' in Tibetan and it is believed that everyone in this universe was born with a unique combination/ constitution of these three primary energies (Gerke 2014). In order to have a healthy body, these three primary energies must remain consistent with the original combination/ constitution as during our birth. However, as we grow these three primary energies change and get disturbed according to our habits, lifestyle, occupation and other factors (Sachs 2001). Therefore, the Tibetan physicians use their knowledge and skills to balance these three primary energies in accordance with an individual's unique combination/ constitution and administer customized medicinal treatment utilizing natural medicinal substances and other medicinal therapies (Sachs 2001**).**

The Tibetan medicinal system known as *Sowa-Rigpa* is also popularly known as *Amchi* system of medicine **(**Ballabh and Chaurasia 2009). *Amchis* are traditional physicians. Traditionally, the training for this medicinal system is given as per the *guru-shisya* (teacher-disciple) tradition. This knowledge is also passed down in the families as per the lineage system through oral discussions and practices (Singh et al. 2012). After completion of this training, the trainee is appears for an oral examination (viva-voce) in presence of a few experienced *Amchis* of his/her community in a religious ceremony. Once successful, these medicinal practitioners are also called *Amchi* and are responsible for providing medicinal care in their village (Buth and Navchoo 1988).

13.4.1   *Recognition of* **Sowa-Rigpa** *in India*

Department of AYUSH (Ayurveda, *Yoga*, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) was created in 2005 to regulate the efforts of practitioners from Traditional, Complementary and Alternative Medicine (TCAM) systems of medicine (Khatri and Sinha 2011). *Sowa-Rigpa* system of medicine was included as part of this department in 2012. This department was further upgraded to an independent ministry in 2014 and is now responsible for development and propagation of AYUSH systems of healthcare i.e. Ayurveda, *Yoga*, Naturopathy, *Unani*, *Siddha*, Homoeopathy and *Sowa-Rigpa* (Official website of the Ministry of AYUSH, Kumar and Pal 2018). Thus, presently, the system of modern western medicine is being regulated by the Medicinal Council of India (MCI) under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, whereas traditional medicinal systems are being governed under an independent ministry of AYUSH of Government of India.

13.4.2   Men-Tsee-Khang and Its Role

Men-Tsee-Khang is a Tibetan Medicinal and Astro Institute. Men-Tsee-Khang in India was established by his Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama himself. It has undergone remarkable development since it's raising and now has 58 medicinal branches and 3 wellness centers in various parts of India as on date (Official website of the Men-Tsee-Khang). It is primarily based in Dharmashala district of Himachal Pradesh. This institute was initially established in Lhasa, Tibet in 1916 by the 13th Dalai Lama of Tibetan Buddhism (Sarsina et al. 2011). The institute was re-established on 23 March, 1961 in Dharamshala, after Dalai Lama's exile in order to preserve the ancient culture and traditions of Tibet (Pordié 2016). It has an approximate strength of 673 employees comprising doctors, astrologers and other contract wagers (Official website of the Men-Tsee-Khang)**.** There are various departments in Men-Tsee-Khang institute (Official website of the Men-Tsee-Khang). Some of these and their role and responsibilities are as under:

(a) Astro-Science. The astro-science department makes use of the traditional "*Phugluk*" method of calculations to obtain the astrological readings for carrying out various calculations. These calculations are then used to produce annual almanacs, birth horoscope, marital compatibility reading, horoscopes and Tibetan calendars.

(b) Body, Mind and Life. The principles of Tibetan system of medicine, Buddhist psychology and astro-science are utilized by this department in collaboration with other modern methods to provide mental health care and treatment of various mental disorders.

(c) College. This department is responsible for training of doctors and astrologers in Tibetan system of medicine and astro-science. Presently, Men-Tsee-Khang has two colleges, one in Dharamshala district of Himachal Pradesh and another in Bangalore, Karnataka. In these colleges, doctors and astrologers initially undergo five year long course followed by internship at various medicinal branches and wellness centers. After completion of the course, students are awarded with *Kachupa* (Bachelor's) Degree in Tibetan system of medicine/ astro-science. At present, 23rd batch of medicinal and 13th= batch of Astro Science is in progress in these colleges. A total of 243 Tibetan doctors and 47 Tibetan astrologers have so far graduated from these two colleges (Official website of the Men-Tsee-Khang Sowa Rigpa College).

In addition to these three departments, there are seven other departments, namely documentation and publication, materia medica, pharmacy, research and development, herbal product research department, over the counter department, quality control. Brief overviews about these departments are provided in Appendix 1. In addition to Men-Tsee-Khang, some other institutes have also come up in India which offer courses in Tibetan medicine, namely, Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Leh, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Saranath, Chagpori Tibetan Medicinal Institute, Darjeeling. Other institutes and schools of Tibetan medicine have also

emerged in other parts of the world and are playing a major role in health care and preservation of Tibetan medicinal practices. Some of these prominent institutes are Qinhai Tibetan Medicinal School, Xinning, Tibet, The Shang Shung International Institute for Tibetan Studies, Merigar West, Italy, Kunde Tibetan Wellness and Healing Center, Daly City, California.

13.5 Analysis

13.5.1 Challenges to Tibetan Medicinal system's Legitimacy

13.5.1.1 Inadequate Research on Sowa Rigpa

Tibet has remained closed to the world for centuries and was subjected to immense political repression which has resultantly also impacted their traditional medicinal system (Janes 1995; Pordié and Kloos 2014). The local traditions and secret oral transmissions of medicinal knowledge in Tibet prior to 1959 limited awareness of Tibet's medicinal knowledge to the outside world (Kloos 2017). In spite of being one of Asia's most renowned medicinal systems, *Sowa Rigpa* remained missing from the major collective works on Asian medicines (Leslie 1976; Bates et al. 1995).

13.5.1.2 Alternate Medicinal Model

The modern western medicinal system practices the model of 'evidence-based medicine' and thus characterize a person by his statistical data. As per these medicinal systems, the bodies and phenomena attached to them are identical from one patient to another (Nicolas and Caussidier 2016; Sournia 1982); and therefore standardized, objective and measurable approach is advocated by them. The human body is characterized by quantified statistical data in western medicinal practices (Bertola 2004). It also considers nature to be an observable material and thus there is a clear separation and disconnection between the human body and nature as per the western bio-medics. There is thus an oversimplification of the human body by western practitioners wherein their studies largely focus on a body organ or cellular composition with no concern to the psychological and wholistic aspects of health (Nicolas and Caussidier 2016). On the contrary, the epistemology of Tibetan medicinal system is far more complex and wholistic and is based on the association and balance of a person with his/her surrounding environment. As per '*The Gyushi'* or 'Four Tantras', foundational treatise of Tibetan medicinal system, diseases and illnesses are related to the interaction of human body with elements (like water, fire, earth, air, and space), *the three nyepas (rlung, badkan and mkhrispa),* and the environment (Choedon and Kumar 2012; Gerke 2014; Wangyal 2002). The medicinal system thus advocates that the functioning of various components of the body is interdependent

and there is a requirement of maintaining a dynamic balance between them and with the environment. Tibetan medicinal system also believes that each individual is unique and thus unique medicinal approach including the medicinal ingredients is required for an individual's treatment (Gerke 2014; Sachs 2001)**.** A greater focus is laid on the psychological aspects of health; and on the individual constitution and *nyepa* imbalances rather than on a disease category (Nicolas and Caussidier 2016).

13.5.1.3 Ritual Empowerment of Medicines

As per the *Sowa-Rigpa*, the potency of medicinal substances depends on a large number of factors. In addition to the material potency, potency or power of these medicines is also influenced by the mantras (Schrempf 2015). Therefore, tantric rituals are often conducted by Tibetan *Amchis* (practitioners) including meditative practices during the preparation of medicines to correct the materialistic weaknesses and enhance its potency (Blaikie 2013). Consequently, rituals like *'Smandrup'* are organized by the *Amchis* on auspicious days to enhance the potency and healing properties of the medicinal ingredients by mantras (Pordié and Blaikie 2014). The resultant empowered medicinal ingredients are then further distributed to the participating *Amchis*. Small amount of these empowered medicinal ingredients are further mixed with larger quantity of herbal medicinal compounds to enhance their overall efficacy (Blaikie 2013; Pordié 2008). These rituals are believed to sanctify and empower these medicinal ingredients (Craig 2011). In addition, increased healing powers and enhanced longevity are also attributed as outcomes of these Tibetan rituals (Garrett 2009). The People's Republic of China has heavily suppressed such pharmaceutical practices dealing with ritual empowerment and blessings (Adams and Craig 2008; Hofer 2008). In line with China's modernization plan, it has also taken intense measures to eradicate pharmacological concepts considered to be scientifically unverifiable, irrational, and religious (Schrempf 2007). From the perspective of industrial pharmacology and bio-medicinal therapeutics, such religious practices and rituals to enhance the potency of medicinal ingredients most likely contaminate the medicines medicinal (Blaikie 2013).

13.5.1.4 Machine Made Drugs

The composition of Tibetan medicines is highly complex as it involves a number of ingredients during preparation. The constituents require precise mixing and vary in their origin, composition and age (Schwabl and Vennos 2015). Traditionally, these ingredients are carefully ground by hand and at best, hand cranked machines are used to make pills from these ingredients. Introduction of technology in the pharmaceutical production has created a division among the practitioners of Tibetan medicinal system. Modernization and technology has resulted in introduction of machines in the pharmaceutical production of Tibetan medicines by a set of Tibetan medicinal practitioners and pharmacists (Blaikie 2013). However, traditional Himalayan *Amchis*

believe that the amount of heat, presence of metal and electricity in these machines is likely to damage the potency of medicines. Moreover, they believe that electrical grinders are capable of grinding the ingredients together and often these ingredients are also not mixed properly by the machines, which are likely to affect the medicinal properties of these ingredients (Blaikie 2013). Many *Amchis* of *Sowa-Rigpa* also critique modernization of this ancient pharmaceutical process as an outcome of greed for profit and competition for business. They consider such practices to be against the Tibetan principles and contaminating the medicines (Besch 2007; Saxer 2013) reducing their efficacy. Resultantly, patients/ consumers are forced to question the legitimacy of Tibetan medicines available in the market, thereby creating suspicion in their minds about the effectiveness of the otherwise acclaimed natural and herbal Tibetan medicines.

13.5.1.5 Drug Regulations

The Tibetan physicians administer medicines requiring mixture of multiple ingredients with one or more pharmaceutical requirements as per the type of unique combination/ constitution of an individual (Sachs 2001). These compounded medicines can traditionally only be prepared by the hands of a pharmacist within his/her pharmacy and by prescription called *formula magistralis*. These customized compound medicines are made up of a number of herbal and rare ingredients; their preparation requires experience, precision and expertise of the pharmacist (Schwabl 2009). Tibetan medicines are thus non-standardised in the Western pharmacological sense. The western drug regulatory authorities generally consider these traditional medicines as unsafe and only herbal medicines being produced by regulated industries are considered by them as genuine (Schrempf 2015). Thus, Padma AG which is based in Switzerland, is the only pharmaceutical company authorized to produce Tibetan medicines in Europe. Padma AG has been allowed to produce only 12 types of polyherbal Tibetan medicines since its foundation in 1969 because of the strict drug regulations in the EU. Three out of these 12 products are still not approved by the Swiss Authority for Therapeutic Products (Swissmedic) and their sale is allowed only in one of the cantons of Switzerland (Padma, AG; Schrempf 2015).

13.6 Tibetan Medicinal System and Tibetan National Identity in Exile

Nationalism's fundamental theme is based on establishing a clearly demarcated and unified nation, with culture and spirituality as its sovereign domain which were essentially their markers of difference against the colonial power (Chatterjee 1993; Nandy 1983; Norbu 2002; Prakash 1999/2020). Asian nationalists successfully deployed their 'traditional medicine' to regain their 'cultural essence' so as to legitimize their

nation (Langford 1998). Medicinal traditions such as Tibetan medicine emerged as ideal expressions of an otherwise intangible culture and Tibetan medicinal system due to its distinct identity, clear boundaries and institutional structure provided national-ists and medicinal practitioners with a 'body' which was immediately noticeable and identifiable as 'Tibetan' (Kloos 2013). Tibetans in exile in India realized that it was essential for them to be recognized by Indian government as a 'medicinal system' as it will imply and highlight the vastness of their culture, intellectual virtuosity, and political self-determination (Kloos 2013). Historically, Tibetans had practiced 'patron-priest' relationship during the Mongol Yuan dynasty wherein Mongols exer-cised administrative rule over Tibet in lieu of the spiritual and political autonomy to Dalai Lama (Goldstein 1997; Kloos 2020). Thus, Tibetans have a historical aware-ness that by helping others through their medicinal knowledge they can earn the political, moral and economic support of others. Services being offered by Tibetans around the world are largely driven by their global, regional and professional ambi-tions, and representing their unique identity and culture to the outside world (Kloos 2013, 2020). Tibetan medicinal practitioners also believe that the purpose of their work as medicinal professionals is to preserve their culture (Kloos 2017). Tibet's image of remaining geographically, culturally and politically isolated from rest of the world is definitely in total contrast to the global presence of *Sowa Rigpa* we see today and therefore besides Tibetan Buddhism, *Sowa Rigpa* is today seen as the most important symbol of Tibet's national identity in exile (Janes 2001; Kapstein 2000). Tibetan medicinal system is today playing a major role in expansion of Tibet's cultural influence to other parts of the world (Schaeffer 2003). Men-Tsee-Khang which was re-raised by the His Holiness sixth Dalai Lama with the purpose of 'preserving the Tibetan culture' and lacked even the basic human and financial resources has today emerged as the most esteemed, profitable, and successful institution of the Tibetans in exile (Kloos 2008).

13.7   Analysis of Role of Language

Tibetan language is monosyllabic in nature and most of the syllables in this language have meaning independent of the compound word in which they are found (Goldstein and Narkyid 1984). Underlying onto-epistemology of Tibetan medicinal terms are likely to be misinterpreted and lost in literal translation as many a times meaning of these medicinal Tibetan terms gets displaced during these translations (Obermiller 1935). The three primary elements of the body, i.e., *rlung*, *badkan* and *mkhrispa*, referred to as '*nyepa*' in Tibetan when translated into English mean 'wind', 'bile' and 'phlegm'. However, these literal meanings carry only a trace of these three phys-iological principles and their real intent thus gets misplaced (Tokar 2008). Even the term '*nyepa*' has been translated to 'humour' in English which literally means 'fluid' or 'moisture'. However, the word '*nyepa*' is both a coloquial as well as technical word. The colloquial meaning of the word '*nyepa*' stands for 'default' whereas technically it means a 'disease', 'a cause of a disease', 'a force or energy in the body that has a

physiological function', as well as 'a gross or subtle component of the body' (Gyatso 2005, p-111). In addition, many medicinal words in Tibetan are formed by combining monosyllables and their technical meaning when combined is quite different from the meaning of each monosyllable. For example, the Tibetan word *'medro'* is formed from the combination of monosyllable '*me'* which means 'fire' and *'dro'* meaning 'warmth'; however, the technical meaning of '*medro*' is 'digestive heat' and is thus nowhere close to the literal meaning of both the monosyllables (Gerke 2011).

It is noteworthy that Tibetan medicinal system is far more complex as it not only deals with the bodily diseases and illnesses but also with interaction of human body with elements (like water, fire, earth, air, and space), the three nyepas (*rlung, badkan and mkhrispa*), and the environment (Choedon and Kumar 2012; Gerke 2014; Wangyal 2002). It thus not only deals with the diet and lifestyle of a patient but also with the psychological aspects of a human body; individual constitution and *nyepa* imbalances of a body rather than only a disease category or organ (Gerke 2011; Nicolas and Caussidier 2016). Tibetan medicinal terms, therefore, encompass much more than what is commonly considered in the Western medicinal domain and thus the meanings of these terms are actually an overlap of diagnosis, anatomy, therapy, physiology and pharmacology and spiritual belief (Druṅ-ʾtsho and Drungtso 2005). These Tibetan medicinal terms are polysemous and therefore their translation is extremely difficult. Tibetan medicinal concepts can thus be better understood in the original language only as the translations are generally eurocentric (Gyatso 2005; Tokar 2008). The role of Tibetan language in preservation of individuality of *Sowa-Rigpa* is further evident in the teaching–learning practices.

13.7.1   Oral Transmission

The knowledge on Tibetan medicinal system or *Sowa-Rigpa* was traditionally given as per the *guru-shisya* (teacher-disciple) tradition and thus followed the lineage system. It is noteworthy that this medicinal knowledge is passed on from one generation to the next by word of mouth (Kala 2005). Thus, native Tibetan language has been a key participant of the ancient *Amchi* medicinal system. Teachings in Tibetan medicinal system is based on oral transmission of the knowledge through discussions on the text and their explanations (Kala 2005; Meyer 1987; Nicolas and Caussidier 2016; Singh et al. 2012). On successful completion of their training, these medicinal practitioners, *Amchis* enjoy great respect and social status in their community. It is also pertinent to mention that the 'Four Tantras' or *Gyu Zhi* was written in verse form and in order to maintain the flow of a rhyme, parts of compound words were omitted (Gerke 2011). It thus requires a detailed study of Tibetan root texts and guidance of an experienced physician teacher to understand the literal meaning of these compound words. The emphasis is therefore placed on listening to these oral transmissions and oral explanations of Tibetan medicinal texts for better understanding and assimilation (Nicolas and Caussidier 2016). Consequently, native Tibetan language has been used to transmit the knowledge orally directly from master to disciple since the origins of

'Four Tantras' or *Gyu Zhi*. Thus, their traditional medicinal knowledge has remained deeply entwined with its history due to the oral transmission lineage (Nicolas and Caussidier 2016).

Now in order to keep the pace with the modern world, institutions with modern training infrastructure such as colleges offering degrees have also been established in various parts of India unlike the *Amchi* system. Students for a course on Tibetan medicinal system are now selected based on the marks obtained in an entrance exam. The language medium for this entire course is Tibetan and thus a beginner's course for 6–8 months in Tibetan language is also conducted for aspiring non-Tibetan applicants (Official website of the Men-Tsee-Khang (*Sowa-Rigpa*) College). A written paper on Tibetan language is also part of the entrance exam at Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, *Saranath,* students have to compulsorily pass this exam for admission in the *Kachupa* (medicinal) course. The insistence on Tibetan language as a medium of instruction, communication and training ensures that the integrity of the onto-epistemic basis of *Sowa Rigpa* is respected and maintained. It ensures that the epistemic violence perpetrated in displaced translations into English are resisted. These practices allow the learner to embrace the wholistic spiritual, psychological, physical and physiological nature of medicine. Interestingly, if a candidate scores 75% or more in the Tibetan language exam, he/she is awarded grace marks in Hindi/English exam in the entrance test (Official website of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2021). This one also symbolically communicates the priority of Tibetan vis-à-vis English, momentarily displacing the global hierarchy of *knowing* languages. The hierarchy of modern western institutional knowledge system however is again reinstated in the fact that graduates of Sowa Rigpa, from Men Tsee Khang are not permitted to use the honorific of Doctor. They only refer to themselves as Mr., Mrs., and Ms. The honorific of doctor is permitted only to graduates of modern western medicine, Ayurveda and Homeopathy in India.

13.7.2 Sacred Rituals in Tibetan Language

Tibetan medicinal scriptures mention 404 diseases; out of which 101 diseases are *karmic* and thus require both medicinal as well as spiritual treatment. In addition, there are 101 diseases which are caused by spirits and thus require spiritual treatment, such as rituals. Accordingly, the diagnosis and treatment of such diseases is carried out by *Amchis* by employing ritual means and sacred mantras in native Tibetan language. Rituals in the native Tibetan language are also performed during the *'Smandrup'* by the *Amchis* to enhance the potency and healing properties of the medicinal ingredients (Pordié and Blaikie 2014). Rituals and recitations in Tibetan language are performed to balance the *nyepa* or primary energies in the human body (Gerke 2014). As per *Yuthok Yontan Gonpo*, sacred Tibetan mantras contribute to longevity of life and supreme medicines like precious pills need to be worn on specific parts of the body like neck, head etc. to prevent illness and influences from evil spirits (Czaja 2020). These eight varieties of precious or jewel pills are made

up of rare and precious natural ingredients like mercury sulfide ash and are used to cure various diseases. During production of these medicines, a set of complex rituals is performed by Tibetan monks to ensure their purity and efficacy. All the medicinal ingredients being used are purified and spiritually blessed by performing sacred rituals in native Tibetan language by monks before being sent to manufacturing plants (Official website of the Men-Tsee-Khang). It is quite evident that these rituals in Tibetan language for treatment and preparation of medicines are being practiced by *Amchis* as part of Tibetan onto-epistemic medicinal practices since centuries. This points out that Tibetan language is strongly intertwined and bonded with Tibetan medicinal system which has greatly contributed to maintenance of each other's uniqueness and identity.

13.7.3 Medicinal Prescriptions

The Tibetan physicians/ *Amchis* still continue to write their medicinal prescriptions in their native Tibetan language including the patient details, generic name of the natural herb, composition of the medicine, quantity, dosage form, dosing instructions etc. at all clinics/ wellness centers of Men-Tsee-Khang in India (See Figs. 13.1, 13.2, 13.3). Based on the medicinal prescription, patient can collect the prescribed medicine from the Tibetan pharmacy which is generally co-located with their clinics/ wellness centers. This practice not only demonstrates strong bond between Tibetan medicinal system with the language but also displays the pride of Tibetan *Amchis* in their language. A sense of distinctive individuality and authenticity is communicated to non-Tibetans through these medicinal prescriptions and inspires belief and faith in them on the ancient values and originality of Tibetan medicinal system thus making them consider it as a viable alternative medicinal system.

13.8 Comparison of Tibetan Medicine System with Ayurveda

Scholars have varied opinions about the origin and development of *Sowa-Rigpa* or Tibetan medicinal system in relationship to Ayurveda. However, the bulk of theories including practices, principles and medicinal ingredients being used in *Sowa-Rigpa* also find their mention in the ancient Ayurvedic texts (Ministry of AYUSH; Cragg et al. 1999). However, Ayurveda is more globalised and commercialized as compared to *Sowa-Rigpa*. In India in particular, commercialization of Ayurveda started in the early nineteenth century and today companies like Dabur, Baidyanath, Dodh Pappaswar, Kotakkal are some of the leading brands in India manufacturing Ayurvedic products (Sahai 2020). In European countries, Ayurveda has been adapted
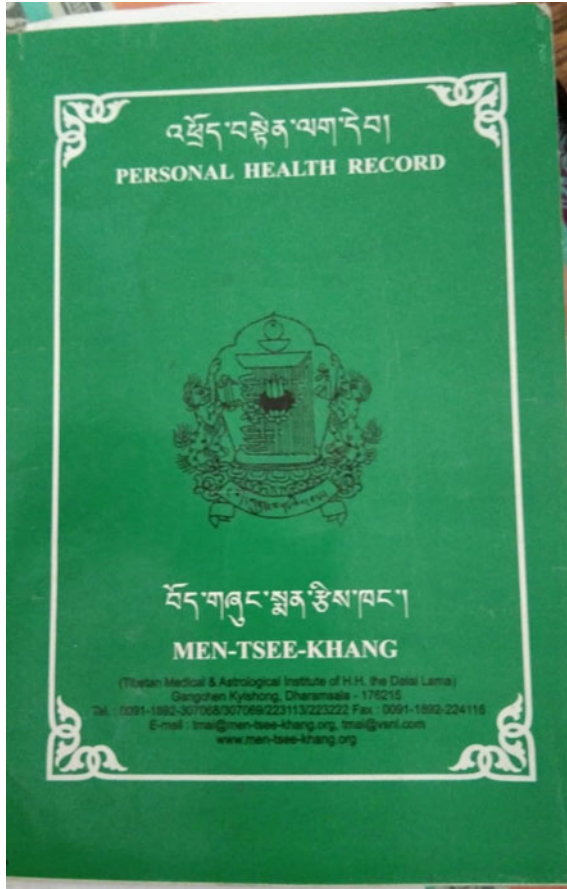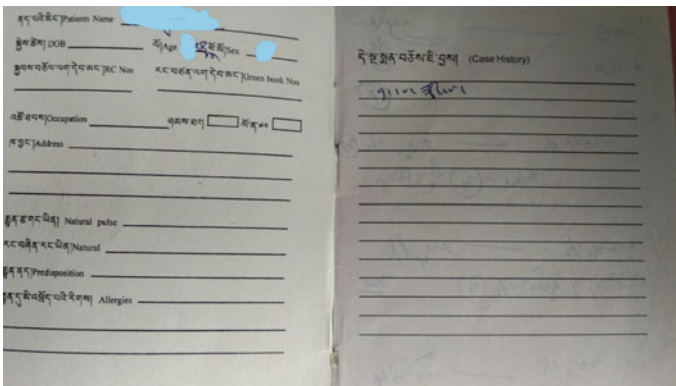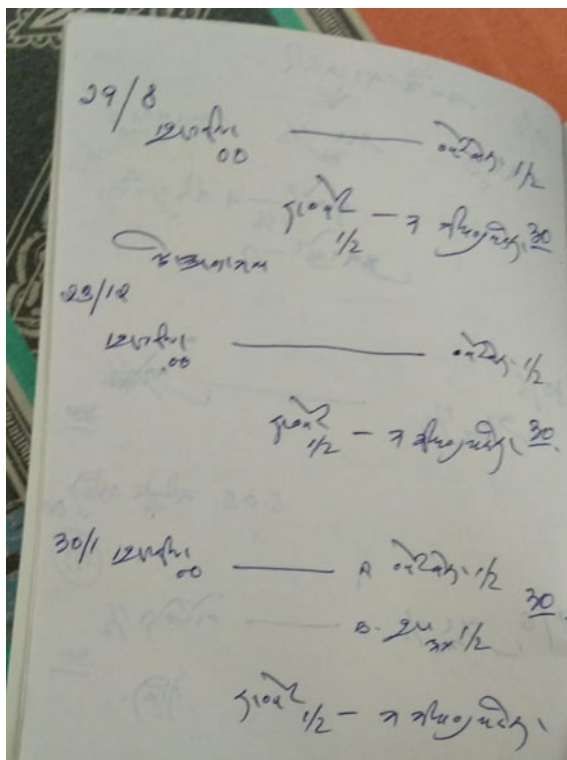
Fig. 13.1 Patient booklet

Fig. 13.2 Patient details

Fig. 13.3 Medical prescription

by separating and eliminating Ayurveda's organic therapies like purging, bloodletting etc., and is being promoted as an over the counter (OTC) self-help medicine which is tender and non-violent. For this reason, Ayurveda has created an impression of being a 'natural' medicinal alternative and something like a luxurious massage treatment (Madhavan 2009). Today Ayurveda has emerged as the fastest growing complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapy in Europe (Nieme and Stahle 2016).

Both Ayurveda, and Tibetan medicine lay emphasis on the balance required in the physiological principles including the environment of an individual and are not just limited to treating disease in particular body organs (Gerke 2014). However unlike *Sowa-Rigpa* the focus of treatment in Ayurveda has now shifted to curative medicine, just like modern western medicine and not prevention of illness (Mathpati et al. 2020). It has also been dissociated from its spiritual epistemic basis with medicines being just mixtures of natural chemicals with their efficacy being dissociated from sacredness and physician or patient's spiritual-psychological state. At the same time, Ayurvedic treatment has shifted its focus to patient's comforts and discomforts (Tirodkar 2006) unlike *Sowa-Rigpa* which continues to follow the preventive-curative approach. Luxurious spas are now offering pedicure, aromatherapy, exfoliation, hot stone back

massage etc. by naming these treatments as 'ayurvedic bliss', whereas these treatments are nowhere mentioned in ayurvedic texts (Madhavan 2009). In addition, we also observe deviations in the concepts of medicine preparation and forms of medicine in Ayurveda because of industrialization (Mathpati et al. 2020) whereas that is not the case in Tibetan medicine system. The entire commoditization of traditional Indian medicine has been at the expense of the production of traditional formulas (Bode 2008) dissociated from their sacredness. For example, Dabur *Chyawanaprash* was positioned as an immunity booster in 1940s and was thus sold in small quantities to hakims and consumers but now it has been largely commoditised and being sold as a product of mass consumption (Bode 2008).

As discussed earlier, the training for Tibetan medicinal system is still being given as per the *guru-shisya* tradition in parts of Tibet and Himalayan regions of India. This medicinal knowledge is thus being passed as per the lineage system through oral discussions and practices (Singh et al. 2012). Even in modern institutions like Men-Tsee-Khang, language for the entire course is Tibetan and knowledge of Tibetan language is a mandatory requirement for getting admission in the institutes. Tibetan medicinal practitioners still continue to use their own native language when writing medicinal transcriptions and Tibetan language still remains the medium of instruction in institutes like Men-Tsee-Khang. However, ayurvedic medicinal knowledge is now being imparted only through government recognized universities. The course curriculum for ayurvedic medicinal courses has been designed and modified as per the course curriculum of western bio-medicinal courses in English language. Even the topics of study have been translated from English to Sanskrit and new subjects have been created which do not find any mention in ancient ayurvedic texts, e.g., anatomy has been translated as *sarirashana* and physiology as *sarirakriya.* However, in Ayurveda *sarira* refers to the integration of a human body with mind and self and covers multiple disciplines like genetics, embryology, anatomy, pathology etc. and is thus not only concerned with anatomy in literal sense (Mathpati et al. 2020). Introduction of new words like, ayurgenomics, ayurnutrigenomics and ayurpharmacoepidemiology in the Ayurveda vocabulary (Debnath et al. 2017; Kurhekar 2021) further highlight the effect of western bio-medicinal systems and appropriation of Ayurveda. Thus, we notice that Ayurveda has achieved popular global acceptance through commoditization as an OTC self-help medicine at the cost of compromising its own epistemology and identity. The Tibetan medicinal system on the other hand continues to use the same vocabulary as was given in the 'Four tantras' and thus remains rooted to the onto-epistemology of native Tibetan language, culture and the wholistic worldview.

13.9   Conclusion

Language is not merely a tool to communicate. It is a vital constituent of the onto-epistemic basis of a people, their culture, traditions and knowledge systems. In this chapter on Men Tsee Khang, I explain the role of Tibetan language in preserving

the onto-epistemic basis of *Sowa Rigpa*, Tibetan medicinal system. I draw attention to the role of native languages in enabling resistance to the epistemic violence of modern western epistemology, even as native knowledges seek to adapt to modern western institutional, legal, and regulatory mechanisms. Even for people that has been occupied and in exile, their language and their knowledge system furnish a sense of national identity and a means of resisting colonial occupation. Tibetan medicine learnt in Tibetan symbolizes the greatness of the Tibetan civilisation and the preservation of Tibetan culture is linked to the transformation of Tibetan medicine into a medicinal system (Kloos 2013). To achieve the same, distinctive historical roots, traditional textual core and clear outside boundaries need to be highlighted (Leslie 1998; Leslie et al. 1992), Men-Tsee-Khang has been at the forefront of this, doing it through Tibetan language as the medium of knowledge.

Appendix 1: Departments at Men Tsee Khang

(a) **Documentation and Publication.** Documentation and publication department preserves ancient Tibetan manuscripts and ancient knowledge of Tibetan Medicine and Astrology by the compilation of these ancient literary works and then their translation by a team of experts.

(b) **Herbal Product Research Department.** This department is involved in manufacturing of 40 herbal health care products comprising herbal tea, hair oil, massage oil, ointments and variety of creams. All these products are registered under the brand name of '*Sorig*' which means 'the science of healing'. All the *Sorig* products contain no animal ingredients and are believed to be free from any side effects.

(c) **Materia Medica.** Materia Medica department is responsible for publishing the works on Tibetan Medicinal Plants so as to ensure the finest selection of raw materials for production of various herbal medicines.

(d) **Over the Counter (OTC) Department.** They are primarily responsible for outsourcing the herbal medicines in global markets as per the internationally accepted standards and norms.

e) **Pharmacy.** Pharmacy department is involved in the production of 172 different Tibetan medicines in three different forms namely decoction, powder and pill. In addition, eight different 'precious or jewel pills' consisting of rare ingredients are also produced by this department.

(f) **Quality Control.** This department is responsible for controlling the quality and consistency of herbal medicines by using traditional Tibetan as well as modern scientific methods.

(g) **Research and Development.** Research and Development department conducts clinical studies and undertakes collaboration works to evaluate and authenticate the Tibetan medicines.

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Chapter 14
Hidden Archives of Kalavantulu Bodies

Yashoda Thakore

Abstract The term 'Devadasi' remains an enigma. These hereditary women singer-dancers in the Telugu-speaking states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are called the Kalavantulu. Their dance reflects the socio-political history besides aesthetics, and their lives cannot be separated from their art. This chapter reflects my lived experience as a dancer from these families. As a practitioner of the neo-classical form of Kuchipudi for 40 years and the Kalavantulu families for 20 years, I am an insider (although a late arrival to this role) of the Kalavantulu families. I draw on the oral histories of these families that continue to reveal themselves during my embodied ethnographic and auto-ethnographic research. Kalavantulu histories live through their repertoire. Their lives through courts, temples, patrons, governments, and society at large to their erasure, from the very art that was their life are woven into an account of my experiences and training in dance in this chapter. Dancers of the neo-classical forms learn a version of history removed from women's bodies and placed on religious figures constructed to meet the needs of both European sensibilities and the nationalist movement. By centering my own experience and the voices of Kalavantulu families, this chapter foregrounds the embodied history and organizing of an art, its performing and its knowledge-repertoire at the crossroads of caste, patriarchy, gender and state politics.

Keywords Kalavantulu · Caste · Gender · Patriarchy · Hidden archive · Lineage · Spirituality · Sexuality · Organizing · Knowledge

14.1 Introduction

My father says that I expressed the desire to dance when I was just three years old. Dance meant only the neoclassical dances. Although my parents were taken aback, they looked for a good teacher. They agreed to allow me to learn to dance, but there were conditions: (1) it had to be a female teacher; (2) it could not be a private class;

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(3) a dance school like my regular school, St. Ann's High School (which too was all girls), was preferred; (4) I would have an escort with me always; (5) I had to excel in academics. I agreed to all this so that I could dance. Dance is all I dreamed about. When I was 6, my mother found out that the star of Kuchipudi, a neo-classical dance form from Andhra Pradesh in South India, Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam, launched the Kuchipudi Art Academy in Hyderabad. Although *Mastergaru* (as we address him) was always there, we were taught by Seeta Teacher (Seetamahalakshmi) and Sobha Teacher (Sobha Naidu).

In the pages that follow, I trace my journey as a female dancer while I discover my roots and claim them from the secret closets of memory of the disavowed, decimated extended Devadasi families that I am a part of. I frame this within the larger socio-political history of the dance from the court to post-colony, through the nation reflected in the repertoire of the artist families and the manner in which both life and art were organized through history. I finally imply that their lives until their erasure from the very art, are the building blocks of the neo-classical forms that took shape during the nationalist period. Dancers of these forms learn a version of history removed from women's bodies and placed on religious figures constructed to meet the needs of both Western sensibilities and the nationalist movement and are also subjected to the patriarchal rule-book that controlled them.

To make this case I draw inspiration from global south feminists such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Uma Chakravarty to focus on the integral narrative of my life in subjective reflexiveness. While examining my own life as one from the Kalavantulu families and my training in Kuchipudi and the Devadasi repertoire, I engage with socio-political histories intertwined with the repertoire. I carry a history of the courtly period, nation, and colony through my dance, and this chapter explores this trajectory. I use Priya Srinivasan's term, 'bodily archive' (2007), and use the repertoire as an archive as it carries history and evidence of organizing through my performing body. I draw on the oral histories of these families that continue to reveal themselves during my ethnographic research.

14.2   Blood Memories?

My father, Seshagiri Rao, is the son of a *Madhva* Brahmin, served by my grandmother, Suryakantham, all his life, even after his wife's demise. She descends from the families that served the Varaha Narasimha Swamy temple at Simhachalam, near Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. They extracted *gandham* (sandalwood paste) for the deity. So we have Chinagandham (the small sandalwood paste) as our family name. My father was well-placed and could afford to send me by car to dance class. My mother or my sister came along with me practically every day till I was in my late teens. They would sit unobtrusively through the class, for at least 3 h. During those years, I fell in love with Kuchipudi. Mainly what I learned from my teacher, Sobha Naidu.

I often heard my grandmother, whom I call *Ammamma*, and mother sing for Lord Krishna with a lot of love. The grounding I had under *Mastergaru's* watchful eye and the memories of my teacher, Sobha Naidu's abandon in expression thrills me every time I dance some of those pieces. I was told by my teachers that I must forget myself and dance like it is worship, as dance is a means for '*Moksha*' or liberation. And I did just that. As I talk about this, another thought comes to my mind. *Ammamma* who lived with us ever since I was born, was initiated into the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition and I, with my parents and sisters, was initiated into the SriVaishnava tradition from the South. In effect, the atmosphere at home was that of love.

Sobha Teacher, as I call her, did not come from a Devadasi lineage nor was she a brahmin. But she is synonymous with my dance and Kuchipudi. My performance lineage began with her. I embodied Chinna Satyam's dance through teacher as the male Brahmin aesthetic through a female non-brahmin body to another non-brahmin Kalavantulu body. I wondered how Chinna Satyam knew what '*kalikitanamu*' (femininity) felt like when he taught her to raise her shoulders and chest with eyes closed and lift the chin a little. Though I did not fully understand the sensuality in the word, I always wondered if she would have done it differently *if given a choice*. This was such a contrast to what I learnt from my Devadasi teachers years later.

The problem arose when I realized my Kalavantulu background. Kalavantulu, mean bearers of art. The word refers to the hereditary female singer-dancer family from the Telugu-speaking areas of united Andhra Pradesh. Dr. Nataraja Ramakrishna, my professor during my Masters in dance from the University of Hyderabad, was one of the pioneers in working with the marginalized groups of Kalavantulu and resurrecting their art from what remained. He spoke to us about the legendary Devadasi women, Rangajamma (16th C), in the courts of Raghunatha Nayaka and Vijayaraghava Nayaka and Muddupalani (18th C) at the Tanjore court. As he did, I saw in my mind these Devadasis as the only literate women of the time who were highly respected. They were a part of the proceedings of the court. *Radhika Santwanam*, that *Ammamma* would talk about carefully because of the Radha *bhava* in it, was written by *the* Muddupalani. The very idea that I could be her descendent was electrifying! Rangajamma, who was never seen by the general public as her beauty was protected from the evil eye through a pompous procession that concealed her beauty, could have been my great-great-grand aunt. But they were spoken about like they were mythical characters by Nataraja Rama Krishna.

But first, I had to learn the art. If I have to know them, I needed to dance and feel them in my body through the five senses. I would go to Nataraja master's house every day from Golden Threshold, my college in Abids, and wait for him to teach me the dance. He refused to teach the art of the hereditary women singer-dancers. I was searching for it outside my family, begging to be taught my own people's art. He was teaching a version of this as Andhra Natyam to a few brahmin girls and others outside the Kalavantulu families. At least nobody said they were from these families. But he wouldn't teach me. Instead, since I came from that background, he advised me to get married. I should stop dancing and 'settle down respectably', he said. I was shocked! I thought I was the most qualified to learn this art!

I knew a little about my background earlier during my teens when I was complimented for my looks. I was beautiful "because women in our families are so." I was devout "because women in our families are so." I asked my parents what the comments meant. "We belong to the community of the Devadasis called Kalavantulu," said my parents. "This is a community of artists who we are told danced in temples at one time. We don't know anything about that, but we do know that later we lost all respectability. So, we don't talk about it. Instead, we call ourselves Naidus."[1]

I was only told this by my parents when I was about 18. When I questioned my professor he said he would not teach the form. Dr. Ramakrisha however, did talk of the art of the 'Lasya Nartakis'. He refused to use the word Kalavantulu or *Saanivaru* or *Bhogamvaru* as the families were initially referred to. He thought 'Lasya Nartakis' was more respectable. *Lasya nartakis* was a word commonly used to refer to graceful women dancers. He talked of these hereditary women dancer-singers who offered their dance as part of the rituals in temples. He however could not tell us what exactly was danced. The technique. Or when this tradition began. I tried to do a little asking around. My relatives, of course, did not know. Nobody knew anything about the dancing in temples. It was just as well. The enigma brought in an aura of divinity and chastity about these women. "They were divine women who were dedicated to the Almighty. They had no other interest in life. Their lives were filled with devotion for God", was the general description from family and scholars alike. This was mostly imagined. And this is something I find extremely problematic. I then deduced with my artistic background of being a trained, professional dancer of the neo-classical Indian dance form of Kuchipudi that these women satisfied criteria like belonging to a certain family whose mainstay was song and dance and being married to God. After all, their profession and expertise was dance.

I was on this quest to see these artists, to know them and connect with them. My only connection with anything at all is art, so I looked for their art. Before I delve into a non-linear account of my embodied experience, I attempt a linear narration of the complex, layered history of the Devadasi from South India. I must admit this simplistic account would not do justice to the discourse of the Devadasi. Still, the purpose is to provide a basic backdrop against which the complex narrative can be structured.

The term Devadasi is literally translated as the servant of God. She was the dancing girl both at the court and the temple. The Devadasi remained unmarried and supported herself by dancing and singing. Her role seems apparent from about the ninth century A.D. in the *agama sastras* in South India. The kings and, later, the zamindars during part of the colonial period were her patrons. The Devadasi was viewed variously. Society saw her as, the supernatural woman akin to the goddess, the ultra-chaste woman married to God, a victim of colonialism, and the degenerate one whose sexuality became her tool to break families. At this stage, nationalist reform movements took it upon themselves to 'cleanse' society by making these women disappear. Movements like the anti-nautch movement and the Madras Devadasi (Prevention of

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[1] My father, C. Seshagiri Rao said this to me in 1989. Naidu is another community, not quite the upper caste brahmins, but not marginalized, either.

Dedication) Act in 1947[2] did cause the dancing Devadasi to disappear. The women, now shamed and stripped of their income and agency, had nowhere to go. They had no identity until the Indian government categorized them and other unmarried women under a caste called Devadasi. The native community identifiers of Mahari, Kalavant, Kalavantulu, and Tevar Adiyar were forgotten. The families were given the supposedly respectable name of Devadasi by the British government, to be made a caste by the Indian government. In parallel to and complimenting this effacement in the garb of Reform was Revival (Srinivasan 1988). Their art was placed on the 'respectable' upper-class bodies that lived in a world of patriarchy. Nataraja, the male dancing god now became the source of the art. Eventually, the art morphed into neo-classical dances to represent the culture of the states of India. The Devadasis watched and continue to watch these new bodies dance from the confines of the now patriarchal families they lived in. She was no longer the head of the family. Men wielded power and forbade these women from having anything to do with the art. They changed their identity in every possible way. Manipulating records to change the name of the caste, declaring a 'respectable' geographic space as their native village, converting to Christianity, rejecting religion, turning to the freedom struggle, English-education, hiding the women, and even forming a male dominated artist caste where the women were from the Devadasi families but do not dance, embracing a brahminic way of life…anything was resorted to, to change their identity[3] The Devadasi exists but in unrecognizable forms. Putcha (2019) sums this up '…fetishizing, while denying the existence of real life courtesans has ultimately brought real-life courtesans out of the shadows'.

I was on a quest for these artists, my ancestors, to know them and connect with them. That was when I saw the presentation of Maddula Lakshminarayana, organized by Ms. Swapna Sundari, a brahmin woman. Maddula Lakshminarayana, a Kalavantulu artist, performed a snippet (lasting an hour!!) from the dance drama *Gollakalapam*. She was probably in her 70 s but looked older. She was not an ethereal beauty. Draped in a silk sari, waist belt, *kaasulaperu*, and the *bulaaq*, this bony structure blasted to life in Ravindra Bharati one morning in 1996. She performed '*brahmanulaithe saranu cheseda…*'(if you are a true brahmin, I shall surrender).

The music was rustic, Telugu to die for, *abhinaya* that makes one wish the moment would never end! Here she was, teasing and poking fun at the brahmin for being ill-informed while educating him in her organic style. Ridicule, respect, humor, self-respect, compassion, social responsibility, knowledge, and rusticity…all that my family taught me was exuding from Maddula Lakshminarayana's dance! Suddenly, those were not sermons. Those were a part of her dance and so a part of her life. I was one of the few who attended this seminar that morning. I had the freedom to weep quietly in the darkness. This lady is not fair by any standards. She was not like the Rangajamma I learned of in classroom sessions and imagined they would

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[2] (https://www.latestlaws.com/bare-acts/state-acts-rules/tamil-nadu-state-laws/tamil-nadu-Devadasis-prevention-dedication-act-1947/).

[3] Personal conversation with my aunt Suguna Kale and father, Seshagiri Rao.

all be divine damsels. Funny that I am saying this, but I felt relieved that Maddula Lakshminarayana, a Kalavantulu woman who sings and dances, is real. Her hair is haggard like mine. She sweats as I do. Her body hurts as mine would. She is me! I cannot really express what that moment meant.

I wanted to learn the art of these Kalavantulu women. I went up to Swapna Sundari and told her that I belonged to the Kalavantulu families and expressed my wish to learn the dance. She introduced me to Arudra happily but not to Lakshminarayana. I wonder why it never crossed my mind that I could reach out to Lakshminarayana, particularly when I knew she was related to me. I wrote to Swapna Sundari, instead! Subconsciously I was aware as to where the power was. Four years later, I was learning Vilasini Natyam from Swapna Sundari. Vilasini Natyam is the name she gave to the dance of the Telugu speaking Devadasis under the aegis of Arudra, the researcher-scholar-poet. Once I started learning Vilasini Natyam, I was immediately exposed to the Ranganatha Swamy temple at Rangbagh, which belonged to the Pitti families. Swapna Sundari was commissioned by the Pitti families to reconstruct the ritual dances in the temple, and teach students to perform there. The Pitti family braved it, Shri Sharad Pitti in particular, in spite of the Devadasi Abolition Act that exists. The Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act is a law that was enacted on 9 October 1947. This forbade the hereditary women dancers from dancing in temples or any other avenues.

14.3   Embodying the Archive

Repertoire, ritual and history are braided together in the case of the Devadasis. *Baliharana* is a ritual performed by the priest and the Devadasi. They invite the deities of the eight directions, give them their rightful places to be seated (*asana*), and then offer food (*bali*), and they are entertained by the Devadasi. This is done ever so briefly in the *raga* (melodic pattern), *tala* (rhythmic pattern), *nritta* (abstract dance), and *gati* (gait) that the deity likes. All this is to implore them to be alert and make sure no opposing force enters the temple, lest the 9-day festival of The Lord is disturbed.

So here are the priest and the Devadasi, whose job was to protect the deity so that the god was safe to protect society. This ritual is also called *Navasandhi* in the deeper South. The sheer giving in the concept of the *Baliharana* is endearing to me. This was one of the roles the Devadasi played. At the Rangbagh temple, one chant on *Garuda*, the eagle mount on Vishnu would go *Vishadharadamanam vishadharagamanam vishadharahaaradharam…* The raw rhythmic sound of the *tavil* and the melody of *nadaswaram* combined with the lively chants inviting the deities through my dance, using every fibre of my body, was overwhelming. My body would shake internally as I struggled to remember the reconstructed pattern, my being yearning to give in to the luxury of tears. I wept silently, not knowing why. The emotion was too much for me to handle. There were too many histories, bodies and voices whispering to

me. I moved on to find those voices, bodies and histories. I needed to know where the Devadasi was mentioned in the *agamas*, which seemed to validate her existence.

I was told the entire ritual at this particular temple is performed according to the *Pancharatra Agama. Agamas* are Sanskrit religious texts of the Hindus that came into existence between 500 and 1500 AD (Orr 2000; p.7). These texts are a comprehensive compilation of the duties of the priest, instructions with respect to the rituals, the details of the deity, details of temple construction, and so on. Though not in too much detail, the *agamas* do mention the role of the temple woman in the ritual. Their role mentioned is mostly that of singing and dancing. The Vaishnava *agamas*, which came much later in fact even give the names of the *ragas* (tunes), *talas* (rhythmic patterns), and the *sthanakas* (stances) favored by the deity of that particular direction. Having said that, there is absolutely no description of the dance or music offered.

Though A*mmamma*, my maternal grandmother too was an expert in Sanskrit, knowing the Veda or *agama* was not part of our training. I needed to know where the Devadasi was mentioned in the *agamas* as that seemed to be a point of validation for her existence. I sat with a Vaishnavaite priest and Sanskrit scholar to check for the term Devadasi in the *agamas.*

The mention mostly was a compound of two words and not an address or reference to any particular woman much to my surprise. The term Devadasi was seldom used in these ancient texts. As Orr says, 'these texts…seem very often to describe women's participation in temple rituals as occasional or optional' (2000, p.8). I too am intrigued that women played such an important role in the temple. A role that she alone could play. Why were these women spoken about concerning anything other than their vocation and their art? I did realize that women who did any job at the temple like garland making, preparation of unguents for the deity, sanitation of the temple, were all called Devadasis. Why then were these women wearing a different identity on themselves?

As if in response, Subramanian says ' … in the seventh century AD a synthesis between bardic Tamil culture and brahminical traditions found expression in the coalescence of a ritual performing community within the temple precincts. As this amalgamation of the temple and brahminical traditions evolved in the 8th and the ninth centuries, the status and persona of the ritual woman was reconstituted and she became part bard, part courtesan and part ritual servant in the temple.' (2006, p.117).

This brings us to the question of lineage and heredity. Progeny could be from men outside the families. Girls may be adopted from either within the families or outside. Training under a teacher was also an important lineage. There was also the lineage of the benefits from the temple! The Devadasi and her family subsisted on the produce of a certain amount of land of the temple. She would train a young girl to take her place in the temple, continuing the heredity of the land. As Orr states about the early twentieth century image of the temple woman defined by three characteristics, her "hereditary status, that is, her birth or adoption into a particular community; her status as dependent on ritual dedication to temple service through a ceremony of "marriage" to the temple deity; and her professional expertise-her mastery of a dance tradition (2000, p.8). Given this, the rhetoric of lineage needs to be seriously reconsidered.

I was told by elderly Vaishnavaite priests in 700- year- old temples in the Telugu land that the *saanivaru* lived in the rooms given by the temples. There were inscriptions, agreements, and government orders which reflect that the temple authority gave her land besides food, clothes and gifts. The patron, of course, was the king through the temple. In fact, my maternal grandmother's paternal grandmother, Madhuravani and her sister Pichayi (I understand her real name was Sarojamukhi) were patronized by the *zamindar* of Annavaram in the Coastal Andhra region. Madhuravani danced and Piccayamma sang. The zamindar gifted the temple-hill of Annavaram to Pichayamma (This was taken back by his sons). But this is from about 200 years ago. Our temple woman's story goes way back to at least the 10th C. The festival days were the brightest when they performed the non-representational pure dance during *Baliharana*, in the palanquin's procession when the deities were taken through the streets and when the deities entered the sanctum sanctorum again. These are but just a few instances. The *agamas* also mention her presence during the *Dhwajaarohana* (hoisting of the flag) to declare that the *Brahmotsavam* has begun and *Dhwajaavarohana* (unhoisting) when the festival closes.

Related to the temple, but not part of the ritual was the Bhagavatam. In the Telugu-speaking areas, a semi-theatrical form called Bhagavatam or *kalapam* was performed outside the temple structure but within the temple's precincts. This is a relatively recent development. The *Gollakalapam* by Maddula Lakshminarayana is an example of this. In my quest for the art, I searched for the only woman from the hereditary families who knew the *kalapams*, Annabattula Lakshmi Mangatayaru. Amma, as I call her and her sister, Leelasai, painstakingly taught me both these theatre pieces the *Bhamakalapam* and *Gollakalapam.* Their grandmother, Annabattula Buli Venkataratnamma, was known for these. Amma taught me these from her grandmother's notebook. They learned them from her at the age of 5. Amma lovingly taught me a *Padam* (amongst so many more), '*Illerugaka maari*,' a particular *slokabhinaya*, and a few *javalis*, which she said were the domain of Buli Venkatratnamma. Now, this lineage of art is so precious to me! It is a legacy. Whenever I perform that *padam* or the *kalapams*, I feel a huge responsibility and her supporting presence. *Bhamakalapam* is also performed in Kuchipudi. Kuchipudi brahmins believe that it was scripted by Siddhendra Yogi, the identity of Kuchipudi and a figure whom Telugu poet-scholar Arudra (1994) interrogates in his research. In Kuchipudi, the heroine, Satyabhama is played by men. But where is the female dancer? The narrative of Siddhendra in Kuchipudi, as Putcha (2013) says, has erased these women and camouflaged phenomenal literature.

Since we are talking about lineage, I must say something about *Ammamma*, my maternal grandmother. She was about 94 and mostly confined to the bed by then. When I began doing the *Mezuvani*, the chamber performance typical of coastal Andhra, she sat up and watched me perform for her in her room. Then, she went into a reverie and started to tell me:

> *Nanamma (Madhuravani) danced and pedananamma (Pichayamma) sang. Tirupati Venkatakavulu even wrote about Madhuramma's abhinaya in his poetry. When she did 'Swami rara' to her sister's song, the spectator felt he was the exclusive guest! We were not allowed to see her dance. We would, anyway, sneak a peek. Nanamma liked me because I*

was fair and she gave me a chain of pearls. She was upset with me when I broke it. Nanamma
was very beautiful!

I asked *Ammamma* if I looked like her, and she brushed it aside, saying I was dark! But she did say I had her large eyes. *Ammamma* approved of my *abhinaya*, but not my song and dress sense. She asked me to wear more jewelry and had a pair of large anklets made for me.

Dance, for me, is no longer a 'means for *moksha* (salvation)' but an embodiment of these women and their art. Their lives.

14.4   O King! Salaam!

In this section, I look at who the patrons of the Devadasis were and address the pressing question of caste and regionality in dance. The repertoire of the Devadasis is also a reflection of the patronage of the day. Patronage, in this case, comes with a compelling reference to caste and regionality in dance. The courtly culture and temple culture co-existed (supported mainly by the king) until late medieval times. The zamindars were a 19th Century phenomenon. The repertoire at each venue differed from the others due to various factors like economy, indigenous aesthetics, political conditions, and patronage. The temple of the period was more than a place of worship. It was the center of life as the hub for financial transactions, deals, marriage alliances, ceremonies, worship, and other activities. While facilitating all these activities, the temple was a place that required financial assistance to a large extent. The king was the patron initially until the general citizens of the site had to fund it. In fact, under the temple's aegis were institutions like *Mathas.*

The Kakatiya kings and their patronage in the Telugu land were an inspiration for dynasties to come. Sumitra Veluri's (2011) dissertation notes instances of royal patronage in United Andhra Pradesh. Twelfth-century inscriptions from the Kakatiya period in today's Warangal and far spread regions, named Devadasis who benefited from and aided the temple during the reign of the Eastern Chalukyas. King Vishnu-vardhana Bhima (also called Chalukya Bhima) established the *Bhimeswara Alayas* in Bhimavaram and Draksharaamam in 910 A.D.

Dance and drama was an integral part of the temple activities. The *Visweswaraalayam* in Guntur district had 10 dancers and 16 singers and 10 instrumentalists. This is significant as Guntur is close to Kuchipudi village which is hailed as the birthplace of the dance form Kuchipudi. Kuchipudi is traditionally performed by men.

Coming back to the patronage in Telugu-speaking areas, I must talk about Jaaya Senapati. Jaaya Senapati, the Commander-in-Chief in the Kakatiya Emperor, Ganapati Deva's empire wrote an extensive trilogy -Geeta Ratnavali, Vadya Ratnavali and Nritta Ratnavali. We only have Nritta Ratnavali available today. The parallel he draws between the provincial abstract dance and the beauty and intelligence of the experienced Devadasi is extremely aesthetic from language and imagery perspectives. I

had the good fortune of working on a critical edition of the Nritta Ratnavali for Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, Government of India (Thakore and Pappu, 2019). I was completely floored by his approach and clarity of thought. For a performer, it is pure pleasure and liberating to just move as he describes the movements.

Jaayana's father established a temple for Shiva under the name Chodeswara in Chebrolu and had a two-story building for the Devadasis of the temple. He even gifted the Mudukuru district to them in 1250. (Maremanda, 306, 392, 393: 1991). Chebrolu is near Kuchipudi village. Nagaylanka is yet another place near Kuchipudi where the Ganapatheeswara temple constructed by Jaayana hosted several Devadasis. I always wonder that amid all these temples with women dancing there for livelihood, we have Kuchipudi village where a male-specific dance form by men, popularly known to be brahmins, perform theatre. The art form these men practice is called Kuchipudi after the place.

Quite often, in different contexts before the Nayaka period in the Tamil-speaking areas, there is little or no mention of an organized temple and court dancing system. The Nayakas were originally under the Vijayanagara kings, who gave them the power to rule these three provinces from the early sixteenth century onwards (1992; p.37, p.40). As Velacheru Nārāyaṇarāvu et al. (1992) say, the administrative framework of the Kakatiyas was initially adopted by the Nayakas down south in Tanjavur, the Nayakas of Madhurai, and the Nayakas of Gingee. However, the Nayaka leadership from the mid sixteenth century onwards had a cultural ethos that had a different nuance from the erstwhile Cholas and Pallavas and even the Kakatiyas. In fact, the Cholas and Pallavas were known for their artistic acumen. Patronage of art and culture was a significant part of all the leaderships. The Chidambaram temple and the icon of Nataraja are but a product of that patronage! This icon of Nataraja was to replace the Devadasi in the history of Indian dance centuries later (Allen 1997). The king being elevated to or looked upon as god was also an integral part of the rules. The Nayaka period went a little further when the king was equated to the deity.

The Nayaka Kings were the Telugu-speaking non-brahmin communities like the Balijas, Velamas, and Reddis, generally categorized as Sudras.[4] They traveled to the lesser populated areas in Northern Tamil Nadu and began a livelihood. (Madras/Chennai was a more colonized space on the coast). Bhakti or devotion gained prominence. Interestingly, there is no usage of the term Kshatriya (the term used for royalty). Only the terms Sudra and Brahmin were used often, and the Nayaka rule was definitely a symbol of the Sudra power forming a strong political base. Valour was of the highest value. Dogmas like religion and caste only came later in the priority list. The ideology seemed to be 'You decide what you want to be and work towards that,' so the Balija power came into existence. The body was primary. It was the means to work and reach goals and the means for pleasure, particularly sexuality (*Bhoga*). They included people outside their communities and strengthened themselves through inclusion and delegation of land and administration. The feminine was quite central to every activity. The Nayaka rule was, by all means, the nucleus

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[4] Members of the working class, generally understood as the lowest in the hierarchy.

of rich art and culture. To put it in Nārāyaṇarāvu et al. words, 'It was a time of movement, innovation, and rapid cultural growth.' (1992, p.314).

The Tanjavur Nayakas were replaced by Madhurai Nayakas for a year to be followed by the Maratha Rulers. By the mid-1670 s, Thanjavur was under the control of the Maratha Bhonsle clan. They ruled till 1855, when the British took over. The Marathas continued the cultural ethos of the Nayakas, under much poorer economic conditions. The king continued to be the romantic god-hero, usually Siva. He was the focal point for the Devadasi songs. Despite this vital role of keeping the king's spirits high that was played by the Devadasi, her position in society continued to be ambiguous. The Devadasi went through a particular ceremony called '*Katti Kalyanam'* or '*Pottukattuthal*,' marriage with the king's sword, solemnizing her relationship with the king. 'Temple dedication' gave them the authority to participate in the daily rituals of the temple. This is the hyped 'marriage with god,' a contract for the ladies, ensuring their sexual economy. A sort of 'settling down' or 'guarantee' in the Indian middle class's language. As Srinivasan (1988) reiterates, this contract did have an economic angle to it. The *dasi* was given a certain amount of provisions every month. Her sexual labor, too, was channelized as she generally was committed to the patron. So *Pottukattutal* was indeed a sought-after ceremony by the Devadasis. Marriage to God was never a concept in this culture. Eulogy, love, even rebuking were accepted.

This fluidity is very much like the idea of the caste of Devadasi women. Like lineage, caste was dependent on the nature of the vocation. Srinivasan (1988) says it was only after the reforms that these individual and distinctive service categories became castes. At this stage, much earlier to the British, Devadasis were not a caste. They were performing groups, and these women could come from varied castes.

14.5 Comprehending the Whispers

Growing up amid Krishna bhakti, dancing at a temple is an experience very dear to me. To dance at Andal Nilayam is a way of life for me. My first performance was done there and I have been dancing, ever since. I was initiated into the Vaishnava tradition even before I was a teenager by my Guru Rinda Devi who was a woman and somehow in my mind it is my way of opening the world of dance to you. An addition to my temple performances is Peddapuram, *Meesala Venkateswara* Swamy temple. At Peddapuram, the joy was that my predecessors led me there. The involvement of my family, without reservations, makes all the difference for me. It is about being chosen to carry forward the legacy. It is about the responsibility that comes with it. The sequence of events was exhilarating. My mother, Lakshmi, six months before she passed, suddenly said, "Chinna! (my nickname) I wanted to tell you something. Every year, on Dola Purnima (the full-moon day that marks the onset of spring), the Kalavantulu families in Peddapuram, Chinagandham families, in particular, offered seva (an offering of labour) at the Meesala Venkateswara temple. We did it till we left. Our cousins continued it." My father reiterated, saying they would make the

garlands, decorate the temple space, make offerings, and sing while the deity retired for the day.

My cousin, Padmajakka, called me a few days later and told me about the upcoming celebration. I jumped at the opportunity and took it up. Sudarsanam babai, my uncle, was involved in this and was doing it quietly for many years. 2020 saw me offer dance again. I must say that I did not dance the ritual dances. I only danced to songs relevant to the occasion at the temple and these were mostly Sringara (erotic) songs.

14.6   Comprehending the Bodies

The temple dance repertoire did not differ from that of the court in many ways except for the rituals. *Sringara* or eroticism was a natural base for the expositions. The songs and the dance were lively as *Bhoga* or enjoyment gained precedence, and the body was looked at as an instrument. The sense of the eye became primary. Visual aesthetic was fundamental. Nevertheless, the *bhoga* aesthetic of the Nayakas cannot be rubbished as carnal and base. The body is seen as an instrument to surpass mundane desires through *bhoga*. Nārāyaṇarāvu et al. (1992) clearly state:

> It (*Bhoga*) orients the symbolic universe not toward pleasure for its own sake but …as a means of transcendence, …. The yoga … always implies … spiritual growth. Sensuality literally incorporates metaphysics; the body remains an instrument, not an end. (p.168)

The body was primary. It was the means to work and reach goals and the means for pleasure, particularly sexuality (Bhoga).

When I dance to the *sringara* songs, my yoga practice does not allow me to look at them as worthless, crass, and hedonistic. For me, emoting to a *padam* itself is a spiritual experience, and the body is facilitating it. The happiness about this repertoire is that the most complex and esoteric concepts are presented through a super simple medium of ingenious literature and performance exegesis. These are but the concepts, one is led to believe, the prerogative of the privileged upper caste brahmins!

14.7   Navigating the Energies

The more I perform the Devadasi style, the more I realize how the dance, synonymous with their style, was not about themselves. It was about the ambience she creates in the space and the pleasantness she makes in the spectators' minds. If Bharata said in his Natyashastra (1967) that the artist cannot be subsumed by the song's emotion but must create joy, this could be an example. There was something about this exposition that made me feel human. There was a truth about it that I had not visited within

myself before. The experience is in the body, and there was nothing overtly spiritual about it. Yet, it was spiritual.

Every little experience of a dancer is through the body. What I do in the exposition of the Devadasis is just the opposite of my training in Kuchipudi. The approach is very different. I thoroughly enjoy performing Kuchipudi. The drama, vibrance, and energy of Kuchipudi, as taught by my teacher, Sobha Naidu, gives the performer and the spectator a high. This is not subtle, but out there, for the audience to relish the drama.

I trained in Vilasini Natyam under Swapna Sundari and learnt quite a few dance pieces from her, understanding the shift from the deliberately structured dance form of Kuchipudi to pieces of *abhinaya* structured on me. Today, I know I enjoy Kuchipudi even more because of an inner abandon caused by the falling off of the 'diva aura'-an affected state of happiness. This happened when Prof. Davesh Soneji very generously took me to his research sites, Rajamundry, and the little villages around and introduced me to my own people! It was Kotipalli Hymavathi akka first. Then Subbal-akshmamma, and the list goes on…They were not dead! They were not something of the past to be glorified or glamoured up as Rangajamma, to suit one's fancy. They were and are real!

14.8   Comprehending History

In the nineteenth century, Tanjore Devadasi performance traditions traveled all the way up to the Godavari river delta, near the Orissa border. These performances were often referred to in Telugu as *Mejuvani*, from the Urdu word, "*Mez*," meaning table, or more appropriately dinner table, indicating that this dance was performed at private gatherings of the elite. Typically, these performances began with a song of salutation known as *salaamdaruvu*. I re-learned the s*alaam* d*aruvu* from Hymavathi. Learning to dance to a song while placing it in the historical context made dancing so complete! The genre derives its name from the word '*salaam'* (an Urdu word for salute) that came to Thanjavur through the Mughal-influenced courtly practices of the Bhonsala kings. The *salaam daruvu* consists of a brief text praising a king or deity, interspersed with rhythmic sequences meant to be sung with melody. The genre can be dated back to the late Nayaka and early Maratha rule in Thanjavur and is one of the most significant genres of Devadasi performance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The *salaam daruvu* from the Godavari region, is reflective of colonial Tanjavur. When I perform this s*alaam daruvu*, I am carrying this complete history on my body! The responsibility and gratitude can be overwhelming! Dance now ceased to be a piece of mere glamour or about herself. I became aware of the place of art in society.

The first two verses are addressed to Pratapa Ramaswami, worshiped in an 18th C temple on West Street in Thanjavur, today known as the Vijayaramaswami temple. It is possible that these verses are pretty old, and date back to the rule of Pratapasimha, the patron of composers like the Telugu brahmin composer Melattur Veerabhadriah

(c. 1700–1770). Significantly, the name of the God Pratapa Rama is a kind of a homonym for Pratapasimha. Was he the same Pratapa Simha in whose court the stellar Muddupalani wrote the exemplary *Radhika Santwanam* (The satiation of the heroine, Radha's desire)? *Radhika Santwanam*, the epitome of eroticism captured in poetry par excellence.

Penned by a Devadasi, Muddupalani, in Telugu, the lyrics make no qualms about love to the extent that it unsettled the male ego during the 19th and 20th Centuries. Muddupalani's *Radhika Santwanam* was censured and rendered invisible by chastising rules of colonialism, only to be brought to light by my idol, Bangalore Nagaratnamma, yet another Devadasi. The iconic Bangalore Nagaratnamma declared that she, from the Devadasi families, would retrieve and print Muddupalani's *Radhika Santwanam.* (Sriram 2007, p. 37–41). Nagaratnamma said she would do this because of the virtuosity of the text written by a woman of her own clan. And she did it. Muddupalani was the epitome of power. She defied patriarchy when she only spoke of her maternal lineage and challenged male sexuality with her exposition of female desire (Tharu and Lalita 1995; Meduri 1996; Srinivasan 2009). Hers was liberalism in its accurate and complete sense and not 'in accordance with the goals of nationalism,' as Partha Chatterjee (1987) says. Was I dancing about that Pratapa Simha who recognized her prowess and gave this Muddupalani a place of pride?

The dwindling economy during the Maratha rule clearly did not deter the sensual excess and consumption. The political power began to disintegrate as it seemed to be an undercurrent of influence, even dominance of the Mughal rule prevalent in the North. Nevertheless, creative juices continued to flow. *Padams, Sabdams, Yakshaganas*-musical dramas in Telugu, Sanskrit, and Marathi, the Tamil *Kuravanci Natakas*, and devotional music flourished. This history rushes through my mind and body as I perform the s*alaam daruvu.*

Davesh Soneji took me to this temple of Vijayaramaswami, the name of the deity/king in this *salaam daruvu.* He also took me to Prasanna Venkateswara Perumal's temple, where the last *pottukattutals* were performed. Sitting there, leaning against the pillar, I had this lump in my throat. Was it anger? Sadness? Pride? Indignation? The temple seemed more like a historical site, than just a place of worship. I sat quietly as Soneji spoke. Why don't I know all this I wondered? This is the story of my family. I am grateful to everyone who has studied Devadasi history. But why am I not the one narrating it? Why was I literally plucked out of this rich history? I wished the pillar would come alive and embrace me. I wanted to melt into it. Would I then see them? I wanted to scream out to my family, 'If distancing us from the art is an injustice the nation has done to us, the larger injustice is what we are doing to ourselves by not being aware of our history. Don't believe what is rubbed on you by others! Find out for yourselves! This is a history the world would do anything to be a part of! This is a woman's story!'.

Our women, the Devadasis, had a more proactive streak about them during the Maratha Period. They built temples and maintained them. Under the king's patronage, they were a part of public welfare by arranging water supply to the town, having tanks dug, massive *annadana* programs (Nārāyaṇarāvu et al. 1992). What really made me very happy was that they named the activities after themselves! To repeat

Nārāyaṇarāvu et al. "by now the Devadasi has become a paragon of power, piety, magnanimity, and even of the wifely virtue of faithfulness" (1992, p.316).

By 1799, South India disintegrated into smaller '*samsthanams'* or *zamindaris* by the East India Company ruled by the *zamindar*. Zamindars were autonomous rulers who accepted the superiority of the ruler of the country, in our case, the British. The village or geographic space was made one unit to be under the rule of the zamindar. Large areas of land and so the peasants were under the control of the zamindar. By1877, Madras Presidency was made of the Princely states of Ramnad, Ganapur, and Sivaganga. Vizianagaram was one of the larger zamindaris in Madras Presidency.

The zamindars had the power and economy to patronize performances of the Devadasis in the intimate spaces of the *samsthanams* held exclusively for his connoisseur guests. This led to a beautiful lyrical exposition of *abhinaya* by them. In Coastal Andhra this was the m*ezuvani*. Eventually, while the zamindari system was weakening.

Madras city came to the rescue of a few of them through the opportunities created by gramophone recording and films. Nautch dance, as today's chamber performance was called, was a gratifying venue, even if for a short while. Ironically, it was the lively repertoire of *javalis*, and the economic independence of the women that ensued, that was once again used to stigmatize the Devadasi woman.

14.9   Ain't I a Woman?[5]

Stigma and appropriation took place at multiple levels. Maddula Janakamma looked so much like my aunt in Kovvur that I was surprised to see her. She would not say anything about the family and dance until I said I was also a Kalavantulu girl. I was her. She slowly asked me where I was from. The moment I mentioned Peddapuram, she froze. "We are artists. We have nothing to do with the women of Peddapuram. Women from other professions came to the place, appropriated our name of Kalavantulu and began sex-work. As a result, we suffer humiliation and stigma to a point of no return". "We carry this stigma through generations" "*taraaluga kshobhapadutunnamu"*.

This was very difficult for me to stomach. Sex work is an individual's prerogative. Why did they take on another's identity? Is this damage repairable? "Ask them to dance to one *swarapallavi* or sing one *padam.* You will know who they are," she challenged. I gently told her that I am a descendant of Kotipalli Madhuravani and Pichayamma, and that *Ammamma* was married to *tatayya*, my grandfather, a lawyer in Peddapuram. My father, too, was from Peddapuram. I was pleasantly surprised when she said, "Yes, yes. Gopinatham *garu's* daughter was given in marriage in Peddapuram. How is she?" It was like coming home! Even as I tell you, there is this surge of gratitude in me!

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[5] Sojourner Truth, an African American women's rights activist, known for her speech with the refrain "Ain't I a Woman", delivered at a women's convention in Ohio in 1851.

I requested her to do some *abhinaya* for me as I danced too. She asked me to do something for her, and with my Kuchipudi background, I bent my knees and opened my chest with hands at shoulder level. The 'perfect' *naatyarambham*, the fundamental stance in the neo-classical forms of South India. She looked at me and asked, 'where is your decency (*maryada*)? How can you open your shoulders so much and stick your chest out?' I became so conscious, I instantly closed my shoulders, and she said, "Aren't you a woman? Why isn't your spine straight? Why don't you look straight? Why *do* those sideward looks all the time?" (She was referring to the coquetry I was proudly displaying). That day was a lesson in real feminism for me. She spoke of dignity, of straightforwardness, and of unabashedly feeling the feminine within…all by simply correcting my posture! Again, this body has taught me this valuable lesson. She taught me how much I am saying by the way I hold my body or, conversely, how much my posture says about me! Besides, why was I carrying masculine stance in my female body when I danced? The stance of my male brahmin teacher Satyam Master transmitted to me via my Sobha teacher a female non-brahmin. The awareness that the change and privileging of a particular aesthetic of performance is related to the change in the center of power orchestrating and organising that performance knowledge began to dawn on me.

Janakamma danced the *Swarapallavi* for 20 min, singing for herself at the age of 80! She passed a few months after this meeting as if she was waiting for me. Pottemma would come there and teach me whatever she wanted to. *Bhajan, harikatha*, film songs…and slowly, after this warm-up, would emerge an old *swarapallavi* or a *tillana* she learnt…Her forte was song and technique. She would sing one line and give up. I would hover around her, humming that one line while she told me how to make a good pickle or what color suits me. Suddenly, the second line came back. We danced for these two lines when the flood gates would open. This is not about learning items, completing a syllabus. It is about learning women. Learning living. Learning myself. The memory encouraged her to call me back and even come to Hyderabad to teach me what she remembered. She walks faster now. I wonder if my journey is reaching its finale or if it has just begun.

My family always asks me, "Why talk about it? We now belong to the mainstream." There is denial in our families because we feel like we have merged into the mainstream. We choose to ignore the fact that society is only being polite. Today, we are the 'proper women' of the nationalist period that Susie and Tharu (Tharu and Lalita,1995) mention. We are normalized and tamed to be tamer and more 'proper' than any other woman. As for the dance, it exists elsewhere outside our bodies. As Urmimala Sarkar puts forth in the podcast, 'Story of Dance', (Thakore, 2020) "the dance itself also moves away from the community, to be performed by a different set of new experts—the urban performers, who then become the role models for the dispossessed locals, while representing the nation in the global stage."

With the formation of states came the neo-classical dance forms. These forms were taught chiefly by men of the artist-families to upper-caste women. Kuchipudi, too, carries this patriarchy, writ large in the technique of all genres of Kuchipudi. Initially men were everything in the productions, including the female roles through the practice of female impersonation, as said by Kamath (2019). Today the patriarchy

is on the bodies of the female dancers! As Meduri(1996) notes, "selected traces from the artistic history of the nineteenth century were carefully reclaimed, reassembled, and sutured on to the visual bodies of living Devadasis and middle-class women in the twentieth-century practices of cultural nationalism".

Kalavantulu families are positioned variously today. There are highly accomplished ones in education and career, and there are ones in the smaller areas who are trying to work their way into the mainstream. It takes extreme resilience to do that. Complacency takes over from time to time. But the next generation of these families MUST get their education. That heart-rending statement from the Madras Devadasi Association in their appeal titled The Humble Memorial of Devadasis of the Madras Presidency to the government (Soneji 2010) where they plead against the passing of the Devadasi Abolition Act, continues to be relevant. "Give us education in the vernacular and in the Sanskrit Literature," they say.

The lives of these women are a lesson on art, living knowledge, resilience, aesthetics, service and humanism. They exist in memory, in dance, and continue to exist. They are not the mythical women in the manner my professor spoke. This is not just my story. It is the story of the female dancing body and the knowledge and organizing this performing body carries in it. It is about the women in the Devadasi families. It is about the woman who continues to struggle to claim identity as an artist, a woman, and a performer to wear it proudly, having earned it through devotion and struggle. It is her story of dance.

Glossary

Abhinaya Expression
Annadana food charity, like a soup kitchen
Bhajan A devotional song with religious themes
Bhogamvaru pleasure women
Bulaaq A nose-pin at the septum
Dasi servant
Garu an honorific in telugu language
Harikatha A traditional discourse where the story-teller explores a traditional theme
Javali Javali was a love song with short passages, set to a catchy tune. This was a quintessential part of the Devadasi repertoire during the zamindari period
Kaasulaperu A chain of circular gold pieces worn on the neck
Nadaswaram a wind based musical instrument
Nartaki Female dancer
Padam Song of love, interpreted through expression
Saanivaru loosely used to refer to women in sex work
Slokabhinaya Interpretation of a Sanskrit verse through the modes of expression
Swarapallavi A genre of Indian music and dance which involves solfa and mnemonic syllables and abstract dance

Tavil A kind of a percussion instrument used particularly in temples and auspicious occassions

Thillana A genre of Indian music and dance which involves solfa and mnemonic syllables and abstract dance. The last stanza briefly mentions the composer's signature

Zamindar land lord, meaning landowner in Persian.

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Yashoda Thakore descends from a long line of Kalavantalu dancers (hereditary women singer/dancer families). She is a renowned performer of Kuchipudi and Devadasi Nrityam. She has a Ph.D. for her research on the Interrelationship Between Yoga and Indian Classical Dances and authored "Kaivalya-Joy in Yoga and Dance" (2014), co-translated and critically edited "Nritta Ratnavali", a 13th C text. She was an artist in Residence at the University of Pennsylvania (2019), and performed at the Wesleyan University (2019). Yashoda is the Chair for Kuchipudi Department at The University of Silicon Andhra, California. She was conferred the Bangalore Nagaratnamma award (2017) by the Samskruti Organisation, Guntur and the Ugadi Puraskaram by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Yashoda works relentlessly to recover the voices and dances of the Kalavantalu women and to bring the next generation of artists from her community back to singing and dancing. Her main goal is to increase awareness and pride in these art forms.