

Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

AGM: Annual General Meeting
CP: Communist Party of Sri Lanka
CWF: Christian Workers Fellowship
INGO: International Non-Governmental Organization
ICCO: Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation
JVP: Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
KS: Kamkaru Sevena
LSSP: Lanka Sama Samaja Party
LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
NSSP: Nava Sama Samaja Party
SLFP: Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SV: Synthetic Vision
TNA: Tamil National Alliance
UNP: United National Party
WSF-SL: World Solidarity Forum/Sri Lanka

Abstract

The state and the civil society are often presented as two opposing forces in both popular and academic circles. The state is ascribed with vertical properties, while the civil society, and thereby NGOs, are “rooted” and representing something “from below”. In this thesis I problematize the term NGO in that I question it’s ‘non-governmental’ properties. I argue, more specifically, that power should be understood by following power relations and the concrete and tangible exercise of power, instead of relying on general formulations like NGOs or the state. By following an internal NGO conflict in Sri Lanka, I will review how power is distributed between and betwixt such general formulations, and that certain political trajectories seek to uphold such dichotomies. I furthermore show that informal, unofficial and personal networks embed actors from both civil society and the state, while the formal, official and public discourse equals many NGOs with terrorists and Western imperialism. By employing a theoretical perspective drawing on Michel Foucault, and so-called ‘governmentality studies’, I will show how political rationalities might differ, while the strategies concerning governance can be shared. This means to show how the internal conflict reacts on ‘external’ factors with ambiguity; the state represent something ‘good’ and ‘bad’ simultaneously, in the wake of local conflict

1. Introduction: From finding the field, to analytics of governmentality

1.1 Finding the field and the core idea

One of the most frequent question I have been asked after I chose Sri Lanka as my field work destination has been: “Why Sri Lanka?” Personally I was always a bit puzzled by the question, and typically responded: “Why not?” For me Sri Lanka had everything for a fieldwork. Interesting ancient culture, colonial history, diverse ethnicity, and admittedly, I wanted my project to have some kind of relevance. The fact that the country recently came out of an almost three decades long civil war was therefore one of the reasons as well. The war was over, at least according to the news, and ambiguous information about the last phase of the war toyed my curiosity even more. I was prepared for an emotional, serious and hard-working fieldwork process in Sri Lanka, and I started to prepare myself practically, academically and mentally. As I am Norwegian, I was well informed about the conflict in Sri Lanka, because Norway was the main peace facilitator between the parties in the early 2000s. I assume the general focus on the Sri Lankan civil war in Norwegian media was above the average in the West, and I followed its development with great interest and sympathy.

Before departing for Sri Lanka, I established contact with Øivind Fuglerud, a prominent Professor of Social Anthropology based in Oslo. He was helpful enough to find a contact for me in Colombo, whom I met upon arrival. This contact was supposed to help me with the practical difficulties to get to Jaffna, in the Northern Province, since this was considered to be quite challenging at that time. First of all, I needed a special permit from the Ministry of Defence in Colombo to legally enter Jaffna, and secondly, I needed a host family there, or at the very least, a contact person. After I met my contact, Kingsley Perera, we were working towards getting me to Jaffna. It proved to be even more complicated than anticipated. Kingsley himself was in the middle of a struggle in an NGO that he founded in the early 90s. Kingsley and his family live in the actual premises of this NGO, where I too was lodged.

After a few days I gradually became more involved in this process of conflict, since Kingsley found some use in me, and according to him, my appearance in Sri Lanka was no less than a gift from God. He also found my last name interesting (Pedersen), and frequently called me “Peter, Son of Faith”, with clear biblical references. I was still planning to go to Jaffna for my fieldwork, but at the same time, I accepted that I was not first priority. After a few more weeks, I understood that a long-term stay in Jaffna was impossible. The Ministry of Defence would apparently never give me more than one or two weeks of legal stay in Jaffna, according to reliable sources. I was about to realise that I had to find a new field.

My original scope was on the Tamil population of the island, and very briefly: their situation in the post-war context in relation to the state and its apparatuses. I conducted short visits to various Tamil institutions in the Colombo district called Wellawatte, which is commonly known as “Jaffna-in-Colombo”. I didn’t find any suitable places there to do fieldwork, thus I simply continued to stay with Kingsley, in the NGO premises, following his conflicted process. I was, however, prepared for a slightly different project, which generated a few challenges for me. The whole sketch and all the literature I’ve read pre-field now seemed irrelevant in terms of this new field. The days went by, and I wrote field notes, and paid interest to what was going on around. I realised that the search for a field was over, since I in fact was already in it. I had found the field, and the locals called me Peter. Gradually, as my understanding of the NGO and the related processes increased, I also discovered that my academic pre-field preparations were everything else than irrelevant.

In recent anthropology, there has been a prevalent tendency to critically examine ‘development’ in the so-called third sector. One well known examination as such is James Ferguson’s (1994), where he shows how a certain rationality forms a discourse that is in conflict with the local political realities; thus forming a force that is essentially anti-political (ibid.) While my project is not primarily concerned with ‘development’, there are still some similarities in these kinds of projects in that I also address and examine ‘NGO activity’. William F. Fisher (1997) summarizes this new trend, and shows its importance by pointing to the way anthropologists unpack taken-for-granted generalizations in studies involving NGOs:

An enhanced anthropological contribution would enrich a literature the majority of which is replete with sweeping generalizations; optimistic statements about the potentials of NGOs for delivering welfare services, implementing development projects, and facilitating democratization; and instrumental treatises on building the capacity of NGOs to perform these functions. Unpacking this literature, much of which obscures its political stance in simple categories and generalizations, requires attention to three sets of issues that have concerned some anthropologists: (a) how discourses about NGOs create knowledge, define sets of appropriate practices, and facilitate and encourage NGO behavior defined as appropriate; (b) how complex sets of relationships among various kinds of associations, the agencies and agents of the state, and individuals and communities have had an impact in specific locales at specific times; and (c) how we can avoid reductionist views of NGOs as fixed and generalizable entities with essential characteristics and contextualize them within evolving processes of associating. *ibid.*, 441-442.

My main argument in this thesis is directly related to this problematization of the term “NGO”. The term is widely used to denote something essentially different from the state in its ‘non-governmental’ properties (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). The state, on the other hand, is in both academic and popular circles frequently addressed and ascribed with vertical properties; the state functions, plans and maintains itself through a top-down approach (*ibid.*) What does this notion of ‘non-governmental’ in the same discourse imply? Society and its civil society, therein NGOs, are often presented as a mediating force between the state; its logical, rational and vertical reach, and society; with its “irrationality, passions and uncontrollable appetites” (*ibid.*, 982). I argue, more specifically, that upholding such oppositions are *de facto* political in its functions and activities, and are in no sense ‘value neutral’ or representing an objective truth about NGOs role as something ‘good from below’, and the state ‘up there’ as a mechanism of power and control. I do *not* intend to perform an analysis on so-called ‘state-society interactions’, since this would assume and maintain the very oppositional tendency that I seek to criticise (*ibid.*) Neither do I intend on arguing that such oppositions does not exist or are false; I rather argue that these oppositions are socially constructed and imagined, and that these imaginations enhance the strength of the opposition itself. Rather, to battle such taken-for-granted generalizations, I will critically address the complex relationships between NGOs and external institutions by following an internal NGO conflict, and how this conflict in turn triggers the use of similar “technologies of government across domains” (*ibid.*, 995). Also, by examining this internal NGO conflict, one can avoid certain generalizations about

NGOs in that it reveals a “rich ideological diversity and functional diversity of NGOs” (Fisher 1997, 449). I argue that this diversity can be examined further by analysing the various factions and actors’ ‘political rationalities’, which means their differing sets of, for instance, moral justifications for certain ways of exercising power, and how this renders various intellectual machineries in which seeks to establish legitimacy (Inda 2005; Rose 1999). To do this, I will employ a theoretical perspective that draw on Michel Foucault’s literature on power, and secondary literature representing several singularities and trajectories of Foucault’s work. This implies a broad collection of concepts and different topics, which will be discussed and elaborated at a later point in this chapter. The title of this thesis metaphorically addresses ‘bananas’ and ‘bullets’, which comes from a field encounter with army soldiers selling very cheap vegetables for the poor and less rich population. These metaphors are meant to illuminate my problem in two ways simultaneously: on the one hand (1), there’s a *politics* of dichotomies that turns the state into a vertical institution of power (bullets) and NGOs as ‘good’ and ‘rooted’ (bananas). In the imagination of these political dichotomies, NGOs are also subject to demagogical rhetoric from the state, and vice versa. On the other hand (2), I argue that bananas are found in the state, and bullets are found in NGOs. There are two over-lapping themes where one (1) could be called ‘politics’ and the second (2) ‘governance’. Therefore, instead of identifying bullets and bananas in general formulations, I seek to identify them in different bio-political rationalities that exist across domains, in both state and civil society. Broadly speaking, I argue that these bio-political rationalities exist in complexity and plurality, everywhere, and do not represent just another binary opposition in structural and general terms.

In the upcoming sections, I will provide basic outlines of the NGO where I conducted my fieldwork, as well as a short presentation of the internal conflict in question, and an introduction of the very basic information and life history of my main informants.

1.2 Kamkaru Sevena, the workers shelter

1.2.1 Organizational map and formal structure

Kamkaru Sevena, sometimes also spelled Kamkaru Sevana, (hereafter: KS) means "workers shelter" in Sinhalese and is an autonomous sub-organization sprung out from the social movement/NGO called Christian Workers Fellowship (hereafter: CWF). Historically both organizations have roots in a Marxist tradition with actors from various communist parties like CP, JVP, LSSE and NSSP. KSs main purpose in its very beginning was to hold property and fixed assets for CWF. Kingsley Perera founded KS as an idea constituted as a series of "shelters for workers", which was honoured by the western donor ICCO. This was a fairly large project involving the construction of several buildings around Sri Lanka. Even though Kingsley was the de facto founder and leader of KS, he was kept in the background, because of his revolutionary background in JVP, which was believed to cause problems with the local authorities. Along the years this situation changed, and KS evolved into something else on its own premises, with continued bonds to CWF and its members. In some examples we can see individuals with double membership in both KS and CWF, and other social movements and NGOs as well. For example are many of the members in CWF and KS also members in WSF-SL, which is another NGO that has close ties with CWF¹.

The original vision and goal for KS were to empower and educate workers in Sri Lanka, and to be a platform where they can develop and flourish skills, knowledge, spirituality and mental capacity. By emic terms 'worker' has a very broad definition, including for instance peasants. The main building of the NGO is located in Ratamalana, just outside Colombo. This is an urban area interconnected with Colombo in general, and is often regarded as a part of Colombo itself, even though it is not. In many ways it can be seen as a community center with a long range of functions: pre-school and kindergarten, nursing school, political/union meetings,

¹ I was able to see documentation on the collaborative nature between KS/CWF and WSF-SL when gaining access to their accounts. Here I saw several transactions and loans from WSF-SL to KS in the period 2002-2008.

weddings, taekwondo-club, violin lessons, youth talent competitions, concerts, library, restaurant, lodging services, traditional dancing school and many other activities and services. This NGO is in some sense run like a private company, but is in a legal body of an organization, with members electing a board of directors annually, which holds the formal authority in that given period. However, this election did not take place the last ten years, between early 2000s to January 2011, which is related to the conflict this thesis describes. Before going into the conflict in detail, I will describe the organization and its premises.

The building itself is a pleasant view, relatively in a Sri Lankan, and especially in a just-outside-Colombo perspective. The architecture is of a Kandyian inspired style, with an “open solution” in the middle, which is supposed, according to my informant, “to create a natural air condition”. Furthermore, the building is huge, with several offices in the first floor, including a lobby, restrooms, kindergarten area, lecture room, kitchen and dining hall, a huge garden in the back, which is indeed cozy and sheltered. The biggest part is the “Big Hall”, with a stage with old and decayed professional light equipment. I guess this hall can hold a few hundred persons, and it is frequently used for various events, for instance weddings and talent youth contests for the young factory workers of the nearby Maliban crackers production site. The second floor has a library, a few storage rooms, another lecture room, and a large hall used for various activities ranging from religious activities to Tae Kwon Do. Also, in the back of the second floor a couple of companies rent office spaces. The third floor has more lodging spaces with my main informants two-bedroom flat, with a kitchen, bathroom and living room, as well as two guest rooms that formerly was a part of the flat, but eventually was separated from the flat to serve as rental rooms for the organizations guests. On the other side of the third floor there are large dormitories and bigger bathrooms, as well as a small private room, where I resided most of the time I was there. I did not dispose a private bathroom, and the room was not of the best quality, since it was actually designed to be a storage room, not a bedroom. Even though, I never complained about the room, and for this I was perceived as a hard-nosed westerner, not being “picky like the rest of them.” From time to time, large groups of youngsters lodged in the dormitories nearby for various reasons, which completely changed the atmosphere from lonely to virtually no privacy. At other times members of CWF came to live in the dormitories, when they were visiting

Colombo from other cities, like Kandy or Trincomalee.

Most of the people I randomly spoke with during my stay, both in Ratmalana area, as well as the nearby districts, knew about this building, and hence the organization behind it (it was frequently called Kamkaru Sevena, as they referred to the building and the organization synonymously). The local environment is indeed urban, and the urbanity stretches all the way to Moratuwa in south to the heart of Colombo in the north, and then further north to Negombo and Colombo's main airport. Directly to the south, most of the adjacent buildings are residential, and to the north you have the large Maliban crackers factory. The area is not urban enough to remain anonymous as a white European, resulting in various local people being curious about my whereabouts and business in Ratmalana. You have all kind of shops, ranging from smaller grocery shops, to modern chain-owned supermarkets, "poor mans market", bakeries, restaurants, bar, dry cleaners, temples, movie shops, electronics shops, internet cafes, tailors and much more. It is virtually no tourism in Ratmalana; in opposition to the nearby college and tourist district Mount Lavinia. Walking from Mount Lavinia to Ratmalana takes about 20 minutes, and gives an interesting experience in terms of transformation from modern, touristic, westernized to a mix of traditional, industrial, local and residential. Since I was the only white man in Ratmalana, I was given a lot of attention out in the public.

The summary of KS's stated objectives is long and vast, but many of these projects were not active during my fieldwork. The main reason for this was that most of the members and board directors were busy because of the conflict, instead of performing the actual programs, projects and workshops that KS is supposed to do. This problem was also tied to the fact that KS had no foreign funding to perform projects. However, many of the projects had been active previously, such as a workshop/educational institution to educate young adults in various practical skills. A range of planned projects can be noted in their official organizational papers: "rural development, urban poor, management, business and industry, water/sanitation, farming development, vocational training, research studies, consultancies, fisheries, woman's activities, self employment, shramadana, religious activities, awareness creation and conscientisation, youth activities, relief, social welfare, workshop to train mechanists and welders, building community centers at Hatton and Negombo, worker education seminars and legal aid and relief activities for strikers." (Organizational Document,

KS) Some of these projects are or have been active to a larger or lesser extent, while some of them never materialized, while others are still under planning. Except from the functions of the 'community center', there were no active development programs during my stay. There were, on the other hand, several workshops and seminars with the intention to educate members on various topics, as well as networking to perform future development programs.

The everyday life of the organization is somehow controlled and led by a staff on a payroll, which are not normally formal members of the NGO, hence no right to vote in the AGM. These employees does everything from office work and administration, to maintenance and cleaning, as well as working in the kindergarten, which represent a different activity in KS, since it is administrated and controlled directly by KS. KS, for instance, does not own the nursing school; they simply rent out classrooms and such in the KS premises. The leader of this staff is the general manager, and was changed three times during my fieldwork.

The formal organizational structure is hierarchical, with its constitution setting its fundamental principles, and with the AGM electing a board of directors annually, which consists of seven individuals. Three persons are elected respectively chairman, secretary and treasurer, while the remaining four are board members or directors. Each of the seven has one vote in the board meetings, which is held approximately once per week. This is normally where the formal decisions of importance are being taken. The board of directors also controls exclusion of members, as well as invitation of new ones.

My empirical data suggests that the everyday decisions is not necessarily taken by the manager of the organization, since the board directors of the organization is around and involved in the practical decisions, where social capital and patron-client relationships will be relevant for the decision making process and its outcomes. Allow me provide an example: Even though questions of maintenance, ranging from buying new long-lasting light bulbs (which are very expensive in Sri Lanka), repairing broken windows, rearranging the open area in front of the building and so on, is supposed to be done based upon decisions of the hired staff, and especially the manager, they are in fact not. Kingsley, being the elected chairman of the board (after

the January AGM) would quite often trample into the office, asking the manager to write checks for various services including the tasks mentioned. It was told to me that this was not supposed to be done in this way, but still, while knowing that Kingsley is the current *de facto* political leader of the organization, he could do it. Kingsley's only concern in regards to this was the financial situation of the organization, and not the fact that he overruled the manager. This could also involve larger projects, like refurbishing the façade of the building by hiring day-to-day labourers. Actually, two of the workers he hired came to be more permanently working, on a KS payroll, even though they were supposed to be there for only two or three days. This was a decision made by Kingsley alone, and not the manager.

What I want to argue by presenting these data is mainly two things: First of all, KS does not work like any typical western organization, even though I am not claiming that these examples cannot be analytically valuable also in general organizational theory. In Handy's (1988) vocabulary, Kingsley's rule is one that resembles 'club culture' in terms of organizational culture. This type of culture is characterized by a charismatic leader who sits in the centre with a group of loyal followers; while the distinctly different 'role culture' is a machinelike bureaucratic form, where everything should go in the proper and formal channels (*ibid.*) Any chairman in a board of an organizational body in a 'role culture', stumbling into an administrative office, and making detailed decisions would be sanctioned. In the Kingsley-controlled KS, this is not the case. The social status and social roles of the actors are much more involved in the current politics and decision-making in the organization, which leads me to my second point. The conflict between the two factions among the KS members is indivisibly bound to the everyday routines in the NGO. As long as Kingsley is the legitimate source of power in the political sphere, he knows that he cannot only control the game, but he can also create new rules in the game itself (Bailey 1969). This will of course be elaborated at a later point, but for now my point is that the hierarchy of the organization is fluid and dynamic and changes along with the political process, and hence I cannot draw a simple hierarchical figure presenting the organizational structure as it would represent the *de facto* authority, since the realities are far more complex.

The formal everyday structure of the organization is made up of a manager, working in his own office with 1-2 assistants. Its income at its present state is mainly profits from the various tenants renting office spaces, classrooms and space for their tuition classes. Kingsley used to retrieve regular support from ICCO, but this came to a halt when Kingsley was excluded from KS early during the 2000s². He later regained his membership. It was the same faction that he is in conflict with in the present time, which this thesis explores, who excluded him. During my stay the manager was changed three times, whereas the first one was sacked, because of allegedly alliances with Kingsley's enemies in the opposing faction. I never had the chance to observe the inner workings of this office during the first months of my fieldwork, mainly because the staff members was seen as Kingsley's enemies, loyal to the other faction, and I had to stick with my main informant and the actors loyal to him. Therefore, it would be a risky affair to engage the office to retrieve anthropological data. This could in fact put me in direct conflict with Kingsley, and ruin my whole project singlehandedly, since he was my host and main informant. I will now briefly outline the basic information on my main informants.

1.2.2 Informants and their life histories

My main informants are mainly three persons, all connected to KS, although in different ways. I will elaborate the life histories and give some general information on these three individuals. I gained rapport with all the three of these individuals, but the relationship between them and myself has been changing and dynamic, depending on my varying role in the organization, and the current circumstances in the power struggling process, as well as other personal factors, dealt with in chapter 2. In this part I will introduce the background of these three persons, as well as some of the relationship between them and myself, and their status and position in KS.

Kingsley is 62 years old, and has an interesting life history, with many anecdotes. In terms of ethnicity he is Sinhalese but with a Tamil mother (Sinhalese-speaking). He is from Negombo, a city north of Colombo, which is known for its high percentage of

² Kingsley was excluded, but regained his membership after a long process in the courts during the early 2000s.

Roman-Catholics in Sri Lanka. Kingsley is quite poor and has no regular income, or own home; he is living in the organizational building with his family. He has been travelling around the world, has been married to a Japanese Professor of Sociology, been studying in University of Berkeley in USA during the 1980s, and was also a part of the 1971 JVP-uprising (revolution attempt in Sri Lanka). For this he was imprisoned. Almost all of the involved persons in this NGO have been or are member of some sort of a communist/leftist/Marxist movement or political party. Some of them have moved away from these ideologies, while others are still active within political parties and/or trade unions. Kingsley is no longer active in party politics. The relationship between Kingsley and me has at times been turbulent. He is a man who likes to be in control. This can at times be very hard to cope with, and has resulted in some notable conflicts between him and myself. Kingsley keeps telling stories, ideas, visions of spirituality, and ways of dealing with everyday life, and normally has had a profound impact on his peers. Øivind Fuglerud “warned” me about him before I left Oslo in mid January, that he could provide me enough data for the next decade. I know in retrospect that this is true. However, the main problem with him as an informant is that he is the one in charge on the topic of the conversations. Asking questions will most of the time end in negative reactions and sanctions. In this way, he provides extreme amounts of information, but he is always in control of the topic. Kingsley is a deeply spiritual man, with a private library quite unique for Sri Lankan standards. Some people claim that he has books that exists nowhere else in Sri Lanka, or even Asia. He does no longer regard himself as Christian, but is constantly using analogies and references to Jesus Christ, Lord Buddha, Lord Kataragama (Skande), Shiva, Vishnu and various legends, myths, gods and entities. Figuring out his “religious” or spiritual point of view has been an indeed challenging task, but fortunately, he is more than willing to tell me about these things, sometimes for hours continuously.

Nirmalan Dhas is my second main informant, and is from my point of view a different person from Kingsley Perera. Dhas is a South Indian Tamil, also called “plantation Tamil”, “up-country Tamil”, and is also from Christian background, like Kingsley. This is regarded as a different type of Tamils, than for example the Jaffna-Tamils. They were brought from India to work in the tea plantation in the hill countries of Sri Lanka during British colonial rule. Dhas is a quite wealthy family man, with a large

house in the heart of Colombo, as he inherited a paper press company from his father. Dhas is one of the old members of KS and got to know Kingsley Perera in India during the 1980s. I am not familiar with the details on how they got to know each other, but as I understand from Dhas himself, it was something involving political activity.

Dhas is a very spiritual and political man, with a long range of various projects in his life. Most of these projects are tied up in one common agenda, and I would like to quote Dhas himself: “We need the initiation of responses immediately, but the structures we have in place are not planetary in their impact. We have to generate and sustain a system of planetary guidance to that can show us how to formulate, initiate and sustain a new way to live, new lives for each one of us and a new world for us all.” These words might seem a little cryptic, but it sums up Dhas’ philosophy in a good matter. Let me explain. Dhas has his own spiritual school/group where he wants people to change their mode of thinking and perceiving things from what he calls “the dominant dualist perceptual paradigm” to the “non-dualist perceptual paradigm” also called “the synthetist vision”. The main message in this theory and way of living is according to Dhas to see everything in a holistic matter, without binaries (good versus bad, me versus you etc.) He claims that the dualist way of thinking is to be blamed for things like global warming, poverty, wars and such. He tries to introduce a new way of dealing with the surroundings to fight the dualist paradigm, which is a mix of western psychodynamics and eastern philosophy. By many of the other informants Dhas is regarded as a typical guru-type (some says he is fake, some says he is for real). His dress is a homemade by his wife, with golden seams and dark colours, and he has a long grey beard. In the very beginning I did not pay much attention to this side of Dhas, his more private spheres, but it became evident for me that his actions and participation in KS was connected to agendas and plans within his general philosophy and school, he also confirms this himself. Dhas is a member of the board of directors in KS, and is the one responsible for human resources and organizational development.

Every Saturday Dhas has a “satsang” in his house. An easy lexical definition of this is “Satsang (Sanskrit sat = true, sanga = company) is in Indian philosophy that involves (1) the company of the "highest truth," (2) the company of a guru, or (3) company

with an assembly of persons who listen to, talk about, and assimilate the truth”. This can also be regarded as a party with dinner and drinks at his home, with his wife, followers/students and his two sons. I have been participating in this regularly, both to get to know Dhas better, as well as gathering information about KS, and his followers who was elected new members of KS in mid June.

Nirrosion Perera is my third main informant, whom I also gradually gained rapport with. Nirrosion is considerable younger compared to my other two main informants. He is in his early thirties with a wife and a one-year-old child. Nirrosion is very close to Kingsley Perera, and in some sense they consider each other father and son, even though they are not biologically related. Nirrosion is educated and holds a degree from a college in Colombo in the topics tourism and social work. However, social work here should not be confused to what we call social work in Europe. In Sri Lanka social work is more typical development work in NGOs and in the government through livelihood projects. When I first met Nirrosion he was working in one of the large Sri Lankan NGOs, called Sewalanka. Nirrosion was a department manager in Sewalanka’s peace and reconciliation program, which in turn was started by Kingsley Perera in the beginning of 2003, when he also was employed there. While I was in the field, Nirrosion quit his job in Sewalanka, and got a job in the Ministry of Cooperation and Internal Trade. He became one of the new members of KS during my fieldwork, but is not among the board of directors, like my other two main informants. He does however have a lot of influence in KS informally, since he is close to Kingsley and his allies. Nirrosion provide for me different kind of data, since his perspective is from a different generation, with completely different background and motives. Nirrosion is half Sinhalese and half Muslim (the latter is considered an ethnicity in Sri Lanka, just like Tamil and Sinhalese). According to himself, such a mixed background represents difficulties for him.

1.2.3 Basic outlines of factions and conflict

Kingsley founded KS in the early 90s, with support from the Dutch donor agency ICCO. He eventually promoted various left-wing comrades and working class “kings”, which Nirmalan Dhas calls them, as both regular members and board

directors. These individuals were to turn on Kingsley, and attempted to exclude him and his loyal group of followers, including Nirmalan Dhas, from the organization during the early 2000s. This led to a long process in the courts, where Kingsley won, and eventually regained his KS membership by court order. Almost a decade later, he had the chance to regain the formal control of the organization too. During the months before I arrived in January 2011, he travelled around and met KS-members personally to lobby for their vote in the forthcoming AGM. According to his calculations, the members who promised him their votes would be enough to win the election. The group who excluded him, which was by Kingsley and his loyalists called simply 'the enemy group' or 'the enemies', had internal problems and conflict. Upon my arrival I was told that this very important meeting (AGM) was to be held within a few weeks. This meeting could, according to Kingsley, give him the chance to win back the formal control of KS after almost ten years of struggle. He also had another ace up his sleeve, since one of the enemy group's leading personalities saw what was coming, and wrote a long detailed letter where he documented fraud, corruption, misdeeds and violation of the Kamkaru Sevena constitution, which in fact would be punishable also by law. Kingsley got the hold of this letter, and wanted me to transcribe it from Sinhalese to English on a computer, with him translating it for me. We worked a good three or four hours, and finally got the letter transcribed. This was important, according to Kingsley, because the non-Sinhala members had to see for themselves this documentation in the forthcoming AGM. Clearly, proving corruption, fraud, misdeeds and violations in the current board of directors would be beneficial for Kingsley, and his current agenda of winning back the formal control of KS.

The meeting was held 31st of January, and Kingsley won the election, with five out of seven board directors as people more or less loyal to him, while two of them from the 'enemy group'. With this, and from now on, I want to make explicit four categories that will be used throughout this thesis. When I talk about the 'current board' I mean Kingsley's board of directors after this AGM, as the 'old board' refers to the one that precedes it, I.E the one that is described as corrupted in the letter. The two other categories are 'Kingsley's group', and the 'enemy group'. Since members change sides and such, these categories are not static, but dynamic in the course of the developing conflict.

In the time after the AGM, the conflict between these two factions was intensified; and violence occurred. Various strategies were used on both sides, to neglect or undermine the other, as well as internal conflict within the groups. In Chapter 2, I show how the nature of this conflict allowed empirical data only inside one of the factions, which means that the thesis is based on empirical observation done mostly in Kingsley's group. The letter from the former chairman is however one exception of data from the 'enemy group'.

I have been asked why people are willing to go to these lengths, to win formal control of the NGO; I think this is highly subjective and personal for the participants. This was not a topic discussed very often between Kingsley and his followers, since the conversations were normally about the conflict itself, and how to win it or undermine the enemies. For Kingsley's part, the conflict was probably not just about the NGO, but also about his home, as this was a part of the KS premises. He is also getting older, and in some sense KS and their series of 'workers shelters' is perhaps his most successful creation. He was normally not explicit on his motivational factors for engaging in the conflict, but this might have been an important factor. I did however ask Kingsley directly whether he actually enjoyed the crisis, problem-solving and tactical meetings that arose from the conflict. I remember he was a bit puzzled by the question, but after he gave it some thought, he had to admit that he actually "enjoyed the struggle" a bit. Upon asking him what he thought the motivational factors for engaging in the conflict for the 'enemies' were, he thought that they had different motivations. Two of the old board members were on thin ice after proof of corruption, fraud and misdeeds had been documented. By winning the struggle in the NGO and being able to control the documentation and proof internally, they could, according to Kingsley, avoid prison time. Kingsley also speculated in the 'enemy groups' agenda as one concerned with "starting a new Christian-socialist political party" where KS could serve as a good source of income, as well as a headquarters. Nirmalan Dhas, upon being asked about this, thought that it was rather about expanding LSSP than actually starting a new political party, since most of the members in the enemy group are members of LSSP. Another important factor is Kamkaru Sevana Trust Fund, which is a new NGO that was started by the 'old board' sometime in the early 2000s. This NGO had according to Kingsley only one purpose: to hold money from an illegal sale of a property in Negambo north of Colombo. This was a substantial amount of

money, and was thought to be as much as 50 million rupees, which is about 390.000 USD. Losing control of KS, and a process in the courts could mean that this sale could be voided, or the money in the “trust fund” to be transferred back to KS. This money was therefore an important part of the prize for both factions of the conflict.

For now, I wanted to give a basic outline of the factions, and the description of the conflict. In my analysis, a range of case studies that involves this conflict, directly and indirectly, will be used. In the next section, I will deal with theory and as well as drawing a map defining the relation between the various case studies, and by this explicating more detailed the general problem formulated earlier in this chapter.

1.3 Governmentality as a theoretical framework: Mapping the thesis

In his famous *Governmentality lecture*, Foucault (2000) starts out to state that a number of treatises meant to advise the prince where to be found throughout the Middle Ages. They were something we could call a guide or a manual for the prince, concerning his conduct for governing his geographical territory, which further implies a proper conduct in ways of exercising power, or “the means of securing the acceptance and respect of his subjects, the love of God and obedience to him, the application of divine law to the cities of men, and so on” (ibid, 201). Foucault exemplifies these advices with perhaps the most well known of these treatises: Niccolo Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. According to Foucault, it is interesting to first take the stance of this treatise, and trace the relationship between this text, and then all those who criticized it. This small book is indeed an example of an advice to the prince, in a completely explicit matter, and Foucault claims that the book was not made an object of execration when it first came to be; on the contrary, the contemporaries embraced it. It later experienced several rebirths in term of interest among scholars and intellectuals, until the nineteenth century. However, what is interesting about *The Prince*, and its reactions, is the way these concrete ideas concerning sovereignty is being battled by a notion of “art of government” (ibid, 204). The critics of these treatises no longer embrace a sovereign, centralized state, but rather a set of techniques and rationalities that seeks to arrange thing in a certain

manner, which is convenient and fosters happiness for the whole population in question. This notion of art of government, which represent a particular change of history, is coined governmentality. Furthermore, Foucault goes on to describe governmentality like this:

The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security. *ibid*, 219-220.

We are therefore talking about a phenomenon that is often referred to as ‘conduct of conduct’ (Dean 2010; Foucault 2000; Inda 2005; Li 2007; Ritzer 2007). Mitchell Dean (2010) argues that this phrase plays on several senses of the word ‘conduct’, where one of these senses are the verbalization, ‘to conduct’, which means to lead, direct or guide (*ibid.*) There’s also a moral sense to it, where the sentence implies ‘to conduct oneself’ which is concentrated around the individuals self-regulating capacities in various social settings, for instance at work, with friends, or in a business deal (*ibid.*) A third meaning of the word is understood as a noun, where conduct refers to normative behavioural factors, including norms, actions and comportment (*ibid*, 17). Nikolas Rose (1999) defines technologies of government as: “[...] those technologies imbued with aspirations for the shaping of conduct in the hope of producing certain desired effects and averting certain undesired events” (*ibid*, 52). In other words, technologies here are a crucial component of governmentality as they denote the conduct-generating forces, and how these forces work.

These basic premises, with a clear Foucauldian stance, has laid a foundation for several theoretical trajectories, which has its generic term “governmentality studies” (Dean 2010), or elsewhere, as “a body of interdisciplinary literature developing around Foucault’s work” (Inda 2005, 2). I will refer to the latter definition as the “interdisciplinary governmental framework” throughout my thesis, again a generic term with the intention to include all those studies that applies to one of the theoretical trajectories inspired by Foucault’s work on power, which is more or less synonymous to Dean’s definition of ‘governmentality studies’. However, to show how this framework is useful for my own project, I need to demarcate it by working through

and delineating the meaning of the various Foucauldian terms used in the interdisciplinary governmental framework. This involves a set of concepts which is often employed in these kind of perspectives, while some of these concepts and the relation between them represent singularities in particular authors' interpretation and adjustment of them, while still being more or less truthful to their origin in Foucault's own writing (Dean 2010). This complies with an encouragement from Foucault's side, where he argues that his conceptual frameworks represent a toolbox made for users, not readers. He furthermore states that anyone interested should use these tools in the way they want, to reach academic achievement in their own respective fields (O'Farrell 2005).

I will now introduce these concepts that make out 'governmentality' and delineate how they function within a frame of understanding civil society (and thereby NGOs) as a sphere of governmental powers in Sri Lanka. This means by doing three things at the same time: defining the concepts by actualizing them in terms of topics this thesis will cover, and with this, drawing a map of the thesis itself.

I will start out with what Dean (2010) calls 'authoritative governmentality', in opposition to the majority of literature on governmentality, which focuses a study of rule in liberal societies (ibid.) This analytics provide a set of tools to "illuminate questions of non-liberal and authoritarian rule both inside and outside these liberal democracies" (ibid, 155). Furthermore, this perspective implies an argument similar to that within governmentality literature on liberal and social forms of rule, which emphasises elements assembled from bio-political, disciplinary and sovereign forms of power (ibid.) This type of governmental framework is fitting for contemporary Sri Lanka, since the country has experienced a gradual political change towards a soft form of authoritarianism the last decade, and especially in the wake of the current Rajapakse-administration (DeVotta 2010).

In chapter 2, I will focus on what Foucault calls micro-technologies of power, and how these powers are *disciplinary* in their way of "habituating the mind or body to a particular activity" (Scott 1995, 203). Furthermore, the second chapter will problematize how various forms of spiritual requirements from my informants were in conflict with my research agenda, and how this has affected my data, as well as other

methodological issues. The process of rapport and my varying participating role in the field needs some clarification, since I was directly involved in the conflict I examine in this thesis. In the last part of chapter 2, I show how these methodological issues and processes can be understood in terms of disciplinary power.

Since ‘governmental studies’ and ‘interdisciplinary governmental frameworks’ has their singularities not representing a ‘grand theory’ by sociological terms, I need to explicate my own synthesis of such singularities, following several trajectories simultaneously, which means to employ conceptualizations from both sociology and anthropology, as well as other disciplines. Bio-power is the form of power that comes to its right though what Dean (2010) calls bio-politics, which is concerned with fostering life of a population, also called vital processes. These vital processes could for instance be health, urban environment, education for various categories within the population, or working conditions (ibid.) Bio-power in authoritarian regimes could for example be a justification of war based on the threats that minorities represent for the vital processes of the majority, sometimes morally funded by a language of racism (ibid.)

In chapter 3, the level of analysis is brought further to include direct and indirect interaction with external factors, such as informal and formal agents of the state, and between KS and the national media. Here, state powers from various sources come into play, intertwined with actors in the civil society through informal networks. From an analytical point of view, I concur with Mary Douglas (1978) when she encourages suspicion on analytical procedures favouring binary oppositions. This scepticism is coherent with Nikolas Rose (1999) when he states that a governmental approach sees across grand dichotomies such as private/public, legal/illegal, political/personal and state/civil society, in opposition to classical sociological analyses (ibid.) Furthermore, this approach will allow me to critically synthesise such spheres. I identify and trace, for instance, the public within the private, and the private within the public, to show how power is channelled, used, manipulated and exercised by individuals betwixt and between those domains. This shows that the political rationality justified through bio-political rhetoric is many-dimensional in its practice, manifested through processes where micro- and macro-levels meet and creates ambiguity. Empirically, it will be provided examples covering the effects of a relationship between Kingsley, and a

personal friend who is an elected minister in the present government, as well as internal strategies in the KS-conflict showing how Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical approach is relevant to see how active manipulation between those domains are a strategy to foster and bolster legitimacy.

In chapter 4, I show a 'shadowy', and by emic terms frightening, side of the contextual and political situation in Sri Lanka. While I in the previous chapter deal with how external power-factors are used, manipulated between domains, I here emphasise that 'the external' also poses fear and threat through 'informal sovereignty' and disciplinary panopticons. Anthropologists have recently had increasing interest for such informal sovereignties, which is made out of 'shadow'-elements such as groups of thugs and "how state officials receive bribes in their dirty togetherness with criminals, or how they have vested interest in upholding zones of exception where illegal groups operate with impunity." (Hansen and Stepputat 2006, 305). There has also been noted that state institutions has forged coalitions with groups outside the law to extend its power into marginal areas (Verdery 1996), which is a long-term tendency also in Sri Lanka (Spencer 1990). By combining a diachronic and synchronic approach, following anthropologist and political scientist Iver B. Neumann (2006), I will show how this external and contextual over-time (diachronic) frame guides, steers and forms conduct in a conflicted (synchronic) event. Following a conflict started in a bedroom between Kingsley and his wife, through the organizational conflict, further via minister contacts, ex-militaries, lawyers and ultimately the chief of police, will provide such a synthesis. I will explicate how choices are being made based on emic assumptions and realities of the ambiguous relationship between the state, via informal sovereignty, manifested in a conflict in an NGO.

In chapter 5 I explore the micro-sociological features of KS, set in the context that the two previous more "macro-oriented" chapters establish. Political rationalities represent intellectual machineries that enable reality in such a way that makes it governable. These political rationalities carry moral justifications, conceptualizations of objects and limits of politics, as well as epistemological characters of political reasoning (Inda 2005). The concept also refers to the way knowledge and expertise is employed, used, relied on, as well as fostered, to stimulate, help or 'solve' various

problems among the population, such as poverty (ibid.) When dealing with process and conflict in KS, I will show how colliding political rationalities ‘provokes’ a certain effect by showing how such knowledge and moral justifications are used to define the Other, the ‘enemy group’, and with that an attempt to establish legitimate leadership. Here, political anthropology concerning strategy will help and enhance the analysis. This chapter makes the final stage of the thesis, by showing how the conflict is regulated ‘from below’ with Foucauldian concepts. By reviewing certain aspects of the conflict and identifying the political rationalities, I will explicate bio-political variables within this rationality, and ultimately show that the conflict itself is justified on grounds of fostering life processes, from Kingsley’s group.

For Bruce Kapferer (1988) the Sri Lankan Sinhalese nationalism is a force that enabled itself to legitimately destroy the ‘evil within’, and in this way the civil war was rationalized for large parts of its population. I argue that this particular ‘within’ is not solely the state, but rather the population at a whole where Sinhala nationalism being indeed one of the main ideological forces within the state, is also an example of bio-politics in action, but loaded with rather different intellectual machineries than the ones sometimes found in the civil society. When civil society meets state apparatuses, officials and representatives, the rationalities might differ, but the technologies and strategies of power are sometimes shared. This means that the ‘embeddedness’ of the state and civil society is manifested in a shared set of technologies of power on the one hand, but with a differing and contrasted political rationality on the other. This is however not a totalizing tendency; which is a part of my argument: rationalities of all kinds can be traced back to individuals operating both from the state, and from NGOs. By following the conflict in KS, and reviewing how external governmental entities are included both directly, through actual social and physical encounters, and indirectly through constructions that results in counter-conducts, one can empirically trace how these conflicting political rationalities are found both within the state and the civil society.

2. Methods, empirical data and disciplinary power

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will contain an explicit elaboration of the methods used in my research process. When presenting these methods, and the challenges that I encountered in this process, I will also relate this analytically to governmental activity and disciplinary power. This means that the chapter does not exclusively deal with methods, but contributes to this thesis' argument in general. This contribution is characterized by showing how also my project; the fieldwork, interviews, relationships, challenges, problems and analytical procedures, are by no means autonomous from governmental capacities and conduct generating forces, but most notably, disciplinary power. As Foucault (2000) suggest, instead of looking at the general formulations of power, one should look at the tangible and concrete instances where power is exercised. My argument in this chapter is that power, in the case of this research process, is not suppressive, but rather complex in that it has several dimensions: in one dimension my informants attempts to control my research agenda, indirectly with various means, such as requiring spiritual devotion that I was partly, but not entirely, able to provide. This attempt is, I argue, neither successful nor unsuccessful, but creates a dialogue where this data is produced and not merely observed. Another, rather different dimension is my own authority, as the individual doing many of the choices, guided or not, that produces the data this thesis is built around. This thesis is therefore made up of data *produced* in a context of governmental activity, which needs explicit exploration to show how this production relates to the conflict and context it was done in. It contributes directly to the rest of this thesis by showing that everything social is subject to power, and that this complexity is not exclusive to state/civil society interactions, but also in the relationships between the researcher and his or her informants. This furthermore illuminates that the political rationalities that will be dealt with in chapter 5, and also partly in chapter 3 and 4, is active also in the production of the data, as in other social encounters. Therefore, by controlling my research agenda, this project was understood locally as something that could serve, in its extension, to foster bio-political goals and by that a valuable source of information in terms of the conflict. This chapter also provides more background information

about my informants and the process of conflict, which will provide the reader with a foundation that enhances all the coming chapters of analysis.

2.2 Methods used

Theoretical commitment or beliefs are not merely academic exercises or semantics when an observation is made; it is entirely related to the practical. The observation is made consciously and as an active choice to illuminate something related to a hypothesis or theoretical framework; the observation is in other words goal-oriented (Davies 2008; Robben and Sluka 2012) The factors guiding the anthropologist are therefore related to theoretical interest and knowledge about particular problems, and accordingly, data is therefore *produced* and not merely observed. This does not however mean that all the observations in an anthropologist's fieldwork is guided by theory about mankind and society, as "what is observed and recorded is not only determined by a particular interest but also by what goes on around" (Holy 1984, 18). My own fieldwork took a severe turn once I reached what I planned to be only a practical stop necessary to conduct my planned project, since I arrived in the middle of a conflict that soon were to capture my scope of interest. As described elsewhere, bureaucratic challenges restricted my original plan to visit Jaffna, in the North Province of Sri Lanka; as a result my "choice" was not really a choice, but compelled by the local circumstances and possibilities at that very moment. I was to some extent academically prepared for a fieldwork circulating around somewhat, albeit not entirely, different key words than the ones I review in this thesis. This served as an academic "reset" in the field, where I found myself uncertain about what, where and who to observe, and from which theoretical perspective. With several strong personalities with in-depth intellectual understanding among my informants, I was guided and at times even directly and consciously controlled in terms of what data I was able and not able to access. As I will show in this chapter, this is of both analytical and methodological interest in terms of what is referred to in the interdisciplinary Foucaultian literature as 'political rationalities' (Inda 2005).

Furthermore, this made me realize that I was completely dependent on a post-field reflexive account before I could honestly and fully commit to an analysis, and this is

what I am planning to do here. Reflexive anthropology or ethnography stems from a critique of fieldwork practices existent in the past, in which challenges such as power relations between field worker and informant and the intersubjective construction of field notes, was neglected (Davies 2008; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). The followers of the reflexive trend then started to focus on meaning, interpretation and intersubjectivity, whereas an analogy were drawn between practices, actions and text, and that meanings in terms of culture would require interpretation in the same way as words or sentences in text (Robben and Sluka 2012). This trend is posterior to what is best exemplified in the anthropological discourse as thick description, where Clifford Geertz is one of the prominent figures (Holy 1984). Such reflexivity then is a key notion to explicate in which framework the knowledge has been produced. First, an awareness of my own role in the social 'whole', where I have been both participating and observing is crucial when attempting to induce, objectify and generalize the data in question. Secondly, my own changing role and subordinate function has restricted my data.

As for the second task, the term 'difficulties' covers a wide range of challenges, including: language, social positioning, field relations and rapport, identity, conflicts, spirituality, religion, politics and rumours. The fact that my fieldwork was undertaken in an organization during a period of severe conflict led to me being drawn into these problems. This necessitates a thorough examination of my own social status within this organization. A dynamic identity as such is not uncommon in ethnographic fieldworks, and Robben (2012) states that "The ethnographers multiple social identities and his or her dynamic self may be liabilities, but they are also research assets" (ibid, 89). For anthropologists conducting ethnographic fieldwork, their gender, religion, nationality and age might be used to obtain sources of data that would be unavailable to persons with a different background (ibid.) As for most ethnographic fieldworks, I employed what is generally known as participant observation, or at that at some points could more accurately be conceptualized as observant participation.

The second method used was in-depth interviews. Drawing on Briggs (1986), I argue that this method might prove useful, if applied correctly (ibid.) The question of correct use of interviews as a method is not easily answered, and is to a some extent

relative on the local circumstances – or put more simply, the success with the use of interviews as a method varies according to the course of the fieldwork process in general, especially in terms of power, influence and hierarchy between the researcher and his or her informants (ibid.) Furthermore, Briggs argues: “Our ability to banish the native communicative norms that operate in other environments is far from complete, and the natives own discourse rules have an odd way of infiltrating the interview” (ibid, 39).

I attempted to perform several interviews with Kingsley Perera, but failed to, since it presupposes, as Briggs argues, that the norms controlling interview as a communicative event is not necessarily shared or accepted by both parties (ibid.) When I tried to ask Kingsley questions in an interview setting, I was told that I asked the wrong questions – and in retrospect, I understand that being a youngster and him being an elder, he would expect me to listen, without asking questions. In order to overcome this challenge, I began to obtain what Briggs calls meta-communicative knowledge (ibid.) After a while I developed new ways to ask questions, in a more subtle and open way, often indirectly related to the topic already introduced by Kingsley. This proved worthy, and it granted me insight that I applied in the many more formal interviews with Nirmalan Dhas. After I gained more interview experience in this setting, I gradually grew more certain that success came through techniques where I for example undermine my own authority as the interviewer. With my interviews with Dhas, this technique was characterized by letting him control the topics. I did not ask questions that were for instance related directly to organizational questions in KS, but rather about his work, vision and spirituality. The meta-communicative aspect here was that I read from Dhas’ answers in terms of facial expression and body language, which questions he found interesting and not. If one question seemed to grasp his interest, I would quickly note that it was a topic and a trajectory of thought that could be further questioned.

2.3 Challenges encountered – choices made

Problem has been a key word throughout my fieldwork, not primarily for me as the novice anthropologist, but most notably for my informants. I am quite sure that not even a single day passed without me hearing this very word: problem. With this in mind, I want to show the duality of the word, where the emic understanding of problems as they appear, in turn, creates methodological challenges for the participating observer – me. Without focusing on examining these problems from the informants' point of view, here, I will rather focus on the challenges these problems caused from my point of view, and how it affected the research process. This in turn, will contribute to my analytical argument as a whole, as my own role in the field, and the changing alliances between the actors directly involves my presence and choices I made in the context of conflict.

On one of my first days in KS, I was walking around in the organization building with Kingsley Perera, while he was introducing me to the various people. After being introduced to a person, I was given a short background story about that respective individual as we walked on towards the next one. I remember being puzzled when negative adjectives (bad, ugly, fat, bugger, evil e.g.) was evoked describing these persons – and sometimes they were even described as 'the enemy'. It was made clear early on in my fieldwork, that any communication with the people being in the category 'the enemy' would put me in a difficult situation. June Nash (1976) addresses similar concerns in her own fieldwork in the Bolivian mining community; she explains how she was forced to take one side in the conflict between the mining community and the Bolivian government.

In Bolivia it was not possible to choose the role of an impartial observer and still work in the mining community [...] The polarization of the class struggle made it necessary to take sides or to be cast by them on one side or the other. In a revolutionary situation, no neutrals are allowed. *ibid*, 150.

Even though my example addresses a micro-conflict within a NGO rather than a revolutionary situation on the national level, I see striking similarities between Nash' experiences and my own. I was in reality left with two choices: a) join Kingsley's side

within the conflict, or b) leave the organization, and find a new fieldwork site. As this conflict eventually became my object of inquiry, it was confusing and at times indeed frustrating to be unable to see both sides of the conflict, especially since the conflict was locally understood as one between two distinguished groups. On the organization level this was, although, a problem that I could handle. In terms of empirical material, it would of course restrict me from retrieving any data from within 'the enemy' groups circles. If I were to approach them, they would probably treat me as Kingsley's subordinate, and if they accepted me, it would naturally cause problems for me in Kingsley's faction. So, the situation forced me to one of the sides, resulting in an inability of perspectives of both groups simultaneously.

Early on, as an AGM - incidentally the first one to be held legally for several years - was scheduled just two weeks after my arrival. In preparation, I helped Kingsley transcribe a hand-written letter in Sinhalese to computer-written English, describing cases of fraud and corruption in the organization over the past years. This was a key document for Kingsley, in terms of strategy, to win back the power in Kamkaru Sevena, since it would be proof of his enemies' misdeeds. Transcribing this letter, gave me an immediate understanding of the two groups in conflict, and the process the organization had been over the last few years. As this letter was written by the current Treasurer in the organization, and one of the alleged leaders of the enemy group, it also gave me the first glimpse of the other perspective. Put differently, this gave me access to a view that was not strictly Kingsley's, without directly interacting with anyone in the enemy group. This was in fact crucial for my fieldwork, since it granted me access to a different type of data about the origins of the current conflict. Van Velsen (1979 [1967]) writes:

However, the ethnographer should be aware that there is a difference of type between these two categories of data. In contrast to the observed data, the other sources of information may contain an element of bias which is not always easy to evaluate. *ibid*, 144.

What this letter represented was thus evidence that confirmed many of Kingsley's accusations towards the enemy group and the old board. This field experience made me attentive to the fact that I needed to control and confirm stories of past events to

avoid biased data from my informants in the future, as problematized by Van Velsen in the previous quote.

Transcribing this letter was extremely important to Kingsley, and it had to be done immediately, as the AGM was imminent. Without an English translation of this letter, the non-Sinhala speaking members (for example Tamil ones) would be unable to see the proof of fraud and corruption. He was very grateful for the transcription; it showed him that I might be useful to him in the future. As a result, I got closer to him as a natural ally and assistant. In the methodology literature this is called rapport, while friendships are described as the most usual field relation.

Unlike most actors involved in KS one way or another, Kingsley has an extensive international network consisting of a long range of people, but mostly academics and NGO-people. Because of this, no one seemed to be surprised by my presence alongside Kingsley. When I was introduced to people (especially the ones described with the before mentioned negative adjectives), I was presented as “the son of Solheim.” Solheim refers to the Norwegian politician Erik Solheim, who was a central actor in the peace brokering between the LTTE and the Sinhalese government in the early 2000s. At first, I was simply surprised by this introduction, but with time I started to interrupt and falsify his claim, as I felt uncomfortable being presented as someone I in fact was not. Sometimes Kingsley would react fiercely on me blowing the whistle; at one point he said: “You must understand Peter, that sometimes I use you, as you use me. When I say that you are the son of Solheim, you must not tell them otherwise”. Most of the people I was introduced to appeared to accept that I was Solheim’s son. Later, Kingsley confided that this would provide safety for him, as they would think he was *that* well connected. However, in terms of methodology, this complicated the situation for me. First, I would have to stick with the story, and go around pretending to be someone I was not, to not upset my main informant, contact and host. Second, I became directly involved in the conflict from the very first weeks without having the exact facts on the backstory of the conflict, excepting what I could deduce from the aforementioned letter. Third, and related to my first point, it would restrict me from communicating openly with members of the enemy group, as they were not aware of my real identity or agenda. These three points illustrates that it

would be hard for me to obtain any data from the sources inside what had been defined as the ‘enemies’, seen from an emic perspective.

2.4 Field relations and rapport

My first and foremost field relation however, was more similar to Jean Briggs’ (1977) experiences in her fieldwork among Eskimos, and was not one that could be categorized as a typical friendship. She found acceptance by going into a role of a fictive daughter of her main informant, and this is according to Sluka (2012) a classic way to gain rapport. As for me, it eventually became natural to present Kingsley as “my Sri Lankan father”. In terms of authority it was definitely a father/son-relationship. The similarities between Briggs’ experiences and my own does not end here. After a while, she found it difficult or even impossible to reconcile the two roles, of a daughter and a conscientious anthropologist. This resulted in her becoming disobedient, obstinate and grumpy (Briggs 1977). During the first two months, I was comfortable in the role as the “son” and student, but the following two empirical examples will show how my main field relation too, was disintegrated and altered in the same manner that Briggs’ describes.

In early March 2011, after being in the field for about two months, Kingsley and I, and another associate of Kingsley travelled to the war-town Jaffna, in the North Province of Sri Lanka. This is regarded as the cultural and political capital of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, and where I first had planned to perform my fieldwork. This was a tiring trip, physically, psychologically and emotionally. We travelled in an original American 1980 Jeep, with very stiff suspensions on terrible dirt roads, and spent almost 20 hours of continuous travel to get to Jaffna, with a short break in the ancient city of Anhuradapura. In Jaffna, we lived in an adjacent house to an Anglican Church, together with the Priest, and his family. Because of extensive noise from crying children, we did not get much sleep, and the days were hectic. As a result, we were all a bit irate, and I gradually started rejecting Kingsley’s orders and demands. I found him very controlling on a micro-level, even demanding to control when I could drink water. The trip was filled with several direct confrontations and conflicts between the two of us, but I will limit myself to describe two analytically related events. These

events are related insofar as they describe situations where two types of power are at play. Kingsley employs a disciplinary power that seeks to conduct my behaviour based on moral justifications that relies on both local traditions and an anti-western sentiment. The other type of power is from my side an attempt to create a counter-conduct, where my goal is to re-establish control of my own research agenda.

One of the mornings we drove out to see all the small islands outside the Jaffna peninsula, which are predominantly inhabited by Roman Catholic Tamils. All of a sudden Kingsley ordered us to stop by a group of middle aged and elderly men, relaxing in the shadow under a palm tree. Close to the palm tree, there was a small building, where they sold Toddy, an alcoholic beverage made from the sap of the Palmyra tree. Kingsley ordered a huge bottle of at least one litre of Palmyra Toddy, and bluntly ordered me to drink it all *very* fast, since, according to him, that was the local way to drink it. At first, I refused to drink. I was tired and irritable and I repeatedly refused, but eventually, after a series of direct orders from Kingsley, I accepted, and drank it all. To me, it tasted horrible, and I came close to vomiting. Once the first bottle was finished, he insisted to buy another, but then I refused in a more strongly manner, and went back to the car, as the intoxication became undeniable. After this, in the car, he insisted on buying some kind of local salty snack, to calm down my stomach after the Toddy, but I once again refused and just wanted to drink water. I felt very thirsty, but again, he told me *not* to drink water, since it would upset my stomach even more. I did it anyway, and he reacted by ignoring me the rest of the day. In retrospect, I can see that in this situation I became insubordinate and disobedient towards Kingsley, just as Briggs described in her experiences. While it might be true that drinking water after the Toddy would upset my stomach, but for me in that very moment, everything felt like a power struggle between the two of us, where I felt that he made me drink the Toddy to state a point. One way or another, he claimed to possess local knowledge about the process of drinking Toddy, and because of that, I were not to drink water, and eat the salt snacks that he bought. For the whole initiation of the Toddy-drinking, he told me that it was essentially important to experience the Toddy on my own body, to gain authentic knowledge and understanding of the culture. He would even argue that any real anthropologist should strive for such an experience, and gladly accept the challenge. In this sense, he does not claim only local knowledge, but also anthropological knowledge. Before

attempting to make sense out of this, analytically and epistemologically, I will present my second example.

Early in our Jaffna stay, we visited acquaintances of Kingsley, a family living near the urban areas of the Jaffna city. The man in the family is a Professor of Aesthetics in the University of Jaffna, while his wife is an ex-MP in the Tamil political party TNA. They were like many of the Jaffna Tamils, especially members of the higher educated elite, living abroad for most of the war. As I understood it, they came back after the war ended in 2009. We came there unannounced, but were served tea and cookies, while we had a long conversation. As we were about to leave, Kingsley asked them whether they could cook a “real Jaffna meal” while we were still in the area. They explained that a relative living in the same house was ill, and that made it impossible to cook at home. I was informed that this was a local custom. Kingsley then insisted, and eventually suggested that they could cook the meal in their other relatives’ home, to transport it to their house, and enjoy it there. They finally agreed to cook and host the dinner, and Kingsley was satisfied. The dinner was held a few days later, and we arrived early that afternoon. The men were gathered in the garden, drinking Arrack, while the women prepared the food inside the house. The dinner got delayed, and so we spent the entire afternoon talking and drinking Arrack in the garden. We all became intoxicated to some extent and finally, dinner was served. The meal was impressive, and we were about 10-12 people present. The mood was pleasant until the hosts put a few large bottles of Pepsi on the table. This triggered Kingsley’s irritation, which he subsequently expressed. He stated in a loud voice that serving Pepsi, the symbol of Western imperialism, with a traditional Jaffna-meal, was nothing but a true disgrace! He continued to have a monologue about this, and the hosts seemed to be either too puzzled or too polite to retort. Admittedly, the Arrack probably affected Kingsley. I felt that this family had sacrificed a lot to host this dinner, so after some time, I interrupted Kingsley, and said that maybe serving Pepsi was meant something else to the hosts. I argued that the Pepsi could be conceived as an attempt to reach out, and as an interesting mix between West and East. Kingsley did however strongly disagree. A heated discussion on the topic followed, resulting in Kingsley leaving the table, entering the kitchen and slamming the door, isolating himself for at least 15 minutes. In retrospect, I regret that I did not abstain from interfering, but at the time it felt right to explicate my opinions.

These two events are meant to illuminate a tendency similar to the one of Briggs', where I first enjoy a situation that is consolidated through a fictive kinship relation, which then changes into something indefinable as I became grumpy and obstinate; the fictive kinship ends, and our relationship is no longer defined properly. What I have seen in retrospect is acting as I did, challenging Kingsley's authority, was necessary to be able to maintain some control of my own research agenda. The research agenda is related to this in the sense that Kingsley wanted to dictate not only actions, but also opinions on my behalf. After all, the authentic Jaffna meal was made primarily for me to experience it. Also, any opposition to his actions, in any context, were completely unacceptable, as this example seeks to illustrate. His attempts to control me was total, and by that also indirectly involving my research agenda. A general tendency in our field relation was that I was sanctioned when I asked questions, since according to him, I was not in a state where I had the right to do so – I did not have sufficient local knowledge to ask the right questions. Nirroision Perera, who was in a similar relationship with Kingsley, confided: "the two main rules when talking to Kingsley is to never ask questions and the other is to always remember what he says". If I were to ask a question that he had answered before at some point, he would always remember this, and would respond with statements like "I already told you that! Pay attention!" The amount of information shared by Kingsley, however, makes it completely impossible to memorize everything. The crux here is that he is always in control of *what* information he is willing to give, and by controlling consciously what information he gives away he can subtly conduct behaviour.

We returned to Colombo after the trip to Jaffna, and our field relation was changed. He would to a larger extent than before ignore my requests, and I was no longer involved with the daily work within the organization. These two cases are interesting in two ways. First, they explicate how my own emotionality, pride and sentiments of courtesy made me do a range of choices, that had direct implications on which direction the fieldwork took, and hence, which data I was be able to access. Second, it can illuminate how Kingsley handles subjects that he sees as subordinates; that are at the same time, dependent on his appraisal and support. The second point will be further discussed in the last section of this chapter, where I perform my analysis in terms of power relations.

2.5 On the family-level

Kingsley, his wife and two daughters reside on the actual premises of the organization, and for the first two months of the stay, I was treated as a guest of the family, rather than the organization. Kingsley's wife, Sandya, served me all meals of the day, from breakfast to dinner. While Kingsley and I usually ate these meals together, I sometimes ate alone, being served by Sandya and/or one of the daughters. As with the KS conflict, I knew that the marriage was tense before I left for Sri Lanka, but I was unaware of the details, which were presented to me within the two first weeks of my stay. According to Kingsley, his wife ran away approximately one year earlier, to work in Cyprus. To fund her travels, she illegally reregistered and sold his car, and moved without noticing him. She had been promised a good job in Cyprus, but returned, with Kingsley's words "as a ghost" only a few months later. According to him, she was subject to a fraud on this trip, as many other Sri Lankans women are when they travel abroad to work. He also speculated that she was physically and perhaps sexually abused during this travel. Abuse is a well-documented problem among female Sri Lankan domestic workers abroad, and has raised considerably academic interest (Abu-Habib 1998; Gamburd 2000; Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004).

Kingsley decided to accept her back; according to him because of sympathy for what he thought she had experienced on this trip. But the relationship was now non-communicative. They did not speak directly with each other, and Kingsley told me that they now communicated through Suwandhi, the youngest daughter who was 19 at the time. In the following weeks, I was able to observe for myself situations where the parents shouted at the daughter, while they were actually attempting to communicate something to their respective spouse. Sandya, the wife, also worked for the organization, and Kingsley defined her as part of the 'enemy group'. Allegedly, she had had an affair with Raja Alahakoon, the Treasurer of the old Board of Directors – one of the leading figures in Kingsley's enemy group.

Methodologically, and by that also personally and ethically, this was a huge dilemma for me. In the family context, I was unable to avoid direct contact and interaction,

even longer talks, with Sandya. After all, she was cooking all the meals for me, and treated me with courtesy. I was trying to keep this communication to an absolute minimum, since I felt that it could be seen as consorting with “the enemy”, or in methodological language: communication with Sandya could restrict data in the group I was participating in. It simply made me suspicious. Kingsley would repeatedly ask me about how she was behaving when he was not around, and he even questioned me about whether she approached me sexually.

This empirical example has shown that to some extent, the family life and organizational features are related. This, in turn, has restricted my data to include only one of the two conflicting groups at the “family level” as well. As I increasingly became identified as a member of Kingsley’s group of allies, the context of the conflict made me unable to maintain a proper field relation with Sandya. As a result, I withdrew and attempted to avoid taking part in their family life, even though I continued to live on the same floor in the same building. In the introduction I problematized how local circumstances could affect the process of gathering data. This example is an instance of that observation, and as we have seen, the power struggle in the organization as well as the family conflict interact accordingly, determining to a large extent what data I could access in the future. In other words Sandya’s perspective was removed from the equation by the local circumstances. I will briefly consider the ethical implications of this dilemma at a later point in this chapter.

2.6 The group level

On the group level, that seeks to include the social dynamics within Kingsley’s group of followers, challenges were also encountered. As I was included as a loyal, although informal (not carrying a proper membership of Kamkaru Sevena), member of this group, I gained access to more informants, and consequently more data. The tension created by the conflict between the groups was always present inside the group as well, as everyone could be a potential spy, informant or have dual loyalties, or what was locally called “dirty agendas”. Some individuals were seen, from Kingsley’s point of view, as more likely to be either of these things, than others. This was a part

of a learning process for me, as I had to reconsider whom to interact with on a day-to-day basis. I spent the most time with Nirmalan Dhas and Nirrosion Perera, presented as two of my three main informants in the previous chapter. In the beginning of my relationship with Dhas, Kingsley would still see me as completely loyal, and even ask me questions about what Dhas “revealed” during our meetings. I was also presented with question in regards to “Dhas’ spirituality”, as Dhas in some sense represented a threat to Kingsley in the domain of spirituality within the group. Kingsley was explicit on this matter, and once said: “Dhas is one of this hoaxes, the new age guru who talks all kind of things, while in reality just seeks to empower himself, while I represent someone who struggles for the weak”. Dhas was seen as a direct threat to Kingsley’s authority as the spiritual master of the group, and this was a topic in many of our conversations. As I spent more time with Dhas, such questions disappeared, and Dhas, on the other hand, would open up and criticise Kingsley in front of me. As I spent more time with other “allies” of Kingsley, I could very soon see our relationship change. He would for instance no longer be as interested in telling me the events of the past day, and the questions about Dhas and his agendas came to an end. This should be seen in relation to the changes within the field relation after several open conflicts between Kingsley and myself, as described in a previous section. One of the reasons that I came to spend more time with Dhas was that Kingsley was upset with me because of what he considered my disobedient and obstinate behaviour during our Jaffna trip. It should also be noted that Dhas was regarded as the only potential leader candidate in Kingsley’s group (excepting, of course, Kingsley himself), and he was already quite influential. Now, Dhas was not in a patron-client relationship with Kingsley as many of the other was. This, as well as the fact that he was very resourceful, especially financially, led to Kingsley allowing him more freedom to make decision than any other actor in the group. This situation would be beneficial for me, as long as I was able to stay valuable and interesting to Dhas. After a while, I was encouraged to attend these spiritual courses and become one of his students. He presented me with a welcome package, including several books and pamphlets on his spiritual direction, as well as a price list for his rather expensive courses. To join this school, I would have to leave my own fieldwork in KS, and so it was out of the question due to my obligations and research agenda. I eventually had to refuse his offer, and consequently he became less interested in helping me in terms of

providing data. I did however remain the rapport with Dhas in a much more stable manner than with anyone else I met during my fieldwork.

While this example is the most notable, it is by no means unique. The same story happened more or less with all of the actors in Kingsley's group, when I wanted to access more perspectives and gain access to more data. This led to friction on my and Kingsley's relationship, and was a source of open conflicts between us several times. As Kingsley was indeed the one in charge of the group, and the person hosting me, my interaction with other group members, would eventually move me further away from the "inner circles", as Kingsley himself described it. Kingsley could in some sense control my income of data, as well as restrict what kind of data I was able to retrieve, as he was fully aware of my double role, as both novice anthropologist, and a member of the group. At some points during my fieldwork, I was even asked to give up my degree and thesis, to pursue more significant tasks in Sri Lanka, like spiritual development and NGO work. This will be more thoroughly discussed in the next section, where I examine the difficult balance between participation and observation during my fieldwork. To summarize, this case depicts clearly how the search for more data and informants did not happen without sanctions; I was inextricably involved in the conflict. This affects this thesis in that the data is restricted from a small number of sources, when the conflict involved many other individuals that have no 'voice' in this thesis. If I were to get data from sources that were seen as illegal from Kingsley's point of view, this data would be restricted in terms of amount, since I could not spend unlimited time with such individuals without sanctions. This is therefore a concrete example where the conflict in question joined with power-relations, directly dictates the empirical data, and as a result, the content of this thesis.

2.7 Participation, observation and research ethics

The fact that what I have been following, describing and participating is a conflict between two factions, gave me no other choice than to join one side. By joining a side, in times of tension and despair, where the use of violence is not only possible, but actually took place; safety becomes a pressing concern – both for me, as well as for my informants. In the tensest periods of the conflict, where Kingsley's group paid

ex-military personnel to guard the premises, day and night, the dangers of undermining observation in favour of participation increased. Security issues then appeared for me as more important than observing actively, and consequently less field notes were taken in the more tense periods. It would also be inappropriate to engage my informants as an ethnographer, when they believe that they are in real danger.

My second example is more directly related to the fact that I did fieldwork in an NGO. During my stay I went to numerous meetings, and met a lot of people working in the development sector in Sri Lanka. At some points my own project seemed insignificant compared to what I witnessed, and I felt for the first time in my life that I was in a situation where I could do something important – for others. In this context, Kingsley and I, among others, started discussing the possibilities of finding foreign funds in Norway. I slowly started to search for possibilities for funding, and engaged potential collaborators at home. As this project saw some progress I found myself in a situation where putting my own thesis on hold as a real possibility.

I felt that the environment was too unstable and I was warned by third party actors about the risk involved, and gradually begun to acknowledge this myself. However, in this period of my fieldwork, the balance shifted from observation to participation, thus affecting the quality and amount of empirical data.

My third example is one of greater complexity. It directly involves questions of spirituality and personal beliefs, and seeks to address a somewhat different perspective than the preceding examples. Like the title of this sub-section suggests, participation and observation are crucial to the ethnographer, whose challenge is to maintain a balance between the two. During my first two months in the field I was invited to several events where the goal were spiritual development. Both Kingsley and Dhas brought me to events that had a clearly spiritual aim. During these sessions I was challenged on non-trivial matters, and put in situations where I had to prove my spiritual capacity, interest and encouragement for further development. With no space to go into details here, the point is that I, stemming from an atheist background, was dragged between two spiritual masters. I was told that it was “time to learn how to operate on spiritual mode”, and that I had to “stop perceiving the world as one built

up by objects, and embrace the non-dual perceptual paradigm”. I was not given much of a choice, and ultimately this accumulated to a small personal crisis, where I no longer felt that I was in control of my own choices and actions. Kingsley noticed this, and eventually told me: “the enlightenment can wait”. Spirituality continued to be a main theme throughout my fieldwork, and I was eventually and admittedly influenced on a personal and “perceptual” level.

What I wish to illustrate with these examples is the following: participation versus observation consists of both internal and external determinants. The first example tries to show how the general context and my interpretation of it lead me to certain choices, which in turn produced a certain type of data. The second example explores how my own ambition, agendas and empathy inflicted on or even made me neglect the research process. The third example illustrates how I failed to meet spiritual requirements, expectations and devotion, made by my informants. Put differently, I found myself in a state where I no longer was in control of my own ontological mind-sets. They all illuminate how my identity was dynamic, ranging from potential funder to spiritual student, and how these identities affect the actual research process. If I were to make different choices, I would not have the empirical data that I now possess.

My participation in one out of two conflicted factions in an NGO also raises research ethical questions. Since I was not able to communicate much with persons in the ‘enemy group’, and was myself an active participating member of Kingsley’s group, I would have to stick with lies, such as me being the ‘Son of Solheim’. This means that the persons in the ‘enemy group’ were unaware, at least in the very beginning, of my role of a researcher, and hence I could not ensure what Davies (2008) calls ‘informed consent’. Informed consent is a principle that states the researcher should always; as far it is possible, inform those studied about what the research is about and who is conducting it (ibid.) This problem is perhaps most important in relation to Kingsley’s wife, since she was a person I interacted with directly. Her English was far from fluent, and I was never able to fully discuss my research agenda with her early on in my fieldwork. The field relation between her and me was in fact on a communicative level mostly in the very beginning, before I had even realized that I was going to do research not in Jaffna, but in the conflicted process in the NGO. Later on, as I have

described earlier in this chapter, I could not allow myself to communicate with her, as it would be acted upon as a treacherous act from Kingsley and his followers. In addition to this, she gradually began to see me as a part of Kingsley's group, so she stopped greeting me in the intersections, and all possible communication stalled.

Another difficulty with the explanation of research to participant is that, particularly with the more open research designs characteristics of ethnographic methods, researchers do not know at the outset what are all the pertinent aspects; in fact, the theoretical focus may shift and different sorts of data become relevant as the research proceeds. *ibid*, 55.

While I was still in the field, I did not know that Kingsley's wife would be a part of my relevant data, as I was in a theoretical mode of organizational anthropology. I was determined to primarily study the formal processes in the KS conflict, and compare them to the informal channels of rumours among the staff and the members. It was not until I returned from the field that I was aware that the family-level, and Kingsley's relationship with his wife, would be analytically pertinent. The ethnographic method is a process, and a different set of ethnographic material came to be relevant as this process progressed.

This chapter began arguing that scientific results are dependent on the individual conducting the research. By drawing on these examples, and discussing how they affected my empirical data, I have shown how my particular choices and the local circumstances are interrelated in a state of flux, where data is *produced* - not merely observed. Production of data is related to the very fabric of the social; and as I will illustrate in the next sub-section, power and political rationalities are no exceptions, as they are in a dialectical relationship with the process of data production.

2.8 Political rationalities, the researcher and methodology

So far in this chapter I have presented a collection of empirical examples to show various aspects of my challenges throughout the research process, and furthermore, how this has affected the data itself. In this sub-section, however, my delimitation and emphasis will be from a different perspective, where I undergo an analysis of the material presented in this chapter, from the governmental theoretical subset discussed

and contextualized in chapter 1. This is directly related to the production of data, since power seen from this perspective also includes influential factors in regards to my own research agenda – or put differently: as a notable challenge in my fieldwork was to remain autonomous on a perceptual level, for instance in terms of spiritual belief or religious practice, and this could in turn illuminate a certain aspect of my general argument that concerns itself with conduct-creating processes.

Governmental capacities and entities are essentially encompassing, therefore, my research project is no exception of such. Foucault argues that there exist numerable points of oppositions, confrontations and examples of resistance within governmental processes, which is conceptualized as ‘microphysics of power’ (Foucault 1995). These microphysics of power are attuned to explore the oppositional forces inside or within these processes, as well as the ones that are against the process at a whole (Ritzer 2007). Furthermore, this microphysics is not something that you simply possess, but is indivisibly a part of strategy,

[...] so the study of this micro-physics presupposes that the power exercised on the body is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy, that its effects of domination are attributed not to ‘appropriation’, but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings; that one should decipher in it a network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity, rather than a privilege that one might possess; that one should take as its model a perpetual battle rather than a contract regulating a transaction or the conquest of a territory (Foucault 1995, : 26)

What I want to argue in relation to the theme in this chapter, and the production of the data, is that these examples are instances of such microphysics of power. My research agenda was sometimes, from my point of view, in conflict with what was required from me to participate and commit fully to the cause Kingsley’s group were fighting for. Therefore, at times, I was accused of following “my own agenda”, and after the fieldwork, I have been accused of acting strategically to maintain my own (research) agenda, in favour of doing “the right thing”. In regards to this, I quote Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller (1992):

The changing discursive fields within which the exercise of power is conceptualized, the moral justifications for particular ways of exercising power by diverse authorities, notions of

the appropriate forms, objects and limits of politics, and concepts of the proper distribution of tasks among secular, spiritual, military and familial sectors. *ibid*, 175.

This is identified as what Inda (2005) calls “intellectual machineries” that “render reality thinkable in such a manner as to make it calculable and governable” (*ibid.*: 7). In this chapter I described situations where I was not only told what to do, or how to do it, but also what to think, and how to act accordingly to this particular way of thinking. This involved most notably examples where it was expected from me to no longer focus on what I was in Sri Lanka to do – my fieldwork, but rather devoting myself to deeper spiritual understanding, and also to *live* and actually experience the world from this new “emergent paradigm”, as Dhas sometimes called it. My research process was sometimes in conflict with the moral justifications for particular ways of exercising power locally, also involving attempts to modify my research directly. At some points my project were subject to discussion among my informants, and one of the things I was told was that it could serve as good “neutral” documentation of the misdeeds of Kingsley’s enemies, and their “dirty methods”. My argument remains that this research process is in reality not something independent of the microphysics of power, but yet another example of it. This chapter also described how I was used as a piece in a political game, for instance, when I was introduced as the son of Solheim. This shows that my presence in KS in this period carries several examples of governmental capacities, both in a personal, group-oriented and political sense. The justifications of the political rationalities could further illuminate this, especially when looking at how reasons are generated from problems:

The other important concern of governmentality scholar is with the problem-oriented nature of political reasons. They note that government is inherently a problematizing sphere of activity – one in which the responsibilities of administrative authorities tend to be framed in terms of problems that need to be addressed. These problems are generally formulated in relation to particular events – such as epidemics, urban unrest, poverty, crime, teenage pregnancy, and so on. The goal of governmental practice is to articulate the nature of these problems and propose solutions to them. *ibid*, 8.

I was shown and presented problems in the Sri Lankan society – as well as global problems, throughout my fieldwork. While Kingsley was more oriented towards the local and national problems (poverty, development, ethnic polarization, racism,

human rights), and how they were generated from a Sinhalese nationalism, as well as from modern and colonial influences, Dhas were more attentive to (global) environmental issues, where the world is on its brink of destruction because of a particular human dualist mind-set, that would have to generate greed, lust and compulsive behaviour³. In short, problems were addressed daily, and proposed solution came promptly, and my research process was always involved in these problems directly.

One of the problems that was most striking for me was the danger posed by potential agents of the state and/or nationalists (often being anti-Norwegian). From Kingsley's point of view, which is the important perspective here, these kinds of people were to be found everywhere; after all they do represent the majority. As a result, I was given very strict rules to follow, when I was out in public space, meeting random people. I was told to never reveal my nationality, and to make up stories about what I was doing in Sri Lanka, such as backpacking, studying Buddhism and sometimes because of health problems. The best option was, according to Kingsley, not to talk to strangers at all, since it could pose real danger to me, and to the ones hosting me. I accepted these rules, and mostly followed them strictly up to a certain point. As a result, I found myself more and more paranoid about random people in the public, and most of all, I wanted to avoid causing problems for my others than myself. After several months I ultimately felt safer about the situation, and got fed up about lying to everyone I met. I also felt that I would lose a lot of contextual data, by restricting myself only to Kingsley's approved informants. As I was staying in an area virtually without any western people, I got a lot of attention. Several times a day, random people in the streets would approach me with friendly questions like, "Hello my friend! Where are you from?" Sometimes, I would tell the truth, sometimes not, depending on the gut feeling of the situation. The argument here is related to problematizations of the governmental processes, where unidentified dangers are seen as one effect of the prevailing Sinhalese government, and the proposed solution were to make up plausible stories. The result of this imposed rationality is that the danger became apparent for me as well, and in turn maintained my patron-client relationship with Kingsley.

³ This is documented empirically in Chapter 3.

The point here is not to discuss whether the posed dangers are de facto dangers for physical well-being, but to illuminate how these alleged dangers are understood locally, and how knowledge about these dangers in turn gives the right to restrict subjects to a certain type of behaviour. I was repeatedly reminded that I was culturally a child in Sri Lanka. The first time this was made explicit was during my first weeks, when Kingsley and I took a public bus from Ratmalana to central Colombo. The bus was crowded; we found only one free seat. I insisted on Kingsley sitting in the vacant seat, while I could stand. A bit humorously, I stated: “In my culture, and I am sure, in the Sri Lankan culture, you offer the seat to your elders.” He quickly replied: “Yes, I agree, but even before the elders, the babies should have the seats. In Sri Lanka, you are a cultural baby; so sit down!” This example summarizes how Kingsley treated me, even in matters where Sri Lankan culture was not pertinent. Since I was in his country, being a cultural infant, I was to obey his commands without questions (as described elsewhere in the chapter). The moral justification of control relies on a type of knowledge, but that knowledge also encapsulates and determines what is to count as knowledge, and when knowledge is to determine decisions or not, while he sometimes would surrender completely, and state: “I know absolutely nothing about that.” This tended to be in questions of technology and electronics, where I was *given* the authority to possess knowledge in the social context. This knowledge, however, did not grant me rights in any other domains, as the category was somehow subordinate.

What I ultimately wish to show with this is the circular nature of power relations seen in a governmental-methodology interaction. The research process itself is another example of a domain that is subject to governmental activity, in a dialectical matter; where me and my research agenda is one will that seeks truths based on anthropological perspectives, cultural background and pre-theoretical commitments, and on the other side, the local realities, main informants and the events going around, sees the research process, and me, as a possible opponent, ally or even political asset. This dualistic interaction generates data that by no means are transcendental, but by carefully and truthfully giving it the reflexive attention it deserves, a certain scientific result should be possible to apprehend. Furthermore, when I follow the discourses and rationalities that render this system of thought, it can be traced outside the relation

between researcher and researched, which is the purpose of chapter 5, where I explicate this political rationality in a context of conflict, where spatial arrangement and moral justifications are sources of legitimacy that are being battled for continuously in tension, as in a microphysics of power.

2.9 Conclusion

As shown in this chapter, governmental activity exists also in and among the relationships between the researcher and the researched. This chapter seeks to entail a certain disciplinary power in the conflicted process of KS, which requires spiritual devotion and certain mind-sets. If one tries to challenge these mind-sets, exclusion from the group is a risk. Methodologically speaking, it was crucial to remain inside the group to continue the ethnographic work. This means that others indirectly conducted many of the choices that were made by me in this process, and therefore my data is produced, to some degree, from these mind-sets. It was especially hard to stay objective in terms of the faction conflict in KS, since I was forced into one of the two. Reviewing the choices, strategies and moral justifications that Kingsley's group articulate and employ will solve this problem, by not focusing on the actualities of the group conflict.

3. Politics of dichotomies explored: Governmentality betwixt and between

3.1 Introduction

One of the reasons that prompts me to raise the question of power by getting to the heart of it at the place where it is exercised, without looking for its general formulations or its foundations, is that I reject the opposition between a power-wielding state that exercises its supremacy over a civil society deprived of such processes of power. (Foucault 2000).

This quote provides a point of departure for this chapter. It will demonstrate how power is exercised, manipulated and channelled betwixt and between general formulations like ‘civil society’ or ‘state’. The interdisciplinary governmental framework and governmentality studies challenges the well-established dichotomy between state and society (Nadesan 2008). In the anthropological discourse the framework provided by a Foucauldian perspective emphasising governmental processes is conceptualized as ‘ethnography of encompassment’ (Inda 2005; Ferguson and Gupta 2002). This means to take as its central object of problem the understanding of processes that both reinforce and subvert legitimacy, through a complex set of calculated moral and rational justifications (ibid.) What does this mean to other, related, dichotomies? Since we in fact want to search for power where it is exercised, instead of working from general formulations, I will also problematize the relationship between the personal and the political, which Nikolas Rose (1999) demonstrates as one of the important change in modern politics:

As these images of the nation state fragment, in the face of strange new couplings, flows and alliances that spatialize power along very different dimensions, and that establish connections and relations through very different lines of communication, a range of other challenges to orthodox politics are on the rise. New feminisms are articulating, in different ways, the insight of the women’s movements of the 1960s, which disrupted the conventional divisions between the political and the personal and between the public and the private. *ibid*, 2.

This amounts to a discussion on the relationship between political and personal identity (Ashmore, Jussim, and Wilder 2001). Anthropologist Ana Maria Alonso (1994) addresses that this problem originates from a mystifying separation between the political and the social, resulting in scholars objectifying and personifying the state in their analysis.

Governmental scholarship attempts to simultaneously address the “rationalities of historically specific forms of political government such as neoliberalism *and* the forms of activity and technologies of power shaping everyday interpersonal and institutional life, thereby bridging micro- and macrolevels of analyses” (Nadesan 2008, 1). This warrants an identification of the relational nature of the personal and political identities, and as my ethnographic material suggests; the persons involved in the conflict have long-lasting personal relationships, manifested in marriage, friendships gone sour, and enemies uniting. They have conflicting political and ideological sympathies, where large parts of the ‘enemy group’ are members of the Trotskyist party LSSP, while others, in both factions, have been or are currently active in party politics in other parties as well as trade unions. There has been an apparent notion of a split based on the prevailing civil war in Sri Lanka, in terms of sympathizing either with the LTTE or the Sinhala government. In addition to this, the peers’ origin from different ethno-religious backgrounds including Christians (both Roman-Catholic and Anglican), Buddhists, Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim (which is regarded as an ethnic group in Sri Lanka), while others, such as Nirmalan Dhas, belongs to a type of “new age” spirituality. These are variables that represent a flux of both political *and* personal identities, with a wide range of possible personal and political agendas, motivational factors and moral justifications. This leads me to two questions implicit in this analysis: How do these variables shape the technologies of power of everyday life, and how does these technologies fit into the present rationalities of political government?

To demonstrate where power is exercised, and how political and personal identities are linked up to this, I will provide two sections. The first section will show how NGOs are in a politicized sphere in Sri Lanka, which requires interaction with the state. Furthermore, I will draw on examples of such interactions, where the state, from

the perspective within the NGO is seen as both productive and oppressive. This gives rise to certain technologies of power, such as multiplex relationship between Kingsley, an NGO leader, and an elected minister in the Sri Lankan state. The second section deals with how strategies concerning the conflict in KS are many-dimensional. In Kingsley's group of allies, strategies are employed to ensure formal power, while external strategies, such as communicating with media, contains a technology of building legitimacy through impression management. This is an attempt to build legitimacy by giving the media a version of the truth that emphasises 'productive' rather than 'oppressive' types of power. I will here combine analytical tools drawn from both Goffman and Foucault, which Ian Hacking (2004) argues are complementary approaches. The two cases are analytically linked in that they both see between and betwixt private/public distinctions, and are concerned about identifying power where it is exercised. Ultimately, these two cases will then show that analytical procedures favouring binary oppositions needs to be abandoned when reviewing power from a perspective of governmentality.

3.2 The political: a mix of private and public?

This sections deals with two types of politics; one type that concerns itself with formal-public-state matters, and one concerning intra-NGO politics, and the analysis is on the relationship between these two political spheres. In Sri Lanka, the NGO-sector is highly politicized and is by no means seen as neutral participants, but rather as political actors in for example (but not always) the conflict between the government and the LTTE. Walton (2012) correctly addresses the complexity of this issue with examples from one of the biggest Sri Lankan NGO, Sarvodaya:

This brief sketch of Sarvodaya's development in Sri Lanka illustrates several general facets of the effect of conflict on the legitimacy of NGOs. First, it demonstrates how national NGOs' rely on a delicate balancing of their relationships with donors, the state, other political and social actors, and the communities in which they work. In the Sri Lankan context, organisational development is heavily shaped by interactions and confrontation with the state. Second, it illustrates how national conflict has the potential to sour relations with the state and

highlights the potentially severe consequences of this for NGOs working in contexts where they lack solid legal protection. Third, it highlights the high degree of instrumentality inherent in government's relations with NGOs: when NGOs are useful they can be co-opted, when political capital can be generated from attacking them, they can be attacked. *ibid*, 150.

For now, what I want to establish is that NGOs, including KS, are in spheres that are politicized in a sense that requires interaction with the state. The civil society at a whole contains organizations that are closely tied to the government, as well as hardliners on the opposite side, often sympathizing with the LTTE (Orjuela 2003). This means that just being an active member in such an NGO puts the individual in a certain category, which might necessitate interaction with other governmental capacities, such as, and perhaps most notably, the state. Since the earliest demands from Tamil militants to form a separate state, both local NGOs and INGOs has been vigorously “portrayed as foreign invaders, colonialists, Christian proselytizers, and imperialists by those who argue the country’s (according to the ideal of King Asoka of India) cannot be restored unless NGO activities conform to national interests” (Fernando 2011, 111). This notion of anti-NGOism is widespread in Sri Lanka, especially through state controlled media and is identified as a popular ideology that finds its power through representation of negative memories of colonialism, Western imperialism, but perhaps most importantly, through rhetorical means based on national security imperatives (*ibid.*) Goodhand (1999) notes that a similar tendency of ‘suspicious cooperation’ between the state and NGOs are also found between different types of NGOs; for instance, between the developmental type versus the ones engaged in human rights issues (*ibid.*) While some NGOs were excluded from such a characteristic during the civil war, especially those being openly government friendly, other NGOs supporting a negotiated political settlement between LTTE and the Sinhala government, was framed as pro-LTTE or foreign agents (Fernando 2011).

In other words, by simply favouring a political solution to the conflict, such as the Norwegian peace facilitation during the early 2000s, an NGO would be placed within a strict category as an enemy of the state (*ibid.*) After the 9/11 attacks on American soil, Western countries begun fighting terrorism by new means, and became increasingly uneasy about terrorism in general. This provided the Sri Lankan state with increased international sympathy in terms of their ‘ethnic problem’ and LTTE,

which further intensified the language of national security (ibid.) Working or operating within the NGO-sector does hence not only require interaction with the state, but also puts one in a certain category among the majority of the population. From this structural perspective, it seems that NGOs and the state are antagonistic, but as the following case will show is this encounter much more complex, especially when taking both public and private spheres into consideration.

Kingsley's group discovered that KS was under surveillance from the Sri Lankan secret police, and Kingsley explained it like this, since I was not present when the event took place:

When I got home I discovered that my wife was speaking to a group of men just outside our flat, whom I did not know. I confronted their leader, and asked who he was. He explained that he was with the police, while being hostile. I got really upset, explained "who I am", and he got calmer. Then I took him to my room [Kingsley lived at this time in a different room outside their apartment in the KS building, because of trouble in their marriage]. In the room, I started asking him questions, alongside Nirrosion. I gradually recognized that it was a man that I've seen around for a long time, here at KS. I threatened him, that he would have to tell me what he was doing there, or else I would have to contact Basheer [minister friend of Kingsley], and make him contact his superior in the police. I told him that I would make sure that he would lose his job, and ruin his career. He got really afraid and nervous when I explained to him how well connected I am, and eventually he begged for mercy, he even cried and went on his knees in front of us. He needed the salary to feed his family. He told me everything. He is with the secret police, and was here to observe what was going around, and that he has been around for years! [KS is a very public organization with people coming and going all day]. He told me that him and the secret police was even more interested in the place because of the recent activity of the South Indian Tamil in the organization [Nirmalan Dhas].

Before going any further, it should be noted that Sri Lanka had 93 ministers at the time being, including deputy ministers. Some of the departments do not have 'full ministers', and in that sense, a deputy minister is regarded simply as a 'minister' in emic terms. I want to show two things with this empirical example. First, it confirms hidden state activity within the civil society, which is thought to be normal, and that activity from Tamils attracts increasing attention from the police. A variable such as ethnic identity is thus enabling police interest, presumably because of potential connection to LTTE or other militarized Tamil groups. Second, and perhaps more

importantly, Kingsley's political capital manifested in having a minister as a personal friend can be used to pursue secret police officers to reveal information about their mission. This could of course be a tactical presentation of the encounter, to build an image showing his strength to even be great enough to even scare off a police officer. However, this story was told only to me in private, and Nirrosion Perera confirmed that it happened the way Kingsley said. When I later on told Nirmalan Dhas about the story, he was not surprised and assured me that it very well was plausible, because that's "how Sri Lanka works". He neither was surprised about his own presence, as a Tamil in KS, would trigger extra interest from the police, responding "Of course!"

This shows that the state's suspicion is legitimate, since de facto power exists there, through personal-political contacts between an NGO chairman and the state, which are higher up in the hierarchy than the policeman himself. Since the policeman actually begged and believed Kingsley to tell the truth about his connections, he would think that the consequences were potentially harmful. According to other events involving Kingsley's minister contact, it is realistic that Kingsley could've created actual consequences for the policeman if he wanted to do so. For example did a relative of Nirrosion Perera totally wreck his car while driving intoxicated, and the police was about to arrest this relative. They contacted the minister, who made the police lay off the case, which in turn saved Nirrosion's insurance policy from becoming void.

This could serve as an example of where the personal meets both the state and the political, in at least two ways. Political power is here ascribed to Kingsley, manifested through direct persuasion of the officer, on the one hand, while the police officer represent an official and legitimate source of power on the other, which means that power exists on both sides. The primordial and executive source of power, on Kingsley's side, stems from a democratic elected minister, while a personal and private relationship, joined with a shared understanding of local political realities and practice, gives room for a chairman in an NGO to affect or conduct the behaviour of an officer in the secret police. Kingsley was not required to actually use his personal friendship to acquire what he wanted, nor did he need to demonstrate that he had it, since the police officers already knew that he was of some kind of importance, since he was under surveillance in the first place. I stress that this example could be, to

some extent, generalized to other areas of the society: a rickshaw-driver, unrelated to KS, whom I met occasionally, asked me whether I wanted him to arrange an extended visa for me. All he needed was my passport one day, along with 10000 Rupees, and then he would return it the day after with a valid visa stamp inside. It is highly unlikely that this was a street-hoax, as I met him several times and developed rapport with him. Furthermore, I told him that I knew a minister, and he replied: “Ah, then you are fine. You can stay as long as you want. Never mind.” Another time, I randomly met a couple of young bank employees out for drinks in Mount Levinia. They decided to go to Colombo, driving, for a few more drinks. I asked them whether that was a good idea, considering the obvious alcohol intoxication. The owner of the car said, “I’m not going to drive, he will!” pointing at his friend, explaining that he was the son of a minister, and hence, the police wouldn’t (or couldn’t) do anything if they were to be controlled. A similar value of political contacts was noted while talking to a restaurant-owner in Mount Levinia, I asked him why he didn’t serve alcohol, while the adjacent restaurant did, while stressing it would be good for business. He responded: “I’ve been living abroad for 30 years and have no political contacts. They do. I would love to sell alcohol.”

While the three latter examples are unrelated to KS, and are purely contextual, they show how “knowing a minister” or other political contacts makes things that are normally not possible, possible. This confirms that public figures, like ministers, channel power “down” through private channels, which is used for various unprecedented or aimed reasons and agendas. It shows how power can be personalized and individualized through, for instance, the domain of corruption, while the execution of this power reinforces itself by reminding other actors, as well as the self, that “knowing a minister” is useful. I stress that this can be conceptualized as what Foucault calls ‘the technologies of self’ (2000, 403-404) or more precisely in this context, “the political technology of individuals” (ibid.) This political technology of individuals aims to denote the process of how the governmental capacities are individualized and appropriated by agents through local knowledge, and how these capacities are *reinforced* through such a process: “Government is possible only when the strength of the state is known: it is by this knowledge that it can be sustained. The state’s capacity and the means to enlarge it must be known” (ibid, 408). In this example the state itself is not reinforced, rather the very governmental

strategy of ‘knowing a minister’ is. Every time it is evoked, used and applied by individuals, it reinforces itself through the practice of this particular governmental strategy. It means that its practice of the power and the power itself is in a dialectic relationship that reinforces itself. Insofar as actors within the civil society evoke the network of ministers, it shows contours of what Sending and Neumann (2006) addresses as a change of governmental logic, rather than a mere transfer or transaction of power between state and civil society. It is not a one-way transaction, but a technology that facilitates civil society into a redefinition, which is characterized as a subject of government, rather than an object.

By reinforcing this technology, it is further conducting others to see the value of having personal relationships with political contacts, but perhaps more importantly, it generates the conductive obedience required for this power to be effective in the first place. People has to know and accept that knowing a minister will be effective, to allow it to be effective. If the policeman were to be completely unaware or unwilling to believe the effectiveness of such a personal relationship as the Kingsley-Minister relationship, he would not need to comply with Kingsley’s wishes. This knowledge itself becomes internalized as disciplinary power, again following Foucault (1995):

The general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines. *ibid*, 222.

This quote is written in a context where Foucault explicates on the process where the bourgeoisie becomes the dominant class in the eighteenth century France, where the surface is explicit formally and coded egalitarian, while the discipline serves as an example of the other side, which he calls “dark processes” of this larger process (*ibid*, 222). I argue that the Kingsley-Minister relationship is one such everyday micro-power that Foucault refers to in the former quote. In contrary to the formal and official political system, it carries non-egalitarian qualities since you have to know a minister to use it, at least without lying about it, and knowing a minister is of course not an egalitarian component in the juridical form in the state, since the relationship is, or could be, “personal”.

Further conceptualized, the Kingsley-Minister relationship is multiplex rather than uniplex, in that it carries both personal and political variables, where the personal and emotional relationship might be used to achieve political goals (Eriksen 2004). Uniplex relationships are fixed; for example as a relationship between a bureaucrat and his client, or as in a purely business oriented relationship (ibid.) Multiplex relationships are more complex, since they involve several social statuses between the individuals simultaneously. For example if the client of the bureaucrat starts to bring flowers and invite the bureaucrat for dinner, it is an attempt to turn a uniplex relationship into a multiplex one. If one does that successfully, it might be harder for the bureaucrat to handle the client objectively and without considering the personal segment of the relationship (ibid.) Kingsley and the minister has a long history, of both friendship and previous collaborations in the NGO sector, all long before the minister was elected and appointed his ministerial post. After he became appointed, their relationship has continued to be personal, but where favours, services and help can be provided on behalf of his ministerial influence and power. In other words, the relationship is multiplex in that the minister is an elected political leader in a country where Kingsley is a citizen, as well as a long-lasting friendship. Clearly, a minister does not provide favours or ensure security the same way for all the citizens of Sri Lanka.

The benefits from multiplex relationships, I argue, are employed more often in certain situations in the conflict, such as in a crisis involving external factors. I will discuss this further by reviewing the use of multiplex relationships in the wake of conflict.

Clyde Mitchell (1974) shows how network-theory has been disputed in the anthropological discourse, and notes that deviating conclusions about the connection between intensity and multiplex relationship has been made (ibid.) Intensity is more specifically a concept denoting “the degree to which individuals are prepared to honour obligations, or feel free to exercise the rights implied in the link to some other person. The intensity of a person’s relationship with a close kinsman is likely to be greater than that with a neighbour for example” (Mitchell 1969, 27). An almost identical concept used to describe the intensity in a multiplex relationship is ‘strength’, which is related to the willingness to ignore other considerations to fulfil obligations and expectations associated with such social ties (ibid, 28).

To address this problem, of two opposing conclusions, Mitchell shows that the difference lies in the distribution of power between the factions of conflict (ibid.) He finds that,

The difference between the situation analyzed by Wheeldon and the situation described by Jacobson is that in the situation described by Jacobson one of the parties holds power over the other, whereas in the situation described by Wheeldon this was not so. The proposition connecting multiplexity with intensity, therefore, in the light of the points raised by Jacobson, needs to be modified by defining the context as one in which power relations are relatively balanced. ibid, 284.

Gregory Bateson (1972) classifies these two conflicting modes, as complimentary and symmetrical schismogenesis. While Jacobson, from Bateson's perspective, describes a complementary schismogenesis, since it is a case of "dominance-submission" (ibid, 82), Wheeldon is concerned with a symmetrical schismogenesis, which is by definition "cases of competition, rivalry, and the like" (ibid, 82). With a perspective drawing on Bateson and Mitchell, one could say that such a connection, as the one between intensity and multiplex relationships, could be employed when we are analysing a conflict of symmetrical schismogenesis only. This raises a few questions: First, how does one define de facto symmetrical schismogenesis when the process is dynamic? Second, when it changes, at which particular point does symmetrical schismogenesis change into complimentary schismogenesis, I.E, where is the border between the two? Third, in this process, how do the local understandings and constructions about the current events and conflict relate back to the conflict itself, and then specifically in regards to governmental entities on different analytical levels, such as the state? To answer these questions I will use a process-oriented perspective.

The conflict between the two factions could be identified as a continuous game in a *political field*, which is defined as "a fluid area of dynamic tension in which political decision making and competition takes place" (Lewellen 2003, 87), which should not be confused with the more static and structural-functionalist concept of political arena (ibid.) By seeing both symmetrical and complimentary schismogenesis from a processual perspective, where the actors operate within a political arena, one can see that actually both of these types are at play simultaneously. From the actor's point of

view, the other faction might be seen as more powerful in some ways and inferior in others. Also, as the conflict progresses and small battles are won or lost, the perception of the conflict can be individually rendered by the current circumstances.

The old board of directors did for instance sell a property near Negombo for a substantial amount of money. However, the money from this sale was transferred to a new organization called “Kamkaru Sevena Trust Fund”, which had its own constitution, organizational structure and members, dictated by the members of the old board whom started it. Legally, it had no direct bonds with KS; it just happened to have a similar name. When Kingsley regained the formal control of KS, the economical situation was poor, since ICCO stopped their funding when Kingsley was excluded from the organization in the early 2000s⁴. He later regained his membership after a long process in the courts. The enemy group, on the other hand, still had access to all the money in Kamkaru Sevena Trust Fund. When the conflict again moved towards a juridical phase, lawyers-fees came to be a substantial expense for Kingsley, which had neither regular private income, nor any money in the organization. This lead to a lot of worrying, since the enemy group had ‘infinite funds’, and could hire the very best lawyers without thinking about the expenses. This money could also allegedly be used to bribe government officials, police officers or buy votes in KS, or even hire hit men. In terms of the economical situation, the conflict was locally understood as one of complimentary schismogenesis. However, the enemy group were understood as simple-minded, stupid and were referred to as “monkeys”⁵. They were seen as far inferior in terms of strategy, spiritual capital and justice, and hence Kingsley’s group were bound to win, according to Kingsley himself. The multiplex relationship between Kingsley and the minister were not used directly in the faction-conflict in KS, but rather when Kingsley’s group suspected that the enemy group had utilized external forces of power outside KS. The first encounter I recorded between Kingsley and the minister happened after co-workers in another larger Sri Lankan NGO threatened Nirroision Perera. As I understood it, Kingsley had not met the minister for quite some time, and this was evident because of the topics of the

⁴ According to Kingsley and other sources, ICCO stopped the funding since Kingsley was their contact person. The funding continued for a while, but this was a private transaction to Kinsley via Nirmalan Dhas. Funding for KS stopped.

⁵ Described in detail in Chapter 5 dealing with political rationalities.

conversations. First of all, Kingsley informed the minister that he had regained the formal control of KS, and that the minister could now see KS “as his own place” if he needed it for anything. The main reason for visiting the minister, however, was the concern that was raised because of Nirrosion’s situation in the other NGO. Since that other NGO was thought to have very close ties to the elites in the Rajapakse-regime, Nirrosion was afraid that the conflict in that NGO could end up with him being imprisoned based on the PTA (prevention of terrorism act), which gave the state extraordinary powers to imprison people without any trial⁶ (Fernando 2011; Wickramasinghe 2001). The conflict in the other NGO started with a chain of e-mails claiming Nirrosion to have contact with LTTE-friendly, government-critical academics, by showing to various articles written by these authors. This whole situation was explained to the minister, and he responded by guaranteeing for Nirrosion’s security, and also indirectly offering him a new job, where Nirrosion was to reorganize an NGO that had its glory-days just after the tsunami that struck the country, which was controlled by the minister and his network in the eastern province. This meeting would later end up with Nirrosion being offered a job in the ministry itself, which he accepted. This encounter was symptomatic for the Kingsley-Minister multiplex relationship. To actively use this relationship and at the same time expect intensity, the matters were somehow connected to the state, and not to ‘trivial matters’ such as the KS conflict itself, when isolated from the external factors. This shows that Mitchell (1974) has a valid point when he argues that “a good deal of confusion has arisen from the fallacious assumption that all analyses [of network theory] are necessarily cast at the same level of abstraction” (ibid, 284). In other words, what enables this multiplex relationship is not something contained in an autonomous faction-conflict, but it is one that is continuously in dialectical interaction with structural forces, and it shows that you need someone in the state, to defend yourself from the state, and this defense might be triggered from conflict with non-state actors. In that way, the state is actually just a mediating force that represents both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ when conflict with other non-state actors arises.

The application of such a strategy or execution of power, as shown in these examples, is always used in a private, and normally between two or a handful of individuals. It is

⁶ See Chapter 5.

likely that a persuasion of such (Kingsley-Police officer) in front of hundreds of people, during a speech, would have a different outcome, following Foucault on the “formal” and “egalitarian” part of the disciplinary power (ibid, 222). It is therefore something restricted to the private sphere, while the formal power itself, as an official legitimate state power (the minister, or the police officer), is public. By seeing the private in the public, ethnographically, one can see the outline of a political rationality rendered in its own right, which is perhaps best conceptualized as disciplinary power, while constituted through a political rationality, which is individualized through the processes where it is utilized.

Several examples of dynamic set of rules regulating the conflict were noted during fieldwork, and this posed, in turn, security issues for Kingsley’s group. In the early conflict, there was an option that anyone would try to hurt each other, physically, and the means of winning the conflict was concerned with formal battles in meetings. Later on it was intensified enough to hire ex-military private security to guard the building. At times when dangers were believed to be more likely to occur, Kingsley was more strict than usual. I had to come home before dark, and the main gate was closed every night. Once the security-situation settled, the gate would be wide-open day and night. In the early stages of the conflict, strategies were concerned with lobbying votes for the upcoming AGM, and then about establishing a legitimate rule⁷. As the conflict evolved, the rules regulating the conflict came to be increasingly unclear. In one of the late evening strategy meetings among those of the inner circles of Kingsley’s group, they discussed how to safe keep all the organizational documents from being stolen and/or burned by the enemy group. This was just before the conflict was about to go to courts, where both factions had engaged lawyers. The growing suspicion originated in Nirmalan’s story about stopping Wijieheva, in the enemy group, from stealing documents earlier that day. These documents were crucial in proving the old boards misdeeds and corruption, and with that proof, some individuals in the enemy group risked serving time in jail. Based on this, speculations about the enemy group’s desperation arose as a topic, and they all agreed that the documents had to be kept elsewhere, outside the KS premises. Rumours about Wijieheva having another pair of keys for the offices circulated. Their conclusion, after a long

⁷ This is referring to the process described in Chapter 5.

discussion, was to give all the documents to Shirley, Kingsley's lawyer, who was present in the meeting. Shirley brought thousands of documents stacked in several large piles, to keep them in his office safe.

For now, what I want to illuminate with this example, is that Kingsley and his followers were uncertain about the rules of the game; they were constituted as fluid political field. Still, even though the rules for regulating the conflict itself remained dynamic, and at times, unpredictable.

The varying sense of security were manifested in hour-long discussions about whether the 'enemy' group would attempt to assassinate Kingsley, or regain control with physical force or even with the help from corrupted police officers. With this in mind, one could see that a process-oriented approach with the concept of political field is fitting for the further analysis. This is by no means unrelated to the 'personal', since the individuals in KS (in both factions) have personal relationships, sometimes long-lasting with phases of friendship or betrayal the past decades. In short, they have history, and in Kingsley's case, he is married to someone he 'politically' defines as an enemy.

This involves a related discussion on the "public" versus the "private" in which Weintraub and Kumar (1997) describe as one of the "grand dichotomies" of Western thought (ibid, 1-3). It is argued that this dichotomy origin in a wider sense of rationale which relies on a binary distinction as an analytical procedure, not necessarily describing the actualities at hand. Anthropologist Mary Douglas (1978) describes this oppositional tendency:

Binary distinctions are an analytic procedure, but their usefulness does not guarantee that existence divides like that. We should look with suspicion on anyone who declared that there are two types of people, or two kinds of reality or process. ibid, 151-64.

With a clear distinction with what is understood as 'private' and 'public', one would miss information of analytical importance in the case of Kingsley's relationship with his Sandhya, his wife, or his multiplex relationship with a (public) minister. The relationship was not just a bad marriage, but also further tainted by her involvement

with peers in KS identified as Kingsley's enemies. Kingsley stated that he was afraid that she would one day poison his food intending to kill him, while he another time said that Sandhya was a 'victim' drawn to his enemies because of promises of sexual satisfaction and money. Kingsley repeatedly accused Sandhya of being unfaithful and promiscuous. This suggests that ambivalence is present, where variables from both "public" and "private" and even "domestic" spheres are inter-mingled.

He also claimed that 'getting to her wife' was a way to hurt him, and a part of the larger political game in the conflict. Seen from this perspective, the (local) political situation directly affected his marriage, as well as the other way round. About a year before my fieldwork, Kingsley said that his wife sold his car to finance an abroad work-trip, when she came back the marriage was changed. This could have been one of many events dividing the two, and eventually somehow pushing Sandya into the 'enemy' faction. Empirically, it is hard to tell what was the causative or decisive factor as it would be too speculative, but analytically it remains evident that these two spheres are over-lapping. With a perspective emphasising a binary distinction between 'private' and 'public' such information would become inaccessible, since this example shows that the two interact accordingly and dynamically with the other. This shows that Mary Douglas has a valid point when she is emphasizing a critical stance towards analytical procedures favouring binary distinctions. Kingsley's domestic and "private" situation, also exemplified in a multiplex relationship, is at all times accordingly dependent and relative to the conflict in the organization, which is, also related to various aspect of the state, with a clear tendency of ambiguity and ambivalence.

What I have been establishing so far is an account of how conflicts related to power have to be understood relationally, and through locating the public within the personal and private, as well as vice versa, one can see how power is channelled, used, manipulated and exercised by individuals betwixt and between those domains. Consequentially, when one takes governmental power as an analytical object of inquiry, grand dichotomies such as public/private and society/state has to be put aside. This analysis also supports the notion of a bridge between micro- and macro-levels, where Foucault's micro-physics of power are examples of disciplinary power keeping the governmental system going, while various historical political rationalities battles to define and redefine how such processes are manifested in the everyday life.

3.3 “The two-face”: strategies involving presentation of self and others in private and public

After Kingsley had been in control of the organization for quite some time, and the ‘enemy group’ had attempted to sabotage his rule with various strategies, they eventually found a legal way to challenge his position in the organizational constitution. They claimed that his use of money to refurbish, repair and clean the premises was irresponsible, since the NGO had low income and no overseas funding, hence they wanted to pass on a “no confidence vote” that would require an extraordinary AGM to be held within two weeks. To avoid confusion, I will briefly provide a timeline of the events in KS leading to this AGM. The first ordinary AGM was held late January 2011, just a few weeks after my arrival. Kingsley won the election, and regained the formal control of KS after almost a decade of struggle. This extraordinary AGM was held 1 July 2011, which means approximately four months after the ordinary AGM.

Many of the members that a few months earlier supported Kingsley would now support the ‘enemy group’, which meant that Kingsley potentially could lose legal and formal control of KS. Kingsley’s group thought that some of these members’ votes had been bought for money since the ‘enemy group’ still had control of the Kamkaru Sevena Trust Fund, which contained a substantial amount of money from real estate sales from their previous period in control. In short, Kingsley group had the formal control, but was low on cash, while the ‘enemy group’ had no organization (or building), but a lot of money. As Kingsley’s group became aware of this they hastily begun forging a counter-strategy. They came up with a plan to recruit many new loyal members, which they could do without issues, since the Board of Directors had the authority to do so following the constitution of KS. The following days they invited neighbours, neutral friends, their children and Nirrosion Perera as members, and with them, they could ensure the majority vote in the upcoming extraordinary AGM. To be absolutely sure, they invited more new members than they in fact needed, in case someone would be persuaded to turn for bribes. This strategical plan was absolutely explicit in private meetings among the peers loyal to Kingsley and Nirmalan.

I was not allowed to be present, at the actual AGM, since I was not a formal member of KS. However, Kingsley brought my tape recorder, which recorded the whole meeting. I have later translated parts of this, as well as being told about the events in the meeting. The meeting was about two hours long, with many issues, with the ‘no confidence vote’ last. It never came to be a vote, since the ‘enemy group’ claimed that the new members were illegible to vote, because they were not members when the current Board of Directors were elected; the Board that the no confidence vote was directed towards. In fact, the ‘enemy group’ had heard about Kingsley’s strategy to recruit new members loyal to him, and had prior to the meeting been in court to obtain an injunction order making the new members illegible to vote. Nirrosion Perera stepped up and challenged this by saying: “Of course we can vote! We are in the room aren’t we? We are just as much members as any of you, and everything has been done by the book!” This escalated into a physical attack from a member of the ‘enemy group’ called Jude Lester, but others constrained him, and the police arrived promptly to settle the situation. I am not sure who called the police, but one of the participants of the meeting informed me that the police was ‘ready’ even before the meeting took place, since trouble was anticipated. In the midst of the chaos, Kingsley adjourned the meeting, as he was the current Chairman of Kamkaru Sevena. This was not planned as a part of any strategy before the meeting, but did according to Kingsley provide them enough time to void the court injunction. This could give Kingsley the necessary time to obtain their own court injunction saying the opposite in terms of the new members, and then host another extraordinary AGM. The Board of Directors remained unchanged, and Kingsley’s group was still in control. The next day, several Colombo and nation-wide newspapers covered the incident. This is a scan from “The Nation”, dated Sunday July 3, 2011:

Injunction order on new Kamkaru Sevana board

An injunction restraining the new members of the board of Kamkaru Sevana from participating at any meeting was served on Friday (1).

The new members of the board were registered as the new board members after the new board was constituted in April this year.

The incident took place when the new board headed by Kingsley Perera was holding its meeting at the Kamkaru Sevana Ratmalana centre on Friday.

The injunction had been obtained by former members of the board Vijaya Vidyasagara, Rajah Alahakoon, and C. P. Vijayahewa.

According to a board member who was present the fiscal had served the injunction order on the new board of directors around 2.45 pm saying that only those who were members before April 8 were eligible to attend the meeting or any subsequent meetings.

As the new board members had objected to the injunction order, the officials who served the order had refused to leave the hall unless the meeting was stopped or the old members were allowed to attend.

According to the member Perera had promised the new members that he would go to court and explain this situation and submit proof and have the injunction vacated.

He had also promised that he would take disciplinary action on those responsible for obtaining the injunction order mainly to prevent the younger generation from taking up their responsibilities in life and making their contribution to society through the Kamkaru Sevana.

The last paragraph of this article shows that Kingsley presents the incident differently from what we can draw from the internal strategies. In terms of the internal conflict between the factions, the invitation was a strategy in the political game. However, the

media was given a different story where the new memberships are explained as an attempt to make the younger generation able to take responsibility in life and making contribution to the society with Kamkaru Sevena as a platform. In certain situations, Kingsley would address this as “passing the baton”, since most of the current members of KS was at least 50 years of age. In the strategy-meetings with Kingsley and his loyalists, this was not mentioned once; it was a way of securing the formal power of the NGO, and not about passing the baton on to the next generation. This could be explained by employing Goffman’s dramaturgical framework (1959), where the private meetings with Kingsley and his more-or-less loyal members represents the off-stage. In the off-stage, the actors’ *performance* (ibid.) differs from the frontstage. The frontstage in this case represents talking to the media, neutrals, non-loyal members, and so on. Some of the new members were aware of this element of strategy, but were happy to help. For example, one of the local shopkeepers told me that he was offered a membership, and further explained to me that “I am happy to help Kingsley, and I am also happy to have the membership! I will of course vote for Kingsley in the upcoming meeting.” Being a member might be valuable for a small business owner like him, since KS is an important institution in the local environment, and might be good to extend social networks and build social capital. There’s also been several examples of people having private loans from KS of smaller and bigger amounts, where the most recent example was Kingsley’s wife having a loan just before Kingsley regained the control of the NGO. The shopkeeper knew whether by Kingsley or someone else telling him, what was going on in the off-stage. However, some other new members had no idea what was going on internally, and simply showed up and voted for Kingsley because they knew none of the others.

While I interpret the Kingsley-loyalist meetings as off-stage, I also want to introduce the backstage; this is where Kingsley seems to feel absolutely secure and ready to talk about anything. A typical example of such an backstage would be late evenings with Kingsley, myself and Nirrosion Perera present, sometimes accompanied with food, tea, cigarettes, with conversations concerning the politics inside Kingsley’s group, for instance. This could be a suitable *front* (ibid.) to discuss Nirmalan’s “actual agendas” or who could be trusted, and who could not. In a situation like this, Kingsley told me that he really wanted to “pass the baton” to the younger generation, and said that “someone has to keep on fighting for change after I pass away”, and “it is important

that we include the younger generation in KS”. Nirrosion Perera, the person that stood up for the new members in the extraordinary AGM, were aware of all these different performances in various stages, and the agendas that were implicit to them. We had several private conversations about this. As explained in Chapter 1, Nirrosion and Kingsley have a fictive kinship relationship, as father and son. While many of the new members were invited merely as a strategy to remain in control, Nirrosion Perera’s new membership was meant as a beginning of building a new leader for KS; this was discussed in private between Kingsley, Nirrosion and myself. The others in Kingsley’s group were oblivious on this strategy, and the internal strategy concerning the new members in general, was the perfect timing to make Nirrosion a formal member. This would give Kingsley a member that was his closet and most trustworthy ally, without drawing any attention from the others in their group.

Later, after my fieldwork was over, Nirrosion Perera became the Manager of Kamkaru Sevena, which proves that he was not a puppet-voter, but a part of Kingsley’s actual heritage. Of course, the one thing does not necessarily leave out the other, and this strategy could be a way of killing two birds with one stone. If Kingsley wanted to both win the election in the extraordinary AGM *and* invite new members of the younger generation, this was indeed the perfect time to do it.

So far I have attempted to establish another analysis concerning private and public spheres, albeit with a different scope showing how these spheres are actively manipulated to fit its audience. I argue that these previous examples show that a binary construction of one public and one private sphere results in unreliable interpretations. By introducing symbolic interactionism-theory which relies on an actor-oriented constructivist paradigm, we can see that the private and public, and thereby the interaction between them, is highly contextual, as it involves a certain rationality that fits its current social environment. If one were to treat the meetings of Kingsley’s followers as private, and the media as something representing the public, one would miss out the third important factor here; Kingsley’s backstage, where he openly and with a differing *performance* show how he in fact does two things at the same time. An analysis upholding a distinction between public and private spheres of behaviour would miss out on complexities like this, which leads me back to governmental activity and disciplinary power.

Since my perspective is mainly Foucaultian, how does this relate to my general framework? According to Ian Hacking (2004) the two thinkers, Foucault and Goffman, are complementary in their thought, even though Foucault has a clear sense of being “top down”, in that his analysis and “archaeological” method are directed at entire systems of thought. Goffman, on the other hand, was more directed towards face-to-face interaction, or what can be called “bottom-up” (ibid, 277-278). Hacking elaborates on this:

I call Foucault top-down because he starts with a mass of sentences at a time and place, dissociated from the human beings who spoke them, and uses them as the data upon which to characterize a system of thought, or rather, its verbal incarnation, a discursive formation. ibid, 278.

With this in mind can a dramaturgical approach be useful when studying disciplinary power. The different stages show various performances that can be classified as different types of power, where the strategy of inviting new members is disciplinary in its form, since it is about securing the formal power oppressively. In other words, it is a pure form of power that seeks to secure power of the institution, in this case, KS. His personal, non-group agenda, in the backstage, is one concerned with “passing the baton” mainly to a person he enjoys a fictive kinship with. The public sphere, or the frontstage, is seen fitting for this same logic, but it is presented as something generalized, from one generation to another, without being personally, from him to Nirrosion Perera. In other words, this can be seen as a productive form of power.

They are productive because the moral foundation for that sort of strategy is to “pass the baton”, to ensure continuity in the NGOs work, in the “right matter”, which as something involving improvement of life of the population, which is both a frontstage message to build legitimacy and simultaneously bio-political in its form since the intention is to foster vital processes through continuation of the NGO and its functions. This governmental activity shows that the public sphere, here exemplified by the media, are given a reason for the conflict that makes Kingsley and his group look ‘democratic’. What is interesting is that everyone in the everyday relations finds the strategy to invite new members solely for the reason to ensure formal power

acceptable. The neighbour whom Kingsley invited knew perfectly well the reason for his sudden invitation, while Kingsley's group were fine with a conscious strategy to actively manipulate the outcome of the forthcoming extraordinary AGM. On the other hand, the presentation of the process to the newspapers had a dramatically different cling to it. Here a certain type of knowledge is present: Kingsley knows what kind of story he needs to sell to the media; he knows what kind of story will build legitimacy and subvert legitimacy of the enemy group. He presents the situation as if the enemy group are old men being unwilling to "pass on the baton" to the younger generation, while himself just wants them to be able to take on "their responsibilities in life".

3.4 Conclusion

As the first section shows how private, multiplex relationships makes possible a circular process which generates and makes possible a strategy of evoking a minister, the second sections demonstrates how the public sphere is actively manipulated by using local knowledge. This furthermore illustrates how power is exercised differently in a legitimate, official and public sphere, compared to a private, enclosed, unofficial sphere. To be able to master a process of conflict one needs different types of knowledge and understand how these differs: The private more enclosed spheres presupposes knowledge about the local situation, and how this has to be handled strategically, by for example inviting new members to win an election. The public spheres involve knowledge on how to manage public images of a certain situation, which is also strategically beneficial in that it builds legitimacy. In other words, there are two types of strategies at play, where the private, multiplex and under-surface type of power is about ensuring formal control, the other public, formal and official one is one that seeks to generate legitimacy; together they make out a governmental capacity. This chapter demonstrates how the state and the media are made relevant in an intra-NGO conflict, and that the NGOs are structurally constructed as the 'enemies' of the state. By reviewing execution of power where it is exercised, we can see that the state and the civil society are embedded through multiplex relationships, but contrasted through an antagonism in the public sphere; there's a constant dialectical process concerning power between this NGO and external factors such as the state and the media. With an analytical procedure presupposing binary opposition, such transactions and manipulations of power would not be accessible.

4. Danger and security measures: diachronic and synchronic synthesis of mirrored strategies

4.1 Introduction

Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital [...] But the existence in question is not longer the juridical existence of sovereignty; at stake is the biological existence of a population. If genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers, this is not so because of a return of the ancient right to kill; it is because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population (Foucault 1978, 137).

By analysing the security-related events during the conflicted process in KS with simultaneously a scope towards Sri Lanka in general, I will work towards an analysis embracing what Foucault describes in this quote. Security, here, aims to emphasise security-related issues concerned with potential physical dangers, potential imprisonment and violence. I argue that these security-issues stem from a certain bio-political logic that is in conflict with other types of bio-political rationalities, which will be elaborated on in chapter 5. This does *not* mean that the state resorts only to one political technology, but rather a flux of strategies all aiming to establish legitimacy through life fostering processes. For example, on the one hand, the state kills members of its population, which brings on the table a notion not only of “right to kill”, but “kill to preserve life”, and on the other, the very same soldiers sell vegetables for 1/3 of the regular price to a poor population.

The current Rajapakse-administration has transgressed the limits of what is thought to be ‘democratic’, and the country has experienced a illiberal and soft-authoritative turn the last five years (DeVotta 2011). This turn is manifested by an increasingly restricted media and active usage of violence to bolster it’s own power, and in turn eliminate political opposition (ibid.) The typical characteristics for this rule is that the leaders on the one hand de facto undermines democratic values, while on the other hand, they mask this “by highlighting whatever they think will make them look more

‘democratic’” (ibid, 130). This understanding is coherent with Kingsley’s interpretation when we observed a group of soldiers selling vegetables in central Colombo. I was puzzled and asked him why the army sells vegetables, and he responded: “It is of course because they want to build an image.”

While President J.R. Jayewardene’s misguided 1978 constitution and his attempt to create a milieu in which his United National Party would dominate the country’s politics gradually undermined democratic institutions, it is Mahinda Rajapaksa, using his popularity stemming from the victory over the LTTE, who is now pushing the country towards greater illiberalism and authoritarian governance. He has done so by combining a virulent Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism with the terrorist threats the LTTE posed to maintain popularity and also marginalize the opposition. With the LTTE now out of the way, the government continues to use the West, NGOs, and the Tamil diaspora to justify its authoritarian practices (DeVotta 2010, 336).

This means that two completely different outcomes (bananas versus bullets) both draw upon logics that has in common that they seek to establish legitimacy through life-fostering processes. These are both, from this particular bio-political rationality, life fostering processes, but understood and manifested dramatically different because of different means, where the bananas represent what DeVotta argues is a strategy to make them look “more democratic”, while the Sinhala Nationalism represent a different authoritative governmentality; together, these two forces make out the power of the Rajapakse-regime. The argumentation is straightforward bio-political in that it argues that an elimination of the enemies (NGOs, diaspora, West, LTTE) is crucial, and by combining this with nationalism, the regime gains popularity.

First, where does the alleged dangers come from according to the informants? Who represents the actual threats? What kinds of threats are there? Second, how does these threats generate security-oriented strategies, and what strategies are chosen, by whom, and why? Third, how is “the state” related to such threats, and finally, how does it affect the dynamics between members of the same faction in the conflict in question? As a point of departure, and by taking security as an object, I wish to show how forces of ‘informal sovereignty’ empirically exist not only inside a centralized state, but also virtually and potentially everywhere. By sovereignty here, I mean that the “new bio-political regimes reconfigured rather than superseded sovereignty as a mode of

power” (Hansen and Stepputat 2006, 302). By informal I mean a shadowy, underground and unofficial form of reconfigured sovereignty, with clear bio-political notions (ibid.) I argue that these informalities are evoked, used and manipulated in the private, while ‘mainstream bio-politics’ that is politically accepted by universal claims (such as human rights) are an example of legitimation used in the public.

I suggest that these forces are mirror images of the political strategy of evoking ministers, reviewed in the previous chapter. This will move the analysis towards a discussion between sovereign and bio-political power, which is a concept-pair described by Dean (2010) as two components making out ‘authoritative governmentality’. In other words, we are not talking about de facto sovereignty, but a reconfiguration of sovereign power, which fits into certain bio-political rationalities.

Iver B. Neumann (2006) argues that the state has been neglected as an object in anthropological discourse because of the methodological difficulties it proposes as the state itself has been seen as a “macro-phenomenon” by anthropologists (ibid.: 213). He does, however, emphasise that this tendency has a few notable exceptions, such as Das and Poole (2004), where the study is concentrated around where the state is on its ‘margins’, where it continually has to re-establish itself to remain in power (ibid.) He also mentions Kapferer (1988), where he compares Sinhala nationalism with Australian nationalism, with a particular ‘metaphysical approach’, as an important exception (Kapferer 1988; Neumann 2006).

Further, he proposes to go beyond “studying up” from a micro- to macro-level of analysis, instead performing a mix between diachronic and synchronic approaches, which follows the emergence of governmental rationality, tracked through its effects or results, empirically (Neumann 2006). The further discussion seeks to show, ultimately, how a governmental approach can show alternative aspects of such processes. This is seen as one of the key properties of this Foucaultian tool, as it attempt, like Bourdieu’s *habitus*, to unite the micro- and macro-levels of analysis (Nadesan 2008). I will, with this in mind, be starting out with a diachronic piece of material, and then a synchronic case study, before I perform the ‘mix’ that Neumann (2006) suggests in his article. This should be seen in cross-reference to what I already established in my sub-section dealing with the state versus society and public versus

private dichotomies, as well as the sub-section emphasising political rationalities, since it suggests to establish a mirror-image of strategy of evoking the minister (exemplified by the Kingsley-Minister relationship), where the state can resort to similar private, unofficial forms of power, all made available from a common governmental logic. However, as I will show, the bio-political arguments behind the two images are distorted and conflicted. The disagreement that makes room for a counter-conduct is not concerned with whether or not one should work towards life fostering processes, but how one should do it, with which means, and based on different moral justifications. Based on these perceptions, several trajectories identified by different political rationalities claims legitimacy through a conflicting set of moral justifications. The conflict is, in other words, not one concerned primarily with ideology, but with conflicting strategies all targeting population, and all being more or less bio-political in their logics.

4.2 Myths, facts and social panopticons: security in a diachronic perspective

The security situation in KS changed radically several times during my fieldwork, from a calm everyday atmosphere, to times of higher intensity. This has previously been briefly discussed in my methods-chapter, where I show how security measures were tied to conduct generating disciplinary power, and as a result, an attempt to establish authority of my research agenda. However, here my perspective is one including external factors in the local conflict. The security situations in terms of external and internal threats were one of the main topics and themes discussed among my informants.

Dangers loomed around any corner, and the “white van” was used as a symbol of this threat. Stories about people disappearing to never return again circulated and reinforced the impression that doing work within the political spheres in Sri Lanka was indeed dangerous activity. One of the CWF-members told me that a journalist friend of him had disappeared a couple of years back after writing critical articles addressing the current Rajapakse administration. Many of the informants were eager

to tell me about these kinds of events. The white vans have been widely discussed in the media, and theories about who they are, are subject to dispute, depending on the political alignment of the newspaper or media-institution. However, the white vans are well-known in Sri Lanka, and there's no doubt of their actual existence, while their authority, agenda and political alignment seems more unclear, as they operate in a shadowy sphere outside any formal juridical system. BBC described this phenomena 14th of March 2012, where they report that more than 30 unexplained abductions took place between October 2011 and February 2012. A total of 14 government-critical journalists have been killed in Sri Lanka after Mahinda Rajapakse won the election in 2005 (DeVotta 2010). Most of the witnessed abductions are told to involve shadowy gangs in white vans, whom seize their victims, at times, even in the middle of the day in the capital (BBC 2012). The abducted people have varying ethnic backgrounds including Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim (ibid.) Before the conflict in KS was intensified, the white vans were discussed mostly in a distant matter, and told to be “terrible”, “terrifying” and “dangerous”, but not something representing a local threat.

However, as the conflict intensified, and the rules of the game came to be unclear, the white vans again came up as a topic, and this time as a more direct and imminent threat by local terms. Since there are many different theories about the white vans, they remain unclear and ill defined among the population. The most prevalent explanation among my informants was that the vans consisted of “government thugs”, civil men, without formal contract with the government, doing various services for ministers and other high-level politicians and bureaucrats. Jonathan Goodhand writes that criminal and political activity merged into each other, and that the white vans were symptomatic for this tendency in Sri Lanka (Goodhand 2010; Goodhand, Klem, and Korf 2009). Furthermore, Goodhand argues that especially civil society groups involved in human rights activism or peace building-issues were intimidated and given restricted access to certain areas of the island. This is a more recent reappearance of a tendency that was noted in the early 1990s (Goodhand 2010), and before the civil war in the 1970s, similar groups has been widely documented, especially in the south of Sri Lanka (Spencer 1990). The most known example, which has served as a symbol among activists in Sri Lanka, is the murder of the journalist, author and humans rights activist Richard de Zoysa in 1990 (Wickramasinghe 2001).

The so-called government's 'death squads' performed the assassination of 'Richard', which was widely believed to be army soldiers dressed as civilians (Samaranayake 1997). The "death squads" were mainly employed and used to torture, terrorize and kill JVP members and sympathizers during the second JVP-insurgency during the late 1980s (ibid, 114). Kingsley was a member and one of the mid-level officers in the JVPs first non-nationalist insurgency in the 70s, where he was responsible for propaganda work and leader of the 'Christian contingent'. He was later, after government forces countered the first insurgency, imprisoned for this. This gives Kingsley a first hand experience and in-depth knowledge of what it means to be in direct conflict with the government, and this will naturally provide experience, knowledge and memories that is brought into the present situation.

We met a group of so-called 'government-sponsored thugs' in one of the official KS-travels I conducted with Kingsley, to see their members in the city of Kandy in a one-day workshop. This does not mean that the group I encountered was *de facto* people involved in white van abductions; however, according to Kingsley and the others around, they were young men working for a minister to gather information, perform various tasks etc. Put simply, my informants put them into the same category concerning 'danger' and 'security', as the white vans; in emic terms, they could represent an example of such. They were a concrete and tangible example and not just another representation in the newspaper. What was previously distant was now near and real for my informants.

Once we arrived Kandy we attended the workshop with the CWF-members of the Kandy area, where Kingsley performed a three-hour lecture for both young and elderly members. As most of the CWF-members had limited space in their houses, we were lodged in the house of a 'friend of a friend'. The owner of the house was by any standards wealthy, with a very impressive house, as he used to work as a successful architect in Russia. It was also told that he owned a lot of real estate in and around the city of Kandy. However, the man lived there only with his cousin, who was a young man around in his mid twenties. His family, wife and a young daughter, had tragically died in a car accident a few years earlier. The man was no longer employed, and he was becoming increasingly alcoholic, according to his peers. After the workshop in Kandy, it was decided to go to his house and have a drink and a snack in his terrace.

At the same time, in the same house, the hosts' cousin had a party for his friends, a group of men aging approximately between 25 to late 40s. The whole 'NGO-crowd' including myself were in the terrace, and the other group remained seated in the living room. I was told repeatedly to 'stay away from them', and 'don't tell them anything', since they were 'government boys', 'thugs', and so on, and could not be trusted under any circumstances. The whole afternoon and evening continued like this, and Kingsley went to bed in our shared bedroom just before midnight. Before he went to bed he quietly informed me that the guys in the living room were 'extremely dangerous nationalists', and that I should come to bed as soon as possible.

After a while, the rest of the 'NGO-crowd' went home, and I was all of a sudden alone in the public part of the house, with the other group in the living room. I was advised by the CWF-members to go directly to bed, and not talk to them, just like Kingsley told me. However, this was not as simple as that, as I was 'invited' to join their party. I mean that I was not given an actual choice, as I was encouraged in a strict matter to join them. By this time, the owner of the house was sleeping in his own bedroom, because of heavy alcohol intoxication. The situation which follows is important: At first, they were friendly, and asked me trivial questions, but the tone was to gradually change. After a while I had the feeling of being in an interrogation, not in a party. I was asked about my relation to those 'NGO-people' on the terrace. As I felt that I was under moderate threat, I made up a story that I was a Swedish backpacker, and that I knew Kingsley, since I rented a very cheap room from the NGO in Ratmalana, just outside Colombo. Some of them seemed to believe my explanation, but their leader remained suspicious about me, and my business in Sri Lanka.

I was asked about my religious beliefs, and whether I liked 'lord Buddha' or not. I actively tried to use my Sinhala phrases to gain confidence, to transform the situation into a friendly one. I also asked them questions, and understood that some of them had been in the Sri Lankan army during the war, but they refused to tell me what they were doing for a living, although, the owner of the house confirmed for me the day after that they were indeed informally working for a minister. After a while, I was 'given permission' to go to bed, and I did. The bedroom had two doors, one leading to the intersection, and the other directly to a bathroom, that also had two doors, leading

to the very same intersection. As I felt unsafe since the ‘government thugs’ were still in the house, I tried to lock both doors, but was unable to lock the door leading to the bathroom. Eventually, I fell asleep, with my main luggage under the bed. The next morning I noticed that the backpack had been moved to the floor, and it had clearly been opened while I was sleeping. I briefly checked it, but nothing was missing. The probable explanation for this is that they had searched my luggage some time during the night. Luckily I had another small shoulder bag for my computer, field notes, passport, wallet, and voice recorder, which I hid in the bed, under the duvet.

I provided this material to give background- and contextual information of the post-war security situation, especially for members in the NGO-sector of the civil society in Sri Lanka. According to my informants, such groups of ‘government thugs’ were to be found all over the island. They were also believed to be the ones behind many of the white van abductions, while this is, of course, impossible to confirm empirically. The most prevalent discussions circulated around the many cases of abductions in Jaffna, north in Sri Lanka, which traditionally has been the Tamil cultural, religious and intellectual city. In Jaffna, the minister Douglas Devananda was given the responsibility for these abductions, indirectly, with the employment of ‘government thugs’. During my trip in Jaffna, I was able to speak with both intellectuals and politically engaged individuals, and they were all more afraid of the ‘Douglas boys’ than the security forces. Interestingly, one ex-MP of TNA in Jaffna said that doing political work was possible only in private spheres. She explained to me that political meetings had to be held in their homes, which would usually not lead to problems. Any attempt to host a meeting, demonstration, speech or other political activities in the public, on the other hand, would be extremely dangerous because of the ‘Douglas boys’. I was told one anecdote where the ‘Douglas boys’ came into their house to stop a political meeting, where some violence occurred, but no one was killed.

The example from Kandy shows how ‘NGO-people’ are perceived from such crowds, and the fact that they are civil and without any formal or official ties to the government, they are hard to spot; virtually anyone can be a ‘government thug’, informant, agent or spy. I argue that this is a parallel case of the political use of ministers, which is constituted by using multiplex relationships to thwart the state. This case, on the other hand, shows how various agents of the state can resort to the

same logics through a similar strategy, where they can employ ‘government thugs’ to carry out all kinds of tasks outside the formally recognized legitimate state force. Furthermore, I argue that these governmental strategies – of government thugs and ministers – represents mirror images of the same governmental logic, as they are activated from different poles, civil society versus state, but with a shared cultural trait and set of logics. These two mirror images are reciprocally dependent on one another, and an employment of one of them might trigger the usage of the other, as will be ethnographically explored in the next section.

According to Spencer (1990) both of the main political parties in Sri Lanka, UNP and SLFP, had substantial private armies consisting of *goondas* even before the civil war. He furthermore shows how both of these parties became increasingly dependant on what he calls “semi-official violence” (ibid, 617) against its opponents. I stress that this semi-official strategy is calculated, rational, and governmental, to ensure impunity for the people in charge, and proper conduct among the people. This could be seen in cross-reference to what I deal with in Chapter 2 in relation to my research process, where my main informant requires me to make up stories about what I do in Sri Lanka when I meet new people, because virtually anyone can be an agent or a civilian willing to report me, or harm the ones helping me, for engaging activities that is not a part of being a “bona fide tourist”, which the department of Immigration and Emigration calls it. The dangers looming here, is of course potentially both official and unofficial (i.e. police or judicial state powers and/or unofficial government-thugs), while the latter was the most frightening one to my informants. The formal juridical system also poses fear, especially through its Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), which grants the security forces extraordinary powers (Wickramasinghe 2001), such as arrest and incarceration without any legal process based on suspicion of terrorist activity, or even just being associated with so-called terrorists. One of the KS-members, which previously were an employee in one of the larger government-friendly NGOs in the country, expressed fear of being imprisoned after an internal conflict in that NGO. He told me that someone in that NGO framed him to be LTTE-sympathizing by spreading rumours about him, and that he suspected that the government could imprison him without trial, indefinitely, based on PTA regulations. Like many other problems, also this was resolved and settled by evoking the minister. What are at play here are both formal and informal sorts of power. PTA is

autonomously a legal, formal law, but here the fear is made up from threats outside the legal-formal domain, which is triggered inside the civil society. A certain knowledge about the unruly coalitions made possible through governmental strategies such as evoking the minister gives rise to the fear of being legally and formally imprisoned, and the only solution to the problem is to ensure safety by employing similar strategies. It is also important to note that these notions of authoritarianism in between both formal and informal institutions has been, in various configurations, present all along post-colonial Sri Lanka (Spencer 1990), even though this notion has become increasingly conspicuous during the Rajapakse-regime (DeVotta 2010). Similar forms of what Hansen and Stepputat (2006) informal sovereignties are found in other areas of inquiry.

Pradeep Jeganathan (2004) describes a legal paradox related to army checkpoints in Sri Lanka. On the one hand, the law says nothing about the necessity of always carrying the ID card when going through checkpoints, which were virtually everywhere in Sri Lanka, but most of them are in and around Colombo, as well as in the north and east of the island. On the other hand, you risk getting arrested if you cross a checkpoint without the ID, and the ID most of the time reveals the persons ethnic identity, which leads to a certain type of questions (ibid.) While the checkpoint and military presence is one of the more visible examples of the means of government in the public and legal domain, I will rather focus on the invisible, unofficial, informal ones, like the government thugs, corrupted/manipulated police or white vans.

The spread of such 'invisible' forces, virtually anywhere, could be understood in terms of what Foucault (Foucault 1995, 2000), metaphorically calls "panopticon". Panopticon denotes a surveillance technique used in modern prisons, where a central guard tower is in the centre of the prison cells. The result is that the prisoners are unable to know whether they are watched or not, and as a result, it ensures conduct and docile bodies even if the tower is empty (ibid.) The art of government that presupposes, articulates, formulates and rationally implements such ideas is another example of what Foucault calls disciplinary power. For example could London Underground's 11.000 CCTV cameras be an example of such a panopticon.

I take the concept of “panopticon” to be dynamic, fluid with a space for abstraction, not different from what Henrietta L. Moore (2006) calls “concept-metaphors”, in the anthropological discourse. She furthermore explains this as “... ‘concept-metaphors’ whose purpose is to maintain ambiguity and a productive tension between universal claims and specific historical contexts” (ibid, 71). Foucault saluted an active use of his work, as he says that it was written for *users*, not readers. Furthermore, he brands his work a ‘tool-box’, which can be used by others, in their own field, however they might like (O’Farrell 2005). This gives room for exploration in the processual use of the concept itself, and shows that a strict and precise theoretical employment is unnecessary; or more precisely, the actual ambiguity of the concept can itself be a research asset. I argue that what I have identified as government thugs, white vans and also the secret police in the previous chapter are part of this social panopticon.

Diane M. Nelson (2005) shows how the concept of panopticon can be analytically useful in a milieu not unlike Sri Lanka when she analyses bio-political rationalities in war-ridden Guatemala (ibid.) Like my own data suggests, she finds that various techniques of government are being employed by the state to “remove the water from the fish”, drawing on Mao Tse-Tungs saying that guerillas move along the population like fish in the water (ibid, 220). This means to alter the milieu, I.E the population’s conduct around the ‘fish’ with various techniques of governmentality. As we have seen, the ‘fish’ in the Sri Lankan context is often LTTE (and thereby potentially most Tamils from the nationalist perspective), most NGOs and Christians. All these categories represent something evil, which needs to be dealt with, from a Sinhalese nationalist perspective (Kapferer 1988). I argue that this tendency in Sri Lanka has two distinctly different kinds of bio-political technologies; one acting upon the fear of the population, and one directing ‘development’ to the population, alongside with a language of ‘democracy’ towards external actors, like Western states and the more ‘politically correct’ public discourse in Sri Lankan politics. Where Nelson (2005) sees “water for the people” as a means of bio-politically buying the populations docility, I mean that when the army acts as vegetable-merchants at 1/3 of market price is one example of such in Sri Lanka.

The spread of the invisible forces, I argue, forms in practice a panopticon that carries clear disciplinary and governmental capacities in that it conducts behaviour in almost

all social settings, especially when engaging in politics in the public sphere, like my Jaffna-example suggests. The main disciplinary capacity that creates docile subjects are still invoked on the level of 'population' in that it creates a clear homogenous majority group, who are Sinhalese and Buddhist, who are threatened by the West, LTTE and NGOs.

I argue that this creates the context where virtually anyone can be an agent, spy or informant for ambiguous forces of power, normally associated with the state. The panopticon attempts to ensure two types of docile subjects: on the one hand the social means of (possible) surveillance among the majority through fear and propaganda, which is thought by the excluded members of the majority (NGO people, LTTE, Tamils) to be "virtually everywhere", who are "dangerous". This latter tendency attempt to ensure docility among those excluded, which is sometimes countered by employing for example governmental strategies, such as multiplex relationships with ministers. The effect of the conduct of the majority is therefore an attempt to frighten certain groups from engaging in political activity. This means that engaging in political activity without such a network providing a minister is risky. Hypothetically speaking, if one were to engage in political activism (or even just NGO work) without this political capital, perhaps because of lack of knowledge about these strategies, or by being willing to take the risk, one does not have these counter-measures in which Kingsley possessed. As abductions and killings performed by unofficial government-supported groups might have a whole range of reasons, ranging from personal disputes, to purely political ones (which might be related, as shown earlier in this chapter), the effect of the conduct of the population because of this *potential* danger is something that will be explored empirically. This potential danger is not, however, something that directly dictates or forces one particular behaviour (in terms of a Weberian concept of power), but rather forms and generates a conduct where being careful with whom you talk to, about what, and how, is important to stay out of trouble, or even remain alive. In other words, we are here talking about how this affects participating in political conflicts, not when the white van is already on the doorsteps, but rather, all that time it isn't, nor the time when a person engages directly with the security forces in a checkpoint, but all the time he or she isn't.

In the upcoming section I will ethnographically explore this. One suspicion of someone using virtually any kind of technology of power moves a conflict that normally would be one between husband and wife into involving the KS-conflict and ultimately several instances of legitimate and illegitimate state powers. This will provide what Neumann calls the synchronic part of the analysis, as the previous one provides the contextual, over-time and diachronic part.

4.3 Escalated conflict, increased danger: synchronic case and synthesis

I have already provided some material on Kingsley's relationship with his wife in Chapter 1 & 2. This could be summarized as a troubled marriage where his wife is, according to Kingsley, "sleeping with the enemy". I will now analyse the organizational impact and structural influences one of their more serious confrontations had. I want to show how the contextual security situation enabled a whole range of outcomes and tactical choices, based on an escalated fight between Kingsley, and his wife, Sandya. As the previous diachronic case make out the context, this synchronic case will show how it fits into the diachronic context, and how two empirically different types of political strategies relies on the same logic and framework. This means that both of these sub-sections deals with processes, but the first process seeks to establish and elaborate on the conditions choices have to be done under, through a process of war, conflict and informal channels of power; in other word both ethnographically and historically. Since these conditions gives room for multiple choices, I will now enter the synchronic object, where I review the actual choices done within the conditions established. With this, one can review how these conditions can be traced through their results, or as Neuman (2006) states: "[...] rationality of government may be tracked through its effects." (ibid, 1).

The first level of analysis will bridge the personal relationship between Kingsley and his wife with the conflict in the organization. The conflict in the organization gives rise to suspicion and conspiracy where non-formal and formal state actors each play their role in conducting behaviour, and furthermore enhancing the political technologies present. Also, the formal non-state spheres, such as Kingsley's role as

the chairman of KS is important here, as it places Kingsley as a “NGO leader” in the context provided by the previous section.

One night the whole organizational building was awoken by some terrible noise. The noise was characterized by the sound of breaking glass, shouting and swearing. It did sound so dead serious that I decided to remain in my room for my own safety. The noise came to an end after a while, and it was replaced by a calmer attitude, of men speaking and discussing in Sinhalese. The day after, I was told that Kingsley was missing, and that it had been a serious argument between him and his wife. I called Kingsley, and he told me that he was hiding at a safe place nearby, and that the police might try to arrest him, and ultimately, according to himself, kill him. In the previous sub-section, where I provide my diachronic analysis, one can see why Kingsley reacts like this. For him, and others involved in the conflict, the danger of being kidnapped and killed by corrupted police, or others, seemed plausible.

After a while, he told me where he was hiding. He was at an old woman’s house nearby, a woman that is not involved in KS. Kingsley and I did in fact visit this woman previously, so I knew her name, and where she lives. I was told to come there, but not under any circumstances tell anyone Kingsley’s whereabouts. The house is very close to the organizational premises, so the walk was short. Once I came there, no one responded to my knocking. I looked through the windows. No one was in the living room where I was the last time I visited her. I called Kingsley, and was told that they were in the very back of the house, in a kind of a back yard. Here, the woman, Kingsley, Lakhi (another board member of KS) and an (for me) unknown man sat smoking cigarettes, discussing and constantly making various phone calls.

Kingsley eventually began explaining the events of the previous night. He said that he came home very late, because he had been in a meeting in Badulla. On the way home from Badulla, Lakhi called him and said that he just had a vision during his nightly meditation session. In the vision he claimed that he saw that Kingsley was facing imminent danger in his home, and called him to warn him about it. Kingsley took the warning seriously, but decided to go home anyway. Despite the fact that Kingsley and his wife didn’t communicate, and perceived one another as bitter enemies at that time, they did share the same bed, normally dividing the two by a big pillow. So, according

to Kingsley, her expected behaviour would be that she had positioned herself on the one side of the bed, with the pillow dividing her from the other, as this was the normal practical solution. However, when he came home in the middle of the night, his wife was occupying the whole bed and still being dressed, which Kingsley found peculiar, as this was not the norm. He went to the adjoined bathroom for a wash, and then decided to go to bed. But his wife was still occupying the whole bed. He decided to turn on the light and take a picture of his wife doing this, with his mobile phone. When he took the picture, it came a bright flash as well as a sound, which in turn woke up his wife. Kingsley explained that he took this picture to ensure proof of her occupying the whole bed. I did never have the chance to review her side of the event⁸.

She became furious and angry with Kingsley, and started yelling at him. He left the room, but she followed, and she physically attacked Kingsley with a broom, which in Kingsley's own word was an attempt to kill him: "She was trying to kill me! Literally!" He defined the blunt part of the broom as a deadly weapon, so he mainly focused on defending himself. He also emphasised that he never even considered to hit back, because he was under the impression that it was the plan – namely to make him hit her, so that she could contact a few corrupted police officers that would kidnap him, and eventually kill him. In other words, he saw it as a planned plot against him. Whether it was a plot or not is hard to tell, but many others around supported this theory, and everyone in Kingsley's group and the others around took it very seriously. Nirmalan Dhas even employed private security guards in the premises as a result of this episode.

Because of that, he said, he never tried to physically stop his wife. Suwandhi, the youngest daughter at the age of 19 also woke up, and ends up cutting herself with a knife. Again, according to Kingsley, she "foolishly tried to kill herself after failing to kill the mother". In other words, Suwandhi was trying to defend the father, which is coherent with my own observations of their family life. The daughters normally support Kingsley in the quarrels. After this attack, she began crushing Kingsley's statues and sculptures, which are located in his library. Later on I saw the damage on these sculptures, and they were severely damaged. After this, Kingsley decided to

⁸ Reviewed in Chapter 2.

flee. I am not sure where he went, but he left the KS premises, and after that the police arrived. He explained that he fled because of fear of low-level corrupted police officers or other hired muscle, perhaps bribed by his wife and her allies in the enemy group.

For Kingsley's accounts, he tried to communicate the following by telling the story; the attack from his wife was a planned conspiracy from the enemy group, in close collaboration with the police. When I spoke with others in Kingsley's group, they agreed upon that hypothesis, and perceived it as plausible that the whole situation were staged to get rid of Kingsley. Regardless of the truth here, what is interesting is how Kingsley's group react and speculate on the event, based on both local and structural notions.

After he told me the whole story, he explained to me that he was actually going to the police, to turn himself in, since they were in fact looking for him, but not without security and precautions. Kingsley's multiplex relationship with the minister was, as in one out of many instances indeed important. A newly employed ex-army Brigadier whom was commanded by the minister came to move out and escort Kingsley to the police station for questioning. Nirrosion was at that time also recently employed in the ministry, and was now a government man. I was asked to come with Kingsley to the police as a witness, but Nirrosion objected and said that it would cause more trouble than good, especially since I was in the country on a tourist visa. Normally, Nirrosion could never take such a decision in front of Kingsley, but in this context he was the one that Kingsley needed. Actually it was the very first time that I saw him directly interfere in Kingsley's judgement. Before Nirrosion objected, Kingsley loudly complained about my clothes, since it was very inappropriate for meeting the police, and maybe even the Chief of Police of the Mount Lavinia branch, just wearing a plain t-shirt and shorts. His reason for involving me was, according to himself, to bring a 'neutral witness'. This encouragement was in sharp contrast to the requirement for loyalty he also demanded. In this sense, I was ascribed qualities as 'neutral observer' once it could be used politically or as a part of a tactic. In a certain sense, I had the feeling that I could do as I want, as long as I do as I ought, which has a clear disciplinary character, as I previously illustrated in chapter 2.

They left for the police station, and Kingsley returned to the KS premises a couple of hours later, as a changed man: “All the security problems are over now, Peter, the Chief of Police even gave me his private number to contact him directly if there is any more problems, and it would show up that the Brigadier was an old friend of him [the Chief of Police]”. After this he behaved dramatically different compared to earlier that day. His reassurance by the Chief of Police made him secure about the situation, however, this would not last. Upon talking with Nirmalan Dhas, he said that Kingsley was too impulsive and naïve, and that such a reassurance were worthless. He decided to employ ex-army soldiers as private security in the KS-premises from that day on, primarily to defend Kingsley, but also to prevent the enemy group from bringing off a coup. Kingsley didn't object to the decision to temporarily employ the security personnel, and eventually, as the days passed by, he seemed to appreciate it, as the meeting with the Chief of Police was getting more distant.

First and interestingly, one way I found useful to measure the presumed security level from Kingsley's point of view, was to see whether we was worried about locking the main gate or not. In times of safety, the gate would be unlocked the whole night, and I would be allowed to come and go, as I liked. At other times, when the security threat was identified as more serious, I was asked to come home before dark, and he was very strict in locking the gate at proper times. After events like the one I have described in this chapter, the gate would typically be locked before dark every single night, but with a looser attitude towards the gate-regime at days like the one when he spoke to the Chief of Police. As the days and weeks went by, the security situation once again became tense, as the memory of the strong meeting with the Chief of Police faded away. New threats like this came from time to time, while this is perhaps the most distinct example.

Kingsley's group suspected unruly coalitions between Sandya/the enemy group and the police, and based on these suspicions they did a range of choices. Without this suspicion it would not for instance represent a problem to go to the police without an escort from other state officials. It was seen as absolutely necessary to approach the police joined with political contacts for both safety reasons, and as a means of social capital. The general political situation in Sri Lanka gives rise for such ambivalence towards the state, where both the problem and the solution are in the state, and where

multiplex relationships within the state is crucial to bolster safe and fair treatment from the police. The solution is in other words a strategy of evoking a minister, while the fear that triggers the requirement for such an evocation is the possibility that others can use the same strategy, in that it involves contacts inside the state. The problem with this political strategy is that it represents something contained in the multiplex spheres of relationships, which makes it complex. It is hard for one individual to know what kind of contacts and relationships other individuals might have forged, and based on this it becomes complex for each of them to know where the dangers might come from, from who and when. Showing off and giving others the impression of having a huge network of political contacts were also a strategy of intimidating the enemy group. I was introduced to the enemy group as the son of Erik Solheim once I arrived Sri Lanka, and Kingsley explained to me that this was a way to intimidate his opposition, and show that he was *that* well connected. Sometimes upon meeting random people in our travels, Kingsley would insist that he could “call Basil” [Basil Rajapakse, Cabinet Minister, brother of Mahinda Rajapakse] to get things done. This shows that an active manipulation of these networks is a strategy without really employing it.

Also, as established in Chapter 4, working within the civil society places you in a certain category, which further builds up under this complexity. Since people in the civil society are aware of this, they know that there are forces within the state, as well as in other civil societal organizations and among the population who perceives you as a threat. This means that threats, from Kingsley’s point of view, can come from a number of different sources, for equally many reasons. If Sandya and the enemy group would like to assassinate Kingsley, this might be easier than to kill someone outside politicized spheres, since the agenda might coincide with other political actors agendas. For instance could the hit be from enemies of the minister, trying to hurt the minister through Kingsley.

If we return to the police and it’s role in the previous case, we can see that the police represent both elements of the problem, as well as the solution. The fear is manifested by potential corrupted police offers, believed to be agents of the enemy group in KS. The police, according to Kingsley and his peers, therefore perform the possible de facto physical and immediate danger, while the enemy group acts as the ones

initiating and triggering these police officers. This does not mean that the dangers are always, in all situations, corrupted police officers, but the danger is often attributed to shady sides of the state; for instance government-thugs, army soldiers dressed as civilians or corrupted police officers. This means that the picture denoting the fear is distorted, since the lack of information makes it impossible to confirm whatever they might be. In other words, it is a prevailing uncertainty about the situation, and not being in control of it induces fear and makes it tempting to employ ones one contact within the state. Ultimately, by employing this strategy one can see as I have described empirically that the price on the end of the road is actually promises of police protection, and direct links to the Chief of Police. This creates an immediate but temporary space of safety, since it is known that other dangers might be out there; again, the problem is the lack of control and information about the situation.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have combined a diachronic and synchronic approach, following Iver B. Neumann, to review the security related issues that comes up as relevant in an intra-NGO conflict that brings on the table state/civil society-interactions.

Furthermore, I have been emphasising how different bio-political rationalities share similar sets of strategies, where civil society, on the one hand can employ multiplex contacts within the state, and where the state can resort to ‘government thugs’ to get things done informally and unofficially. I argue that these strategies enhance each other in that they get triggered in various events. I draw on examples from a conflict within an NGO in the civil society, and show how these strategies employed or thought to be employed in one group, triggers employment in the other. The governmental strategy of government-thugs is always an underlying threat, that forms, conducts and affects the way Kingsley and his peers react upon the crisis. This is precisely why I argue that the two strategies; ministers and government-thugs are mirror images of each other, and by emic terms it is hard to decide whether one is one or the other, when enemies have employed it. It is for example impossible to *know* for a fact whether the white van is controlled directly by the state, or indirectly by actors with contacts within the state in the civil society. It is also impossible to know whether the white van consists of criminals, police officers, army soldiers or civilians; because the white van is a symbol of uncertainty. This uncertainty guides, steers and

conduct political activity in the Sri Lankan civil society. This governmental logic also presupposes that political actors engaging in political activity need to be connected to do so. The material I have provided does not review political actors not being connected to any formal or non-formal state powers, but if that occurs, they would have to take quite different precautions in the current conditions, since the safety net would not be there in the first place.

5. Chairs, tables and ideology as a multifaceted strategy: identifying political rationalities

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will deal with processes of change in KS, and how these processes can be analysed from a perspective of ‘political rationalities’. I want to show how a new legitimate power is sought implemented in the practices of the organization through a differing political rationality that seeks to distance itself from the old board of directors, especially through spatial manipulation. Nikolas Rose gently describes what these kinds of rationalities are capable of, how they function, and how they define their goals and generation of legitimacy:

Nonetheless, political rationalities are characterized by regularities. They have a distinctive moral form, in that they embody conceptions of the nature and scope of legitimate authority, the distribution of authorities across different zones or spheres – political, military, pedagogic, familial and the ideals or principles that should guide the exercise of authority: freedom, justice, equality, responsibility, citizenship, autonomy and the like. They have an epistemological character in that, as we shall see in detail later in this chapter, they are articulated in relation to some understanding of the spaces, persons, problems and objects to be governed. And they have a distinctive idiom or language. A certain element of thought, that is to say, is involved in all projects of government. (Rose 1999, 26-27)

Furthermore, I will show how these aspiring rationalities are using two dimensions of ‘Others’, both locally, exemplified by the old board or the ‘enemy group’, and nationally, through state phobia by creating a counter-conduct that finds its oppositional reference in the state bureaucracy as well as in the Sinhala majority. A certain type of knowledge is evoked in this attempt to distinguish itself from the ‘Other’, which represents a struggle for defining history in terms of inventions of traditions. The general argument of this chapter is that a microanalysis of such political rationalities can provide a foundation for understanding intra-NGO conflicts in Sri Lanka, and perhaps also outside Sri Lanka’s borders. It also illuminates the outlines of a growing lack of state legitimacy among representatives in the civil society. It is directly related to the previous chapters (3 & 4) in the way that it

provides these micro-sociological examples, which provide useful analytical insight to see how these governmental mechanisms impact the local conflict.

5.2 Change, processes and knowledge as identifiers

Shortly after Kingsley regained the formal control of KS, he began doing material improvements and changes to the organizational premises and the surrounding areas. Kingsley said that this was supposed to fulfil several tasks: “I want to clean this place, and chase out the devils! This is part of kind of a cleansing process, both spiritually and materially.” Furthermore he explained to me that the cleaning, repairs and improvements of the property was an intentional strategy, yet with several purposes.

Kingsley stated several reasons to do this once he regained the control of the organization. First of all, it would mark a change of leadership, and show the members that a better time was ahead. This would be manifested in something concrete and visible; in the cleaning, repair and maintenance of the property. Second, it would send a signal to the preceding board members, as well as it involved a collection of evidence of their misdeeds, whereas I was ordered to take photographs of everything that was dirty or broken in and around the building. Third, it would cleanse the building in a spiritual matter, and remove all the negative energy from the past, which was conceptualized as “chase out the Devils”. Fourth, a process like this would make the premises more lucrative for the users, and it would also set it to be ready for other projects Kingsley had on his mind; in short, the cleaning, maintaining and repairs was seen as a business asset for KS. Fifth, it was a means to inspire and encourage others starting working, by him going forth exemplarily. Sixth, and perhaps most importantly, he stated that: “This is a place that was built to make people exchange ideas and have conversations and dialogue, so we must make the building suitable for that purpose”. Kingsley made all of these strategies and agendas explicit, and worked very long days, with both hired labour and myself assisting him.

The approach here is process oriented, where I see politics as “the study of the *processes* involved in determining and implementing public goals and in the differential achievement and use of power by the members of the group concerned

with these goals” (Swartz et al. 1966, 7). All of Kingsley’s stated goals have one thing in common: they all deal with change, although in quite different ways, as I will get back to. It is from a processual perspective change can be further flourished and remain analytically valuable. With Raymond Firth, and his oppositional presentation of social structure versus social organization in mind this could be further exemplified (Lewellen 2003). While social structure is determined and static, social organization moves towards the dynamic aspect, and the social actions in scope of interest, in favour of the structural frames present in the context. Put differently, while structural analysis wishes to describe how something is, *social process* seeks to show how things happen progressively, or more precisely, processually (ibid.). Kingsley’s range of differing goals concerning these changes shows that strategy is closely related to change; or put more precisely, strategy requires change, and change requires strategy. This does not mean that all these goals are of the same importance, emically. While some of them, like internal strategies to pacify the members that voted for him, it is a matter of staying in control of the organization formally. But what is the main the goal of staying in control? According to Kingsley, it was related to transforming KS to what it was supposed to be, according to him; from its present decaying state to the previously mentioned “platform for inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue” or what was frequently called a “new age temple”. With this in mind, the various reasons he gave for doing what he was doing, has to be seen in this light, namely that it is multifaceted, with both primary and secondary concerns. Doing one thing, for example polishing the floor, carries a number of elements in terms of strategy. His idea of implementing tangible changes is part of a more profound agenda, which is not necessarily shared by the members.

The advantage of engaging this processually lies in the relationship between these multifaceted stated agendas, how they are thought, rationalized, and ultimately whether they are successfully implemented or not. A successful analysis here would include an outline of the *social organization* with a scope emphasising governmental activity. Kingsley’s multiple strategies can be seen as a unified governmental strategy, where the achievement is of bio-political qualities. ‘Government’ in this context should, of course, be understood not as the state, but as “any rational effort to influence or guide the conduct of human beings through acting upon their hopes, desires, circumstances, or environment.” (Inda 2005, 1).

The changes that are done, and all the struggles and work he goes through in KS, are mainly done to “empower the people”, to quote Kingsley. He is here using the words ‘empower’ and ‘people’, where empowerment is a clear example of contemporary liberal rationalities, where victims are sought to be brought out of poverty, or from their powerless situation of life (Dean 2010). The word ‘people’ carries the same connotations as ‘population’, and furthermore shows that this rationality follows a bio-political, productive logic, where the goal is to recreate KS into a platform where guidance towards such ‘empowerment’ of the ‘people’ is primary.

Foucault gives special attention to Le Perriere’s statement that “government is the right disposition of things, arranged so as to lead to a convenient end” (Foucault 2000, 208). ‘Things’ here should be understood as plural and heterogeneous, as the word refers to a “sort of complex of men and things” (ibid, 208-209), where ‘complex’ involves humans’ relations with wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its borders, qualities, climate, as well as with each other in their customs, habits, ways of thinking and acting, and with eventualities such as accidents, misfortunes or death (Dean 2010, 104). As a point of departure, I will begin describing the material changes in the organizational building, with a commentary on the impact this had on the social organization, and ultimately how this can further illustrate the political rationalities present.

It was obvious that the premises had been poorly maintained during the last years. Several rooms, closets and toilets were full of garbage, broken equipment, old electronics, journals, books, piles of newspapers, documents, balance sheets and paintings (mainly Kingsley’s old reproductions of Vincent Van Gogh paintings). Outside the main entrance there was a large pile of garbage blended with sand and dirt under a large Banion Tree. The building was in general very dusty and dirty, even in the public areas that were used daily. This pile of garbage was according to Kingsley perfect to illustrate the enemy groups’ misdeeds the last decade. He repeatedly complained, “How could anyone possibly store garbage at the nicest place to sit and have conversations, under this beautiful tree”. He subsequently told me that all the Sri Lankan folk tales would start with: “Once upon a time beneath a Banion Tree...” of which he felt was a good example of his enemies complete lack of a sense of history. No good history could ever start under a Banion Tree full of garbage, according to

Kingsley. It could be interesting to explore the relation made between the recent local events, and the large-scale Sri Lankan history. Knowledge of history is here evoked as an important variable to understand and comprehend the present in addition to how the correct way of conduct is directly related to this allegedly historical sentiment. It is therefore something normative carried in Kingsley's reference to the Banion Tree's local status.

We spent a whole day of work to remove the garbage under the tree, and the following day, we formed a circle of large stones we found during the process. These stones were meant to be stools, with a collection of larger stones in the middle forming a table. The day after, I noticed a group of nursing students enjoying their lunch break at our newly arranged seating facilities under the Banion Tree. These kinds of references to local traditions and historical emphasis are widely used in Kingsley's rhetorical vocabulary. According to Kapferer (1988), among others, is nationalism something highly constructed through national symbols, and by drawing on Hobsbawn, he identifies it as an "invention of tradition" (ibid, 209). While Kingsley is clearly not identified with what is called Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, the dispute over history and historical truth is striking. The Banion Tree could never serve its purpose while surrounded by garbage, since the tree itself has a traditional purpose; it is where the old folk-tales begin. Accordingly, the people responsible for this could not possibly be suitable for being in control. With this in mind, we start noticing an increasingly problem with dividing power from knowledge, since knowledge of history is essentially power in this context. Furthermore it creates legitimacy through showing how this historical sentiment is directly relevant in the current situation.

After the surrounding area begun to look better, we continued our work in the lobby. The tiled floor were grey and dusty, so Dhas came around a few afternoons with a floor-polisher, and a few servants, assistants and a spiritual student. Polishing the floor was an extensive task that required a lot of work from all of us. After the floor was done, Kingsley insisted to rearrange the furniture in the lobby. Previously, upon my arrival to KKS, the arrangement of the chair was a row, facing towards the entrance. The individuals sitting in the chairs would then face the entrance, and not each other. Kingsley commented that this made the place looks "like a bank, or a

government institution”. He moved the chairs to form two circles, with large wooden tables in the middle, on each sides of the main entrance. His result worked as intended, as I noted that people sat down with tea and coffee, having conversations, unlike before. Many of the people sitting in the lobby would be parents waiting for the children attending one of the many classes. Many of our more informal meetings among members of Kingsley’s group now moved from one of the offices to the lobby, where we mingled and chatted with random people. One of the consequences of this was that the whole room gained an increasingly informal atmosphere. This informal atmosphere seemed to gradually and subtly undermine the staff, and most notably the Managers authority. It is quite clear that the real power lies within the board of directors, and these directors were now suddenly spending time in the lobby, exposing themselves to the users, students and staff. This change of furniture arrangement was done without any discussion or notification to the manager and his staff.

By presenting this material, I want to illuminate the differing rationalities emerging and how they are being concretized in explicit multifaceted strategies. By rearranging the furniture in the lobby, Kingsley and his group seeks to achieve several related goals. Kingsley gave me a cap during these weeks, which was marked “Altogether”. He further explained that it was a very important message, which KS is obliged work towards. He emphasized the importance of dialogue, and a platform where dialogue could flourish without risk of being subject to attacks or reprisals. At the same time, this has to be seen in terms of internal strategies of power and legitimacy, especially in relation to the cleaning and repair-process at a whole. Kingsley was explicit on the fact that something like this had to be done to pacify the members – to mark a change in leadership. Many members were persuaded into voting for Kingsley before the AGM, and therefore they expected results. This shows that this process carries a set of strategies internally, externally, and in terms of the visions of the conflicting factions. I argue that there are also disciplinary powers at work, as the change of the place and space, here exemplified mostly with the organizational lobby and its outdoors surroundings, has a clear conduct-generating agenda. This agenda is to “create a platform, where dialogues and understanding can flourish”, as Kingsley articulated it. The recreation of the space through for instance rearrangement of the furniture is therefore made possible through a spatial manipulation, where bodies are made “docile”, as Low (2003), drawing on Foucault calls it. The docile body is here

conducted to be engaging in dialogue with strangers, and to establish a new atmosphere that has implications in both internal and external agendas, terms of the dynamic between the factions. For this special manipulation to be possible in the first place, a certain power/knowledge about the effects of such change of place must be present. There was also made explicit remarks about the architectural intentions of the building, and how the ‘enemy group’ had arranged things in a manner that was inconsistent with this intention, since Kingsley himself claimed to be the one to design the building in the first place. In this argumentation, then, we can see that this rearrangement is concerned with time in a dual matter: one the one hand, this rearrangement is something immediate, present and tactical, while on the other, it is connected to the past, to the original intention, and how this furthermore justifies the process of change in the present time. In other words, the spatial manipulation is dialectical of past and present. It is also a dialectic between what is social and spatial, which connects this past and present dialectics within a social sphere, which is coherent with Gür (2002) when he argues that: “The dialectical associations of social and spatial relations, which are inherently historical, become the fundamental premise in the understanding of (social) space” (ibid, 238).

The internal strategies, such a pacifying the members and sending a signal of change to the old Board of Directors are related to the common (external) goal in Kingsley’s group that can be summarized as a governmental activity. These changes imply changes from something, to something essentially different, and in this view, the result can illuminate the previous organizational features of KS. It seems that the change can be said to go from formal, hierarchical and fixed, to informal, egalitarian and dynamic. Allow me to elaborate. Once the changes were done, meetings of all kinds, except the ones involving the staff, were held in the lobby in an informal matter, instead of behind closed office doors. The relationship between the clients and the leaders and members were changed, since the threshold to actually speak to each other, or involve oneself in others conversations were lowered. Spending time in the lobby and mingling with people could sometimes even turn into parties, where bottles of Arrack or beer were brought up. In the previous more formal atmosphere, this kind of activity would be, at best, frowned upon. This contextual change gave rise to a new way of communication, and between people that previously would not speak to each other, now spoke. I argue that this is an example of devolution in terms of spatial

manipulation, where one is battling towards a “*produced* boundary between public and private” (Fraser 2007, 60). More specifically, I mean that this former formal space is transformed into a synthesis of private and public qualities, where social space is a social product in both instances (Lefebvre 1991). Now, drinking Arrack, or having informal meetings in groups in the lobby, which was previously something contained in the private sphere, was now included and mixed with ‘NGO activity’.

I argue that what we see here is an outline of a change between what Spencer (2007) calls objects and subjects of power, which strikes directly into the core of governmental activity (ibid.) Kingsley’s KS-platform is not value-free or without own agendas, and it can be noted that these changes are well calculated to achieve multiple political and disciplinary goals. It is however not a particular form of government where clients are *forced* to behave or think in one particular way, but rather a contextual change designed to flourish and encourage the output wanted from a certain interest. It is an example of “art of government”, as presented in Chapter 1 (Foucault 2000). It must however be noted that the content of the conversations were most of the time related to the on-going conflict between the two factions. Members of the ‘enemy group’ were hence not welcome to join this new form of social interaction in the lobby, while Kingsley’s group (and other random people) was visible to everyone in the day-to-day life. During the time before these changes were made, the chairs were arranged in a row, or as several informants agreed upon: it was organized in the same way as in a bank, or a government institution. The connotations were clear and shared among the informants, and my observations showed that people sitting in a row like that would hardly speak, unless they knew each other from before. Typically, the people sitting in the lobby during daytime would be parents waiting for the kids to finish one of the classes. The chairs would warrant, when arranged like this, a reason to sit there. It made it clear that sitting there, in a row, was not done because of amusement or conversation, but with a clear rational function: waiting. Implicit here is also a notion of hierarchy, where these individuals are merely users, or customers, of a service provided by KS. Sometimes the people waited there to get into the managers office for a meeting, while at others times groups of people that knew each other would move the chairs to form a circle, but once they left the premises, someone among the staff would rearrange the chairs back to the original position, in a row. That the chairs were organized like this was in other words not a

coincidence, but something that was determined somewhere in the formal hierarchy, which was manifested and reflected in habits among the staff. The informant's connotations, on the one hand, shows that this is something structural in the sense of organizational features, while on the other, Kingsley's change from this way of arranging the chairs, to a new one, shows that it engages and challenges the established.

Later, when Kingsley and I went to the customs to clear a package he had ordered from France, I got one of my first glimpses of the Sri Lankan bureaucracy. The chairs were conveniently organized in rows, and we waited for more than two hours. It was strikingly similar to the organization of the chairs in KS before Kingsley made the changes. It was also the same organization as the one I encountered in the Department of Immigration and Emigration upon renewing my visa. Furthermore, this is what I meant by "something structural", namely that it connotes a way of organization nation-wide, as a norm, while a change of this setup not only challenges the other faction, locally, but also the established sense of what an institution is supposed to be, and how people relate to each other in such a context – it challenges the norm. I want to argue that the change described here is one concerned with liberalism.

The most general norm of liberal government is that of the changing balance between governing too much and governing too little. Liberalism seeks to establish norms of government derived from the population in its concrete economic relations with the processes that will lead to the production of the resources necessary for its sustenance and prosperity. It uses these norms of government to criticize earlier forms of the detailed regulation of the population found both in police and in reason of state. (Dean 2010, 144)

The rearrangement of the lobby could from this perspective be seen as a subtle revolt by using the established norms actively creating a tangible alternative. Rearranging the chairs would not have the same effect if the clear link between their previous state and the Sri Lankan state bureaucracy were non-existent, which is coherent with the previous quote. It was a general agreement among persons in Kingsley's group that the previous arrangement of the chairs had a notion of state bureaucracy to it, and Kingsley explained it causally: "almost everyone of the staff are ex-government employees." The transformation of the space is therefore related to a criticism of a

reason of state, where a vertical social space is replaced with a horizontal, dialogical platform, which reflect a different political rationality, and by that a ‘counter-conduct’ (Dean 2010) against a conduct that is understood as hegemonic by emic terms.

Kingsley sees certain productive and useful components within the state, but he is largely very critical towards it, which is sometimes explicated by him. When he criticises the state and it’s “Sinhala Buddhist Nationalist” qualities, it is normally done in private settings. However, some notable exceptions were made. Once he made a scene and complained loudly in a Colombo cinema when the two of us, and his daughter, went to see a Tamil movie starring one of his friends. The movie was made in Tamil Nadu, India, and had a fairly large budget, starring several semi-famous Bollywood actors. The problem, however, was that the sound quality of the movie was terrible, and during the intermezzo in the middle of the movie, Kingsley went furiously to the cinematic staff requiring to see their technician. He was denied such, and then went on having something resembling a speech in the lobby of the cinema, with a few dozen eager teenagers as his audience. His main argument was that the movie was sabotaged and undermined by the state, possibly through Sinhalese owners. He shouted: “Fucking Sinhalese! They are torturing these people!”

When the audience asked for his name, he said he was Muslim and that his name was “Abdul Malic”, and by that, concealing his formal name and identity. This example can illustrate how Kingsley sees the state and its agendas, and by returning to “counter-conducts”, it is a counter-conduct with a notion of “state phobia” (ibid, 60). Before going further into this counter-conduct and the state phobia, I want to briefly discuss Kingsley’s impression management, as it provides information about how the technology of this counter-conduct manifests itself in social action. “Abdul Malic” was according to Kingsley a name he acquired after participating in a Sufi ritual, which was “as real as Kingsley, or any other name”, or at other times he would claim that “Kingsley Perera is not my real name, as it is a colonial name. Perera is a Portuguese name, no?” By this he justifies to operate with a number of identities, sometimes improvised and constructed in the moment, while “Abdul Malic” was an alter ego that returned several times in different contexts, especially when encountering Muslims whom he did not know. Obviously a Tamil identity could not be evoked during the event in the cinema, as the audience was mostly Tamil, and

Kingsley does not speak Tamil very well. English is therefore a choice that is 'neutral' in this sense, since people from all ethnic groups speak it.

The justifications is what is interesting here: Even though operating with several identities, especially in order to stay out of trouble, could be seen as a political strategy, his justifications illuminates how a certain 'truth' is defined. 'Kingsley Perera' could not be his real name, since it has colonial origins, and hence, a definition of 'self' in terms of a name is no longer required, or even possible. It shows that Kingsley thinks that an account of history is contested (and invented), and that he refuses to accept a 'common' understanding of names, since he sees also names as historical constructs in terms of power relations.

By returning to counter-conducts and the notion of state-phobia, I argue that this example is illustrative in that it shows how a flux of identities is evoked in a dual matter. It can forge alliances or reduce the social distance between strangers on the one hand, and also "conceal its identity and its activities from external authority, the camouflage value of such naming practices [...]" (Scott 1998, 64-65). Naming practices are heterogeneous around the world; for instance, it is not uncommon for individuals to have different names depending on their current life phase, while social settings or interlocutor can also determine it (ibid.) However, the point here is not to suggest that such a manipulation of names are a part of local custom in Sri Lanka; rather, the point is to show how certain governmental features are imagined and acted upon. Names are according to Scott (1998) the first and most crucial step towards making legible citizens in the modern state. In certain other situations, such as direct confrontation with the state in for instance army checkpoints, identity cards are widely used as an 'objective' method to determine the ethnic identity of the subject (Jeganathan 2004). This means that some situations and encounters are more open for manipulation than others; for instance army checkpoints versus informal events like the case in the cinema. By disputing the 'truth' and 'objectivity' that a formal name implies, I argue that Kingsley react upon the governmental strategy names has in the first place: to create legible individuals in a fixed state scheme. By doing this, he seeks to achieve goals related to both forging alliances and concealing his identity, which constitutes a counter-conducting governmental activity.

It also shows what de Silva (2011) means when he claims that colonialism is far more than simply a curiosity in Sri Lanka and that its legacy continues to impact various political trajectories in the country; in other words: the historical accounts and meanings of colonialism is an active component in the present governmentality. I argue that this is another, albeit different, aspect of what is called counter-conducts, and that it furthermore illuminates how this political rationality is rebellious to what is perceived as established from a majority.

Returning once again to state-phobia, which indeed involves grand establishments, I want to briefly visit Kingsley's past in the 1970s. In 1971 the first out of two insurrections by the Marxist-Leninist party JVP found place (de Silva 2011; Fernando 2011). Kingsley led the "Christian contingent" of JVP, which was a party/movement mainly made out of Sinhalese Buddhists. Eventually, after the insurrection was suppressed by the state, Kingsley was imprisoned for his involvement. After this, JVP was marginalized as a result of their defeat, as most were either dead or imprisoned. According to Jude L. Fernando (2011), many of the remaining JVP members that were not either dead or imprisoned too long, joined the NGO-sector, and "paved way the way for contemporary progressive NGO movements" (ibid, 117).

After Kingsley's release from prison he spent years outside Sri Lanka, especially in Japan, where he was married to a Professor of Sociology, and in USA, California, where he conducted studies in Berkeley University. He returned some time in the 80s, after he was divorced from his Japanese wife, and started KS as a sub-NGO under CWF with the support from the Dutch donor ICCO. In the meanwhile, there had been another JVP uprising (1987-1989), but this time JVP had changed its alignment into one of ethno-nationalist sympathies (ibid.) I argue that KS, at least from Kingsley's vision, is an example of what Fernando calls the contemporary progressive NGOs. With revolutionary roots, as well as a meeting with a new world in Japan and studies in USA, Kingsley was loaded with a combination of experience that very few Sri Lankans had, at least from his generation and background. I stress that this combination of intellectual scholarship, international experience and roots in a revolutionary organization are important variables for understanding his current political rationality. Also, with this kind of a life history, from a relatively poor background, we could say that Kingsley has been through a class travel of social

mobility, which is discussed in the next sub-section. The concept of state-phobia includes a view that “state as capable of unlimited expansion and detects a kinship and genetic continuity between different types of state: from administrative state to the welfare state, the bureaucratic state, the fascist state and the totalitarian state” (Dean 2010, 60). In other words, as I understand it, state-phobia is a form of a counter-conduct that identifies everything a state does as fascist and totalitarian; in a black or white matter.

For example, when Kingsley and I travelled in Colombo, we saw army soldiers selling vegetables. During my fieldwork this happened all over Colombo, and was presented as a way to help people because of rising vegetable prices. The army sold vegetables for 1/3 of the ordinary price, and many people made ironic statements like: “The army now wield bananas instead of weapons!” When Kingsley and I observed this he explained that this was a cunning strategy from the state to build its public image, and conceal its misdeeds and fascist qualities. While this might be true, again, what is interesting is the reaction: like in the cinema, he reacts with suspicion that can be characterized by state-phobia. Certain manifestations (vegetables, bureaucracy) are acted upon and understood as twisted and manipulated forms of state fascism.

With this in mind and by returning to KS, we can see that the rearrangement and spatial manipulation is characterized as a counter-conduct with elements of state-phobia. The overarching governmental goal is to create a platform where “concrete economic relations” among the population can process and flourish the production of a deliberated political rationality, a platform that could change nothing less than conduct of people. However, the term ‘liberalism’ could be unfitting to describe Kingsley’s ideological sympathies, the governmental rationality remains similar. In the next sub-section, these ideological implications will be dealt with both empirically and analytically.

5.3 “Practically all of them are Marxists – We are something else, we are different”

Upon interviewing Nirmalan Dhas, he reflected on the conflict at a whole. What were the essential differences between Kingsley’s group and the ‘enemy group’? Nirmalan emphasised the fact that within the ‘enemy group’ “practically all of them are Marxist of one sort or the other”. What I want to emphasise here is not the actual ideological sympathies of the ‘enemy group’. What is interesting, rather, is how key persons in Kingsley’s group define themselves as something essentially different, from the ‘enemy group’. How can their arguments against the ‘enemy group’ illuminate the political rationalities within Kingsley’s group?

He addresses that the main problem with working with people that adhere to Marxist beliefs or sympathies are related to a neglect of change, or with Nirmalan’s own words “stochastic processes versus a collection of static entities”. He claims that the struggle in KS was one between Marxists and “something else, something different”, where the Marxists main goal is to end up with a communist society that has come to the end of the road, evolutionary, and hence a static state. He furthermore claims that this taints and affects their thinking and way of working, where they deal with the world as if it is static, fixed place. His commentary on this is therefore more than ideological criticism, as he claims that it carries implications for how they behave and conduct in their everyday life. He went on to claim that you “simply cannot work with these kind of people” as “they lack a proper conceptual framework”. He stressed that Marxism had an inherent hierarchical logic, which Kingsley and Nirmalan rejects. They are both, in different ways, advocates of grass root initiatives, where change has to come from “below”. Nirmalan exemplified this in an interview:

NIRMALAN: There wasn’t enough time for the people in KS to mature in their perception and come to a complex understanding of what is happening in the world, because most of them started off with a purely Marxist ideological basis. And they started off from the point of view where Marxism can actually explain everything.

VEGARD: A dogmatic view?

NIRMALAN: Well, I don’t know if it is dogmatic, but certainly a thought that Marxism had a set of technical tools to explain everything that is happening. No, that is not the place to look for possibilities. People like that have always closed the doors to a lot of other things.

When asked where Kingsley Perera is positioned in this, he further replied:

VEGARD: What do you think about Kingsley Perera; do you think he still has Marxism in his way of dealing with things? Or do you think he is...

NIRMALAN: To a large extent he has transcended the Marxism, not perhaps out of choice. But as he went along the things were actually different. That might be that he is actually involved with people at the grass-root level, and so naturally he found ways of behaving, ways of thinking and way of being that could not be explained purely by the Marxist way of thinking. So he was then sort of forced to change, perhaps reluctantly, and very painfully, because I remember especially 20 or 25 years ago, he still were a Marxist, who was then rejected by the Marxists. So he had very difficult time I think, but right now I think he is OK, and more "I have to do what I have to do."

Furthermore, Nirmalan said:

VEGARD: You are talking about that everything is ever changing, stochastic, dynamic, and things like that. Do you think that, is this some kind of deep spirituality, or is this a kind of humanism that could be understood at several levels?

NIRMALAN: It can be, yeah, at several levels. It can be seen from a purely academic view, from a purely philosophical point of view, or just as a theoretical framework, on the one hand. But on the other hand, it can be a very real experience. It can be something very experiential that can be in that case very profoundly very life changing, life transformation. And at that level, I would say, it is very deeply spiritual. Spiritual in the sense that it makes you a different person, and it makes you see the world different.

What we can draw from this, from now, is that spirituality and change is one identifier of this political rationality, where it has several levels, where two of them are exemplified a an academic-philosophical perspective, while the other carries a profound life-changing process. I then asked Nirmalan whether both of these levels had to be present to work together in organizational work, and he answered:

NIRMALAN: That would depend on the nature of the collaboration. You can work with people that have a purely theoretical understanding of these things, that's fine. You can do certain things with them, but you cannot also do certain things with them. Especially if you are looking at guiding dynamic processes of social development, because this at the theoretical level you are just looking at content of perceptions, you are not looking at the perceived itself. So, that's two different things. So the application of the content of perceptions, would then itself be a bit static, and it may then interfere with the very processes that you are trying to guide.

VEGARD: So, it might represent a problem then?

NIRMALAN: It might, but still much less of a problem than dealing with people that thinks the world is a static place, and continue to be a static place, and can be related to as some kind of static entity.

According to Nirmalan, the 'enemy group' does not have either of those two qualities, because they adhere solely to a Marxist framework. Upon asking him how he thinks think impacts an organization in terms of functionality, he answers:

Nirmalan: When you look at Kamkaru Sevena, you have a framework, which is fairly set. It is governed by law. It is predictable when you work within this framework, because you know what will happen. You can do certain things to prevent that from happening. One of the obvious things to do would be to structure the membership in such a way, that it doesn't go the way 'it is supposed to go'. I want to create an organization where every member has its distinct agenda, so that the organization simply gives that person a framework in which that agenda can be pursued. The agenda itself, does not relate to the organization. The organization is just a supportive platform for what you are doing. This is the problem with organizations that are governed by law; they will end up in this crap. This is the same for all institutions, government, corporate businesses, NGOs; they all suffer from the same structure.

In other words, Nirmalan favours a network-oriented approach, where the organization itself is merely a platform to support the members to complete their explicit agendas, not unlike the political rationality identified in the previous subsection. It is coherent with the certain way of arranging the chairs, and it carries a clear dissatisfaction with a top-down approach, that he claims to be found in all kinds of institutions. The well known concept 'organizational culture' has been widely discussed and employed in organizational theory and management, while it is far more rare in studies concerning NGOs (Lewis 2003). Charles B. Handy (1988) outlines four general types of organizational culture, where so-called club culture is identified as one where a charismatic leader sits in the centre being surrounded by like-minded individuals who perform tasks on behalf of the leader. The second type is one that looks more like a Weberian bureaucracy, and is called role culture, where roles are clearly defined and fixed, and where rules and order are being followed strictly. The third type is called task culture, which is often found in the private sector. This type emphasises a 'team structure' with people representing different sets of skills form teams to solve tasks as necessary. The last type is called person culture, which can be exemplified with an academic department. The structure is minimal, and each person is seen as the main resource of the culture, where the organizational features are supportive (Handy 1988; Lewis 2003). I argue that Nirmalan's quote above shows that he favours a sort of a person culture, while Kingsley in his practice and ideas seems to embrace club culture. Note that Nirmalan, in the previous quote, talks about what he sees as the ideal organization, what he 'wants to create', and not the current state of Kamkaru Sevena; he is in other words normative, and not descriptive on the current state of the organization. He was also very clear on the fact that he was not happy about the current or past workings of KS. It is however no doubt that both Nirmalan and Kingsley share the same dissatisfaction with bureaucratic 'role culture', which is the important point here.

There are some notable differences between Nirmalan's perceptions here, and Kingsley's. While Kingsley focuses more on the ideological and fascist sides of the state as a problem, Nirmalan sees the challenges in the organizational structure. Nevertheless, their technologies of power and conduct generating forces main similar:

VEGARD: Where do you want your work to go from here? What do you wish to achieve? [In terms of Kamkaru Sevena]

NIRMALAN: When you answer a question like that, you have to be very careful. It has two very real dimensions, and one is the perceptual dimension, which is the one that I am most interested in, because it gives a lot of possibilities. The other one would be the material dimension, if you look at Kamkaru Sevena; Kingsley has been very focused on the material dimension. And along these years, he has brought upon him self a lot of responsibilities, which, personally I would have found very uncomfortable to have to manage. But at the perceptual level it is very different. I will give you a mythological representation of the kind of work that I am doing. It is a about the ancient Vedic Prince, and at any given time there are six persons in the world who nobody can really see, because they are withdrawn from the material world and society, but who are actually responsible for dreaming the world into being. This is very descriptive of the work that I do. By perceiving something that has not been perceived before, you are opening a door to see the whole collection of the perceptions of all the human species. And there are people who can hook up on these perceptions, perhaps not very consciously. And because they come into contact with these perceptions, their entire perceptual paradise is changed. As you said yourself, you've met another guy that says the same things as me, and came to the same conclusions without knowing me. There has been people like this, who appeared from time to time, and saw the world in a completely different way, and tried to describe what they saw to various people. And it actually went to the extent of setting up systems of teaching and training, for other people who might be interested in seeing what they have been seeing, and actually try and see it themselves.

VEGARD: How do you think this is directly or indirectly is manifesting itself in the material world? Do you think these kinds of individuals are history changers?

NIRMALAN: What they do is to help people change they way people see the world, actually. And in that sense, I suppose you could change history as well. But they are not crusaders, and they are not revolutionaries in that sense. They are not interested in making material changes. Those kinds of changes happen!

I argue that what we see here is an example of a technology of power that is indeed governmental since it is concerned with changing the perception, and from that, the conduct of the people. It also carries elements of bio-politics, since the main cause of doing those changes is to transform the population of the whole world (the human species) to a sustainable way of living, since this is the main goal in Nirmalan's agenda, and the way we threat our environment is linked up with the question of perception:

NIRMALAN: This whole question of perception, and how it affects the way we relate to each other, and how it affects the way we threat our environment, and actually how it relates to the way we see ourselves, as in who or what we are, and about what we are supposed to do and what we can be doing.

Both Kingsley and Nirmalan, the two leading personalities in Kingsley's group, often speak in advanced metaphors, with an academic language, and with historical, intellectual and religious references. Upon talking to some of the staff, and with Kingsley, others had the impression that both of them were, albeit in quite different ways, pompous and "guru" types. Someone would also attempt to make Kingsley the clown, by making fun of his appearance in the KS premises, behind his back. The 'enemy group' had removed Kingsley's Vincent Van Gogh paintings that used to hang around in the buildings offices and such, when they were in control. Once Kingsley rediscovered those painting in one of the storage rooms, he promptly rearranged them at their original locations; some of them were pictures of naked women. He furthermore explained to me: "They removed them because they don't understand the meaning of them. They see a picture with a naked body, and they think it is dirty. They don't understand the meaning of interpretation." Nirmalan repeatedly referred to the 'enemy group' as "monkeys", which had no proper conceptual framework to perceive the world, nor anything worthwhile outside the Marxist paradigm, as I have exemplified with the interview quotes. Various individuals in Kingsley's group used the metaphor "monkey" repeatedly throughout my fieldwork, and often to describe individuals in the 'enemy group'. I argue that this metaphor is a conventional in opposition to a innovative metaphor, where it of course refers not to literal but metaphorically to certain qualities in the monkey's behavioural qualities transferred between paradigms (Heradstveit and Bjørgo 1986). I argue that what we can draw from this is a notion of differing cultural capital, where aesthetic concepts like taste is one important factor (Bourdieu 1984). Furthermore does Bourdieu show how taste continuously and actively create and recreate distance between classes (ibid.) From this perspective, one can see that this is not only a struggle between Marxists and non-Marxists; it is also a matter of class and cultural capital.

Virtually all of the members of the 'enemy group' are affiliated with leftist, communist or Marxist political parties and trade unions. While most of them are members of the LSSP, some are also members of the CP. They are in total approximately 15-20 persons, but with a core of 5-10 people, mostly including the members of the old board of directors and some of the staff of KS. Elaborating

detailed on the ‘enemy group’s’ inner logics would be impossible⁹, but I will briefly outline a basic structure of the group, and their political belongings and sympathies. The core of their group consists of both Buddhist and Christian LSSP-members. Mr C.P Wijieheva, whom Nirmalan Dhas describes as the most dangerous man in their group, is one of their leading personalities. Wijieheva is a member of LSSP and is Sinhalese Buddhist, and was supposedly part of a LSSP and CP-based paramilitary group that fought alongside the government forces against JVP in the second JVP-insurgency during the late 1980s. Jude Lester, also one of the leading individuals, is an LSSP-member and have Sinhalese origins. Lester turned violent in the extraordinary AGM, and has a rumour as volatile among Kingsley’s followers. Raja Alahakoon was the person who wrote the letter that Kingsley used to with the election in the January AGM. He is also LSSP and Sinhalese, but I am not informed about his religion. Kingsley claimed that Alahakoon had a relationship with his wife.

Mostly students that had absorbed Marxist ideas abroad established LSSP December 1935, which makes it the oldest political party in Sri Lanka (Wickramasinghe 2006). The party was never revolutionary, as it was created with the purpose to contest elections (ibid.) This sets LSSP in a different Marxist course than for example JVP, which has two very real revolution attempts in their history. They did however share with JVP the very strong anti-imperialist sentiment (ibid.) LSSP and other smaller Marxist parties has been predominantly insignificant in parliamentary politics, since the SLFP, which is a non-Marxist socialist-leaning party, captured most of the left-oriented voters. On the other more conservative side, UNP has been the main political party throughout the 20th century. The left forces was also overrun by the more extreme JVP, which left LSSP and other smaller Marxist parties marginalized (ibid.) According to Kingsley and his followers, the current LSSP is supporting SLFP, which is the current party in control, represented by the Rajapakse-administration. CP was formed as a party by people that broke loose from LSSP in 1940, where CP had a more clear and explicit communist tone and agenda (Tambiah 1992). Basically, what I want to illustrate with this is that LSSP in its current state is not revolutionary, nor very critical to the current government. Since they do not have any seats in the parliament, it is hard to prove that they support SLFP, but it has been documented

⁹ As described in Chapter 2; it was methodologically impossible to do this because of the conflicted circumstances between the factions.

such a support earlier (Kearney 1965). It was widely believed among Kingsley's group that the 'enemy group' had their sympathies and loyalty within LSSP and their members, but also some individuals from other parties, like CP. Seen from this perspective, it was thought that the enemy group would back and support each other in the KS-conflict because of their common party membership.

What I want to emphasise by presenting this material is the following. By reviewing Kingsley's and Nirmalan's distancing from the 'enemy group', one can see that the difference in their political rationalities lies in anything ranging from everyday conduct to spirituality, religion and state-phobia. This means that they rely on different 'intellectual machineries' (Inda 2005) for calculation and manner to achieve a given goal. Since the intellectual machineries foundational for these political rationalities are so radically different between the two groups, also the actual agenda for engaging in NGO activity is different. This changes the ambition as well, since Kingsley and Nirmalan's vision is one concerned with nothing less than changing the world, while they perceive the Marxists as static, hierarchical, in stead of network-oriented and dynamic. In other words, it is related to what could be summed up as "... point to the forms of political reasoning ensconced in governmental discourse, the language and vocabulary of political rule, the constitution of manageable fields and objects, and the variable forms of truth knowledge, and expertise that authorize governmental practice" (ibid, 8) It is therefore at least two different categories of political rationality at play in this conflict, where the disagreement is more complex than merely trivial matters. It is actually a matter of not what the truth is in terms of ideology, but what truth itself is, how it should be reacted upon, and how this is relevant to use the NGO as a platform.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have been presenting empirical data aiming to identify the political rationalities, and their technologies of power, which are at play in the KS-conflict. As we can see, the political rationalities are generated from a flux of subjective ideas on structural matters, as well as based on ideas and visions on metaphysical concerns. Kingsley links the old board and the enemy group with a bureaucratic state mechanism, and want to replace it with a dialogue-based, process-oriented structure,

not unlike Nirmalan. It furthermore shows how their technologies of power are concerned more with changing conduct of their peers, instead of direct oppression or control. In short, their political rationalities are governmental in their nature. It furthermore shows that their political rationalities are constructed in relation to the state in two different ways: For Kingsley, it is more about a rebellion constituted through state-phobia and thereby counter-conducts, while for Nirmalan the main concern is with metaphysical aspects such as perception, change and spirituality, and how this manifests itself in organizational structures. While both informants favours a certain notion of modernity in their rationalities, that being a progressive tendency towards conservative forces, Kingsley's object is conceptualized as 'empowering the people' in Sri Lanka, while Nirmalan makes his object the human species at a whole. In this sense, Nirmalan is operating through a moral justification that makes its project avoiding human extinction through 'civilizational collapse' due to, among other things, climate change. While this chapter have been predominantly concerned with the process in KS, and how it can illuminate the political rationalities and their technologies of power, the next chapter includes social interaction with external factors. With this in mind: this chapter forms a foundation for the next, in that it provides the basic political rationalities present in the conflict. How does these political rationalities empirically react on various external forces, such as the state? Are some of the active technologies of power shared by different political rationalities? By reviewing these questions, I will discuss how it is useful to trace manipulation of governmental and disciplinary power betwixt and between domains such as private/public and state/civil society.

6. Conclusion: State/civil society-synthesis as an anthropological object

In this thesis I have been critically examining the concept NGO by drawing on empirical examples from contemporary Sri Lanka. A general academic and popular discourse concerning so-called state/society-interactions presupposes and generalizes questions of power and influence based on general formulations, such as non-governmental versus governmental capacities and institutions.

In this thesis, I have shown that the realities are far more complex; in that governance and politics are bundled together creating room for informal forms of power, which transcends limits suggested by these general formulations. This has been further actualized and problematized by introducing ‘political rationalities’, and how different types of such mental sets provoke and submerge conflicts at a local level. In these micro-sociological examples I have shown that the conflicts and alliances are based on conflicting bio-political rationalities in that they seek legitimacy through a different logic concerning life-fostering processes. However, similar strategies are found across domains, both in the faction conflict of KS, and within the state; the differences lies not in the way execution of power takes place, but in the way these various executions or practices of power seek legitimacy. In the process of creating legitimacy, one can see that both NGO actors and the state upholds a socially constructed dichotomy between the state and the civil society, while the de facto governmental and disciplinary power travels across those domains.

I have been doing this by following and describing an internal NGO conflict, and how this conflict has manifested itself both internally and externally. I have shown how these internal processes react and use external resources and networks to ensure safety and success in the internal conflict. The internal processes have been identified as a faction conflict, where Kingsley’s group has actively tried to express similarities between the ‘enemy group’ and several characteristics of the state. Through spatial manipulation, Kingsley’s group has successfully changed the social space, and thereby implementing certain governmental strategies that is coherent with a larger political agenda: to turn objects of power into subjects of power, where a deliberated

political rationality is supposed to flourish and challenge the established. They differentiate themselves from the Other by employing a mix of spiritual, political and organizational features, which is also the very same characteristics used to distance themselves from ‘the state’.

There are two very real forces that function simultaneously. Broadly speaking, there’s one structural force that I have identified as socially constructed and political; this is the force where NGOs are placed alongside with LTTE, the West, Christianity and essentially everything that threatens the Sinhalese Buddhism, which is fuelled with nationalism. This ‘politics of dichotomies’, I have argued, is a force where such dichotomies are constructed for political means. This does *not* mean that these dichotomies are fake, non-existent or purely theoretical; it means that they are maintained for a purpose, politically. To reveal it’s political motives and intentions, one has to analytically see betwixt and between spheres like private and public and then critically examine how they interact accordingly and dialectically. The second very real force is the governance; these are de facto power relations that are best identified without taking into account general formulations like NGO, state or society. In terms of informal networks, I show how “NGO-actors” and “state-actors” blur the boundaries between those generalities. The state is in other words indeed heterogeneous and plural in the sense of utilization in the so-called civil society. However, this does not mean that “the state” is without disciplinary powers and panopticonism. Also in the ‘oppressive’ forces of the “state” does informalities come out as important. The danger lies in the informal shadowy networks that are characterized by white vans, ‘government thugs’ or corrupted police officers. Such a political climate steers, conducts and affects choices done in times of tension and despair, and furthermore shows that these forces, and the fear they induce, again can be employed and triggered from individuals outside the “state”. In my empirical example, the fear that conducts choices within the particular circumstances is Kingsley’s wife, which is close kin, and not “the state”. The oppressive element is therefore not suitable to be set as “the state” or “civil society”, but has to be understood in terms of a flux of experiences, thoughts, emotions and contextual circumstances.

By returning once again to the title of this thesis; bullets versus bananas, I mean that bananas, which is the ‘good’ and ‘rooted’; and the bullets, which is the oppressive, sometimes sovereign and ‘evil’ power, are found betwixt and between domains. By this, I do not mean to give any moral characteristics of the two. The metaphors are meant to be analytical, and not ethical in their application. Also, they do not denote another binary opposition of either/or; rather the point is to show that bananas *and* bullets, which can represent bio-power and sovereignty, productive and oppressive, or governance and politics, are always active together and simultaneously. In that actors within NGOs use and manipulate state power in order to remain safe from dangers triggered also within NGOs (or elsewhere), but is executed from the state, this flux bind these grand establishments together. Therefore, by reviewing this complex relationship, one cannot say that one has a strict category of “NGOs” in the civil society, and a vertical, power wielding “state” above, in terms of power. Bullets are found in NGOs, and bananas are found in the state. Also, as Dean (2010) has reminded us, wielding bananas does not mean that we no longer resort to violence:

Thus bio-politics reinscribes the earlier right of death and places it within a new and different form. It is no longer so much the right of the sovereign to put to death enemies but the right to disqualify the life of those who are a threat to the life of the population, to disallow those deemed ‘unworthy of life’ (ibid, 164).

Still, by wielding these bananas, there’s ways of eliminating life -- by disallowing it. The shadowy elements of ‘white vans’ and ‘government thugs’ disallow life, and operate from one certain bio-political rationality. Kingsley’s group operate from a different bio-political rationality, which is not about taking lives to preserve them; but their rationality is still bio-political. This means that several distinctly different types of bio-political rationalities can exist simultaneously, while they at the very same time resort to similar governmental strategies.

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